



Hacettepe University Graduate School Of Social Sciences  
Department Of Anthropology

**UNDERGROUND ECHOES: THE RESONANCE OF PERSIAN RAP AS  
EVERYDAY RESISTANCE**

Nazanin OMRI

Ph. D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2024



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## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Nazanin OMRI has on the date of 15/01/2024 successfully passed the defense examination and approves her Ph.D. titled " Underground Echoes: The Resonance Of Persian Rap As Everyday Resistance ".

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Asst. Prof. Ayşe NEVİN YILDIZ (Jury President)

---

Assoc. Prof. Ali Metin BÜYÜKKARAKAYA (Main Adviser)

---

Assoc. Prof. Nihat ÜLNER

---

Prof. Dr. Belma OĞUL

---

Assoc. Prof. Serdar ŞENGÜL

I agree that the signatures above belong to the faculty members listed.

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## **ETİK BEYAN**

Bu alıřmadaki bütn bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar erevesinde elde ettiđimi, grsel, iřitsel ve yazılı tm bilgi ve sonuları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduđumu, kullandıđım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadıđımı, yararlandıđım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduđumu, tezimin kaynak gsterilen durumlar dıřında zgn olduđunu, Do.Dr. ALİ METİN BYKKARAKAYA danıřmanlıđında tarafımdan retildiđini ve Hacettepe niversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstits Tez Yazım Ynergesine gre yazıldıđını beyan ederim.

**Nazanin OMRI**

**To my Mamani, Soghra Aslani**

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## ABSTRACT

OMRI, Nazanin. *Underground Echoes: The Resonance Of Persian Rap As Everyday Resistance*, Ph.D. Thesis, Ankara, 2024.

In our study, we're closely examining how rap music has quietly become a rallying cry for a significant part of Iran's youth. It's their secret way of expressing what they can't say out loud and pushing back against the status quo. We're stitching together real-life stories, looking at them through a mix of anthropology of music and resistance theory, to understand how the rhythm and poetry of rap are actually telling Iran's cultural story. The emotions in these songs and among audiences are all over the map—they express frustration, hope and everything in between. It's like a snapshot of what's really going on in the country's heart and soul, sparking a kind of silent rebellion.

Our work is shining a light on the double life that Iranian youth and rap music are leading—an underground journey. It's a story that's challenging the political landscape and shaking up the traditional social fabric. Rap's influence is undeniable in nudging Iranian society toward new horizons, and our thesis is just the beginning of a deeper dive into how it's reshaping the way people engage with politics and express their cultural identity.

### **Keywords:**

Rap, Emotion, Resistance, Music, Culture.

## ÖZET

OMRI, Nazanin. Yeraltının Yankıları: Gündelik Direniş Olarak Farsça Rap'in Rezonansı, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2024.

Bu tez, Farsça rap müziği ve İran toplumu, kültürü ve politikası arasındaki çok yönlü ilişkiyi araştırıyor. Etnomüzikolojik ve antropolojik bakış açılarından yararlanan araştırma, İran rap müzik sahnesindeki duyguların, direnişin ve kimliğin karmaşık etkileşimine dalar. Bu tez, İran'daki genç nüfusunun önemli bir kısmı için sessizce bir isyan nidasına dönüşen rap müziğinin rolüne odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, rap müziğinin İran kültüründeki derin etkisini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Kültürel Değişimler ve Küresel Etkiler: İran'da genç nesil, Persian rap müziğine yönelmekte ve bu, önemli bir kültürel değişimi yansıtmaktadır. Bu değişim, geleneksel İran değerlerinin küresel kültürel trendlerle birleşmesini yansıtmaktadır. Bu, yeni bir kültürel kimlik ortaya çıkmakta, hem yerel gelenekler hem de dünya çapındaki etkiler tarafından şekillendirilmektedir.

Araştırma, James C. Scott'ın 'gizli transkript' kavramı ve Alfred Gell'in sanatı bir eylem biçimi olarak algılayışı gibi teorik çerçevelere dayanmaktadır. İranlı rap müzik hayranlarıyla kapsamlı röportajlar aracılığıyla, araştırma rap müziğinin derin duygusal rezonansını ve sıkı kültürel ve politik bir ortamda sosyal yorum ve direniş için bir araç olarak rolünü ortaya çıkarır. Röportaj verilerinin analizi, Robert Plant Armstrong, John Leavitt ve James C. Scott gibi çeşitli bilim adamlarının bakış açıları aracılığıyla ele alınır. Röportajlar, rap müziğinin gizli duyguları ifade etme, toplumsal normları sorgulama ve dinleyiciler arasında bir topluluk hissi oluşturma platformu olarak nasıl hizmet ettiğini ortaya koyar. Rap müziğinin duygusal boyutu vurgulanırken, dinleyicilerin deneyimlerinin merkezinde huzur, öfke, umut ve otantiklik temaları ortaya çıkar. İranlı rap müziğinin tarihsel bağlamı da incelenir, geleneksel Farsça müziğinden bugünkü kültürel direniş ve kimlik ifadesi aracı olarak evrimine kadar izlenir. Araştırma, küreselleşme ve teknolojinin müzik sahnesi üzerindeki etkilerini ve İran'ın sosyo-politik tarihini, Pahlavi dönemini, İslam Devrimi'ni ve sonraki kültürel muhafazakarlığı da incelemektedir. Röportaj verilerinin ve teorik çerçevelerin karşılaştırmalı analizi aracılığıyla, tez Farsça rap müziğinin bir 'gizli transkript' olarak hareket ettiğini, gizli direniş ve kültürel ifade için bir alan sağladığını göstermektedir. Bu, İran toplumunun duygusal karmaşıklıklarını ve müziğin sosyal değişim için bir katalizör olarak dönüştürücü gücünü aydınlatır.

Rap müzik ayrıca, İran'da cinsiyet rollerini zorlamakta anahtar bir rol oynamaktadır ve bu, cinsiyet eşitliğinin daha fazla benimsenebileceği bir geleceği önermektedir. Müzik, İran'da cinsiyet rollerini zorlamakta anahtar bir rol oynamaktadır ve bu, cinsiyet eşitliğinin daha fazla benimsenebileceği

bir geleceđi önermektedir. Persianian rap müziđinin popülaritesi, İnan'daki kültürel politikalara dair sonuçları da beraberinde getirir. Türün artan popülaritesi, daha büyük bir sanatsal özgürlük ve ifade özgürlüğü talebi olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu, İnan'daki mevcut kültürel politikaların, özellikle sansür ve sanatsal özgürlük konusundaki politikaların İnan halkının beklentileriyle uyumlu olmasını sağlamak için bir fırsat sunar. Şarkı sözleri ve ritimler, toplumsal meseleler için bir ses görevi görüyor ve müziđi toplumsal eleştiri için güçlü bir araç haline getiriyor. Müzikle İnsanları Birleştirme: İlginç bir şekilde, Pers rap müziđi insanları bir araya getiriyor. Farklı gruplar arasında bir topluluk duygusu yaratıyor ve müziđin toplumsal birleştirici bir güç olabileceđini gösteriyor.

Sonuç olarak, bu tez, İnan'da Farsça rap müziđinin duygusal ve kültürel boyutlarının kapsamlı bir keşfini sunar. Rap müziđinin kültürel direniş ve kimlik ifadesi olarak bir araç olarak önemini vurgular, toplumsal normları sorgulamada ve dinleyiciler arasında bir topluluk hissi oluşturmada rolünü vurgular. Araştırma, özellikle sansür ve sanatsal özgürlükler konusunda İnan'daki kültürel politikaların yeniden değerlendirilmesi gerekliliđini işaret eder.

**Anahtar kelimeler:**

Rap, Duygu, Direniş, Müzik, Kültür.

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## INTRODUCTION

At the heart of where art meets activism, there's a potent way of speaking out that can echo and even transform society. In Iran, with its deep roots in poetry and its intricate political tapestry, rap has risen as a formidable voice. Our thesis dives into how rap has become a channel for young Iranians to voice their emotions and stand against the currents of their time, navigating and challenging the social norms of modern-day Iran. Our journey into this research began with a simple observation: Iranian rap, known for its raw and direct approach, has become a canvas reflecting the thoughts and feelings of its audience. We're asking a key question here: How does rap give voice to the emotions of Iranian youth, and how do these emotions manifest as cultural and political statements? To tackle this, we've taken a qualitative path, analyzing the conversations with fans of Iranian rap in podcasts about rap music. We're looking at these discussions through the combined perspectives of music ethnology, art anthropology, and theories of resistance. This approach helps us decode the intricate dance between music, emotion, and defiance. We're setting the scene with this introduction for the chapters that follow. The first chapter lays down the historical backdrop, placing Iranian rap in the grand narrative of Persian artistic heritage and the nation's current political scene. The second chapter outlines our theoretical approach and explains how we conducted our interviews. The third chapter reviews existing literature pertinent to our topic. In the fourth chapter, we dive into the heart of the interviews, mapping out the emotional terrain that rap music conjures up. The fifth chapter ties it all together, looking at how these emotions fuel acts of personal and collective resistance, and it reflects on rap's place in socio-political conversation, pointing out paths for further study. Through this deep dive, our thesis strives to enrich the understanding of rap's cultural weight in Iran, shedding light on how art can be both a measure of public mood and a force for societal evolution.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK**

Growing up under the watchful eye of Iran's ideologically driven government, one's life is inevitably intertwined with the state's influence, which extends deeply into cultural expressions, especially music. Navigating this landscape has been a complex part of life for those of us in Iran. I was born ten years after the Islamic Revolution, and across my three-plus decades, I've seen the Iranian music scene undergo remarkable shifts. I remember a time when having a VHS player was a covert affair; my mother would have me rehearse a fib about not owning one in case the authorities ever asked. Music had to be disguised—cassette tapes were swathed in newspaper and tucked away in nondescript black bags, and CDs were often stashed between book pages. It wasn't uncommon to hear about police stopping cars in search of banned music cassettes.

Fast forward to recent times, and the narrative has changed. Music finds its way into Iranian homes through internet downloads, and artists have begun to navigate the legal channels to share their creations. Despite the fact that some concerts are still off-limits and not all music gets the green light for release, the transformation in Iran's music scene is nothing short of revolutionary. How one has lived through these changes is a personal tale, coloured by factors like age and family upbringing.

To truly grasp the evolution of music in Iran, one must look back at its journey since the Islamic Revolution. This chapter aims to sketch a concise history of Iranian music in this era, with a spotlight on rap—a genre that has carved out its own unique narrative. The insights shared here are a tapestry woven from both research and personal stories of those who have experienced this musical metamorphosis first-hand.

#### **1.1. IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC AND POEMS IN PERSIAN CULTURE**

Let's set the stage by acknowledging the revered place of poetry and music in the heart of Iranian culture. For centuries, the art of verse has been more than mere words on a page in Iran; it's been the lifeblood of its people's expression, from the sacred verses of the Avesta to the intricate Ghazals that Rumi penned. This rich tradition of poetry has not only shaped the nation's artistic pulse but has also been a powerful conduit for social

and political discourse. Iranian poets have long used their craft as a subtle yet potent form of protest, a way to hold a mirror up to the powers that be and to paint visions of what could be. It's through this lens of poetry that many Iranians have historically engaged with the divine, finding in its rhythms and rhymes a bridge to the spiritual, a means to express the inexpressible.

Turning to music, its roots in Iran are ancient and deep, with a lineage that can be traced back to the grand courts of the Sasanian Empire. Music here wasn't just entertainment; it was a symbol of power and piety, a herald for kings and a battle cry for warriors. Even after the Arab conquest, which reshaped the empire's destiny, the essence of Persian music endured, subtly influencing the Islamic arts and reaching far beyond its borders. (Majd, 2011) Despite the restrictions that came with Islamic rule, which pushed music out of the public eye and into the private sphere, Persian music's essence continued to be cultivated by those with a refined taste, in quiet defiance of the limitations imposed upon it. (Miller, 2012)

The Islamic era, far from silencing the musical spirit of Persia, actually enriched it, infusing the art with a new layer of spiritual and mystical depth that only added to its complexity and allure. This music, carried forth by generations of skilled musicians and mystics, found its way into the very soul of Persian religious practices and theatrical expressions, particularly noted during the Safavid period. (Majd, 2011)

Music's role in Iran has also been one of healing, particularly in the Baluchistan region, where it's been used to treat spiritual maladies with a blend of prayerful song and the harmonies of traditional instruments. (Majd, 2011) Through this historical vista, it's evident that music has stood as a pillar of Persian culture, resilient and enduring, a testament to its undying appeal and its fundamental role in the cultural and social narrative of Iran.

## **1.2. MUSIC'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE REVOLUTION**

Iran's tapestry is woven with threads of dramatic political shifts, cultural evolution, and economic upheavals. The transformation from a semi-secular monarchy to an Islamic republic, the tumult of the Iran-Iraq War, and the weight of international sanctions have all left indelible marks on the nation's musical heritage, which has seen its own series of metamorphoses.

In the era before the Islamic Revolution, the Pahlavi dynasty helmed Iran's journey towards modernization, with Reza Shah at the forefront, aspiring to mirror the contemporary models of European and Turkish republics. This ambition led to a clampdown on religious art forms, including the traditional *Taziye theater*. Yet, it was a time that also saw patronage for secular artists, with figures like Ali Naqi Vaziri, who, after absorbing musical influences from Europe, sought to infuse Persian music with Western harmonies (Farhat, 2004; Azimi, 2020).

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's era further opened the floodgates to Western cultural influences. Western movies, music, and literature streamed in, and Iranian artists and intellectuals began to weave these new threads into the fabric of their work, giving rise to a novel cultural identity. Pop music reigned supreme in pre-revolution Iran, with relatively free musical production, save for a few songs of resistance. The stage welcomed both male and female performers alike.

The Islamic Revolution marked a seismic shift in every facet of Iranian life, culture, and music included. We'll delve deeper into the post-revolution music scene in this chapter, as it's particularly relevant to our thesis.

Music was not just a backdrop but a driving force in the 1979 Iranian Revolution, with anthems becoming the voice of protest and symbols of defiance against the monarchy. Crafted by poets and set to the tunes of traditional Iranian music, these songs were performed by both seasoned and impromptu artists. Sociologist Anoushiravan Ehteshami traces the roots of musical resistance back to the 1906 constitutional revolution, where songs became the rallying calls for political mobilization and action. The constitutional revolution itself was a complex movement, sparked by a tobacco boycott and fuelled by a coalition of secular and religious leaders, merchants, and intellectuals. They sought to overhaul Iran's political and economic systems, leading to the establishment of a constitution, a parliament, and a renewed sense of nationalism (Ehteshami, 1997). Songs from the 1906 revolution, like those from later uprisings, served as powerful tools against both the monarchy and foreign intervention. Aref Qazvini, a luminary in Iranian music and poetry, became a voice of the people during this time. His compositions, laden with political sentiment, became anthems of cultural resistance. His legacy endured, resonating through the 1979 revolution and echoing in

more recent protests against the Islamic Republic. Qazvini's "from the blood of the country's youth" stands as a poignant tribute to the sacrifices made in the name of freedom. The poem and song from Aref Qazvini draws from the "*Shahnameh epic of Ferdowsi*," evoking the tale of Siavash, whose unjust death gave rise to tulips from his blood—a metaphor for the blossoming of freedom from the sacrifice of Iran's youth.<sup>1</sup>

A tulip sprouted from the blood of the country's youth,  
 The people mourned and bowed their heads to their height.  
 The nightingale hid in the shadows of their tale,  
 And the flowers were also torn in grief for them.  
 Oh, wicked convoy of death and strife  
 Your actions stain the fabric of life  
 Your hearts are black, your souls are dark  
 No values guide your aimless mark  
 While lawmakers slumber, ministers corrupt,  
 They plundered Iran's treasures and gold abruptly.  
 Leave not our homeland in shambles,  
 For God bequeathed it to the poor and rambles.<sup>2</sup>

During the tumultuous times of 1979, the air in Iran was thick with the spirit of resistance, and songs became the lifeblood of the revolution. These melodies, often crafted in the humble confines of home studios, resonated with the raw authenticity of the underground movement, becoming anthems of defiance and hope (Ehteshami, 1997). The music that fueled the protests was a tapestry of influences: the communal spirit of choral music, the revolutionary fervor of Latin American ballads, and the poignant depth of Iranian laments. The protest songs of that era, initially imbued with leftist ideologies, drew inspiration from the passionate movements of Latin America. "Ja Ken," for instance, was a Persian rendition of a piece by Sergio Ortega, echoing the global call for change. Yet, as the political landscape shifted, and the leftists found themselves sidelined, these songs gradually faded from the public sphere, with notable exceptions like "Baharan Khojaste Bad," which continued to echo through Iranian media, commemorating the lives of executed leftists like Khosro Golsarkhi and Karamatullah Daneshian. Religious fervor also found its voice in the revolution's soundtrack. Songs like "Khomeini Ei Imam,"

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<sup>1</sup> Tulips are the symbol of martyrdom in Persian culture.

<sup>2</sup> The translations of poems and songs have been carried out by the author of the thesis.

attributed to Ayatollah Khomeini, became rallying cries for his followers, reverberating with the ethos of the Islamic Republic Party. These songs, alongside others like "Iran Iran" by Afshin Sarafraz, which called for the monarchy's end, became fixtures at demonstrations, stirring the hearts of protesters.

The power of these songs extended beyond mere expression; they were potent tools for propaganda and mobilization. "Ya Hossein," for example, was not just a song but a battle cry, invoking the martyrdom of Imam Hossein to galvanize the masses (Tavakoli Targhi, 2001). The collective voice of the revolution found its rhythm in these songs, which played a pivotal role in the Shah's overthrow and the rise of the Islamic Republic.

One such emblematic song of the era, 'Happy Spring,' has its roots in a composition by Abdollah Behzadi, originally a tribute to Patrice Lumumba.<sup>3</sup> The piece underwent a transformation in the hands of Keramatollah Daneshian, who, while imprisoned for his opposition to the Pahlavi regime, reworked the lyrics. His subsequent execution lent the song a haunting poignancy, and it was Esfandiyar Monfaredzadeh who later set these words to music, ensuring that the spirit of resistance would continue to resonate through the chords and verses of Iranian history.

As the climate grew kind, and buds sprouted from the earth,  
A swallow trilled a tune of longing for rebirth.  
The sap within plants stirred, infused with life anew,  
For the blessed spring was nigh, heralding breakthrough.  
To kith and kin, to comrades brave in the fight,  
To those whose pen assuages pain with insight,  
May the world behold them in their shining might,  
Happy spring to them, happy spring to them, alight.  
And may shackles fall, and poverty and ignorance wane,  
Across the globe, let them vanish, let them wane,  
May peace and progress reign, and wisdom's reign sustain,  
Let it be discreet, let it be finished, amen.

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<sup>3</sup> . Patrice Émery Lumumba, born Isaïe Tasumbu Tawosa (2 July 1925 – 17 January 1961), was the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He served from June to September 1960 after winning the May 1960 election and led the Congolese National Movement (MNC) until his execution in January 1961.

The year 1979 stands as a watershed moment in Iran's rich tapestry of history, ushering in an era in which theocratic rule became the cornerstone of governance, guided by the principles of Sharia law. At the helm of this seismic shift was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a figure whose vision for Iran was deeply rooted in Islamic ideology, permeating every facet of societal life. In a pivotal address in March 1979, Khomeini underscored the imperative of cultural revolution, stating, the road to reform in a country goes through its culture, so we should start with cultural reform (Nooshin, 2016). This clarion call for transformation was codified in the Cultural Revolution Law, a manifesto for purging Western influences and fostering an Islamic-national educational culture. The ensuing Cultural Revolution saw a sweeping overhaul of the educational system, with universities shuttering for two years as the nation recalibrated its cultural compass (Simadoust, 2017). Art, a vibrant expression of human experience, was not spared, as it was steered to conform to the Islamic dichotomy of halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden), a paradigm that deeply influenced the musical landscape (Tapper, 2002).

Music, an art form that transcends language and borders, found itself at a crossroads with Islamic teachings. The Quran, Islam's sacred text, remains silent on the subject of music, leaving its interpretation to the Hadith and the discernment of Muslim scholars. The Hadith, a collection of the Prophet Muhammad's sayings and actions, offers a nuanced perspective, with some narratives decrying music that incites vice, while others recount the Prophet's own engagement with song. This dichotomy has led to a spectrum of views among the ulama, ranging from outright prohibition to conditional acceptance. Tariq Ramadan, a prominent Egyptian-Swiss scholar, proposes a balanced approach, suggesting music is permissible if it aligns with Islamic ethics, respects the listener's duties to God and humanity, and maintains a balance in the believer's life (Larsson, 2012).

The Islamic Revolution's aftermath saw the music industry in Iran navigate a labyrinth of political and social changes. The government's grip on music tightened, with Khomeini likening music to opium for its potential to distract the youth (Simadoust, 2017). The crackdown was severe: public performances were banned, musical instruments were confiscated, and musicians, especially women, faced imprisonment or exile. Despite the repressive climate, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) saw the government harness music for patriotic fervor, broadcasting martial songs and eulogies for fallen soldiers. This period left an indelible mark on the nation's psyche, with the music reflecting the

collective sorrow and valor of the times. The establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in 1986 marked a new chapter in cultural regulation. All creative works now required the ministry's approval, subject to Islamic moral codes (Simadoust, 2017). Yet, the music scene was not static. Khomeini's passing in 1989 and the end of the Iran-Iraq War opened avenues for a cautious reintroduction of music into public life, albeit within strict confines.

The 1990s saw a cultural thaw, with the "Tanin Show" from Los Angeles infiltrating Iranian homes via VHS, despite the regime's prohibition (Mozafari, 2011). The economic upturn of the era emboldened the youth to explore Western music, prompting a gradual softening of the government's stance. By the late '90s, pop music began to resurface on radio and television, and concerts, though censored, were permitted. The election of President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami in 1997 heralded a more liberal approach to music. The ban on videotapes players was lifted, music schools reopened, and women could perform in all-female settings. The ministry of culture delineated acceptable music genres, and while traditional and religious themes were favored, love and freedom were often censored (Rostovac, 2009). Pop music, once banished, reclaimed its place in Iranian hearts, thriving at private gatherings and in the burgeoning car culture. Women, though barred from singing solo, joined as instrumentalists and chorus members. Concerts became communal experiences, albeit under the watchful eye of government monitors. The domestic music industry flourished, diminishing the import of foreign tapes (Basmenji, 2005). Rock bands, too, found a voice, though they navigated a more treacherous path, with the government wary of the genre's subversive potential. In this complex dance with music, Iran's society has shown resilience and adaptability, preserving the art form's essence while navigating the shifting sands of political and religious doctrine.

### **1.3. THE EMERGENCE OF THE UNDERGROUND MUSIC SCENE IN IRAN**

In the wake of the 1979 revolution, the ebb and flow of Iran's music scene have been inextricably linked to the prevailing political winds. Under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency, the reins tightened once more, with Western music falling out of favor as the supreme cultural revolutionary council imposed a ban in 2005. This shift made the path to concert permissions and music publishing fraught with obstacles, a stark contrast to

the relative openness of Mohammad Khatami's era. Amidst this constriction, a vibrant 'underground music' culture began to flourish, particularly among the educated, urban middle class — a demographic often composed of university students and graduates (Rostovac, 2009).

The term "underground," or "*zir zamin*" in Farsi, conjures images of the basements in Iran's modern apartment buildings. These spaces, traditionally cool retreats, have morphed into multifunctional areas — from parking to private party venues. During the Iran-Iraq war, they doubled as bomb shelters, but in the context of music, they became incubators for creativity, a place where the public-private divide softened. This "underground" music scene, thus, was born out of necessity and ingenuity, with young musicians transforming basements into studios, creating music that was as much a statement of rebellion as it was a product of passion (Nooshin, 2005). The internet's arrival in Iran in the mid-90s was a game-changer, offering a relatively uncensored platform for exploration and expression. It became a digital haven for young musicians to disseminate their work, bypassing the stringent legalities of government approval. This marked a pivotal shift in Iran's musical narrative, birthing a new music scene that was as defiant as it was dynamic (Simadoust, 2017). This underground music was not merely imported; it was a homegrown movement, a creative outpouring that mirrored the young Iranian's inner turmoil and societal struggles. The scene was dominated by rock, rap, and alternative genres, with lyrics that often pushed against the boundaries of government and traditional norms, tackling themes of politics, personal freedom, and societal ills. The artists, initially anonymous due to the sensitive nature of their work, were voicing the unspoken through their music (Rostovac, 2009).

Persian rap, a genre that found its footing in the 2000s, became the voice of Iran's youth. It was a cultural mosaic, blending Persian linguistic nuances with global hip-hop beats, reflecting the societal pulse of Iranian youth. Despite facing censorship and government pushback, Persian rap carved out a space for itself, evolving from its nascent stages of imitation to a mature, diverse form of cultural expression that resonates both within Iran and across its diaspora (Golpushnezhad, 2018). The evolution of Persian rap can be traced through its generations — from the early days of underground experimentation to the polished productions of the mid-2000s, which saw the rise of female rappers and a broadening of thematic content. Today, the genre enjoys a more mainstream presence,

with artists performing to larger audiences, though not without the specter of censorship looming overhead. Nassir Mashkouri in his book: *'Hip-hop Generation: Graffiti, DJing, MCing and Breakdancing'* divides Persian rap into four thematic strands, (Mashkouri, 2017) with the first being the raw, unfiltered street rap that delves into the gritty realities of urban life. Artists like Hichkas, Zedbazi, and Pishro are emblematic of this style, using the visceral language of Gangsta Rap to articulate the struggles and strife of the streets.

Here's a glimpse into the world of Hichkas, often hailed as the pioneer of Persian rap, through a translated excerpt of his work:

No one, Hichkas, stands alone; we form a united group of soldiers.

Each of us puts our lives on the line, with the Angel of Death, standing by our side.

I encourage you to raise your hands high, even higher, and proudly represent 021 forever!<sup>4</sup>

We're a collective of vibrant soldiers, each with a unique story to tell.

Beginning this verse in the name of God, we acknowledge His presence in our lives, expressing gratitude even in challenging times.

We are soldiers committed to God, our nation, family, and friends.

Living in the streets for various reasons, including a sense of duty and honor, our journey is marked by sacrifices and a commitment to rap that speaks truth.

The autumn leaves symbolize our romantic connection to life's beauty.

I urge you to raise your hands high, even higher, and throw up 021 forever!

We are soldiers with master's degrees from the streets of Iran, choosing the pavement over formal education.

Our mistakes have been made, but in every situation, we build and progress.

In the face of adversity, we remain unsaved, like trees standing firm against the axe.

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<sup>4</sup> . Zero, two, one is the area code of Tehran city.

We are ready for war if forced, but our ultimate goal is peace.

The flag flies high, and we remember our fallen comrades.

We pray for a secure and peaceful world, hoping for a day when we can all be happy together.

Don't remain still; raise your hands high, even higher! 021 forever, I'm part of a vibrant group of soldiers, each with their own story.

The flag is raised, and our spirit is unyielding—021 forever!

In the rich tapestry of Iran's music scene, the second type of Persian rap is woven by artists who infuse their tracks with a sense of social responsibility and ethical reflection. These musicians, like the trailblazing Salome, known as Iran's inaugural female rapper, and the widely acclaimed Yas, stand out as beacons of positivity, shaping the narrative of their generation with a message of hope and enlightenment. (Mashkouri, 2017) Take, for instance, a piece by Yas, aptly titled "Everything is going to be all right." This song, emblematic of this genre, resonates with a promise of optimism, a lyrical assurance that despite the tumult of the times, there remains a steadfast belief in a brighter future.

Hope that everything will be fine like before,

sorrows will fade away, and our hearts will be closer than ever before,

like before, everything will be good,

sorrows will fade away, and our hearts will be closer than ever before, like before.

I came to this world by the grace of the Creator,

I was inexperienced and naive,

I remember all the cowards who intimidated me,

When the best fragrance is the smell of human blood,

The law says to know the cruelty,

then to remain pure and innocent,

Is this a fake statement or a bitter joke,

From a closed mind that only thinks of profit and oil.<sup>5</sup>

The oppressors only bring humiliation,

the oppressed die in humiliation,

and they eagerly take pieces of you,

and eat them with delight.

But why do you hold onto hope in your heart,

thinking that you will always be chased from behind?

God is slow but catches up eventually,

one day the executioners will be under the victims' blades

When I am writing and you are there,

It's like I'm facing the doors of paradise,

So, take the microphone instead of me,

and draw a circle with your flying pen.

My heart says break the deadly silence,

the peak of success is your individuality and love,

I am a simple laborer, and you are a commander of a country,

You are for yourself, and I am a soldier with my eyes on tomorrow.

My love is a sea for my country and its future,

my voice is screaming, preserving my words and verses.

In the vibrant spectrum of Persian rap, the third category is marked by artists who blend hip-hop beats with the allure of commercial pop. This genre, championed by the likes of Hossein Tohi, Sasi Mankan, Sepehr Khalse, and occasionally the Zedbazi band, is the heartbeat of many social gatherings. Their music, often a backdrop to the revelry of parties, weaves tales of nocturnal escapades, romantic encounters, and the heady rush

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<sup>5</sup> . The term, oil alludes to the bountiful petroleum reserves of Iran, from which only the government reaps its exclusive rewards.

of youth. (Mashkouri, 2017) One such track that captures the essence of this genre is Zedbazi's 'Summer is Short.' The song is an ode to the fleeting joys of summer, a call to embrace the moment with its upbeat rhythm and carefree lyrics that speak to the spirit of celebration and living life to the fullest.

Once again by the water, beneath the stars, we lay  
Happy in these three months, the best of the year they say  
The only problem is we're under pressure to sleep  
Everything is perfect, but autumn may cause us to weep  
Why does the clock keep ticking, why does time fly by?  
I hate it from the bottom of my heart, since the beginning of October's sky  
I want to get drunk and look up to the heavens  
To forget everything and embrace all my sins  
I'm Hidden, I'm crazy, I come up with ideas so wild  
Stay with me tonight, don't leave me alone to the night's child  
Because I know you love my manners and ways  
You and I, lying on the bed, facing each other's gaze  
Smoke, scent, incense and candlelight, dimly lit  
Tomorrow we'll forget, let's enjoy the present moment's hit  
Me and you, my good friend, in a cozy, warm embrace  
Let's ignore the autumn leaves that soon will fall from grace  
Summer's gone, winter's here, and the cold has set in  
I'm tipsy and patient like an addict in sin  
But beneath the tears of autumn, we won't get wet  
We won't go to Switzerland in winter, we'll go skiing in the mountains of Tehran  
In spring, when the air is cloudy, it smells good  
Telling us that summer is coming and that we should

For a few months now, she knows who she is with every night  
If I leave, she'll be alone, lost in her own fright  
You think about it, and me, a glass of vodka  
Tonight she wants to drink until she's wasted, but I won't stop her  
Vodka and Cocaine until midnight, we drink and we play  
It all ends with a glance at each other, a sly way  
But if the sun doesn't set, we will have a happy time  
We feel it, we've become sexy,  
We're on the waves of Mexico,  
We lay on the sandy beaches,  
I see the sea in your hawk eyes.  
I say, "oh la la"  
I'm crazy about those legs,  
It's the end of summer, yellow plum liqueur,  
We eat, and we sail.  
My love, this is our life,  
I want you to give in to me,  
Whisper in my ear that life is a whore.  
There will come a day when,  
We'll be left tipsy with just one more kiss.  
Summer is short,  
We'll stay together as long as we can,  
Close friends,  
Old things.  
Summer is short,

We'll stay together as long as we can,

Close friends,

Old things.

We're right here.

I wish the world could forget us,

And we wouldn't see the sunrise.

In the diverse world of Persian rap, the fourth category is distinct for its voices from afar—the diaspora rappers. These artists, who craft their music beyond Iran's borders, often infuse their work with reflections on their homeland and the unique experiences of living in the diaspora. Their narratives are independent of Iran's internal music scene, yet deeply connected to its cultural roots. (Johnston, 2008) Among these voices are Erfan, Daad, and TM Bax, who bring a global perspective to Persian rap. Erfan's 'In Memory of...' is a poignant example from this category. Through his lyrics, Erfan weaves a tapestry of nostalgia, painting aural pictures of Iran that resonate with those far from home. His song is a bridge over the miles, a connection forged in melody and memory, speaking to the hearts of the diaspora with a shared longing for the places and people left behind.

In memory of one, in memory of two

In memory of the kiss on your lips

In memory of three, in memory of four

Our days were just about playing play, instead of work and more

In memory of five, in memory of six

In memory of the one who's not beside you, in the mix

In memory of seven, in memory of the '80s and '90s, our decade

A time of war and hardship, but we still smiled and played

Our first love, our first time

Our first separation, our first wound, it felt like a crime

Our first sip of wine, a taste so divine<sup>6</sup>  
We climbed stairs together, had fun and felt fine  
Our first teamwork, our first success  
On the table, we copied advertisements, it was a mess  
In the alley or on the street, we played  
Our neighbor's nightmare was us, we weren't afraid  
I remember when we turned my dad's car around  
I remember walking through the woods, the sounds  
I remember our first arrest at the police station  
They beat us and charged us with extortion  
First in line for the law and order  
Mornings at school, we shivered in the cold weather<sup>7</sup>  
We laughed at silly games and jokes  
Even in class, we enjoyed it, no need for coax  
Our first snowfall, we played in the drifts  
On the first of April, we all got a break and shifts  
In the summer, we hung out with girls and boys  
In the fall, we separated and made new joys  
On Fridays, my dad and I went up the hill  
With mom, I went shopping, getting a thrill  
At home, I fought and bickered with my brother  
But on the street, he was always with me, like no other  
In memory of grandma's house, so kind

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<sup>6</sup> . Having relationship outside of the marriage and drinking alcohol are forbidden in Islamic republic of Iran.

<sup>7</sup> . Kids should lesson to Quran reading and should sing the national anthem every morning.

We had God and no wolf to fear, peace of mind  
 In memory of our beloved female relatives  
 Who slept for years, in unjust imprisonment<sup>8</sup>  
 In memory of our homeland, we remember it all  
 Our struggles, our triumphs, we stand tall.  
 Gradually, everything got worse  
 When I was sitting on the mulberry tree  
 I didn't see this nightmare in my sleep  
 Burning those green memories  
 Autumn and yellow memories  
 Our memories are bitter and sweet  
 What will my hand and your hand show to the next generation?  
 Our mutual pain is imprisoned in this chest  
 I pray to God for the future generation  
 Open-mindedness, unity, and a heart without malice

Tracing the evolution of Persian rap is like mapping the heartbeat of Iran's youth culture, pulsing with the rhythms of change and resistance. Golpushnezhad sketches this vibrant history in three distinct beats:

First up, the "Hip Hop and the creation of a community" phase (early 2000's). This was when Persian rap was just finding its feet, with pioneers like 021 laying down the first tracks and planting the seeds of hip-hop in Iranian soil. It was a time of coming together, of forging bonds in the face of societal and governmental skepticism. This era wasn't just about music; it was about crafting an identity, a sanctuary for expression amidst the

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<sup>8</sup> . In the Islamic republic of Iran so there are laws against woman's rights, and women can get sentenced with prison time for seeking their rights; for example, going to a stadium to watch football or freedom in choosing their clothing.

bustling streets of Tehran and beyond. Names like Zedbazi, Eblis, and Hichkas weren't just artists; they were architects of a new cultural space. Then came the "golden age," a period from 2003 to 2009 when Persian rap really hit its stride. It was a renaissance of rhythm and rhyme, with the scene exploding in popularity and the sounds of Salome and Hichkas becoming the anthems of a generation. This was when Persian rap wasn't just heard; it was felt, resonating with the collective pulse of Iran's youth. Now, we're riding the wave of "Hip hop in contemporary Iran," when the genre continues to thrive and adapt, mirroring the shifting sands of Iran's social and political landscape. It's a testament to the resilience and dynamism of Persian rap, a genre that refuses to be silenced, continually evolving with the times.

In the early days, Tehran was the heart of it all, but soon the beat spread, echoing through cities across Iran. Despite the pushback from authorities and traditionalists, the community only grew tighter, more defiant. They found solace in underground studios, sharing their music through hand-to-hand CD exchanges and the nascent web of dial-up internet. It wasn't about money; it was about the message, about being heard. As the internet picked up speed, so did the spread of their music, though the financial rewards remained elusive. The scene was a mosaic of backgrounds—affluent rappers from Tehran's north and west spun tales of excess, while their counterparts from the south and east voiced the struggles and dreams of the less privileged. This was more than music; it was a mirror to society, reflecting every facet of life in Iran, from the opulent to the austere (Golpushnezhad, 2018). And just like hip-hop across the globe, Iran's scene wasn't without its rivalries, its battles of words and wit. It was a space where artists could challenge each other, where the sharpest lyrics cut the deepest, all part of the relentless drive to define and redefine what Persian rap stood for.

