

2013

## Criminological Theory as Represented in Music Lyrics

Arielle Hollman  
*Florida Southern College*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/papersandpubs>



Part of the [Criminology Commons](#), [Music Commons](#), and the [Theory, Knowledge and Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hollman, Arielle (2013) "Criminological Theory as Represented in Music Lyrics," *Papers & Publications: Interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research*: Vol. 2 , Article 8.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/papersandpubs/vol2/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (CURCA) at Nighthawks Open Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Papers & Publications: Interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research by an authorized editor of Nighthawks Open Institutional Repository.

Criminological theory is a subject that is most associated with academics and lawmakers. Those who study criminological theory would expect to find these theories in books or academic journals. Surprisingly enough, such theories can also be found in one of the oldest and most common forms of expression: music. Unlike most traditional sources of theory, music is widely available and appeals to a large and diverse audience. A variety of criminological theories, including rational choice, social learning, subculture, and anomie-strain, can be found in the lyrics of rap music. These perspectives as expressed in rap may be useful in teaching criminological theory because musicians are generally more recognizable than theorists. Furthermore, the presence of theory in music lyrics may demonstrate the relevance of these theories in modern times.

### **Rational Choice Theory**

Rational choice theory has its roots in the Classical School of criminology (Williams & McShane, 2010). The Classical School arose in the eighteenth century and is commonly associated with Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham. Beccaria believed that laws and justice should be based on rationality (Tierney, 2009). In order to deter crime, Beccaria proposed that punishment should be swift, certain, and proportionate to the crime. If the punishment failed to be swift, certain, or proportionate, deterrence would be ineffective. Bentham emphasized the rationality of man and suggested that men operate according to the “pleasure-pain” principle (Williams & McShane, 2010, p. 18). According to this principle, all actions are performed with the intention of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. When applied to criminal behavior, the perspectives of Beccaria and Bentham suggest that crime is a rational choice of free will.

The idea of a rational offender is central to rational choice theory, which suggests that crime occurs when the benefits of criminal activity outweigh the perceived costs (Williams & McShane, 2010). Associated with this theory are Derek Cornish and Ronald Clarke, who examined the various factors that potential offenders must consider when deciding whether or not to commit a crime (Cornish & Clarke, 1987). The factors are so numerous that Cornish and Clarke referred to them as a “constellation of opportunities, costs, and benefits.” Cornish and Clarke proposed that different types of crime may be more appealing in certain situations because the perceived costs and benefits of crime vary from one situation to another (as cited in Nagin & Paternoster, 1993).

Raymond Paternoster (1989) has also examined rational choice theory. Paternoster conducted a study on adolescents and the factors affecting their decision to commit four types of minor offenses. The offenses included liquor consumption, marijuana use, vandalism, and petty theft. Paternoster found that offenders are “informed decision makers” who actively assess and reassess information when determining whether or not to continue committing an offense. In regards to deterrence, Paternoster found that the severity of punishment had almost no effect on the decision to continue or quit the delinquent behavior. Although Paternoster’s findings are based on adolescents and delinquent behavior, these findings demonstrate the importance of certainty and swiftness of punishment in effective deterrence.

## **Represented in Music Lyrics**

Rational choice theory is represented in the song “In the Ghetto” by Busta Rhymes (2006). In the first verse, Busta Rhymes says “It be good if you flaunt it, we will take it if we want it” (Busta Rhymes, 2006). This line reveals the ease with which the character and his group are able to steal valuable items that they see displayed in their neighborhood. The character in this song is not concerned about the costs of crime, which shows effective deterrence is absent. In the same verse, the results of the cost-benefit analysis conducted by the character and his group are revealed: “And develop our muscle ‘til we sicker with the shine / In the struggle, thus our money come quicker doing crime” (Rhymes, 2006). In these lines, the song’s main character states that the benefits of crime (quickly acquired money) outweigh the costs (which are not even mentioned), especially when skill and influence (“muscle”) have been developed. The character in this song is an informed decision maker that actively decides when and how to offend.

