Snaprappers, Youtube Gangsters and Insta Imaginaries

An analysis of the construction of a violent imaginary across the connected spaces of social media platforms and the physical street within Dutch drill rap

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Abstract

Drill rap is a relatively new phenomenon in the Netherlands, and has been linked to several incidents of violence. The rappers are known for their explicit portrayal of violence, both in their music videos and on their social media accounts. By making use of the analytical concept of violent imaginaries (Schröder & Schmidt, 2001), combined with theory on performance and the code of the street, this thesis is concerned with unpacking the way that drill rappers construct a violent (online) identity. It does so by looking at the way that different elements of the street code are used to build and perform a violent imaginary and the way that social media contributes to the reinforcement and movement of this violent imaginary across both online and offline spaces. It thereby aims to contribute to the increased academic interest in combining digital and urban studies to explore street culture within an online context. This process has been researched through an analysis of drill music videos on Youtube, observation on Snapchat and Instagram and interviews with people encountering drill in their work field. This research demonstrates how drill rappers effectively construct a violent imaginary that portrays them as authentic. They do so by making use of lyrics and imagery about their offline lives, and disseminating these via different online platforms which creates traction. The downside is that, for this violent imaginary to remain authentic, drill rappers are pressured to put their words, or these imaginaries, into action. As these online constructions spill back into 'the street' it creates a dynamic in which one may get entangled. Understanding how violent imaginaries are constructed, performed and reinforced within mutually constitutive online and offline spaces help to recognize the connection between the streets and social media, and the way that this is part of drill rap.

Acknowledgements

Well into my fieldwork, wrapping up my research in the run-up to the deadline and having been surrounded by analytical frames, theories and concepts, I woke up to the news of an incident in Scheveningen between two rivaling rap groups. This event made my thesis move from paper to the street again, thereby painfully illustrating some of the stark differences in the daily realities between these rappers and myself.

At the end of the day I close my laptop and, returning to my own personal life, drill rap is just one of the topics on my mind. This world, however, meaning the continuous interaction and presence on social media and the internet, is the reality of youth nowadays, which they are no longer only engaged while being outside, but which they've taken with them to their, before private spaces, through their posts, DM's and Snapchats. Rap, hip-hop and music in general, form an incredibly rich source of entertainment, support and empowerment, and by delving into drill rap and Dutch hip-hop more broadly, I have encountered many new talented musicians. However, in times with increased social media use, it are no longer always only these positive aspects that count, but also about the number of views, likes and comments you can gather, which creates a whole new dynamic.

Before you lays the result of the research I have conducted during the past months. A great thank you goes out to my respondents who, in a time in which they were dealing with a lot of extra work due to Covid-19, found the time to talk to me. I heard and shared their worries, and learned a lot about the way they have come to experience the increased popularity in their offline interactions with youth. I furthermore want to thank the other people who have shared their time with me, to help me interpret certain social media content, 'translate' some of the lyrics and share their knowledge about street culture in the Netherlands. I want to thank my supervisor Luuk for his continuous guidance, patience and encouraging feedback throughout the fieldwork and writing. And lastly, I want to thank my friends, classmates and especially my family for their continuous support, feedback, and loving presence along this process.

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Introduction

On August 10th 2020 a 22-year-old man from Rotterdam was deathly stabbed on the pier of Scheveningen amidst a confrontation between two drill rap groups (NRC, 11th of August, 2020). These were a group from Rotterdam, named 24, and one from Amsterdam called 73dePijp. The 'beef'[1] between these two groups, fought out mainly in music videos and via Snapchat and Instagram, had already been going on for a few months and intensified in the days leading up to this event. On the 9th of August, a rapper from a group affiliated with 73dePijp was beaten up by members of 24 in a video circulating online with the accompanying text "don't link with 73". On the 10th of August, a rapper from 73dePijp shared his location, Scheveningen, for the day on social media, enabling his opps to track his exact location. Later that day, it came to a confrontation between the two groups, which led to the death of the young man.

The incident described here formed the new peak in offline violence in the Dutch drill rap scene, since the death of a rapper in September of the previous year. It forms an excess within a continuous process of communication and hostility between different drill rap groups, mostly taking place online.

Drill rap is a subgenre within hip hop, characterized by a particular beat and dark and violent lyrics. Its music is accompanied by music videos which portray groups of rappers in their respective neighborhoods while at the same time references to violence, antagonistic relations and weaponry are made. It originates from Chicago, but Dutch drill shows most resemblance with UK drill, which has a faster beat and particular characteristics like the once above (At5, 2019).

Although an already existing phenomenon in other parts of the world, drill rap and its accompanying violence in the 'face-to-face' is a relatively recent phenomenon in the Netherlands. In our conversation about his experience with drill rap, a youth worker from Amsterdam Zuidoost reflects on the conversations he had with British colleagues back in 2016. "At one point in time, we have been in contact with youth workers in London, around 2016, 2017. They said 'we have an enormous amount of knife crimes'. We responded by saying 'we can't imagine that'. I remember that very vividly … Now it's different [its] a kind of soap opera[2].

At the time of that conversation, the Dutch streets were relatively unknown to drill rap. Accounts of the people I have spoken to for this research depict drills relative silent introduction in the Netherlands around 2018. The summer of 2019 saw a rapid increase in the popularity of the - hitherto relatively unknown to a broader audience - genre among youth in the bigger cities. In the fall of 2019, in particular instigated by the death of a young rapper from Amsterdam Zuidoost for which members of a rival drill rap group were

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[1] Beef or beefing is defined as fight(ing), a hip-hop terminology that originally encompasses all forms of conflict (Soortkill (2017) Smibanese Woordenboek 2.0, p.40). In this thesis beef is referring to an antagonistic relation or conflict between two groups.
[2] Authors Interview with a youth worker from Amsterdam Zuidoost, 6-08-2020

arrested as suspects, media and local governments began to speculate about the potential role of drill in the escalation of violence (Crimesite, December 4th, 2019).

News headings like "Drill in the Netherlands: pure entertainment or catalysator of violence" (3voor12, October 31st, 2019) "Drill rap seems to put action to word" (NRC, November 6th, 2019), "What is the role of 'drill' in the fatal stabbing in Zuidoost" (At5, September 6th, 2019)[3], all hint to a potential role of drill in converting musical words into real-life action. At the same time as this genre became enormously popular among urban youth populations, of particular concern among citizens and youth workers was the increase of weapon possession and use among very young teenagers[4], which moved drill rap to the top of the agenda among youth organizations and the municipality.

Drill: A new phenomenon?

Amidst its rise in popularity, international researchers have started to show more interest in drill rap as a means of expression of this interplay between social media and street culture. Situated in the US, Forrest Stuart's recently released book 'Ballad of the Bullet' (2020) gives a detailed portrait of the intimacies of the drill scene in Chicago, and the ways youth capitalize on the public interest in gang and ghetto life. Recent research conducted in the UK has mainly focussed upon a discussion of the criminalization of drill (Illan, 2020; Fatsis, 2020), apart from the contributions of Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney (2017) who address drill music videos in their research report on youth and social media and the work of Pinkney and Robinson-Edwards (2018), who explore the narratives within (drill) rap music videos.

The interplay between street culture, rap music and violence is not something new, and there is ample of research describing this connection.[5] What is said to be new to drill is the very explicit nature of the content or imagery, as there can be found a reference to violence in almost every sentence and also a lot of performative aspects refer to violence (Pinkney & Edwards-Robinson, 2018:107). Most importantly new, as highlighted by e.g. Irwin-Rogers & Pinkney (2017), Urbanik & Haggerty (2018) and Stuart (2019), is the importance of social media in the success of drill, and the translation of the violent content displayed online into offline contexts and vice versa. Drill is said to have come into existence in the cross-pollution of social media and the street (Drake, 2012) and I, therefore, argue that drill rap forms an interesting and exemplary example of how social media and street culture intersect.

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[3] Translated from Dutch: "Drill in Nederland: puur entertainment of katalysator van geweld", "Drill-rap lijkt daad bij het woord te voegen", Wat is de rol van 'drills' bij fatale steekpartij Zuid-Oost"

[4]. This increase is supported by 2019 statistics from the national police, which indicate that the number of both suspects and victims of stabbing incidents in the age group 12-17 has doubled since 2017. The amount of weapon possession has tripled but, as the police notes, this should be approached with caution as this could also be a consequence of increased attention and subsequent weapon searches. In addition to this, as NOS notes, up till 2016, there was actually a decrease in the involvement of youth in knife incidents (NOS, 20th of March 2020)

[5] See for example Illan (2015) and Kubrin (2005)

Online identities have become more salient to young people as they spend more and more time online (Irwin-Rogers & Pinkney, 2017:28). According to research into social media use in the Netherlands in 2019 93,5% of the 12 to 18-year-olds used the internet daily, in 94,6% of the cases this was for social media (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2020). Due to this increased online presence, the internet has become a principal gateway for the communication of street culture as well.

In recent years, various authors have been devoting attention to the ways social media and street culture intertwine by looking into (1) the ways street culture is performed online (Roks & van den Broek, 2017, van Hellemont, 2012) (2) the online and offline transgression of streetlife (Lane, 2016, 2019) and (3) how social media are used to challenge rivals and the risk this may entail (Stuart, 2019, Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018). Although these researches do not all focus specifically on drill, they give context to the relation between street culture and social media in which this research is situated. Their contributions will be discussed more in-depth in the following chapter.

This Research

Building upon the interplay between social media, street culture and violence, this thesis is concerned with the way that drill rappers construct a violent presentation of themselves online and the role that social media plays in enabling this construction and its transgression to offline contexts. To understand this new phenomenon, within the context of the Netherlands and existing connection between street culture and online environments, it is necessary to move beyond merely descriptive or explanatory questions and focus upon the processes that are at play to understand the dynamic within this connection.

This research aims to give insight in, first of all, the way that drill rappers use their music and social media accounts to construct a violent persona around themselves. Secondly, how this online construction, through social media, may transgress to offline spaces and vice versa. In doing so I consider social media to be both a setting, a component and a tool within drill rap and, as a consequence, will devote significant attention to the role social media plays in this scene.

More specifically, I will examine the way that youth use the internet, Youtube, Instagram and Snapchat, to construct a violent imaginary of themselves and their lives by enlarging certain norms of the street code in their online content. To do so, I analyse the music videos and social media accounts of various rap groups, and in addition, I interview several people who encounter drill in their work.

These insights may help to build a more firm empirical foundation for the current state of knowledge on the hybrid relation between the 'online' and the 'offline' within street culture, in a context of increased and intensified social media use. It does so by making use of the concept of violent imaginaries (Schröder and Schmidt, 2001:9). This analytical concept, which will be further explained in the next chapter, refers to the discursive ways a legitimacy of violence is conveyed, through the use of narratives,

performances and inscriptions. In addition to the concept of violent imaginaries, I draw upon concepts of street culture, and the code of the street, as studied online in particular, (Anderson, 1999; De Jong, 2007; Heitmeyer et al., 2019; Kubrin, 2005) and performance theory (Goffman, 1959) to examine the processes through which drill rappers give shape to these imaginaries. I hereby formulated the following research question:

"How is a violent imaginary constructed, performed and reinforced within the mutually constitutive spaces of online social media platforms and the physical street in Dutch drill rap since 2019?"

This research puzzle is broken down in three sub-questions, namely: (1) What characterizes Dutch drill rap? (2) What key components constitute the violent imaginary within drill rap, and how is this violent imaginary constructed? (3) How does social media play a role in the construction of the violent imaginary within drill rap and its movement from online into offline spaces and vice versa?

The first question aims to describe and contextualize the Dutch drill scene by looking at the characteristics of drill itself and the music industry in which it came into existence. The second question serves to explore the different elements that embody the narratives, performances, and inscriptions that together inform the violent imaginary. The last question aims to examine how social media forms both a setting and vehicle through which drill rappers embolden these violent imaginaries and the process through which these move between different online and offline settings.

The theoretical significance of this research puzzle lies within the further exploration and empirical grounding of the hybrid relation between the online and offline in street culture. By addressing drill rap within a context of online behavior, it consolidates the bridge built between digital and urban studies in understanding the relation between street cultural expression and social media. It furthermore offers a new analytical angle by combining established concepts of different fields of research - violent imaginaries, street code and performance theory - formerly used for offline settings, and apply them to a digitalized context.

This thesis is empirically relevant as it constitutes the first academic exploration of drill in a Dutch context. While in recent years more and more academic attention is given to street culture within the Dutch context and news platforms have written extensively about drill, up to date there has not been any academic research on drill rap in the Netherlands. Although social media and, in part, rap music are universal, exploring the way it interacts with Dutch street culture and local specifics of violence is essential are we to understand the potential impact it has on Dutch drill rap and society.

Lastly, this research also makes a societal contribution, as a better understanding of the nuances and factors within the relation between social media, drill rap, offline-online relations, street culture and

violent incidents, offers an entrance to the development of policy and tools in order to effectively prevent the escalation of violence. This responds to the concerns of the respondents of this research that they often feel to be behind on following the paths of youth on social media.

Outline of contents

This thesis is structured in the following way. In the first chapter, I will discuss the theoretical embedding of the research puzzle by introducing theory on street culture, in particular the code of the street, performance and social media, and by further introducing the analytical frame. The second chapter elaborates on the methodological choices I have made. Chapter three outlines the Dutch drill scene in terms of the emergence, stylistic characteristics and demographics of drill and the music industry it came into existence in. In chapter four, I do two things. First, I unpack the different components that embody the violent imaginary within drill rap by looking at the narratives, performances and inscriptions and the ways these are presented. Secondly, I explore the role of social media in the movement of this violent imaginary between online and offline spaces. In the final chapter, I will conclude my research findings, answer the research question and discuss the pathways for future research.

Chapter 1: Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I outline the theoretical context of the research puzzle by discussing different bodies of literature on street culture, the code of the street, performance and the way that these are increasingly present online on social media. Before I do this, I will first highlight my analytical frame.

1.1 Analytical framework

Jeffrey Lane (2019:45-46), in his book The Digital Street[6], has argued that combining urban ethnography and digital studies and thereby using theory from both fields will obtain benefits for the study of online street culture. Similar to Lane, I will take Elijah Anderson's code of the street (1999) as a core concept from street cultural studies within urban studies. From digital studies, I centralize social media and consider it both a means, setting, and process through which this code of the street flows.

