Gangs, music and the mediatisation of crime: expressions, violations and validations

Craig Pinkney and Shona Robinson-Edwards

Abstract

Purpose – The way in which criminologists understand, contextualise and theorise around the mediatised world has raised some critical new questions. The purpose of this paper is to report on qualitative research which looks at the ways in which some forms of social media are utilised by gang members. Gang research in the main is predicated on the notion that gangs are deviant products of social disorganisation; however, there is little written on the "specific" forms of expression used by those associated with gangs.

Design/methodology/approach – The lyrical content of three music videos has been analysed using narrative analysis.

Findings – Music videos have been used as a form of expression for decades. More recently in some cases they have been used as a tool to send threats, promote gang culture and flaunt illegal substances, which is fairly a new concept, in the UK at least. Social media and music videos are not the sole reason why there has been a rise in violence amongst young people; however, this paper aims to further explore some of these notions.

Originality/value – The authors suggest that this form of expression presents challenges in the understanding of gang activity in a mediatised world. The intention is not to further criminalise young people, but to seek understanding and explore the phenomenon of music videos and its position their gang research.

Keywords Violence, Narrative, Crime, Youth, Social media, Mediatization, Gangs, Expression

Paper type Research paper

Craig Pinkney is a Criminologist, an Urban Youth Specialist and a Lecturer at the School of Education and Community, University College Birmingham, Birmingham, UK. Shona Robinson-Edwards is a Criminologist, a PhD Researcher and an Assistant Lecturer in Criminology at the Centre for Applied Criminology, Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK.

Introduction

Social media has become an integral part in the lives of young people within the UK, and those that are involved or subscribe to street gangs are increasingly using social media as a platform to communicate. Music videos have been used for decades by artists to express, communicate and tell stories of their lived experiences. Drill music in particular is a hip-hop subgenre originating from youth located in the Southside of Chicago, USA (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). Due to the current climate of gang-related music videos, and the consequential incarceration of individuals involved in such videos, we felt it appropriate to explore this element further. The use of music videos as evidence within a court setting has been utilised more frequently. An example is Reial Phillips from Birmingham, who was sentenced to 27 years in prison for conspiracy to possess a firearm with intent to endanger life, possessing ammunition without a firearms certificate and further charges of possessing a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence (McCarthy, 2016). The second example is Winston White, Akyrie Palmer and Mark Oduro who were sentenced to a total of 51 years for 2 counts of possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life and three charges of ammunition possession (Bullen, 2016).

In both cases, music videos, specifically, played a role in the evidence and subsequent convictions. Crime and the expression of crime through means such as social media is arguably utilised more frequently by new millenniums. Yardley *et al*. (2017) argued that criminology has leant far too heavily on media concepts that are binary in orientation and in the main operate as independent variables, without acknowledging that crime has now firmly moved into a digital,

virtual and online mediated space. Arguably gang members have also seized this very opportunity of utilising mediatised spaces.

This paper explores gang research in relation to the "mediatisation of crime" with specific reference to gangs and social media. Hjarvard (2002) argued that mediatisation is a technological "modus operandi", in which media distribution operates within, and impacts on, society as a whole. Lilleker (2008) further argued that mediatisation shapes and frames the processes of social, cultural and political communication in the society in which that mediatised communication takes place. In essence both Hjarvard (2002) and Lilleker (2008) saw that we are all inextricably located within a mediatised culture, where we are not passive observers, nor onlookers from a distance. The need therefore to use an interdisciplinary approach to better understand the complex and challenging world of gangs and social media is required.

Mediatised communication is clear, with the proliferation of online blogging, high-performance phone cameras with easy access to digital platforms, and examples include the extensive blog written by Norwegian mass murderer Anders Brevik and recent graphic depictions of beheadings posted online by ISIS. It is important to note here that websleuthing has made the headlines on several occasions. Yardley et al.'s (2016) paper titled "What the deal with websleuthing" explored the above. Arguably as the wider public now see themselves as amateur sleuths, virtual police and internet vigilantes, criminology is moving into an era of "digital public criminology". Public criminology could be loosely defined as the intersection of academic criminology and public discourse. It is by no means a singular entity and means different things to different people, as there are multiple publics and many public discourses. Given the significant role of social media, specifically related to the presence of music videos in the narrative of gang members, the way in which individuals make sense of their world, a number of reasons why gangs choose to utilise this platform is clear due to easy accessibility of social media and the attention those utilising it receives. This paper therefore outlines the findings of a study that examined the expressions of three individuals, all of whom took centre stage in music videos. The lyrical content was documented and analysed using narrative analysis. It is important to note that a number of narrative identities emerged from this study. Having said this only the Rival, Life for a Life and Hyper Masculine narratives are discussed in detail.

Cultural criminology

Cultural criminology is key to the understanding of culture, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. However, the question of who defines mainstream culture is constantly debated. Essentially those in gangs deviate from informal and formal social expectations. Deviation, however, from mainstream culture can relate to a number of factors such as hobbies, clothing, music and so forth. Counter culture is also applicable here, which looks at how individuals, in this case how gang members embrace their position in society. In essence those in gangs are living "counter" to what mainstream society expect. The question of "media" is central for cultural criminologist, according to Deuze (2012) we "live" in media. The sole concern, however, is not the way in which the media dictate to us about deviant acts, but how those labelled deviant and even criminal use the media. Individuals use the media in constructing, maintaining and shaping their identities.

Ferrell et al. (2008, 2015) used the concept of "loops" to explain this process. Loops essentially describe the process by which "everyday life recreates itself in its own image" (Ferrell et al., 2008, p. 130). As gang members utilise media platforms and their lives are made visible through the media, this then feeds back into those lives themselves. Arguably mainstream media representation of gangs, alongside the media produced by gangs (e.g. YouTube videos), add to, and give meaning to the experience of gang members. Ferrell et al. (2008, 2015) argued that whilst these loops remain self-contained, they more commonly connect up to other loops in larger "spirals" of culture and crime. This ties into Surette's (2015) concept of performance crime:

> Contemporary performance crime encompasses the spectacle of recording, sharing and uploading crime in order to distribute the performance to new media audiences […] purposely created and distributed by offenders (p. 199).

However, it is important to note that performance crime is not a new concept; individuals engaging in criminal activities have often sought to perform for others. This can take various forms, Vester Lee Flanagan killed two people in Virginia, later posting a video of the incident to social media, people also upload attack on strangers, a phenomenon better known as "happy slapping". Although performance crime is not a new concept, the newer media technologies that have emerged mean that there are more opportunities for crime to be performed for an audience.