Rational choice is also represented in Jay-Z’s “Never Change” (2001). The chorus, which describes the overall theme of the song, is “(Never, never, never, never change) / I’m still fuckin’ with crime cause crime pays / (I never change) / Out hustling, same clothes for days / (I never change) / I never change, I’m too stuck in my ways, I never change” (Jay-Z, 2001). In this verse, the character not only asserts that the benefits of crime outweigh the risks, but that the rewards are so worthwhile that he will never stop committing crime. The individual in this song has learned that punishment is neither certain or swift (he is able to commit crime for days at a time). As a result, this individual has learned to navigate Cornish and Clarke’s (1987) “constellation of opportunities” and has found the situations in which the benefits of crime outweigh the potential costs.

## **Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theorists suggest that criminal behavior is learned in the same way as any other behavior: through social interactions and the feedback (positive or negative) received from people we value (Williams & McShane, 2010). Differential association and social learning are among the most well known social learning theories.

### **Differential Association**

The theory of differential association was developed as a general explanation for criminal behavior and was used to explain white collar crime (Sutherland, 1940). Differential association states that criminal behavior is learned in the same way as conventional behavior: through association with those who define such behavior favorably, while in isolation from those who define such behavior unfavorably (Sutherland, 1949). The intimacy and frequency of each type of contact are the most important factors in determining whether an individual will view crime as favorable or unfavorable (Sutherland, 1940). The theory also suggests that criminal behavior will only be engaged in if the associates’ attitudes in favor of law violations outweigh their attitudes unfavorable to law violations (Sutherland, 1949). In other words, if an individual’s peers engage in and support crime, the individual will develop a favorable opinion of crime. Once an individual has developed a positive opinion of criminal activity, he/she can easily learn the techniques for committing crime, as well as the situations in which crime can be committed.

## **Social Learning Theory**

Today Ronald Akers is commonly associated with social learning theory, a widely accepted behavioral approach to crime and deviance (Williams & McShane, 2010). Akers' social learning theory is largely based on Sutherland's theory of differential association. Akers, Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, and Radosevich (1979) suggest that the process of learning criminal behavior is a result of conditioning. Again, one is believed to learn to commit crime just as they would learn to do anything else: through social interactions and social feedback. According to social learning theory, positive or negative feedback will condition an individual's opinion of criminal behavior as positive or negative. Once an individual has been conditioned, his/her opinion of crime will be used to determine the expected consequences of future behavior (Akers, 1990). Akers's theory suggests that the decision to commit crime is based on the individual's history of rewards and punishments, patterns of behavior that have developed based on this history, and the perceived consequences of such behavior in a given situation. Rewards and punishments serve as positive and negative reinforcement, which encourage or discourage certain types of behavior. According to Akers, the social environment is the most important source of reinforcement, because deviance is learned through social interaction. As in differential association, a favorable opinion of criminal behavior develops based on the attitudes of an individual's peers and the reinforcement they offer.

## **Represented in Music Lyrics**

The theories of differential association and social learning are represented in Mobb Deep's song "Survival of the Fittest" (1995). One of the artists, Havoc, states,

As long as fiends smoke crack  
I'll be on the block hustlin' counting my stacks  
Five-oh lurkin', no time to get lost in the system  
Niggas usin' fake names to get out quick  
My brother did it and got bagged with two ounces  
...No matter how much loot I get I'm stayin' in the projects, forever  
...my crew's all about loot  
(Mobb Deep, 1995)

The character's primary group, referred to as his "crew," has a favorable opinion of crime. As a result, the character has developed a favorable opinion of crime: he does not condemn his brother for selling drugs, nor does he deny his own criminal behavior. Selling drugs is profitable (i.e. "counting my stacks"), which serves as positive reinforcement. Furthermore, the main character knows that lower class neighborhoods ("the projects") will provide him with a market for his services. The individual in this song has experience selling drugs in this environment and knows the benefits outweigh the risks. The potential consequences of selling drugs include being arrested (negative reinforcement), but this individual has learned how to avoid the police. In case he is caught by the police, the character knows how to avoid long-term incarceration (by providing police with a fake name). The character's behavior is a result of conditioning: a positive opinion of criminal behavior has been learned and reinforced through his social interactions, so the character commits crime.