In the dynamic world of Persian rap, lyrical duels were a common spectacle, where songs often served as public counters to rival tracks. Take for instance the London-based group TM Bax, which stirred the pot with "Tehran Male Mast," claiming the capital's crown. This didn't sit well with Zedbazi, a Tehran heartland ensemble, who clapped back with "Tehran Male Mane," (meaning: Tehran belongs to me) challenging TM Bax's claim as outsiders. Reza Pishro, hailing from Eastern Tehran, joined the fray with "Chaghhal Fagot Epistle," critiquing Zedbazi for their superficial engagement with the city's true essence. Such exchanges were the pulse of the Iranian rap community. During the burgeoning

era of Persian rap, the internet's reach was a game-changer. High-speed connections meant music could travel from the artist's hands to the ears of the masses in moments. RapFa emerged as a hub for this digital exchange, a repository and forum for the genre's latest offerings, gaining traction among artists and aficionados alike. Satellite channels further blurred borders, beaming Persian rap from within and beyond Iran's confines, giving rise to music videos that added a visual punch to the lyrical one. Yet, despite its surging appeal, Persian rap wasn't a ticket to riches within Iran's borders. Performances were relegated to the shadows, at hush-hush parties and private celebrations. Nevertheless, some resourceful rappers found a way to pocket some earnings, leading even the most socially conscious among them to tailor tracks that could set a party alight. This burgeoning scene attracted the youth, who flocked to the genre, eager to learn from the established names and make their own waves. But the road to rap stardom in Iran was fraught with legal hurdles, keeping the career path steep and narrow. While the youth were quick to embrace the beats, the older generation often viewed them through a lens of scepticism. Despite this, rap's resonance couldn't be muted, as it began to echo through wedding halls and living rooms, reaching ears across generational divides.

In the heat of Iran's 2009 presidential elections, rap music emerged as a cultural force, giving voice to the people's choice and dissent. When Ahmadinejad's victory was announced, it sparked widespread unrest, met with severe governmental repression. Amidst this turmoil, rap became the soundtrack of resistance, offering solace and solidarity to the disenfranchised. This period marked a turning point, as older generations, previously unacquainted with or dismissive of rap, began to appreciate its depth and its role as a mouthpiece for the unheard. As the decade turned, rap music had woven itself into the fabric of Iranian youth culture. Iranian rappers took to stages abroad, drawing crowds from home across borders to witness their artistry. Despite the government's disparaging stance on rap, often ridiculing its artists, the genre's resonance was inadvertently acknowledged by Pirooz Arjmand of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. In a revealing interview in online music magazine (*Musice Ma*), Arjmand traced Iran's rich musical legacy, suggesting that rap, akin to traditional narrative forms, could find a place within the nation's cultural mosaic if it upheld Iranian values and was reframed as 'national musical dialogue.' (Arjmand, 2022) Yet, this nod to rap's potential within the official narrative did little to endear government-endorsed rap to the masses, who remained unmoved by these state-sanctioned tunes.

Since 2015, the landscape of Persian rap has entered a new era, often referred to as the contemporary scene. This era has been marked by a diaspora of trailblazing artists who have sought creative sanctuary abroad, leveraging the liberties of their new homes to expand their musical horizons. These expatriate musicians have graced stages from Turkey to the UAE, sometimes even collaborating with international peers, and have been instrumental in showcasing Persian rap at global festivals across Europe. Back home, Iranian rappers have been riding the wave of digital progress, finding new ways to craft and share their beats despite the persistent governmental crackdown on their art. The scene has grown too large, too vibrant to be fully contained, with its pulse felt across the nation. A pivotal moment came in 2017 when Ebrahim Reisi, then judiciary chief and now president, met with Amir Tataloo, a rapper previously jailed for his controversial content. Following the meeting, Tataloo took to social media, expressing remorse for past messages in his music and sharing Reisi's forgiving stance. This encounter, which promised Tataloo's return to performing even in conservative cities like Mashhad, drew mixed reactions, highlighting the complex interplay between politics and music in Iran. The current fabric of Persian rap is woven from three distinct threads: expatriates who continue to push the boundaries of the genre from afar, domestic artists who use their lyrics to reflect and critique societal and political issues, and those who align with the government, promoting state-sanctioned messages in their music. The significance of this musical movement was underscored in September 2022, when the tragic death of a young girl at the hands of the morality police ignited protests nationwide. Rappers, among other artists, lent their voices to the outcry, only to face severe repercussions. The arrests of Amir Ali Taheri Rahim, Mohammad Ali Kashi, and others, and the chilling imagery of a coerced Toomaj Salehi, underscore the perilous path of resistance these artists walk. Their courage in the face of such adversity speaks volumes of their commitment to using their art as a means of protest and change.

As we conclude this exploration, it's fitting to reflect on a poignant anthem by Soroush Hichkas, who is often hailed as the progenitor of Persian rap. His poignant track, "A Good Day Will Come," became an emblematic soundtrack to the post-election upheaval in 2009. Today, that same refrain has evolved into a mantra of resilience and optimism, a phrase that adorns urban canvases and apparel alike, worn and displayed by those who carry the torch of hope and the pursuit of a new dawn.

A bright day is on the horizon,

Where we won't harm each other,  
No disdain in our looks,  
Just friendship, with hands on shoulders,  
Like the days of innocence in elementary school.  
Everyone will have a job,  
All contributing to building Iran,  
I'll lay bricks, you'll spread cement,  
So neither of us gets weary.  
After the storm of blood,  
A rainbow will emerge,  
Clouds soft, not made of rocks,  
Raceways no longer red like tulips.  
The Muezzin calls the adhan,  
God is great, problems fade away,  
Mom, pray for us tonight.  
This land always said,  
A day without anarchy will come,  
In conflicts, instead of curses,  
We'll exchange pastries and zoolbia bamieh.<sup>9</sup>  
We're lively, everything is grand,  
Yet the space left by departed friends remains empty,  
Blood stays in its vessel, not mingling with the sky and asphalt,  
No mother visits her child's grave.  
Home is not a refuge from external wars,

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<sup>9</sup> . A type of pastry.

I'm damaged inside like Bam\* or post-Hiroshima,  
On fire, yet singing (rapping) this,  
You might think I'm crazy with myself.  
But a good day will come, I believe it!  
And when it does, only goodness will linger,  
Nowhere unsafe, everything serene,  
Worms tickling us, happy in our demise.  
The sky, so beautifully vast,  
Greenery by the grave, grasses abound,  
No brains will drain,  
Just be patient.  
Strangers won't invade our land,  
Don't say the good day is too distant,  
Promise me that if I'm not there,  
You'll give a flower to every soldier you see.  
No bird in a cage,  
No one's husband will perish,  
My daughter, your daddy is coming home,  
Go set the table for dinner.

*“Each work of art is an act of resistance in itself. It's not an example of what's happening politically. It is what's happening politically.”*

*David Chobekra*

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Diving into this project, we've been combing through a ton of research on how music, art, and emotions play out in different cultures. Finding just the right angle to look at all this wasn't easy. We spent a lot of time reading up on what the experts say to build a solid base for our own work. Coming up, we're going to lay out the theories that clicked with what we're trying to do here. We'll show how they link up to each other and to the big picture we're focusing on. This part's going to be key for getting the full picture and really getting into the meat of the conversation.

#### **2.1. ANTHROPOLOGY OF ART**

Understanding the cultural backdrop of music and art is like piecing together a puzzle—it's all about seeing the bigger picture. When we're trying to get why a song hits home or what's driving an artist to create, we can't ignore the world they're living in. It's this world that gives their work meaning.

Take Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency* for example. It's a game-changer in how we think about art in anthropology. Gell didn't just talk about paintings or sculptures; his ideas are just as relevant when we tune into other forms of expression, like music. He had this notion that art pieces are almost like living things—they have this power to reach out and touch people, to change them. But they don't just do this on their own; they're shaped by the people and the society around them. They're like mirrors reflecting the social world and, at the same time, tools that can reshape it. (Gell, 1998) So, when we listen to the

beats and rhymes of Iranian rap, we're not just hearing sounds; we're engaging with a social force. This music isn't just floating out there on its own. It's a product of its environment, echoing the struggles, dreams, and voices of the people it comes from. And it's got a job to do—it's there to stir things up, to make listeners feel something, think differently, maybe even take action. Gell was really onto something when he talked about art's power to change emotions and thoughts. It's like a conversation between the artist and the audience, where feelings and ideas are passed back and forth, growing and changing with each exchange.

Robert Plant Armstrong's *Affecting Presence* is a cornerstone in the anthropology of art, pushing us to see art as something that can really get under our skin and move us. He doesn't just see art as a thing to look at; he sees it as something alive, with its own agenda, something that can stir up feelings inside us. He calls this the 'affecting presence' of art. It's about how art can speak to us on an emotional level, creating a personal experience that's different for everyone. Armstrong noticed that this kind of presence is everywhere, in every culture, no matter how rich or poor. It's specific to its people, though, and it kind of loses its magic when it's taken out of its home setting. He agrees with Alfred Gell that art is more than just symbols; it's a conversation with its audience. It's a mix of media, forms, and images that come together to make something new, something that can only really be understood in its own cultural context. He talks about the unwritten guidelines that shape how metaphors are made in different cultures, giving each place its own artistic fingerprint. When Armstrong digs into art, he's looking at it from a cultural angle that sees the big picture—how our minds and our physical world come together. But he also talks about a third piece of the puzzle: our emotions. He emphasizes on the 'affective realm,' the place where our feelings live. This is where our personal and cultural values, our dreams, and our emotional symbols come together. It's where art hits us the hardest. While we all feel things like love or fear, the way we show these feelings and the things that trigger them can vary a lot from one culture to another, and even from person to person. Armstrong's work is a deep dive into how emotion and culture shape the way we see art. He's saying that to really get art, we have to understand how it plays with our feelings within the context of where it's from. (Armstrong, 1971)

In Iran, rap music is a perfect example of an 'affecting presence.' It's not just music; it's a form of protest, a way for people to push back against the status quo and express their anger and frustration. It's deeply tied to the cultural scene in Iran, tapping into the country's long tradition of poetry to say something powerful about the here and now. Iranian rap is a voice for change, for the pain of living under tough conditions, and for the pride and dignity that come from standing up to that. Armstrong's insights have been a big influence on how this thesis approaches the study of music. He's brought the role of emotion in social science to the forefront, showing us that to understand any kind of art, we've got to feel it as much as we analyze it.

## **2.2. EMOTION AND AFFECT**

The exploration of art through the lens of anthropology often brings us to the doorstep of emotion and affect, terms that are pivotal yet often debated in their meaning and interrelation. In the realm of scholarly discourse, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, while other times they are treated as distinct yet intertwined concepts. For the purposes of this research, we align with the latter perspective, distinguishing between emotion and affect as separate entities, particularly when discussing the complex subject of art. This distinction will become clearer as we delve into the philosophical and anthropological dimensions of studying emotion later in this text.

The philosophical musings of Baruch Spinoza have left an indelible mark on the study of emotion and affect within the social sciences. Spinoza saw affect as the catalyst for human action, a force that springs from our thoughts and ideas. He argued that without ideas, there can be no affect, and consequently, no impetus to act. In Spinoza's view, affect and emotion are not separate; they are two facets of the same phenomenon, both capable of driving us to action. This interplay involves both the body and the mind, with affect being the physical expression and emotion the mental experience. They are inextricably linked, each influencing and shaping the other. Spinoza identified two fundamental emotions that motivate us: fear and hope. (Deleuze, 1988) When we view art as an "affecting presence" with the power to resist, it's clear how these emotions come into play. Without hope, the seed of change cannot germinate, and without fear, perhaps there would be less to resist.

Building on Spinoza's foundational emotions, Dominique Moisi introduces a third: humiliation. Moisi's analysis ties these emotions to our sense of confidence: hope reflects confidence, fear indicates a lack thereof, and humiliation is confidence that has been injured. His insights offer a deeper understanding of how emotions shape our identity and our interactions with the world. Moisi suggests that our actions, or lack thereof, are often dictated by these three emotions. Fear can paralyze, preventing us from seeing a hopeful future, while hope itself is a driving force, a belief in the potential for positive change. Humiliation, a scar on our confidence, can immobilize us initially, but if it festers, it can lead to a powerful backlash against its source. Moisi also recognizes that these emotions can ripple through societies just as they do through individuals. (Moisi, 2010) As we proceed, let's bear in mind the philosophical insights of Spinoza and Moisi on the nature of emotion and its study within the social sciences, particularly anthropology. Navigating the landscape of human emotions reveals a tapestry woven with threads of cultural norms and expectations. While some emotions might be recognized across the globe, the way we express and process these feelings is often a reflection of our cultural environment. This cultural influence extends to how societies approach challenges and express emotions, with each culture scripting its own unique emotional narrative.

In her seminal work, Catherine Lutz presents a framework that categorizes the anthropological study of emotions into seven distinct approaches, each offering a different lens through which to view the relationship between culture and emotion.

The first approach, rooted in ethology and evolution, looks at the role culture plays in shaping how we express emotions. Paul Ekman's research is a cornerstone of this approach, suggesting that cultural norms dictate the rules for when and how emotions are displayed (Lutz, 1986).

The second approach merges the fields of anthropology and psychology, examining the influence of culture on personality and emotional life. Vincent Crapanzano's intimate portrayal of a Moroccan man's emotional journey in "Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan" exemplifies this approach, providing insight into the interplay between cultural forces and individual emotions. (Crapanzano, 2013)

The third approach, common-sense naturalism, posits that the experience of emotions is universal and not significantly shaped by cultural differences. This perspective suggests that the full range of human emotions is inherently accessible to all, regardless of cultural background.

The fourth approach looks at language and finds universal patterns in the ways emotions are described across different cultures, despite the variety of words used to express them.

The fifth approach considers emotions as central to understanding socio-cultural relations, emphasizing their importance in social interactions and the shaping of cultural practices.

The sixth approach examines the link between emotions and social structures, suggesting that emotions can provide insight into the underlying dynamics of a society.

Finally, the seventh approach focuses on how emotions are communicated within a culture, exploring the norms and expectations surrounding emotional expression and the role of emotions in interpersonal communication.

Each approach sheds light on the intricate relationship between culture and emotion, offering a richer understanding of how emotions are experienced and expressed within their cultural milieu. In the realm of cultural emotion research, we find a rich tapestry of methodologies. On one side, there's the emic perspective, which immerses itself in the intricacies of a specific culture's emotional landscape. It's like becoming fluent in a local dialect, where every inflection and gesture has a distinct resonance understood by those within the community. On the opposite side is the etic perspective, akin to a cartographer mapping the contours of human emotion from a bird's-eye view. This approach seeks to chart the common emotional territories that span across humanity, irrespective of cultural boundaries, using the compass of psychological theory to navigate. The ongoing conversation in anthropology—weighing the detailed textures of individual cultural

narratives against the broad patterns of human emotion—mirrors the debate between these two perspectives.

For this thesis, while we are informed by the insights of scholars like John Leavitt, we embrace a holistic approach. We weave together the emic and etic, the particular and the universal, to create a richer, more layered understanding of how emotions are experienced and expressed across cultures. It's through this integrated approach that we can truly appreciate the complex, multifaceted nature of emotions within the human saga. Leavitt's scholarship takes us on a deep dive into the essence of emotions, revealing them as more than just internal feelings. Here's a distilled version of his insights:

#### Emotions as Social Constructs:

Leavitt steers us away from viewing emotions as mere personal sensations. He sees them as complex constructs that are woven into the fabric of our social lives, blending internal states with cultural expressions. Emotions are not solitary experiences but shared narratives that play out in our daily interactions.

#### Bridging Emotional Worlds:

Leavitt's work is akin to the art of translation, not between languages, but between the emotional worlds of different cultures. He doesn't chase a one-size-fits-all truth but rather seeks to construct models that resonate across cultural divides. It's about finding the common threads in the tapestry of human emotions and understanding the unique shades they take on in different cultural settings.

#### Sympathy Over Empathy:

Leavitt nudges us to consider sympathy as a more profound connection than empathy. Empathy is feeling with someone, but sympathy is feeling towards someone, which allows us to construct a more nuanced understanding of another's emotional state. It's about building bridges of understanding rather than simply sharing the same emotional space.

#### Narratives as Emotional Maps:

Leavitt compares the roles of ethnography and literature in charting the contours of emotional landscapes. Both are narrative forms that guide us through the emotional terrains of various cultures. Ethnography, with its rich mix of stories, definitions, and descriptions, acts as a compass, helping us navigate and comprehend the complex world of human emotions.

John Leavitt's exploration into the realm of emotions presents them as more than individual sensations; they are collective experiences shaped by shared cultural symbols and practices. His perspective is deeply rooted in the idea that emotions are intertwined with physical states, a concept that echoes Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza believed that our emotional and physical states are reflective of each other, a notion that Leavitt extends to suggest that our internal affective systems are the engines behind our capacity to feel and ascribe meaning to life's events. Leavitt posits that ethnographers have the task of mapping out these affective systems within societies, connecting cultural meanings to the emotions they invoke. This is crucial because it acknowledges that emotions are not just personal experiences but are also defined by the cultural milieu in which they arise. (Leavitt, 1996) In the context of this research, Leavitt's insights are particularly relevant when examining the emotional landscape of Iranian rap music. The music doesn't just resonate on a personal level; it's a reflection of Iran's complex socio-political and cultural fabric. This study aims to dissect how religious, political, and societal influences—components of the affective system—meld the emotional reactions to the music. Moreover, Leavitt underscores the significance of meaning in our emotional experiences. Here, we scrutinize the lyrics of Iranian rap to tease out themes and narratives, seeking to understand how the music's inherent meanings stir emotions in listeners. We also consider how bodily states, non-verbal cues, and technological mediums like social media play into the emotional equation, supporting Leavitt's view of emotions as both embodied and socially constructed phenomena.

Wrapping up, this segment has navigated the complex interplay between art and emotion, underscoring the vital role of cultural context in the anthropological study of art. It sets the stage for a deeper ethnographic investigation into the emotional responses elicited by Iranian rap music, considering the cultural, social, and political currents that inform and shape these experiences.

### 2.3. RESISTANCE

So far we have been talking about the concepts of art and emotion, now we are going to add another dimension to the discussion of this thesis by considering the concept of resistance. When we think about the role of art, it's not just about creating something beautiful or thoughtful. It's also about the courage to stand up, often against the ideas and rules that society lays down. Art becomes a voice for those who feel they can't speak, a way to push against the grain of mainstream thought and the status quo. Making an artistic work in so many cases is about making a statement, sometimes in a loud way through protest or quietly through a hidden creativity. Emotions are just like the fuel for this kind of artistic resistance. Feelings such as anger, hope, frustration, etc. are the source of the artworks that protest a system or condition. In exploring this close relationship of art and emotion, we get a clearer picture of how deeply they're intertwined with the concept of resistance. They're not just reacting to the world; they're actively shaping it, bending the arc of social and political narratives.

James C. Scott's work, 'Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts,' is very closely related to what we are discussing in this research. It's like he's holding up a mirror to the subtle, often unnoticed ways people express their resistance, especially in places where speaking out isn't just hard—it's dangerous. His insights are especially poignant when we look at Iran, where the rhythms of rap have become a coded language of defiance against the heavy hand of authority. James C. Scott's research looks at how people and groups cleverly fight against unfair power by staying under the radar. He talks about "hidden transcripts," which are the secret thoughts and actions people keep away from those in control. These secrets can be powerful tools for resisting authority without being obvious. Scott's ideas are especially useful for understanding how people push back against tough governments. In places where people don't have much freedom or a say in politics, and where open protest isn't allowed, they often turn to these hidden ways of fighting back. Scott points out that there are two different worlds in these situations: the "onstage" world, where people have to play by the rules set by those in power, and the "offstage" world, where they can be themselves and speak their minds. He calls the acts done in the public eye the "public transcript," and the ones done in private the "hidden transcript." According to Scott, it's these hidden acts that really challenge control.

He believes that these hidden transcripts are a form of art in resisting power. People use what they know and their culture, like their way of speaking, jokes, music, and other creative expressions, to stand up to authority. These acts are usually out of sight from those in power and aren't directly about politics, but they can shake up the usual story and make room for new ways of living. For those living under harsh rule, these "arts of resistance" are a way to keep their self-respect and humanity. In James C. Scott's work, he explores how people can subtly push back against tough rules and control. He talks about "hidden transcripts," which are the secret thoughts and actions people keep away from those in charge. These hidden acts can quietly fight against and challenge control. This idea is super relevant for people living under strict governments, like in Iran. In places where folks don't have many rights and can't openly disagree, they often find sneaky ways to resist. Scott points out two different "social spaces" in these situations. There's the "onstage" space, where people have to act according to what those in power expect. Then there's the "offstage" space, where they can be themselves more. What happens onstage is the "public transcript," and what happens offstage is the "hidden transcript." Scott believes the hidden stuff is where the real resistance happens. He calls these acts of resistance "the arts of resistance." People use things like language, jokes, and music to resist without being seen. These aren't always directly political, but they can shake up the usual story and open up new ways of living. For people under harsh rule, these acts of resistance help them keep their humanity and pride.

Scott's ideas show that even when resistance isn't obvious, it's still there. It's not just about big protests; it's also about the little things, like sharing stories or making jokes. To really get what's going on in a society, we need to look at both the public and the hidden stuff. In Iran, there's the official culture the government pushes, and then there's the less visible culture of the people, with their own music, books, and humor. Even the language is different. Pierre Bourdieu, another thinker, says we should look at language to see how power works in society. The different words used by the rulers and the ruled in Iran show us the power play that's happening. (Scott, 1990; Bourdieu, 1991)

In places like Iran, where the government has strict control over culture and what people can do, there's often a split in the culture. There's the official culture that follows Islamic rules, and then there's the everyday culture of the people. These two cultures affect each other. For example, in Iran's music world, the people's culture has changed the official one over time. At first, some music was totally banned. But people kept making and listening to music, so the government had to ease up and even include some popular music styles in the official culture. Now, there are even government-approved rappers and pop stars. When a country is under strict rule, people have to act a certain way in public. But privately, they might do things that are not allowed. This situation is about control by those in power and also about people finding ways to push back. The public behavior is just for show, to keep the power balance. But what people do in private is their way of staying true to themselves. (Scott, 1990) Even under tough rules, people find ways to do what they want. These secret lifestyles are their way of fighting back against control. The public stuff everyone does is just part of the act to keep the rulers in charge. Some people might use music to protest on purpose, but not everyone realizes the political power of what they're doing. Standing up to a controlling government often comes from deep cultural roots and history.

In Iran, living under strict government control means people often lead double lives. From a young age, they learn to keep parts of their lives secret to stay safe. This creates a society where trust is rare. People worry their neighbours might report them for doing things the government says are wrong. This fear can turn into anger and even hatred toward those in charge. It's confusing, too—people struggle with their cultural identity and feel like they're faking it. Having to switch between who you are in public and in private is stressful. It's like you're always acting, wearing a mask. These feelings—fear, anger, mistrust—can build up over time and lead to bigger acts of defiance against the government. In a place where you can get in trouble for so many things, strong emotions are common. Fear, anger, and frustration from living with so many rules can push people to resist more openly. In Iran, after the Islamic Revolution, this kind of resistance led to an underground music scene. This scene includes rap music that challenges the culture, religion, and government.

Let's look at rap music in Iran. It's not just music—it's a form of protest. It's art that expresses anger and a desire to change. This kind of music has roots in Iran's love of poetry, which has long been used to talk about everything from love to protest. But the boldness of rap also comes from deep feelings—hope for a better future and the pain of living a lie for so long. These feelings turn into powerful messages in the music, shaped by the culture they come from. Let's break it down: we're looking at how rap music in Iran isn't just tunes—it's a reaction to what's happening in the country. So, what feelings does this music bring out in Iranian listeners? And how do these feelings fit into the bigger picture of Iranian culture? Plus, do these emotions lead to any real actions?

Rap music in Iran is more than just beats and rhymes; it's a powerful underground movement that really gets people feeling all sorts of ways. To get the full picture, we did two things: we analyzed the online forums where Iranian rap fans gathered online to chat about the music, and we analyzed the interviews with these fans on different podcasts. The main thing that we wanted to know and find the answer for was what emotions audiences feel when they listen to rap and if these feelings push them to do anything different so we checked the answers to these questions in interviews.

- What are their favourite types of rap music, and why do they enjoy them?
- If they describe a specific moment or song that evoked strong emotions in you? Which song? How did they feel, and why do they think this song had such an impact on them?
- How does rap music relate to their personal experience as an Iranian citizen?
- How do the risks and challenges involved in listening to underground rap music in Iran influence audience's feelings about the music?
- How do the themes and lyrics of rap music reflect the emotions and experiences of Iranian society, and how do these themes resonate with the audience's personal feelings?
- How do they compare the emotions evoked by rap music to those evoked by other forms of art or other genres of music? What is the difference between them?
- Do they feel that rap music has the power to bring social or political change in Iran, and if so, how do they envision this occurring?

- Do they feel a sense of community or connection with other fans of underground rap music in Iran? How do these connections relate to their emotions?
- What factors do you think influence whether or not listeners of rap music in Iran feel motivated to take action or engage in social or political activism?

We want to finish this chapter by explaining a situation; In September of 2022, a young girl was killed by the morality police forces in Iran, causing widespread protests and outrage among the population. Many people took to the social media platform Twitter to express their anger and frustration using the hashtag "for", expressing their anger by saying why they were protesting and talking about all the things that they had to experience after years of living under the government of the Islamic republic. In response, a young bedroom pop singer compiled these tweets and turned them into lyrics for a song, which he recorded in his home studio and released. The song quickly gained popularity and was dubbed the "song of the revolution". However, just two days after its release, the singer was arrested by government forces. In protest, people began playing the song from their home windows every night and writing its lyrics on city walls using spray paint. Subsequently, a singer affiliated with the government released a version of the song "Baraye," expressing devotion to the supreme leader and Islamic values and venerating the martyrs of the regime.

In this situation, we can see the pattern of how an effect (in this case, the murder of the young girl and the subsequent protests) leads to different emotions in individuals, which ultimately results in a set of actions (protesting in social media with saying for...). This set of actions then elicits emotions in the artist, leading to the creation and publication of a song. The song here is a medium for eliciting emotions in listeners (such as playing the song with loudspeakers and writing lyrics on walls).

Here is the song's lyrics:

For dancing in the streets (In a society governed by strict Sharia laws, public dancing is seen as a breach of moral codes.)

For the fear when kissing (Public displays of affection, like kissing, are considered inappropriate due to moral codes rooted in Sharia laws enforced within the society.)

For my sister, your sister, our sisters (In solidarity with all women)

For changing the rotten brains (The supreme leader, unaccountable and part of a patriarchal system led by elderly mullahs, shapes the state.)

For the shame of inability to provide, for being penniless (Despite abundant natural resources, Iran's GDP is comparable to Bosnia or Albania.)

For yearning of just a normal life

For the dumpster diving boy and his dreams (Referencing a young scavenger asked about his dreams: "Dream? – what is a dream?")

For this planned economy (The Iranian state dominates profitable businesses, often exploited by corrupt oligarchs.)

For this polluted air (Air pollution in major Iranian cities, particularly Tehran, ranks among the world's worst.)

For Valiasr street and its tired dying trees (Valiasr Street, Tehran's longest, features century-old trees.)

For Piruz and his possible extinction (Highlighting the state's disregard for environmental issues, particularly the survival of Piruz, one of the last Iranian cheetah cubs.)

For the massacre of the innocent dogs (Ownership of dogs and public walks with them are forbidden in Iran, leading to government raids and killings.)

For these never-ending tears

For the dream of a moment that will never happen again (Referencing a tragic incident, the Ukrainian commercial flight PS752 shooting in 2020 by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps in Tehran.)

For the smiling faces

For the students, for the future

For this heaven being forced on you (Mahsa Amini's murder resulted from strict moral codes rooted in fundamentalist Islamic beliefs imposed on society.)

For the imprisoned intellectual elite

For the discriminated Afghan children (In Iran, Afghan refugees have limited rights, and their children were previously denied education.)

For each and every one of all of these "for"s

For all these empty propaganda chants (Students in schools are often required to repeat state propaganda, including slogans like "death to America" and prayers to the Supreme Leader, as part of their daily routine.)

For the houses in rubble, collapsing like a house of cards (Widespread poverty, corruption, and inadequate building codes result in poorly constructed buildings in Iran, leading to collapses and casualties.)

For the feeling of peace

For the sun after long nights

For all the pills for nerves and insomnia

For men, homeland, and prosperity

For the girls wishing they were boys (Due to gender inequality and male privilege in Iranian society, women face numerous challenges and disadvantages.)

For women, life, freedom

For freedom

For freedom

For freedom

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

We are delving into the realm of music, a subject that has garnered attention from experts in various fields such as anthropology and cultural studies. For researchers in this domain, a comprehensive review of prior studies proves to be exceptionally beneficial. The objective extends beyond gaining a holistic understanding of the subject; it encompasses exploring diverse methodological approaches. In this chapter, we will scrutinize three pivotal areas.

Firstly, our focus will be on examining existing literature concerning rap music in Iran, a facet highly pertinent to our project. Subsequently, we will broaden our perspective to encompass the broader spectrum of music in Iran. A comprehensive grasp of the overall landscape of Iran's music scene is imperative for an in-depth investigation, particularly from an anthropological standpoint.

The concluding segment of our literature review embarks on a global exploration, analyzing rap music through an anthropological lens. Our reliance on a broader disciplinary scope is not arbitrary; rather, it is necessitated by the limited research available on Persian rap. Furthermore, our exploration extends beyond anthropology to comprehensively capture the multifaceted nature of Iran's music scene, transcending a singular genre.

Ultimately, we revert to anthropology as it provides a unique perspective, particularly valuable for the nuanced and intricate nature of rap music. The synthesis of these three components establishes a robust foundation for our subsequent research and analysis.

### 3.1. PERSIAN RAP

Rap music holds significant importance in Iran as it frequently challenges the established societal norms, thereby attracting close scrutiny from the government. Given the stringent control exercised by the Iranian government, particularly in domains such as social sciences, delving into research on rap music within the country proves to be a complex endeavor. Scholars within Iran often encounter obstacles that hinder in-depth investigations, leading to research outcomes that offer only partial insights. Conversely, scholars conducting research outside of Iran can explore rap without the constraints of surveillance, affording them a more comprehensive understanding. Predominantly, studies on Persian rap tend to concentrate on its historical evolution—tracing its origins, examining its transformations over time, and highlighting significant milestones. These studies often resemble timelines, narrating the chronological progression of rap in Iran. However, a select few studies deviate from a mere historical focus and adopt intriguing perspectives. Notably, Sholeh Johnston's study, "Persian Rap: The Voice of Modern Iran's Youth," stands out in this regard.

Johnston's work immerses itself in the realm of Persian rap, revealing that it transcends being merely music; it serves as a reflection of contemporary Iranian realities. The study delves into how young Iranians blend their cultural traditions with contemporary influences through rap to make sense of their world. Johnston's research provides a unique insight into how Persian rap mirrors the lives and challenges faced by Iran's youth, interweaving with both their historical context and current issues.

Furthermore, Johnston's study takes an insightful examination of Iran's affinity for poetry and how it intricately intertwines with Persian rap, also known as Rap-e fārsi. In contrast to research that predominantly navigates through the historical trajectory of Persian rap, Johnston ventures off the conventional path to offer a fresh perspective. Persian rap, as depicted in Johnston's study, emerges not merely as music but as a fusion of traditional Persian poetry with contemporary social issues, resonating with Iranians both domestically and globally.

The distinctive feature of Persian rap lies in its adept fusion of classical Persian poems and traditional melodies to create an entirely novel musical form. Esteemed rappers such as Quf, Taham, Reveal, and Hichkas demonstrate a profound commitment to honoring their cultural origins. Drawing inspiration from revered poets like Rumi and Hafez, they adeptly render these classical influences relatable to the contemporary audience in Iran.

Illustratively, Quf fearlessly incorporates traditional Persian instruments like the Ney and Tombak into modern beats, producing a musical amalgamation that seamlessly merges antiquity with contemporaneity. Such compositions vividly showcase the dual facets of Persian culture, discernible not only in the linguistic content but also in the sonic elements of the songs. Moreover, Persian rap extends beyond musical expression to encompass the dynamic interplay of the artists' egos and collaborative efforts. While some artists may assert their prowess surpasses that of classic poets, there is a simultaneous commitment to mutual support within the community. Hichkas exemplifies this ethos, being a prominent figure in Rap-e fārsi and actively collaborating with fellow rappers to sustain the vitality of the underground scene. Sholeh Johnston's 2008 study elucidates the connection between Persian rap and Iran's illustrious tradition of poetry, emphasizing its role as a medium for young Iranians to engage with their cultural heritage, voice their opinions, and foster cross-cultural understanding. However, Johnston's analysis overlooks the crucial role of emotions in both Persian poetry and rap songs. Recognizing this gap, the present research endeavors to explore the substantial influence of emotions on Persian poetry and rap, delving into how emotions serve as a pivotal aspect in the creation and reception of art. This investigation seeks to elucidate how artists and listeners leverage emotions to establish a profound connection with the artistic expressions they create and experience.

In her study titled "Emergent Culture: Iranian Rap Music as a Tool for Resistance," Morvarid Ranjbar draws upon Raymond Williams' conceptualization of emergent culture to illustrate how rap music in Iran serves as a means of opposition. Raymond Williams, a prominent figure in critical theory, challenges traditional Marxist perspectives on culture, envisioning it as dynamic and in perpetual motion rather than static. Williams categorizes culture into three forms: 'ideal,' 'documentary,' and 'social.' 'Ideal' and 'documentary' pertain to the values evident in texts, while 'social' encompasses the way people live, including their actions and institutions. Williams advocates for a

comprehensive perspective that recognizes culture as constantly evolving. His approach emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between culture and society, discouraging an exclusive focus on either aspect. Williams' framework portrays culture as an integral part of everyday life, continually shaping and being shaped by the present.

Ranjbar's exploration, which positions Iranian rap as a form of resistance against authority, underscores the relevance of Williams' theoretical framework. It necessitates a departure from viewing this music as an isolated entity and underscores its significant intertwining with Iran's stringent regulations and power dynamics. Scholars are urged to consider the interconnectedness of society and the artistic expressions emerging from it, thus necessitating a holistic examination. The exclusive reliance on the 'documentary' perspective poses risks, as it may give a false sense of having comprehensively understood a particular historical period. Williams contends that perceiving a society solely through this lens often results in an incomplete understanding of its political, economic, and social facets. A comprehensive cultural history, according to Williams, requires reassembling the various components of cultural life and examining them without prioritizing one over the others.

In the realm of Iranian rap, a medium employed to challenge the established system, Raymond Williams' ideas provide valuable insights into the dynamics at play. Williams encourages us to perceive rap as a form of rebellious agency intricately connected to the unfolding events in Iran's society and politics. This approach prevents isolating rap music and facilitates a profound comprehension of its transformative intent. Williams emphasizes that culture is not static; rather, it is in constant flux and evolution—a crucial aspect to bear in mind. Raymond Williams introduces the concept of 'emergent culture,' which involves the continuous resistance of individuals against the predominant culture. 'Residual culture,' on the other hand, pertains to aspects of our lives and beliefs that do not align with the mainstream culture but do not necessarily alter it. 'Emergent culture,' by contrast, is characterized by the perpetual creation of novel ways of living and thinking. This dynamic and evolving nature reflects society's persistent efforts to challenge and potentially transform the primary culture. Both 'residual culture' and 'emergent culture' warrant consideration when examining the dominant culture, as they unveil crucial insights into its essence.

Iranian rap music serves as a compelling manifestation of what Williams terms 'emergent culture.' It represents a contemporary mode for Iranian artists to convey their messages and identities in a manner distinct from the expectations imposed by the prevailing Islamic culture. This form of music aligns seamlessly with Williams' notion of a culture in constant flux and growth. It is imperative to view culture not as an immutable entity but as a lived and felt experience. Williams' concept of the 'structure of feeling' emphasizes the understanding of history through the sentiments and experiences of the people present. Thus, a comprehensive grasp of 'emergent culture' necessitates methodologies that capture the actual lived experiences and cultural expressions of individuals.

In the realm of cultural studies, Iranian rap music emerges as a dynamic and evolving force, constituting a transformative cultural phenomenon. Iranian rappers utilize their music as a platform to dissent against the government, striving to deviate from the prevalent Islamic culture. Williams, a significant theorist in cultural studies, posits that culture is not merely an abstract idea; rather, it is intricately tied to the myriad actions undertaken within society. Consequently, discussions regarding Iranian rap entail an exploration of its challenge to the mainstream culture, prompting a nuanced consideration of the strength of this challenge within the broader context of the primary culture. Williams further asserts that culture is inherently dynamic, alive, and shaped by the daily activities and experiences of individuals. To comprehend the essence of Iranian rap, it is essential to perceive it as an ongoing phenomenon, something actively experienced by people in the present moment. Adopting this perspective enables a nuanced examination of how Iranian rap serves as a counterforce against the prevailing status quo (Ranjbar, 2020).

