University of Sussex

A University of Sussex PhD thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

LIFE ON ROAD:

Symbolic Struggle & The Munpain

Yusef Bakkali

Thesis submitted for PhD Examination

University of Sussex

May 2017

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signed……………………………………….

Acknowledgements

This thesis came together when, by necessity, I had to turn to my community for support. So for that reason, before anyone else; I would like to thank those who took part in this thesis.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Susie Scott and Rachel Thomson for their supervision during my PhD process. Admittedly I might not have been the easiest student, but both of my supervisors stuck with me and supported me, helping me to believe it was possible. For the same reason I'd like to thank Luke Martell who supervised me as an undergraduate and helped me to apply for my PhD studentship; always a generous friend and mentor.

I'd also like to shout out my friends; Monje, Big Dhil, Matty G, Aaron, Neelam, Sav, Rosa and Ladi, for supporting me through the PhD. We often would talk about issues relating to the thesis, thus some of the formative work is definitely owed to you all.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my mum and my siblings who have supported me in all the ways that they could throughout this process. I suppose the contents and message of the work are in a way dedicated to the futures of my niece and nephews; Raff, Hermione, Adam, Taha and little Khalil, as we all hope that the world you inherit will be better than the one depicted in this thesis; even at a time where that seems increasingly unlikely.

Thesis Summary: *Life On Road: Symbolic Struggle and the Munpain*

This project began back in 2013. It has sought to understand the life worlds and biographies of young urban people engaged with life on road; oscillating between the minutia of their day to day lives and broader structural happenings connected with the continued onslaught of neo-liberalism. The use of the term road is a UK specific expression which is more broadly understood as 'street culture'.

The findings of this study reveal a group who in many ways strongly embody neo-liberal values of consumerism, meritocratic status attainment and individualism; yet are broadly seen as anti-establishment and often find themselves at the centre of moral panics. The heightened presence of; poverty, non-corporate masculinities, violence and criminality associated with road life (issues which many participants felt acutely) are often used as the metaphoric irons wielded by the powerful to brand the mark of abjection on urban youth. However, by examining the spectacular and everyday stories of those on road this study identifies a situated 'logic of practice' in actions which more powerful observers claim symbolise individual deficit and failing.

What becomes evident is that young people on road are engaged in a ceaseless symbolic struggle of performative negotiation with abjection and material deprivation. Coining the terminology 'munpain' (shorthand for pain of the mundane) I demonstrate how many exceptional young people navigate treacherous trajectories whilst striving all the time for recognition, respect and dignity. On this journey they seek to ameliorate their situations, negotiating stigmas attached to; unemployment, poverty, drug use, familial breakdown, race, gender, single parenthood and many more. This process involves a wide array of strategies and forms of cultural expression including; crime, violence, coolness, music and conspicuous consumption – creating a vibrant but often transient and destructive cultural landscape.

This study suggests that monocultural hegemony, expressed through the preservation of an outdated and inaccurate canon in contemporary Britain, unleashes vast waves of symbolic violence on those who personify forms of cultural and stylistic difference. In a globalised world moving through the late modern period we live in a nation bursting with difference, as many struggle to come to terms with it, the powerful seem to have mobilised around this crisis by enforcing an externally imposed narrative. Embodying difference in Britain today can entrench and exacerbate material hardships adding to exclusion and abjection. Those on road however exhibit a ceaseless ambition for equitable inclusion (often described as 'going legit') via cultural and economic projects aimed at adjusting the status quo; epitomizing ways in which class struggle, albeit more complex and individualised, lives on in 21st century Britain.

Contents

Introduction

This study focuses attention on the symbolic struggle which is at the centre of a street cultural formation. It tries to understand how those with involvement in road culture navigate their social world, and the existential implications of their trajectories. How is the development of personhood shaped by social exclusion? In a winner takes all world, how do people adapt to a state of inequity and how does this sit alongside dominant meritocratic narratives. The crux of the thesis lies in the understanding that those on road (although not uniform in their experiences) share aspects of social suffering across lines of difference. It is possible to trace the origins of such suffering in symbolic violence, material deprivation, dehumanisation, commodification, criminalisation and incarceration.