Social learning theories are also represented in Jay-Z's "Never Change" (2001). A positive opinion of crime is expressed in the lines "We all fish, better teach your folk / Give him money to eat, then next week he's broke" (Jay-Z, 2001). In these lines, the song's character is stating that crime is acceptable and can provide a reliable source of income. As the song continues, Jay-Z describes how the character developed a positive opinion of crime and learned to commit crime from his elders:

Young brother, big city, eight million stories  
Old heads taught me, yung'un, walk softly  
Carry a big clip, that'll get niggas off me  
Keep coke in coffee, keep money smellin' mothy  
Change is cool to cop but more important is lawyer fees  
(Jay-Z, 2001)

Growing up in a large city, the main character in this song valued the relationships he had with his peers (this sentiment is later expressed in the lines: "...that's family...this is crew love"). It is through his association with these individuals that the character developed a positive opinion of crime. As a result of his favorable opinion of crime, this individual learned how to fend for himself in the city (by carrying a firearm), as well as how to hide the drugs he sold and the money he earned (it has been suggested that coffee masks the smell of cocaine and that moth balls mask the smell of money). The individual learned how to successfully commit crime in a large city, which included being prepared for the consequences of his actions (the importance of lawyer fees when arrested). The individual's criminal behavior is a result of learning from criminal peers in an environment containing few definitions unfavorable to law violations.

### **Subculture Theory**

Subculture theories were developed to explain gang delinquency (Williams & McShane, 2010). Of the many subculture theories, it is lower class focal concerns and theories of the subculture of violence that are represented in music.

#### **Lower Class Focal Concerns**

Walter Miller (1958) suggested that a unique subculture exists among member of each social class or group. Miller proposed that each subculture possesses its own set of values, also known as focal concerns. Focal concerns are values of the subculture that require constant interest and involvement by the members (Miller, 1971). Miller (1958) identified six lower class focal concerns: *trouble* (causing problems), *toughness* (masculinity and bravery), *fate* (being "lucky"), *excitement* (living dangerously, thrill seeking), *autonomy* (rejecting authority and depending on oneself), and *smartness* (cunning). Lower class focal concerns may lead to behavior that is completely acceptable among the lower class subculture, yet conflicts with the values of the middle and upper classes in society. When lower class focal concerns conflict with the values of conventional society, crime occurs, though Miller noted that while certain criminal behavior is more common among the lower classes, a majority of lower class behavior is not criminal.

Miller (1958) attributed some lower class juvenile delinquency to the abundance of fatherless homes in lower class neighborhoods. Miller suggested that young men would overcompensate in their efforts to exhibit masculinity and could look to gangs for acceptance. In gangs, lower class focal concerns are heavily emphasized. Emphasis on focal concerns in gang settings may result in criminal behavior.

### **Subculture of Violence**

Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti (1967) suggested that members of a violent subculture generally conform to the culture of which they are a part. Wolfgang (1976) characterized a “subculture of violence” as a culture in which aggression is viewed as an acceptable way of communicating and an effective way of solving problems. In these subcultures, the ability to solve problems through verbal communication is limited. Violence is an expected response to frustration, and this expectation is passed down through generations. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) proposed that a willingness to be violent and a favorable attitude toward violence are learned in these subcultures.

Elijah Anderson (1994) attributes the violent subculture found in many inner city areas to the “code of the streets,” an informal set of principles that evolved from an inability to rely upon law enforcement or the justice system for personal protection. According to Anderson, this code prescribes the means through which individuals can appear willing and able to take care of themselves in the street environment. The code determines behavioral norms in the street environment, as well as the consequences for violating them: the very nature of street norms makes it essential that they are followed in all public places. Central to the code is the idea of respect, which is very unstable in the street environment. Individuals of the street become hyper vigilant to possible social slights because such slights may indicate disrespect and a possible physical threat. To earn or maintain the level of respect that individuals believe they deserve, all prescriptions of the code must be followed, including the proper way to dress and demeanor (especially a willingness to become violent.)