In order to grasp the dialectic between the online and the offline and to analyse the presentation of the code of the street within drill rap, Schröder and Schmidt's (2001) concept of violent imaginaries will be used as a lens to examine drill rap. Violent imaginaries are defined as the discursive ways through which the legitimacy of violence is conveyed to the people who will pursue violent action and those around them which can be represented through narratives, performances and inscriptions (Schröder & Schmidt, 2001:9), i.e. You tell a story, you perform something, or you use specific symbols to establish a violent imaginary. According to these authors, representation forms an integral part of the perception and legitimization of future 'violence' or actions (2001:8). The concept of violent imaginaries is functional in grasping the expressive and performative nature of drill-rap, that extends discourse beyond words and texts alone.

I extended the definitions of the different components as provided by Schröder & Schmidt (2001) in order to suit the research puzzle and allow for a more thorough examination. Narratives in this research are defined as the stories, which are mediated by what is considered "normal" or "deviant" within the cultural context, that are shared in oral or written communication with an audience, and which tell something about the life of the storyteller, that of others around him or about his opponents (Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards, 2018:109, 111; Schröder & Schmidt, 2001:10; Yardley et al., 2013:260).[7] Closely related to the communication of these stories or narratives are performances. Performances are the ways in which a social presentation of the self or a group is constructed and presented, and antagonistic relationships are displayed. These ways are informed by the code of the street and contain (prototypical) images of violence (Anderson,1999:72; Goffman,1959:9; Hallsworth,2013:149; Schröder&Schmidt, 2001:10). In the case of drill rap, performances more or less intertwine with the third component of 'inscriptions'; which I will refer to as images that visually represent existing antagonisms (Schröder&Schmidt, 200:10).

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[6] In his research he focussed upon the online activity of street cultural youth in Harlem NYC
[7] I construed these definitions by merging the definitions of the mentioned authors

Inscriptions are best understood as the snapshot or more permanent components of performances, or what Howell and Zdun (2019:44) call scripted objects or certain symbols "in particular material objects that are understood symbolically", which signal a particular reputation. Showing a weapon can be seen as such a scripted object (Ibid. p. 120), as is the portrayal of certain locations in rap music. These three components are tightly connected, inscriptions are for example used to support a performance, or a performance may aid to bring across a particular narrative more convincingly. I will look at the way that these components are embodied, through drawing upon additional concepts of theory on street culture and performance theory which I will elaborate on and operationalize throughout the paragraphs below by looking at street culture, the code of the street, performance, social media and 'beef' respectively.

1.2 Street culture

For this thesis, I will place drill rap in the larger context of street culture, as rap is considered a musical component of a larger hip-hop street culture (Roks, 2013:15). In approaching street culture, I build on the work of criminologists Jan Dirk de Jong and Robby Roks who have done extensive qualitative research into street cultural topics in a Dutch context. The concept of street culture, as Roks and his colleague Van Den Broek (2017) note, was not commonly used as an academic concept in the Netherlands before the publication of Jan Dirk de Jong's research "Kapot Moeilijk" (2007). Although the concept was relatively new to the Dutch context, the underlying themes within discussions on street culture, the intertwining of "poverty, culture and criminality" as Roks and van den Broek (2017:32) identified, have been present and researched for centuries.[8] In his qualitative research into delinquent behaviour of young Maroccan Dutch youth, De Jong defined street culture as *"the shared experiences, knowledge, meanings and symbols that are relevant in the daily actions of youth spending their free time together in the public spaces of their neighborhood"* (De Jong, 2007:149). De Jong's definition would be suitable for this research, as it is geared towards the Dutch context, but I chose to adopt a slightly broader definition as posed by sociologist Simon Hallsworth (2013) for two reasons. De Jong's definition focuses on free time, whereas I would argue that in the case of drill rappers the street culture also plays a role in their professional lives and he focuses on 'the public spaces of their neighborhood', whereas I would argue, that solely looking at the physical public spaces in the neighborhood, without acknowledging the digital public (and private) spaces, does not cover the current nature of street culture anymore. Hallsworth (2013:142-143) defines street culture as "the subterranean world governed by distinctive norms, values, and repertoires of action and practices that organise and define the patterns of social action that those who participate in this culture engage in."

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[8] See Roks & van den Broek (2017:32) and Ilan (2015:23-29) for an extensive overview of the history of research on street culture which can be traced back to the Chicago School and Subcultural theories.

1.3 The Code of the Street

Hallsworth definition focuses on "distinctive norms, values and repertoires of action" that "define the patterns of social action". These norms, values and repertoires of action have been theorized and collected under what Anderson first described as 'the code of the street'. According to Anderson (1999:10), the code of the street is "a set of [...] informal rules of behavior [...] that govern public social relations, particularly violence". Central to this are the search for respect and the construction of a social identity within a social and physical environment characterized by structural deprivation of resources (Anderson, 1999:33, 185). As Howell et al. (2019:137) found "respect is intimately tied with violence, both as a driver of violence in the name of respect or as a means of garnering respect, and inversely, in being drawn from the symbolic use of violence itself". In addition, to achieve and maintain respect, authenticity plays an important role. Being authentic or real was described by the respondents in Kuppens (2008:43) research as not portraying yourself differently than who you are, [...] holding on to your own principles, [...] not forgetting your roots". Whereas Anderson's research focuses upon a US context and has not gone without criticism[9], his work is still influential in discussions around street culture worldwide today.

Contemporary researchers have used the code of the street to explore different norms and features held in street culture in respective local contexts. They hereby defined different elements of the street culture. De Jong (2007:152) speaks of seven street values, namely standing up for yourself, loyalty with the neighborhood boys, being tough, showing courage, being sharp, shining[10] and being chill. Lane (2018:7) distinguishes the three Rs of street code, reputation, respect and retaliation, as overarching values. Kubrin (2005:369) found respect, willingness to fight and use violence, material wealth and violent retaliation to be the most important features of the street code found in gangsta rap and Kurtenbach and Rauf (2019:36), combining both street norms and street practices, identified respect, the neighborhood, enemy, toughness, symbols, friends, street wisdom and violence as important dimensions. Above all, they all underline the central aspect of achieving and maintaining respect as a key feature. In order to gain respect, Anderson (1999:186) argues, people have to show toughness.

When compared a lot of the norms and values as mentioned above, show overlap. Standing up for yourself, being tough, showing courage, for example, can all be seen as elements of toughness. By combining the different norms and values outlined by the authors above, I distilled toughness and the willingness to use violence as the most prevalent values. In addition, I identified neighborhood

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[9] Andersons code of the street is relatively deterministic as it positions the code in direct opposition to 'decency'. Howell et al. (2019) question whether the agency of youth in this way is sufficiently covered. Furthermore they debate whether the code should be considered a script or an orientation and how the code is adjusted to the local context. Kubrin (2005:365) considers the code to be not an explanation or source of motivation for behavior but a locally developed interpretative framework to make sense of behavior. This research acknowledges the critique on the code of the street theory as laid out by Anderson, but through looking at the way this theory has been used in later research argues its core principles are still relevant today.

[10] In the context of his research this was called "draaien" which refers to showing of success with material goods.

representation as an important element of the street code as a setting and motivator for respect. Representing the neighborhood has become some sort of requirement in hip-hop (Forman 2011:208), and is especially prevalent in drill, where groups even represent smaller fractions of the neighborhood. Representing your neighborhood, both as a spatial and social construct, revolves around the idea that an artist is identifying with a particular neighborhood and group and actively portrays that (De Roest:2017:29).

1.4 The Code of the Street in Rap

Kubrin (2005) researched the reflexive relationship between the code of the street, social identity and rap music, by examining the way the narratives within over 400 gangsta rap songs help to organize and construct a violent social identity. His work shines light upon the way that elements of the code of the street can function as an analytical tool to study rap, and offers an example of the way narrative analysis can be used to examine how lyrics are used to construct a violent imaginary. The lyrics teach that values such as toughness are central to reputation and respect (Kubrin, 2005:375). In his view "rap lyrics are discursive actions or artefacts that help construct an interpretative environment where violence is appropriate and acceptable" (Kubrin, 2005:366). Kubrin explains that the lyrics create "the sense of a normative climate of violence", giving instructions for how to interpret and use violence. In this way, the narratives within the lyrics supply a *vocabulary of motive* which, as C. Wright Mills has argued, offers "accepted justification for present, future or past programs or acts" (Mills 1963:443 in Kubrin, 2005:371).). By implicitly and explicitly using the code of the street, they construct a violent social image and legitimize it at the same time (Kubrin, 2005:372).

Kubrin identified different indicators which are used in this thesis, to examine toughness and a willingness to use violence in the lyrics, namely; describing how dangerous you are or can be, referencing violent reputations, and describing past perpetrated acts. Furthermore, Howell et al. (2019:127) add, outside of a representation in the narratives, these values can also take the shape of a performance through standing ground, retaliation and an antagonistic relation with the police, or that of an inscription, through the use of weapons as symbols (Kubrin, 2005:371).

Lyrical analysis, according to Kubrin (2005:367), is not so much involved with whether the reality depicted is in fact "real" but rather with how it comes to constitute a reality that is *considered* real In Kubrins work he states that "the focus has shifted from what is said by rappers to how they say it and what is socially realized in the process". When aligning this with the current research this entails two things: apart from a focus on the narratives, the performance and inscriptions are just as important, and, although we cannot know if the way drill rappers present themselves in their music is real, this does not really matter since we are looking to see how they constitute a reality that is considered real. In order to examine the way that drill rappers present the street code and themselves, I will now turn to performance theory.

1.5 (Online) performance

The study of the performance of the street code is not something new but has recently been studied more intensively in different online settings varying from Brussels (van Hellemont, 2012) and Toronto (Urbanik & Heggarty, 2018), to Harlem NYC (Lane, 2018), Chicago (Stuart, 2020) and Rotterdam (Roks & van den Broek, 2017).

In "Hou het Straat" Robby Roks and Jeroen van den Broek delve into the ways Dutch street culture manifests itself online, thereby drawing upon online data from youth in Spangen Rotterdam. They center the notion of identity as introduced by Goffman (1959) namely 'identity as performance', and also identify this concept in the work of Anderson (1999:72), who states that "the code revolves around the presentation of self. Its basic requirement is the display or a certain predisposition to violence". In addition to this, they highlight Hallsworth's (2013:149) description of the construction of a "social presentation of the self" within the context of the street.

According to Yar (2012:25), this type of performance of the self has started out in the 18th century when the introduction of romanticism began to see 'the self' as an imagined entity and something which could be constructed by oneself, in opposition to the view that it was merely something given. The presentation of the self, seen as a performance, is an important concept related to the code of the street and will be further explored for this thesis.

In relation to the performance and the build-up of a violent imaginary within drill, I want to introduce Goffman's concept of impression management. According to Goffman's' impression management, the way in which the individual presents themselves and their activities to others is central to identity (Goffman, 1959:9). In this performance, people navigate between the impression given and the reaction of the audience (Van Hellemont, 2012:169). Goffman (1959:3) talks about the role that routine behavior and past information play in the power of the performance; if it fits in with earlier behavior, it becomes more believable to an audience.

Although Goffman's impression management is initially geared at performance, I would argue that by making use of narratives or inscriptions drill rappers also try to manage the impression of their social identity, and thus impression management is concerned with the overall presentation of the rappers. This impression management is supported by three different processes which Goffman identifies as idealization, mystification and dramatic realization. Idealization refers to the idealization of a certain performance by highlighting specific aspects, stressing the authenticity of your performance by stressing that you 'are' a certain way and have always been like this, and by avoiding performances that do not fit the preferred image

(Goffman, 1959:41, 46-47). To do so, the performers make use of sign equipment, or symbols (p.36). Mystification refers to a performance where the audience is not in direct contact with the performer, which makes it more difficult to test whether the performance is real or not, and therefore enable the performer to build up a desired impression more easily (1959:67). Dramatic realization, which is closely linked to idealization, refers to the highlighting and portraying of evidence that may otherwise go unnoticed (Goffman, 1959:30). In order to convey an image in line with the impression someone wants to hold on to, someone has to act upon the claims they make about certain actions and capacities. If you want to give off the impression, Goffman argues, of for example of being tough, you have to immediately act tough to convince the audience that indeed you are tough. In this way, dramatic realization can also be seen as conveying that you are what you claim to be. For drill rap, this entails that rappers have to follow up on the claims they make within their music, in order to keep up their impression.

1.6 The role of social media

In the previous paragraphs I have introduced theory on street culture and the code of the street and the way this is performed. As drill rap is said to have come into existence in a system of cross pollution between the street and social media (Drake, 2012), I will explore its connection to social media in this paragraph.

According to Yar (2012:255), social media offer a platform to construct and perform a mediated identity, in which the enactment of illegal and or risky activities form an integral part of becoming esteemed by others. The willingness to portray a mediated self can even form a motivation for offending behaviour (Yar, 2012:252). Recording crime for the reason of uploading it to and distributing it on the internet or even committing a crime for the purpose of portraying it, is what Surette (2015) called performance crime. Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards (2018:104), who explore available gang research concerning 'the mediatisation of crime', found that gang members in the UK involved in drill rap used social media to visualize their offline actions. These online representations then fed back into their life on the street again and may, over time, inform their online content which creates what Ferrel et al. called 'loops' (2008:2015). This increased role of social media in street culture has changed the way performances take place (online) in several ways.

First of all, it disrupts the key impression management by broadening the audience (Stuart, 2019:2). Before the influence of social media, youth could shape their image or self-presentation performance to fit specific audiences. According to Lane (2018:9), the challenge of digital street culture is that it has changed the *boundaries of visibility*, as social media connects settings that were separated in the past and enables people to see all available digital content of you (Lane, 2018:9). This process, in which messages are conveyed to multiple but undifferentiated audiences, is also called context collapse (Marwick & Boyd, 2010 in Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:9). In the past evaluations of reputations were based on secondhand

interpretation; however, due to context collapse, everyone can watch for themselves (Lane, 2016:50). Based on Lane's research on the ways performances and interactions take place across both online and offline spaces among young people in Harlem NYC, he argues that the digital environment resulted in a mediated code of the street (Lane, 2016:50). On social media, the audience plays a central role in communicating a performance through for example commenting on blogs and video's (van Hellemont, 2012:1174). By doing this, they may play a role in stirring up fights (Pinkney & Edwards-Robinson, 2017:109).