Hayward and Presdee (2010) highlighted the link between criminality and symbolic display, suggesting that the images that we see from people engaged in deviance and crime, is as real as the crime and deviance itself. So as gang members display Hyper Masculine tendencies such as brandishing weapons and talking about violence, the narratives in which they communicate is real to them and their audiences (Hayward and Presdee, 2010). It is a connection to the social realities of young people in gang impacted environments. Bennett *et al.* (2014) argued that these social realities are by default a consequence of poor socio-economic backgrounds, which create a series of marginalised subgroups and subcultures. Arguing that the voices of such groups, are often captured within different forms of sound, and have always found an audience regardless of location, race, age or gender.

Social media and gang research

Attitudes, behaviours and perceptions have been shaped, and in some instances reshaped by the use of social media in people's lives (Greenfield, 2014; Annisette and Lafreniere, 2016). Communication undoubtedly can be enhanced by online activity; however, it is acknowledged that it also raises a host of challenges. This paper focusses on one of these challenges, exploring the links between gang-related activity in the virtual and real world. Gang-related violence has existed long before the establishment of social media platforms, and is well documented within research on gangs (Horowitz and Schwartz, 1974; Decker, 1996; Hagedorn, 1998). Having said this, research has found a correlation between online activity on social media platforms and offline gang-related violence (Johnson and Schell-Busey, 2016). The internet appears to provide a platform for new conflicts, alongside intensifying old ones (Moule *et al.*, 2016).

Social media networks such as Myspace (created in 2003); Facebook, a text, video and image sharing network (2004); YouTube, a video sharing network (2005); Twitter, a text-based platform (2006); Instagram, an image sharing platform (2010); and Snapchat, a video sharing platform (2011) have been utilised, enabling communication on a multitude of levels. In 2010 social media users worldwide were estimated at just under one billion; by 2016, this has grown to almost two and a half billion – a figure that is projected to reach three billion by 2020 (Statista, 2016d). Data clearly show the increased number of people using social media; however, it is important to note that the duration, frequency and use of online platforms are steadily increasing. According to Statista (2016b), one in four teenagers admitted in a US-based survey that they are checking the internet "almost constantly" during their waking hours.

The emergence of smart phone in 1992 technology plays a significant role, with smart phones accounting for over two-thirds of time spent on social media (comScore, 2016). Snapchat, an application developed specifically for smart phone use, for example, generates an average of 10 billion daily videos from 150 million daily active users worldwide (Statista, 2016c). Having said this, there is a clear generational divide in relation to the popularity of some social media platforms, whilst younger generations embracing platforms developed "specifically" for smart phones, whilst older generations not so much. in April 2016, almost 70 per cent of US smart phone owners aged between 18-24 reported using Snapchat, compared to only 14 per cent of adults aged 35 and over (Statista, 2016a).

Gang activity on social media

Research including interviews and data from surveys contends that gangs are online and using social media (see King *et al.*, 2007; Decary-Hetu and Morselli, 2011; Knox, 2011; Decker and Pyrooz, 2011, 2012; Van Hellemont, 2012; Pyrooz *et al.*, 2015). Gang members like anybody else use the internet for a number of reasons, which include making remarks or threats to rival

gangs, promoting gang culture, recruitment, flaunting illegal substances or weapons (see Womer and Bunker, 2010; Decary-Hetu and Morselli, 2011; Decker and Pyrooz, 2011; Hanser, 2011; Sela-Shayovitz, 2012; Patton et al., 2013, 2016). To provide a comprehensive review of the literature to date this paper will focus on the role of music videos in gang activity and research.

Gangs have used social media platform such as YouTube to promote gang music videos for decades (see Haut, 2014; Johnson and Schell-Busey, 2016). Currently, in the UK and the US, these videos typically sit within the music genres of "drill" or "trap-rap" (Densley, 2012; Storrod and Densley, 2017; Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). The majority of videos are filmed at night, either in areas associated with the gang or in a rival's territory, identifiable through the inclusion of street signs or local landmarks in the video shots.

Such videos often attract both local and national attention, not only from gang rivals, but also from impressionable young people that find such videos entertaining (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). Moreover as gangs utilise social media as a means to maintain virtual presences, to communicate about their activities, and to establish an identity, criminal justice agencies in recent times have used gang material on social media to help incarcerate gang members (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). Within the major cities across the UK, gang taskforces have been set up to disrupt gang activity, reduce the threat of violence that gangs pose and work alongside police, local authorities, criminal justice agencies, to better manage individuals involved in gang activity (Home Office, 2015). This multiagency approach, according to the "Ending Gangs and Youth Violence Report" (Home Office, 2015), asserts that in order for there to be a reduction of violence within gangs and gang impacted environments, better communication and appropriate dissemination of gang intelligence gathered by gang taskforces needs to be more transparent between agencies.

Gangs, Hagedorn (2007a, b, c) argued are products of social exclusion, like other social movements and groups of armed young men. Wood and Alleyne (2010) suggested that future directions into gang research should adopt a more multidisciplinary approach. Wood and Alleyne also called for theory knitting, which refers to integrating the best ideas into a new framework to undertake new gangs research. It involves identifying the common and unique ideas from existing ideas and theories that provide explanatory power and testable hypotheses. Such a model they argued would facilitate the examination and further development of theory.

The role of music and gangs

In 1873, Pike reported the first active gangs in Western Civilisation; Pike "documented the existences of gangs of highway robbers in England during the 17th century" (Howell et al., 2002, p. 1). The term gang has evolved, still raising a host of complexities. Debated for decades, arguably no worldwide or even national consensus has been reached on its definition. The question which frequently arises is what is a gang? And how do gangs differ from groups of friends? Is criminality an element relating to gangs? If a group is not involved in criminality it this a gang? The diversity and complexity of the nature of the term gang is clear.

Wood and Alleyne (2010) expressed the view that although criminological explanations on gangs span almost a century much of that literature was written at a time before the intensification of mediatisation within society. Joseph and Gunter (2011) posited that academic research, government policy, youth work/youth crime prevention practice and policing have largely failed to get a handle on contemporary urban road youth culture, which functions with a mediatised world. Short (2007) and Glynn (2014) also expressed the view that too often criminologists focus on the social control of crime, not emerging trends and patterns such as mediatisation of crime. Decary-Hetu and Morselli (2011) pointed out that we need to understand the emergence of gangs in this new social world as a way of identifying trends in the virtual world in relation to new gang activities and trajectories. Harding's (2014) book "Street Casino" provides a recent perspective surrounding gangs within urban communities; Harding highlighted this notion of constant competition amongst gang members. Rival gangs whom engage in violence do not solely compete for territory, but for wealth, status and recognition. Moreover, this quest to receive the ultimate goal of success within gang membership is frequently challenged in the day-to-day

lived experiences of gang members. This notion of gang rivalry has now transited onto media platforms, in which not only engages their rivals but also impacts wider communities (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017).