Anderson (1994) states the code may be learned from parents, who possess short tempers due to the long-term frustrations of persistent poverty: children may experience severe physical punishments or verbal punishments for rule-breaking. These parents rarely provide their children with a verbal explanation for their punishment and, as a result, these children learn that violence is the expected and accepted way to respond to problems. As these children grow up, their behavioral schemas are shaped by their bellicose role models. Some children may even be punished if they do not display adequate levels of aggression.

### **As Represented in Music**

Miller’s focal concerns and Wolfgang and Ferracuti’s subculture of violence are represented in Lil’ Flip’s “My Block” (2000). This song is about a lower class neighborhood and its culture. In the chorus, the artist describes a violent neighborhood: “From my block to yo’ block, we stackin’ chips / From yo’ block to my block, we packin’ clips / And if you don’t work, then you don’t eat / I’m tell you like this, it get rough on these streets” (Lil’ Flip, 2000). The artist is referring to the code of this neighborhood, which requires toughness (“stackin’ chips”

refers to poker chips, while “packin’ clips” refers to firearm ammunition) and smartness (the streets are rough, but the artist implies that they can be survived.) The song continues, and the artist describes the normal state of affairs in this neighborhood:

You wanna feel like I feel then go sit on my block  
You might see teenagers, flippin and workin’  
You might see canines, sniffin’ and searchin’  
You might see plastic bags with drugs and stuff  
You might see a whole block full of thugs and stuff  
...Real niggas in the kitchen cuttin’ stuff...  
(Lil’ Flip, 2000)

The artist describes a unique subculture in which drugs and other illegal activities are a part of everyday life. The character in this song attributes his feelings and generally favorable attitude toward crime to the neighborhood’s culture. Later in the song, the character demonstrates his favorable attitude toward violence, as well as the focal concerns toughness, trouble, excitement, and autonomy with the lines “My glock cocked, yo’ block drops / I bust shots, ya’ll call cops, fuck 911 nigga we blaze spots” (Lil’ Flip, 2000). The lack of faith in law enforcement is evident, which supports the assumption that the character is following the code of his streets. In this neighborhood, violence seems to be an expected and acceptable method of solving problems.

Subculture theories are also represented in Wu Tang Clan’s “The City” (1997). A violent subculture is described in the first verse with the line “I took your bad looks for a joke, get your back broke” (Wu Tang Clan, 1997). As Anderson’s (1994) code suggests, this character is hyper sensitive to disrespect and must respond with violence. To the character in the song, violence is an acceptable way of handling some sort of frustration. Furthermore, it is beneficial for this character to use violence to prove his toughness and earn respect.

As the song continues, there are various references to focal concerns. Toughness, autonomy, and excitement are represented: “Warfare’s inevitable, Rebel, I hold several government official / Issue thirty-eight specials, that step through / Like Nat Turner create a spectacle, / I may die in the scuffle, but I’m takin’ forty devils” (Wu Tang Clan, 1997). Autonomy is present throughout the verse as a complete lack of respect for authority (“devil” is another way of saying Satan, which means “accuser”; in this verse, the “accusers” are likely the cops.) Excitement and toughness are present in the last two lines, which express risk taking and daring behavior (a “spectacle” that involves not only the death of the artist, but of 40 cops). Later in the verse, fate is represented in the line “The outcome do or die, Son it’s bound to come” (Wu Tang Clan, 1997). Smartness and trouble are demonstrated in the lines “Wanted dead or alive / Rebel, I escapes across the desert sand / Leavin’ no footprints to trace” (Wu Tang Clan, 1997). The character tells of his ability to commit crime by describing how much authorities want to apprehend him. The character implies that he is too cunning to leave any way for authorities to find him.