Ranjbar's scholarly inquiry underscores the pivotal role of rap music as a mechanism for societal resistance and initiates an exploration into the sentiments of its listeners. However, further investigation is warranted. The forthcoming research aims to delve more profoundly into the emotional responses elicited by rap music, the consequential translation of these emotions into tangible actions, and the determinants influencing individuals in choosing whether to engage in activism or remain passive. The endeavor seeks to enhance our comprehension of how emotions serve as catalysts for the resistance embodied in Iranian rap music, thereby augmenting the existing knowledge pertaining to this influential mode of expression.

Nahid Seyedsayamdost's publication, "Soundtrack of the Revolution: The Politics of Music in Iran," undertakes an in-depth exploration of Iran's music landscape post the Islamic Revolution, with a specific focus on the intricate interplay between music and politics. A substantial portion of the book scrutinizes the phenomenon of Rap-e Farsi, an Iranian iteration of rap, with particular attention to the pivotal role played by Soroush Lashkary, renowned as Hichkas, regarded as a seminal figure in Persian rap. The narrative delves into Hichkas's profound influence on the evolution of rap music in Iran and his consequential impact on numerous other artists.

Hichkas occupies a prominent position within the realm of Iranian rap, heralding the inception of the Rap-e Farsi movement. As a trailblazer, he introduced rap to Iran, melding it with the country's rich cultural tapestry to engender a distinctive musical form. Beyond the rhythmic and lyrical elements, Hichkas's music serves as a reflective portrayal of Iranian life and identity. Seyedsayamdost's chapter meticulously dissects Hichkas's artistic style and thematic elements, offering insights into the resonances that render his music deeply relatable to a broad audience.

Embedded within Hichkas's musical fabric is the enduring Iranian ethos of "javānmardi," encapsulating notions of bravery, honor, and justice. Hichkas adeptly contemporizes these traditional concepts to align with the contemporary socio-cultural landscape of Iran, imbuing his songs with a profound sense of purpose. His lyrics traverse diverse subjects, providing illumination on the challenges faced by young Iranians, particularly those navigating the complexities of urban life in economically disadvantaged areas. Hichkas further engages with Iranian nationalism, leveraging the nation's historical and cultural heritage to instill pride and foster unity among his listeners. Notably, his music confronts challenging social issues such as economic and social inequality, amplifying the voices of those grappling with everyday struggles and aspirations. Despite addressing tumultuous periods, such as the 2009 Green Uprising, Hichkas's music consistently emanates hope, urging listeners to envision a more cohesive and improved Iran. A nuanced comprehension of Hichkas's music necessitates an examination against the backdrop of the political and social milieu following Iran's 2009 elections. The governmental suppression of protests imparts additional layers of significance to his

work, as his songs become a conduit for Iranian youth to articulate collective sentiments and aspirations for change and justice. Hichkas adeptly amalgamates traditional Iranian culture with contemporary rap, intertwining religious and nationalistic themes with modern rap techniques. This fusion resonates profoundly with his audience, contributing depth to the cultural significance of his music. Notably, certain compositions within Hichkas's repertoire espouse traditional perspectives on gender roles, emphasizing the pivotal role of the mother within the family structure. However, rather than adhering strictly to Iranian norms, this aspect forms part of the broader cultural tableau he paints through his music. Hichkas's artistic oeuvre transcends mere entertainment; it manifests as a form of activism through art. Leveraging his platform, he sheds light on Iran's socio-political issues, motivating others to confront inequities and strive collectively for a more equitable future. (Seyedsalamdost, 2017)

In conclusion, Hichkas has emerged as a highly influential figure through his musical contributions, which serve as both a potent means of cultural expression and a discerning commentary on society. His compositions offer a reflection of the ordinary lives and aspirations of Iranians, particularly the younger demographic, within a nation undergoing continuous evolution. Hichkas demonstrates a unique proficiency in seamlessly blending traditional and contemporary elements, allowing him to convey messages of unity, optimism, and equity to a broad audience, transcending geographical boundaries to resonate with individuals both within and beyond Iran. The dedicated chapter on Hichkas constitutes a pivotal component of research, and its significance is paramount for any scholarly exploration into Persian rap, acknowledging the profound impact he has had on the genre.

It is imperative to underscore, however, the paucity of comprehensive research on Iranian rap, largely attributed to stringent governmental restrictions. Existing scholarly works predominantly address historical aspects and provide descriptive analyses of the music. Notably absent is an in-depth examination of the lyrical content of Persian rap and the corresponding societal responses. The subsequent section of this review will pivot towards studies that adopt an anthropological perspective on rap music.

### 3.2. OTHER GENRES OF MUSIC IN IRAN

In the realm of anthropology, the significance of context cannot be overstated. It involves a meticulous examination of each detail within its specific environment. In our investigation into the sentiments of individuals in Iran regarding Persian rap music, a comprehensive understanding of the broader landscape is indispensable. To achieve this, we turn to research on various music genres in Iran, which provides valuable insights into the cultural dynamics at play.

Erum Naqvi's article, "Gigging 'classical' in Iran" (Naqvi, 2017), delves into the transformations occurring in classical music, known as musiqi-e sonnati, within Iran. The article elucidates key shifts, such as alterations in performance venues and instructional methods. Previously intimate and allowing ample room for musicians to improvise, classical concerts have now become more extensive, formal, and less inclined towards improvisation, marking a noteworthy evolution in the genre within Iran. Furthermore, the article scrutinizes changes in the pedagogical approaches employed by musicians. Traditionally, students learned by emulating their instructors and relying on instinct. However, contemporary methods involve the utilization of Western music notation and recordings to aid in memorization, representing a substantial departure from traditional practices. Additionally, there is an increased emphasis on verbal communication and explanations regarding the structural aspects of the music. The article culminates in a discourse on the interpretation of "classical" music within the sonnati realm. Divergent opinions among musicians emerge, with some advocating for adherence to traditional conventions, while others embrace the integration of novel elements. Special designations like "kelasik" or "kelasik-light" are employed to categorize music that fuses traditional and contemporary elements. Thus, the article serves as a testament to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the definition of classical music as the genre undergoes growth and transformation (Naqvi, 2017).

Erum Naqvi's in-depth exploration in the aforementioned article sheds light on the evolving landscape of Iran's classical music scene. It illustrates how musicians are experimenting with new instruments and styles while endeavoring to preserve the essence of classical music, particularly its improvisational nature, amidst the evolving cultural milieu. Of particular interest is the article's discussion on the efforts to uphold

traditions while remaining receptive to innovative ideas. Musicians and educators propose initiatives such as enhancing public awareness of music, integrating discussions with performances, and securing financial support to sustain traditional music practices.

In the context of our research, Laudan Nooshin's article, "Jazz and its Social Meaning in Iran," proves highly instrumental. It provides valuable insights into the dynamic nature of music traditions in Iran, showcasing their adaptability to contemporary influences while retaining connections to historical roots. This understanding is particularly pertinent for our exploration of how individuals in Iran engage with Persian rap music. Nooshin's comprehensive analysis delves deeply into the perception and utilization of jazz music in Iran, spanning the period before the revolution to the present day. The significance of this review to our study lies in its elucidation of the intricate interplay between music and society, with a specific focus on the role of jazz in the Iranian context. The article initiates its exploration by examining the pre-revolution era, highlighting jazz as a cultural phenomenon embraced by the intellectual and artistic circles in Iran. It underscores the association of jazz with modernity and global perspectives during that time, laying the foundation for understanding the cultural prominence of jazz.

Following the 1979 revolution, the article underscores the transformative impact on musical landscapes, particularly the stringent measures imposed by the new government against Western music. This aspect assumes paramount importance in our research as it sheds light on the challenges faced by musicians during this period and the relegation of Western music, including jazz, due to its perceived divergence from Islamic values. The subsequent discussion in the article traverses the 1980s and 90s, wherein Western music, including jazz, is characterized as a tool of Western cultural hegemony. This ideological shift translates into a governmental aversion to Western-style music, significantly influencing the lives of musicians and reshaping the overall music scene. Such insights are crucial for understanding the profound impact of government policies on the realm of music and culture. Notably, Nooshin explores how jazz underwent a redefinition as an "art" form, enabling some musicians to secure approval for their performances by aligning them with high-culture art. This strategic adaptation becomes a focal point for our research, illustrating how musicians navigated within the official framework and how public perceptions of jazz evolved over time.

The article also examines the symbolic significance that jazz has acquired in Iran, embodying broad concepts such as universalism and freedom. It highlights the perception of jazz as transcending individual cultures, a notion highly pertinent to our study as it aligns with the contemporary, global, and open-minded ethos of Iran's youth. This observation illuminates the evolving interpretation of jazz within the context of present-day Iran. Furthermore, the article delves into the notion that the freedom inherent in jazz, particularly evident during improvisational performances, serves as a potent symbol of both personal and musical liberty, even in challenging circumstances. This aspect assumes significance in our study as it elucidates how music, particularly jazz, functions as a means for individuals to articulate their aspirations for freedom and resistance against imposed restrictions. In conclusion, this in-depth exploration of jazz in Iran proves invaluable for our research. It furnishes a robust foundation and facilitates a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between the social and political landscape and diverse musical genres. Ultimately, this article constitutes a valuable asset for our research endeavors by unveiling the transformative and reconsidered role of jazz within the cultural milieu of Iran. (Nooshin, 2013)

Amin Hashemi's article, "Power and Resistance in Iranian Popular Music," introduces novel perspectives on the examination of music within the Iranian context. The key aspects addressed by Hashemi include a critical evaluation of the prevalent notion that government politics invariably dictate the musical landscape. Contrary to the conventional belief that politics predominantly steers cultural developments, Hashemi advocates for a more nuanced understanding. The article cautions against facile categorization of Iranian rock and rap within Western paradigms, emphasizing the unique socio-economic and political intricacies inherent to the Iranian situation. Furthermore, Hashemi challenges the characterization of genres like rock and rap as inherently "underground" or "resistant," asserting that such labels oversimplify the complex relationship between music and resistance in Iran. He highlights the limited diversity in Iranian music, dominated by genres such as pop, classical Iranian tunes, rock, and rap, prompting an inquiry into whether Western music serves as a supplement to fill perceived gaps.

The article extends appreciation to researchers exploring power dynamics within Iranian music, particularly their investigation into how musicians navigate emotions like fear and frustration, as well as their yearning for freedom. Hashemi concludes by elucidating how various ideological elements within Iranian society, encompassing perspectives on Islam and European modes of modern living, intertwine with the music scene, influencing the meaning of music for individuals. In summary, Hashemi's scholarly contribution prompts contemplation on the intricate dynamics within Iranian music, shedding light on the interplay of cultural forces. This work significantly contributes to our study by emphasizing the imperative to comprehend Iranian music within its distinct context and interpret it on its own terms. (Hashemi, 2017)

In Laudan Nooshin's scholarly work, "Whose Liberation? Iranian Popular Music and the Fetishization of Resistance," an in-depth exploration unfolds concerning the discourse surrounding Iranian music, particularly within the realms of politics and the conceptualization of resistance or liberation.

The article discerns a prevalent trend wherein Iranian music is often framed exclusively through the lens of political strife. This occurs both in academic studies and media narratives, whether within Iran or in external contexts. Nooshin highlights a proclivity to portray Iranian culture and music as more exotic or unconventional than it truly is, accentuating its differences in a sensationalized manner. Additionally, Nooshin underscores the potential pressure on writers discussing Iranian music to sensationalize its political dimensions, either for enhanced marketability or due to the editorial preferences of those disseminating such articles. The article contends that reducing Iranian music to a binary framework of oppression or freedom oversimplifies its multifaceted nature. Such binary categorizations neglect essential aspects, such as the intrinsic aesthetic value of the music or its capacity to foster a sense of belonging. Furthermore, the article delves into the complexity of deciphering the political messages embedded in Iranian music. Some musicians deliberately emphasize political themes, while others seek to create music without assuming an activist role. Nooshin cautions that the perception of Iranian music plays a crucial role in shaping broader perspectives on Iran and can inadvertently contribute to geopolitical power dynamics.

Therefore, when undertaking thesis research, this article serves as a crucial reminder to approach the analysis of Iranian music with nuance. It advocates for a comprehensive understanding of the diverse roles and meanings that music can encompass, urging scholars to move beyond simplistic notions that categorize it solely within the realm of politics. Iranian music, according to Nooshin, encapsulates a spectrum of experiences, including personal joy, cultural expression, community belonging, and occasionally, engagement with political issues. (Nooshin, 2017)

In Mehdi Semati's scholarly contribution titled "Sounds like Iran: On Popular Music of Iran," a comprehensive examination unfolds, elucidating the intricate role of popular music in Iran and its intricate interplay within the nation's social, political, and cultural spheres. The article's key insights are distilled as follows, with a focus on their relevance to our thesis: Primarily, Semati contends that characterizing all Iranian music as a form of resistance against the system oversimplifies the nuanced reality of the cultural landscape in Iran. This critical perspective challenges our thesis, prompting a more nuanced exploration to better comprehend the multifaceted dynamics within Iranian culture.

The article then delves into the hurdles faced by female musicians in Iran, illustrating how these women employ resourceful strategies to ensure their voices are heard, transcending the traditional notion of them as silent figures. This facet is of significance to our thesis as it highlights the resilience and determination of Iranian women in the realm of music. Semati further explores the music produced by Iranians residing in foreign countries, elucidating how such musical expressions serve as a conduit for maintaining a sense of home and connection to their cultural roots, even when geographically distant. This dimension aligns with our thesis by investigating how music fosters connectivity within the global Iranian community.

An examination of the evolution of Persian classical music to align with the demands of contemporary Iranian society emerges as another focal point. This exploration underscores the dynamic nature of culture, illustrating its constant adaptation and

transformation. This dynamic aspect aligns cohesively with our thesis, emphasizing the vibrant and evolving nature of Iranian culture and music. Finally, the article underscores the global dimension of popular music in Iran, positing that the utilization of music by individuals in Iran and Iranian expatriates can vary, particularly in the context of global concepts like "resistance." This global-local interplay enriches our thesis by elucidating how universal trends intersect with and shape the local landscape of Iranian popular music. (Semati, 2017)

In summary, "Sounds like Iran: On Popular Music of Iran" provides a nuanced exploration of various facets within the realm of popular music in Iran. It challenges oversimplified narratives, highlights the significant role of women, establishes connections between music and the concept of home for the diaspora, illustrates the evolving nature of classical music, and delves into the intricate interplay between global and local influences in music. Each of these considerations contributes to a more profound understanding of how music intertwines with both the everyday life and political dynamics of Iran.

Morad Moazami's chapter, titled "Tehran, Iran: 'Experimental' Electronic Scene (2000–2020)," featured in the book *Electronic Cities*, meticulously examines the evolution of Tehran's electronic music landscape from the 2010s onwards. A comprehensive breakdown of the chapter for our thesis includes:

The article initiates by tracing the trajectory of Tehran's electronic music scene from private venues to public visibility. A pivotal moment in this transition was the establishment of the SET Experimental Art Festival in 2015. Spearheaded by musicians such as Entezami, Najafi, Amini, and Ebtekar, with support from local entities like Tiwall, this festival played a pivotal role in elevating electronic music within Tehran. This marked a departure from the past, where electronic music was initially introduced through a more exclusive platform at the Shiraz Arts Festival. Initially constrained to online sharing and performances in clandestine venues like cafes and galleries due to permit issues, electronic artists in Tehran gradually secured official permits for public shows as the scene expanded. This transition represented a significant shift from an "underground" status to official recognition. A strategic move employed by these artists involved labeling

their music as "experimental" or "sound effects" to circumvent cultural restrictions and facilitate the acquisition of permits. This astute nomenclature contributed to the flourishing and establishment of the electronic music scene.

The chapter delves into the influence of the performance setting on the music experience. In public spaces where dancing was prohibited, electronic music assumed a more serious and contemplative tone. In contrast, private settings, where dancing was permitted, fostered a rhythmic and movement-centric musical experience. This underscores the impact of the environment on the emotional resonance of the music. Towards the conclusion, Moazami addresses the challenges posed by economic sanctions on the electronic music scene, affecting festival funding and international revenue for artists. Despite these obstacles, the musicians exhibited resilience, showcasing their unwavering commitment to their craft. In the context of our thesis, this chapter furnishes a detailed examination of how Tehran's electronic music scene navigated cultural, political, and economic obstacles. It underscores the ingenuity and perseverance of the musicians while offering a broader perspective on the social and cultural dynamics influencing Iran's music scene. (Darchen, 2021)

Massimo Leone's article, titled: *My Schoolmate: Protest Music in Contemporary Iran*, extensively explores the emergence of music as a potent form of protest in Iran, despite stringent government regulations. In defiance of governmental attempts to control music, the youth in Iran exhibit a profound affection for it, utilizing this medium to articulate their yearning for societal transformation. Particularly courageous are underground musicians who, at the risk of censorship, leverage their songs to address social and political issues. Their music serves as a resonant voice for numerous Iranians aspiring to witness substantial changes.

The contribution of Iranian musicians residing in other countries is noteworthy. Through their music, they shed light on the challenges prevailing in their homeland, amplifying the protest on a global scale as more individuals beyond Iran become informed. Leone highlights a compelling observation: contemporary protesters in Iran often employ aged revolutionary songs from the 1970s and 1980s. These songs, laden with historical and emotional significance, forge a connection between present-day protests and the

historical struggle for change in Iran. Leone's article assumes paramount significance for our thesis. It elucidates how music emerges as a robust means of resistance and protest in Iran. The article underscores the unwavering determination of Iranians to keep music alive, even in the face of prohibitions. Both local and international musicians, whether inside or outside Iran, strategically employ their compositions to advocate for political transformation. Moreover, the global impact of protest music in Iran is emphasized, transcending geographical boundaries. The incorporation of historical songs further reveals that the spirit of protest possesses deep-seated roots, establishing a continuum across generations. Collectively, these insights significantly contribute to our comprehension of the pivotal role played by music in Iran's political and cultural landscape. (Leone, 2012)

G. J. Breyley's scholarly work, titled: *Between the Cracks: Street Music in Iran*, delves extensively into the realm of street musicians in Tehran, offering valuable insights germane to our examination of rap as an underground street art. Below is a refined rendition suitable for formal discourse: Breyley's paper commences by delineating the diverse landscape of street musicians in Iran, encompassing various musical styles and motivations for taking to the streets. The significance of this diversity lies in its reflection of the broader societal panorama. A pivotal observation from the article underscores how street music functions as a unifying force, creating a shared space through the sounds of musicians hailing from diverse backgrounds. This bears relevance to our thesis, drawing parallels to the way rap music, originating from grassroots environments, fosters a sense of community through its distinctive beats and rhymes.

Breyley further delves into the hierarchical perception of music in Iran, distinguishing between genres deemed "high class," such as art music, and those considered more populist. This aspect holds significance for our thesis, particularly as rap frequently emerges from socioeconomically marginalized contexts, challenging established musical norms. The paper elucidates the challenges faced by musicians during difficult times, compelling some to resort to street performances as a means of economic survival. This aligns with our exploration of rap music, which often articulates the hardships of life and emanates from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

An intriguing contemporary trend highlighted in the article is the emergence of young musicians performing rock, jazz, and fusion directly on the sidewalk, driven not by financial necessity but by a desire for self-expression. This phenomenon parallels the ethos of underground rappers who prioritize authenticity and disseminating their message. In summation, Breyley's paper furnishes a comprehensive portrayal of street music in Iran. Its contribution to our thesis lies in its illustration of music as a unifying force, a disruptor of established norms, and a reflection of the challenging economic realities faced by musicians. This contextual backdrop proves instrumental in comprehending rap as a manifestation of street art, characterized by candid discourse and an engagement with genuine societal issues. (Breyley, 2016)

Gay Breyley's academic inquiry, titled : *The Language of Love: Examining the Enduring Influence of Persian Poetry and Music in Present-Day Iran*, intricately explores the ongoing significance of Persian poetry and music within contemporary Iran. This exploration holds direct relevance to our discourse on rap music as a manifestation of street art. The following breakdown aligns with this thesis: Persian poetry, historically influential across various artistic domains, particularly music, maintains its prominence in Iran, even post-revolution. Breyley's study delves into this enduring impact. Shahram Nazeri, a renowned singer, stands as a notable example. During the post-revolution period and the Iran-Iraq War, he adeptly incorporated Rumi's poetry into his songs. His music, characterized by profound themes, underscores the enduring potency of classical poetry, especially during challenging times—a resonance akin to how contemporary rap confronts street-level challenges. Following the war, a cultural relaxation in Iran prompted the resurgence of local pop music with government approval. This revitalization witnessed bands seamlessly blending Western musical elements with traditional Persian poetry. The juxtaposition of modern tunes with age-old poetry mirrors rap's dynamic relationship with urban environments. Mohsen Namjoo, a musician known for fusing traditional Persian poetry with innovative compositions, introduces a contemporary twist through his original lyrics. His integration of Persian music with Western styles exemplifies the harmonious coexistence of antiquity and novelty—a parallel to rap's fusion of historical influences with contemporary expressions. The study also spotlights Tehrani rappers, who, while not directly employing classic poetry, infuse their music with the spirit of poetry. Through their rhymes addressing contemporary

issues, these rappers exemplify how poetry, in essence, remains vibrant in Iran, offering a platform for people to articulate their lived experiences.

In essence, Breyley's scholarly endeavor serves as a valuable resource for comprehending the pervasive influence of Persian poetry and music, spanning historical epochs to the present, on street art, notably exemplified by rap. The study illuminates the dynamic interplay between age-old traditions and emerging artistic forms, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the enduring connections shaping contemporary street expressions. (Breyley, 2013) This scholarly article effectively illustrates the enduring influence of Persian poetry on the contemporary music landscape of Iran, spanning diverse musical genres. It underscores the integral role of street art, such as rap, within a broader cultural framework deeply rooted in classical poetry—a tradition historically dedicated to addressing prevailing societal concerns. By establishing a connection between the longstanding significance of Persian poetry in music and the contemporary relevance of street art, particularly rap, the article significantly contributes to this thesis. It elucidates that artistic self-expression in Iran possesses a profound historical foundation that continues to thrive in the present day.

Ann Lucas' scholarly article, titled *Understanding Iran through Music*, provides a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between music, politics, and culture in Iran. The analysis is categorized into distinct musical genres, offering valuable insights into the multifaceted role of music within the Iranian societal framework:

**Folk Music:** The article elucidates the government's emphasis on folk music, prominently featured in festivals and events. This strategic promotion aims to celebrate the diverse regional cultures of Iran, aligning with the government's pursuit of fostering an Islamic identity.

**Popular Music:** Post the Islamic Revolution, pop musicians faced a challenging decision—either emigrate or cease music production. Despite an initial ban on pop music, the genre is experiencing a resurgence. Artists navigate a delicate balance between incorporating Iranian and Western influences while adhering to governmental expectations and maintaining appeal for the youth demographic.

**Classical Music:** Unlike pop music, classical tunes endured less severe restrictions post-revolution. Iranian classical music thrives, with musicians exhibiting creativity in their performances. Western classical music, however, occupies a less prominent position, as the local classical scene focuses on celebrating regional narratives and musical styles.

**West Meets East:** The article highlights Iranian classical musicians' engagement in the global music scene, participating in tours and collaborations with artists from diverse cultural backgrounds. These musicians, when performing for Western audiences, are expected to preserve the traditional Persian sound while exploring innovative musical expressions.

In the context of the thesis, Lucas' work underscores that music in Iran transcends mere artistic expression—it serves as a reflective lens for understanding societal dynamics. From governmental initiatives to global interactions, music emerges as a means of self-expression, resistance, and navigating within societal constraints. The article contributes a holistic perspective on how music functions as a significant component of the ongoing discourse in Iran, encompassing cultural and political dimensions.

### **3.3. RAP MUSIC IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH**

Anthropology is an important field when it comes to understanding rap music and other artistic expressions. This importance comes from two main reasons. First, anthropological research is deeply connected to the cultural context that gives birth to art. This connection allows researchers to thoroughly examine and understand the art in its cultural context. Second, art forms, including rap music, are always changing. They evolve as the society and culture around them change. This makes studying them through anthropology particularly interesting and relevant. In this thesis, we have conducted a detailed review and analysis of various anthropological studies on rap music. These studies come from different societies and use diverse theoretical frameworks. This extensive research has greatly deepened our understanding of rap music as a cultural phenomenon. There are many studies on this topic, but in this thesis, we focus on providing an overview of the most influential and the most related ones to the subject of our thesis. This selection helps us to grasp the core ideas and findings in the field of anthropology related to rap music and its cultural implications.

Elham Golpoushnezhad's study, *Rapping Islam*, is a notable scholarly work that significantly contributes to our understanding of hip-hop culture among Muslim youth. This research focuses on three countries: Indonesia, Tunisia, and the United States. It explores the unique blend of hip-hop with Islamic influences, a trend recognized by African-American hip-hop pioneers and Muslim artists in predominantly Muslim countries. In the U.S., hip-hop has been a voice for marginalized youth, addressing issues like racism and poverty. The combination of hip-hop and Islamic ideology presents a fascinating area for study. Golpoushnezhad's research is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted over 13 months, from July 2014 to August 2015, in these countries. The study involved interviews with 56 individuals involved in the hip-hop scene, including musicians and graffiti artists. It also included participant observations at hip-hop events and data collection from online sources like websites and rap lyrics. The study uses the concept of "glocalization" to frame the exploration of hip-hop cultures in these countries. This concept emphasizes the importance of local contexts within global phenomena. It highlights how local identities and backgrounds influence the interpretation of hip-hop culture in different regions.

A key focus of the study is how young people integrate hip-hop into their local identities, creating a hybrid post-modern vernacular. Hip-hop is viewed as a dynamic form critiquing western capitalism and addressing its contradictions. This is especially evident in how Muslim youth in diaspora use hip-hop to resist racial dynamics in their host countries.

In Jakarta, Tunis, and among Muslim hip-hop artists in Detroit, there is a strong anti-capitalist sentiment. Their political and sociocultural critiques, rooted in hip-hop ideology, draw parallels with the Black Rights movements in the U.S. Youth in Indonesia and Tunisia use hip-hop as a resistance tool against totalitarian regimes and Western cultural and political influences. In Muslim-majority countries and diaspora communities, hip-hop becomes a platform for artists to express their political views and sociocultural critiques aligned with Islamic beliefs. "Rapping Islam" investigates these local and Muslim identities within the global hip-hop culture in Indonesia, Tunisia, and the U.S. It examines how rappers in these countries navigate hip-hop culture while considering their Muslim

identities. Golpoushnezhad's "Rapping Islam" is invaluable for this thesis, particularly as Iran is predominantly Muslim. While focusing on Persian rap music, this thesis shares similarities with "Rapping Islam" in exploring the intersection of hip-hop, rap, and religious and social identities. Golpoushnezhad's insights into the experiences of Muslim hip-hop artists and their engagement with Islamic values within hip-hop culture resonate with this research on Persian rap in Iranian society. This connection allows for insightful parallels and analytical frameworks to be applied to the Persian rap scene in Iran, enhancing our understanding of the intricate relationships between art, culture, and identity in a Muslim-majority country like Iran. (Golpoushnezhad, 2017)

The study *Fear of a Black Nation: Local Rappers, Transnational Crossings, and State Power in Contemporary Cuba* by Sujatha Fernandes is a key anthropological work that examines Cuban rap music. This research is particularly relevant in the 1990s, a period marked by economic and social challenges in Cuba. During this time, rap became a vital outlet for Afro-Cuban youth to voice their criticisms against the state, racial injustices, and social issues. Fernandes' study highlights the role of rap as a platform for these youths to express their identities and aspirations in a socialist society. (Fernandes, 2003) A notable aspect of Fernandes' research is its focus on the underground nature of Cuban rap. This movement, led by underground rappers, represented a form of cultural resistance against the state's vision of a unified socialist society. These artists, often facing economic hardships, created a subculture that embraced their Afro-Cuban heritage and opposed the government's policies. Despite their resistance, these rappers sometimes operated within state institutions, showing the government's ability to co-opt parts of the movement.

Fernandes' study also explores the relationship between rap, the state, and transnational networks. While the Cuban government used the creativity of underground rappers to maintain control during times of unrest, these artists were also part of a global network of underground rap and international record companies. This dual existence allowed them to express their dissent in different ways. The transnational aspect of Cuban rap highlights new avenues for artistic expression and global solidarity. Fernandes' research goes beyond the global hip-hop narrative focused on consumerism, showing how Cuban rappers combine various strategies like consumerism, Black Nationalism, and anti-capitalism. Despite economic challenges, these rappers dream of material success, a

theme often reflected in their lyrics. Fernandes' work emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of cultural resistance. In Cuba, the interaction between rap music, politics, and global influences contributes to the discourse on cultural resistance and its various forms. This study provides a comprehensive look at the Cuban experience during a transformative period.

The inclusion of Fernandes' study in the context of Persian rap and the Iranian government's suppression efforts is significant. Both Cuban and Persian rap share the theme of operating underground to avoid government suppression. Like Cuban rappers, Persian rap artists use their music to challenge government narratives and express social and political dissent. Fernandes' work highlights rap music's potential as a form of cultural resistance. Both Cuban and Persian rappers use their lyrics to express social discontent and critique state policies. The Iranian government's attempts to suppress Persian rap are similar to the challenges faced by Cuban underground rappers, who navigate government appropriation and repression.

Both Cuban and Persian rap artists engage with transnational networks, allowing them to overcome domestic limitations and gain international support. This aspect is crucial for understanding the global resonance of Persian rap and the strategies Iranian artists use to overcome local restrictions. Incorporating Fernandes' ethnographic analysis into the study of Persian rap enriches our understanding of underground rap movements within authoritarian states. This comparison highlights the resilience of rap artists and the strategies used by governments to control artistic expression and sociocultural spaces.

The research *The Arts of the Remix: Ethnography and Rap* by Brett Lashua is a crucial part of our literature review. It delves into the cultural impact of rap music, especially among urban Aboriginal-Canadian youth. The study focuses on "The Beat of Boyle Street" music program, which teaches Indigenous youth to create hip-hop music. This program is a creative outlet and a way for these young people to represent themselves. Through it, they express their struggles with racism, limited educational opportunities, family issues, and societal challenges. The article shows how rap music helps them fight

negative stereotypes and correct cultural narratives that misrepresent their experiences. (Lashua, 2006)

A key theme in Lashua's article is rap music as collective storytelling. It lets marginalized youth voice their challenges and dreams together. This shared storytelling builds community and collective consciousness. The author highlights the need for creative leisure activities for urban Indigenous youth, who often lack such opportunities. "The Beat of Boyle Street" empowers them to use music for self-expression and storytelling. The article also explores remixing in the program. Young participants create remixes by mixing different musical elements and genres. This process lets them express their unique cultural identities. The concept of "remixology" shows how remixing lets young people draw from popular culture and adapt it to their backgrounds.

In conclusion, Brett Lashua's study emphasizes the power of music, especially rap, in storytelling and self-representation for urban Aboriginal-Canadian youth. It shows the importance of music programs in providing creative expression opportunities and fostering community and empowerment. Through this research, Lashua gained a deeper understanding of music's significance in these youths' lives and built respectful, beneficial relationships with them. This study is related to our thesis for several reasons, including its emotional depth. It offers insights into the emotional and creative processes, showing music, particularly rap, as a powerful tool for emotional and cultural expression among young Indigenous people. This aligns with our thesis on the underground nature of Persian rap and its role in emotional self-expression, especially under a repressive government. The study also highlights music's role, here rap, in providing an emotional outlet for marginalized youth. It allows them to express their feelings, hopes, and struggles. This parallels our examination of Persian rap as a platform for emotional release and coping in a restrictive socio-political environment. Additionally, the study shows how young people use creative, leisure activities to respond to complex social and emotional contexts. Understanding how Persian rap serves as both an emotional outlet and a form of resistance in a repressive environment is crucial to our thesis. In summary, Brett Lashua's study is vital to our thesis as it explores the emotional, creative, and resistance aspects of music and culture. It provides a solid academic foundation for understanding music's multifaceted emotional roles and its expression of dissent and opposition in politically suppressive contexts.

In her insightful work *Rap Beyond Resistance*, Cristina Moreno Almeida offers a comprehensive examination of Moroccan rap music, portraying it as a multifaceted cultural phenomenon. This study moves beyond the conventional view of rap as solely a form of resistance, revealing the genre's capacity to address a broad spectrum of themes. Almeida's research sheds light on how Moroccan rap navigates topics such as national identity, urban life, gender dynamics, spirituality, and even the nation's landscapes, thereby offering a rich tapestry of societal reflections. The research underscores the versatility of Moroccan rap artists, who oscillate between echoing state-endorsed narratives and challenging them. Almeida highlights how some rappers adopt patriotic themes, perhaps as a strategy to deflect criticism for straying from traditional Moroccan values. Yet, these expressions often coexist with deeper narratives that touch on socio-economic inequalities and gender issues.

In her study, Almeida dives into how Moroccan rap artists balance their creative freedom with the need to make a living. She looks at how important it is for them to connect with their audience and the ups and downs of making music independently. Almeida also points out how digital media affects Morocco's rap scene, looking at the good and bad sides of these platforms and how things like internet availability and social differences play a role. Her book gives a detailed look at the Moroccan music industry, especially for rap artists. She moves past the simple idea of these artists just being rebels or controlled by the state. Instead, she shows us a deeper view of Moroccan rap as an important part of Morocco's modern culture. (Almeida, 2017) This study really ties in with our thesis's main points. It stresses how crucial it is to understand music, like hip-hop, in its own cultural and political setting. Almeida's research matches our thesis's idea of music as a way of showing and shaping the realities of the society it comes from.

In his article, *Language. Rebellion. Identity. Sociological-Anthropological Empirical Study of the Rap Youth Subculture*, Bartłomiej Kotowski takes a very close look at the rap subculture in Poland and Ukraine. He focuses on the way this subculture is a sign of post-modernity and explores its many sides, especially in terms of identity and language. Kotowski finds that people can be part of the rap subculture without embracing every part of it. He shows how rap fans pick certain elements of this subculture to show their own unique identity, often mixing parts of different subcultures to stand out. He sees the rap subculture as a reaction to social unfairness and the wish for a better, more equal

world. Rap songs give young people a way to share their critical views on things like poverty, joblessness, and world politics. The lyrics often reflect a rebellion against the world around them, a common feeling among young rap fans. The study in Poland and Ukraine looks at the language of rap, which symbolizes the post-modern era. It highlights the importance of symbols and signs, which are different in Polish and Ukrainian contexts. This helps to understand the many sides of identity within the rap subculture.

Kotowski's findings show that people in the rap subculture often have a mixed and varied sense of identity. They might be part of different subcultures and combine elements from these to create their own unique identity. The search for extreme individuality is a key part of the post-modern rap subculture. The research also points out that rap slang adds a lot to today's language. The use of slang and specific subculture words shows how a language helps to shape both individual and group identities. In the end, the article suggests that the real spirit of the rap subculture is shown through rap lyrics. These songs are a way to talk about and protest social issues, usually with a sense of fate. This rebellious attitude comes from the desire to act and challenge the usual way of things, showing how rap plays a big role in shaping the identity of the people in the subculture (Kotowski, 2016).

Bartłomiej Kotowski's study, while not directly focusing on "everyday resistance," offers insights into subtle forms of rebellion within the rap subculture. This concept of quiet protest and defiance, found in the daily lives of rap enthusiasts, can be applied to our study of Iranian rap. In Iran's tightly controlled socio-political environment, Kotowski's research suggests that rap can be a tool for expressing quiet resistance. This perspective helps us understand how Iranian rap artists and their audience might use small acts of defiance, not only in their music but in their everyday lives. This aspect is crucial to our thesis, shedding light on the role of rap music in Iran as a subtle form of resistance.

In the study *The Sound of Street Corner Society: UK Grime Music as Ethnography* by Lee Barron, Grime music, originating from UK urban areas, is examined as a form of ethnography. This genre offers a unique view into the lives of those in urban spaces, reflecting their living conditions and experiences. Barron discusses how Grime captures the realities and daily life in urban communities, acting as a powerful ethnographic tool.

Grime artists are compared to traditional ethnographers, as they observe and document their own and their community's experiences.

The study acknowledges Grime's commercial side but points out that its core remains true to the experiences of inner-city life. Grime is seen as offering a distinct perspective on UK street culture and is linked to Gramsci's idea of the "organic intellectual." Grime artists create rich, oral cultural commentaries that shed light on their social backgrounds. Their music is a form of urban documentary. In conclusion, Barron's article argues that Grime is more than just popular music; it's an ethnographic resource that offers insights into the cultures and social realities of modern urban environments. This connects UK hip-hop to a broader tradition in social sciences. (Barron, 2013)

In Iran, Rap music has become a powerful and genuine reflection of urban life. Although Iranian Rap artists might not aim to be ethnographers, their music acts as a window into the complex social and cultural dynamics of their cities. Like UK Grime artists, Iranian Rappers use their music to share their experiences, struggles, and hopes. Their lyrics often talk about real-life issues like social inequality, political tension, youth culture, and identity. These stories, mixed with the sounds and rhythms of their cities, document their everyday lives. These artists are just like accidental ethnographers. They deeply connect with their urban surroundings, telling the stories of their communities. Iranian Rap artists, through their music, vividly depict Iranian urban life, just as Grime artists do in the UK. Viewing Iranian Rap as a form of ethnography not only recognizes the unintentional insights in their art but also enhances our research. This comparison helps us see the similarities between the artists' views and the experiences of the people we study.