Secondly, exaggerating about street credentials or a certain status becomes possible, which is called 'fronting' (Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:6). This might be a dangerous activity because in rapping culture and the code of the street, authenticity is paramount. Rappers and people who are affiliated ór associated with them can be held accountable for their performance and narrative in their videos online (Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:4). Both Pinkney & Edwards-Robinson (2018:108) and Robby Roks (in NPO Radio 1, 2019) acknowledge the ways in which youth want to present themselves online in drill-rap and are 'tested' by viewers on whether this is true content and can be or should be verified. This leads to an urge for the rappers to prove this proliferation as their street credibility is at stake, which then moves online fights to the street. Van Hellemont (2012:167), in her research on youth gangs in Brussels, found that the expression or performance of 'gangness' is more important than the actual violence. However, in line with the process of dramatic realization, violence might be a consequence of this performance as youth want to dismiss the idea that their performance is child play. Similarly, Kubrin (2005:371) takes after Anderson's work that although establishing a violent image is important, following up this image with actual violence is expected. A way of accomplishing this, according to him, is describing acts of violence in detail that have been perpetrated on others. In other words, the online impression management does not only have offline consequences, but the offline also impacts the impression management on social media.

Thirdly, in relation to the previous point, is the fact that the failure to enact the code of the street, and for example not act tough in every situation, is caught on camera (Lane, 2016:49). This failure can be held against you and re-visited and re-shared in the future (Stuart, 2019:9)

Within a growing focus upon the "digital" street, two strands of research can be distinguished. Scholars such as Irwin & Pinkney (2017), Patton et al. (2013) and Pyrooz, Decker and Moule (2015) have all argued the increased importance of the digital, and have thereby posed the "digital street" as an extension of the physical street or as its mirrored situation. In this way, the characteristics of the physical street have merely moved online. Social media, according to them, will then necessarily increase the frequency and intensity of offline violence, as there is increased potential for disrespect. Stuart (2019:1-3), building forth upon the ideas of Lane (2018) and Urbanik & Haggerty (2018), identifies this as a theory of parallelism and criticizes it for its overestimation of the causal relationship between online content and offline behavior and

argues that it neglects the potential of social media to transform, rather than merely amplify, offline conflicts as social media offer youth different routes to react. According to Stuart (2019:4) "offline interactions and identities are better understood as coevolving with online interactions and identities", and researchers should thus ask how mechanisms of violence are altered and restructured by social media. As stated by Lane (2018:2), researchers should focus on situations or interactions that start in one sphere and stay there or move to the other in an effort to understand how these spaces fit together as street life. In this research, I build forth upon the second strand of research, in which I consider the physical and digital to be mutually constitutive environments in which both similar characteristics related to the code of the street are present but also different processes are at play due to the role of social media.

1.7 Challenging rivals and performing the street code online

Now that we have discussed the current academic literature on street culture and its relation to social media and have identified the code of the street and its performance as key features within this relation, the way that this search for respect outplays on the nexus between online and offline spaces is most visible when looking into how the street code is performed in relation to the challenging of rivals within drill rap.

Rivalry or 'beef' is one of the most dominant components of drill rap. Threats to status are, according to Johnson and Schell-Busey (2016:49-5), often exerted over non-material matters and a threat to one member is considered a threat to the group due to existing bonds. These bonds are shaped based on a shared norm-system and "create a structure that allows violence to be used for what may appear to be minor events, like a look" (Decker et al. 2013). Schröder and Schmidt (2001:14) argue that violence may constitute an integral element of a group's self-definition. Their idea about the application of the principle of totality informs the way rivalry may take place. This means that "any action or expression by the other party of the confrontational relationship is taken to be a threat or aggressive act that calls for defensive action" Schröder and Schmidt (2001:10).

The notion of gang rivalry has now transited onto media platforms, in which it not only engages their rivals but also impacts wider communities (Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards, 2018:107). Social media have altered "the spatial and interpersonal dynamics of contact among rival groups" (Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:13), as it connects people who did not used to have direct contact before (Lane, 2018:2) I am particularly interested in the way that social media facilitates the beef within drill rap, as this best illustrates the online and offline nexus.

There are various ways in which the use of social media within drill rap, and in street culture more broadly, impacted antagonistic relationships or 'beef'. The changed dialectic between social media and beef has both positive and negative consequences regarding offline confrontations. This supposed link between online activity and offline violence resembles older offline performances of the code of the street

concerning disrespect. You can disrespect someone through challenging, victimizing or snitching (Kubrin, 2005:373). When someone is disrespected, even only mildly as explained above, this threatens to undermine a person's status and reputation, and therefore according to the code, provokes, justifies and even obliges a violent response as retaliation. (Anderson, 1999:165, Kubrin, 2005:373, Kurtenbach & Rauf, 2019:25, Howell et al., 2019:137).

What is new, Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney (2017:28) state, is the way social media are "amplifying the number of opportunities for young people to disrespect one another and intensifying the provocative power of such disrespect. This is because threats can be issued at any place or time, in a more provocative manner than they used to be and to an enhanced audience. Indeed, found Urbanik & Haggerty (2018:13) due to the issuing of threats at any time and place, the pace increased, and because online attacks are more visible and permanent than normal street attacks (Van Hellemont, 2012:174), social media platforms become places where you can easily challenge street credibility (Patton et al., 2013). Online identities are more prone to challenge because they are often not a direct reflection of real-life (Irwin-Rogers & Pinkney, 2017: 28). Without social media, people could get relatively easy out of a confrontation without losing street credibility, as secondhand accounts of incidents managed reputations. Nowadays, a video or photo can be repeatedly shared and reviewed (Lane, 2018:65; Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:13). Social media may have increased or postulated 'viral contagion', as Harding (2014) calls it, as relatively minor disagreements quickly escalate into major disputes even faster than they used to. Due to this visibility youth can also 'claim' certain violence, by reasserting their role in a particular event (Lane, 2018:12).

Social media can facilitate and accelerate assaults because of the potential of collecting detailed data on the whereabouts of people (Stuart, 2019:13). This is how people can prepare attacks or performances (Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:11). Through this, the physical performances change; crossing to another neighborhood forms a symbolic performance, social media is used to publicize this and this fuels into a renewed cat-and-mouse game (Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:14). This connects to the idea of loops as earlier discussed in this chapter, where online content transgresses to the offline street and vice versa. "It is the combination of this enhanced audience dimension alongside the lingering nature of online content that seems to play a central role in understanding how online disrespect is so effectual in terms of provoking face-to-face violence" (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney 2017:24). Stuart (2019), who states that social media may also form a medium to change the disrespect rather than merely amplifying it, shows how individuals deploy social media to challenge rivals, and how and why certain challenges are more likely to catalyze physical violence (Stuart, 2019:2). He distinguishes three ways that drill groups challenge their opponents, namely cross-referencing, calling bluffs, and catching lacking, which will be explained and used for analysis later on in this research. Furthermore, he has highlighted the ways in which social media can be used to counteract to a challenge and repair reputations in new and non-violent ways (Stuart, 2019:13)

1.8 Moving forward

In the previous paragraphs, I consecutively introduced literature on the code of the street, performances, and the role of social media. I have constructed an analytical frame by using the concept of violent imaginaries, complemented by theory on the code of the street and performance theory. The code of the street informs the way that these narratives, performances and inscriptions are embodied guided by the principle of respect and authenticity. In this research, toughness, a willingness to use violence and neighborhood representation, were identified as key values. The way these are presented is informed by performance theory and impression management and more specifically the processes of idealization, mystification and dramatic realization, which play a role in constructing this violent imaginary and transferring it from online to offline spaces. Before examining the way that these processes play a role in drill rap, it is necessary to elaborate on the methodological decisions made in this research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter lays out the argumentation for the methodological choices made within this research. In the first section, the research strategy will be explained. Secondly, I discuss the method by introducing a triangulation of data followed by an explanation of the sampling, time and setting. Lastly, thorough attention is given to research ethics and a discussion of the limitations of this research.

As introduced earlier, this research is guided by the following research question:

"How is a violent imaginary constructed, performed and reinforced within the mutually constitutive spaces of online social media platforms and the physical street in Dutch drill rap since 2019?"

2.1 Research strategy

The research strategy is based upon the ontological, epistemological and theoretical nature of the research puzzle. The ontological nature of the research is structurationist, as violent imaginaries are being constructed through the actions of drill rappers but also form the context in which drill rappers act, and in such a way cannot be studied independently. Giddens, who coined this ontological approach, argues that structure and agency should thus be seen as constituting and complementing the other instead of being in opposition (Giddens (1984) in Demmers, 2017:119). Structures are the "rules that are articulated in social interaction and tell people how to " do " social life, and the resources on which people can call to achieve their objectives whereas agency refers to humans being purposeful actors who shape and articulate these 'rules'" (Wallace and Wolf 1999: 181 in Demmers, 2017:120). Structures of legitimization, in particular, define "norms and the sanctions which accompany their application in social interaction" (Jabri, 1996:83) and in this sense form the contours of how one 'should react'. In this sense, the way that the street code informs the construction of a violent imaginary constitutes a structural feature too.

The epistemological stance taken in this research is interpretivist because the research is aimed at understanding how violent imaginaries are being constructed and transcending through social media platforms and offline spaces. According to an interpretivist stance, 'actions derive their meaning from shared ideas and rules of social life' (Demmers, 2017:17). This is in contrast to a positivist stance which focuses more on causes and consequences and explaining a phenomenon rather than understanding by unpacking it.

Consistent with the structurationist nature of this research puzzle and the interpretivist epistemological stance, this research has taken a qualitative research strategy. A qualitative research strategy offers room for the use of flexible research methods in order to capture the construction of violent imaginaries and its movement through online and offline spaces(Boeije, 2010:13). This will yield rich and descriptive data, through which drill rap can best be understood (Boeije, 2010:10).

2.2 Research Method

For this research method triangulation was established by combining data from social media observation, video analysis and interviewing. The subquestions, as explained in the introduction, have been approached by a combination of this data. I explain my research method by looking at the two 'spaces' that I have examined and the data collection techniques and analysis methods I have used.

2.2.1 Part 1: Online

I collected the data in this section through observation on Instagram and Snapchat and analysis of the music videos on Youtube. This part builds upon extant types of data such as posts and images (Salmons, 2015:32) supported by the interviews conducted in part 2. I did not interfere with the data by commenting on it in any way, although through my repeated presence the views on the videos and posts increased and might have influenced the algorithm of the social media platforms.

I started my observation and selection of the music videos by following general music and rap accounts such as DutchDrillNews, Rapnieuws, Parratv, and listening to releases of 101Barz and Convo who give a platform to a diverse range of rappers, to familiarize myself with the field. Through these social media accounts and the information I had from news updates, my video and observation sampling unfolded. I started following the official accounts of some of the drill rappers whose videos I intended to include. Their Instagram accounts then directed me to Snapchat as they actively promoted their Snapchat accounts on there.

For the next period of my fieldwork, I monitored several social media accounts more closely, and saved conversations and uploads which seemed relevant for observation. I selected videos based on the sampling method described in the next section. I, at minimum, watched the videos three times each, focusing on the performance, inscriptions and narratives respectively. I then transcribed and categorized the videos. From this resulting data I formed categories of components present in the drill rap violent imaginary, that I lay next to the performative elements of the code of the streets that I had already identified in the literature namely: toughness, a willingness to use violence and neighborhood representation.

I analyzed the videos by making use of narrative analysis. This is also done by Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards (2018), who follow the guidelines of Lewis-Beck et al. (2003) in their analysis of narratives in rap videos. Lewis-Beck et al. (2003:3) distinguish between thematic analysis; which focuses on the content and on what is said, and thus on the narratives I want to identify and performative analysis, which focuses on the story-telling and how something is said, and thus on the performance. According to them storytelling is seen as a performance by someone "who involves, persuades and (perhaps) moves an

audience through language and gesture, doing rather than telling" (Lewis-Beck, 2003:5). For the data collected from observation on Snapchat and Instagram, I used the same categorization framework like the one used for the videos, which enabled me to combine this data more efficiently.

2.2.2 Part 2: Offline
Apart from supporting the examination of the violent imaginaries constructed within drill rap, the interviews I conducted helped to categorize drill rap and reflect on the role of social media in the offline experiences of the interviewed respondents. The semi-structured interviews allow participants to talk about their experiences in their own words and come up with topics that are important to them, in comparison to a formal interview in which the questions are fixed (Boeije, 2010:63). I deemed this important as it allows more openness to the actual situations happening outside of the spheres that were already known to me beforehand. For the interviews, I used Microsoft Teams or regular phone calls, depending on the preference of the respondent. I transcribed and coded the interviews for analysis. The parts that I use to illustrate arguments within this thesis are translated into English.

2.2.3 Setting and Timeframe
Drill rap has been most prevalent within de Randstad, more specifically, the cities of Den Haag, Rotterdam and Amsterdam (Taha & Haspels, 2019). This research focuses on the processes within Dutch drill rap, by looking mostly at groups originating from Amsterdam as this is where drill rap manifests most strongly, thereby adhering to the principle of maximization (Boeije, 2010:34). The most dominant research setting are the social media platforms on which these groups perform and interact, supplemented by the experiences of drill offline as laid-out by the respondents.

In correspondence with the data derived from the interviews and the news articles, I cautiously argue that drill rap started to be of particular significance to the people involved, during the summer of 2019. As I also want to examine the construction of a violent imaginary leading up to this popularity, I chose to examine the way that this is done since 2019.