## **Anomie Strain Theory**

The theory of anomie was introduced by Emile Durkheim (1893) in the late 1800s (as cited in Williams & McShane, 2010, p.76). Durkheim's theory of anomie was used to describe the breakdown of social norms and expectations within a society and the unregulated (deviant) behavior that would result. According to Durkheim's theory, anomie would occur during times of rapid economic change because social norms would break down and people would not know how to conduct themselves. During periods of anomie, people would not know how to define success and would not know how to go about achieving it. Without social norms to control their behavior, people would be more likely to pursue unlimited personal desires, including committing crime for financial gain (Tierney, 2009). Another possible outcome of anomie was suicide, which would result when individuals were unable to function in a society without social norms or regulations to control their behavior.

### **Anomie Strain**

Robert Merton, well known for his anomie-strain theory, was heavily influenced by Durkheim (Williams & McShane, 2010). Merton (1938) did not believe the cause of anomie was rapid social or economic change, however. According to Merton, anomie was caused by a disconnection between socially emphasized goals and the conventional means of reaching those goals. Merton believed that the ultimate goal in American society was the acquisition of wealth, but he believed there was a limited and regulated number of legitimate ways to achieve that goal. Merton's (1968) theory of anomie-strain suggests that when too much emphasis is placed upon a goal achievable by only a certain number of people, those without access to the legitimate means of success experience anomie. With anomie, people experience strain because they want to achieve the emphasized goal, yet do not possess the legitimate means to do so. Merton (1938) proposed five types of adaptations to anomie to deal with strain: *conforming* (accepting the goal and the legitimate means), *innovation* (accepting the goal, but rejecting the acceptable means), *ritualism* (rejecting the goal and accepting the legitimate means), *retreatism* (rejecting the goal and the legitimate means), and *rebellion* (substituting both the goal and the legitimate means). Merton identified conforming as the most common adaptation, which allows society to remain stable. The remaining adaptations were identified as deviant, with innovation as the most common and rebellion as the least common. Most crime would result from innovation, because the rejection of legitimate means of success would allow for illegitimate means to be utilized. Ritualism was not associated with criminal deviance and would occur when the legitimate means were prized instead of the overall goal. An example of ritualism would be someone working in a low wage, low prospect job (such as a cashier at fast food restaurant), knowing they will never attain wealth, but abiding by the laws and norms in order to keep the little they have. Retreatism would occur when individuals "gave up" on the social goals and means, while rebellion would be rare and would only occur among revolutionaries.

### **Institutional Strain**

Merton's anomie-strain theory has been expanded to a more personal level by Messner and Rosenfeld (Williams & McShane, 2010). Messner and Rosenfeld (2001) suggest that "the American Dream," which consists of the concepts of material success, achievement, and

competitiveness, is heavily emphasized in our society. The American Dream contributes to the “anything goes” mentality, which increases the appeal of criminal behavior. In addition, the American Dream has strengthened the social control of the economy and has weakened other social institutions (family, polity, education). Monetary gain has become the primary goal of our economy: new ways of doing things (innovations) are preferable to established techniques if they prove to be more cost efficient. As a result, the “institutional balance of power” (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2001, p. 61) lies with the economy. Messner and Rosenfeld suggest that the emphasis on the American Dream and the institutional balance of power interact to create a culture of anomie, weakened social controls, and crime.

### **Differential Opportunity Theory**

Differential opportunity theory is an adaptation of Merton’s anomie-strain theory (Williams & McShane, 2010). Richard Cloward (1959) proposed that there was an entire structure of illegitimate opportunities available to those without access to legitimate opportunities. According to Cloward, illegitimate opportunities were just as limited and established as legitimate opportunities and were “differentially available” to those in certain social positions. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) proposed that this illegitimate opportunity structure was utilized in areas with little access to legitimate means of success. When legitimate means of success are blocked, individuals in certain areas can resort to illegitimate means to attain success.