Lyrical expression is vital for some gang members, many of whom have limited access to elements of the social structures within society, such as employment, education and training. Music is a way to express their narratives, since many gang members have the access to local recording studios. Arguably music videos, lyrical content and the physical portrayal of a "gangsta lifestyle" are becoming more mainstream, specifically within the UK. For many involved in gangs, motivations are not solely economic, and to do with identity, power and recognition are also significant factors. Arguably popular media and global entertainment industries have "sensationalised" crimes and specifically gang crimes and Lyddane (2006) suggested that this has contributed to the "migration and growth of a popular gangsta subculture" (p. 2). The media has therefore perpetuated the spread of subcultures from beyond borders. An example of this is Chicago's drill rap movement as Drew (2013) accurately put it, if you want an "accurate" portrait of Chicago modern gang culture the "drill music scene" needs to be explored.

Drill music

The globalisation of Drill music and its link between gangs and social media has been a significant point of interest by many researchers and practitioners (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). Drill music is a style of hip-hop music that originated in the Southside of Chicago. Drill broke into the mainstream in mid-2012 with the success of rappers like Music Video 1, Lil Durk, Fredo Santana and Lil Reese, all of whom were established on their strong local followings and internet presence. Although in spite of having much economic success and signing to many of the major labels in America, drill rappers were being criticised as the style of music was getting a lot of media attention for the graphic imagery and lyrical content. Drill music was linked to a spate of gangland shootings and murders as it was said to be perpetuating the youth in Chicago to be violent. The lyrics of drill rap tend to mainly focus on the harsh and dangerous experiences of life for residents of Southside Chicago. It is widely argued that hip-hop as a genre historically has always featured artists highlighting the social reality of people in a range of socio-economic environments. However, in drill rap, although a more contemporary facet of hip-hop, the overt explicit nature of content/imagery, i.e. imagery of young men holding automatic weaponry, live drive-by shootings, discussions of violence and unsolved murders either by the artist or by a member of the gang is different (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017).

This persists in spite of the police and authorities observing footage on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Periscope (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). Drill rap has been coined the most explicit response to the city's off and on title as the murder capital of America (Goldstein, 2013). Gangs and artists alike such as Music Video 1, Lil Durk, Fredo Santana and others have embraced this title as Chicago being the murder capital of America, by often referring to Chicago as "Chiraq", due to the homicide rate in the state mirroring the number of fatalities in modern day Iraq.

The drill phenomenon is clearly intertwined with violence, although drill music has not affected the UK to the extent it has in Chicago, yet, there are, however, some very clear similarities. Major cities such as London, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, which in recent years, have seen a rise in knife and gun crime (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). And a rise in music videos used by gangs similar to those identified as drill music. However, it should be noted that all gangs do not express themselves in a lyrical or even musical form, although according to Lyddane (2006) "a significant number of gang members do" (p. 6). Within the UK therefore there is an increasing popularity of gangs using music to enforce their points.

Grime music, which has a similar lyrical content and expression as hip-hop, has its own unique sound and is the style that many artists in the UK have used. Grime music has witnessed the success of artists such as "Lethal B", "Dizzie Rascal" and "Stormzy", many of whom rose to success through music platforms like SBTV, which is owned by millionaire and entrepreneur Jamal Edwards, who started recording artists with talent across the country giving them exposure (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). Other music platforms have mirrored this idea such

as Grime Daily, Link Up TV and P110 to give exposure to new talent. Many street gangs have members that are musically talented and have used these platforms to showcase their lyrical talent; however, some use these platforms as an opportunity to publicise their gang identity and agendas (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). Drill music has been the choice of style, as we have seen artists such as Music Video 2 in London, "Tremz" from Liverpool and Music Video 3 from Birmingham rise in popularity with drill rap. The West Midlands in recent times has been labelled "the nation's gun crime capital" (Halliday, 2015). During this period, a young man named Reial Phillips was sentenced to 27 years in prison, after he featured in a number of "drill" style music videos. These videos were ultimately used in court to support his conviction (McCarthy, 2016), as it was said his involvement in the video, and being part of a gang were responsible for the spate of shootings in 2016.

More attention should be given to "gang narratives", which are amplified through social media; however, this also raises a host of complexities for academics and the Criminal Justice System at large. Performance crime is a concern; therefore we cannot take every element of lyrical content expressed in music videos literally. Surette (2015) explored what "criminals" and "deviants" do with media – constructing, maintaining and shaping realities – an example being "performance crime". The concept of blurred lines comes into play here, as arguably the line between fact and fiction are blurred. The mediascape is a hall of mirrors in which the street scripts the screen and the screen scripts the street (Hayward and Young, 2004). The lines between fact and fiction are not clear cut, gang members often talk about incident which may have taken place, however, can be exaggerated or even include fictional elements. Whether a real crime or incident has occurred or not, essentially gang videos are developed and performed by the artist who develops a significant fan followings. In a nutshell gang narratives should be pursued, however, with critique and caution.

Narcissism and the amplification of violence

A recent report titled "Social Media as a Catalyst and Trigger for Youth Violence", by Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney (2017) discusses studies surrounding social media and violence, highlighting concerns amongst young people and professionals relating to music videos. In particular those that contained taunts and threats to individuals from rival groups. comScore (2016) discussed the dramatic rise in the use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Periscope and YouTube. Over recent years, social networking sites account for nearly a quarter of the total time teenagers spend online. comScore (2016) further discussed that such sites have become one of the primary venues in which young people interact with one another, establish identities and friendships and influence peers.

Research suggests that young people's constant use of social media has a strong connection with narcissism. Narcissism according to Panek *et al.* (2013) is an affinity to believe oneself to be superior over others, to increasingly pursue adoration from others, and to participate in egotistical thinking and behaviour. Carpenter (2012) expressed the notion that young people have become obsessed with taking and posting "selfies" on social media platforms, similarly gangs utilise these platforms for the very same reasons. The lust for adoration sees young people thriving on the idea that they are important based on the volume of "likes" and comments received on personal profiles (Carpenter, 2012). Alloway *et al.* (2014) asserted that narcissism in relation to the aforementioned use of social media, damages people's abilities to shape healthy, mutually beneficial relationships.