2.2.4 Sampling
This research makes use of strategic (Mason, 2018:58) or purposive sampling (Boeije, 2010:35), which entails selecting the units of analysis based on their relevance to the research puzzle (Mason, 2018:59). I have analysed the videos of the Amsterdam rap groups: KSB, FOG, 73dePijp and Leyland Spartans as these groups have been most present in the societal debates surrounding drill rap, and all of these groups are connected by either a friendly or antagonistic relationship. I incorporated the drill rap videos of the Rotterdam duo Qlas and Blacka in a later stadium, as they were often identified as prominent

players in the Dutch drill scene throughout the research. The selection of the videos was done sequentially and includes for all groups at least their first major music video, the video which received the most views, the most recent video at the time of analysis and additional videos picked based on their significant drill characteristics or importance in the overall repertoire of the rappers. For the interviews, both purposive and snowball sampling have been used to recruit respondents, by spreading a message through my network and through reaching out to youth organizations located within Amsterdam (Boeije, 2010:40). I have interviewed five youth workers, three high school teachers or employees, an artist booker, someone at the municipality and a DJ.[11] In agreement, I chose to anonymize their names to prevent interference with the trust relations between them and the youth we talked about. Although I will refer to them with the title of the professional role I interviewed them in, most of them have, in addition to coming across drill rap in their work with youth, some connection or affinity with the hip-hop scene at large.

Additionally, I informally spoke to other people researching this topic, or with comprehensive knowledge about street culture in the Netherlands who helped to make sense of certain images and narratives I distracted from the material found online.

2.3 Ethics and Limitations

Urbanik and Roks (2020:2) point out that there has been a lack of ethical guidance in the study of online communities due to a lack of methodological considerations. Since the circumstances in which this research was done, covid-19 inhibited face-to-face contact during the fieldwork, more attention was given to data derived from the internet than initially planned. Therefore research ethics pertaining to this particular form of doing research have had to be specifically thought through as it became a focal point rather than a supportive method. This paragraph will start off with an exploration of ethics in online research. It then continues with a consideration of my position as a researcher in researching street culture and rap and concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this research with specific attention to the influence of the covid-19 pandemic.

2.3.1 Public or private data

Of particular concern during my research was the question whether social media data are should be considered public or private. In correspondence with Boyd and Crawford (2012:672) I agree that "...the process of evaluating the research ethics cannot be ignored simply because the data are seemingly public…" which is the case with the Youtube data used in this research. I will therefore explore the ethics of my data in this paragraph. According to the British Psychological Society (2013:6-8) the publicity or privacy of

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[11] See the appendix for an overview of the research sample

online postings is partially determined by the online setting itself and whether the social media user may expect a reasonable extent of privacy. There are various types of data present on the internet: 'public' data on artist accounts, data on personal accounts that are open to everyone and data on private accounts (Townsend & Wallace, 2016:10). Furthermore, there are various ideas about privacy. Some people believe all data on the internet should be considered public, others believe that only data which is publicly accessible could be used, others believe a lot is possible as long as the ethics are thoroughly revised (Townsend & Wallace, 2016:10).

Working with only the legal guidelines made available by the platforms themselves feels not enough as this is often based on a policy of fair use but leaves room for interpretation. Although the terms and conditions platforms do not limit the use of their data as a public source under certain restrictions, I have had to consider whether using the online activity of these young boys is ethically correct. The consideration I made is that the people I followed online, purposefully positioned themselves as artists, encouraged people to follow them on Instagram, and shared their Snapchat accounts on these platforms in order for people to follow them there too. I did identify differences in the amount and detail of information that was shared on Instagram and Snapchat respectively. I 'felt' that the rappers used Snapchat for more direct interaction, and it appeared they considered this a little more private, or intimate than their interactions on Instagram, which was used more for promotion of their music. Although some would argue that seeing the large number of followers, the fact that the people consider themselves as artists and public figures and deliberately draw attention to their social media profiles might render the information on those profiles as public, I decided to treat the information I found through Snapchat and Instagram as general observations and distinguish broader themes rather than single out descriptive but specific examples. When I did use specific examples, these were already shared by general accounts reporting on drill news. The videos I found on Youtube I considered as public data as they were meant for public distribution. This thought is supported by Townsend & Wallace (2016:10), who state that in general using data posted by music artists tends to be less problematic as they intend to reach a wider audience.

Anonymizing data in online research proves more challenging than in offline settings (Lane, 2016; Stuart, 2019). Due to algorithms and big databases, anonymizing individual internet abstracts (such as an Instagram post) may prove complex but also crucial as these abstracts can be traced back to its original source through the use of search engines. The potential repercussions of this might not be apparent to the researcher. Concerning sensitive information, this could potentially harm the social media user. According to the Association of Internet Researchers (2012:3), the researcher's responsibility increases with the risk of harm or vulnerability of the participants. The risk of harm increases when the social media user's anonymity has been breached, or when the data revealed may expose the user to for example reputational damage or prosecution (Townsend & Wallace, 2016:7). I chose to refrain from using individual and

identifiable data in my thesis. In answering my question, it is more important to get a general impression of how rappers use Snapchat then tracing it back to individual rappers. Anonymizing the data is not enough. In line with Lane (2019) and Stuart (2019), I 'ungoogled' the data where possible and necessary, by making sure the data I distilled from the social media observation could not be traced back to its original location when being used in a search engine.

2.3.2 Position of the researcher

During this research, I had to acknowledge my position as a female, rich, white university student, an identity in sharp contrast to the drill scene I have examined. This position could remain relatively invisible due to the distant nature of the eventual data collection but was of main consideration throughout the research. My main concern was to not fall into the trap of what Jaffe (2019:387) calls writing a 'ghetto ethnography' by "play[ing] into existing stereotypes of certain people or places as deviant and dangerous", contributing to the anthropological trend she identifies of "contemporary journeys into the supposedly impenetrable urban ghetto". I have tried to avoid this by continuously re-iterating the analytical vantage points of the research and by questioning the factual truthness of my observations. I furthermore, stayed close to the experiences that were shared with me by my respondents. However, as I am not an insider to the music, images and messages shared online, I had to be constantly aware of the possibility of misinterpretation of the data used.

Regarding the risk of negative stereotyping, this research did intentionally not set out to evaluate whether drill rap may prompt more violence or not, and thus whether it is 'bad' or 'good'. This research focuses on the processes at play. The research has a more explorative character than I had imagined it to be as I came to the conclusion that there had not been set out a thick description of the drill rap scene in the Netherlands. I should state in this regard, that there is not such a thing as one 'drill scene', as rappers have often made other types of music in the past, or continue to do so while making drill music.

2.3.3 Limitations

As already reflected upon above, my position as a researcher also forms a limitation in this research, as I lacked certain knowledge about street culture. Although I could never 'overcome' this limitation, I tried to limit its consequences by informing myself on street cultural traditions by talking to people who do have this. I sought to understand and 'know' more than I would eventually need for my thesis in an effort to be able to contextualize the later findings.

Covid-19 has impacted the fieldwork conducted during this research in various ways. First of all, it influenced the sample and setting of the research. Initially, I set out to interview youth in the drill rap themselves, what would already be challenging regarding access, but proved almost impossible when the

Covid-19 pandemic halted public life and therefore the potential for face-to-face contact and the build-up of trust. I, therefore, decided to interview youth workers and school personnel only, whom I interviewed through Microsoft Teams and phone calls. The lack of face-to-face contact, which is important in qualitative interviewing was, therefore, less present, but because I was not focusing upon the way certain statements were made, this was of not a big concern. It was also harder to find respondents, as organizations had different priorities. This resulted in a smaller number of interviews then intended but was countered by a stronger triangulation with the data from the observation and videos.

I ended up looking into the online presentations of the rappers and laying this next to the experiences of the respondents, in order to answer my research question. However, to understand the dynamics within drill rap on a more specific and personal level than I set out to do in this research, I argue that incorporating the voice and interpretation of both drill maker and drill audience, is necessary in correctly interpreting their messages.

Apart from an impact on the methodology it is interesting to consider how the covid-19 has impacted the nature of the phenomenon under research as well. Participants mentioned how covid-19 potentially impacted the development of the drill scene in the Netherlands by jeopardizing the growth of drill as part of the established hip-hop scene or at least inhibiting us from seeing how it would have evolved otherwise. Participants also noted that the streets became relatively empty for a certain amount of time and therefore possibly fewer incidents occurred, as there was less opportunity for confrontation. Along with this development more social media presence has been noted and as such, the salience social media within drill might have actually increased as a consequence of the Covid-19.

Chapter Three: Outlining the Dutch Drill Scene

If you watch a typical drill rap clip, the video often opens with short shots of closeups of the rappers over a slow intro beat. This technique of slowing down videos to half-pace is often used to add scenic elements (Stuart, 2020:72). The rappers have facemasks on, but their eyes pierce right into the camera. Smoke from their cigarette or joint spirals up in front of their face, some of them make hand signs referring to shooting a gun or to their area code. Then the beat starts rolling in and they start spitting their bars supported by a sliding bass and fast kicks in the melody. They vividly talk about the way they will take out any opp[12] while boasting about victories in earlier events or money earned on the streets. Then the video turns black and a list of names of boys in prison is shown.

The example illustrated above mirrors a typical drill music video. Drill is a South-Side Chicago originating type of rap that finds its stylistic origin mostly in trap or gangsta rap, lending either lyrical subjects, performance, or beats from those styles. [13] It contrasted with the 2010s popular subjects within hip-hop in Chicago, which mostly centered around wealth and luxury, unattainable to many youths (Caramanica, 2012). Despite a difference in views regarding the exact founding father of drill, a name mentioned often is Chief Keef, whose fame rose simultaneously with that of drill rap (Drake, 2012). Chief Keef, according to a respondent, was the first to openly use violence and flaunt weapons in his music videos without being famous already.[14] According to Stuart (Stuart, 2020:31,35), Chief Keef showed a viable route for youth in Chicago communities because he lived very similar lives to them. In 2012 drill started to become popular in the UK as well. It was this specific type of drill, characterized by a faster pace and different aesthetics than its Chicago counterpart, that spread across different countries and also landed in the Netherlands (At5, 2019).

This chapter is concerned with outlining the Dutch drill scene in order to establish a common point of reference to the features that are characteristic of drill. What phenomenon are we talking about, what does it look like and in which context did it come into existence? This information is necessary to be able to understand the upcoming chapters and the vital role that social media plays in this genre. I approach this by first discussing the introduction and characteristics of drill before moving on to a more elaborate discussion of the changes in the music scene that enabled the coming into existence of drill. I hereby draw upon literature, my own online observations and the experiences of the people I talked to.

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[12] Opp, is short for opponent or enemy (Soortkill, 2019:176)
[13] Author's interview with hip-hop artist booker 4-06-2020 and DJ 10-05-2020,13-05-2020
See Kubrin (2005) for more information on gangsta rap and Bravo and Greco (2018) for trap rap
[14] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

3.1. The introduction of drill in the Netherlands

Although there must have been some early adopters before that time, according to most of my respondents drill gained ground in the Netherlands around 2018-2019, reaching a peak in popularity at the end of the summer of 2019. Arguably, this was instigated by an increase in public interest, and in particular media attention after at least one fatal knife incident in September that year was linked to this music genre and the scene surrounding it (At5, 2019) This popularity led to the emergence of many dispersed neighborhood drill rap groups, as observed by a youth worker from Amsterdam Oud-West and many established rappers started making drill. [15] The timeline outlined above is supported by interviews with different popular drill rappers in 2020. In the interviews, they point out the relative newness of this rap genre in the Netherlands, as the rappers state to only have started rapping around a year before. (Clubhub, 27th of May, 2020; Vuesmedia, 19th of June, 2020)

3.2 Drill's stylistic characteristics

This paragraph examines drill's main characteristics, in part by contrasting it to other types of rap. The specific content of these characteristics will be revisited when unpacking the violent imaginary in chapter four. What indisputably sets drill apart from preceding types of rap, according to the people I talked to, is the music itself. According to a high school teacher from Amsterdam West "The beat is different [...] it is incorporated within the song in a very specific way"[16].

In addition to the type of beat, a difference can be found in the nature of the lyrics. As exemplified the same respondent "In rap there has always been mention of violence and criminal activities but more implicitly. In drill it's really direct, 'this is what i'm going to do with you". Another respondent contributes that although in earlier rap they also wanted to show that they could be violent, they first and foremost wanted to show that they were better rappers. He notices that in drill this does not seem important anymore and it has become "the more shocking the better".[17]

Other contrasting features are the visual elements that characterize drill music. In most of the music videos I analysed, the young rappers wear dark clothes, display weapons and anonymize themselves by covering up their faces with various types of balaclavas[18]. Usually they are filmed at recognizable places within their own neighborhoods, such as certain residential buildings, neighborhood squares or metro stations (Boom, 2019; Carvalho, 2019). According to the highschool teacher from Amsterdam[19], it is this

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[15] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam Oud-West 16-06-2020
[16] Author's interview with highschool teacher from Amsterdam West 10-04-2020
[17] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam Oud-West 16-06-2020

image; with knives and covered faces, and together with the lyrics; with direct references to violence, that distinguishes drill.

Multiple youth workers have argued that they feel like the quality of the rap has changed with drill. A youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost, who illustrates "it's not about rhyme scheme, or whether music is good, it's about what you are saying, who you are provoking, what you say you did, who you're with, that's way more important"[20]. Stuart (2020:67) phrases that "quality means something different in the drill world". According to him, by deliberately making the music not too polished, and thus creating a raw sound, they convey a sense of street authenticity.

Apart from the music itself and the accompanying music videos, another respondent points out the specific role of social media in the genre. Although drill may be relatively similar to earlier sounds, due to social media it is distributed more widely and reaches more youth. [21]

Although for analysis I focus in particular on drill's distinctiveness from other genres, some respondents have pointed, as also mentioned before, to its similarities with trap music, in terms of stylistic element and it might not be as distinctive as often thought.[22]

3.3 Drill rappers

After succinctly gaining a sense of where drill came from and what drill 'looks like', this paragraph is concerned with the people that form the drill scene, in particular the rappers. Examining this group is important to later be able to understand who is involved in constructing the violent imaginary.

Most of the more popular rappers are in their late teens, although increasingly younger teenagers are making drill music as well.[23] This young age has a few consequences as suggested by my respondents. First of all, they argue that as a teenager, rappers are still developing their identity and therefore recognition and appreciation of their peers is extra important and thus searched for.[24] Secondly, they hold the teenage brain accountable for making the youth more impulsive and relatively naive. In addition to this some of the youth also cope with additional mental disabilities[25] What makes this young age more salient is highlighted by the words of this youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid who states "these young ones believe very strongly in walking around with a shank and defending their own postal code, you know? That is very raw, there is almost no fake to it anymore". More than their predecessors these young boys, according to him, believe that they have to put words into action.