The thesis is the product of an empirical project exploring the biographies of young adults who have had experience of 'road life'. The research describes this subcultural formation, and more importantly investigates experiences of hope, aspiration and hurt amongst those involved. Though largely carried out with participants from South London, the study examines cultural flows which connect this subcultural arrangement with society more generally. Drawing on Appadurai's (1995: 208) distinction between 'locality' and 'neighbourhood'; road culture is conceptualised as 'primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar and spatial', something akin to an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983). This is a cultural community within which the author is positioned in relation to participants, shaped by the socio-economic patterns of British life, which include historically constituted inequalities such as class, race and gendered forms of discrimination. In practice this gives rise to a layering of contradictory narratives, captured in life history interviews gathered within an ethnographic framework.

The key themes in this study coalesce around the symbolic struggle for legitimation. This is a struggle which I argue finds it origins, at least in part, in the injurious consequences of political, material and historical processes of othering (Fanon, 1952; Hall, 1992; 1994; 1996; Skeggs, 1997; 2004; Tyler, 2009; 2008; 2010; 2013; Reay, 2005; Young, 2007). Although this is a study on street culture, it became clear from early sensitizing work (Blumer, 1954) that the most pertinent issues for participants regarding road cultural formation were related to social exclusion. Consequently, this became a study of what it means to 'get by' (Mckenzie, 2015)

and to lead 'liveable lives' (Butler, 2004; 2010 2012; Phoenix, 2007), whilst experiencing life on the margins.

This is also a study of youth, focusing on the up and coming millennial generation who, in this study, collectively expressed a sense of unrealised aspiration. These were the children of the New Labour government, who were once promised a society of meritocratic social mobility through policies aimed at *'Education, Education, Education'* (TheGuardian.com, 2001). In the lives of all but the most fortunate participants, these lofty ambitions were yet to materialise in any meaningful way. This meant that many had to come to terms the hard reality of life in a society where parental income and social status are a strong predicting factor of a person's destiny (OECD, 2010). The thesis documents the struggle of this generation of young people 'on road', as they try to acquire the values and value necessary to make it. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu and his followers, I will suggest that their subcultural formation is utilised as a resource, yet these forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) acquired on the margins are hot and ephemeral, likely to burn anyone who holds on to them too long.

The approach to life stories taken in this thesis can be regarded as a celebration of people's struggles against everyday marginality (Back, 2007), yet together these stories they constitute a cautionary tale of the violent and disastrous, but often ignored, outcomes of a society which places the interests of the few ahead of the majority. The struggle for value is a real one, and the interests of those seeking to maintain positions of privilege often come into direct conflict with the interests of those on road. This introductory chapter seeks to explain more about road culture, whilst framing it within contemporary socio-economic and political discourse. The chapter begins with a short review of the literature which has emerged over the last decade regarding road culture in the UK, emphasising tensions between its ethnographic and criminological framings. I then explore the present conjuncture which provides the context for my study, characterised by entrenched neo-liberal economics and the subsequent post-recession austerity policy directions implemented by successive Conservative led governments. Finally, I explore the consequences of these macro level processes on the lives of the young adults involved this study.

Road Culture

Road culture is a 'black influenced' subculture, meaning that its origins can be found in more widely recognised Black Atlantic popular culture (Gilroy, 1993) in terms of musical expression, dress codes and common patterns of speech (Gunter, 2008). This does not mean that 'road

culture' is an essentially Black subculture, as in reality it "…cuts across ethnicity and gender" (ibid: 520). Aside from the aesthetic elements, road culture is predominantly concerned with the 'mundane' practices of urban life (ibid). This involves young people's down time; for example; 'kicking ball', 'linking' (dating), or just 'cotching' (relaxing) and 'catching joke' (having a laugh) (ibid). There is a more sinister side to road culture, but there is a subtle distinction between those who spend time on road, who are also involved in this community, and what many describe as 'active' 'road men' or those who are 'on this road ting' who are known to commit crime.

Road culture is a British urban variant of more widely recognised 'street culture', with the term street literally being substituted with road. Street culture has been said to consist of 'a complex and conflictual web of beliefs, symbols, modes of interaction, values and ideologies that have emerged in the opposition to exclusion from mainstream society' (Bourgios, 2003: 8). This is typical of definitions of street culture which are usually characterised as forming a cultural response to marginality, poverty and exclusion amongst populations of dispossessed people. This can involve developing alternative value systems, norms and embodied dispositions, Ilan (2015: 8) elaborates on this by saying:

> "Street culture [forms] the values, dispositions, practices and styles associated with particular sections of disadvantaged populations. These involve practically negotiating (relative or absolute) material deprivation as well as asserting alternative and/or parallel systems of normativity and expressivity in the face of cultural subordination."