As drill music has become a popular genre of choice for many young people, gang members alike have taken advantage and utilised social media platforms, thereby attracting attention from people within the music industry, their fans, rival groups and criminal justice agencies by default. With the constant increase of video views, alongside comments and "likes" for the drill/trap rapper, this becomes the motivation to want/or need to make more content to appease their audiences (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). This by default has created a paradigm shift in the way artists make music, as well as the way in which the viewers decide whether the content they view is good enough. Therefore, where viewers would traditionally listen to music and analyse the content of forms of expression, the difference with "drill music" or "trap" rap now means that viewers are making judgements based on whether the artist is projecting true content, and whether this can be verified. If an artist professes that he/she is a gang member, who has

committed a series of stabbings and shootings, the audience in a sense demands some type of proof. Although the artist may be lyrically talented, the talent of such an individual will be tainted if the claim cannot be supported.

An example of this comes from a well-known "trap" rapper known as "Nines" from London who released a video on Instagram with fellow members of his gang, posing with the jewellery of an opposing "trap" rapper from London named "C Biz". In the video "Nines" and his friends are seen boasting and taunting "C Biz" about the robbery and challenging "C Biz's" rap ideas about the money he spends on his jewellery, suggesting that the watch and chains that his gang took was not worth as much as he claimed in his music videos. This video went viral across the UK on all media platforms which young people use. Along with the thousands of views on YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat, there were comments from his fans and rivals suggesting what "C Biz" should do a retaliation, which would in turn have gained his popularity back. Within 24 hours of the robbery, a drive-by shooting on "Church Road", where the rapper "Nines" resides, took place resulting in an innocent man, aged 27, being murdered (IBTimes, 2016). Following the incident, seven men including "C Biz" were arrested in connection with the murder and are currently on remand awaiting a trial at the Old Bailey.

Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney (2017) suggested that violence within inner cities is increased when "beef" is uploaded on the internet. The volume of viewers and comments from both supporters and opposing groups amplify the violence because the constant narrative of "will you do, what you say in your raps" puts the victim in a position where their credibility and livelihood is at stake. Although this may be seen as entertainment for those viewing robberies, assaults and other forms of violence, the victims themselves feel they have a duty to respond due to the narcissistic thinking social media has created (Carpenter, 2012). In many cases where certain areas within the major cities across the UK have witnessed spats of violence, it is important to note the significance of the adverse impact that comments from viewers on social media platforms have on individuals that are victims to some sort of violence (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney, 2017). This discourse highlights new elements within gang research that explore not only what triggers gang members to be violent but rather the discourse about narcissism, social media and its relation to gang violence.

Narrative identities

Yardley *et al.*'s (2013) study "Narrative beyond Prison Gates: Contradiction, Complexity, and Reconciliation" highlights both the importance and complexities of narratives. Undoubtedly social scientists have become interested in how stories and personal experiences are told, through oral, written and/or visual means (Atkinson, 1997; Atkinson and Delamont, 2006; Riessman, 2008). Consequently a significant area within literature has emerged around the "concept of narrative". Narration has a key purpose, Yardley *et al.* (2013) suggested it is to "share a story with an audience – and indeed, the audience or audiences, actual or perceived, are shapers of narrative" (Yardley *et al.*, 2013, p. 160). Looking at narrative identities through oral expression and visual means is significant, as language is explored to begin to understand elements such as how the story teller presents stories about their lives, and the lives of others:

> The interpretation of language will be mediated by the cultural context within which there are frameworks guiding what constitutes "normal" or mainstream and what is "deviant" or runs counter to social acceptability Yardley *et al.* (2013, p. 160).

Narrative is not a new concept as criminologists have explored narratives in various areas, including the Chicago School Studies (Shaw, 1930) and desistance literature (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001). Narrative, however, is key to understanding why people do certain things, and enables one to make sense of their journey. Having said this, criminologists are not "detached" observers, and as Yardley *et al.* (2013) eloquently put it:

> We are inextricably intertwined with the social world around us. Our inquiries are conducted through lenses coloured by our lived realities, and our findings are given meaning by culturally mediated concepts, names, and labels (Yardley *et al.*, 2013, p. 165).

Narrative accounts of offenders or ex-offenders are crucial in the criminological research process. Brookman (2015) illustrated how narratives can shift between different discourses, individuals can therefore commit to a particular narrative. Sandberg (2009) reported on individuals who

committed to the "gangster narrative", however, interestingly shifted from gangster to a victimhood narrative (Brookman, 2015). Therefore, interviewing or analyses content cannot be looked at, at face value, as there are a range of "multi lingual and seemingly contradictory accounts" (Brookman, 2015, p. 208).

The shift of narrative highlights a number of implications for narrative criminology (Brookman, 2015), "If the narratives of violent offenders are constantly shifting, how can we make sense of past and (potentially) future offending" (Brookman, 2015, p. 208). It is documented that offenders present themselves in a multitude of ways (Brookman, 2015). Literature to some extent has focussed upon this, for example, how some offenders excuse or justify offending behaviour and in turn present positive self-image (see Sykes and Matza, 1957; Scott and Lyman, 1968; Maruna and Copes, 2005). Acknowledgement of behaviour and self-presentation has been explored in some depth within criminological and sociological literature (Brookman, 2015, p. 208), clearly highlighting that offenders tend to choose the position they wish to identify.

Methodology

Due to the exploratory nature of this study narrative analysis was adopted to explore the lyrical content of three music videos. The aforementioned form of analysis was chosen not only because it allows for the exploration of content and material, but it also explores the narrative and lived experiences. Arguably voices and the experiences of those affiliated to gangs are rarely heard, qualitative research involves a continuous process of reflection which gives a greater understanding of the social context which is being studied. It is therefore incumbent for all criminologists to transcend straightforward explanations and neat theoretical understandings of crime, and occupy space outside of the comfort zone of the "ivory tower".

Instead this is a historical moment that requires a move towards a more "mediatised criminological imagination". This new world is not science fiction, nor is it neat and tidy. It is messy, chaotic and in need of understanding. More importantly, criminologists have been too slow to respond to the growing menace of how crime operates within this mediatised world based on the paucity of studies that have been conducted. Clark (1965) revealed the importance and contemporary relevance of conducting research in inner city communities and called for the researcher operating as an "involved observer", who is well versed in the historical, social, cultural, political and economic realities of inner city communities and can enhance researching and criminological theorising when investigating a complex and under researched area such as gangs and social media.

Context

We decided to focus on three music videos from individuals residing in Birmingham, UK; London, UK; and Chicago, USA , all of whom had some affiliation with gangs. The videos were in the public domain, having said this some aspects of analysis were generalised to protect the identity of individuals. The analysis of video content took place over three weeks by a qualified gang and urban youth specialist (C-P), whose experience of working on the front line in Birmingham (UK) was crucial in understanding the context of media pieces. The approach to this study is anti-positivist in its nature, with the view that understanding is only possible from the subjective perspective of the story teller.