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[20] Author's interview with youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost 6-08-2020
[21] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020
[22] Author's interview with hip-hop booker 4-06-2020 and youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid 1-05-2020
[23] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid 1-05-2020 and youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost 6-08-2020
[24] Authors interview with Counselor and Intern Teacher Highschool Rotterdam 22-06-2020, youthworker Oud-West 16-06-202.
[25] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid 1-05-20

The Dutch drill scene is dominated by boys from Suriname and Antillean descent. According to my respondents this can be traced back to various factors. First of all, in contrast with the Netherlands where the rap scene is relatively mixed with a dominance of Maroccan rappers, the UK rap scene mostly exists of Black rappers.[26] As Dutch drill takes after UK drill, this could inform the fact that mostly Black youth adopted this genre. As this type of rap rose to popularity in certain areas and communities, drill became a genre of these communities. A youth worker illustrates that, according to Maroccan rappers he spoke to in his neighborhood, drill rap is considered more raw.[27]

Although the UK is home to some popular female drill rappers, up to this date, female Dutch drill rappers remain rather invisible on social media and within the Dutch drill rap scene at large. Most of the respondents I spoke to had heard of the existence of Dutch female drillers but none of them knew one. They do however, according to my respondents, make up a large share of listeners. At parties with drill music for example, the crowd consists of a lot of girls.[28] The idea that girls make up a large share of listeners is supported by several instagram posts in which rappers share females who filmed themselves singing along to their music. Furthermore, they appear to play a role in stirring up fights, being well informed on what's happening and discussing this publicly.[29]

3.4 Getting involved in drill: Capitalizing on a violent persona

As many respondents described, and what became clear to me during the research, social media plays an important role in the existence of drill rap and researching drill without social media would be largely inadequate. Due to social media street culture is more visible and popular than ever (Roks en van Den Broek, 2017:31) According to a respondent "hip-hop is the music genre of this generation, Black culture is seen as cool".[30] This idea is not hard to argument when looking at the increased popularity of 'street' clothing brands like Daily Paper or Patta, the large representation of hip-hop music in the 50 most streamed Dutch songs on Spotify, and the increased use of street language words like guap, meaning money, on a day to day bases by white college students, who seem far removed from street culture in their daily lives. For youth not originating from communities embedded in street culture, the same respondent argues, it is fascinating and exciting and social media, having to be entertaining, taps into this fascination.

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[26] Author's interview with highschool teacher from Amsterdam 10-04-2020, Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

[27] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid 1-05-20

[28] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020, Author's interview with hip-hop booker 4-06-2020

[29] Author's interview with Counselor and Intern Teacher Highschool Rotterdam 22-06-2020, Author's interview with youth worker Amsterdam Zuidoost 6-08-2020

[30] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

The idea that youth have found a way to capitalize on this curiosity by making use of the digital economy; and thus social media, forms the focal point of Stuart's (2020) research into the mechanisms within the drill scene of Chicago. He argues, in the attention economy that predominates social media, the background of drill rappers function as their asset rather than a deficit (Stuart, 2020:42).

Drill rappers say to have started rapping as a way of 'getting out of the gutter' and express their feelings and thoughts on music (FunX December 2nd, 2020) or to give an online voice to the beef they were fighting out on the street (Vuesmedia, July 19th, 2020). This motivation is partially reiterated by a Youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuid "I think for them as well, they have looked for a way out of their situation, they want fame, they want to succeed in their music, in their lives, they want to make a difference for their little brothers, sisters, mothers, etc, I think that was a wish and they have been able to achieve that." [31]

Drill rappers, according to another respondent, have found out that violence sells.[32] The more violent they can make themselves come across the more followers, likes and views they get Stuart (2020:101) found. The respondents from Rotterdam also point to the assigning of status, that comes along with the ability to make a cool diss track, and acting upon the message. According to them, even standing with the older neighborhood kids in a video clip is considered cool.[33] Stuart (2020:34) points out that the success of early drillers, such as Chief Keef was based on the fact that their fame and brand were based on their violent persona, so the more they were associated with violence the more popular. Every violent act then re-proved their authenticity (Stuart, 2020:80). This idea is supported by a respondent who states that drillers market their persona very well "they talk about carrying a gun, they carry a gun".[34] However, this success is not only reliant on the good marketing skills of drill rappers, but also based on the current music industry. That drill rappers can capitalize on a violent persona the way they do, is enabled by social media.

3.5 The impact of social media on the music industry and the coming into existence of drill

In order to understand the role of social media in drill rap, I will first succinctly discuss the way that social media impacts the music industry as a whole.

Social media has made the music scene more accessible. As argued by both Stuart (2020:33) and my respondents, it has made it easier to become an artist, as it enables you to bypass the traditional

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[31] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid 1-05-20

[32] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

[33] Authors interview with Counselor and Intern Teacher Highschool Rotterdam 22-06-2020,

[34] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

gatekeepers such as radio stations and labels and distribute your music via Youtube and other social media channels.[35]

As a consequence of this diversification of the music industry in which producers can more easily get involved in the music industry and deliver directly to an audience, audiences in return have access to everything available on the internet, and therefore it is more difficult to stand out (Stuart, 2020:44).[36] In order for drill rappers to get noticed and become popular, and eventually to earn money through their music, drill rappers have to create traction, which is possible to do via social media. According to a respondent "everyone is doing everything to create traction and in drill this is violence".[37] To create this traction through violence, drill rappers have to make use of the algorithms that pertain to social media.

3.5.1 Algorithms in drill

Algorithms sort the order in which you see content on social media accounts, based on the amount of engagement it has - the number of people that view, like, comment or share it - and how relevant it is to the person watching dependent on what he watched before (DigitalMarketingInstitute, 2020). Shocking content, which extracts a lot of reactions and thus has a lot of traction, is rewarded and moved to the front of people's pages which will then again create more views. A respondent[38] acknowledges, this role of algorithms and calls drill rap "a pure marketing machine; they tell you to carry weapons, they carry them themselves. They explain very detailedly how they may kill someone, more specific and explicit, everything in order to create friction". By capitalizing on and exemplifying a violent persona that is intriguing to follow Stuart (2020:49) explains that "drill rappers make algorithm friendly content".

For these algorithms to function well, consistency is needed[39]. As the same respondent explains, today's teenagers are social media experts. They know the importance of consistency and high interaction, such as posting every day, tagging people in their posts and commenting a lot.[40] According to him, drill could rise to popularity because consistent posting comes natural to the people who carry the genre. This idea is reiterated by a youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid, who states drill exists because of social media and fuels its algorithm very effectively as there is so much going on online, that functions as entertainment

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[35] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020, Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid 1-05-20

[36] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

[37] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

[38] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

[39] The importance of consistent posting for marketing reasons is mentioned in allmost every social media strategy. See for example Simpson (2019) Why Content Consistency is key to your Marketing Strategy on Forbes.nl

[40] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020

for potential audiences on Instagram, Snapchat and Youtube.[41] Drill could became so big because of algorithms.

With the help of algorithms bad news travels much faster, explains a youth worker from Amsterdam Oost, "If someone gets stabbed, that video travels very fast, even within minutes"[42]. This became clear to me when on the 27th of May, on a late afternoon well into my fieldwork, I saw videos of a young man affiliated with a drill rap group receiving medical care after being stabbed in the head. This offline event travelled from personal videos on Snapchat and Instagram, to being shared on drill 'news' pages. Later that day local news sites took this over, making it to the national news later that night. Such an event illustrates the way that offline events quickly transgress to online spaces, in which they receive a far larger audience, and thus have a bigger impact. In the next paragraph I will take a closer look at these drill 'news' pages, as they form an important fuel of the scene and a network around drill rap groups.

3.5.2 A web of interaction: facilitators and instigators

An important supercharger of the algorithm, outside of the drill rappers themselves, can be found in pages 'reporting' about certain drill events and enabling the interaction among youth in drill. I highlight these pages here as these pages form an important instigator of the popularity of drill, and form a connection between drill rappers and their audience.

There are multiple Instagram accounts such as DutchDrillNews, Dewaarheidnldrill, Drillersvannl [43] on which the account assembles Snapchat posts of rappers, comprising videos, videos of encounters with rivals, the newest releases and general news, sometimes while adding commentary. Through this, these pages add to the persona of the rappers by reiterating the narratives, performances and inscriptions that the rappers have used and even inciting new behaviour as they spread the messages to a larger audience and incite reactions.

The second phenomenon are videos with titles such as "Dutch drill BEEF explained", often with a reference to certain groups in the name. In these videos short clips of music videos are interchanged with screenshots of social media conversations and the makers' own interpretation of the events. Some videos focus on the supposed scoreboard between rap groups, but it is not clear what score is granted to certain events. Although no one really seemed to know the exact details of this, my respondents referred to the notion of points as well. "If you make someone run away, if you harm someone, if you harm someone's family, if someone calls in their father or school to solve things, you earn points", the youth worker from

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[41] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuid 1-05-20

[42] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam Oost 5-06-2020

[43] These particular pages have been rather consistent throughout the course of the fieldwork. However, these pages are subject to change and pages may be deleted or new ones might be created.

Amsterdam-Zuidoost explains.[44] In the comment section below the videos, fans list their support for one of the groups or comment on the way events are being portrayed. Through commenting, the fanbase can create pressure as they call upon rappers to take certain actions or do certain things. [45]An example of this can be found in this comment underneath a rap video "Your friend was killed, now you have to do the rest, show us that everything you rap is real" [46] Through these kind of videos and comments like the one above these pages and audiences stir up fights (Pinkney & Edwards-robinson, 2017:109)

Stuart (2020:145) states that, these pages decrease the ability of rappers to settle disputes online, because they disseminate the content to a larger audience and make it permanent. Furthermore, by assembling different footage and adding commentary, I found that they connect and frame events in a certain way. According to this youth worker from Zuidoost[47], the guys making these videos are often not really the ones on the street, but these videos do feed the whole scene and contribute to the constructed violent imaginary. According to Stuart, people capitalize on violence in this way too. This is especially prevalent when considering the fact that during this research the DutchDrillNews Instagram was offered up for sale, and thus owning an account like that seems like a profitable business.

3.6 Summary

Drill is a fairly recent phenomenon in the Netherlands, it can be distinguished based on it's beat, on its visual characteristics: clothing, carrying knives, neighborhood places and violent lyrics and on its makers; a relatively young male age group from mostly Black communities. Furthermore, social media plays an important role in this scene. Social media have made the music industry more accessible, you only need recording apparatus, social media access and 'shocking'content to creat traction. Drill rappers have, by playing upon the algorithms of social media that reward shocking content, found a way to capitalize on the construction of a violent persona. By making shocking content and being very consistent, drill rappers find their ways to the front pages of social media. They are helped by what I call here facilitators, or 'newspages', accounts on which movieclips, comments, incidents are gathered, shared and commented on. The next chapter delves into the construction of this violent persona and further examines the way that social media ties in with this construction.

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[44] Author's interview with youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost 6-08-2020

[45] Author's interview with youthworker from Oud-West 16-06-202*0,* Author's interview with hip-hop artist booker 4-06-2020

[46] Comment underneath Music video Pressure, FOG

[47] Author's interview with youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost 6-08-2020

Chapter 4: The construction of a violent imaginary and its online-offline nexus

"Drill would be nothing if there hadn't been clips, or social media. If it had only been a music genre that you could listen to on Spotify, it wouldn't have this much of an impact. It's about the comments, the videos that come along with it, the Snapchat stories. Drill music can't be compared to what hip-hop is. I think hip-hop always feels a little attacked. If you say drill has a bad influence they hear 'music has a bad influence'. I think that this platform lends itself well to these kinds of excesses. It is a kind of catalysator for that street culture. An extra platform that is uncontrolled, that you can't tame or something like that"(Youth Worker Amsterdam-Zuidoost, 6th of August, 2020)

The above quote illustrates the role social media plays in drill rap and expresses the idea that drill rap would not be so popular *without* social media. It reiterates the idea that Drill indeed came into existence on the connection between the (offline) street and the internet. It brings forward the question how rappers use these platforms to give a certain impression, i.e. how they manage their impression, in relation to the expression of street culture. The whole violent imaginary is built in correspondence with a certain impression management, the way that a rapper presents himself and his activities to others (Goffman, 1959:9). The rappers try to prove their authenticity and legitimize their violent online persona through different ways, which are discussed in different paragraphs below.

The first half of this chapter is concerned with this impression management, and will formulate an answer to the question: What (key) components constitute the violent imaginary within drill rap and how is this violent imaginary constructed? I will unpack the way in which a violent imaginary is constructed online in the videos and on social media respectively. As stated before, I define violent imaginaries as the discursive ways through which the legitimacy of violence is conveyed to the people who will pursue violent actions and those around them which can be represented through narratives, performances and inscriptions (Schröder & Schmidt, 2001:9). In other words, how is an imaginary created through repetitive narratives, performances and inscriptions through which violence is rendered normal. I will unpack the way this imaginary is constructed by looking at the different elements that make-up the narratives, performances and inscriptions within drill rap. I do this through drawing upon my analysis of music videos and social media content, thereby focussing on what they say, how they say it and what they use to support this message respectively. For analytical reasons I divide the various observations I made of the videos and social media over these three categories. In reality however, these three often overlap or are intertwined, as they together function to portray an image of toughness, willingness to use violence and neighborhood representation.

The presentation of these antagonistic relations illustrate the way that narratives, performances and inscriptions are jointly used. Glancing back to the theoretical chapter, Stuart (2019) has identified three distinctive ways in which youth challenge authenticity of the code of the street performance of their rivals; namely through cross-referencing, calling bluffs and catching lacking. In this paragraph I will examine the way that Dutch drill rappers employ these three strategies. To show this, I connected the way that the challenges that Stuart presented are used by drill rappers, to the effect that social media has on the impression management of the rappers through context collapse, facilitating exaggeration of street credentials and the potential to be caught on camera.