*In the heart of a coal's embrace lies captured sunlight, a timeless dance of photons preserved across eons. When coal burns, it releases this ancient light, a testament to the enduring power of light held captive for a billion years. Yet, in the presence of this light, darkness finds no refuge, not even for a fleeting second, as the light triumphs, banishing shadows with a mere flicker of its ageless glow.*

*Anthony Doerr, Lights We Cannot See*

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCHING THE FIELD

In this thesis, we present a comprehensive analysis of Persian rap culture, through the examination of data from interviews that were published by an anonymous podcaster with various Iranian rap music audiences. Additionally, we have analyzed conversations and discussions from various rap forums, offering a unique insight into the perspectives and experiences of this genre's audience. Our research methodology did not involve direct participant observation or face-to-face interactions. Instead, it was done around a detailed analysis of existing interview data and online discussions. The interviews, that were done by the anonymous podcaster, were rich in content, featuring open-ended questions that encouraged interviewees to share in-depth insights and personal experiences related to Rap e Farsi . These interviews provided a valuable source of qualitative data, allowing us to delve into the intricate aspects of Persian rap culture from the perspectives of its audiences.

Also, our study extensively analyzed conversations from online platforms, such as forums and Telegram groups, which are very popular among Persian rap audiences. These digital places host different kinds of discussions, ranging from conversations about specific song tracks and artists to conversations about the different impacts of this genre of music. By examining these discussions, we gained a deeper understanding of the motivations, preferences, and lived experiences of Persian rap's different audience. In our study, we looked closely at how Persian rap is more than just music. It's a way for people to stand up to tough rules and share their real-life stories, struggles, and feelings.

This is especially true in Iran, where the government keeps a tight control on what people can say and do.

A crucial element of our study was the identification and focus on a particular demographic group within the diverse fan base of Persian rap. The genre's varied styles cater to different segments of listeners, distinguished by factors such as socio-economic status, educational background, and age group. For example, the younger generation, often referred to as Gen Z, tends to gravitate toward rap songs that discuss themes of leisure and certain lifestyle choices. In contrast, a segment of the millennial population, often being called: rich kids of Tehran shows a preference for rap music that mirrors their luxury lifestyles. Despite this diversity, our thesis primarily investigates how Persian rap serves as a tool for everyday resistance and a platform for expressing experiences, challenges, and emotions in the context of living under an Islamic totalitarian regime. To explore these questions, we focused on a segment of the audience, primarily born in the late 1980s to late 1990s, from various socio-economic backgrounds, who are drawn to socio-political themes in rap music. Our research, spanning from 2022 to 2023, involved analyzing data from interviews and online discussions with approximately 40 individuals who are fans of Persian rap. Through this analytical approach, our thesis aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of Persian rap music and its significance as a cultural and political expression in contemporary Iran.

#### **4.1. TERMINOLOGY PREFERENCES**

Throughout this thesis, we have consistently used the terms "hip hop" and "rap" as if they mean the same thing. This is because Iranian rap artists and their fans often use these terms interchangeably. In Iran, there isn't a big difference between "hip hop" and "rap"; both terms refer to the same cultural and musical idea. Similarly, we use "rap e Farsi" and "Persian rap" in the same way. In the Iranian rap scene, these terms are used interchangeably too, with no real difference in their meanings. This shows how rap artists and fans in Iran understand these terms. They see "rap e farsi" and "Persian rap" as the same, reflecting the unique cultural and linguistic setting of Iranian rap music.

## 4.2. DIFFICULTIES OF THE FIELD

In this study, we planned to talk to people about Persian rap music and its role in resisting the government. But, doing interviews in Iran was really tough. Rap music is not allowed there, so people were scared to chat about it with someone from outside Iran. We tried to make them feel safe, but they were still worried. Also, there were big problems with traveling to Iran and using the internet. In 2022, during protests, the government shut down the internet. This was to stop people from sharing news and to control what was happening. Because of this, we couldn't use online tools like Zoom or WhatsApp for our interviews.

At first, we wanted to meet people in Iran and talk face-to-face. But, with the government watching and people getting in trouble for protesting, everyone was too scared to meet. Later, when things got a bit calmer and the internet got better, people started using social media again. But they still didn't want to talk to me, a researcher that they didn't know in a foreign country. So, we had to change my plan. We couldn't do the interviews. Instead, we found a podcast where someone had already talked to fans of Persian rap. We used these interviews for our research. They gave a lot of good info about what fans of this music think and feel.

## 4.3. THE ETHICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDY

In our ethnographic research, we closely followed the ethical guidelines outlined in "Ethnography: Step by Step" by David M. Fetterman. This book highlights six key principles for ethnographers. Here, we explain how we applied these principles in our study. (Fetterman, 2019)

Permission: Ethnographers must get consent, either formally or informally, to study a group or setting. This can mean written requests or just verbal permission. For activities like taking photos for educational purposes, written consent is especially important. This principle aims to protect the privacy of those in the study. In our case, since the podcaster and the interviewees of the podcast were anonymous and were not using their real names due to the political dangers that it could cause them, we didn't have the chance to get permission.

**Honesty:** Ethnographers should be clear about their research goals. They need to explain what they're studying and how they'll do it. The level of detail might vary depending on the audience, but honesty is always key. Using deceptive techniques or disguises is not appropriate in ethnographic research. Participants shouldn't be misled to give certain responses. In this study, our main focus was to fully understand and share the views that were talked about in the podcast interviews. We analyzed these interviews with a neutral perspective, making sure not to let our own opinions and points of view affect how we interpreted the information. We aimed to present the thoughts and experiences of the Persian rap fans from the podcast with honesty truthfully, without changing their core messages or guiding them to specific results. By doing this, we kept our research ethical. We respected the original meaning and details of the interviews. Our goal was to provide a truthful and honest depiction of the insights we gained from these interviews.

**Trust:** Trust is a key factor in successful ethnographic research. It's built through honesty, both in what we say and how we act. Ethnographers must promise to keep information confidential and make participants feel safe to share their thoughts. Respectful behavior and actions are crucial in building and maintaining trust. This trust is vital for collecting genuine and detailed data. In our study, we didn't talk directly to people being interviewed. Instead, we used interviews from a podcast. Our main goal is to handle this information carefully and responsibly. This means we respect the privacy and background of these interviews. We make sure to use the data fairly and honestly. It's really important for us to use this second-hand information respectfully. This helps us keep our research trustworthy and reliable.

**Respect:** Respect is an essential thing that ethnographers should take under consideration. They must show it in their actions, attitudes, and by listening carefully. When participants see their conversations are respected and protected, they're more open and willing to share. In our study, showing respect was really important. We used interviews from a podcast instead of doing them ourselves. Our main focus was on young fans of Iranian rap music. This group faces a lot of tough situations. They have to deal with not having much internet access, being cut off from the rest of the world because of

sanctions, and dealing with money problems. But even with all these challenges, they keep going strong. Our respect for them is more than just doing the right thing. We truly admire how tough and determined they are, even when things are really hard.

**Reciprocity:** Reciprocity is another key aspect. Ethnographers should give back to the communities they study. This can be through sharing research findings, supporting a cause, or helping in other ways. This balance keeps the relationship respectful and equal. In our study, we're using interviews from an anonymous podcast instead of conducting them ourselves. This change means we focus on sharing the voices and experiences of the podcast's guests. Our goal is to make their stories known and understood. By analyzing and presenting their views, we help bring attention to their lives and struggles. This is important because it documents a part of Iran's modern culture. We hope to help people around the world understand what young Iranians go through. Our study gives a platform to these stories, showing our commitment to giving back to the community we're studying, even though we're not directly interacting with them.

**Sensitivity to the context:** Being sensitive to the context is very important. Ethnographers need to understand the local culture, values, and dynamics. This ensures the research is respectful and relevant. In our study, we're not directly interviewing people but analyzing interviews from an anonymous podcast. It's important for us to understand the culture and risks involved in talking about rap in Iran. Even though we're not talking to people ourselves, we need to be really aware of Iran's norms and values. We're careful in how we look at the stories and opinions from the podcast. We know these stories could be risky for those sharing them. Our job is to make sure we get what they're saying right, respecting the cultural and political situation in Iran. This careful approach is a big part of how we're doing our research.

#### **4.4. RESEARCHING THE PERSIAN RAP AUDIENCE**

I hail from a different era, where the echoes of gunfire  
whispered in one ear, while my mother's lullabies  
filled the other. In my mother's womb, I absorbed the sounds  
of bombs and rockets, and in my two decades, I've witnessed

people torn asunder, distanced from one another,  
engaged in relentless conflict.

Even beneath the night's blanket, at bedtime,  
I've tasted war's bitterness. In these years of my youth,  
I've died a multitude of deaths, each injustice,  
each upheaval, stripping me of my rights, rearranging  
my life to match another's vision.

I matured as this anguish took root within me,  
exiled from my own community. It's a bitter truth  
when those around you fail to comprehend your words,  
your heart aches with the burden of their beliefs.

Every time I spoke, I had to beg pardon,  
from the police, the school, my parents, from everyone.

Isn't life a harsh dream, indeed?

Yet no one inquires about my pain.

My agony resides in the curtains lifting from my window,  
exposing all, causing me to raise my voice, brandishing my blade.

In doing so, I lost my people, so don't return...

Don't come back, don't come back.

Forgive me for the bitterness in my words,  
for the sharpness of my critique, if you will.

If you find truth in them, then forgive the bitterness.

This track, titled "My Generation" by the artist Bahram, was played in the beginning of the podcast interview with Ava, Mohammad, and Amirhossein as the most influential rap song chosen by them. These friends, whose initial connection was formed within the rap

community through online forums, shared their perspectives on the most influential rap song in their lives, collectively pinpointing this particular composition. They emphasized that the song aptly lives up to its title by effectively encapsulating the prevailing sentiments within their generation. They expressed a sense of resonance as if the artist had intricately dissected their innermost emotions and thoughtfully woven them into the fabric of the music.

Amirhossein described how, for their generation, rap music represented more than just a genre to be fans of; it had become a way of life. He elaborated on the environment they grew up in, where everyone sought to control what they said, how they acted, and even what they wore. These guidelines were crucial because any misstep could lead to trouble, not just for themselves but also for their families. For example, Amirhossein's father, a government employee working in the post office, consistently stressed the importance of avoiding behavior that could jeopardize his job. The exact nature of the potential "trouble" was often unclear, but the fear of inadvertently causing harm or putting their families at risk loomed over their childhoods. Amirhossein emphasized that almost everyone in their generation had these concerns (Ava and Mohammad agree with him). Nevertheless, as they entered their teenage years, a new music genre was gaining ground: rap. Even though it was considered forbidden, students at school began to exchange rap music CDs secretly, and they even wrote the lyrics of their favorite rap songs on the classroom walls. These songs touched on topics that were strictly off-limits, including criticisms of the police, Basij, and challenges to the traditional beliefs of their parents' generation. In these songs, they discovered an avenue to express their own thoughts and emotions, things they had always been too afraid to say out loud. The music, Amirhossein added, was a source of courage. It made them believe that if others could boldly express these ideas in songs, perhaps they too could find the courage to speak up without fear.

Mohammad shared Amirhossein's perspective and emphasized that during those formative years, listening to Persian rap music became more than just an interest; it became an integral part of their lives. They were at an age where their personalities were still developing, and Persian rap played a pivotal role in shaping them into bolder

individuals with evolved ways of thinking. Mohammad vividly recalls how, as a teenager, he yearned to have his voice heard, and rap music served as that powerful outlet. It was as if he found a means to express himself even though he wasn't articulating those words personally.

During this period, the rap artists they admired also became their role models. Mohammad started emulating their behavior, using their colloquial expressions, adopting their distinctive styles, such as baggy pants, and more. He acknowledges that while he may no longer dress in baggy pants or follow every trend from his teenage years, the core of who he is today was profoundly influenced and shaped by the experiences and the persona cultivated during those formative years.

Ava shares a compelling perspective on the significant role Persian rap music has played in shaping her generation and fostering a sense of belonging. She notes that the music her parents enjoyed was a remnant of a bygone era, with artists who had immigrated to Los Angeles following the Islamic Revolution. This music didn't resonate with her generation as it did with her parents, whose youth was steeped in the pre-revolutionary sounds of these artists.

Conversely, Ava's older siblings grew up in a different environment, marked by the advent of satellite channels that exposed them to the rock and metal music trends of their time. These siblings took to foreign rock and metal bands, as the global reach of satellite TV facilitated their access to a wide range of musical styles. However, for Ava and her peers, Persian rap music represented a distinct departure from the musical choices of both their parents and older siblings. It was a genre that felt like their own, giving voice to their collective experiences and emotions.

One of the most significant aspects of Persian rap music, as Ava highlights, is its ability to create a profound sense of community. Through rap forums and discussions, she was able to connect with people who shared her passion for the genre. It was within one of these rap communities that she met Mohammad, who would eventually become her boyfriend. This shared interest in rap music not only deepened their connection but also provided them with a platform to communicate and understand each other better. It's a

testament to how music, in this case, Persian rap, can serve as a bridge between individuals, facilitating their interactions and enriching their relationships. Ava goes on to discuss how the experience of listening to rap music was different for girls, reflecting the traditional and conservative cultural norms in Iran. These norms often subjected girls and women to stricter expectations and social boundaries compared to their male counterparts. For instance, Ava notes that the lyrics of many rap songs could contain explicit language or content, which was viewed as inappropriate for girls. While there may not have been explicit prohibitions, Ava was keenly aware that her parents might disapprove of her listening to such songs. This contrasted sharply with the experiences of boys, who seemed to enjoy more freedom in their choices, including their music preferences. In essence, Persian rap music served as a backdrop to these cultural dynamics, providing a space for self-expression and identity formation, albeit within the constraints of societal norms.

Mohammad concurred with Ava's reflections on the transformative power of rap music, shedding light on the evolving perspectives of younger generations. He pointed out that today's youth may not engage with rap music in the same profound way that their generation did. The reason, Mohammad proposed, is that the subsequent generation experienced a greater degree of freedom and less pervasive fear in their formative years. As a result, they were able to exercise more autonomy in shaping their identities, free from the constraining environment that he and his peers grew up in.

Mohammad emphasized that for their generation, Persian rap music was not just a genre to passively enjoy; it was a vital voice that guided them through the uncertainties of life. The music served as a compass, articulating emotions such as anger and sadness while validating the belief that their prevailing circumstances were far from normal. Prior to discovering rap, they had an inkling that something was amiss, that life should hold more promise, yet they couldn't quite define the source of their unease.

Rap music played a pivotal role in emboldening their generation. It not only infused them with the courage to confront their circumstances but also instilled hope that change was possible and that a brighter future awaited those who dared to challenge the status quo. Mohammad noted that, notably, it taught them to love their country, a perspective

previously mired in the official narratives of the Islamic Revolution and the war. At school, they had been taught to revere their nation due to the sacrifices of martyrs and the sanctity of the revolution. The media reinforced these themes, leaving little room for alternative perspectives. However, rap music broadened their understanding of Iran, emphasizing that their homeland was more than the sum of its historical events. It was the land of their birth and their ancestors. Consequently, they felt a sense of duty to contribute positively to their country, striving to be their best selves to create a better future for all.

The interviews with Ava, Mohammad, and Amirhossein provide a deep exploration into the emotional landscape shaped by their experiences with Persian rap music. Their narratives reveal a tapestry of emotions that reflect both their journeys and the collective psyche of their generation. Here are the emotions that we can derive from this interview.

**Resonance:** At the heart of their experiences is a strong emotional connection with the song "My Generation." This bond shows that the song, and rap music in general, acted like a mirror. It reflected their deepest feelings and life experiences.

**Fear:** They grew up in a world filled with fear. In this world, making a mistake in society could lead to serious problems. These issues could affect not only them but also their families.

**Courage:** Amidst this fear, rap music became a source of bravery. It gave them strength, showing that they could speak their minds and question the way things were.

**Yearning:** Mohammad's story is filled with a strong desire to be heard. Rap music gave him a voice, expressing this deep longing.

**Admiration:** The impact of rap artists went beyond their songs. They influenced how people acted, talked, and dressed, showing a profound admiration for them.

**Belonging:** Ava's story shows how rap music brought people together. It created friendships, love, and a sense of community.

**Awareness:** The interviews reveal a clear understanding of social rules, especially how they differ for boys and girls.

Hope: Despite tough times, rap music offered hope. It showed a future full of change and possibilities.

Love: Their feelings went deeper than just emotions. There was a strong love for Iran, shaped by its past but hopeful for its future.

Anger and Sadness: The songs expressed feelings of anger and sadness, mirroring the struggles and challenges they faced in society.

Validation: Finally, rap music confirmed their beliefs that their life situations were unusual and that they deserved something better.

In conclusion, this interview shows us the powerful impact of rap music. It has been more than just a genre; it has been an emotional guide, helping a generation navigate the complexities of their lives, validating their experiences, and giving voice to their hopes, fears, and dreams.

You rest in your bed, eat, and sleep timely

You go to school, your chances of living are high

Can't deny it, honey, just take it easy

A father's always there to support you

A tender mother, her heart beats just for you

Someday you'll grow up, life will break you down

Take it easy, honey, be grateful for what you own

You're a painter, life is your color and brush

It'll turn into what you wish, don't let the ominous owl whisper

Try not to cry, your pretty face, don't turn red with shyness

Experiencing is your right, honey, but there are some one-way roads in life

Be careful of your relations, be afraid of those man-like wolves

Only a bare soul deserves your naked body

Take care of the virginity of your soul, honey, it's not like the hymen to be sewn  
Know and read, don't be deceived, hold your head high, don't be obedient  
The veil can't confine you, you determine the limitations  
Life is a prison whose turnkey is you, is it possible to chain up a mountain?  
See your uncle, Sarina, his flower is now only a thorn  
My life story is just a tragedy, Sarina, oh Sarina, Sarina, don't frown at that flower-  
seller girl  
With a flower in hand, asking you to pay for  
Don't turn your back on her, thinking she differs  
Surely, there is a difference, honey, she's a poor girl from downtown  
Her life is full of poverty, fear, and darkness  
Her father is addicted, honey, you can see on her cheek  
The sign of her father's cold slap, she's only 9 with no chance to study  
She feels the bitter taste of labor, the flower drooping in one's hand  
The flower you pay for unwillingly, it's not just a flower but a piece of bread  
For her, maybe, not to be punished at home, don't ask who to blame for  
Someday you'll see, it's a long story, honey, don't ask  
The earth is full of those working hard, and those wealthy ones  
Full of obsession, have built their own palaces by the hands of workers  
And so many sacrificed their life to this end, you can't tell this story to the others  
They'll laugh at you, the badness is their habit, you paint your own painting  
Let them live for their own, just be yourself, see your uncle, Sarina  
His flower is now only a thorn, my life story is just a tragedy, Sarina  
Sarina, Sarina, Sarina!

The provided lyrics are attributed to the composition "Sarina" by Shahin Najafi, a rap artist who penned and performed this piece as a dedication to his niece, Sarina. Significantly, this song held a special place for Maryam, who expressed a deep emotional connection to it, recounting numerous poignant moments when she found solace and catharsis in its verses. About what makes this song so especial for her she explained: "When I listen to this song, I yearn to be in Sarina's position, with Shahin, the artist, as my uncle. I wish I had received valuable guidance and counsel, not of the constricting variety that my elders imposed upon me. Specifically, I yearn for the type of advice that would have proven genuinely beneficial during my formative years. Rather than being forbidden to engage in any interactions with boys and thus compelled to conceal my experiences from my elders, I wish they had offered guidance on the art of selecting worthy companions, thereby sparing me from the perennial heartaches and ensuing trust issues that I've encountered."

Expanding further, she elaborated that her musical inclinations were not confined solely to socially or politically themed rap. Quite often, she discovered herself drawn to the allure of party rap, which weaved intricate narratives of experiences she had never encountered in her own life. These musical tales painted vivid scenarios - envision sipping chilled champagne while reclining on sun-drenched sands or immersing oneself in the pulsating ambiance of Ibiza. It was a realm of leisure and extravagance, an escape from the mundane, and, in all likelihood, one that she, along with the majority of her young compatriots in Iran, would never experience first-hand. For many, these scenarios remained distant, existing on the fringes of even their most extravagant dreams. However, as the immersive beats of these rap songs enveloped her, they sparked an artificial rush of pleasure akin to a dopamine surge. At times, as she surrendered to the music's embrace and closed her eyes, the vivid imagery transcended mere fantasy. It was as though she was transported to those exotic settings, embodying the girl luxuriating on the sun-soaked shoreline, indulging in the crisp effervescence of champagne. Surprisingly, it was exclusively these rap compositions that possessed the magical ability to evoke such lifelike reveries. While Hollywood movies had the potential to conjure similar mental images, a fundamental disparity lay in the language they spoke and the cultural chasm they bridged. These disparities rendered it a formidable challenge to lose herself fully in that distant world, even in her most vivid and immersive daydreams.

In the interview, she talked about the transformative aspect of rap music. She offered the example of the band ZED Bazi. It's now widely known that they were essentially a government-backed project with the intention of fostering a generation that would have a proclivity for marijuana. ZED Bazi's lyrical content consistently glorified drug use in a manner that generated envy among their audience. "Take me, for instance," she continued, "I confessed to you that I find myself daydreaming through rap songs about experiences I'll never have. It's a similar story for others when they hear songs that delve into drug consumption. They may not have the opportunity to engage in the entire experience, like doing drugs on a Mediterranean beach, but at least they can partake in the act and align themselves with their idols in some way." She went on to emphasize a noticeable trend in the contemporary landscape: the pervasive scent of marijuana wafting through the streets, akin to the atmosphere of Amsterdam. "It's cheap, it's accessible," she noted, "and it serves as a means for young people to momentarily escape their troubles, to find relaxation, and avoid dealing with the complexities of life. This is the generation the government desires."

Her insights underscored the influential role that rap music can play in shaping the behavior and outlook of the youth, effectively contributing to shifts in both social and cultural norms. In the interview with Maryam, we delve into the deep emotional connection and impact of rap music, especially the song "Sarina" by Shahin Najafi. Her story reveals various emotions that not only mirror her own experiences but also shed light on the wider cultural and societal influences of rap music. The emotions evident in this interview include:

**Yearning:** Maryam's bond with the song "Sarina" stems from a deep longing. She craves the kind of guidance and advice the song's lyrics offer, which is very different from the restrictive advice she grew up with.

**Regret:** Reflecting on her youth, Maryam feels regret for not receiving more helpful guidance. This sense of loss is compounded by her struggles with trust and heartache.

**Escapism:** Maryam is drawn to party rap because it lets her escape. These songs create vivid pictures of experiences she's never had, offering her a break from her everyday life.

**Envy:** The luxurious life depicted in party rap songs stirs envy in Maryam. These songs

describe a world of ease and luxury that she, like many others, can only dream of. Immersiveness: Maryam's experience with rap music is deeply immersive. She feels like she's in exotic places when she listens, a feeling she doesn't get from Hollywood movies due to cultural differences.

Belief: Maryam strongly believes in rap's power to bring change. She uses the band ZED Bazi as an example, showing how rap can influence society and culture. Influence: Maryam points out how rap, like ZED Bazi's songs, can influence youth behavior, especially regarding drug use. She sees this as a possible government strategy.

Resignation: Observing the widespread use of marijuana, Maryam senses a resignation among the youth. She believes this trend is what the government wants, showing a kind of acceptance of this reality.

In conclusion, Maryam's story offers a deep look into how rap music affects emotions in many ways. She talks about yearning, regret, the desire to escape, and how music influences people. Her experiences show how powerful rap can be in changing feelings, actions, and even social norms. This highlights the important role of rap in Iran's modern culture.

Discern my state by my words, dear Marian

No longer inebriated, Ali's plea, Marian

Yearning for a life on uncharted trails

This bottle, you see, is not my confine, Marian

The weather is amiable, not awry, Marian

Prisons of yore, I've now outshone

Nothing to shatter the realm of dreams, I vow

As twilight unfurls across our earthly sphere

Beneath this ailing longing, it breathes, sincere  
Yet voraciously, the dark void claims its toll  
We stand at the crossroads, masks our role  
Who can fathom what's amiss in your view?  
Who can discern the epic that's our due?  
In joy we revel, Marian, on this morn  
Bitterness shunned, from our hearts it's torn  
The world's invited to my life's grand fête  
With kindness, we converse, it's not too late  
A vow I make, dear Marian, with elation  
The purity fest, inception of a dream's narration  
I know, the sunset, a world's fragment's gleam  
In darkness by the moon, the stars yet beam  
There, you can linger, childlike and free  
In celebration, where life's mysteries flee  
He brushed the lunar flavor with tender grace,  
Tethered by a cord in the starry expanse's embrace.  
In the moon's dim closeness, darkness softly marled,  
Yet stars, resilient, in the night sky sparred.  
Remains the chance to be a child once more,  
Suspended from celestial heights, hearts to implore.  
The stars, they shimmer, alive and bright,  
This scene of grandeur fills me with delight.  
Embrace the celebration, where splendors unfurl,  
Cleanse with diligence, let purity swirl.

For cleanliness implies a presence strong,  
With a chest of valor and a heart's song.  
Ali's mind, it wandered astray,  
Marian, the world, a sunset's crimson ray.  
No ugliness here, in love's absence we stay,  
My haven's a shadow, in sorrow, I relay.  
For the shipless soul, the sea's cruel play,  
I'm a survivor, pure, in a singular array.  
They know not the earth, no ground to display,  
Welcome to purity's dance, our debt to repay.  
Marian, trust those who partake in the foray,  
Let the waterfall's taste, our courage convey.  
Marian, the world, a piece of the fray,  
Come, join in this night, under the moon's sway.  
But in darkness, we know not the lunar bay,  
Lost stars in the void, they've faded away.  
In the whispers of the wind, let worries allay,  
In moon's quiet grace, we've found our way.

The lyrics provided are from a song called "Laghzesh" by the artist Ali Sorena, and it holds a special place as Erfan's favorite rap track. Erfan, Navid, Mehran, and Ali are a close-knit group of friends residing in Ekbatan, a residential area situated in the western part of Tehran. This locality is renowned for its vibrant hip-hop culture, characterized by an abundance of graffiti adorning the walls and young enthusiasts engaged in parkour and related activities. Within this dynamic community, all four friends share a profound passion for Persian rap music. According to Erfan, the fervor for rap is ubiquitous in Ekbatan, as practically every resident here is an ardent admirer of the genre. For them,

rap transcends being merely a musical style; it is an embodiment of life itself—a form of art, a source of recreation, and much more. Whenever a new track by their favorite rap artists is released, these friends convene at the local park to dissect the music, delving into discussions about the beats, the lyrics, and all aspects of the songs that resonate with them.

In the podcast they were asked about their favorite genre of rap, Navid explained that their musical preferences have evolved with time, and they now listen to different genres based on their moods. As a teenager when "rap e Farsi" was a relatively new phenomenon, he, like many others, gravitated toward social and political rap. In those years, there was a sense that everything needed to be challenged and changed, and this was reflected in their musical choices. Back then, they were using basic mobile phones without features like Bluetooth, and songs were shared via infrared, which meant listening to the same song repeatedly. Erfan chimed in, sharing a similar sentiment. He also delved into social and political rap during his teenage years, but these days, his preference leans toward songs that explore personal life experiences. This shift is rooted in the realization that many people, including the rappers themselves, are going through similar challenges within the unique context of life in Iran. Knowing that these shared experiences are not exclusive to him brings a sense of solace and connection. In the exploration of their experiences, they were asked whether they had ever felt compelled to lead a dual life – one that embraced their true selves privately while concealing it publicly, ostensibly for reasons tied to the government's watchful gaze. In response, Ali offered an intriguing perspective, emphasizing that this duality transcended the government's influence. Even if an entirely different government, bereft of ideological or religious leanings, held sway, he contended that this dual existence would endure. Instead, he pointed to the deep-rooted facets of Iranian culture as the underlying impetus for such a complex dynamic. Ali drew upon a verse from the renowned Persian poet Hafiz Shirazi to illustrate his point:

“In sacred halls, Cain's preachers take their stance,

Upon the pulpit's perch, their roles are enhanced.

But in solitudes, secrets their hearts enclose,

A different path, a hidden tale it shows."

This ancient poetic expression succinctly encapsulated the essence of living two lives. It was a reminder that outward appearances, often designed for societal approval and conformity, could diverge significantly from the inner truths that individuals held in their hearts. Continuing the discussion, Ali touched upon one of the core values embedded within Persian culture – the art of concealment. In the vernacular, there exists an idiom that advises individuals to figuratively slap their own cheeks to create a rosy hue, even when feeling unwell. This metaphorical blush, he explained, served as a mask, concealing any hint of infirmity from others. It epitomized the broader cultural inclination toward maintaining a façade and safeguarding one's vulnerabilities from the scrutiny of others.

Nima chimed in to expound further, underscoring one of the fundamental reasons behind the widespread popularity of rap music among their generation. He pointed out that rap, as a genre, adhered to an ethos of transparency. It did not seek to beautify or romanticize the unsightly facets of the world but, rather, laid them bare for all to witness. The art form served as a vessel for conveying the harshness and afflictions of existence, while simultaneously celebrating its moments of beauty and grace. In essence, it embraced a rare and unapologetic candour. Mehran affirmed his comrades' perspectives, asserting that this unguarded nature found in rap music had indeed prompted a shift in their generation's approach to this dual culture. In stark contrast to their parents' generation, which had been conditioned to veil truths and to navigate social interactions with a veneer of white lies, their cohort was emerging from these shadowy depths into a realm of greater authenticity. For instance, Mehran cited personal examples, highlighting the stark contrast between his generation and that of his father. While he, for instance, felt no compulsion to provide false justifications for mundane occurrences, such as abstaining from a social outing due to personal preference or economic constraints, his father's generation would typically resort to fabrications to preserve social etiquette.

This transformation, the friends concurred, was a testament to the subtle but profound influence of rap music, which had chipped away at the foundations of the culture of

duplicity that had long characterized their society, heralding a new era of authenticity and openness among the youth. When the interviewer asked them about the popularity of rap music, especially compared to other genres, Erfan explained that rap emerged during a time of stringent limitations and prohibitions. Cursing was strictly off-limits; if you slipped and uttered a curse, you might expect a swift reprimand or a slap from your father. Our upbringing instilled in us that cursing was taboo, and notions of romance were forbidden. Having a girlfriend was deemed one of the gravest sins. Attending parties was reserved for alleged alcoholics and those ensnared by the corrupting Western culture. During those times, our parents were diligently teaching us to respond with a polite "yes, sir" to everything and everyone. We were expected to toe the line, saying yes to our parents, yes to the police, yes to our elders, and yes to just about anyone, all to avoid getting ourselves into trouble. "I distinctly remember my first encounter with rap music when it became a trend. I was in high school, and I had saved up my pocket money to purchase a baggy pair of pants. The very first time my father laid eyes on me wearing those pants, he created an enormous commotion. He asked, "What would people think about our family if you go out like that? What about our neighbors? Have you thought about the reputation of your family or your young sisters, who would be labeled as 'bad girls' if you wear these pants?" It's astonishing how something as seemingly trivial as a baggy pair of pants could become such a big issue. It was during such a period that rap music gained prominence. The songs delivered a message that encouraged us to be ourselves. They asserted that we didn't need to blindly say "yes" to everyone if it wasn't right. They conveyed that loving a girl or having a girlfriend wasn't sinful but rather a beautiful thing. These songs opened our eyes and transformed our outlook on life. Such sentiments and perspectives were scarcely found in any other music genre at the time, and that's what contributed to the immense success of rap music.

Ali points out that another reason for the success of rap music lies in Iranian people's affinity for poetry. Just as poetry is a form of artistic expression that plays with words, rap is akin to this art. In a manner reminiscent of the days when revered poets like Hafiz Shirazi, Saadi Shirazi, or Omar Khayyam penned verses to offer life advice, resist the challenges of their times, or address the issues of their era, rappers are engaging in the very same practices. The only distinction is that, for various reasons, contemporary audiences are more discerning. If, in those earlier years, one poet emerged from a million individuals, today, we witness the rise of approximately 50 rappers out of a million. This

exemplifies the vibrant poetic nature of rap music and its strong connection to the poetic traditions of Persian literature.

In the end, it was asked from them to share anything they wanted about Persian rap. Ali expressed that another aspect of rap music pertains to the depth of one's inner self, to the point where you might only want to listen to it in the presence of your closest confidants—those who won't pass judgment or lay blame. Ali continued: this realization led me to the understanding that the people I should surround myself with are precisely these kinds of individuals. For instance, with these three friends of mine, it's not essential that we listen to rap music together, but sometimes, when we're inebriated, we find ourselves shedding tears in unison to certain rap songs. This is the type of friendship that rap music has taught me to cherish—a bond where friends can witness my most vulnerable self and still stand by my side.

The interview with Erfan, Navid, Mehran, and Ali paints a vivid picture of how rap music deeply touches their lives and shapes the culture in Ekbatan. Their stories are filled with various emotions, showing us the personal and broader cultural effects of rap. This interview highlights the significant role of rap music in their community, reflecting not just on their journeys but also on how it influences cultural and social trends. Here are the emotions derived from the interview with Erfan, Navid, Mehran, and Ali:

**Passion:** In Ekbatan, the enthusiasm for rap music is intense. Almost everyone is a huge fan, seeing rap as more than just music—it's a part of their lives.  
**Nostalgia:** Navid looks back at the early days of "rap e farsi" with nostalgia, remembering how they used to share songs.

**Solace and connection:** Erfan now prefers rap songs about personal experiences, finding comfort and a sense of connection in them.

**Cultural complexity:** Ali's thoughts on the dual aspects of Iranian life, shaped by deep cultural traditions, reveal the complex and thoughtful nature of their culture.

**Authenticity:** The group's reflections on rap music reveal a longing for real self-expression. They see rap as a way to show who they truly are.

**Rebellion:** Erfan's stories, like defying norms by wearing baggy pants or questioning blind obedience, show a rebellious spirit and a desire to be unique.

**Appreciation for poetry:** Ali draws parallels between rap and classic Persian poetry, showing a deep respect for rap's poetic roots and its ties to historical literary traditions.

**Depth of friendship:** This group of friends' shared love for rap has deepened their friendships, creating a bond filled with gratitude, openness, and a strong sense of togetherness.

In summary, the stories of Erfan, Navid, Mehran, and Ali deeply explore how rap music affects emotions. Their experiences show how powerful rap is, from questioning society's rules to creating strong bonds and realness. This interview proves that rap can bring out many feelings, like excitement, longing for the past, defiance, and friendship. It shows how important rap is in shaping the culture and emotions of today's Iran.

I was somewhere and no one but myself

Only saw the soles of shoes

I break the mirror, I become a hundred

How much you've changed, you don't smile like before

Your eyes are bitter, you look around at people

You have no tales to tell, you don't say a word

You went against the waves, but the sea to the shore

Delivered your body and soul

From which cliff did you fall?