Data collection

Three videos were analysed individually and collectively, by C-P. The analysis of each music video was recorded in a chart, which was structured around a number of headings. The authors also created a general comments column for further commentary. Each video was analysed using this framework, and a process of watching and re watching the videos took place. The first phases allowed a general sense of familiarisation which then led to the second phase, analysis of the videos individually and then a comparative analysis of all of the videos. Notes included commentary on linguistic style, lyrical content, tone, reference to other gangs and visualisation of weapon. A summary of analysis and documented notes was further developed with SR-E.

The third phase involved the interpretation of data and the development of themes and narrative identities. Analysis involved referring back to observations, comments and interpretation, alongside regular discussion between authors to ensure the validity of the analysis.

Data analysis

Language describes the human world and conveys meaning about past events and action. Therefore, data analysis was in the form of narrative analysis. Narratives are unique and somewhat special whether this be oral or written communication, individuals express events which have and in some cases have not (yet) taken place. Narrative research therefore enables the researcher to analyse stories to further develop understanding. The model of narrative analysis focussed on thematic and performative analysis. Thematic analysis therefore focusses on the content, for example, "What is said" more than how it is said" (Lewis-Beck, 2003, p. 2). Performative analysis was also utilised as, "interest goes beyond the spoken word, and, as the stage metaphor implies, storytelling is seen as performance by a 'self' with a past-who involves, persuade and (perhaps) moves an audience through language and gesture, 'doing' rather than telling alone"(Lewis-Beck, 2003, p. 5).

Results

Table I clearly shows the similarities between all three music videos, which all used antagonistic language and made clear reference to rival gangs. The promotion, use and in all cases sale of drugs are promoted throughout. Essentially some drugs such as marijuana were normalised, therefore discussing this in lyrical content and in some cases visibly smoking such a drug is not viewed as deviant or even criminal. Also the sale of drugs is also documented, and there seems to be a hierarchical structure in relation to the usage of particular drugs. As aforementioned, some of

Table I	Drill music videos						
Title of song	Antagonistic language	Glamorising gang culture	Promotion of drugs	Reference to other gangs	Reference to specific area codes	Visualisation of weapons	General comments
Music Video 1 (MV, 1) (Chicago)	Yes MV1 – "Keep diss shit 1 Hunna, I keep this shit 3 Hunna, I pull up in dat Audi, you pull up in dat Honda"	Yes MV1 – "fuck ah tooka gang bitch, im 3 Hunna"	Yes MV 1 – "im high, im smoking gun smoke (im smoking ganja)"	Yes MV1 – "fuck ah tooka gang bitch, im 3 Hunna"	Yes MV1 – "We 3 Hunna"	Yes	This video clearly was aimed at a rival gang, and the promotion of illicit drug use was a key theme throughout
Music Video 2 (MV, 2) (London)	Yes MV2 – "Free Mental (Free K), an opp got, got so they threw him in jail"	Yes MV2 – "Pull up in a stolen truck, hear thunder see lightning, yeah that shits exciting"	Yes MV2 – "Smashing bits and draws, packs and teks on da landin"	Yes MV2 "An opp got, got so they threw him in jail (free mental)"	Yes MV2 – "Sixty yeah all ah dat, all ah dat"	No	This video highlights gang activity, there is constant taunts towards rivals and poor relationship with the police
Music Video 3 (MV, 3) (Birmingham)	Yes MV3 – "Tried to run from the bells and ting, my jigga hit a nigga in his back!"	Yes MV3 – "Me and LJay running niggaz down, dat nigga dere got cheffed. He got grabbed, got kicked, got punched, that nigga dere nearly dead!"	Yes MV3 – "I got bud and grub, point 2 and I hit that strip. On the M42 got a parcel for hoods and bits"	Yes MV3 – "Me and LJay running niggaz down, dat nigga dere got cheffed"	Yes MV3 – "Ol Tight all the AR Man, 21 to 18 always"	No	This highlights the emergence of a new gang. With constant references to drug dealing, shootings/ stabbings and threats to rival gang members

the videos show individuals smoking what appears to be marijuana; however, none show the use of crack cocaine or heroin; however, the sale of these drugs is expressed to some extent. The promotion of drugs is particularly interesting, as some see the sale of drugs as a "business", for example, discussing prices, the amount of drugs sold and motorway route ways.

There is clear reference to specific postcodes/area codes, the lyrical content does not use subliminal messages, and is straight to the point and direct. Arguably gang culture is glamorised in these videos, and can be viewed from those involved or associated as a personal "anthem". Table I illustrates that the only significant difference is that Music Video 1 clearly brandishes an array of firearms, which is not seen in Music Videos 2 and 3. Evidently the location, laws and regulations are major factors. Having said this, the overall message and content is mirrored throughout all three videos.

Narrative identities of music artists affiliated with gangs

Although a number of themes were highlighted such as materialism, competition and conspicuous consumerism, this paper, however, focusses on three narratives expressed by those who appeared in (Music Videos 1, 2 and 3) these included Rival; Life for a Life; and Hyper Masculine narratives.

Rival narrative

The Rival narrative is used to describe those who specifically make reference to rivalry between gangs; this is portrayed through the lyrical content and in some cases illustrated through symbolisation. The specific nature and focus on rivals is quite clear in this narrative. Music videos are therefore used as a tool for individuals to portray their message. Interestingly rivalry, however, is not solely between gangs; reference is also made to the strained relationship with the police. The recognition and validation received from peers were quite surreal; as many were encouraged, supported and in most instances joined by others who essentially portrayed tendencies related to the Rival narrative. It can be suggested that elements of power, masculinity and most certainly antagonistic language are key in this narrative. Individuals within this narrative needed and in some cases relied on the platform of music videos to express their points to a wider audience, as many have limited access due to location, postcodes and gang affiliation. Arguably without external influences such as music videos, some may not have pursued their interest and roles in music videos to the extent in which they did. Below are quotes taken from all three music videos that reflect the Rival narrative:

> MV1 – "im high, im smoking gun smoke (im smoking ganja), fuck ah tooka gang bitch, im 3 Hunna".

> MV2 – "Free Mental (Free K), an opp got, got so they threw him in jail".

> MV2 – "Stepped out on violence, beef with meeks and trident".

> MV2 – "The whole squad on obbo (all of us), feds make squad feel famous, where ever they see us they follow".

> MV3 – "We got bells and polls in the ride, if he's from 1.9 he has to die".