This British subcultural variant of street culture is beginning to receive significant scholarly attention (Gunter, 2004; 2008; 2010; 2016; Pitts, 2008; Briggs, 2010; Earle, 2011; Ilan, 2012; Hallsworth, 2013; Densley, 2013; Young, et al, 2014; Glynn, 2014), however, there has been a temptation amongst some to conflate it entirely with criminality (such as; Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). Many of the accounts in the literature arise from criminological studies on male prisoners (Earle, 2011; Glynn, 2014), gangs (Hallsworth, 2013; Desnley, 2013) and gun crime (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). This does not invalidate their findings but more ethnographic style approaches (Gunter, 2008; 2010; 2016; Ilan, 2012; 2015) highlight how these studies may miss many non-criminally orientated cultural aspects of road life.

Although street cultural responses to marginality typically involve facets of criminality, they are also creative practices. On road, life in many ways is about getting by and having fun (Gunter, 2008; 2010; 2016); crime plays a part in this, but it is an aspect of trying to make good

in a hostile world. With this in mind road culture should be seen as embedded in everyday life. In most cases it is not an all-consuming influence in peoples' lives; people can be involved in life on road but still have other connections and interests. This is well illustrated by Gunter (2008) and his road culture continuum, which posits that young people's involvement on road is rarely static, but instead fluctuates over time. He argues that road life is mostly lived out in 'non-spectacular' fashion, in the mundane practices of the lives of urban young people. The aspects of road life picked up on by criminologists exist only on the margins. There is movement between these poles with some young people engaging in criminal activity should an especially good opportunity arise or their life situation suddenly necessitate it. Gunter explains this as follows:

> "'Road culture' is viewed as a continuum, where occupying the centre ground are the vast majority of non-spectacular young people, with a small minority of young males or 'rude boys' [or road men] – who immerse themselves into the world of badness – taking up the extreme margins. … Road life['s]… life force is derived from the majority of young people who make up its centre ground. For the[m]… Road life is not about rebellion or hedonism, rather it is centred upon meeting up with friends, 'hanging on Road'… In essence, Road life is about friendships, routine and the familiar or doing nothing (Corrigan, 1979)." (Gunter, 2008: 352)

A 'road man' is commonly associated with 'badness', typically engaging in hyper-aggressive and often ostentatious behaviour (ibid); at least partially sustaining themselves through low level criminal activities ranging from fraud, to drug dealing and some more violent crimes. This seems to be the aspect of the subculture mainly picked up on in Hallsworth's and Siverstone's (2009) study on gun crime in Britain, though some of their observations could apply to the wider demographic. This suggests the roads are reactive to a broader socio-structural environment of oppression and exclusion, though it is in reality a more intricate relationship than this. This is not a population that is wholly excluded, but one heavily influenced by consumer capitalism, meaning that it shares values with wider neo-liberal society (Hallsworth, 2013). This shared desire for material wealth is then powerfully contradicted by various kinds of economic, structural and cultural inequalities (Nightingale, 1993; Young, 1999; Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). This results in a paradox of attainment, where on the one hand young people are taught to value and desire material wealth but on the other are denied legitimate access to it, creating a kind of crisis in status (Briggs, 2010).

Briggs (2010) also uses the terminology 'on road' but instead of confining it to the study of criminals he examines the effects that 'the streets' have on urban, often minority, young people more generally. He examines the school experience of his participants finding that these were largely negative due to a belief "…[that] institutional routes to success were unavailable to them." (Briggs 2010: 857). He highlights the pressure young people are under to stay 'fresh' and maintain an appearance of wealth which is in reality beyond their means. The fast money available in the underground economy provides a real way of acquiring the funds necessary to keep up with their peers as well as undermining the deferred gratification offered by pursuing education (Briggs 2010).