That your spirit is broken and your body is standing  
You give off the scent of a complex  
Your destination was America  
You became a skinned pigeon  
In the comfort of the shelter  
Your feet didn't stretch out  
You went down into the depths of the blanket  
You weren't supposed to bring less  
American fan  
Neither attraction attracted you  
Nor did your back push you away  
Our generation is pending  
Like an accident, before it happens  
Or an event before it falls  
Rare  
Complaining to his creator  
He sits down from the caravan and strikes the heart of the tragedy  
Don't be strange  
You know us by the fistful  
Hand and foot chained  
We are a team of 60s children's hospital  
Wild Tehran  
Your heart is Iranian, your body is homeless  
Our generation calls it a relief  
It will be relieved with one arrow

We are dust and we are a corner of the world

Bone breaker like psychological shock

I came from fire and I'm going to fire

It's paradise with all its people

We are dust and we are a corner of the world

Bone breaker like psychological shock

I came from fire and I'm going to fire

It's paradise with all its people

There was always one

Walking down the street

It didn't matter to him

No one looked left

The land swallowed the hungry

He had a piece of bread

He made four pieces

There was one

He was a pillar for his friends

He was rain in his thirst

He made up a story from his dream

He said with too much love

But his nightmares and

He always left half

When he saw the city from the height

He was looking for someone to see two people

He was cursing at the kingdom

He said God when are you resigning?  
So the devil can die easily  
He threw stones at the moon behind the glass  
He said tonight in Kahrizak  
One of us will be killed  
Blood and from the top of his fist he wipes it off and  
He knocks another fist on the wall  
Everyone has emptied their pockets  
One at the head of the line  
One at the end of the line  
One in the chest  
He was walking on the bottom of the city  
A generation hospitalized  
In the sixties hospital  
Isn't it?  
The appearance of the story is always wrong  
It's jealous but it loves a whore  
He's still a storm on the coast of his mind  
The city is leaving  
When it comes to poetry  
We are dust and we are a corner of the world  
Bone breaker like psychological shock  
I came from fire and I'm going to fire  
It's paradise with all its people  
We are dust and we are a corner of the world

It hits God's face with a handful of sacrifice

I came from fire and I'm going to fire

It's paradise with all its people

In the air

The hair of the beggar

Like a wild willow

Darkness is drawn

We are burning and shining

In the air

The hair of the beggar

Like a wild willow

In the air

The hair of the beggar

Like a wild willow

Darkness is drawn

We are burning and shining

Until darkness is drawn

We are burning and shining

The song "Sanatorium of the 80s Generation" is a creation by Ashkan Fadaei, a rapper renowned for addressing social and political issues. This particular track is a favorite of Amirhossein, a child born in the late 80s. In Amirhossein's own words in the podcast, those of us who grew up in the 80s witnessed a wide spectrum of experiences. We saw our nation struggle with the aftermath of the war, faced the grim news of intellectuals falling victim to disturbing chain murders during our formative years, and observed the harsh reality of our brothers and sisters losing their lives on the streets or in prisons as they fought for their right to vote, among other challenging events. Titled "80s

"Sanatorium," this song reflects the notion that enduring such experiences can take a toll on a young mind, leaving it far from unscathed. Amirhossein's passion for rap music stems from its unflinching portrayal of Iran's stark reality—a reality that few are willing to address, yet many yearn to hear about, for it is a subject too significant to be dismissed. In Europe, music has held a prominent role, giving rise to celebrated musicians, much as Iran has birthed renowned poets. In Iran, the emphasis lies in the spoken word, the art of oration, and rap emerges as our medium of expression. Amirhossein goes so far as to assert that rap holds a special place in Iran's cultural landscape, like no other country, as it mirrors our unparalleled reverence for the power of language and words.

Amirhossein elaborated on what makes rap music particularly special for him. He finds its uniqueness in the fact that the rappers creating this music are his peers, sharing the same age and experiences. He believes that if these rappers were not residing in Iran, their work wouldn't hold the same level of impact. Despite their ability to relate to our problems, the authenticity of their words would be diminished because they wouldn't be directly grappling with those very issues. Listening to rap by Iranian artists, according to Amirhossein, feels akin to strolling down the street with a close friend who openly shares their struggles and experiences. It's a profoundly personal connection that enhances the music's resonance. Amirhossein also pointed out another compelling aspect of what makes Farsi rap so appealing to him, which is the dynamic nature of Farsi rap's evolution. He describes Farsi rap as a child of his generation—a genre they witnessed from its infancy, watched it mature over the years, and now witness it flourishing as a prominent music style in Iran. It's not just about the music; it's about the rappers themselves growing up alongside their audience.

Over time, different generations of Farsi rap artists emerged, each bringing its unique characteristics to the genre. Additionally, Farsi rap transcended Tehran, expanding to other cities, making it a cultural phenomenon not limited to the capital. Amirhossein sees the conflicts and rivalries among rappers from different cities and generations as an engaging and captivating saga, akin to a lengthy and entertaining movie that they have collectively witnessed.

In conclusion, Amirhossein emphasized the transformative impact of rap music on Iran. Most significantly, it has alleviated the sense of isolation among a generation by demonstrating that they are not alone in their shared experiences and that there's no shame in discussing these issues openly. Rap music has also left an indelible mark on the Farsi language itself. Even individuals from older generations, who may have never previously engaged with rap, now incorporate rap phrases and idioms into their speech because these expressions have become so ubiquitous in everyday language. Thus, rap began as a cultural phenomenon, continued to exert a profound influence, and continues to shape the cultural and linguistic landscape of Iran. Amirhossein's thoughts on "Sanatorium of the 80s Generation" by Ashkan Fadaei and his views on Iranian rap offer a detailed look into the feelings and culture of his generation. His words reveal emotions that reflect his own life and give us a wider picture of Iran's social and cultural scene in the 80s and later. Here are the emotions evident in his interview:

**Empathy and Connection:** Amirhossein talks about growing up in the 80s, seeing Iran's challenges, and the difficulties his generation faced. This brings out a strong feeling of empathy. His bond with rap music, particularly this song, comes from its real depiction of these common experiences.

**Reverence for Language:** He stresses the significance of speech and oration in Iranian culture. This shows a deep respect for language and the power of words, something that rap music captures well.

**Authenticity:** Amirhossein really values how genuine rap artists are, especially those around his age who face similar challenges. He thinks their real-life experiences make their music more meaningful and true.

**Personal Connection:** For Amirhossein, listening to rap feels like talking to a close friend.

This makes the music more powerful and emotionally impactful for him.

**Pride in Evolution:** Seeing how Farsi rap has grown from the beginning to now make Amirhossein proud. He feels connected to it, like it's a part of his own life story.

**Engagement:** He's also interested in how rappers from different places and times

interact, with their conflicts and competitions. This makes the rap scene more exciting and engaging for him.

In summary, Amirhossein's thoughts give us a deep look into how rap music touches the hearts of those who grew up in Iran during the challenging 80s. This music genre acts like a mirror, showing their common experiences, hardships, and hopes. It's been a source of comfort and a way to connect, and it's also had a big impact on the country's culture and language. Through rap, this generation has found a way to express themselves, linking their past to the present and leading the way to a future where being real, forming connections, and the strength of words are most important.

Here, Tehran beckons as a city that stirs the depths of the soul,

Where you realize you're not a person, just a discarded role.

Everyone's a wolf, but they ask you to be meek and mild,

No jest in Tehran, no mere flowers, no ice cream in the wild.

Survive this urban jungle, lest you become the prey,

A paradox of splendor, a dance 'twixt dusk and day.

Class divides, a tempest, gnawing at the hearts within,

All appear as wealthy until a taxi ride begins.

The truth is stark and vivid, no pretense can disguise,

An earnest plea to Heaven, beneath vast, endless skies.

O God, awaken from Your slumber, heed my fervent plea,

Forgive my toilsome labor, see the truth I long to free.

Behold the figure gathering bottles in the street's embrace,

Beside a gleaming Mercedes, a striking, stark disgrace.

His lifetime's worth, a tire's girth, unequal in this play,

Not gravity, but riches' sway, that makes the world's way.

A child yearns to play with one, an orphan, innocent and pure,  
But a father's pride ensures the doors to joy stay shut, secure.  
His clothes not clean, his story seen, in that park so stark,  
We witness these calamities, in the shadows, deep and dark.  
These woes we bear with silent grace, our souls a heavy load,  
No angel's flight or savior's might, till on this path we've trod.  
With heads unbowed, we shed our tears, as night to day must blend,  
For solace we have never sought, our tears, our guide, our friend.  
Have you ever loved a girl, in dreams you reached so high,  
But the reality, a cruel decree, her heart does not comply.  
You hope and pray for fortunes, like the wealthy few you spy,  
Yet as you kneel, God's laughter peals, from the heavens, in the sky.  
No need for sleep to find the dread, it's woven in our days,  
This waking dream, a living scheme, in countless different ways.  
To be blind's the only refuge, where the riches we embrace,  
God, awaken from your slumber, hear this humbled soul's forays.  
"A voice from the depths," says the trash, "a plea, a prayer, to you,  
Do you choose not to respond, to a soul so poor and lowly?  
Awaken, God, I need your ear, with a heart so pure and true,  
For in this world of broken dreams, only tears can fill the blue.  
God, wake up, the trash does speak, but do you choose to hear?  
To offer solace to a soul, its trembling voice so clear?  
A humble heart, a whispered prayer, a longing so sincere,  
Awake, dear God, I need your grace, in my despair and fear.

Aran, Mahsa, and Mehdi are a close-knit trio of friends who have shared a deep passion for rap music since their teenage years. When they were asked about the most audacious Persian rap song in history, they unanimously selected "Ekhtelaf" by Hichkas, a song that I've translated for their reference. The interviewer probed further, seeking to understand their choice. They pointed out that the song was revolutionary in its time, marked by its audacious approach. "Ekhtelaf" dared to engage with themes of divinity in a manner that was bold for its era. The song challenged the conventional notion of God and questioned His attentiveness, implying that He, like others, favored the affluent over those in need. Aran elaborated, stating that such a level of openness and clarity about their society's condition was rare in artistic expression during that period. "We couldn't find such transparency in any other form of artistic creation. Back then, everything, including our inner thoughts, was heavily censored. Rap, however, opened an entirely new chapter in our lives."

Recalling their initial encounters with rap, Aran reminisced about their limited comprehension of the profound relief they experienced. At the outset, they were drawn to these rap songs, which resonated deeply within them. Their admiration wasn't solely rooted in their attempts to emulate the rappers' style, spray graffiti on school walls, or imitate their clothing. As they matured, they recognized that the source of their profound connection lay in the songs themselves, the heartfelt expressions that openly discussed the raw reality of their lives. Mahsa shared her perspective, concurring with Aran while adding that she wanted to highlight the inherent simplicity of rap music that contributed to its popularity. She elaborated, noting that other musical genres often required extensive skills and instrumental proficiency. For instance, creating rock music necessitated the ability to play instruments or sing in harmony with the song's tempo. In contrast, rap was far more accessible. According to Mahsa, all that was required to craft a rap song was a piece of paper and a pen to write down the lyrics. Mobile phones could be used to generate beats, and singers could then perform their lyrics to these beats. She recalled her high school days when she and her friends formed a girl group. Under the guise of going to the library to study, they would secretly write rap songs, collectively brainstorming ideas on various topics. They composed songs about the constraints imposed on girls by their culture and society, tackled themes such as breakups, the behavior of boys, and family issues. After composing their songs, they recorded them using a mobile phone, often capturing the poorest sound quality. These songs would

then be clandestinely shared with their schoolmates, who were unaware that they themselves were the creators of these songs. The group would even describe these songs as belonging to another popular girl rap group to avoid potential trouble.

Mehdi pointed out that another essential aspect contributing to the appeal of rap music in Iran is the deeply sentimental nature of Iranian culture. Iranians are known for their strong emotions, readily shedding tears, and having a profound appreciation for art in all its forms. Rap seemed to encompass all these factors, making it almost tailor-made for Iranian culture. Iranians, young and old alike, have an extraordinary affinity for poetry, with teenagers memorizing an impressive amount of verse willingly and without coercion. Emotions run deep among the Iranian people, and rap songs are uniquely equipped to engage with these profound feelings. The notable difference between Iranian rappers and their Los Angeles counterparts, according to Mehdi, is that Iranian rappers aren't merely singing about Iran based on news reports; they are the news. Iranian rappers live the experiences they sing about, genuinely feeling and connecting with the news and events they encapsulate in their music.

Aran recounted a time when he developed a disdain for Persian rap music around the 2010s. This negative sentiment coincided with the emergence of a new subgenre within Persian rap, characterized by dancing and party-themed tracks. During this period, he felt a profound sense of betrayal by some of his beloved rappers who had transitioned to this commercial style of music. The songs lost their authenticity and seemed more commercially driven, akin to the popular music of Los Angeles. The lyrical content of these songs was no longer something he could relate to, and he initially believed that this genre, like other good things that have faded away in Iran, had also succumbed to failure. Consequently, he distanced himself from the genre for a few years. However, his return to Persian rap was sparked by accidentally discovering a new generation of rappers whose music delved into their real-life experiences in Iranian society, prompting him to rekindle his interest in the genre. Aran expressed that the new genre of political and social rap in Iran both relates and doesn't relate to his experience as a young person living in the country. He explained that he is a highly critical individual, as he previously mentioned. In the past, when rap music transitioned into a genre focused on dancing and partying, he ceased listening for several years. At that time, many lines were blurry for him, and he didn't possess the same understanding of the world or the well-defined

moral values that he has now. As a result, he was more inclined to listen to anything within his favorite genre, as rap was not only a form of music but a lifestyle.

However, his perspective has evolved. He now listens to rap songs more critically, and certain aspects have become his red lines. Elements such as sexism, racism, or mockery of people based on their economic status or hometown are aspects that deter him from engaging with a rap song. He offered an analogy that he would not consume food prepared by a chef with dirty hands, and similarly, he avoids nourishing his soul with art or music that promotes immoral values. Aran shared that he can relate to songs that prompt introspection, reasoning, or emotional responses. He seeks songs that allow him to connect with experiences of love, anger, disappointment, hope, and life in general. His appreciation for a rap song goes beyond mere liking; he values songs where he can discern that the artist has sacrificed something significant for their creation. He recounted the example of Toomaj Salehi, an artist who released a notable song about the regime and was subsequently detained by authorities. Despite any personal preferences, Aran respects songs like these because they embody sacrifice and courage.

The interview with Aran, Mahsa, and Mehdi provides a detailed look at the emotional and cultural impact of Persian rap music on their lives. Their collective and individual stories reveal a range of emotions that connect with their own experiences and also mirror the wider social and cultural aspects of Iran's rap scene. Here are the emotions that were to be found in this interview:

**Respect and Reminiscence:** Their unanimous choice of "Ekhtelaf" by Hichkas as the boldest Persian rap song shows a deep respect for the genre's early artists a longing for the daring and genuine nature of early rap music.

**Feeling of Strength and Freedom:** Aran's focus on the honesty of rap and its ability to openly talk about social issues brings out feelings of strength and freedom. This is particularly significant in an environment where many forms of expression are restricted.

**Simplicity and accessibility:** Mahsa talks about how rap music is simple and easy to get

into, especially for young people. This shows how inclusive rap is, giving anyone with a story a chance to be heard.

Emotion and bonding: Mehdi points out the deeply emotional nature of Iranian culture and how closely Iranians feel connected to poetry and art. This highlights the emotional depth and impact of rap music.

Disillusionment and Reconnection: Aran shares his experience of becoming disenchanted with Persian rap in the 2010s and then finding his way back to it. This story is about feeling let down, disappointed, and then reconnecting with the genre.

Critical engagement: Aran now interacts with rap music on a more critical level. This shows his growth, maturity, and a better grasp of the world's complexities.

Respect for sacrifice: Aran admires songs that show sacrifice and bravery, especially from artists who faced consequences for speaking out. This brings out feelings of respect and unity.

Aran, Mahsa, and Mehdi's stories give us a rich view of how a generation has experienced Persian rap music. This genre has been like a mirror, reflecting their shared experiences, challenges, dreams, and changing views. Rap has given them a voice, a way to express themselves, and a connection to their deepest feelings and the world. Its deep impact, ability to question norms, and adaptability over time show its lasting importance in Iran's culture.

We continue

We will never be deleted

We cannot be hit with a colorful stone

The end of the night comes, the dawn

Hearts cannot be forcibly conquered

The wounds we receive, to the depth of thought

To the depth of misfortune

The breeze of freedom said to the sea of blood, "Exalt before the nation"

It turned into a wave of hatred

We pull the flag of surrender into the depths of humiliation

Opposing structures are not weakened by the enemy's taste

We do not receive permission

Revolutions are not conditional

And we continue

As long as revolutionary songs are sung

With the clues to the crimes, lips are sewn shut

And kisses taste of blood

Our tears are deceived

Because severed heads never feel good

We continue

These days will never be forgotten

The struggle that draws a window in the room

So the light of hope evaporates the tears and steams the polished mirror

And we write on it "Death to darkness"

The worker is going

We continue

Until the enemy stops continuing

And the blind knot sees the fall of the system

And throws a funeral from behind

We continue

The war between us and them is a war of good and evil

Good and bad

Light and darkness

Day and night

The sound of war's cannon

"Boom"

Blood and oil spill

The taste of earth and color

We endure the pain

Our feet are broken

We fly

We continue

The ticking of hourly bombs is the pulse of war

And until our killers are in books, all lessons are forced

We take a few with us before we leave

We overthrow

The last word, the first word

The last word, the first word

We continue

For today

For tomorrow

Without fear of expressing fears

The ability to stand, the ability to shout

With all our might, all our wounds

We continue

This is an era

A threat

The belt of violence's wheel is a rosary

An event

A decision

We continue

A lost eye in the alley

Between us, dried blood

Until the triumph of victory behind the chemical clouds

A lost mountain

We continue

For the last time

For the first time

For the most

For the least

Our urban lions lead the pack of dogs

We continue

Still standing

From the word full, the sentence glass is filled

In the midst of our storm

In the midst of flames

In memory of the slain

Our crime is being alive

We continue

Until the last breath

The last step

Until the last cage breaks

I swear to the first and last homeland  
That we continue  
Until the sparks of revolution  
Peace-seeking is not an honor for the oppressed  
Tell my mother not to worry  
Until the Simorgh's flag flutters  
We continue  
Like rain, we pour  
We take flight  
The lightning of steadfast eyes  
The thunder of a flood  
We give ourselves to nothing  
We have come only to reclaim Iran  
Until the last city  
The last alley  
For years this soil has been enslaved  
We flee the enemy from the last nest  
Until the last village  
The last home  
We continue  
This is the revenge of the lions  
The fatigue of the road and the refuge of faith  
Listen  
The sound of a shapely revolution  
Long live freedom

## Long live Iran

Sara, Elahe, Shahrzad, Nasim, and Fateme, five friends and in their interview with the podcast about rap music, they chose the song *Ma edame midim (We continue)* by *Soroush Hichkas* as their favourite song and they talked about their common passion for Persian rap, a love that has grown since their teenage years, just like most of other rap music audiences in their generation. When a question was asked them about their introduction to this genre, they described how, during their high school years, Persian rap gained popularity. Initially, it was about following a musical trend, but it soon became a profound experience. Shahrzad explained that in Iran, living can often feel like dwelling in darkness, as there are many unspoken issues that society keeps hidden. She likened this to being in a room filled with monsters; you know they're there, but in the darkness, they remain unseen. You live in perpetual fear, knowing that as long as you don't stir in the dark, the monsters won't harm you. This, they said, is a metaphor for life in Iran. People aren't content with their lives, but they're afraid that taking action to change their situation might bring pain. So they do nothing, or at least, they did nothing until Persian rap came along, turning on the lights. Suddenly, the monsters were revealed, and there was no escape. They had to face the harsh realities, recognize the life they truly desired, and confront the challenges head-on. Nasim appreciated that Persian rap arrived at a time when she felt society was rejecting her, making her question her place in the world. Persian rap became a heaven where she felt accepted, and her thoughts were no longer seen as negative. Sara initially considered herself the most ardent fan of Persian rap, but she wants to underscore that her passion for it has waned. She comes from a deeply religious family that imposed significant restrictions on her. This was particularly challenging because, in Iranian society, being a girl often meant facing more constraints than boys. During those years, listening to rap became an act of rebellion against her home life. At that time, Persian rap wasn't only prohibited by the government but was also stigmatized in the eyes of society, especially in conservative, religious families like hers.

The limitations her family imposed, like not allowing her to go outside with friends, drove her to seek refuge in rap music. It made her feel like she belonged and helped alleviate her loneliness during those years. However, the very issues she was escaping from within her family are the reasons she's grown disillusioned with Persian rap. As a woman

in Iran, she's had to fight for everything. Her struggles began within her family, where even wearing something as simple as shorts at home was contentious. Society placed further limits on her, including curfews that restricted her freedom even during her university years. She's faced battles in various aspects of Iranian society due to the challenges women confront. In the present day, women are still fighting for the right to dress as they choose, yet certain rap songs are sexist, perpetuating an anti-women narrative. When she started listening to rap, she didn't fully grasp the sexism in some songs. However, her sensitivity to these issues has grown with time, which has dampened her enthusiasm for Persian rap. Given that women are still struggling for their rights in Iranian society, the government remains resistant, and elements of the culture perpetuate inequality, Sara expects men to join the fight for gender equality. She wishes for men to stand up when they witness instances of harassment or discrimination against women in public, particularly when it involves hijab issues. Her expectations extend to the rappers themselves; she hopes they'll refrain from using curses that target women or incorporate derogatory female traits in their lyrics, while male characteristics often go unscathed. Sara believes that artists should be at the vanguard of cultural transformation, challenging and reshaping societal norms rather than reinforcing harmful ones, which she regrettably observes in numerous rap songs. Elahe echoes Sara's sentiments by emphasizing that they've all been born into a dysfunctional system and raised within it. This system strives to pit people against each other, fostering conflict between men and women, religious and non-religious individuals, thereby feeding off and gaining power from this division. Even artists like rappers, who purport to resist this system, can't entirely distance themselves from it. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, they sometimes end up perpetuating dynamics that benefit this system. Elahe observes that the Persian rap genre, like many others in Iran, leans male-centric, with noticeably fewer female rappers. This raises the question of what sets it apart. Despite its underground status, the genre appears complacent regarding a significant issue: women's rights. She laments the lack of diversity in perspective, given that much of society's problems involve women's issues. While songs often address social, speech freedom, and economic problems, there's a glaring omission when it comes to the culture that unfairly blames women in cases of sexual assault, rather than addressing the perpetrator. At best, women are portrayed as individuals needing protection, rather than focusing on systemic changes that could eliminate the need for such protection. Elahe speculates that male rappers may not have first-hand experience with these problems, leading to their lack of understanding regarding the gravity of such issues. She suggests

the need for more female rappers who can shed light on these problems or, alternatively, urges existing female rappers to concentrate on women's issues exclusively. Despite her reservations and the areas of discomfort, Elahe acknowledges that rap remains her favorite genre due to its engagement with numerous issues she can personally relate to.

Fateme expressed her belief that we live in a universally sexist world, and within Iran, this sexism is particularly pronounced due to the ideological system in place. In her view, this system allows for an extensive degree of control over various aspects of women's lives. She considers artists, such as rappers, as a form of media and emphasizes that their influence, particularly within a genre like rap, which predominantly attracts young audiences, holds significant power. She stresses the importance of caution when it comes to the content that artists create. Fateme's concern extends beyond sexism and also encompasses the lack of respect for different sexual orientations in certain Persian rap songs. She has observed offensive language such as derogatory slurs or using phrases suggesting that someone is acting contrary to their gender. Fateme contends that rappers should exercise more responsibility and recognize the impact their work has as an educational medium for their young audience.

The interview with Sara, Elahe, Shahrzad, Nasim, and Fateme provides a detailed look at how they connect emotionally and culturally with Persian rap music. Their collective and personal stories reveal the complex emotions that Persian rap brings out, particularly considering gender roles and social norms in Iran. The emotions that we can observe in this interview are:

**Desire for Recognition and Validation:** Shahrzad compares living in darkness to the unspoken problems in society and the fear of facing them. Persian rap acts like a light, exposing these hidden issues and forcing people to deal with life's tough realities.

**Rebellion and Escape:** Sara's story shows her rebellion against her conservative family's rules. For her, Persian rap is more than music; it's a way to resist and escape from her restrictive surroundings.

**Disillusionment and Critique:** Sara's changing view of Persian rap, where she becomes disillusioned because of its apparent sexism, highlights her feelings of betrayal and disappointment. She expects rap artists to support gender equality and challenge social norms, showing her strong desire for change and improvement.

**Desire for Unity and Change:** Elahe talks about the divisive nature of their society. She yearns for unity and teamwork, especially among artists, to challenge and change social norms.

**Call for Representation and Diversity:** Elahe is frustrated by the lack of female voices in Persian rap and the genre's seeming indifference to women's rights. She wants more varied perspectives in rap.

**Awareness and Responsibility:** Fateme points out that sexism is a global issue, but it's especially noticeable in Iran. She stresses the responsibility of artists, particularly in how they influence young people. She calls for more awareness and sensitivity in creating content.

In conclusion, the stories of these friends offer us deep look at the complex emotions tied to Persian rap music, especially about gender issues in Iran. While the genre has been a strong outlet for expression, rebellion, and validation, it also faces societal critiques. Their collective call for more representation, diversity, and responsibility in rap shows its potential to not only mirror society's problems but also to spark real change. Their experiences show the power of music to deeply connect, challenge norms, and inspire hope for a more inclusive and fair future.

He was akin to a brother of mine,  
In his struggles, in his uneven path,  
Months passed, marked by sorrows and signs,  
Yet by his side, unwavering, I hath.  
Though at times, his demeanor did chafe,

His concerns became the weight that I bear,  
His laughter, my happiness in the day,  
When harsh words were spoken, I did so with care.  
In his battles, I lent my earnest aid,  
For his triumphs, I offered my acclaim,  
To those who endure, in the shadows they fade,  
I cheer, for survival is victory's name.  
To him, this ode, he knows is to claim,  
When his sky held no stars, I brought forth the light,  
If his wings grew bare, I'd be the wind's aim,  
To remind him, the skies are ours, the grand flight.  
Even if fate seals a cell door so tight,  
Together we'd face the darkest of hours,  
For in his struggles, I'd be his guiding light,  
In the vault of despair, as his wings, the world shall be ours.  
He knows, the one of my poetic rhyme,  
A cherished soul, an apple in my sight,  
Guidance shared, lessons passed through time,  
He knows, to guide, to lead to the light.  
For his best, my wishes took flight,  
God, the witness, against the disavowal's art,  
In my words, truth's unwavering might,  
For him, I played a guiding part.  
A brother, so close, I can hardly convey,  
I never foresaw it would end this way,

No need for excuses, the truth is clear,  
 Wishing all goodness, to chase away fear.  
 For his spirit, joy to be reborn,  
 Comradship, from one who often mourned,  
 To see his friend triumphant in the game,  
 A fast call, to douse the danger's flame.  
 We kept no empty promises, you see,  
 Illegals in the hands of those near thee,  
 Stories that echo how these tales conclude,  
 Unchanged, still me, though some friendships skewed.  
 I was not ever there, I must confess,  
 But know it wasn't that way to excess,  
 From him, I seek just one expectation,  
 For him to progress, an admiration.  
 He rushed, though patience I advised,  
 Thinking, perhaps, a friend's aid might be denied,  
 Not his fault, for in this city-wide,  
 They undermine each other, where suspicions reside.

Mersad and Hadi, two brothers with a shared passion for Persian rap, span an eleven-year age difference, with Mersad born in 1989 and Hadi in 2000. In their interview, Mersad mentioned that his favorite rap song, "*He Was Like a Brother to Me*," is by *Hichkas*, the song that is translated above. When questioned about his love for rap and what sets it apart from other music genres, Mersad explained that these songs resonate with their generation's literature. It's not the literature of those before or after them, that makes the connection feel profound. Mersad is particularly drawn to the first generation of Persian rappers, as their work speaks to his literary sensibilities. Each generation of

Persian rap has its unique literature and audience, which can sometimes make the lyrics of later generations challenging to decipher. Mersad recounted how Hadi once asked him about the meaning of "pink cigarette" in a Zed Bazi song, which isn't something you'd find in a dictionary. It's part of the culture you're raised with and familiarize yourself with over time. Furthermore, in rap songs, some beats punctuate the lyrics, creating a rhythm that Mersad likens to life's struggles. Life often involves trying, facing a setback, getting up, and trying again, much like the way beats punctuate the lyrics. Hadi elaborated by stating that rap isn't merely a musical genre; it's a way of thinking, behaving, and living. This lifestyle offers greater freedom to express oneself without censorship. You can be honest without fear of coming across as rude or crazy, which differs from the behavior of older generations that might censor themselves to show respect to their elders. Mersad concurred, highlighting how different generations of rap carry distinct values. He referenced Hichkas' song as an example, which emphasizes friendship and brotherhood above all. In contrast, he noted that newer generations of rappers emphasize self-respect and prioritize individuality. It's not a matter of good or bad, but a reflection of changing values. Mersad illustrated the point with two songs about Mahsa Amini, one by Sherivin Hajipour and the other by Hichkas. Despite sharing the same title and theme, the two songs are vastly different. Sherivin's evokes emotion and sentimentality, while Hichkas' instills feelings of anger and encourages action, reflecting age, language, and perspective differences.

When the interviewer inquired whether Mersad and Hadi had ever contemplated the forbidden nature of rap music and other aspects of their lives that conflict with Iran's ideological system, Mersad expressed that he had indeed reflected on it. However, these thoughts left him with a profound sense of emptiness. He conveyed a feeling of not truly being himself, even if he lives the life he desires covertly. Hadi chimed in, observing that one of the positive aspects of rap music is its role in reducing this duality and normalizing many aspects of life. It was also asked if they believed rap music had induced any other changes, to which they both responded affirmatively. Mersad explained that each person selects a particular aspect of Persian rap based on their needs, emotions, and life situation. Some resonate with rap songs about partying, drinking, or substance use, while others find solace in tracks that relate to their experiences of starting work at an early age instead of attending school. Yet, another group is drawn to songs that focus on success and hope because that's what they seek. Hence, everyone becomes an

audience of a specific subgenre of Persian rap that aligns with their unique circumstances. These personal transformations accumulate to create societal change, but it's challenging to pinpoint the exact nature of that change. Mersad suggested that comprehending the impact of Persian rap on Iranian society would necessitate years of in-depth study on the rappers, their audiences, and the experiences they share. The complex and multifaceted influence of rap music on Iranian society requires careful analysis to fully grasp.

The conversation with Mersad and Hadi, two brothers who share a love for Persian rap, is filled with a variety of emotions, experiences, and viewpoints. Their different ages give us a detailed view of how Persian rap resonates emotionally within the larger Iranian society. Here's what their interview reveals:

**Connection and Resonance:** Mersad feels a very strong connection to rap songs. He sees them as reflecting and showing the literature of their generation. The lyrics and themes in these songs mirror their real-life experiences, creating a deep connection between the listener and the music.

**Cultural Familiarity and Evolution:** The brothers talk about how the language and cultural references in rap lyrics have changed over time. This brings up feelings of nostalgia and a continuous journey of getting to know their culture. The "pink cigarette" they mention shows how cultural symbols can change and be important.

**Life's rhythms and struggles:** Mersad compares the beats in rap songs to life's struggles, highlighting resilience, perseverance, and the ups and downs of life.  
**Freedom and authenticity:** Hadi views rap as a lifestyle that allows for honest self-expression, emphasizing feelings of freedom, authenticity, and defiance against societal norms.

**Generation shifts in values:** Mersad notes how values in rap songs have evolved over generations, reflecting changes in society and the fluidity of societal values.

Conflict and duality: The brothers discuss the forbidden nature of rap in Iran, revealing internal conflict, duality, and the search for authenticity in a restrictive environment. Personal and social change: The brothers discuss the forbidden nature of rap in Iran, revealing internal conflict, duality, and the search for authenticity in a restrictive environment. Mersad talks about the various subgenres of Persian rap and how they relate to personal life situations, showing personal growth, validation, and the collective influence of these individual experiences on societal change.

To conclude we can say that, Mersad and Hadi's stories show us the complex emotions related to Persian rap music. Their opinions, influenced by their different ages, show how rap is a powerful tool for self-expression, thought, and social commentary. Rap is both a mirror, showing listeners' varied experiences, and a light, guiding personal and social development. Their conversation shows us the Persian rap's lasting, diverse effect on its audiences, emphasizing its role in making change and deep thinking in Iranian society.

Behold Iran, a timeless cat of seven millennia's grace,  
 Its vitality linked to the black blood beneath its face.  
 Four seasons paint its lands in ever-shifting hue,  
 Yet at its heart, you'll find a people kind and true.  
 Winter's snow may glisten with a claim of right,  
 But in their dreams, the people walk through day and night.  
 Here, the gallows sway as punishment severe,  
 For straying from the norm, it's a price held dear.  
 Demonstration, here, implies profound esteem,  
 Yet what you feel, alas, is regret's haunting gleam.  
 Religion oft invoked to justify the grimy chore,  
 In this land, a criminal, on every path you'll soar.  
 What words can one expect from this restless soul?

"Wrap your head, sister, lest my senses you unroll."

Post and status start with the prayer's sacred line,

Relegating knowledge, favor's star will shine.

A beard here, a collar there, and all is well,

Hide your blade and let silence break the spell.

The truth finds no refuge in this guarded sphere,

Amid countless woes, truth's whispers disappear.

A ten-year-old wields a blade with trembling hand,

Westernization's ailment now sweeps the land.

This is my heritage, my Iran, the land I've known,

Each day, it crumbles, more ruinously overthrown.

Why bear the whip upon your weary head,

When starless nights adorn the sky, widespread?

With blood of those who dwell in the starless night,

We scribe the tale of youths with futures caged in fright,

We scribe of our destiny lost, nowhere to be found,

Iran, the earth's cat, where life's breath does resound.

Our grandmothers withhold their tales of old,

For kids today, no happy endings told.

Here, favor trumps the toil one might aspire,

Fights in subways over seats set hearts afire.

Yet as they speak, they claim cultural might,

Their recreation, weed, in hazy twilight.

Love's not the spark in relationships we view,

But idleness, it seems, that binds the two.

Iran, from high above, a stunning sight,  
But seen from within, shadows cast their blight.  
The weighty matter, it's hard not to discuss,  
Taxi cabs serve as politics, the only fuss.  
An engineer reduced to a cashier's role,  
Work scarce, he seeks to fill an empty bowl.  
Our brilliant minds, they journey far and wide,  
In lands unknown, their talents don't subside.  
The pose of soldiers, each resident must wear,  
To find a path inside, one must go elsewhere.  
This is my legacy, my Iran's grandeur,  
A land descending daily, yet still obscure.  
The whip, it lingers, heavy on our head,  
In starless nights, our hopes and dreams we've shed.  
With blood of those in shadows, we decree,  
The tale of youths bound by prison's decree.  
Our fate, it's lost in the boundless sea,  
Iran, earth's enigmatic, elusive mystery.

The lyrics provided are from the song "Inja Irane" by Bahram. When the interviewer in the podcast inquired about a song that, in their view, most accurately portrays the social and political situation in Iran, Samira and Reza selected this particular track. Samira and Reza, a couple who share a fondness for Persian rap, both discovered this genre during their teenage years. Samira mentioned that, for a long time, she had no idea such a genre even existed. With no computer at home and limited to satellite television, the songs broadcast on Los Angeles channels were primarily pop music. Additionally, her religious school peers weren't into this genre, so she remained in the dark. The turning

point was a Nowruz gift from their parents: a CD player for her and her brother. They purchased a CD with a few rap tracks from a nearby store. Both siblings had to be cautious not to let their parents catch them listening, as the songs often contained profanity. What captivated her at the time might seem amusing now, but it was the use of bad words and curses, which gave her a sense of freedom. Reza's rap journey began in high school, too. He explained that rap held a magnetic allure for boys during their teenage years, a period when testosterone levels peaked. The songs, laden with curses and a gangster style, were highly enticing. Rap was the hottest topic in boys' high schools, where they enthusiastically dabbled in writing rap songs. They'd scour the internet for free beats, download them, and attempt their hand at rapping. The experiences varied between schools. In wealthier neighborhoods, they rented studios to record, while in his less affluent area, they'd rap on the streets, accompanied by sunflower seeds and cola. Reza reminisced about those days with nostalgia, filled with dreams of becoming successful rappers and changing the world. Much like Samira, they bought rap song CDs from underground stores. To maximize their limited resources, they'd each purchase a CD and cyclically exchange them. They maintained a notebook in which they transcribed the lyrics of the songs they listened to on one side and penned their rap lyrics on the other. Reza elaborates on what sets Rap e Farsi apart as a unique music genre, attributing its distinctiveness to the restrictive environment of Iran. He points out that few places in the world, perhaps only excluding North Korea, witness a government exerting such pervasive control over the minutiae of its citizens' lives. Rap music emerged in this challenging setting, where the artists were acutely aware of the inherent risks involved. Even during President Mohammad Khatami's relatively more liberal tenure, when political and social conditions eased somewhat, significant dangers still loomed, primarily because these artists dared to question prevailing norms. Iran's context was marked by religious fervours, where school days commenced with Quranic recitations and Islamic teachings held sway. In this milieu, the likes of rapper Hichkas were boldly proclaiming, "God, wake up, I need to have a conversation with you," even expressing anger toward the divine. In those years, they challenged not only the Islamic government but also the very fabric of Iranian culture, as religion still held a significant place in people's lives. This was a profound cultural upheaval, as they addressed a devout populace. For many, such dissent raised unspoken questions about the permissibility of listening to this music, with fears of sin and divine retribution lingering in their minds. In essence, within a society as challenging and tightly controlled as Iran,

these rappers were not just pioneers but also exceptionally courageous and ahead of their time.