Apart from unpacking the violent imaginary, as mentioned above, I will explore the role of social media. Over the course of this research I repetitively encountered the salience of social media, to drill rap, as also shown in the opening quote. Both in the form of the setting and as a main component in regulating the dynamics of violence within drill. In the second part of this chapter I examine, through social media observation and supported by the interviews how, through the works of social media, this violent construction may spill onto the offline street, thus in what way the violent imaginary interacts with social media and facilitates this movement. I thereby look at the way rappers respond to challenges, examine the case study of Scheveningen and look at the way that young rappers become entangled in their own construction. Again I draw upon social media data and combine that with the data from the interviews. By making use of Snapchat and Instagram they provide proof that what they say in their music, is not just fiction but a resemblance of their daily (offline) lives. In the words of Stuart (2020:78) "they can better convince audiences that they aren't just from the streets, but they are in the streets at the moment". They triangulate their own performance through these routes, and thus use dramatic realization to do this. Validating authenticity according to Rose (2008:136) contains two steps. First is to tell stories about being in the streets, the second is to convince the audience that they're really there, doing the things, personally. What I found is that, as mentioned above, rappers use their different platforms to tell the same story and in this way provide proof, with for example, their Snapchats about the story they posted on Instagram. These social media provide drill rappers with new tools of proving authenticity (Stuart, 2020:78). Dutch rappers use an interrelated web of different platforms to show that the construction of their violent imaginary is a representation of their real life.

Status is tightly connected to authenticity; not portraying yourself differently than who you are. In the case of drill rap this entails that your offline behavior should mirror your online presented self.

4.1 Narratives

One of the ways a violent imaginary is constructed is with the help of narratives. Revisiting its definition, narratives here are considered as the stories the rapper tells about his own life, that of the group he belongs to or about his opponents within the lyrics. The stories in the lyrics are supplemented by the stories told on Instagram and Snapchat in text. These stories try to convey the image of toughness, willingness to use violence, material wealth and representation of the neighborhood. In the stories they tell, they try to construct a violent persona and at the same time convey this constructed violent persona is a real resemblance of who they are, that it is authentic.

They hereby make use of the processes of idealization as introduced by Goffman (1959:41,46-47). As explained earlier this process has changed due to social media, as it facilitates the exaggerate about street credentials in the form of fronting, In the narratives it is relatively easy to use idealization as it is easier to highlight preferred aspects, you choose your own information and avoid information that does not fit the preferred image, you can leave it out. This process of idealization has also become more prone to testing, as it is not always based on the truth. In this sense proving authenticity is made easier, but challenging authenticity and claims of the opps at the same time is to. As Illan (2020:8) states lyrics can communicate norms. This is especially prevalent in the articulation of the willingness to use violence. According to Kubrin (2005:366), this creates an environment in which violence is seen as appropriate and acceptable, or even required. Through the continuous process of stressing their own authenticity and violent reputation by questioning that of others they justify the present, future and past actions (Mills 1963:443 in Kubrin, 2005:371)) and thereby normalize the violence (Kubrin, 2005:366). In this way it creates a receptive environment for the created violent imaginary.

Looking at the way the different aspects of the street code are presented within the narratives of the drill rap videos under review, a few main themes can be identified, namely: the glorification of the own group by calling upon stories representing toughness in regard to identity, actions, norms and values, the discussion and taunting of rival groups and, connecting the previous two, a description of the willingness to use violence. Furthermore, I discuss the way that narratives are used to challenge the rival groups.

4.1.1 Glorifying the own group

In all of the rap videos a considerate amount of lyrics are attributed to a discussion and glorification of their own group or self in order to come across as tough and willing to use violence. This is done through stressing authenticity and by stressing a violent reputation.

The rappers repeatedly stress their authenticity through different ways. First of all, by stating that they are real and thus not fake "those men play real, I am real", and really live the life that they are rapping about "I

do what I have to do, I am not about the chitchat"[48]*. In addition they emphasize the consistency of their performance by indicating that they have had this lifestyle for a longer period of time and not just for the sake of their rap career "I do this shit since primary school"[49]. As Goffman (1959:3) stated, routine behavior and demonstrating consistency by playing upon past information makes the impression given more believable.

Another way of stressing the authenticity of the own group is by referring to their adherence to the street code, in particular to the unwritten rule of not snitching, or talking to the police, through lines such as "that I ever open my mouth, no chance"[50] "I keep quiet although I am caught on cam[51]

Drill rappers stress their violent reputation by stating for example that "I come alone for your whole gang"[52] and are thus not scared of coming to rival territory without the back-up of other group members, referring to their potential to stand up for themselves.

They furthermore stress their violent reputation through lines as "I swear those men are afraid"[53] and "Men run away when I step in their ends"[54] Thereby underlining that apart from not being scared of anything, they are scary to others. Apart from using past information to come across as consistent, rappers also re-narrate specific incidents with certain individuals, to fortify their violent reputation, as was also described by Pinkney and Robinson-Edwards (2017). It is here where the videos tie in with their social media content. They tell these stories in their music videos on Youtube and then repeat it in the content of their other social media platforms, thereby contributing to conveying a sense of routine behavior and uttering disrespect towards the opps.

Another way of glorifying the own group can be found in the representation of the neighborhood. Apart from showing represent through the incorporation of the name of the neighborhood in their group's name such as in 73 de Pijp, which refers to a neighborhood or Kikkenstein Bende (KSB) which refers to a residence building in the Bijlmer, rappers also refer to their "ends" "block" or use references to their postal code in their lyrics.

4.1.2 Willingness to use violence
Tightly connected to the glorification of their own group by calling upon images of toughness, is convincing the audience of the rappers' willingness to use violence, which runs like a thread through the lyrics and is portrayed in various ways.

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[48] Karma – KSB
 *The lyrics that were used in this research were translated from Dutch to English.
[49] De Pijp - 73dePijp
[50] Get Back - FOG
[51] No Hook - FOG
[52] Pressure - FOG
[53] F*ck 73 - LelylandSpartans
[54] Kikkeboe 1.0 - KSB

First of all, a way that this willingness to use violence is narrated is through showing off a comfortableness with the use of weapons. This can be done by making a reference to certain types of weapons directly; in the lyrics references are made to guns and knives through for example words as "my rambo", "iron", "15 inch" "skeng", "shank" or "slice", or by talking about the violence that was, may or will be perpetrated with those weapons.

The explicitness of the lyrics is often seen as a characteristic of drill. Drill rappers talk about what they will be doing with the weapons very explicitly in lines such as "[stab him] until he throws up blood"[55] "dip him in his chest or neck"[56] Swing my blade, let him leak".[57] They also make explicit that they won't shy away from, or even threaten to use, future violence. They do this by either claiming that if they were to be disrespected they would harm their opponent "we don't tolerate disrespect, run on me and end up stretched"[58] or more specifically by mentioning certain names saying "[name] is a dead man walking"[59], meaning someone who is soon to die. They thereby claim to stand up for themselves when disrespected, which is part of an image of toughness as well. Whether groups call out individuals, or only talk about the group as a whole, differs per group, which was also underscribed by a respondent.

This willingness to use violence is also shared on social media, through for example re-posting or sharing tweets and memes referring to the use of violence, and the expectations of the use of violence "if I know he aint shooting he is not with me"

4.1.3 Taunting the performance of the opps
In addition to authenticating the status of their own group and showing off their willingness to use violence, rappers use the lyrics and posts on their social media accounts to question the authenticity of their rivals or opps and to challenge or disrespect them. They engage in beef.

Beef has always been, in some form, been part of hip hop.[60] It is often difficult, if not impossible, to trace back how a drill beef initially started as the beef evolves, creates a domino effect and events crowd out earlier ones, a respondent explains.[61] Social media, according to the youth worker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost, have offered a new platform for beef, and have amplified the opportunities to create it.[62] Some respondents argue that the beef in drill is more disrespectful, as it is also uttered towards people who have

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[55] Pressure - FOG
[56] Kikkeboe - KSB
[57] Lightwork - KSB
[58] No Mannerz 2.0 - FOG
[59] Karma - KSB
[60] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020, hip-hop Booker 4-06-2020
[61] Author's interview with youthworker from Oud-West 16-06-202.
[62] Author's interview with youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost 6-08-2020

died and family members of drill rappers, and more institutionalized, it forms part of the marketing strategy.[63]

Beef is a good way to create the traction needed to become popular online, to solidify your own authenticity and settle disrespect or an argument and to strengthen the violent imaginary created.[64] Challenging others and discrediting their reputation, Stuart (2020:131) argues, may raise your own. The challenging and discrediting of the opps done in various ways.

First of all, They defy the performance of toughness by calling that performance fake. They state that the opps never show up, "you don't show up when I connect you"[65] or show up in secret "do not come in secret, in order to return"[66]. They are accused of backing away from confrontations and running from a potential encounter. "... hid in flats.. [...] your whole team did the dash"[67] and they are accused of talking about being involved in drugs but not doing anything "those men talk about bricks but they slay nothing"[68]

Secondly, they are said to link - make music with or get back up from - other groups for support, "they link with other gangs in the hope for back up"[69] as they are not able to defend themselves on their own, and thus not adhere to the principle of toughness.

Thirdly, they accuse the opps of not adhering to the code of the street of staying silent when interrogated by the police (not snitch) and remaining in an antagonistic relation with the police. They do this by calling the opps snitches in their own lyrics "those men talk a lot with the police"[70] and by showing proof of opps talking to the police by sharing official police statements on their social media accounts.

Fourthly, they defy the claims on violent events that the opps discuss in their lyrics. This is mostly done on social media. When the opps rap about certain events in the lyrics that happened in an encounter with the rapper's group, for example when someone got hit or stabbed, the rappers refute the authenticity of this event by claiming that it was a sneaky attack, it was one person against a large group or that the opps are portraying the event differently than how it actually went. An example of this in the lyrics is "that I ran is no more than a rumour" [71]

These tie in with the way that rappers bring down the authenticity and toughness of the opps, in both the lyrics and on social media, by claiming that the opps only act the way they do online. They accuse them of doing it for the fame on internet through lines such as "Snapchatgang"[72] and They come here, post

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[63] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020, Author's interview with youthworker from Oud-West 16-06-2020
[64] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020
[65] Kikkeboe 1.0 - KSB
[66] Pressure - FOG
[67] Karma - KSB, Dashing refers to running (Soortkill, 2017:65)
[68] TMRW - Lelyland Spartans
[69] Get back - KSB
[70] Karma - KSB
[71] GetBack - FOG
[72] Lightwork - KSB

a snap, and drive away"[73] "They step and go and talk on the gram"[74] or that they only talk about it but don't do something and that their performances of toughness are just 'chitchat', or lies. "I hear those words, but don't see deeds"[75]

This last questioning of authenticity is also a way of challenging the opps as it calls upon the opps to engage in the process of dramatic realization, which entails showing proof that their internet persona is a reflection of their real life by engaging in the actions that they say to be doing.

These different ways of questioning the authenticity of the opps is what Stuart (2019:8) identified as the strategy of 'calling bluffs', which is essentially calling the opps liars by challenging them to act in accordance with the things they claim online and in their music, and thus make use of the process of dramatic realization. As a way to respond to this challenge, rappers visit each other's neighborhood's which can be seen as a performance or they respond through a new narrative by stating for example that they do in fact visit the rival neighborhood but the opps weren't there, or they re-narrate about their previous 'victories'.

4.2 Performances

In his analysis of rap lyrics Kubrin (2005:367), has argued that the examination of how something is said has become more important. This paragraph is concerned with unpacking the performance within drill rap. In the theoretical chapter I defined performances as the ways in which the self or a group are presented and antagonistic relationships are displayed, including prototypical images of violence.

This paragraph will show overlap with the description of narratives, as it describes how a certain narrative is brought forward, and with the paragraph on inscriptions, as it shows how inscriptions are used as part of a larger performance as well. In practice, this paragraph delves into what can be seen in the videoclips and in the social media content of drill rappers. The themes that came forward when looking at the way that the different identified values of street code are presented in the performance within drill rap are the process of mystification, the performance of represent and the visualization of an antagonistic relation with the police and rival groups.

4.2.1 Mystifying the performance

The first element of the performance, that has a very visual character is the repetitive use of facemasks in the videos. Here the rappers make use of the process of mystification, as described in the previous chapter, in which the facemasks separates the rapper from their audience through this it makes it easier to maintain a certain tough performance, as the audience do in some cases not know who is behind the mask. The

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[73] Lightwork - KSB
[74] On the Spot - 73dePijp
[75] Pressure - FOG

created distance between performer and observer, makes it less easy to "check" the authenticity of the performer.

The facemask, or balaclava, also more directly adheres to the image of toughness, as it may reference involvement in criminal activities for which this face cover is often used. According to my respondents the facemasks mostly serve two functions; in a large part it is part of the performance and image. In the US some rappers put on a facemask when performing on stage.[76] This can be seen back in the video's where some rappers can be distinguished by their facemask. Secondly, it can serve to anonymize themselves as a protection from the police and opps. Social media have increased the risk of recognition. [77] Exposing the identity of masked drill rappers, have become a strategy used by groups in their beefs and by secondary accounts to gain views.

4.2.2 Performing represent

Representing the neighborhood also finds its way into the performance. Represent in the narratives, is a form of direct performance, represent in the performance, is more indirect. Indirect performance of represent is done through showing images of certain identifiable places in the neighborhood. KSB often records their videos in front of the Kikkenstein flat and other groups portray metro stations, or other well-known places that are linked to the neighborhood ór that of their opps. Through this, they show claims of dominance of these areas ánd they consolidate the idea that they are living the life they are rapping about. As rappers claim to represent a certain space or neighborhood, trespassing on territory of a rival gang, is also a form of performative provocative action as explained by a respondent.[78] According to Urbanik & Haggerty (2018:14) transgressing into a rival neighborhood is "an act designed to spark confrontation, intimidate rivals and enhance the intruder's reputation for being tough and fearless"(Urbanik & Haggerty, 2018:14). Dutch rappers visualize by filming themselves riding through the rival neighborhood, sometimes calling it a 'dead block', claiming that nobody from the other group is there. This trespassing, as Van Hellemont (2012:171) states, can not only take a physical form, but can also be done online, when commenting negatively on a group photo or other footage of the rival group.