Life for a Life

The Life for a Life narrative is very much concerned with expressing past encounters and highlighting future actions. Individuals constantly referred to strengths as musicians; affiliation with gangs and the use of guns and weapons. This was specifically expressed in relation to reflecting on the near death experiences of rival gang members. Consequently threats are directed to rival gangs, the main areas of focus in this narrative are revenge, violence, threats and homicide. The sole interest for individuals in this narrative is revenge, and music videos are used as a platform to express the "Life for a Life" narrative. This narrative was used within music to engage others in some way, shape or form. This included music being viewed by various audiences such as friends, gang rivals and others. The socialisation with other like-minded individuals had a number of benefits for those who expressed the Life for a Life narrative. It should

be noted that the "Life for a Life" narrative is somewhat similar to the "Rival Narrative" as rivalry and revenge in most cases are tightly linked:

MV1 – "GBE Im a big dawg, kill yall and forget yall".

MV2 – "Stepped out on violence, got beef with meeks and trident. See man run to the sound of that drum, bet he thought he was sliding".

MV2 – "An opp got, got so they threw him in jail (free mental)".

MV3 – "Me and LJay running niggaz down, dat nigga dere got cheffed. He got grabbed, got kicked, got punched, that nigga dere nearly dead!"

MV3 – "Tried to run from the bells and ting, my jigga hit a nigga in his back!"

MV3 – "Big corn in dis ting, click-clack everybody dead".

Hyper Masculine

Individuals used the Hyper Masculine narrative to brag about material possessions. This was heard via lyrical content; however, Hyper Masculine characteristics were also shown through body language. Individuals frequently sought to engage with others to show what they have; what they have achieved; and in essence what they can do. For the Hyper Masculine music videos are quite personal, the portrayal of exaggerated aggression, strength and violence is clear in this narrative. Socialisation and connections with other like-minded individuals were key. Although some may not possess the wealth or power to the extent in which they portrayed, the video and rhetoric clearly enabled individuals to portray a "desired" lifestyle and share this with others. The Hyper Masculine narrative is tightly linked to the Rival and Life for a Life narratives. Individuals would therefore draw upon multiple narratives:

MV1 – "Keep diss shit 1 Hunna, I keep this shit 3 Hunna, I pull up in dat Audi, you pull up in dat Honda".

MV2 – "Still got to pray for my sins, I did a lot of dirt but im innocent, chilling wid streetz on da wing".

MV2 – "Pull up in a stolen truck, hear thunder see lightning, yeah that shits exciting".

MV3 – "I got bud and grub, point 2 and I hit that strip. On the M42 got a parcel for hoods and bits".

Discussion

To our knowledge, no recent study examines three videos, from different locations in relation to gang culture and the mediatisation of crime. The findings of this study are therefore important to develop further knowledge about how best to understand gangs, gang's rivalry and the use of social media. It is also important to understand the current context of the use of music videos by gang members, emphasising that these are not only consumed by audiences in the USA, but have transcended and become utilised more frequently by gangs in the UK.

As discussed earlier narrative analysis is important for social scientist, and specifically criminologist in "understanding how people make sense of their lives" (Yardley *et al.*, 2013, p. 174). Various scholars have highlighted the flexibility or elasticity in stories (Maruna, 2001; Sandberg, 2013), "through the coexistence of conflicting or contradictory narrative identities" (Yardley *et al.*, 2013, p. 174). The purpose of this paper was to explore the nature of gangs, music and forms of the mediatisation of crime, this was done by focussing on three music videos, with the aim of highlighting the following; what were the videos portraying? Were there any conflicting narratives? Were there any similarities? Having presented the narrative identities that emerged from the research encountered we therefore present the following points.

Although the Rival, Life for a Life and Hyper Masculine narratives shared a number of similarities characterised by power, masculinity and gangs, these narratives were still unique in the sense that key themes, and expressions were focussed on in each. The narratives highlighted are potentially problematic for those who identified with them, and raise a host of complexities. Most notably the "Life for a Life" narrative was categorised by direct threats to kill. For example, Music Video 3 (MV3), "We got bells and polls in the ride, if he's from 1.9 he has to die". This quote makes

reference to weapons, and the location of rival gang members, post-codism is important, and quotes like the above are not unique.

Having said this, it is clear that there is often a switch between narratives, and we do not suggest that individuals rigidly express one particular narrative; essentially there are a series of different characters. An example being those expressing the "Life for a Life" narrative were able at times to draw on the "Hyper Masculine" narrative, which was demonstrated more so in body language, whereas the "Life for a Life" narrative was more focussed on lyrical content. These narratives therefore in most cases complemented each other. Those expressing the "Rival Narrative" seemed to refer to issues of the past, which have led to rivalry in the present whereas; the "Life for a Life" narrative was very much future focussed, emphasising what was going to happen in the future, alongside direct threats; and the "Hyper Masculine" narrative was generally portrayed through content and body language, facial expressions and aggression were a recurring theme.

Elements which emerged from narrative analysis are the complexities of dealing with and understanding forms of expression. The platform of music videos facilitated the opportunity for people to express their views albeit negative ones in some instances, which consequently motivated others to imitate and retaliate. We suggest that for those involved in such exchange, their role is not simple, it, however, is to make a statement and send threats. Having said this, it is also linked to thrill, power and masculinity. The impact and in some cases inspiration for music videos is clear, and this shift has been highlighted more recently within the UK. These similarities are not only picked up within this paper, comments left in the public domain also make reference to the influence of other artists on style, lyrical content and the visual nature of music videos in the UK.

Arguably gang members within these videos have achieved some goals, such as financial gain, status and recognition, many of them have become known beyond their postcodes, and in some instances beyond the country in which they reside. Ultimately music videos are a platform which can provide the gang and/or gang members with a sense of power and authority. Individuals can essentially say and do what they want, which in the short term does not necessarily carry any immediate consequences. The videos in some cases portray a desirable life, full or thrill, living life on the edge and excitement. What the videos fail to do is give the audience a "reality update". For example, the grieving process of families who have lost loved ones is not shown, and the consequences being involved in criminality is not documented. Significantly music videos have been used as vital evidence in courts; The Criminal Justice System within the UK has a history of using such material which has led to the conviction of many. Evidently many did not foresee the impact of music videos on pending and future criminal cases.

Given the nature of gangs and the lyrical content of music videos one might have expected the central narrative to be associated with violence. And, indeed while this is true to an extent the role of masculinity, revenge, past experiences and the treatment received from those in authority heavily shaped narratives. While it is clear that gang rivalry does exist, many gang members expressed a somewhat negative relationship with the police and the Criminal Justice System at large. Therefore, this platform used by gang's member should not be viewed as being solely targeted at rival gangs. The content should be listened to by a wider academic audience, as criminological research and the process of research are forever changing. Individuals in these videos were able to subconsciously or consciously draw upon different narratives, emphasis within songs is upon gangs and violence; however, on the other hand reference is made to harassment of the police, innocence and essentially false imprisonment. Narratives of the past and present are somewhat intertwined.