Personhood and Social Exclusion – Moving Past Post-Subcultural Criticism

This study of life on road involves the analysis of race, gender and class. It does not view subcultures as being strongly segmented away from what might be considered more mainstream popular culture. In the same breath it is important to state that it also holds that class, familial and historical inequalities are also intrinsically relevant to the formation and involvement of young people involved in subcultural phenomena (Blackman, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2005; Shrildrick & MacDonald, 2006). I am aware of the subcultural tradition (Cohen; 1972; McRobbie & Garber, 1976; Willis; 1977; Marsh, 1978; Clarke et al., 1976; Thornton, 1995; Macdonald, 2001) and post-subculture (Muggleton, 2000; 2005; Bennett; 1999; 2005; St John, 2003; Ueno, 2003; Clark, 2003; Stahl, 2003) debate which has raged in British youth literature in the last 20 years.

This debate centres around the division between the more structurally focussed analysis of youth culture carried out by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) (Clarke et al., 1976) and more recent postmodernist criticism of these. Early subcultural studies like Hebdige's (1979) work on youth subcultural styles viewed subculture as being centred around the "…expressive forms and rituals of… subordinate groups…" (Hebdige, 1995: 1259). His analysis carried some synergies with Tyler's (2015) work on *revolting subjects*, in that he viewed the 'revolting style' of punk groups as they inverted norms of social respectability. He claimed that "…for those who erect them into icons… these objects become signs of forbidden identity, sources of value." (Hebdige, 1995: 1259). Meaning that style, and subculture, were *political*. This is a train of thought which has clear origins with the CCCS's own definition of subculture:

"Relative to… cultural-class configurations, sub-cultures are sub-sets—smaller, more localised and differentiated structures…[they] therefore, take shape around the distinctive activities and 'focal concerns' of groups. They can be loosely or tightly bounded. Some sub-cultures are merely loosely-defined strands or 'milieux' within the parent culture: they possess no distinctive 'world' of their own… [they] must exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their 'parent' culture. They must be focused around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces etc. which significantly differentiate them from the wider culture. But, since they are sub-sets, there must also be significant things which bind and articulate them with the 'parent' culture." (Clarke et al, 1976: 13)

Though there have been many contested uses of the term subculture the above resembles a reasonably settled account of what the CCCS developed themselves in response to calls for greater symmetry in the analysis of subculture (Murdock & McCron, 1976). This definition holds that subcultures are derivatives of class based 'parental' cultures, meaning that from their very point of origin they are class inflected, this is what makes them *'sub'*cultures as they are essentially cuttings from larger more deeply rooted cultural configurations. This is also why, though sometimes radically different in 'style' (Hebdidge, 1995), they still share some core sets of values which 'bind' (Clarke et al, 1976) them to broader class based cultures. This is something which has been widely contested by those who can be broadly categorised as post-subcultural thinkers (e.g. Muggleton, 2000; Bennett, 2000; Miles, 2000; Stahl, 2003).

Muggleton (2005: 209) describes how the CCCS response to subculture represented an attempt to analyse a new problem with an 'old problem-solving paradigm' in the shape of a Gramscian, Marxist inspired, class based analysis. He claimed that, aside from the work of Paul Willis, much of the CCCS work on subcultures relied on secondary data and lacked empirical validity (ibid). There were also concerns raised around the lack of transformational potential offered by subcultural theorists particularly in relation to the responses of these groups to the commercialization of the styles (Waters, 1981; Clarke, 1982). Post-subcultural theory rejects notions of class based subcultures as outdated in relation to what they view as a fluid postmodern social structure. Notions such as 'neo-tribes' (Bennett, 2000), 'lifestyles' (Miles, 2000) and 'scenes' (Stahl, 2003) view young people as picking and choosing from an array of cultural modes of expression to suit their specific preferences; meaning that their structural backgrounds have much less influence on the way they choose to appropriate culture. This

approach has run in to criticism too, however, as in the words of Muggleton (2005: 217) himself; "…recent revisionist theories have… over emphasised the prevalence and intensity of such features as flux, fluidity and hybridization…".

Indeed, in their haste to emphasise the extent which postmodern choice now forms the crux of youth cultural formation, Shrildrick and MacDonald note that, not only are issues of social class overlooked, but working class and poor young people are "…wholly absent from post-subcultural studies" (Shrildrick & MacDonald, 2006: 129). Given this significant absence in post-subcultural literature I tend to agree that "…youth culture research lays itself open to accusations of pointlessness…" (Shrildrick & MacDonald, 2006: 128). If the CCCS are responsible of imposing an external and outdated Marxist framework on to the study of youth culture; the post-subcultural movement are equally guilty of imposing a postmodern framework, which applies only loosely to the experiences of a, mostly privileged, demographic of young people. This oversight of lower-class youth experience more broadly creates an added, and arguably more dangerous, culpability of ignoring and silencing the experiences and subjectivities of poor and marginalised young people (ibid).