### **Represented in Music**

Anomie theories are represented in Talib Kweli’s “Get By” (2002). The song features numerous artists, each telling of difficulties that may be faced in the struggle to become successful. Jay-Z’s verse includes numerous references to anomie and illegitimate opportunities: “Just to get by / Nigga I sold coke, nigga I pushed lah, / Carried a fo’five, / Claimed I was ready to die. / ...Reality was too much to take so I / Kept my mind fried” (Kweli, 2000). The character described in this verse lived in an area with few legitimate opportunities to acquire wealth, so he resorted to selling drugs and living a dangerous lifestyle in order to survive and be successful by mainstream standards. The last line (“kept my mind fried”) refers to drug use, which is typically a retreatist adaptation. Later in the verse, the character expresses contempt for the retreatist lifestyle with the lines “I’m a poster for what happened seein’ your moms / Doin’ five dollars worth of work just to get a dime” (Kweli, 2000). With legitimate avenues to success limited and a refusal to retreat from societal goals, the character claims his only choices were to “load up these nines or blow up with rhymes” (Kweli, 2000).

The character in this verse expresses his frustration with a social structure that has emphasized certain goals without providing enough legitimate means to attain them: “So pardon my disposition / Why should I listen to a system that never listened to me? / Picture me working McDonald’s. / I’d rather pull a mac on you, / Sorry Ms. Jackson but I’m packin” (Kweli, 2002). The character reveals his method of adaptation to be innovation, which includes utilization of an illegitimate opportunity structure. As evidenced in the song, access to illegitimate opportunities provided the character with the means to attain standard success in a more efficient way than conventional means. The efficiency of innovation explains the character’s scorn for conventional means of making money (working at a fast food restaurant) and his preference for

unconventional means (“I’d rather pull a mac on you,” in which “mac” is a pun on the McDonald’s Big Mac and is used to refer to a firearm). The inefficiency of conventional means may be a result of the American Dream and society’s extreme emphasis on profitable economic practices to attain that dream (Messner and Rosenfeld, 2001).

Anomie-strain and differential opportunity theory are further represented in Lil’ Flip’s “My Block” (2000). The uncertainty and frustration of anomie are expressed by the artist Dante in the lines “Me and my niggas, feelin’ trapped like we in a maze / Misbehave, refuse to be a slave” (Lil’ Flip, 2000). In these lines, the character is acknowledging the strain caused by anomie and is rejecting society’s goals and means. The retreatist adaptation is further supported by Dante’s lines later in the verse: “We high, getting’ drunk, doin’ what we want / Jail can’t change us it only makes us dangerous” (Lil’ Flip, 2000). The character believes if he rejects society’s goals and means, then society’s regulations will not apply to him.

In a later verse, artist Lil’ Flip’s character expresses his preference for illegitimate opportunities with the lines:

Look, I stay on my block  
I get paid on my block  
It ain’t no such thing as being afraid on my block.  
I’m true to my block, I shoot wit my glock  
...Even though I’m a star, I go back to my block.  
(Lil’ Flip, 2000)

The character in this verse knows the opportunities available in his neighborhood and feels comfortable navigating the illegitimate opportunity structure. Although the character has attained mainstream success (presumably through his music), he prefers innovation as a means of making money (he “gets paid” in his neighborhood). Again, the efficiency of innovation makes it preferable to utilization of legitimate means of success.

## **Conclusion**

Theories of criminology are not limited to discussions in academic journals and books. As demonstrated here, criminological theories can be found in the lyrics of rap music. The presence of many decade-old theories in modern music lyrics suggests that the causes of crime may have remained fairly stable over the last century or so. In addition, the presence of criminological theories in music may be useful for drawing attention to the subject of criminology. Law enforcement may be able to use music lyrics as a tool for learning theories or laws, as suggested by Caleb Mason’s article on the Fourth Amendment (2012). Further, as a teaching tool, music lyrics may help students associate and understand theories in context. For whatever purpose it is used, the presence of criminological theory in music lyrics is a subject worthy of further exploration.