This paper has explored the narrative identities highlighted in three music video, we therefore acknowledge that this study is vulnerable to the criticism that one cannot generalise (Yardley *et al.*, 2013, p. 176); however, this study is not based on testing factors and variables, the approach used in the natural sciences. We have engaged in an exploratory study in the contexts of discovery (McAdams, 2012; Yardley *et al.*, 2013), understanding and comparative analysis. We acknowledge that our interpretation of the narrative identities may differ from others; however, this is our subjective view as academics and practitioners. We intend for this study to contribute to the criminological knowledge base surrounding gangs in the UK, whilst contributing to a pathway of research exploring the current issues impacting gangs.

In conclusion, we suggest that the narrative identities highlighted should be understood as an element of the deep rooted issues experienced by gang members. Understanding gang members and their lived experiences and choices is a "journey". We suggest that the gang members in this particular study affiliated themselves with the narrative highlighted; however, it is important to note that narratives are amendable to change and adaption (Maruna, 2001; Ward and Marshall, 2007). Therefore, those in gangs who openly express gang rivalry may require support, intervention and education needed within communities and behind the prison walls.

References

Alloway, T., Runac, R., Qureshi, M. and Kemp, G. (2014), "Is Facebook linked to selfishness? Investigating the relationship among social media use, empathy, and narcissism", Vol. 3, pp. 150-8, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/sn.2014.33020

Annisette, L.E. and Lafreniere, K.D. (2016), "Social media, texting and personality: a test of the shallowing hypothesis: personality and individual differences", available at: dx.doi.org.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/10.1016/j.paid.2016.02.043 (accessed 10 January 2017).

Atkinson, P. (1997), "Narrative turn or blind alley?", *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 325-44.

Atkinson, P. and Delamont, S. (2006), "Rescuing narrative from qualitative research", *Narrative Inquiry*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 164-72, doi: 10.1075/ni.16.1.21atk.

Bennett, A., Bentley, N. and Branch, A. (2014), *Subcultures, Popular Music and Social Change*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle.

Brookman, F. (2015), "The shifting narratives of violent offender", in Presser, L. and Sandberg, S. (Eds), *Narrative Criminology: Understanding Stories of Crime*, New York University Press, New York, NY, pp. 209-11.

Bullen, J. (2016), "Jailed: gang members who boasted about guns on YouTube and Channel 5 documentary", available at: www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/jailed-gang-members-who-boasted-about-guns-on-youtube-and-channel-5-documentary-a3410151.html (accessed 7 December 2016).

Carpenter, C.J. (2012), "Narcissism on Facebook: self-promotional and anti-social behaviour", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 482-6.

Clark, K. (1965), *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*, Harper & Row, New York, NY.

comScore (2016), "Cross-platform future in focus: 2016", available at: www.comscore.com (accessed 18 November 2016).

Decary-Hetu, D. and Morselli, C. (2011), "Gang presence in social network sites", *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, Vol. 5, pp. 876-90.

Decker, S.H. (1996), "Collective and normative features of gang violence", *Justice Quarterly*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 243-64.

Decker, S.H. and Pyrooz, D.C. (2011), "Leaving the gang: logging off and moving on", Council on Foreign Relations, New York, NY.

Decker, S.H. and Pyrooz, D.C. (2012), "Gang offending and online behavior", *Justice Research and Statistics Forum 30*, pp. 1-4.

Densley, J. (2012), "The organisation of London's Street Gangs", *Global Crime*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 42-64.

Deuze, M. (2012), *Media Life*, Polity, Cambridge.

Drew, D. (2013), "[Enough] Chicago Drill Stars Talk Music", Violence, available at: www.ebony.com/entertainment-culture/enough-chicago-drill-stars-talk-music-violence-453#axzz4NWlF8IKL (accessed 18 October 2016).

Ferrell, J., Hayward, K. and Young, J. (2008), *Cultural Criminology*, Sage, London.

Ferrell, J., Hayward, K. and Young, J. (2015), *Cultural Criminology*, 2nd ed., Sage, London.

Glynn, M. (2014), *Black Men, Invisibility, and Crime: Towards a Critical Race Theory of Desistance*, Routledge, London.

Goldstein, S. (2013), "Chicago's 'Drill Rap' Movement: expression of struggle or a glorifying of violence?", available at: www.chicago-bureau.org/chicagos-drill-rap-movement-expression-of-struggle-or-a-glorifying-of-violence/ (accessed 18 October 2016).

Greenfield, S. (2014), *Mind Change: How Digital Technologies are Leaving Their Mark on our Brains*, Penguin Random House, London.

Hagedorn, J. (2007a), *Gangs in a Global City: Alternatives to Traditional Criminology*, University of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Hagedorn, J. (2007b), "Gangs in late modernity", in Hagedorn, J. (Ed.), *Gangs in the Global City*, university of Illinois Press, Chicago, IL, pp. 319-42.

Hagedorn, J. (Ed.) (2007c), *Gangs in the Global City: Alternatives to Traditional Criminology*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, IL, pp. 13-33.

Hagedorn, J.M. (1998), "Gang violence in the postindustrial era", *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 24, pp. 365-419.

Halliday, J. (2015), "UK's 'gun crime capital': rancour and regret over West Midlands label", available at: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/feb/20/uks-gun-capital-rancour-and-regret-over-west-midlands-label (accessed 19 October 2016).

Hanser, R.D. (2011), "Gang-related cyber and computer crimes: legal aspects and practical points of consideration in investigations", *International Review of Law, Computers, and Technology*, Vol. 25 Nos 1-2, pp. 47-55.

Harding, S. (2014), *The Street Casino: Survival in Violent Street Gangs*, Policy Press, Bristol.

Haut, F. (2014), "Cyberbanging: when criminal reality and virtual reality meet", *International Journal on Criminology*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 22-7.

Hayward, J.K. and Presdee, M. (2010), *Framing Crime: Cultural Criminology and the Image*, Routledge, Oxon.

Hayward, K.J. and Young, J. (2004), "Cultural criminology", *Theoretical Criminology*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 259-73.

Hjarvard, S. (2002), "The mediatization of society: a theory of the media as agents of social and cultural changes", *Nordicom Review*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 105-34.

Home Office (2015), "Ending gang and youth violence programme: annual report 2014/15", available at: www.gov.uk (accessed 15 November 2016).

Horowitz, R. and Schwartz, G. (1974), "Honor, normative ambiguity and gang violence", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 238-51.

Howell, J.C., Moore, J.P. and Egley, A. Jr (2002), "The changing boundaries of youth gangs", in Huff, C.R. (Ed.), *Gangs in America III*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 3-18.