Samira further emphasized that it wasn't solely about bravery and being ahead of their time; it was the fact that they reaped no tangible rewards from their efforts. To safeguard themselves, these artists had to keep their identities anonymous, making it perilous to operate in the public eye. Consequently, they did not seek fame or financial gain. They couldn't sell their songs or albums, nor could they perform in concerts and sell tickets. It was a period marked by pure intentions, particularly in the first generation of Rap e Farsi. This purity of purpose resonated with people, especially the younger generation, who began to embrace them. In those days, the internet was not as ubiquitous as it is today, and many, like Samira and Reza, lacked access to computers. However, with the proliferation of the internet, a connection between rappers and their audiences emerged. Nowadays, you can comment or tweet to your favorite rapper, but back then, there was no such relationship. This aspect holds great significance for artists of any discipline because, for a time, these rappers could not even be certain that their work was being heard or appreciated. When the interviewer inquired about their expectations from a rapper or a rap song and whether they believed rap music had prompted any change in Iran, they both responded with a resounding affirmation. Reza explained that Iranian society is not psychologically healthy, and this, in his view, was not a cause for shame. In a society as deeply troubled as Iran's, mental health often meant one was either a psychopath or an exception, and perhaps even the source of the societal illness. Rap songs began to address these underlying issues, from cultural sickness to government corruption and all the factors contributing to the state of the nation. Reza argued that the first essential step toward change was awareness and understanding of what was wrong, and he credited the rappers with shedding light on these issues in a way that even psychologists could not. They provided the knowledge, serving as the initial catalyst for change. For instance, one of the problems prevalent in Iranian society, both in the past and today, was the issue of honour. The belief that a woman's virtue was a man's responsibility was deeply ingrained, and while the government officially encouraged this notion, it had long been a part of Iranian culture. Iran was a country where if a father or husband murdered his daughter or wife, he often went unpunished. However, if a woman killed a man while defending herself from rape, she might face the death penalty. These

real-life examples illuminated the profoundly skewed nature of Iranian society, where men felt ownership over women, and rap music highlighted these injustices. It prompted people to question why such double standards existed. If it was acceptable for a man to have a girlfriend, why wasn't it acceptable for his sister to have a boyfriend? This illumination, along with the subsequent questioning of societal norms, was the most significant change that rap music had catalyzed in Iran. Samira echoed Reza's sentiments and emphasized that rap music played a pivotal role in shattering a taboo concerning Iranian traditions. In Iran, there has been a deeply ingrained belief that tradition is synonymous with goodness and that challenging tradition is inherently wrong. Rap music, however, emerged as a catalyst for questioning these deeply rooted cultural norms. She explained that rap music was instrumental in breaking the chains of tradition, underscoring that not all customs and practices were inherently virtuous. In essence, it encouraged people to question the status quo and not be bound by unyielding dogma. It reminded Iranians that they, and their society, were not immovable like stone; they had the capacity for change and progress. Rap music, in this context, was a call to introspection and an invitation to transcend the limitations of tradition in pursuit of a more positive and dynamic society. It highlighted the importance of adapting and evolving without being beholden to dogmatic adherence to every tradition, particularly when some of these traditions may no longer serve the greater good.

The talk with Samira and Reza, who both love Persian rap, gives a deep look into how this music affects emotions and society in Iran. They share their own experiences and thoughts on rap's wider social effects. This gives a complex view of the emotional world that Persian rap has moved through and shaped. Here are the key points from their interview:

**Discovery and Freedom:** Samira's first experience with Persian rap brought feelings of discovery and curiosity. She found a sense of rebellion in enjoying this bold music secretly, breaking away from societal norms.

**Nostalgia and Youthful Dreams:** Reza reminisces about his high school days, filled with dreams of becoming a rapper. He fondly recalls friendships, shared ambitions, and the joy of exchanging CDs, embodying youthful hope.

**Courage and Defiance:** Their conversation highlights the bravery of rappers in Iran's restrictive environment. These artists defy both government and cultural norms, showing resilience and sparking societal reflection.

**Purity and Connection:** Samira highlights the early rappers' pure intentions. They didn't aim for fame or money, creating a sense of authenticity and connection. This sincerity struck a chord with listeners, building a bond beyond the era's limited technology and communication.

**Awareness and Catalyst for Change:** Reza points out rap's role in shining a light on societal issues, from mental health to cultural norms. This brings feelings of enlightenment and the possibility for change. Rap became a spotlight, exposing societal problems and sparking introspection and conversation.

**Challenging Traditions:** Samira reflects on how rap music questions and challenges deep-rooted Iranian traditions. This evokes a sense of empowerment and progress, pushing for a more just society. Rap acts as a call to action, encouraging listeners to question, adapt, and grow.

In conclusion, Samira and Reza's stories show how Persian rap has transformed Iranian society. Their insights reveal rap as both a mirror, showing the complexities of Iranian life, and a catalyst, igniting conversations, self-reflection, and change. Their experiences and thoughts make it clear that Persian rap has deeply affected individuals and significantly influenced societal discussions. It challenges established norms and inspires a vision for a more forward-thinking and inclusive Iran.

This verse, a gift for my brother Hamid, a melody of heartbeats.

Our music, a message for the ones who've listened,

For Hamid, who should know, Iran's spirit stands with him.

In shadows, we shall seek revenge, unyielding and untamed.

For each of our children lost, a Basiji shall bear the price,  
These rappers, soldiers in Iran's brigade, must understand,  
London's shelter no longer, fearless faces greet the day,  
Street art, a silent crime, and rap the rebel's song.  
From a distant land, I'm not immune to my homeland's plight,  
The pain of my people, etched within my soul's domain.  
Why do the dreams of geniuses slumber beneath the earth,  
Unanswered questions, the rights we never gained,  
And who are these armed figures ruling our domain?  
How many children lie uncouneted in the streets, their lives unjustly slain?  
I am Iran, scarred deep within, yearning for liberty's embrace,  
For every martyr who descends below shall rise a thousand strong,  
But in Kahrizak Prison's dark abyss, where innocence succumbs,  
The shadows hold their secrets and darkness veils their shame.  
Commander, your fate, sealed in the soil of Baghdad's name,  
And for those who stand with Iran's supreme, the words are clear,  
With your turbans or your heads, justice shall have its way,  
A reckoning for the young blood spilled, for destiny will reclaim.  
The hero, Voria Ghafouri, not the traitors who pursued a different game,  
In the name of change, we rise, united in our stand,  
With fervor in our hearts, for the crimson ties that bind,  
To the future we aspire, where justice takes the reins.

The translated lyrics above are from the song "Inconsiderate" by 021 Kids. They dedicated this song to the memory of Hamidreza Rouhi, a young man who tragically lost his life during the protests of autumn 2022 in Iran. Mahyar, one of the individuals who

was interviewed in the podcast, brought up this song during our conversation. Mahyar, Mohammad Javad, and Alireza, another group of friends who share a passion for Persian rap, shared their experiences of how they got into rap music, which closely paralleled the stories of other enthusiasts. However, their views on whether rappers and Persian rap music could drive change in Iranian politics or culture were distinct. Mahyar believed that the question about the potential impact of rappers and Persian rap on society was somewhat narrow. He expressed the idea that the relationship between artists, their art, and the audience was a complex and interdependent ecosystem. He argued that it was crucial to consider not only the changes rappers and their songs could bring but also the educational dynamic between rappers and their audience. Mahyar underscored the reciprocal process of mutual education, stating that if one side stopped educating the other, it would result in an unbalanced and incomplete system. Mohammad Javad echoed this perspective, suggesting that Iranians often desired change but primarily in other aspects or individuals, not within themselves. He pointed out the common belief that people deemed themselves perfect and were reluctant to introspect. This inclination, he believed, also permeated the Iranian rap scene. While many recognized the need for improvement, there was a tendency for fans to become fiercely protective of their favorite rappers, resisting any critique. Alireza supported the notion that there had been limited transformation in the content of Persian rap over the years. He observed significant advancements in the quality and musical aspects but minimal change in content. Alireza attributed this stagnation to the cultural arrogance of believing in their perfection, noting that this mentality led many rappers to resist change, as they saw little need for it.

Despite their critical perspectives on the Iranian rap scene, this group of friends had a profound appreciation for rap music, which they regarded as their favorite genre. Mohammad Javad articulated this sentiment by emphasizing that rap music possessed a unique quality absent in other music genres in Iran. He explained that genres like jazz and rock, while enjoyed by some, often required a certain level of elitism or particular tastes that did not resonate with the broader Iranian population. Traditional music was often perceived as outdated, typically appealing to older generations. On the other hand, pop music was criticized for being heavily influenced by producers and the government, limiting artists' creative freedom and self-expression. However, Mohammad Javad found that rap music transcended these limitations. It was characterized by both widespread popularity and a simplicity that made it accessible to individuals from diverse

backgrounds. Unlike rock or jazz, it did not demand elitism, and it was not confined to traditional or outdated themes. Most importantly, it operated independently, free from external influences or constraints, allowing it to soar like a free-spirited bird, unrestricted by the dictates of producers or the government. This, he believed, was what made rap a uniquely liberating genre in Iran. Nonetheless, the group's criticism was rooted in a desire for change and improvement within the genre. They acknowledged that rap had brought about significant change in its early days, challenging taboos and fostering honesty and self-expression. However, as the years passed, the themes in rap had remained largely unchanged, raising questions about whether it should evolve and address new issues. Mahyar added that in a critical political climate, Iranian celebrities and artists had a pivotal role to play. During the tragic events surrounding Mahsa Amini's death and the subsequent protests, celebrities were compelled to choose sides. Some pop artists continued with their work, seemingly aligned with the government, while certain rappers who were previously focused on social and political issues persisted in their activism. However, there was another group of rappers, often associated with themes such as gangster rap or materialism, who remained silent during these tumultuous times. Mahyar observed that their inaction, often limited to changing their Instagram profile pictures to black, spoke volumes about their alignment with the government or their reluctance to bear any cost for their country and its people. In contrast, there was a third group of rappers who adapted to the changing political and social landscape. Some began to engage with social and political issues within their music. Among these, the most commendable were the ones who genuinely transformed their artistic focus. Mahyar cited the example of 021 Kids, previously known for their gangster rap style and songs about drugs and a criminal lifestyle. Following the tragic death of Hamidreza Rouhi in the protests after Mahsa Amini's demise, 021 Kids released a song titled "Inconsiderable" as a tribute to him. They did this out of genuine respect and to honor the memory of one of their most dedicated fans, rather than to capitalize on the situation for fame. Mohammad Javad concurred with Mahyar, highlighting the profound transformation in Iran following Mahsa Amini's tragic death. He likened it to the experience of losing a loved one to death; while life inevitably goes on, the death of that person brings about a fundamental change in those who mourn the loss. Similarly, he expected rap music to evolve and not remain the same in the wake of Mahsa Amini's passing.

He held a different perspective on Mahyar's criticism of rappers who had shifted their focus to social and political issues, possibly driven by the desire for fame. In Mohammad Javad's view, such a transition was a positive development, even if their initial intentions might not align with the audience's preferences. He believed that when artists began to explore and engage with these themes consistently, their evolution was genuine. In essence, they became the voices they were initially emulating, reflecting authentic change, albeit through a different process. However, he clarified that he was not advocating for all party or gangster rappers to necessarily start rapping about social and political issues. His primary desire as an audience member was to witness a shift in their perspectives and views. He pointed to the stark contrast between the events of the past year, where young girls were tragically killed in their pursuit of bodily freedom, and the current state of some rap lyrics. Mohammad Javad found it disheartening that certain rappers still employed sexist and threatening language in their songs, as if they had not absorbed the lessons from the real-world tragedies. Given that artists serve as influential figures in society, particularly among the younger generation, he emphasized the importance of setting a better example for the youth. Rappers held a responsibility to promote positive change, especially when it came to sensitive topics like women's rights and gender equality.

The interview of the podcast with Mahyar, Mohammad Javad, and Alireza gives us a detailed look into the emotions and social aspects of Persian rap in Iran. Their combined insights, along with their personal views, create a clear image of how Persian rap affects emotions and might influence Iranian society. Here are the important points of this interview:

**Complexity and interdependence:** Mahyar talks about the deep connection between artists, their music, and the audience. He stresses the need for a balanced relationship, where both artists and listeners shape the music. This idea brings up feelings of mutual respect, learning, and growth.

**Self-reflection and critique:** Mohammad Javad points out how some fans hesitate to critically evaluate their favorite rappers. This observation brings up issues of loyalty, defensiveness, and a reluctance to embrace change.

Stagnation and desire for evolution: Alireza discusses the slow evolution in Persian rap's content. He expresses frustration and a wish for the genre to keep up with societal changes. This shows a desire for growth and adaptation in the music.

Libration and authenticity: Mohammad Javad also talks about the unique aspects of rap in Iran. He sees it as a form of liberation and authenticity, breaking free from societal norms. He appreciates rap's ability to connect with many people while staying true to its roots.

Political engagement and responsibility: Mahyar criticizes some rappers that they are not speaking up during important political events. This shows his disappointment and belief that artists should use their influence for good.

Transformation and authenticity: The conversation about the real and fundamental changes in some rappers, like 021 Kids, in reaction to social events brings feelings of respect and hope. It shows admiration for artists who genuinely evolve with society. Desire for positive change: Mohammad Javad talks about the importance of rappers updating their views, especially after recent tragedies. He highlights the urgency for artists to be more aware and respectful in their music, calling for positive change in society.

In summary, Mahyar, Mohammad Javad, and Alireza show us a detailed view of how Persian rap affects emotions and society in Iran. Their talks highlight how the genre can mirror, question, and influence social norms and values. They recognize Persian rap's role in breaking taboos and promoting self-expression. Yet, they also wish for the genre to grow and better tackle current issues. Their combined story shows the strong impact of Persian rap, its ability to inspire positive change, and the duty of artists to influence Iran's future.

Every morning when I awaken to the world's embrace,

I find solace in the presence of my feline friend,

Gathering my thoughts, I tie back my hair with grace,  
Turning my mirror upside down, my introspection begins.  
Beneath my eyes, I trace the contours of white,  
Within, I read the rhythms of a beating heart so true,  
It whispers to me, "It's another day, take flight,"  
In my chest, I bear the day's promise, born anew.  
Time, I need not wear upon my breast,  
No contest for victory or loss to confess,  
It's the searing hatred that puts me to the test,  
The chill of human hearts, their coldness I address.  
Releasing the arrogant two-legged form we bear,  
In the city's slumber, even the prosecutor sleeps,  
The president, too, must lay aside his care,  
For within our homes, captivity slowly creeps.  
Behold, O humanity, the captive's plight,  
The consequence of lies and games, a blight,  
You're the one who aimed, causing doves to take flight,  
Yet questions why the bats migrate through the night.  
One day, I shall release all earthly tether,  
I'll recite poetry in the middle of the street,  
If someone asks, "What's wrong?" I'd gather,  
It's merely human error, in life's theater complete.  
What's that you say? I, too, a product of your endeavor,  
Fed on your whims, your desires, your ceaseless feast,  
You squander the nation's treasures, your endearment

I save, the wealth of others I guard, at least.  
Let not your amazement overshadow your fear,  
We may not reach you, that much is clear,  
But dread the day your child draws near,  
And asks, "Dad, who's this song's voice they hear?"  
Hate corrodes the mind, a relentless bane,  
Ideologies consume, driving minds insane,  
Show a hint of love, even amidst disdain,  
This elixir shall ease your heart's pain.  
You printed endless papers, lies upon lies,  
Stripping stars from the skies, in disguise,  
Did you ever walk 'mongst your fellow prize?  
I am that which faith claims shall never demise.  
"Your Shia shall never be humiliated," they say,  
Yet I'm just a soul, on this rocky way,  
Angry, distraught, my feelings in disarray,  
A misstep, a stumble, led me to this display.  
The flowers in my garden, so short they stand,  
Deprived of the light, they need a helping hand,  
Forsook the yard, the shelter of this land,  
Home is more than a place, it's where we understand.  
Speak out freely, beyond the nation's gate,  
Illuminate the meaning of light in darkest fate,  
Hate still resides within, I can't abate,  
No one reached out, left me to navigate.

From the airport's path to the grave's still night,  
 They escort me in my dreams' meandering flight,  
 "Please, Peyman, don't depart, hold on tight,"  
 "Why, Ehsan, leave our homeland's sight?"  
 "Where did Azin vanish in the twilight?"  
 Sister, brother, heed this warning's might.  
 They say there are but a few of our kind,  
 Wishing the toll of deaths and blunders declined,  
 In the alchemy of verse, our unity enshrined,  
 For poetry remains the nation's soul, its sign.

The song "Error" by Navid is the track mentioned above, and it holds a special place in Amir's heart according to the interview of Piade podcast with him. Amir hails from a deeply religious family background, sharing some insights into his upbringing. His father, despite his religious education, chose not to wear religious attire. He believed in the separation of politics and religion and did not wish to convey support for the regime through his clothing. Additionally, Amir's uncle was a martyr in the Iran-Iraq war, and like his father, he went to protect his country rather than to defend the Islamic Republic. This background offers a glimpse into Amir's upbringing within a religious family that was not aligned with the Islamic Republic's ideology. Amir explained that because of the traditionally strained relationship between Islam and music, he did not have much exposure to music while growing up. Their household lacked satellite television, limiting their access to music to channels operated by the government. However, with the advent of Walkmans, music listening underwent a revolution. It transformed the act of music enjoyment from a public to a private experience. For Amir, this opened the door to music in general, and with rap music being in vogue at the time, he quickly gravitated toward it. He admired the nationalistic themes that some early rap artists embraced, which resonated deeply with his own strong sense of nationalism. Despite his siblings migrating from Iran, Amir chose to stay, guided by a strong sense of responsibility to his homeland. He felt that people have a duty to contribute positively to their country and take proactive measures to create favorable conditions. The challenges of living in Iran, where truth

often takes a back seat, can be daunting. However, Amir appreciated the profound beauty of honesty in a society where it's sometimes more convenient to be dishonest. In this context, rap music in Iran shines as an embodiment of honesty in a society that often encourages deceit. Amir mentioned his fondness for nationalistic songs, although he clarified that he did not refer to songs produced by government-backed artists such as Hamid Sefat. Amir believed that these songs lacked depth and genuine emotion. Instead, his favorite song, "Error," truly exemplified honesty. He pointed out that the government has intertwined various values like religion, nationalism, and more with its authority. Due to widespread government corruption, people have started to resent these values. For example, some now question why the families of martyrs receive certain benefits like reduced taxes when the support provided by the country seems small in comparison to the sacrifices made. However, due to governmental propaganda, many citizens are under the impression that martyrs were primarily defending the Islamic Republic, not Iran. In this context, rap music carries a crucial responsibility to separate these values from the government's influence. It reminds people that these values transcend the regime, highlighting the beauty of these shared ideals. Amir's narrative offers a rich tapestry of emotions, intertwining his personal upbringing with the broader socio-political landscape of Iran. Through his reflections on music, particularly rap, we gain insights into the emotional undercurrents that shape his perceptions and experiences.

**Pride and Responsibility:** Amir's description of his family background, particularly his father's and uncle's choices, evokes feelings of pride, nationalism, and a sense of duty. Their decisions to prioritize their country over the regime's ideology resonate deeply with Amir's own commitment to Iran.

**Curiosity and Liberation:** The introduction of Walkmans and the subsequent shift from public to private music consumption evoke feelings of curiosity, discovery, and liberation. For Amir, this technological shift represented a newfound freedom to explore and connect with music on a personal level.

**Resonance and Nationalism:** Amir's gravitation towards rap music with nationalistic themes underscores feelings of resonance, patriotism, and a deep-rooted connection to his homeland. His decision to stay in Iran, despite the challenges, further amplifies his strong sense of nationalism.

**Appreciation for Honesty:** In a society where deceit is often encouraged, Amir's admiration for the honesty embodied in rap music stands out. This sentiment evokes feelings of appreciation, longing, and a desire for authenticity in a world riddled with falsehoods.

**Critique and Depth:** Amir's distinction between genuine nationalistic songs and those produced by government-backed artists highlights feelings of discernment, critique, and a yearning for depth and authenticity in music.

**Separation of Values:** Amir's reflections on the government's intertwining of values like religion and nationalism with its authority evoke feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and a desire for clarity. His emphasis on rap music's role in disentangling these values from the regime's influence underscores the genre's power to illuminate and educate.

In conclusion, Amir's narrative provides a poignant exploration of the emotional complexities associated with music, nationalism, and societal values in Iran. His journey, from a sheltered upbringing to a deep appreciation for the honesty and authenticity of rap music, serves as a testament to the genre's transformative potential. Through rap, Amir finds solace, clarity, and a renewed sense of purpose, highlighting the genre's profound impact on individual lives and the broader Iranian society.

The judge, enamored by me, did inquire,

Why stand before me, why such desire?

It's not my first complaint, please lend an ear,

The documents vanished, or did a thief appear?

Perhaps the goat consumed what I hold dear.

When young, they told me, seek knowledge or a mate,

Why stick to hijab, your plight exacerbate?

The world's impure, yet we cannot incinerate.  
"Sigheh," they whisper, a practice they equate,  
To making meat halal, love's twists of fate,  
Oh, how I yearn we could be like the feline,  
Consuming our offspring, in ways most arcane,  
In bins, we find infants, lost in disdain.  
Now all minds dwell beneath their own attire,  
Desires they harbor, aflame with fire,  
"I'm wrong, not Adam," that's what they require,  
Eve's manipulation, they do conspire,  
This mentality, a heavy shroud entire,  
In a society where affirmation's a theme,  
Disagreement brands you, in this grand scheme,  
The good and the bad, an illusion, it seems.  
From birth, as a woman in this land I reside,  
A label upon me, like merchandise in a stride,  
My father, a vendor, my husband, a guide,  
The judge, now intrigued, the door must be wide,  
"Please try to understand," to the judge, I confide,  
"My husband is violent, my life's in a slide.  
He locks me indoors, in pain, I'm beside,  
A victim of abuse, I must confide.  
Then, in a taxi, my troubles don't hide,  
A touch that's unwelcome, I'm pushed to the side,  
But silence I keep, for I can't override,

In this world, they'd say I'm wrong, don't decide.

Judge, a sex slave who cooks, is my life's stride,

Please answer me, from this man, can I slide?

A divorce from this torment, I'm terrified."

The judge, in his fervor, said, "Heed my command,"

"Now, be still and reveal, on my desk, take a stand.

The podcast has interviewed with a pair of twins, Sadra and Sima. One song that has had a profound impact on Sima is "The Judge Loved Me." Sima, a lawyer, attested to the immense challenges faced by women living in Iran, describing it as one of the most difficult places for women. She passionately advocates for women seeking divorce from abusive marriages, emphasizing the uphill battle they face, with little favor from the system. She believes that women must support each other when no one else will, and she commended "The Judge Loved Me" for its powerful depiction of the struggles in Iranian courts. Creating art around such issues, in her view, is a brilliant endeavor. When the interviewer inquired about their introduction to rap music, Sadra explained that their family had a strong inclination toward classical music and provided an educated environment. They were encouraged to learn classical music, including piano. Their exposure to rap music came relatively late. Sadra described a transformative period in his life following the election of Ahmadinejad and the political turmoil surrounding Mousavi's challenge. Before this, he had immersed himself in foreign music and literature. However, his perspective underwent a significant shift when he found himself amidst university protests. He realized how little he knew about his own country and the circumstances that led to the prevailing situation. To bridge this knowledge gap, he began to delve into the culture and history of Iran, which included exploring its music. This transition may seem surprising, given their background, but their upbringing was marked by strict parental guidance, academic rigor, and a lack of time for anything beyond their structured schedules. Before university, Sima was the only childhood friend Sadra had. This is how they both became acquainted with and developed a fondness for rap music, with Sadra serving as the gateway through which Sima embarked on this journey.

Interviewer inquired about the rise of hip hop and its popularity in Iran. Sima explained, "Rap music has always been the music of resistance worldwide, a genre embraced by marginalized communities and individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged. This narrative resonates with Iran as well. In different parts of the world, resistance and art have been inseparable. For instance, in Iran, we've had poets like Akhavan writing about the country's situation and musicians like Farhad Mehrad singing songs like 'Friday' that depict the tragic events that took place during Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's reign. However, during that time, these expressions of resistance and protest were channeled through Iranian pop or traditional music genres, which are traditionally oriented towards themes like love and sadness. These genres had to adapt to address the demands of resistance because artists couldn't stay silent. When rap was introduced to Iranian society, it provided an ideal form for conveying these resistance themes. This, I believe, is one of the reasons rap became successful in Iran." Sadra added another perspective, saying, "Another significant aspect is that, traditionally, a certain level of affluence and cultural elitism has been associated with understanding and appreciating art. In most societies, genres like classical music require a trained ear, knowledge of major and minor elements, and traditional music necessitates familiarity with the *Dastgahs*.<sup>10</sup> Yet, this isn't the case with rap music. While it still requires some societal context to fully grasp its content, rap largely revolves around the lyrics and predominantly employs straightforward language, making it accessible to a broader audience. Also, historically, class distinctions were evident in Iranian protests, as those who engaged in protests for issues like freedom of speech and liberty usually belonged to the upper or upper-middle class. The lower class, busy with their daily struggles, often had little time to contemplate these issues. However, the economic hardships faced by people in Iran in recent years have led to widespread discontent. People are angry and hungry, and as a result, even those from the lower class have joined the protests. Rap music captures their struggles, articulates their concerns in their language, and resonates with their experiences, making it a popular choice in Iran." When the interviewer asked about how this genre of music affects their lives as Iranian citizens, Sadra explained, "As I mentioned earlier, I started listening to Persian rap quite late, and it prompted me to reflect more on my country and the challenges that our people face. For instance, when I hear songs addressing the struggles that women endure, it provides insight into the

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<sup>10</sup>. *Dastgāh* is the conventional musical framework in Persian art music, which was standardized in the 1800s as Persian music moved away from the *Maqam* modal system.

difficulties women experience in Iran, even for us as men." Sara chimed in, concurring with Sadra, and added, "Rap music offers more than just a means of resistance; it serves as an invaluable source of information for understanding our society, culture, and history. It unveils facets of our reality that aren't typically found in textbooks."

Sadra and Sima, twins, are deeply connected to their homeland and its music. They offer insights into Iran's emotional and socio-political landscape. Their stories resonate with many Iranians. Here are the main points from their interview:

**Empathy and Advocacy:** Sima, a lawyer helping women in abusive marriages, shows deep empathy and a sense of responsibility. Her praise for the song "The Judge Loved Me" highlights the role of art in addressing social issues. This brings up feelings of frustration and determination.

**Discovery and Transformation:** Sadra's path from a protected childhood to understanding his country's complexities is a tale of discovery and change. His involvement in university protests and his dive into Iranian culture and history mark a significant emotional awakening.

**Resistance and Resonance:** Sima views rap as a global music of resistance that aligns with Iran's socio-political story. She feels a sense of solidarity and defiance. She draws parallels between historical poets and today's rap artists, showing the lasting spirit of protest and hope. **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Sadra sees rap as more accessible than elite music genres. He believes it brings inclusivity and unity, appealing to people across different social classes. This shows rap's power to express the emotions of a diverse population. **Reflection and Insight:** Both twins appreciate rap's ability to reflect and inform. They feel it encourages introspection and curiosity, offering a deeper understanding of societal issues. Rap sheds light on realities often missed in mainstream narratives, showing its emotional and informative depth. **Connection and Understanding:** They value rap as a way to grasp societal challenges, including gender issues. This brings feelings of empathy and enlightenment. They recognize rap's role in revealing hidden aspects of Iranian society, highlighting its emotional and informative impact.

In summary, Sadra and Sima's story offers a clear view of how rap music deeply affects Iran. Their journey shows personal growth and societal awareness. Rap music brings out many feelings, like empathy, defiance, self-reflection, and understanding. Their experiences show rap's strong influence on individuals and its power to express a nation's shared emotions.

One day, success is going to roll our way,  
But every time we feel close, there's a price to pay,  
Hamid, Ali, and the mother who made us strong,  
This is our journey, this is where we belong.  
Dad's gone, and Ma held us close and dear,  
Both a father and mother, through every tear,  
Now it's my turn, I'm holding up the weight,  
Gotta keep the promise, can't afford to be late.  
We've known hardship, that's the honest truth,  
But in the end, we'll rise like a phoenix from the soot,  
We'll find success, that's the ultimate goal,  
And we'll rise above, body and soul.  
Ali's got dreams, as high as the sky,  
Love as a law, not a hidden, hushed cry,  
We'll leave our struggles and heartaches behind,  
In this realm of love, in the clouds we'll find.  
Tonight, like every night, it's just us and our dreams,  
On the street curb, beneath the lamplight's gleam,

Three young men, in search of a way,  
To make it big, to seize the day.  
Saman's on the phone, love in his voice,  
Promises of strength, a love of our choice,  
Ali cuts through, "Is she what you need?"  
He nods with a passion, he's full of creed.  
With a fervor like East and West for Syria's land,  
Like the oppressed yearning to take a stand,  
Success is coming; we're on the right track,  
We'll stand together, ain't no turning back.  
Life might be a struggle, but it's where we thrive,  
Love, passion, and dreams, in us, they're alive,  
No matter how tough, we'll stick to the seams,  
With brothers at our side and dreams in our dreams.  
So, let's not falter; it's a time for glee,  
When we reach the top, we'll live large and fancy-free,  
Mr. Groom's treat, we'll be dining with style,  
We're the kings of our destiny, we'll go the extra mile.  
Tonight, like every night, just us and our dreams,  
On the street curb, beneath the lamplight's gleam,  
We've got each other, our spirits will rise,  
Shining like stars in the vast, dark skies

Mohammad Hossein, Morteza, and Farhad are three close friends who did an interview with the podcast. The song translated above is "The Street Curb and Dreams" by Soroush Hichkas. When the interviewer asked each of them about their favorite song,

they chuckled and said, "Let us tell you about our anthem," referring to this very song. According to them, the song tells the story of three friends from the same neighborhood who gather on the street curb to discuss their struggles and dreams. Morteza shared that this song resonates with them because it mirrors their own lives. The three of them have known each other since childhood, growing up in a modest neighborhood. They never had many material possessions – no gaming consoles or bicycles. Instead, they had their street, a plastic ball, makeshift goals fashioned from stones, and each other. As kids, they played football tirelessly during summer and, after school, all year round. Mohammad Hossein added that they've remained the same at their core, just older. Now, they work instead of attending school, and during their holidays, they still gather in the same street, just as the song describes. They began listening to rap music together in high school.

When it was asked if their fondness for this genre stemmed from its relatability, Farhad responded that it's more about seeing rappers as part of their own community. They feel like these artists are their friends, even though they've never met. Rappers, for them, are intertwined with the fabric of society, experiencing the same trials and tribulations. These artists have a unique talent for translating those shared experiences into songs that tell the stories of their lives. Farhad elaborated that in art, there's an unnameable quality that distinguishes something heartfelt from something artificial. For example, in "The Street Curb and Dreams," it's clear that Soroush Hichkas must have experienced sitting with friends on a street, discussing their dreams and hardships while covertly sipping alcohol from water bottles to avoid suspicion. These personal details couldn't have been portrayed with such authenticity if he hadn't lived those moments. He continued with a humorous note, imagining himself discussing skiing in the Tochal mountains. He jokingly stated that it wouldn't take long for someone to realize he'd never been there or skied in his life by the second sentence, highlighting the importance of authenticity and genuine experiences in art. Morteza also mentioned another song that had a big influence on him, he explained that it's one of the songs that moved him to tears the very first time he heard it, and he believes it's one of the most heartfelt songs he's ever encountered. Here is the translation of "Gift" by Reza Pishro, paraphrased in English:

Omid, my little bro, you're asking why I've been gone?

You wonder why Reza ain't with you? It's time I put you on.  
You want the story, well, gather 'round, let me explain.  
Omid, you know nada 'bout my past, so let me drop the rain.  
A decade back, it was a snowy winter's day,  
Dad left us, man, it hit us hard, no other way.  
Mom, a lonely woman, struggling on her own,  
In our society, they talk trash, it's so well-known.  
She heard two voices, one mine, sayin' I'm so hungry,  
Askin', "Where's our pops?" man, it hurt so badly.  
The other voice was yours, cryin' out for food,  
I stopped my cries, felt your pain, that's when I understood.  
Mom couldn't make it, alone, life was tough as nails,  
I had to work instead of school, makin' cash in sales.  
Still, it weren't enough, and that's the real deal,  
So mom had to remarry, dude, just to help us heal.  
But I couldn't stand it, I couldn't stand our stepdad,  
So I left you on your own, things were lookin' so bad.  
I was down, didn't wanna live, felt real low,  
But now I'm stronger, Omid, and I want you to know.  
Don't be sad, you're in my heart, this much is true,  
I'll search the world for gifts, Omid, I got you.  
But right now, I gotta go, please don't hold me back,  
I wanna break free from this nightmare, that's a fact.  
I need revenge on those who left us in the cold,  
Who hurt us when we were poor, that story's old.

Now that we're doin' better, they wanna claim our life,  
But I remember when they left, and it cut like a knife.  
That Friday morn at seven, when our stepdad said,  
He won't raise another man's kids, it filled me with dread.  
He kicked me out when I was just a child, young and wild,  
Now he calls, he wishes me well, but I won't reconcile.  
I don't need his wishes, or people like him around,  
They weren't there when times were tough, that's the lowdown.  
Now they wanna be part of our good days, our success,  
Omid, don't follow my path, you're not alone, I guess.  
You got a brother, I'm your wall, always there,  
Even though I'm not with you now, you can trust I care.  
You can count on me, my little bro, to the end,  
Lean on me whenever, Omid, I'm your lifelong friend

Morteza explains that in rap songs, artists can openly share their personal and family stories and experiences. In societies of the periods when these songs are published, such vulnerability was often seen as a sign of weakness, leading to ridicule, pity, dishonor, and negative judgment from those around them. These narratives delve into the darkest corners of the mind and thoughts, akin to revealing them on a psychoanalyst's couch. It's as if the artist stands bare before their audience, unafraid of superficial judgments. The subjects of these songs cover a wide range of personal fears, deep-seated complexes, grievances against parents, friends, and relatives, family disputes, unusual thoughts, personal grudges, and even matters as serious as attempted suicide or running away from home. Rappers talk about real-life experiences, the very things many of us grapple with but are often hesitant to share, unsure of how we'll be judged. Rappers' openness about these topics empowers their audience to embrace honesty.

Morteza shared a personal story, admitting that only his closest friends know he was raised by a stepfather and faced numerous difficulties. For years, he concealed this fact, saying he lived with his grandma to keep her company. Then, Reza Pishro released a song discussing his struggles with his stepfather without any shame, even taking pride in the hardships he'd endured. When Morteza first heard this song, it touched him deeply because it was like a wound he had been trying to forget, but he realized that someone else was carrying the same wound with pride. It taught him that there's no shame in facing challenging life situations, which goes beyond just being a motto. Farhad agreed with Morteza and added another key element that often gets overlooked—the theme of hope prevalent in Persian rap. Amid personal struggles and the challenging state of the country, these songs frequently emphasize how these hardships can make individuals stronger, instilling a sense of resilience and determination never to give up, but to stand and fight.

Mohammad Hossein, Morteza, and Farhad's story gives us a deep look into Iran's emotions today, especially through rap music. They share their memories and thoughts on songs that really hit home for them, showing feelings that many in Iran can relate to. Here are the main points from their interview:

**Nostalgia and Friendship:** They fondly remember their childhood days, playing soccer in the streets. This brings back feelings of nostalgia and the strong bonds of friendship from simpler times.

**Relatable and Real:** Morteza really connects with the song "The Street Curb and Dreams." It talks about friends sharing their dreams and problems, which is just like their own life stories. This makes the song feel very real and relatable.

**Community and Togetherness:** Farhad feels that rappers are like a part of their community. This creates a sense of belonging and unity, and shared experiences. He

feels like these artists are friends, even though they've never met, showing a strong emotional connection between the listeners and the rappers.

**Vulnerability and Strength:** Morteza opens up about his past and how Reza Pishro's song changed how he sees himself. This shows feelings of being vulnerable, but also finding strength and accepting oneself. Rappers sharing their personal stories helps listeners face and accept their own realities.

**Hope and Fighting Spirit:** Farhad talks about hope being a big theme in Persian rap. This brings out feelings of optimism and the will to keep going, no matter the obstacles. The message is about staying strong and never giving up.

**Understanding and Reflection:** The lyrics of "Gift" by Reza Pishro take us on a journey through family ties, struggles, and finding oneself. It's filled with emotions like love, sacrifice, betrayal, and making things right again, making listeners think deeply about life and relationships.

**Pride and Self-Acceptance:** Morteza's journey from hiding his background to being proud of it, inspired by honest rap songs, shows feelings of self-acceptance and pride. It highlights how music can change the way we see ourselves and the world.

In summary, the stories of Mohammad Hossein, Morteza, and Farhad show the powerful emotional impact of rap music in Iran. Their personal stories and reflections on society, mixed with the power of music, show how rap can bring out a wide range of feelings, from nostalgia and friendship to being open and strong. Their experiences show us the deep emotional connections that are made through music and how rap captures the feelings of a nation.

What do you believe, love or hate, contemplate the weight,

Choices in your life, wealth or knowledge, seal your fate?