The performance of this represent is extremely local, according to a youth worker from Amsterdam Zuidoost it is one block against the other. Through the constant reification of neighborhood boundaries or even postal codes sections in the performance, these boundaries may be consolidated. According to the

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[76] Author's interview with highschool teacher from Amsterdam West 10-04-2020, Author's interview with youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost 6-08-2020

[77] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020, Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam Oost 5-06-2020

[78] Author's interview with highschool teacher from Amsterdam West 10-04-2020

same youthworker this may inhibit mobility "youth cannot move, they are trapped in their own postal code [...] when they move only a block they find themselves in rival territory. If you need to move outside that postal code, you can be in danger" At the same time as drill is extremely local; it comes to existence within neighborhood sections and some social media content is produced from one's own room, it is also very global, as videoclips transgress national boundaries across the globe. Connected to representing the neighborhood are the performance of antagonistic relations. When disrespected, a youth worker explains this also inflicts on the identity of the neighborhood (source). As Howell et al. 2019:127) state, antagonism both to another neighborhood or a rival group and towards the police form an indicator of the performance of toughness. These two will be explained in the next two paragraphs.

4.2.3 Antagonistic relations with the police

Antagonism or a hostile attitude towards the police as an institution, is used performative to indicate toughness. The police are also used as a figurant in the rapper's performance of a tough identity. In the performance of this tough identity, and as proof of the 'criminal acts' that the rappers committed, they draw on footage of encounters with the police both in the videoclips and on Instagram or Snapchat. In the videos news items about offline incidents are used[79], or videoclips open with a police arrestation.[80] In social media footage I have seen, the police list the criminal acts that the rappers are suspected of or charged for, on camera to which the rapper in question comments with "and supposedly we're doing nothing".

I furthermore, witnessed several rappers showing proof of having served time in jail by showing the court orders or bag tags on their social media. According to different respondents, arrests, jail time and an antagonistic relationship with the police work status strengthening.[81] The rappers often share references to people of their group who are in jail, in some instances even, rappers are performing from jail through a recording of a phone call.

That the performance of an antagonistic relation with the authorities is not always without risk, was found out by 73dePijp when they were accused of faking a ban on their album last January. They did this through showing an official looking letter from the police on their social media account, but the ban was denied by both the police and the government, the person who had send the letter, was supposedly not working there (3voor12, 2020). However, an incident like this does create a lot of traction and subsequent popularity.

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[79] On the Spot - 24
[80] De pijp - 73 de Pijp.
[81] Author's interview with youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost 6-08-2020, Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020, Author's interview with youthworker from Oud-West 16-06-2020

4.2.4 Beef as an performance

As mentioned above, rappers enact their beef with other groups, and their representation with the own group by visiting each other's neighborhoods. To defy the toughness and willingness to use violence of their opponents via performance, drill rappers make use of another strategy identified by Stuart (2019:9) namely 'catching lacking'. The phrase 'catching lacking' refers to someone being caught not adhering to the violent person they claim to be, not standing up for themselves, or failing to engage in the process of dramatic realization. In an online context, this entails the distribution of videos of someone getting beaten up or running away from an encounter, and thus not standing up for themselves. Everything you do offline can be caught on camera, doing something which is not considered tough, which does not fit into your idealized performance, which does not adhere to code of the street, and this is brought to the internet. These videos may incite offline retaliations, which may be filmed in return and uploaded again on the internet. It has become more difficult to keep things that don't fit in with the performance away from the viewer, and that is what you want in an idealized performance. In this sense your offline behaviour moves online. Catching someone lacking becomes a goal in itself, violence is committed in order to post it online and thus rappers make use of performance crime to construct the violent imaginary. As a way to dispute catched lacking, rappers may state the people catched lacking weren't real members of the group, or acknowledging the moment but belittling the attempt by saying it was sneaky, or doesn't count'. In response the opps may label these counterreaction as bluff (and thus engage in the strategy of calling bluffs) and it may continue back and forth in a spurr of messages posted

If your failure can be caught on camera, so can your success, and can be re-visited and helps the construction of a violent imaginary. Dus eigenlijk al deze dingen maken proving of authenticity easier maar het challengen ervan ook. Just as re-narrating events in their narratives, they can also use old footage to re-do their performance.

They can not only make use of the activity that they're doing in the moment to prove their authenticity, for example riding through a rival neighborhood, but if they have previous content of them doing that, they can share it and show that they have been doing that as well. Thus on the one hand social media enables rappers to construct a violent imaginary but on the other hand, these exact tools also form a potential for 'opps' to question that authenticity and violent imaginary ath the same time. The amount of counterproof necessary to refute such a doubt to your authenticity has become higher. This is because, As I highlighted in the theoretical chapter, social media has changed the way a violent imaginary can be constructed and performed by disrupting the key impression management that rappers normally try to uphold. Rappers repetitively posted videos of filming a music video or hanging out with a large group of

friends. These often entailed posting photos that had been posted before or had been recorded or taken in earlier instances. This makes their performance more consistent.

As mentioned earlier consistent posting is important on Social Media and drill rappers know how to do this. Apart from the fact that through consistent posting the algorithm will highlight the music and posts of rappers, this consistency also consolidates their authenticity (Stuart, 2020:80). This ties in with the idea of idealization, in which they want to convey a message that this is their day to day life. Through consistent and repetitive posting, they can convey to their audience that they are in the street at the moment, while this might not be the case.

Apart from visiting each other's neighborhood and catching eachother lacking, another way in which rivals challenge each other through their performances can be found in disrespecting them through for example releasing a song on a specific date, which includes a reference to the name of the rival group, or to the date of death of someone, or with a specific name, or filmclips appearing to be celebration the death of an opp.

4.3 Inscriptions

Inscriptions form the more permanent components of performances and are the images that visually represent antagonisms, or other values of the street code. They are sometimes also referred to as scripted objects when referring to a material object with a symbolic meaning. The inscriptions in drill rap videos are used to communicate toughness, willingness to use violence, material wealth and local representation.

4.3.1 Weapons as metaphor for a willingness to use violence

Weapons play an illustrative role in the performance of the willingness to use violence. Due to its direct relation to violence - you can use a weapon to do harm - it is a rather effective one. Portrayal of weapons as a symbol, or scripted object occurs in two ways. First of all, by using real or fake weapons as props in the videos. Rappers can be found waving around knives and sometimes showing guns within their videos. Although I've heard and seen proof of other rappers extensively showing their weapons in Instagram lives and the fact that the rap videos I analysed did include weapon portrayal, I did not encounter any 'proof' of them in the social media activity of youth while I was observing it. I also found that earlier video's showed more weapons, whereas later videos had references to weapons in another way. This brings us to the second way of portraying weapons namely through hand gestures in which rappers mimik weapons and the use of them by shooting a fictive gun or flashing a knife at an opponent.

According to my respondents, the possession and portrayal weapons is motivated by several things that are tightly connected. On one hand it is motivated by an urge to act cool or tough, and thus motivated by peer pressure "everyone has one and if I don't carry one I am a chingboy [little boy, pussy]". So because

you have to, because everyone does it, because it's a hype, you have to do it too".[82] On the other hand it could be motivated by fear, I might be in danger so I carry a knife. This might, as seen by a respondent, create an arms race, in which more and more youth start carrying a weapon. [83] When asked about whether the possession of knives has increased, the youth worker from Oud-West answers that waving around weapons to this extent is something new, and there must be more youth having one when only listening to the amount of times it's a topic of conversation.[84] This image was supported in the conversation I had with someone from the municipality of Amsterdam.[85]

4.3.2 Represent in Inscriptions

Also represent is visualized through inscriptions. First of all, through the indirect performance of hand signs that refer to a certain postal code or to a group name and thus reference an alliance to a certain group or the representation of a certain neighborhood. Secondly, although part of the larger performance of represent, through showing photos of certain places from the neighborhood in social media posts and in the music videos. In the latter the location itself could be seen as an inscriptions. Thirdly, I want to highlight a relatively new form of direct performance of represent in inscriptions, namely through the use of location stickers on Snapchat. This feature enables you to add a sticker with the location where the photo or film clip you are sharing was taken, such as the example in image.

Example of a Location Sticker

[82] Author's interview with counselor and intern teacher highschool Rotterdam 22-06-2020
[83] Author's interview with youth worker Amsterdam Zuidoost 06-08-2020
[84] Author's interview with youth worker from Oud-West 16-06-2020
[85] Author's interview with researcher municipality of Amsterdam 9-06-2020

4.3.3 Using inscriptions in challenging rivals

In this subparagraph I want to discuss the way that inscriptions are used to question the image of toughness of the opps, by looking at the third strategy that Stuart (2019:8) identified, which is called cross referencing. With cross referencing Stuart refers to the process of calling attention to certain compromising information of rivals that would otherwise go unnoticed, in order to show the falseness of online claims of toughness. They typically do so by making fun of it. I argue that this information may not be an inscription on itself, but when used in this way takes the form of an inscription. Over the course of my research, various old videos of youth participating in rather innocent community videos, were shared by their opps, both to expose their face, but also to defer their tough character. The idea of exposing rappers by showing them baitface, without face cover, which is done by various secondary Youtube accounts as the ones discussed in Chapter Three, could also be seen as a form of cross-referencing, as they draw attention to already existing photos on the internet. This could possibly be a way to demystify the persona of the rapper and give insight into their non-drill related activities such as to which school they go to. In other instances youth drew attention to their opps doing jobs that did not fit into their violent persona such as modeling, older music made with different texts and rhythms, or they published conversations in which their opps seem to praise their music or at least speak on friendly terms.

Apart from drawing attention to already existing information, I would like to add a subcategory to the practice of this kind of challenge, namely the creation of memes, or the sharing of already created memes, in order to ridicule the opps. This varies from photoshopping long woman's hair on a rappers photo, a gif image of people happily dancing to a songline referring to the stabbing of an opp "x got chinged in his head", or a rapper being accused of acting tough when linking with other groups but acting scared when alone (see image below).
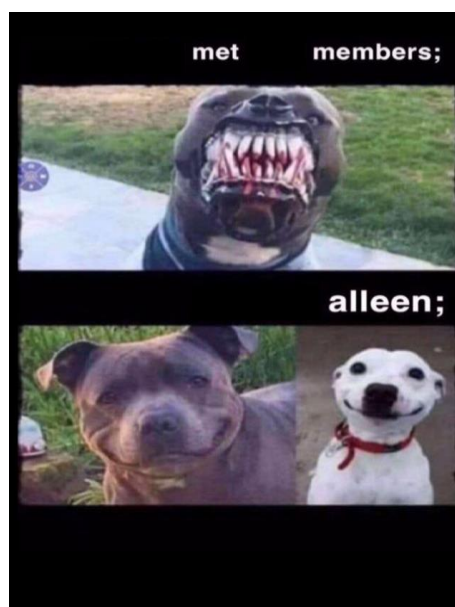
This strategy of challenging is exclusively a strategy which is done on social media. Both calling bluffs, and catching lacking are also done through the music videos, but cross-referencing is exclusively done on social media. This type of challenge is enabled by the process of context collapse, where one performance is spread to a large audience. Rappers cannot control who sees what and therefore footage made in other times or situations of their life will find its way into the spaces where they try and construct the violent imaginary. Furthermore, because the audience is large, they also put more pressure on the rappers, as more people view and assess the content. Through secondary pages re-post comprising footage, audience comment on this, this increases the pressure. This idea was discussed in the previous paragraph where secondary pages re-post the content of rappers and audiences' comments and the rappers gather a large amount of "followers' online, who will all view and assess their content. When responding to cross referencing I observed that rappers often do not respond at all or share similar material.

4.4 The online -offline nexus

In the previous three paragraphs I have unpacked the way that narratives, performances and inscriptions are used to construct a violent imaginary by presenting an identity of toughness, willingness to use violence, material wealth and neighborhood representation in the music videos and on social media. A question that often surfaced while examining and discussing the way that this is done was whether what we look at forms in part a lived reality, or solely a careful construction or imaginary, that is intended to come off as a reality. The line between what a rapper says and what is supposed to be true, fades easily and often (De Roest, 2017:23). Studying the construction of the violent imaginary we are not that much concerned with whether something really happened, but with the way that events are presented and used to construct a reality. According to a youth worker from Amsterdam Zuid-Oost [86]rappers make a conscious decision about what to show the outside world, even though the information they share, showing weapons and money may at times be incriminating. The majority of my respondents pointed out the exaggeration and performative character of online, as the actual amount of offline confrontations is much lower. But as multiple respondents have argued, due to the repetitive portrayal of weapons and a violent image in clips and on social media, youth will come to see it as normal, or even profile like this.

However, at times, such constructions may still have very severe reallife and offline consequences. This supposed link between online activity and offline violence resembles older offline performances of the code of the street in regard to disrespect. When someone is disrespected, even only mildly, this threatens to undermine a person's status and reputation, and therefore according to the code, provokes, justifies and

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[86] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam Zuidoost 6-08-2020

even obliges a violent response as retaliation. (Anderson, 1999:165, Kubrin, 2005:373, Kurtenbach & Rauf, 2019:25, Howell et al., 2019:137).

In the previous paragraphs I have already discussed the ways that online is used to portray a supposedly offline life, but this paragraph is concerned with the online-offline nexus within drill, and in particular the instances when this online construction translates into offline encounters and vice versa, and thus examines the consequences of this construction.

4.4.1 The incident in Scheveningen: on the intersection of online-offline

I want to highlight the online and offline nexus by examining the deathly stabbing in Scheveningen this thesis opened with, and in particular the different types of content this event was used in.