IBTimes (2016), "London rapper war revealed: Harlesden MC Nines, Cbiz mugging and another bodybag", International Business Times, London, 11 January 2017.

Irwin-Rogers, K. and Pinkney, C. (2017), *Social Media as a Catalyst and Trigger of Youth Violence*, Catch 22, London.

Johnson, J. and Schell-Busey, N. (2016), "Old message in a new bottle: taking gang rivalries online through rap battle music videos on YouTube", *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice & Criminology*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 42-81.

Joseph, I. and Gunter, A. (2011), *Gangs Revisited: What's a Gang and What's Race Got to Do with It?*, Runneymede Trust, London.

King, J.E., Walpole, C.E. and Lamon, K. (2007), "Surf and turf wars online – growing implications on internet gang violence", *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Vol. 41 No. 6, pp. S66-8, doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.09.001.

Knox, G. (2011), *Gang Members On Facebook: Should We Look the Other Way?*, National Gang Crime Research Center, Chicago, IL.

Laub, J.H. and Sampson, R.J. (2003), *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Lewis-Beck, M., Bryman, A.E. and Liao, T.F. (2003), *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Social Science Research Methods*, Sage Publications, pp. 1987-9.

Lilleker, D. (2008), *Key Concepts in Political Communications*, Sage, London.

Lyddane, D. (2006), "Understanding gangs and gang mentality: acquiring evidence of the gang conspiracy", United States Attorneys Bulletin, Gangs, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 1-8.

McAdams, D.P. (2012), "Exploring psychological themes through life narrative accounts", in Holstien, J.A. and Gubriam, J.B. (Eds), *Varieties of Narrative Analysis*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 15-32.

McCarthy, N. (2016), "Watch: Burger Bar boys gang member boasts of shooting 16-year-old in rap video", available at: www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/watch-burger-bar-boys-gang-12038162 (accessed 7 December 2016).

Maruna, S. (2001), *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Maruna, S. and Copes, H. (2005), "What have we learnt from five decades of neutralisation research", *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 32, pp. 221-320.

Moule, R.K., Decker, S.H. and Pyrooz, D.C. (2016), "Technology and conflict: group processes and collective violence in the internet era", *Crime, Law, and Social Change*, Vol. 68 Nos 1-2, pp. 47-73.

Panek, E.T., Nardis, Y. and Konrath, S. (2013), "Mirror or megaphone? How relationships between narcissism and social networking site use differ on Facebook and Twitter", *Computers in Human Behaviour*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. 2004-12.

Patton, D.U., Eschmann, R.D. and Butler, D.A. (2013), "Internet banging: new trends in social media, gang violence, masculinity and hip hop", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. A54-9.

Patton, D.U., Eschmann, R.D., Elsaesser, C. and Bocanegra, E. (2016), "Sticks, stones and Facebook accounts: what violence outreach workers know about social media and urban-based gang violence in Chicago", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 65, pp. 591-600.

Pyrooz, D.C., Decker, S.H. and Moule, R.K. (2015), "Criminal and routine activities in online settings: gangs, offenders, and the internet", *Justice Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 471-99.

Riessman, C.K. (2008), *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Sandberg, S. (2009), "Gangster, victim, or both? Street drug dealer's interdiscursive construction of sameness and difference in self-presentation", *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 60 No. 3, pp. 523-42.

Sandberg, S. (2013), "Are self-narratives strategic or determined, unified, or fragmented? Reading Breivik's Manifesto in light of narrative criminology", *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 69-83.

Scott, M.B. and Lyman, M.S. (1968), "Accounts", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 46-61.

Sela-Shayovitz, R. (2012), "Gangs and the web: gang members' online behavior", *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 389-405.

Shaw, C.R. (1930), *The Jack-Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Short, J. (2007), "The challenges of gangs", in Hagedorn, J. (Ed.), *Global Contexts, in Gangs in the Global City*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, IL, pp. 319-42.

Statista (2016a), "Beware Snapchat users: your parents are coming", available at: www.statista.com (accessed 12 November 2016).

Statista (2016b), "Internet usage frequency of teenagers in the United States as of March 2015", available at: www.statista.com (accessed 12 November 2016).

Statista (2016c), "Number of daily mobile video views on Snapchat as of April 2016", available at: www. statista.com (accessed 12 November 2016).

Statista (2016d), "Number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2020", available at: www.statista.com (accessed 12 November 2016).

Storrod, M.L. and Densley, J.A. (2017), "'Going viral' and 'going country': the expressive and instrumental activities of street gangs on social media", *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 677-96.

Surette, R. (2015), "Performance crime and justice", *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 195-216.

Sykes, G. and Matza, D. (1957), "Techniques of neutralisation: a theory of delinquency", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 22 No. 6, pp. 664-70.

Van Hellemont, E. (2012), "Gangland online: performing the real imaginary world of gangstas and ghettos in Brussels", *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice*, Vol. 20, pp. 165-80.

Ward, T. and Marshall, B. (2007), "Narrative identity and offender rehabilitation", *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, Vol. 51 No. 3, pp. 279-97.

Womer, S. and Bunker, R. (2010), "Surenos gangs and Mexican cartel use of social networking sites", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 21, pp. 81-94.

Wood, J. and Alleyne, E. (2010), "Street gang theory and research: where are we now and where do we go from here?", *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 100-11.

Yardley, E., Wilson, D. and Kennedy, M. (2017), "'TO ME ITS [SIC] REAL LIF': secondary victims of homicide in newer media", *Victims & Offenders*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 467-96.

Yardley, E., Wilson, D., Kemp, D. and Brookes, M. (2013), "Narrative beyond prison gates: contradiction, complexity, and reconciliation", *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 2015*, Vol. 59 No. 2, pp. 159-79.

Yardley, E., Lynes, A.G.T., Wilson, D. and Kelly, E. (2016), "What's the deal with 'websleuthing'? News media representations of amateur detectives in networked spaces", *Crime, Media, Culture*, p. 1741659016674045.

Further reading

Oliver, W. (2006), "The streets: an alternative black male socialisation institution", *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 36 No. 6, pp. 918-37.

Sela-Shayovitz, R., Pyrooz, D.C. and Decker, S.H. (2016), "Israeli and US gangs in the virtual world: the sociocultural context of gang members' online activity", in Maxson, C. and Esbensen, F.-A. (Eds), *Gang Transitions and Transformations in an International Context*, Springer, Cham, pp. 115-35.

Shaw, C.R. and McKay, H.D. (1942), *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Corresponding author

Craig Pinkney can be contacted at: c.pinkney@ucb.ac.uk