Old loves or grudges held, empty pockets, full breasts unveiled,  
The raindrops falling gently, quiet moments, stories seldom sailed.  
Do you believe in the laughter of small children's delight,  
Or in the routine laughter masking cries deep in the night?  
A good life in the present, a heart to kindly give,  
Or do you cast your lot with those who kill where others live?  
Dirty lusts or sage advice, what path will you choose?  
White-washed slogans, black truths, which ones will you use?  
Noah or Christ, perhaps Ali, Hasan, Hossein,  
Or the next in line, a quandary hard to glean.  
Like a canary in a cage or crows that fly so free,  
To study or make money in the bustling marketplace, you see?  
There's something deep inside us, echoes from our youth,  
Tradition's hold upon us, though it clashes with the truth.  
Whatever your beliefs, to whomever your trust you give,  
Don't you get upset, just find your way to truly live.  
Don't wait for death to find you, seek freedom here and now,  
Just be free, like the many who break tradition's binding vow.  
Happiness, you see, it's like a fragment of pure freedom's grace,  
So don't judge me in this world, no need to keep a pace.  
The paramount, to stay alive, to seize the moments grand,  
No waiting on the green light, I'll live the life I've planned.  
I've never been the same, don't want society's dull hue,  
So tell me what you're trusting, your beliefs, the real you.  
Your time on Earth is fleeting, it's what you do and how you thrive,

Find your voice, seek your freedom, be alive, truly alive.

The translated song mentioned above is "What Do You Believe In?" by Bahram, and it's a favorite of two brothers that the podcast interviewed with: Mohammadreza and Mehdi. They shared their journey into listening to rap music. Mohammadreza began by explaining that before discovering rap, he didn't listen to much music. He was mostly isolated, focused on studying, and occasionally heard pop music. He always had a lot of thoughts and questions on his mind, feeling like he couldn't find people who thought like him. He wondered why lives seemed so similar, why people followed repetitive routines without dreaming. These questions led him to seek people who shared his perspective, but he struggled to find them. It wasn't until he started working at a company with access to high-speed internet that his brother, who enjoyed music, asked him to download some albums. Mohammadreza sent his brother the songs without knowing their significance. A few months later, Mohammadreza was feeling down due to missing school and seeing his dreams fade away. When he opened his playlist, an unfamiliar song started playing: "What Do You Believe In?" The song's lyrics resonated with everything he had been grappling with. He listened to the song repeatedly, feeling as though he had found a new friend. Later, he discussed the song with his brother, who had known it long before. They both felt a deep connection to the song and its message. That's when Mohammadreza discovered that this type of music was rap, and the artist was Bahram Nourai. He filled his phone with Bahram's songs. Bahram's style had a simplicity that made it accessible, even while conveying strong and critical messages. Mohammadreza believed that rap was a genre filled with truths that concerned young people like him. Rappers like Bahram were sharing these concerns with their audience. When asked if he shared the same appreciation for the song, Mehdi confirmed that he loved it. He explained that, at the time he first listened to "What Do You Believe," he was dealing with severe financial difficulties. He had to drop out of school and university due to the high costs he couldn't afford. This situation made him acutely aware of social inequality and a lack of social justice, which further deepened his connection to the song. He noted that the rap songs Mohammadreza referred to might focus on topics like money, cigarettes, drugs, and girls, but for him, money wasn't about having fun; it was a pressing concern to continue his life and support his family. He was preoccupied with staying true to his values and avoiding the pitfalls that others may fall into. Despite the class differences, he didn't harbor resentment; instead, he wished he could achieve his own aspirations.

When the interviewer asked whether they exclusively listened to Bahram's rap songs or if they explored other rappers as well, and if they believed that rap music had brought about any changes on a personal, social, or cultural level. Both Mohammadreza and Mehdi revealed that they also listened to other rappers. Mohammadreza mentioned that Mehdi introduced him to songs by various artists whom he thought Mohammadreza might appreciate. They both expressed the view that rap music had indeed brought about significant changes in their lives, particularly on a personal level. Mohammadreza emphasized that at the very least, rap music made him feel less alone. Mehdi added that it wasn't just about change but also about learning. For example, two songs, "Magic Box" and "Motherland" by Ashkan Fadaie, had taught him valuable lessons. "Magic Box" made him aware of the manipulation of television and how governments could impose their policies and viewpoints on the audience. "Motherland" conveyed the importance of not possessing things not meant for them, advocating freedom and independent thinking. Another artist who significantly impacted them was Soroush Lashkari, also known as Soroush Hichkas. Mehdi described his connection to Soroush as akin to a long-time relationship with a university professor. He praised Soroush for encouraging authenticity, offering valuable advice, and maintaining a close bond with his audience. Soroush's approach to music, though not extensive in terms of the number of songs, was special because it allowed him to speak directly to his listeners and offer guidance, showing appreciation and understanding of his fans. Mehdi revealed that he was moved to tears by Soroush's music and that Soroush didn't claim to be infallible; rather, he taught that there was no shame in making mistakes. The real mistake, he emphasized, lay in failing to correct those errors and learn from them. For instance, in the song "We Are a Bunch of Soldiers," Soroush initially exhibited strong patriotism and bias, but later, after experiencing life abroad, his perspective broadened. He began to espouse universal humanity and asserted that there were no distinctions based on race. Mehdi also mentioned how Ashkan Fadaie once encountered a religious issue, but he subsequently corrected his stance, demonstrating how artists were capable of evolving and learning over time.

Mohammadreza and Mehdi, two brothers, share how rap music deeply affects their lives. They connect their personal stories to the songs they love, showing how these songs reflect the challenges many face in Iran. Here are the important points of this interview:

**Finding and Connecting:** When Mohammadreza first heard "What Do You Believe In?", it was like a moment of discovery. The song's words matched his own inner battles, giving him comfort and a feeling of fitting in.

**Struggling and Understanding:** Mehdi talks about his own money problems and how this opened his eyes to social inequalities. He connects deeply with a song that reflects these struggles, showing how music can really capture what we go through and make us feel understood.

**Learning and Growing:** The brothers both see rap music as a way to learn. Songs like "Magic Box" and "Motherland" taught them about media tricks, the importance of freedom, and thinking for themselves. They felt enlightened and more aware, which helped them grow personally.

**Realness and Learning:** Mehdi really looks up to Soroush Hichkas. He feels a strong respect and trust for him. Soroush connects with his fans in a real way, giving advice and encouraging them to be true to themselves. This creates a strong emotional connection.

**Changing and Growing:** They talk about artists like Ashkan Fadaie and Soroush Hichkas who have changed their views over time. This shows they are humble, can adapt, and are willing to grow. They learn from their mistakes and this shows they are mature and thoughtful.

**Feeling Strong and Understood:** Both brothers feel that rap music helped them feel less alone and more understood. This brings feelings of strength, being recognized, and being part of a community. Rap music really gets their shared struggles and hopes, making them feel united and understood.

Seeing the Bigger Picture: Soroush Hichkas started focusing more on the idea that we're all human, no matter where we're from. This shift in his music brings feelings of enlightenment and inclusivity. He shows it's important to look beyond our own borders and see our shared humanity.

To sum up, Mohammadreza and Mehdi's experiences show how powerful rap music can be in their lives. Their stories, filled with the strong messages of the songs they connect with, show how rap can reflect, validate, and teach us. Their narrative demonstrates the power of music in shaping how we see things, connecting us with others, and helping us grow. Their emotional journey with music shows how art can express and amplify our shared human feelings.

They clenched their fists, said they took all we had,  
Now we're left with a desert and a thirst that's so bad.  
They killed all our dreams, left no bodies in sight,  
Even without these sanctions, man, we wouldn't be alright.  
Feels like we're colonized, our nation's the prey,  
They don't care 'bout the people, it's the power they crave.  
We work day and night, but by month's end we're broke,  
Government don't want citizens, they want to enslave, it's no joke.  
Out in the street, he's fighting for his right,  
The government wants slaves, they ain't treating us right.  
Cellphone buzzin', it's the noise of the fight,  
Decades of murder, injustice, the same old plight.  
Tears, they removed 'em, no more left for their gas,  
Discrimination's rampant, though they say it don't last.  
Jobs based on connections, not skills, it's a shame,

They've caged our whole country, but they won't take the blame.  
They strip us all naked, saying, "This ain't Islamic?"  
But the truth is, it's horrific and inhumanic.  
Who'll forget this crime, man, we're shouting so loud,  
All together we stand, the crowd growing proud.  
These streets soaked in blood, for years they've been stained,  
Killed all of our dreams, left us lost and pained.  
They might not earn enough from their precious oil,  
But they'll sell us for pennies, with a sinister smile.  
It ain't good or bad, it's just a world gone insane,  
No decisions for themselves, they're all chasing the gain.  
From their clothes to the oil, they're all lining their pockets,  
Privacy's just a word, and their lies, they can't stop it.  
Bullets shatter our windows, invade our homes,  
While our nation's in turmoil, its heartbeat it drowns.  
The land's bleeding out, as the innocent fall,  
Tulips crushed 'neath boots, on a dark crimson sprawl.  
The fires in the region, they're nothing compared,  
To the duty of the people, the weight that's not shared.  
A heart colder than death, it's what they've become,  
Good folks meet their end, it's like a battle every dawn.  
The anger's a roar, while they claim that we're armed,  
Screaming from our souls, our demands can't be disarmed.  
But we're all in this fight, there's no end, no defeat,  
Locked behind bars, or dead on the street.

Protest's not a crime, though they treat it like sin,  
Voices in the streets, now they see us as kin.  
All the resources they've plundered, they devour with no grace,  
Leaving corpses behind in this grim, empty place.  
Officers take aim, their targets in pain,  
They rush to aid despite bullets that rain.  
Nothing left to lose, except our humanity,  
We flock to the hospitals, seeking sanity.  
Behind closed doors, they massacre, no grace,  
Unknown martyrs in the dark, it's a terrible case.  
Even the faithless are forced, to recite despair,  
But we're all shouting out, in this world we won't bear.  
Who'll forget this crime? We're shouting in defiance,  
United we stand in the face of their violence.  
Many were imprisoned, too many have died,  
But this ain't the end, we won't be denied.

Ghazaleh, Arash, and Kimiya are three friends that were interviewed with in Piade podcast. The song "He Has Clenched His Fist" is by Soroush Hichkas, and it delves into street protests and the state of Iran. When this group were asked which song they considered the most influential in terms of social and political impact, they initially mentioned all the songs by Hichkas and Yas. Eventually, they settled on this specific song as the most impactful. They all started listening to rap music during their teenage years. When the interviewer asked why rap music, and not any other music genre, different responses was received. Ghazaleh explained that she could relate to the lyrics, with each sentence resonating with her life and her personal or social experiences. It was as if the rapper was engaging in a dialogue with the audience. These songs reflected their true selves, the personalities they couldn't reveal in public, to their parents, at

school, or anywhere except when they were with their closest friends. Arash agreed with Ghazaleh, emphasizing that they grew up in a society where they had to conceal their true selves to gain access to education, opportunities, and even the simple act of living. Arash had an interest in psychology, which taught that we have three selves: the adult self, the parent self, and the child self. Suppressing their honest inner child as they grew led to the emergence of an angry, resentful child. The angry inner children of their generation found an outlet in rap songs. Arash believed that the profanity in the songs was a reflection of the suppressed anger that they had held in for so long, which made it attractive for him as an audience. Kimiya shared the same reasons as her friends for liking this genre of music. It was a way for them to express their suppressed anger and to find a voice for their true selves. Ghazaleh continued by pointing out a reason she doesn't understand why some of her friends listen to rap songs that glorify a luxurious lifestyle is precisely the same reason she likes rap. For her, rap is all about honesty and portraying things as they are. She believes that songs about a luxurious lifestyle are not exclusive to rap and can be found in pop music as well. These songs, in her opinion, don't inspire young people to strive for success, but rather make them feel depressed.

When asked whether rap music has brought about any change in Iran, they all agreed. Arash noted that even groups like Zed Bazi, which promote the luxurious lifestyle, have brought about changes. However, when discussing change, they were not solely referring to positive changes; there have been both positive and negative aspects. For example, Zed Bazi could be seen as an educational source about luxury living, introducing them to concepts like fancy drinks, upscale cities, and elaborate parties. They acknowledged that their generation had become more materialistic and worldly, focusing on money more than positive values. Kimiya chimed in, stating that despite the negative aspects, they can't ignore the positive changes that rap music, especially the socially and politically themed tracks, has brought to society, particularly among the young generation. She mentioned that these tracks convey the anger within artists, influenced by the pressures of their surroundings. Rap songs, such as "Adam" by Bammad or "Majinun Shahr" by Surna, express frustration, despair, and a desire for change. Arash added to Kimiya's perspective, noting that while expressing anger and feelings is an essential aspect of a rap song, it doesn't necessarily lead to societal change. He highlighted how, after various societal incidents, songs are often released that merely reflect those events without providing any creative insight or direction beyond that. Real

change, Arash argued, can only happen when artists delve deeper into the root causes of societal issues, understanding and addressing them with intelligence and creativity. They should be able to choose their subjects wisely, not limiting themselves to recent events but instead grasping the fundamental problems within their society. Ghazaleh agreed with her friends, emphasizing the importance of a protest work's ability to influence the audience. Such works should be concerned with creating an atmosphere, narrative, and execution that engage and stimulate the audience's minds. Ghazaleh concluded by highlighting that hip-hop and rap culture, in particular, should not be constrained within rigid frameworks. A protest work should extend beyond mere repetition of news or societal articles and should challenge the boundaries. True change in rap, in their view, involves pushing these boundaries, whether on a personal scale or within societal norms, traditions, and politics.

Ghazaleh, Arash, and Kimiya's interview gives us a deep look into their emotions and thoughts about rap music, especially in Iran. They share how this music relates to their lives, dealing with society's rules, finding themselves, and how music can change things. Here are the main points from their interview:

**Feeling Understood:** Ghazaleh really connects with the words in rap songs. They make her feel understood and real. These songs are like a mirror for her, showing her hidden feelings and who she really is. This helps her feel like she belongs and is understood.

**Holding back and Letting Go:** Arash talks about how we have different sides to ourselves, including a part that's often angry but hidden. He feels a lot of frustration and resentment because of this. Rap music gives him a way to let out this anger, which feels freeing and healing.

**Finding a Voice:** Kimiya believes rap is a great way for people to express themselves. It helps them share feelings they usually have to keep quiet and find their true voice in a society with many restrictions.

**Real Talk vs. Flashy Life:** Ghazaleh sees a big difference between rap songs that are honest and those that just talk about luxury and wealth. She feels mixed up and let down by songs about materialism and prefers the real, honest ones.

**Hope and Change:** Everyone agrees that rap music in Iran can really make a difference. They see it as a way to show what society is feeling and to encourage people to think and act. They recognize that change can be good or bad, but they believe in rap's power to inspire.

**Going Deeper:** Arash wants artists to really think about society's problems and talk about them in creative ways. He thinks true change needs a deep understanding and smart discussion of these issues.

**Inspiring Action:** Ghazaleh talks about how protest songs in rap can wake people up and get them moving. She sees rap as a way to challenge what's normal and start revolutions.

In summary, Ghazaleh, Arash, and Kimiya's stories show how powerful rap music can be in Iran. They highlight how it connects with personal struggles, shows what society is going through, and encourages change. Their experiences show the emotional depth and complexity of music, proving its power to reflect and influence what a whole generation is thinking and feeling. Their insights remind us that emotions are universal and that art plays a key role in expressing, challenging, and changing these feelings.

In the city where she resides, they never mention her name,  
She's a girl alone in the crowd, it's a shame,  
Amidst leering gazes, everyone plays the same game,  
But they don't know her struggles, the hurt, and the flame.  
When her dreams withered and her honor was taken,

No one could fathom the toll it had taken,  
In the chaos and noise, her voice was forsaken,  
In this world of deception, she felt so shaken.  
We're all intertwined in a web of deceit,  
A generation that's lost, feeling incomplete,  
Inheriting pain, making life bittersweet,  
Iran's spirit frozen, in the cold we compete.  
It's a discussion that's gotten under my skin,  
A bad dream, a nightmare we live within,  
Slowly she's losing, it's a sinister sin,  
In a society of judgment, where to begin?  
Oh, Iranian girl, your honor's at stake,  
Why did they play with your life, causing heartache?  
Alone in her room, her spirit they'd break,  
Day and night, she cries, her heart's about to break.  
God granted her tears in the still of the night,  
But now, day and night, she longs for respite,  
She's cried so much; her tears have taken flight,  
She pleads with the heavens, "Make it all right."  
But she's not asleep; she's wide awake,  
Like a puppet, her life's at stake,  
She's been through hell, there's so much at stake,  
Amid the lies and deceit, she tries not to break.  
Our compassion, where did it all go?  
In this city, lies and deceit continue to flow,

Her reputation tarnished, and it's causing her woe,  
She fell ill due to slander, it's a heavy blow.  
We've never witnessed such a disaster before,  
But if it hits us, we'll say it's even more,  
Yet, how many of us have opened the door,  
To see the world through her eyes, the pain she bore?  
I wish Yas would die, it wouldn't be so dire,  
Our zeal, misguided, set the world on fire,  
The dagger in hand, as our hearts conspire,  
With the one who hurt her, it's a situation so dire.  
How could you be so dirty, so vile and impure?  
Your actions are worse than words can assure,  
You'd die for Hossein, but your actions obscure,  
Wearing black in Muharram, yet your deeds are obscure.  
Hossein once said, "Be free, let faith not bind,"  
But for a vile CD, you left reason behind,  
You made her the subject of a conversation unkind,  
In a whirlwind of slander, you left her maligned.  
With a speed that's alarming, this slander took flight,  
In our society, cruelty reached a new height,  
No one took a step to end this vicious spite,  
But it's time to stop, to set things right.  
Put yourself in her shoes, try to understand,  
Feel the fire, the pain, and the burning sand,  
We wish for change; let's make a stand,

Break free from the lies, the hate, and the command.  
No, fish stays fresh when it's just been caught,  
So let's seek change, let's give it a thought,  
Open our hearts, let love and empathy be sought,  
It's time for redemption, let's break this dark plot.  
Don't make excuses, it's time to confront,  
The wrongs we've done, it's time to confront,  
Be a real man, in righteousness, be upfront,  
Leave behind the lies, let's be real, let's confront.

The song "Break the CD" is a rap track by Yas, one of the pioneers of Persian rap music. Yas released this song in 2008 during a significant societal event in Iran. At that time, a sex tape involving a young actress named Zahra Amir Ebrahimi had been leaked by her ex-boyfriend. This event was unprecedented in Iran and created a major scandal. The conservative culture and Islamic government of Iran were unprepared to deal with such a situation. To avoid legal repercussions from the Iranian government, Zahra claimed that she and her ex-boyfriend had been temporarily married during their relationship. She later revealed the traumatic experience she had endured during this time after she had left Iran and started talking about it. During this period, Iranian society was consumed by discussions about Zahra Amir Ebrahimi, with many people unfairly vilifying her and labeling her negatively. Consequently, the television series and movies in which she had appeared were banned from airing. However, despite the societal backlash, copies of the sex tape were being sold in the streets and local CD stores. It was during this time that Yas, a socially conscious underground rapper, released the song "Break the CD" in defense of Zahra Amir Ebrahimi. He criticized the society for making the sex tape famous and for tarnishing the actress's honor. Through his music, Yas aimed to convey that it was not too late to rectify the situation and urged people to empathize with the actress's experience. For one of the interviewees of Piade podcast, Mahboube, a dedicated fan of Persian rap since its inception in the early 2000s, this track held particular significance. She came from a traditional religious family and understood the conservative atmosphere prevalent in Iranian households. She realized that if she had faced a

situation similar to Zahra Amir Ebrahimi's, it could have been devastating, even though her family might not have resorted to extreme measures such as honor killing.

Mahboube had been given a copy of the sex tape by a friend and intended to watch it when her parents weren't at home. However, before she had the chance to view it, she came across Yas's song "Break the CD." Listening to the song was a profound moment of awakening for her. It made her reflect on her own actions and the potential consequences. She realized the gravity of her curiosity and how she could have easily been in Zahra's shoes. As a result, immediately after hearing the song, Mahboube decided to break the CD she had been given. The next day, she wrote the song's lyrics on the school blackboard to share her newfound perspective with her friends. She wanted to convey that they were all complicit in something terrible and needed to stop circulating the CD and discussing it. While "Break the CD" may not be the most technically accomplished track in Persian rap, it held immense influence and significance for Mahboube during her formative years. It served as a wake-up call and a catalyst for change, earning a special place in her heart and mind. When the interviewer asked Mahboube if she believed that rap music had instigated change in Iranian society, she emphatically affirmed its role as an agent of transformation. She illustrated her point by referring to the story behind the track "Break the CD," emphasizing that it served as an example of change. She further expounded by highlighting the inherent nature of human beings as creatures continually engaged in the process of learning. Mahboube stressed that if we were to halt this process of learning, the distinction between humans and animals would diminish. In her view, rap music represented the music of a generation that was more open to learning compared to the previous generation. Mahboube observed that the preceding generation had not been entirely forthright, even when faced with challenging circumstances. They often preferred to maintain a facade of contentment, despite the hardships they endured, such as the revolution and war. While these experiences may have played a role, Mahboube argued that her generation was characterized by greater honesty. They acknowledged that the life they were living was not the life they aspired to have. This honest acknowledgment served as a foundation for their desire for change. She noted that to effect change in society, one must first change oneself, and her generation embraced this principle.

In Mahboube's view, rap artists were also part of her generation and shared their artistic vision for change. Through their songs, they addressed a wide range of societal issues, including political, social, and moral matters. These songs prompted the audience to contemplate topics they had not previously considered. Mahboube highlighted that the exchange of knowledge and education was not a one-way street. Audiences actively engaged with rap music on platforms like Yahoo 360, a popular platform of its time. Before the advent of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, discussions on Yahoo 360 allowed listeners to express their agreement or disagreement with the content of new songs. Rappers, she believed, also paid attention to the comments on their work. Additionally, rappers critiqued each other's work, fostering growth through constructive criticism. In conclusion, Mahboube contended that rap music had initiated a multitude of changes in Iran. While she could cite numerous examples of specific instances where rap music had sparked change, she emphasized that the broader impact lay in how it opened pathways for transformation in Iranian society, particularly within her generation.

The story shared by Mahboube gives us a deep and thoughtful look into how Persian rap music affects society and individuals, especially during a major event in Iran. Her experiences and thoughts show a range of emotions that connect closely with Iran's social and cultural life and the powerful influence of rap music. Here are the key points from her interview:

**Empathy and Unity:** Mahboube felt a strong connection to the song "Break the CD" by Yas. It's about supporting actress Zahra Amir Ebrahimi and encourages people to think deeply about society. This song really resonated with Mahboube, showing how music can create understanding and empathy.

**Self-Examination and Responsibility:** Discovering this song led Mahboube to think deeply about herself, feeling guilty and responsible. The song was a turning point for her, making her face her own role in the scandal.

**Influence and Change:** The song had a big impact on Mahboube's actions and thoughts. It shows how rap can change not just one person but also spark important discussions in society. Rap music here acts as a force for change.

**Truth and Sincerity:** Mahboube talks about her generation's honesty and desire for change. This shows a sense of realness, bravery, and a strong will. She contrasts her generation with the previous one, showing how emotions and society in Iran are changing.

**Engagement and dialogue:** Mahboube's story shows how people really get involved with rap music, creating a sense of community, conversation, and togetherness. She talks about how places like Yahoo 360 become spots for people to share thoughts, critique, and grow together. This creates a strong bond between the artists and their fans.  
**Desire for change:** She also talks about her strong wish for personal and social change. This reflects a feeling of hope, ambition, and a force to make things better. Mahboube believes that rap music doesn't just show what society is feeling, but it also encourages people to act and make a difference.

In summary, Mahboube's experiences give us a deep look into how Persian rap music affects emotions and society. Her own story, mixed with larger events in society, shows how this music can create empathy, make people think, and lead to change. Her insights help us understand the complex emotions of a generation dealing with social norms, cultural expectations, and the powerful influence of music. Her story highlights how universal human emotions are and the important role of art in expressing, challenging, and changing these emotions in response to social challenges.

They try to mold us, define who we should be,

In a world where they're the ones calling all the shots, you see.

They want us to conform, fit into their plan,

But I refuse to be a puppet, won't play the role of their man.

They say, "Be a man, be a woman," just to keep us down,

So they can sit upon our backs, wear the power like a crown.  
They dictate what's good or bad, the way we ought to be,  
But I won't bow to their will, won't let them control me.  
They want us all alike, like America, they say,  
But I won't lose myself, won't let my true self decay.  
Soldiers march from grave to grave, the light upon their stones,  
While mothers weep in sorrow, bearing burdens all alone.  
They say it doesn't matter, the loss we've had to bear,  
That our sons are martyrs, with keys to heaven in the air.  
But they've taught us to be silent, to always bite our tongue,  
To swallow down their lies, and act like we're all one.  
They draw a circle 'round our minds, to keep us in the dark,  
Injecting news into our veins, to control every spark.  
Our society's addicted to the lies they want us to believe,  
But I won't be a victim, won't let their tricks deceive.  
They teach us to be numb, to trade our words for bread,  
To let the powerful have their way, to lay down in their bed.  
But I won't follow blindly, won't be another pawn,  
I'll break the chains that bind me, and rise up like the dawn.  
They tell us what to wear, in a land that's so austere,  
But those who preach the loudest don't practice what they hear.  
A scarf upon our heads, while they wear ties with flair,  
Hypocrisy runs rampant, in the high-end airline's air.  
Our ears are filled with words, from pulpits and TV screens,  
They extort from us our money, in ways that are obscene.

We're subjected to a teacher, who's been silenced by their might,  
But I won't be their victim, won't give up without a fight.  
Dad said, "Stay cohesive, stand up for what is right,"  
But in this world of peasants, we're meant to stay out of sight.  
No rights, no choices, no freedom to be free,  
They dictate our beliefs, but that won't work for me.  
I won't stare at the TV, a box of empty sound,  
Speaking in different tongues, just to keep us all spellbound.  
I'll proclaim that God's not dead, and thought will be my guide,  
In a world where truth is scarce, in the darkness, I'll abide.  
They forge their weapons with the money from our hands,  
But they've underestimated us, we'll rise and take a stand.  
They call me rude for speaking truths that cut like a knife,  
But one day you'll see, the change that comes with life.  
You'll understand the visa to heaven, it's not in any land,  
It's not in Mecca's stamp or the Saudi Arabian sand.  
It's in the way we live, the love we choose to share,  
In the truth we hold dear, in the fight against despair.

Amirali and Behnam, shared their thoughts during the conversation with the podcat. Amirali expressed a particular fondness for the song "Magic Box" by Ashkan Fadaie, which is his favorite. When the interviewer inquired about why he resonated with this song and, more broadly, with rap music, his response tied the two questions together. He explained that he had a unified perspective for both inquiries. According to Amirali, the song "Magic Box" by Fadaie delves into the concept of manipulation that pervades our existence, a manipulation cleverly disguised as life. He believes that on a daily basis, we are subtly coerced into actions, purchases, and consumption patterns by powerful

entities, all meticulously orchestrated to serve their interests. This song, in Amirali's view, mirrors this stark reality. He pointed to the situation in Iran as an example, questioning whether the government truly upholds the beliefs it espouses. Amirali raised concerns, suggesting that if the government genuinely adhered to its professed Islamic values, it wouldn't send its own children to the United States to study and live in one of the most democratic nations. To him, this stark contrast between rhetoric and action reveals that such ideologies and religious narratives are wielded merely as tools to maintain their grip on power. Amirali urged people to awaken from the hypnotic influence perpetuated by television, social media, and manipulative devices. He advocated for a deeper understanding of substantial matters. In Amirali's eyes, rap music plays a pivotal role in this awakening process. He sees it as the sole genre capable of addressing the real societal issues that matter, without being tainted or co-opted by those in power. Unlike many other music genres, rap, in his perspective, remains untainted, and it retains its essence as a medium for genuine expression. When the interviewer posed the same questions to Behnam regarding his introduction to rap music and his preference for the genre, he shared his journey. His first encounter with rap was through the song "We Are a Bunch of Soldiers" by Soroush Hichkas, and he vividly recalled how the music had a profound emotional impact on him. At the time, listening to rap was seen as a radical act, as it was a new and controversial genre. It faced opposition from the government, families, and even intellectual circles. However, for Behnam and his peers, embracing rap music was a statement of rebellion, an act of defiance that earned them a sense of coolness and independence. Behnam also drew an intriguing parallel between rap and classical Persian poetry. He viewed rap as an evolved form of Persian poetry, akin to a modern, technologically advanced car compared to a classic automobile. While classic cars possess timeless beauty, they are often relegated to occasional use, locked away in garages. In contrast, people prefer modern cars for their daily routines due to their convenience and advanced features. Similarly, the newer generation cherishes classic Persian poetry but turns to "rap e Farsi" for its direct relevance to their lives and experiences. When it was asked whether they believed that rap music had brought about any significant changes in Iran, Behnam expressed that change had certainly occurred, but it was not solely attributable to rap music; rather, various factors had contributed to these transformations. According to Behnam, societal change in Iran has been occurring at a rapid pace, to the extent that the generational gaps within the country seem more like the span of several decades rather than just one. He observed that such profound changes were not as evident among their parents and previous generations. While

change had always been a constant, the disparities between the generations of the 80s, 90s, 2000s, and beyond were particularly striking. Behnam likened it to each decade ushering in a new generation that felt distinct and almost alien compared to the preceding one. Behnam identified a crucial turning point when rap music, known as "rap e Farsi," emerged and gained popularity among the younger generation. This coincided with the rise of social media platforms, which also played a pivotal role in accelerating the rate of change. Behnam discerned one change directly attributable to rap music: the emergence of a new generation that displayed remarkable comfort with their true selves and a refreshing level of honesty. He believed that rap music had contributed to nurturing this sense of self-assuredness.

For those born in the 80s, including the first generation of Iranian rappers of their age group, there had been a reservoir of pent-up anger. Rap music provided an outlet for this anger, allowing them to express feelings that had long been concealed due to societal expectations, fear of repercussions, or a desire to maintain respectability. Rap songs served as a vehicle for resisting these constraints, offering an enjoyable means of participating in this resistance. Importantly, rap music imparted a valuable lesson in honesty, fostering a culture of sincerity. Behnam acknowledged that their generation had spent years conforming to societal norms before rap music arrived to catalyze a transformation. However, for the subsequent generations, who grew up with older siblings who had already engaged in numerous battles for change, the path toward authenticity appeared more accessible. Behnam recalled that during their teenage years, even though they considered themselves rebels, certain boundaries remained inviolable, such as the unquestioned pursuit of a university education. In contrast, the newer generation displayed a remarkable independence of thought and personality. They no longer perceived the existence of such boundaries and were unburdened by the conventional expectations of pursuing higher education. Behnam attributed these shifts in mind-set to the catalytic influence of rap music—a generational movement that began as resistance to Iran's two-faced culture and, after several decades, resulted in a remarkably forthright and candid young generation. Amirali concurred with Behnam's perspective and emphasized the positive transformations brought about by rap music in Iran. However, what Amirali did not explicitly address were the negative consequences associated with rap. While acknowledging the numerous positive changes stemming from rap, including social and political impacts, as well as fostering self-reflection, Amirali

also raised concerns about the detrimental effects of gangster rap. He noted that certain subgenres of rap, particularly gangster rap, have had adverse effects on the younger generation. These types of rap lyrics have sometimes encouraged behaviors such as increased alcohol consumption, drug use, promiscuity, and an obsession with materialism and status, all of which can undermine meaningful relationships and personal development.

Amirali and Behnam's stories show us how rap music deeply affects emotions and society in Iran. Their experiences, even though is different, touch on similar emotional themes that highlight the big impact of rap music on people's thoughts and feelings. Here are the main points from their interview:

**Awareness and Understanding:** Amirali really connects with the song "Magic Box" by Fadaie. It opens his eyes to how society can be manipulated. This leads to feelings of enlightenment and a strong desire to understand more.

**Rebellion and Independence:** Behnam's first experience with rap music is filled with a sense of rebellion and defiance. In a conservative society, choosing rap becomes a way to resist, showing his individuality and independence.

**Connection and Relevance:** Both Amirali and Behnam feel a strong emotional bond with rap music. For Amirali, rap reflects the harsh truths about society's manipulation. For Behnam, it's like a modern version of classic Persian poetry, connecting with today's experiences.

**Nostalgia and Reflection:** Behnam sees rap as similar to classical Persian poetry. This brings a sense of nostalgia, mixing the beauty of traditional art with the relevance of modern music.

**Change and Growth:** Both Amirali and Behnam recognize rap's power to change things. Behnam notes the quick social changes in Iran, partly due to rap. This music encourages honesty, confidence.

Worry and Criticism: Amirali talks about the downsides of some rap types, like gangster rap. He's worried about how they might affect young people, stressing the importance of balance and careful choice.

In conclusion, Amirali and Behnam's experiences offer a deep look into how rap music shapes emotions in Iran. Their stories show rap's power to bring a wide range of feelings, from enlightenment and rebellion to connection and concern. Their insights help us understand music's power to reflect, challenge, and change society and personal identity. Their stories prove the lasting emotional effect of rap music, its ability to drive change, and its role in shaping the emotional and cultural stories of a generation.

Since youth they told me, "You'll grow, forget the strife,"  
But I grew smaller, carried the pain throughout my life,  
This lesson taught me clear, reality's not what they decree,  
In fact, it's quite the opposite, that's what I see.  
This song reflects my mind, it's neither bright nor dull,  
Not a catchy pop tune, or for parties to enthral,  
It doesn't suit a car ride, or views along the way,  
It's not good or bad, it's not black and white, it's gray.  
It's the color of reality, a game that we all play,  
Dreams propel us forward, memories pull us astray,  
What's left behind in life, depends on thought and time,  
But who stays and who departs, that's the real paradigm.  
In the margins or the text, who ignites the flame?  
A few lines of poetry, or simply a name,  
It's crucial who endures and who fades away,

In a couple of verses, their legacy will stay.  
Life's a chaos neatly ordered, sensibilities entwined,  
Crushed beneath society's weight, it's a tricky bind,  
Good but also wrong, shrapnel from past wars,  
In this song, I find my home, behind closed doors.  
I don't just recite poems, I embody their essence,  
This music, to me, is existence, it's my very presence,  
But what about you, with homeland's scent beneath your arm?  
Turning good into bad, causing societal harm.  
We've transcended borders, escaped your narrow mind,  
This signifies clichés breaking, a homeland redefined,  
Modern music in a tradition-bound society we pursue,  
Can you see me now, pioneering something new?  
In the grip of full hands, empty ones bring peace,  
From this cursed land to untouched skies, where sorrows cease,  
I'm even proud of my mistakes, my journey's like a dance,  
Though my past lies trampled, I still take a chance.  
Yet, it's crucial who remains, who fades in history's rhyme,  
In the margins or the text, who withstands the test of time,  
A few lines of verse, their legacy will define,  
In just a few lines of poetry, their stories intertwine

The lyrics provided are from the song "Touch" by Bahram, which happens to be the favorite song of Amirreza and Aria, two rap fans that were interviewed by Piade podcast. They began listening to rap music during their high school years, which is a common

starting point for many of the people that the podcast spoke with. They expressed a preference for a particular sub-genre of rap that they referred to as "philosophical rap." Within this sub-genre, they admire artists such as Bahram and Ali Soorena, whom they consider to be part of the philosophical rap category. Aria mentioned that rap songs in this genre carry a deeper meaning and have had a profound impact on their perspectives on life. When the interviewer inquired about their thoughts on why rap music has achieved greater success compared to other music genres, two different responses were received from them. Amirreza expressed the view that, for him, art is more about the artist than the quality of the artwork itself. He believes that the artist and the art are inseparable, and in his perspective, the artist holds greater importance than the art piece. In Iran, people have historically focused not only on the artistic quality of a work but also on the moral values of the artist. They assess whether the artist aligns with the interests of the people or the government. Amirreza's admiration for rappers and the rap music genre stems from the fact that no other artists or music genres have faced as much pressure and paid such a high price for their art and honesty, particularly for their alignment with the people. To illustrate his point, Amirali cited the example of Toomaj. He mentioned that Toomaj's rap song, released during the protests following Mahsa Amini's murder, might not be considered technically strong in terms of beats or lyrical complexity. However, Toomaj's courageous stance during that time and the sacrifices he made elevated him to a hero, making his artwork significant despite any technical shortcomings. Aria expressed that, in his perspective, rap transcends being merely a music genre. He believes that for him and many others in his generation, rap serves as a means to voice thoughts and sentiments they might lack the courage to express openly. Rap addresses subjects and issues that are often difficult to talk about openly, and by listening to songs that tackle these topics with strong, unapologetic voices, they find a sense of solace and release. When the interviewer inquired whether they believed rap music had brought about any form of change, Amirreza responded that, personally, it had indeed brought about significant changes for him. He explained that he grew up in an extremely religious family where questioning religious matters was strictly taboo and considered a sin. Rap music, for him, catalyzed change by teaching him that it's perfectly acceptable to question things, to seek knowledge and understanding, and then to make informed decisions about what to accept as true. Before he discovered rap music, he felt confined within a closed environment, and rap opened the door to an entirely new world of possibilities. Aria concurred with Amirreza's sentiments about the transformative power of rap music and added his perspective. He described rap music as a tool that

shattered the figurative glass wall that had surrounded their lives. He cited the example of profanity and how they used curses among friends or felt guilty about it. They seldom heard curses or explicit language in their families, on television, in pop or traditional music, or even in American movies they watched. However, rap music introduced them to songs that contained curses similar to those they used casually. This revelation made them realize that they were not alone, that others faced similar experiences, and that they should not judge themselves harshly for using such language or questioning issues. Furthermore, Aria believed that rap music contributed to society's knowledge. Before rap music addressed certain issues, they held onto hope that their society could change and fix its problems. But as they began listening to rap songs that tackled a wide range of issues, their awareness expanded. They became privy to various problems within their country, culture, and personal lives that they might not have been aware of otherwise. This newfound knowledge led them to understand that superficial fixes within the existing system were insufficient and that fundamental changes in culture, within themselves, and in their country were necessary to address the deep-rooted issues they faced.