## Reference

- Akers, R. L., Krohn, M., Lanza-Kaduce, J., & Radosevich, M. (1979). Social learning and deviant behavior: A specific test of a general theory. *American Sociological Review*, 44(4), 636-655.
- Akers, R. L. (1990). Rational choice, deterrence, and social learning theory in criminology: The path not taken. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 81(3), 653-676.
- Anderson, E. (1994). The code of the streets. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 273(5). Retrieved March 2, 2013, from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/05/the-code-of-the-streets/306601/>
- Cloward, R. A. (1959). Illegitimate means, anomie, and deviant behavior. *American Sociological Review*, 24(2), 164-176.
- Cloward, R. A., & Ohlin, L. E. (1960). *Delinquency and opportunity: A theory of delinquent gangs*. New York: Free Press.
- Cornish, D. B., & Clarke, R. V. (1987). Understanding crime displacement: An application of rational choice theory [Abstract]. *Criminology*, 25(4), 933-948. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-9125.1987.tb00826.x
- Durkheim, E. (1933). *The division of labor in society* (G. Simpson, Trans). New York: Free Press (Original work published 1893).
- Mason, C. E. (2012). Jay-Z's 99 problems, verse 2: A close reading with Fourth Amendment guidance for cops and perps. *St. Louis University Law Journal*, 56(567), 567-586.
- Merton, R. K. (1938). Social structure and anomie. *American Sociological Review*, 3(5), 672-682. doi:10.2307/2084686
- Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure* (Rev. and enlarged ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Messner, S. F., & Rosenfeld, R. (2001). *Crime and the American dream* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Miller, W. B. (1958). Lower-class culture as a generating milieu of gang delinquency. *Journal of Social Issues*, 14(3), 5-19.
- Miller, W. B. (1971). Subculture, social reform and the 'Culture of poverty'. *Human Organization*, 30(2), 111.

Nagin, D. S., & Paternoster, R. (1993). Enduring individual differences and rational choice theories of crime. *Law and Society Review*, 27(3), 467-496.

Paternoster, R. (1989). Decisions to participate in and desist from four types of common delinquency: Deterrence and the rational choice perspective. *Law and Society Review*, 23(1), 7-40.

Sutherland, E. H. (1940). White-collar criminality. *American Sociological Review*, 5(1), 1-12. doi:10.2307/2083937

Sutherland, E. H. (1949). "A theory of white collar crime." *White collar crime: The uncut version* (p. 240-257). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Tierney, J. J. (2009). *Key perspectives in criminology*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Williams, F. P., & McShane, M. D. (2010). *Criminological Theory* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Wolfgang, M.E., & Ferracuti, F. (1967). *The subculture of violence: Towards an integrated theory in criminology*. London: Tavistock.

Wolfgang, M.E. (1976) Freedom and Violence. *Educational Researcher*, 5(5), 7-10.

## Discography

- Busta Rhymes (2006). In the ghetto. On *The big bang* [Online sound recording]. Santa Monica, CA: Interscope. Retrieved June 20, 2011, from <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bustarhymes/intheghetto.html>.
- Jay-Z. (2001). Never change. On *The Blueprint* [Online sound recording]. New York, NY: Roc-A-Fella. Retrieved July 17, 2011, from <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jayz/neverchange.html>.
- Kweli, T. (2002). Get by (remix). [Recorded by Talib Kweli, Mos Def, Kanye West, Jay-Z, & Busta Rhymes]. On *Quality* [Online sound recording]. New York, NY: Rawkus Records. Retrieved June 2, 2011, from <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/talibkweli/getbyremix.html>.
- Lil' Flip. (2000). My block. On *The leprechaun* [Online sound recording]. Sucka Free Records. Retrieved July 15, 2011, from <http://www.lyricstime.com/lil-flip-my-block-lyrics.html>.
- Mobb Deep. (1995). Survival of the fittest. On *The infamous* [Online sound recording]. New York, NY: Loud Records. Retrieved June 3, 2011, from <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/mobbdeep/survivalofthefittest.html>
- Wu Tang Clan. (1997). The city [Recorded by Inspectah Deck]. On *Wu Tang forever* [Online sound recording]. Loud Records. Retrieved June 11, 2011, from <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/wutangclan/thecity.html>