The beef between 24 and 73depijp had already been going on for a considerable amount of time, which has been made apparent through the use of performances: with occasional visitations between the two groups which were recorded and posted on social media, inscriptions; by either making or re-sharing memes about one side or the other and narratives, which have mainly centered around accusations back and forth about the toughness and willingness to use violence of the groups. by claiming certain encounters. A beef like the one between the rap groups from Rotterdam and Amsterdam could be what Urbanik & Haggerty (2018:13) explained as the changed "spatial and interpersonal dynamics of contact among rival groups", as through social media they could prolong this beef without being physically present, encountering each other on a day to day basis. Put pressure from both Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

Over the days leading up to the event, messaging between the groups involved intensified. A rapper from 24 openly asked to "settle things once and for all" and meet at a location in between Amsterdam and Rotterdam. On the day before the fatal stabbing his group and a group affiliated to 73de Pijp had two encounters. The first one, was a rather friendly looking meeting of the groups on the Scheveningen boulevard which was recorded and posted. The second one was a recorded video in which one of the rappers of the group was 'caught lacking' in a video in which he was being beaten up accompanied by the text "this is what happens if you link with 73dePijp. The attacked rapper later responded with a photo and statement that he did end up stealing a chain-necklace of one of the boys, and thus in with that defied the validity of the catching lacking attempt. That night a rapper from 73dePijp shared that he would be at the coast the next day with his location on and that nobody would hurt him.

On that Monday he shared proof of his location on Snapchat being on. Later that day it came to a confrontation between members of both 24 and 73dePijp. This encounter led to the death of a 19 year old boy from Rotterdam. That night videos and memes circulated of the "celebration" of a death of this boy affiliated to rap group 24. Other people in the audience, in turn, questioned the 'authenticity' of the death,

as they say due to the fact that he was not an official member of 24 it did not count. The supporters of 73dePijp in reverse shared proof that he was in fact affiliated to the opp group.

An event like this is often incorporated in the narrative of the group who committed the act, as we saw when unpacking the narratives in the previous chapter. They will hold it against their rivals in their lyrics and on social media, and call upon them to act accordingly, to respond. This can also be seen in this case. 73dePijp just released a new video called "De Pier", referring to the place in Scheveningen where the incident happened, they released it on the 24th of October, which could be seen as another disrespect towards 24. Furthermore, the music video is interwoven with short shots of the location itself, news journals, screenshots of the social media updates of someone from 24 preceding the incident and even contains footage of the incident itself. Re-narrations like these This may provoke new violence in the form of retaliation or at least a counter response, which may move offline again. People become entangled in beef.

4.4.2 Entanglement in drill

Social media have made it more difficult for beef to de-escalate, because it changed the temporal and spatial dynamics (Stuart, 2020:140). In the past you could relatively easy get out without losing face because everybody could have their own interpretation, the youthworker from Amsterdam-Zuidoost explains, but now it is being caught on film as proof and "they can keep it in your face, asking you what you are going to do about it"[87] It becomes more permanent and when deleted from a personal account, but still present on another account, can be re-visited and re-shared. Furthermore, Stuart (2020:114), a confrontation in the past required physical presence. Now with social media, status can be derived and challenged city-wide, nation wide or even global wide, largely increasing the possibilities for this same status to be challenged. In the previous paragraphs I have already outlined how rappers rely on different responses to specific types of challenges. Not reacting to a form of disrespect, another respondent explains, portrays you as weak and inflicts on your status. To keep up your violent imaginary, and restore their authenticity, rappers will therefore have to react.

It are the above described processes, which have led to an entanglement and investment of drill rap groups in beef that proves very difficult to get out of. Drill enables many drillers to make a difference in their lives, move away from doing certain stuff, to get fame and recognition, but as the youthworker from Amsterdam Zuid[88]points out, the flip side of the coin is that in drill rap if you say something, you have to do it. The created violent online persona carries the implication that to remain being seen as authentic, drillers have to commit to some sort of offline behaviour especially when trying to refute a challenge to

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[87] 6-08-2020
[88] 1-05-2020

their authenticity. They have to engage in the process of dramatic realization, in order to re-assert their status and authenticity.

This creates a field of tension in which on the one hand rappers earn money and status by capitalizing on a violent persona through constructing a violent imaginary, but on the other hand by capitalizing on this and to convince the audience of the authenticity of this violent imaginary, they have to put their words into action. In this cyclical connection, or loop, between online and offline spaces, rappers convert offline experiences into content that they distribute on social media and their online activity may impact their offline experience again.[89] This offline outplay is recognised by respondents. As phrased by a respondent from a High School in Rotterdam[90] "At some point they feel the pressure to put what they're rapping to action. A student of mine said literally "you know madame, I have to be stabbed this year or I have to stab someone, it has to happen this year" I'm not going to say this is solely to drill but [..] you have to do what you say". In addition, someone else mentioned, "the more it is watched online, the more views it gets, the more offline boys will go and act this way. Rappers will think, we have to be cooler, we have to do crazier stuff"[91].

Bit by bit, rappers can get entangled in this loop, it becomes difficult to get out and may have very severe implications. As Stuart (2020:127) puts it, "drillers sometimes pay a lethal price for success in the attention economy". Their increased fame increases the chances of getting entangled in beef, because the pressure and stakes are higher due to a wide audience and it is profitable for other people to fight with them for views. Deciding to react in a different way after someone of your group was fatally stabbed is incredibly difficult and for youth it may be impossible to go back.[92] A respondent from Zuid-Oost describes this dilemma: "Sad example, we had two groups against each other, and essentially they did not really want to, but they couldn't go back, nobody could say 'I'll leave then, or I don't do it. I saw that, that wasn't an option anymore. I saw the dilemma they were in. They stir each other up, they are pitted against each other and that expresses itself in gigantic excesses".[93]

4.5 A separate world

What has come into existence is a separate world in which these violent imaginaries are constructed, distributed and reinforced outside of the supervision and influence of adults, sometimes even outside of their understanding. A youth worker explains; "It's a whole system that they have locked up away from their parents, aunts and uncles. Of course this is typical for youth but nowadays the world of youth is 80%

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[89] Author's interview with DJ 10-05-2020, 13-05-2020
[90] Author's interview with Counselor and Intern Teacher Highschool Rotterdam 22-06-2020
[91] Author's interview with highschool teacher from Amsterdam West 10-04-2020
[92] Author's interview with youthworker from Oud-West 16-06-2020
[93] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam Zuid-Oost 06-08-2020

online, 20% outside, offline"[94]. It has become difficult to access this world and parents don't always know the potential dangers of social media, he continues. According to him, people don't understand the amount of peer pressure on the youth. "Teachers choose for old-school solutions, sitting round the table talking about it. That is not possible with the pressure of such a gigantic following outside, putting way more pressure, they don't know the dynamic of street culture and the mechanisms. Then I step in, I force them to separate, even whisper in their ears to follow, 'I am pushing you away, walk with me'. Then it wasn't their fault, then they couldn't do something about it." because he intervened, the honor was kept.[95]

Conclusion and discussion

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[94] Author's interview with youth worker from Amsterdam Zuidoost 6-08-2020
[95] Author's interview with youthworker from Amsterdam Zuidoost 6-08-2020

In our current world, social media is more important than ever, forming a central aspect of the establishing of the drill scene in the Netherlands. It forms the platform through which youth succeed in constructing, performing and reinforcing a violent imaginary. They do so by making use of their lyrics, music videos and social media accounts on Youtube, Snapchat and Instagram. This results in a situation where on the one hand rappers earn success in terms of money and status by capitalizing on this violent persona, but on the other hand, if they want to maintain this success, have to put their words into action and become entangled in a cat-and-mouse game of online and offline challenging of rivals.

By means of the preceding chapters this thesis aimed to formulate an answer to the question *"How is a violent imaginary constructed, performed and reinforced within the mutually constitutive spaces of the physical street and online social media platforms in Dutch drill rap since 2019?"*

In order to answer the research question, this thesis firstly provided an outline of the main characteristics of drill and the social media context in which it came into existence. Subsequently, three components of the concept of violent imaginaries (Schröder & Schmidt, 2001) , namely narratives, performances and inscriptions have been unpacked with the help of theory on the street code (Kubrin, 2005; Kurtenbach et al. 2019) and performance theory (Goffman, 1959). In addition, with the help of Stuart (2020)'s identification of different types of challenging between rival groups, the nexus between 'online' social media platforms and the 'offline' street was further explored.

Conclusion

Drill is a subgenre within hip-hop, or trap more specifically, that is characterized by its distinctive characteristics in the form of the beat, explicitness of the language, and imagery. It has gained more popularity, among its particular young age group, in the Netherlands around the summer of 2019.

Different than in other types of rap, social media plays an essential role. It is relatively 'easy' to become a drill rapper, as you can bypass existing structures that once governed the music industry. Drill rappers have found a way to capitalize on a violent persona and know how to make use of social media by working along the algorithms that pertain to social media that reward shocking content and consistency. They create traction and popularity through the construction of a violent imaginary. This violent imaginary takes shape through their narratives, performances and inscriptions. These narratives, performances and inscriptions in turn are informed by different elements of the street code through which drill rappers stress their authenticity and gain respect. This was done through building upon images of toughness and a willingness to use violence, strengthened by neighborhood representation. An important component of these street code values are antagonistic relations or the beef that drill rappers have with other groups. Through questioning the authenticity of their opps by sharing comprising online content, calling their image

of toughness fake and by recording offline encounters, drill rappers not only undermine the construction of a violent imaginary of their opponents, but at the same time strengthen their own.

Social media has impacted the dynamics within this construction intensively. By facilitating context collapse, the construction of this violent imaginary is shared to a broad audience. Furthermore, it easier to exaggerate about your toughness or willingness to use violence, which is more prone to be tested by the broadened audience. Subsequently, social media enhances the possibilities to record, store and (re-) distribute the instances when rappers fail to live up to their violent construction. This online content may concentrate around online spaces but, when rappers are actively challenged to re-assert their authenticity, they will engage in the process of dramatic realization, and online content may spill into offline spaces.

To answer the main research question, drill rappers construct a violent imaginary by, interchangeably building upon the values of toughness, willingness to use violence and neighborhood representation, to direct their impression management. In doing so, they deliberately choose to highlight certain information while hiding other. This violent imaginary is then repetitively performed in the lyrics, clips and in social media content, in interaction with both rivals and with the audience. It is through this repetitive performance, instigated by social media technicalities, that this violent imaginary is being reinforced. The down side of this process is that, by making this violent imaginary come across as authentic, drill rappers are challenged to put their words into action, and through this, these imaginaries may not stay imaginaries, but might have real-life offline consequences.

Discussion and reflection

This thesis aimed, through an analysis of an online construction of a violent imaginary and its online-offline nexus, to contribute to the increasing body of literature on the relation between social media and street culture. This online portrayal is, most possibly, not a direct reflection of their offline lives, but as Lane (2018) and Stuart (2020) had mentioned, offers dynamics of its own and thus the construction of a violent imaginary, and street culture in genera, should be seen in the light of these mutually constitutive spaces. Social media impacts street culture, but in turn street culture influences the shape that its reflection on social media may take. This thesis has shown the potential for offline urban theories to be used in a digital context.

In this research I have examined drill from an outside perspective, by looking at the construction that rappers portray to the outside world. Equipped with a better understanding of the processes within this construction, further research could explore the motivations for making specific content and the way this content resonates among youth itself.

To research the processes at play I have deliberately focussed on the drill rap groups that were most at the forefront within the societal debate around drill rap and therefore, where the processes were most

visible. However, it is important to realise that the drill rap scene consists of a variety of groups and gradations, and these processes may take on a different shape when examining more 'invisible' rap groups. Furthermore, the central role that antagonistic relations play within their overall presentation may differ.

This research took a theoretical angle in examining drill rap, however, in my conversations with respondents, relevant information in regard to the practical and policy side of repeatedly came up. In the conversations with youth workers, and others, one of the main topics brought up by the respondents themselves was the current policy addressing drill rap. The main takeaway was the feeling that, in part due to the fast developments on social media, they are always too late. They argue that the current policies do not entail structural changes or even, in the case of forbidding certain film locations, add to the violent imaginary as this fuels into the agonistic relation with the police. According to the people I have spoken to, youth should be offered psychological help after an incident, as involving the police keeps them in the cycle of violent imaginary construction. Furthermore they state that people with cultural sensitive knowledge should be put in the positions where decisions are made, as the gap between policy and practice is often too large in their experience. The best pathway according to almost all respondents, lies within a reform out of the drill scene itself. They predict that drill will become a permanent subgenre in hiphop and with this incorporation the topics spoken about might change and become less raw and violent.

The role of the processes I have laid bare and explained in this research are likely to become increasingly important as social media becomes a bigger part of street culture. In time, social media might become more important than the street itself. Going forward, it is important acknowledge these processes.

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Appendix 1: List of Videos

FOG (FullyopGevaar)
No Hook (3-07-2018)
Pressure (1-08-2019)
No Mannerz 2.0 (14-09-2019)
Get Back (16-05-2020)

KSB (KikkensteinBende)
Kikkeboek 1.0 (8-01-2019)
Karma (11-04-2019)
Whole Lotta Gang (3-04-2020)
Vision (4-06-2020)
Lightwork (22-06-2020
NoGetBack (3-09-2020)

73dePijp
De Pijp (14-01-2019)
Impact (20-06-2019)
On the Spot (21-04-2020)
Lessons (feat. 3robi) (8-06-2020)
De Pier (24-10-2020) * not incorporated in the analysis but mentioned in the thesis

Lelyland Spartans
TMRW (08-04-2019)
Wat ga je doen (31-07-2019)
F*ck (73) (13-12-2019)
SSH (10-03-2020)

24 (Qlas & Blacka)
Verlof (21-06-2019)
Shooter (16-09-2019)
On the Spot - leaders of drill (18-02-2020)

Appendix 2: List of Interviews

Date	Respondent	Category of Conversation
10 - 04 - 2020	High School Teacher Amsterdam	Interview
01 - 05 - 2020	Youth Worker Amsterdam Zuid	Interview
10 - 05 - 2020 & 13 - 05 - 2020	DJ	Interview
04 - 06 - 2020	Hip-hop Artist Booker	Interview
05 - 06 - 2020	Youth Worker Amsterdam-Oost	Interview
09 - 06 - 2020	Researcher Municipality of Amsterdam	Interview
11 - 06 - 2020	Youth Worker Amsterdam Nieuw-West	Interview
16 - 06 - 2020	Youth Worker Amsterdam Oud-West	Interview
22 - 06 - 2020	Counselor and Intern Teacher Highschool Rotterdam	Duo Interview
06 - 08 - 2020	Youth Worker Amsterdam-Zuidoost	Interview