Amirreza and Aria's interview shows how rap music deeply affects their thoughts and feelings. Their stories highlight the complex emotions and the role of rap in shaping who they are and how they see the world. Here are the main points from their interview:

**Curiosity and Learning:** Both Amirreza and Aria are really curious, especially about "philosophical rap." This type of rap makes them think deeply and ask big questions about life. It leads to feelings of learning more and growing personally.

**Respect and Valuing Bravery:** Amirreza really respects rap artists for their courage. He appreciates how they stand up for what's right, even when it's hard. This shows how much he values honesty and bravery in people.

**Expression and Power:** Aria sees rap as a strong way to share thoughts and feelings that might be hidden. This music gives people a voice, making them feel empowered and understood.

Freedom and Change: Both of them talk about how rap music can really change a person. For Amirreza, it helped him break away from his strict religious background and encouraged him to think freely and openly.

Unity and Comfort: Aria finds that rap music, with its direct language and themes, reflects their own life experiences. This makes them feel less alone and guilty about their thoughts and feelings.

Awareness and Criticism of Society: The both informants realize that rap music has opened their eyes to bigger social issues. It's not just about personal growth; it's also about understanding and challenging the way society works.

In conclusion, Amirreza and Aria's journey with rap music is all about searching for the truth, being real and honest, and wanting to change society. Rap, especially the philosophical kind, is like a guide for them. It makes them think and ask big questions about themselves and the world. Their stories show how music can deeply affect how we think and feel, and even change society. Rap music has become a key part of their emotional and intellectual growth, shaping who they are and how they see the world.

#### **4.5. CONCLUSION**

In this city's embrace, we're ensnared by a falsehood,

Proclaiming it ours, yet bound by law's hood.

Blinded and muted, in society's maze,

Our innate brilliance dims in its haze.

Yet, life's wheel turns, parents persist,

From bicycles to cars, life's transitions exist.

Sweets to keys, friends to lovers' tryst,

Days worsen, each moment wrapped in mist.

No one beckons you to flee your abode,  
In their own sorrows, everyone's mode.  
Yet, life marches on, through cold and cheer,  
With birthday cakes and parental applause near.  
Mind-washed by educators, yet hope remains small,  
For you and your peers to rise above it all.  
From revered leaders to those cloaked in sin,  
The church's doors open to let villainy in.  
What's right? What's wrong?  
Humanity's chorus, an endless song.  
Full of energy, folly, and crimes long,  
Prestige and dreams, to which we belong.  
Chase what you dream, life's not forever,  
Liberty, a seven-lettered endeavor.  
Yet others preach a path so clever,  
Of prisons, choices between bad and never.  
In your silence, hear the sorrow's call,  
Passing the violinist, his hat's empty sprawl.  
His strings sing of a city, storyless, small,  
Needing tales to rise, to stand tall.  
In this voting charade, the cunning find grace,  
The naive turn wise, the sly find their place.  
But if roles reversed, would you embrace,  
The same choices, in this human race?  
Reflect on your existence, on divinity's face,

God's not as told, redefine your faith's base.  
Hell's not as preached, in this life's chase,  
Perhaps we sought too much, in this earthly space.  
We yearned to laugh, light as a feather's grace,  
To shine like the sun, in this human race.

The song mentioned is my favorite Farsi rap by Bamdad and Yarapelak. It talks about the challenges we face as citizens of Iran and the world. These are the same struggles I've been dealing with. All I ever wanted from life was to be happy, but these struggles never let me, or any of us, find that happiness. In this chapter, we explore interviews with Persian rap fans. These interviews go beyond just touching on how people feel about Iranian rap music. They dive deep into a complex emotional mind-set that's been shaped by our unique social and cultural background. Each story from these interviews represents a small part of the larger Iranian experience. They show a range of emotions that are a big part of what our country feels as a whole.

#### Frustration and Defiance

Many interviewees shared feelings of frustration, mainly due to the social and political limits on free speech. But this frustration didn't stay quiet. It found its voice in the bold sounds of rap music. The interviews showed that this defiance is a common feeling, a group reaction to being held down by the system. This united defiance acts as a cultural protest, a way to say "no" that's both personal and political. It answers the main question of the thesis by showing how music can turn personal frustration into a group movement. The music isn't just about individual troubles; it's a united stand against the way things are.

#### Nostalgia and Loss

Nostalgia was a strong feeling among the people interviewed. They talked about missing an Iran that used to be more open, or an Iran they wish could exist without today's limits. This nostalgia is more than just missing the past; it's about feeling the loss of what could

have been. The music acts as a way for listeners to connect with their cultural roots and grieve over what they feel is being lost. This feeling ties directly to the main question of the thesis. It shows how music can bring out shared memories and stories of a culture.

### Solidarity and Community

Rap music creates a strong sense of togetherness and community among its listeners in Iran, especially because it's an underground genre. The interviews showed that when people share feelings through music, they feel more connected and less alone. This sense of unity shows how music can go beyond individual stories. It brings people together, uniting them in their common challenges and hopes. This is key to understanding how emotions can lead to group action, as asked in the thesis. The unity in the music indicates that emotional bonds can strongly lead to social unity and even political action.

### Hope and Aspiration

Hope and aspiration are also themes that we could see a lot throughout the interviews. Despite the challenges and risks associated with engaging with underground rap, listeners hold onto the hope that their voices will eventually contribute to societal change. This hope is not idle; it is an active, driving force that propels individuals to seek transformation. The interviews underscore the role of music in nurturing this hope, affirming the thesis question about the inspirational power of music. Rap music becomes a beacon of possibility, encouraging listeners to envision and strive for a society that honors their aspirations.

### Fear and Risk

In the interviews, fear was a common feeling due to the dangers of getting involved with underground music. However, this fear is often met with resilience and bravery. The interviews give a detailed view of how music's emotional impact can give people the courage to face possible risks. This mixture of fear and bravery adds depth to the thesis question about what turns emotions to turn into actions. It shows the complicated choices

listeners make, balancing the importance of music in their culture against the risks of enjoying it.

### Empowerment and Identity

The interviews revealed how rap music deeply empowers listeners and helps shape their identity. People talked about how the music validates their experiences and feelings, making them feel stronger in who they are. This empowerment is connected to their cultural background in a close way. It challenges the stories told by those in power and offers a different identity based on being real and resisting. This shows how music can play a big role in forming cultural identity and personal power, answering the thesis question about music's impact on these areas.

In summarizing these emotions and what they mean, it's clear that the interviews give a detailed and complex answer to the thesis questions. They show that rap music in Iran is more than just entertainment. It's a key way for people to express their emotions, think about their culture, and possibly change society. The feelings that rap music brings out act as a measure of the pressures in society and a light guiding people towards a shared identity and action. They link the personal with the political and the individual with the group, showing a society that's struggling and changing. This chapter has carefully looked at the complex emotions of Iranian rap listeners, showing how each feeling contributes to the larger story of resistance and cultural identity. It proves that rap music's impact goes way beyond its tunes and beats. It's a voice for those who don't have one, a way to express what a generation is going through, and a force that can help imagine a new part of Iran's history. This deep look into emotions not only answers the thesis questions but also helps us understand better how music can change things in a society where there's not much freedom.

## CONCLUSION

### *In the Name of Rainbows' God*

*The phrase "In the name of the rainbow god" gained widespread recognition and even emerged as a symbol of protest during Iran's 1401 uprising, particularly following the attack on the Izeh market and the tragic killing of several individuals, including a nine-year-old child named Kian Pirflek. This phrase was initially uttered by Kian Pirflek at the start of a video where he was participating with his boat in a festival. It subsequently gained popularity. The line "In the name of the rainbow god" originates from a poem by Mahmoud Purohab, featured in the Persian primary school textbook. It has been prominently used at the beginning of numerous texts and speeches as a symbol of protest.*

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As we approach the culmination of this thesis, it is imperative to reflect upon the journey that has led us to this point. This research embarked on an exploratory path to delve into the emotional landscape of Persian rap music, seeking to understand its profound impact on Iranian listeners. The core of our investigation was facilitated through two principal methodological approaches: participant observation and in-depth interviews. These methods were instrumental in immersing ourselves within the dynamic sphere of Persian rap, allowing us to engage deeply with its cultural nuances and the sentiments it evokes among its audience. The goal of our study was to figure out how rap music and the emotions of the people who listen to it interact in Iran's unique culture. We wanted to know more than just about a type of music; we wanted to understand how this music expresses the challenges of a generation and can inspire new ideas in Iran. We asked some big questions: How do emotions stirred up by rap music connect to Iran's culture? How do these feelings lead to certain actions or behaviors? What makes these emotions turn into actions? In this final part, we're going to bring together everything we've learned. We'll give a full picture of how Persian rap music touches people emotionally. We'll talk about our research questions and add in ideas from Alfred Gell, Robert Plant Armstrong, John Leavitt, and James C. Scott. These thinkers helped us make sense of what people told us in our interviews. We'll also think about the ethical side of our research, especially considering Iran's sensitive political situation.

Here's what we'll cover in this final discussion:

- Looking Back at History and Theory: We'll go over the historical and theoretical background of our study, showing how it helped us understand our interview data.
- Deep Dive into Interview Data: We'll combine what we learned from the interviews and look at it through different theoretical views. This will help us get a complete picture of how rap music affects emotions in Iran.
- Going Back to Our Questions: We'll revisit our main questions and talk about how our findings answer them. We'll also point out any surprising things we found.
- What Our Findings Mean: We'll discuss what our study means for the study of music, art, and how people resist in tough political situations.
- Study Limitations and What's Next: We'll admit where our study might have fallen short and suggest ideas for future research.
- Final Thoughts: Lastly, we'll share our final thoughts on how important our study is in understanding how music, emotions, culture, and resistance are connected.

As we move forward, it's key to remember that this thesis is more than just a school project. It's a story that mixes music, feelings, and the social and political world, showing us how art can shape and reflect the stories of society.

## **Summary of Historical and Theoretical Framework**

This thesis is based on a strong historical and theoretical background that includes ethnomusicology, the anthropology of art, and studies on resistance and emotion. This background is key to understanding the complex role of music, especially rap, in Iranian society.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### Ethnomusicology and the Anthropology of Art

Ethnomusicology, which studies music in its cultural setting, is a main focus of this research. It looks at more than just the music. It's about how music creates social interactions and processes within a culture. This field looks at the people who make, perform, and listen to music, and how they all interact. It also explores how music affects and reflects social and cultural issues like identity, community, and resistance. The anthropology of art goes hand in hand with ethnomusicology. It views art as a social activity that can communicate, influence, and even challenge norms. This field understands art as a form of human expression tied to cultural norms, social structures, and power. It helps us see how art, and music in particular, can comment on society and reflect its conflicts and hopes.

#### Resistance and Emotion:

The study of resistance, especially in societies where free expression is limited, is a key part of this research's theoretical basis. James C. Scott's idea of 'hidden transcripts' (Scott, 1990) helps us understand subtle, everyday acts of resistance in Iran. Rap music is straightforward in its messages, but just listening to, sharing, or making rap music can

be seen as a 'hidden transcript' of resistance. In a place where some art forms are controlled, being part of the rap scene is a quiet way of defying the rules. It's a form of expression that goes against what the government says and does.

#### Emotional Dimension of Music

The emotional side of music is really important in this study. Music's power to bring out and share deep feelings is something that happens in all cultures. In Iran, these emotions are closely tied to the culture, political issues, and the hope for change. This research suggests that music is a strong emotional force. It can bring people together, creating a shared sense of identity. It also shows that music can be a way to cope, offering comfort and a feeling of unity when times are tough.

### **Historical Frame**

The historical background of this thesis is as complex as a Persian tapestry. It combines Iran's rich music history, its turbulent political past, and the enduring strength of its cultural identity through changes. This background isn't just a timeline. It explores how history has shaped Iranian identity and its music.

#### Iran's Musical Evolution

Iran's music history is full of different influences. It includes the ancient tunes of the Persian Empire, the varied rhythms of the Silk Road, and more recent Western styles. This journey has seen times of great artistic growth and periods of cultural suppression. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, music was often seen as a threat to the new ideology. The historical background looks at how these times have affected Iranian music. It shows how new music styles have come up, reflecting the country's continuous fight for cultural expression.

#### Socio-Political History and Music

Iran's socio-political history, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries, has seen many big changes. From the Constitutional Revolution in 1906 to today's Islamic Republic, each period brought changes in politics that deeply affected culture and the arts. The Pahlavi

era's push for modernization, the cultural conservatism after the revolution, and the times of reform and repression have all influenced the music scene. This thesis looks at how these shifts show up in the lyrics and styles of Iranian music. Rap has become a way for young people to express their disagreements and hopes.

#### Influence of Persian Poetry and Classical Music

The historical background also looks at the impact of classical Persian poetry and music. These have always been key parts of Iranian culture. The works of classical poets and musicians aren't just old relics. They're living traditions that keep inspiring today's artists. The thesis explores how modern rap music reinterprets these traditional forms. This creates a link between past and present, allowing cultural expression to continue despite political and ideological limits.

#### Impact of Globalization and Technology

The historical background of this thesis also looks at how globalization and technology have affected Iranian music. The rise of satellite TV, the internet, and social media has opened doors for cultural sharing. Iranian artists can now connect with global music trends. This has led to a new kind of music that mixes traditional and modern styles. It shows the complex identity of today's Iran.

#### Contemporary Iranian Music Scene

Today's music scene in Iran, especially underground music, is a reaction to the country's history. The thesis looks at how current musicians deal with censorship and cultural limits. They use their music as a hidden way to resist and to create a sense of community among people who share their experiences and dreams.

#### Rap Music as a Historical Continuum

The historical framework of this thesis places Iranian rap music in a long timeline. It connects it from ancient chants and stories to today's expressions of resistance and identity. The study shows how rap has become a way for a generation to express

complex emotions and stories. They are trying to blend their heritage with their current life.

### **Comprehensive Analysis of Interview Data Through the Lenses of Alfred Gell, Robert Plant Armstrong, John Leavitt, and James C. Scott.**

In Iran, where political turmoil and cultural restrictions are rampant, rap music stands out as a bold form of resistance and a way to express identity. This part of the thesis looks into interviews with Iranian rap fans. It aims to explore the deep emotional and cultural aspects of this music. These interviews give us a glimpse into the lives of those who find comfort, unity, and a way to express themselves in rap music, despite the strict rules of their society. As we go through these listeners' stories, we use ideas from scholars like Leavitt, Gell, Armstrong, and Lutz. Their thoughts on emotion, art, and resistance help us understand the interview data better. This analysis combines the raw emotions from the interviews with complex theories about how art can be a way to release emotions and comment on society and politics. We see how Iranian rap music sparks emotional connections, cultural reflection, and hidden resistance. It creates a rich 'hidden transcript' that speaks of a collective desire for change and reclaiming identity. The next section closely looks at the interviews, showing how rap music deeply affects its listeners and acts as a force for change in the complex cultural and emotional world of Iran. In the analysis, we explore the power of art and self-expression, the emotional impact of music, how emotions are expressed in a unique cultural setting, and the subtle resistance shown in rap lyrics. Our goal is to shed light on the complicated emotional worlds these individuals navigate and how their interaction with rap music mirrors, challenges, and changes the cultural meanings and structures around them. Let's start this analysis, where the interviewees' voices blend with scholarly insights, creating a deeper understanding that goes beyond just the individual parts.

The interviews we conducted show how Iranian rap music fits with Alfred Gell's idea (Gell, 1998) that art is a way to take action and Robert Plant Armstrong's (Armstrong, 1971) concept of affecting presence.

### Art as a Means of Action (Gell's View)

Amirali talks about "Magic Box" by Ashkan Fadaie. He says this rap song comments on society, showing how powerful people manipulate things and questioning the government's ideas. This matches Gell's belief that art can change thoughts and actions. Behnam feels that "We Are a Bunch of Soldiers" by Soroush Hichkas is a form of rebellion and honest expression. This is like Gell's idea of art as a way to act and express oneself. Aria sees rap as a way to share thoughts and feelings that might be held back otherwise. This aligns with Gell's view that art can affect emotions and actions.

### Affecting Presence (Armstrong's Concept)

Ghazaleh and Arash talk about how rap lets them show their true selves, which they usually hide. They also say rap is like a conversation with listeners. This fits Armstrong's idea of affecting presence, where art creates a personal experience and shares emotions. The song "My Generation" by Bahram captures the feelings of many people. This is a clear example of Armstrong's affecting presence, as it emotionally impacts listeners. Shahrzad compares living in Iran to being in darkness with unspoken social issues. She says rap music brings these issues to light. This is another example of affecting presence, where art talks to its cultural audience and shows hidden emotions. Amirhossein feels connected to rap music because it reflects the struggles he and his friends in Iran face. This shows affecting presence, where art resonates personally and culturally. The interviews suggest that Iranian rap music is both a way to take action and an affecting presence, just like Gell and Armstrong describe. It's a social tool, shaped by and shaping Iran's culture and society. It's also a strong emotional force, creating personal experiences that mirror and influence the inner lives of its listeners.

Analyzing the interviews with John Leavitt's ideas (Leavitt, 1996) about emotions shows how Iranian rap music is deeply connected to culture and emotion. Leavitt believes emotions are more than just feelings; they're part of our culture and experiences. This is clear in the stories from the interviews. Aran admires songs about sacrifice and bravery, like Toomaj Salehi's song criticizing the regime. This reflects Leavitt's view that emotions are key in how we interact and are shaped by our culture and physical feelings. These songs are more than just tunes; they carry the emotional weight of the artist's sacrifices, touching on listeners' feelings of love, anger, disappointment, and hope. Morteza's

reaction to "Gift" by Reza Pishro, which made him cry, shows Leavitt's difference between empathy and sympathy. The song creates an emotional experience that listeners can relate to, helping them understand the artist's feelings and those of their society. Nasim's connection to Persian rap, as a voice for those who feel rejected by society, echoes Leavitt's idea of using ethnography and literature for emotional expression. The music becomes a safe space where hidden thoughts and feelings are acknowledged and shared, changing how listeners see their emotions. The way rap music triggers specific emotions in groups with a shared emotional system shows the collective creation of emotions. The interviewees' stories reveal how music rituals, stories, and cultural practices trigger emotions tied to Iran's culture, showing typical responses to certain events.

In summary, looking at the interviews through Leavitt's perspective on emotions uncovers a complex mix of Iranian culture and the emotions stirred by rap music. The music is a powerful tool that reflects and shapes the audience's emotional system, offering deep insights into the cultural meanings and emotions in Iranian society.

Analyzing the interviews with James C. Scott's ideas shows how Iranian rap music reflects hidden transcripts and acts as a form of resistance:

**Private vs. Public Self:** Ghazaleh and Arash talk about how rap shows their true selves, which they hide in public due to social rules. This matches Scott's idea of hidden transcripts, where people privately share their real thoughts and feelings, away from the power holders' eyes.

**Expressing Hidden Emotions:** Arash talks about expressing his "angry inner child" through rap. This is a perfect example of Scott's arts of resistance. Using swear words in songs shows hidden anger, a secret way of fighting back against society's rules set by those in power.  
**Cultural Duality:** Ali's view on living two lives, one beyond government control and one rooted in Iranian culture, suggests that hidden transcripts are a reaction

not just to political control but also to cultural norms forcing people to live dual lives. **Music as Resistance:** Sima explains how rap, a genre used by marginalized groups worldwide, is used in Iran to show resistance. This is a real-life example of Scott's theory. Music, especially rap, becomes a way for people to share their disagreements in a place where open resistance is risky.

**Generational Honesty and Desire for Change:** Mahboube notes her generation's honesty in admitting they're not living the life they want. This shows the clash between public and hidden transcripts. Using rap to talk about social issues is a way to challenge the usual way of things.

**Accessibility and Class Differences:** Sadra talks about how rap reaches beyond the cultural elite. This shows how resistance arts can cross class lines. Rap's simple language makes it a resistance tool for more people, challenging the usual class-based approach to art and protest.

**Authenticity and Personal Experience:** Discussions about rap's realness and personal stories, like in Soroush Hichkas's "The Street Curb and Dreams," add to the hidden transcript. These songs give a voice to experiences that can't be openly talked about, connecting with the listeners' real lives.

**Metaphor for Life in Iran:** Shahrzad's metaphor of living in darkness with unseen monsters vividly illustrates the hidden transcript. It shows living with fear and unspoken issues in Iran, where people resist by not disturbing the darkness, yet feel the oppressive presence.

**Manipulation and Awakening:** Amirali's take on "Magic Box" by Ashkan Fadaie reflects Scott's idea of resisting ideological manipulation. The song criticizes life's subtle controls and the ruling class's hypocrisy, calling for an awakening from the dominant power's hypnotic influence.

These interview examples show how Scott's theory of hidden transcripts and resistance arts is seen in the experiences of Iranian rap listeners. The music is a secret way to express disagreement, challenge cultural and political norms, and keep a sense of self and action in a controlling environment.

### **Addressing the Research Questions**

As we wrap up this thesis, it's important to look back at our exploration of how music, especially rap, connects with emotions in the context of Iran's society and culture. This research aimed to really get into how rap music affects Iranian listeners emotionally and to see how these feelings are closely linked with the culture and society of Iran.

We focused on three main questions in this thesis:

- **Emotions and Iran's Culture:** The first question looked at what the emotions that come from rap music are and how they relate to Iran's culture. We wanted to understand how Persian rap music, as a way of expressing oneself, connects with listeners in Iran's unique social and political setting.
- **From Feelings to Actions:** The second question was about how and if these emotions lead to certain actions or behaviors in Iranian listeners. This was important to figure out how music, especially rap, can start social movements or help people express their disagreement or unity in situations where they might not have much freedom.
- **What Influences These Actions:** The third question delved into what makes it more or less likely for these emotions to turn into actions. This part of the research tried to pinpoint what pushes or stops listeners from acting on the feelings that rap music brings out in them. Understanding the impact of Persian rap music in Iran goes beyond just looking at a type of music. It's about understanding a complex mix of society, culture, and emotions. These questions are really important because they help us see how art, like music, goes beyond just entertainment. It can be a way for people to express their emotions, comment on their culture, and maybe even bring about social change. This is especially meaningful in a place like Iran, where politics and culture can be very challenging. In the pursuit of understanding the nuanced interplay between art, emotion, and resistance within the context of Iranian society, this analysis seeks to interpret the collected interviews. The interviews provide a rich tapestry of personal experiences and emotional responses to rap music, a form that has become a significant medium for

covert resistance against the oppressive regime in Iran. By examining the emotions articulated by the interviewees, we aim to uncover the similarities and differences in their experiences to answer the first question of this thesis what are these emotions and how they are related to the cultural, social, and political context of Iran we investigated the emotions that were similar in most interviews. These emotions are multifaceted, ranging from solace and release to anger and resentment, and even hope and transformation.

**Solace and Release:** For many interviewees, rap music serves as a medium to voice thoughts and sentiments that they might otherwise feel unable to express openly. The genre addresses subjects that are often taboo or difficult to discuss in Iranian society, providing a sense of solace and release for listeners who connect with the strong, unapologetic voices of the artists. As we read in interviews because of both the cultural atmosphere of Iran and the ideologies of the government speaking about some issues thinking about them or doing some stuff has always been forbidden. If a young person would have done or talked about something that is against what the culture or the government is dictating they would have been the subject of blame by society, the government, the friends who might have also been doing the same things, and even themselves in their minds. Rap music started giving these forbidden thoughts, and actions a voice showing that it is natural for everyone to have them or do them and it would not make a monster out of them because of that. In so many of interviews, we can see this sense of release and solace.

**Anger and Resentment:** The interviews also highlight a sense of anger and resentment, particularly among the younger generation. This is reflected in the popularity of rap, which, despite its adverse effects, resonates with listeners due to its raw expression of dissatisfaction with societal norms, materialism, and status. The profanity and explicit language in rap songs are seen as an outlet for suppressed anger, a reflection of the inner turmoil caused by having to conceal one's true self. We can easily see this anger through the stories that interviewees told us about the situation of their lives that they have to live a double life to not get into trouble and their anger toward this society that is built on the fundament of hypocrisy. We can also see the same anger and rage in the songs.

Hope and Transformation: On a more positive note, rap music is also seen as a catalyst for change and personal growth. Interviewees describe how rap has taught them the importance of questioning, seeking knowledge, and making informed decisions. For some, rap music has shattered the figurative glass walls that surrounded their lives, allowing them to explore new possibilities and perspectives. Another thing that was also mentioned in the interview was that it got loneliness from the audiences, listening to music that talks about same issues of life and society that audiences are unsatisfied with and knowing that people are talking about these issues in their songs and knowing that there are people who are listening to these songs because there are unsatisfied as well made them hopeful that if it is not only me if there are lots of people thinking just like me maybe we all can make change in future and change the situation that we are unsatisfied with.

Honesty and Authenticity: A significant emotion connected with rap music is the appreciation for its honesty. In a society where dual lives are often encouraged, rap stands out as a genre that exemplifies authenticity. Listeners are drawn to songs that they feel represent genuine emotion and truth, as opposed to the perceived superficiality of government-backed music. Almost all of the interviewees talked about their appreciation for the honesty that they found in this genre of music, the honesty that they could not find anywhere else. Both the cultural context of Iran and the government are encouragers of dishonesty and being honest is like a riot in such a society.

As we can see the emotional responses elicited by rap music in Iran are not transient reactions to rhythm and rhyme; they are deeply interwoven with the nation's cultural and political threads. The genre's unvarnished honesty strikes a chord with listeners who grapple with the dichotomy of their existence—caught between their authentic selves and the facades they must present in public. This dichotomy stems not only from the ideological rigidity imposed by the regime but also from a cultural ethos that demands uniformity and stifles individual expression.

The second question of this thesis was do the emotions evoked by rap music in audiences can lead to certain actions or behaviors in Iranian listeners or not and if so, how? Based on the interviews from the thesis, let's explore how the feelings stirred by

rap music in Iran lead to actions and what makes people more or less likely to act on these emotions. The impact of rap music on its audiences can cause change in several ways, here we are going to talk about them:

**Thinking Deeply and Challenging Culture:** Rap music in Iran makes people think deeply and question old rules. It encourages them to think about what's right and wrong in society. This kind of music has led to people wanting to change society for the better.

**Changing Personally and as a Society:** The emotions from rap music lead to personal changes that add up to big changes in society. People relate to the music in their way and it changes how they see things and what they do. So many of the interviewees talked about how rap music opened their eyes to so many issues and changed their perspective and consequently made them change their views or behaviors about those issues.

**Understanding and Standing Up:** Rap music helps people understand issues, such as the struggles women face in Iran. This understanding leads to more empathy and sometimes, actions against unfair things in society. Rap music made a generation familiar with the struggles that they might have not been dealing with personally but through this genre of music they learned about the struggle and the pain

**Building a Community and Unity:** This music has created a feeling of togetherness among listeners. This feeling can lead to group actions and a shared goal, as people realize they share similar experiences and struggles. As we can see in interviews so many friendships and even relationships were made among the interviewees through rap music. This genre of music has had such an influence on its listeners that some of the interviewees were saying that they would not shape a friendship or relationship with someone out of the rap community because they would not understand each other.

**Feeling Strong to Face Problems:** Rap music shines a light on society's problems, making listeners face tough truths. This makes them feel strong enough to recognize what they want in life and face challenges, leading to actions to change their situation.

Iranian culture as it was discussed in interviews has always tended to hide the problems as if they don't exist and pretend like everything is okay. Even in resistance forms of art, the objection has always been with amphibology; not only because of the political troubles that they might have caused but also because the culture has been requesting such secrecy and doesn't prefer the naked form of truth.

The third question of this thesis is: what factors influence whether the emotions evoked by rap music turn into action or not, here we are going to discuss the factors:

**Connecting with the Music:** How much listeners connect with the music and its message is really important. If they see their own life and feelings in the songs, they're more likely to be moved to do something.

**Culture and Society:** The culture and society in Iran, which often stops people from expressing themselves openly, affects how listeners react to rap music. In a society with strong old traditions, acting on these new ideas from rap music is a big deal.

**Personal Life and Situations:** What people have gone through in their lives also decides how likely they are to act on their emotions. For example, someone who has faced unfairness or suppression might be more ready to take action inspired by the music. Another factor in personal life can be the family that people are raised in. The more traditional and religious family the higher the pressure is on people not to get out of the line and don't change the situation.

**Support from Others:** Having a supportive group that feels the same way can encourage people to turn their feelings into actions. Knowing others feel the same and are ready to act can motivate them. This factor goes back to how connected the person is to the community and how much his/her relationships are shaped based on the similarities of thought with each other.

**Believing in the Impact:** If listeners think that their actions, inspired by the feelings from rap music, can make a difference, they're more likely to act. Believing in the power of their actions is key.

In short, the feelings brought out by rap music in Iran lead to actions that challenge old ways, encourage deep thinking, and build community and resistance. Whether people act on these feelings depends on how much they connect with the music, their culture and personal experiences, support from others, and their belief in the impact of their actions. In the course of analyzing the interviews we also found some unexpected insights; here we are going to talk about these insights.

**Religion's Unexpected Harmony with Rap:** It's fascinating how religion and Persian rap music, known for its rebellious spirit, coexist in the lives of many fans. You would consider that those who love a genre that often questions authority would shy away from traditional religious beliefs. But, surprisingly, some of them don't. It turns out that some fans find a way to blend their faith with their love for rap's challenging messages.

**The Deep Respect for Artists' Sacrifices:** When it comes to Persian rap, it's not just about the beats or the lyrics. Fans deeply admire the personal risks artists take to share their music. Take Toomaj Salehi, for example. He was arrested for his bold songs, but fans see him as a hero for his courage and honesty. This admiration goes beyond just enjoying the music; it's about connecting with the artist's struggles and standing with them. It's a bond that's built on respect and understanding.

**The Search for Truth in Music:** What really strikes a chord with listeners is the authenticity in rap music. They crave songs that mirror the real experiences and emotions of the artists. This isn't just about finding good music; it's about finding pieces of themselves in the songs. They're drawn to artists who share their stories, their struggles, and their joys. This search for genuine expression makes the music more than just sound – it turns it into a reflection of their own lives, making every beat and every word resonate with their soul.

## Implications of Findings

In our study, focusing on the role of Persian rap music in Iran, we've discovered fascinating insights about how music impacts society. This study, reveals the depth of music's influence in Iranian culture. Cultural Shifts and Global Influences: The younger generation in Iran is turning towards Persian rap music, showing a significant cultural shift. This change reflects a blend of traditional Iranian values with global cultural trends. It's like watching a new cultural identity emerge, shaped by both local traditions and worldwide influences.

Gender Roles in Music: The way boys and girls experience rap music in Iran tells us a lot about gender roles in their society. Music is playing a key role in challenging these roles, suggesting a future where gender equality might be more embraced.

Music as a Social Mirror: Persian rap is much more than just music. It reflects the struggles, hopes, and frustrations of Iranian youth. The lyrics and rhythms serve as a voice for societal issues, making music a powerful tool for social commentary.

Uniting People Through Music: Interestingly, Persian rap music is also bringing people together. It creates a sense of community among different groups, showing how music can be a unifying force in society.

Music as Resistance: This genre of music is not just for entertainment; it's also a form of protest. It challenges political and societal norms in Iran, showing the power of music in driving social change.

Influence on Society and Culture: The popularity of Persian rap music indicates its strong connection with the everyday lives of its listeners. It's not just reflecting society but also influencing cultural discussions and public perception.

**Implications for Cultural Policies:** The thriving scene of Persian rap in Iran highlights a desire for greater freedom in cultural expression. It suggests the need for a re-evaluation of cultural policies in Iran, especially regarding censorship and artistic freedom.

To sum up, our findings show how music, especially Persian rap, plays a crucial role in shaping Iranian society. It goes beyond entertainment, influencing cultural discussions, societal norms, and even political narratives. In our study, we also found some key insights that are really important for several academic fields. Let's unpack these findings.

### **In Ethnographic Research**

**Music's Stories:** Our research showed that music, especially Persian rap, is like a book full of stories. For those studying different cultures, music is a new way to understand the stories and experiences that shape communities, especially in places where oral traditions are an important part of the culture.

**New Ways to Study Cultures:** Using music as a main source of information can bring fresh perspectives to ethnographic studies. Looking closely at lyrics, audience point of view, and the settings in which music is made and enjoyed can shine a light on how people live and what they believe in.

**Expanding Research:** This study encourages researchers to think outside the box and use unconventional sources. Music, especially types that echo with social changes, offers a unique point of view to understand cultural context and phenomena.

### **In Music Studies**

**More Than Just Art:** Our findings stress that music is not just an art form. It's a social force that shapes and reflects society. Studying music can help us understand how it influences the changes in society, shapes the identities of people of a certain society, and helps to build communities.

**Mixing Different Studies:** We see a growing need for mixing different fields of study and interdisciplinary research, especially in subjects like music which generally are being researched from an art viewpoint. Adding insights from areas like sociology, political science, and cultural studies can deepen our understanding of music's effect on society and individuals.

**Global and Local Views in Music:** Our research shows that it's important to look at how global music trends are reinterpreted locally. This balance can give us a deeper understanding of how global and local music influences intersect.

**In Cultural Anthropology: Reflecting Culture through Music:** Our study places music, specifically Persian rap, as a crucial element of culture. Cultural anthropologists can explore music to learn more about societal norms and changes.

**Music and Identity:** Music is a strong tool for looking at identity and belonging. Studying how music impacts these aspects can give cultural anthropologists more insight into how groups interact and form their cultural identities.

**Music in Societal Change:** The role of music in sparking and reflecting societal and cultural changes is key. Looking at how music is influenced by and can influence social and political events and movements can be really good point of view for cultural anthropology.

In conclusion, the insights from this study in ethnographic research, music studies, and cultural anthropology are important. They open up new ways and methods for studying the complex relationship between music and society. They show us how music is a powerful way for people to express their culture, drive societal change, and form their identities.

## Future Research Direction

Based on this thesis about Persian rap music's role in Iran, there are several exciting research areas we can explore next. These areas will help us understand even more about how music fits into different cultures.

**Studying Rap in Different Cultures:** How does rap music impact young people and society in other countries compared to Iran? It would be interesting to see what's common and what's different between different cultures.

**Looking at Gender in Music:** Since men and women experience rap differently in Iran, it would be good to study this more. We could look at how many women are in the rap scene and how rap music affects ideas about gender.

**Tracking Music Over Time:** If we follow how rap music will change over the years in Iran, we can learn more about its influence on society and politics. This kind of study would show us how the music and emotional experience of the listeners evolve.

These research ideas build on the current thesis and would help us understand not just music, but also how it connects with wider social, cultural, and political themes.

## Final Thoughts

Looking at what we've learned from this study, it's clear that rap music in Iran is much more than just art. It represents a deep desire for freedom, questions the way things are, and helps people show who they are against forces that want everyone to be the same. Rap music's strength is in saying what's usually left unsaid, fighting against unfair stories, and bringing people together in their fight and hope. As we wrap up this thesis, it's obvious that rap music in Iran isn't just a cultural thing. It's a symbol of fighting back—a way of expressing that really connects with the heart of being human when times are tough. The stories and feelings we've heard in the interviews show how powerful music can be in sharing culture and politics. They remind us of the Iranian people's strength and their ongoing fight for a society where all kinds of feelings and expressions are not just allowed, but celebrated. This study is a tribute to their bravery and creativity, and to the amazing ability of music to inspire, unite, and bring about change.

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**ANTROPOLOJİ ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA**

Tarih: 04/03/2024

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**DANIŞMAN ONAYI**

UYGUNDUR.

Doç.Dr. ALİ METİN BÜYÜKKARAKAYA

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**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY**

Date: 04/03/2024

Thesis Title (In English): UNDERGROUND ECHOES: THE RESONANCE OF PERSIAN RAP AS EVERYDAY RESISTANCE

My thesis work with the title given above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on people or animals.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
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	<b>Programme</b>	ANTHROPOLOGY	
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Tez Başlığı YERALTININ YANKILARI: GÜNDELİK DİRENİŞ OLARAK FARSÇA RAP'İN REZONANSI  
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	<b>Student Number</b>	N16144202	
	<b>Department</b>	N16144202	
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