The focus of both schools (I use this term loosely) of thought which tend to focus largely on spectacular stylistic cultural forms, is perhaps one of the weaknesses they share most (ibid). This led Shildrick and MacDonald (2006) to suggest that turning the focus away from the 'most obvious' stylistic forms, which the majority of poor young people in contemporary Britain fail to embody; and instead utilizing a broader conception of youth culture (e.g. Loader, 1996; Williamson, 2003; Ball et al, 2000; Bose, 2003; Shildrick, 2003). This study seeks to do the same in that it connects youth cultural analysis with biographical trajectory based narrative interviews, which work to heed the call for a greater connection between youth culture and youth transition work (MacDonald et al. 2001; Chatterton & Hollands 2002; Nayak 2003; 2004; Pilkington 2004; Bose´ 2003; Shildrick 2006 Shildrick & MacDonald 2006; 2007; 2008). This approach seeks to comprehend young people's lives and road cultural involvement across a broad spectrum of their experiences, understanding the ways in which issues of race, class and gender intersect and influence their subcultural involvement. Of course "…the nagging sense…. that these lives, selves and identities do not always coincide with what they are supposed to stand for' (Cohen, 1980: xviii [cited in] Muggleton, 2005:210) is always there in this kind of work, but the definition offered by Clarke et al (1976) stating that subcultures can be 'loosely or tightly bounded' still holds and offers possibility in relation to current configurations and

diversity across individual experience. Indeed, "the subcultural concept is rather more secure than has often been suggested by those seeking to (over)state the postmodern case" (Muggleton, 2005: 217). Consequently, I chose to still use the term subculture, but below I will engage in more detail how I understand it in relation to road culture.

In this study I regard the boundaries of road culture as blurred, porous and iterative. Many of the fundamental values of neo-liberal society are shared across classes and subcultures; particularly those surrounding aspiration and desire, what Merton (1938) described as a *culturally induced success goals*. One of these might be described as a legitimate personhood. A feature of contemporary class exploitation is that poor people are not exploited exclusively in economic terms, they are dehumanised to such an extent that the realisation of their personhood becomes an existential struggle. Charlesworth (2000: 7) exposes the consequences of such a situation by reflecting on the unequal distribution of the cultural resources necessary for self-fulfilment:

> "…the social and cultural resources for developing one's inalienable human capacities, what Marx called one's 'species being', of coming to fruition as a person of categoric value, are inequitably distributed, with the result that the possibility of the development of capacities important to personal fulfilment are frustrated."

The acquisition of status, along with inequality, has become a more pertinent issue since the 'great recession' of 2008 and the subsequent election of successive Conservative led governments. As austerity agendas have gained traction and become policy, those groups already experiencing marginalisation, have become targets for public spending cuts. This has had real consequences for the experiences of those at the lower socio-economic rungs of society, including the participants involved in this study. One only has to think of current television depictions of poor people such as *Benefit Street*, or examine public speeches (especially in the wake of social uprising such as the London riots, something I explore in chapter 5 on crime) to show evidence for the denial of the humanity of the poor. Being termed a benefit scrounger, a gang member, a teenage mum, a person NEET (not in education employment or training) or any of many other derogatory classifications circulating freely in contemporary discourse, carries with it similar connotations; of a dearth in the qualities necessary in the formation of legitimate personhood. Contemporary class exploitation does not culturally exclude just to economically exploit (it does this of course), but does so to

morally underpin the social order, to justify the seemingly natural positioning of elites and their management of dangerous surplus populations.

The roads have become a space for people who for any variety of reasons struggle to attain legitimate personhood; and where a variety of alternative 'road capitals' are traded in order to force its realization. This is not another world; this is a world we know well. This is the rat race, in Bourdieu's terms constituted as 'fields' where individuals 'search for respect' (Bourgios, 2003) against a backdrop which appears more barren with each passing year. Ephemeral in nature; fortunes rise and fall, lives unravel, street supernovae expand and implode. Much like the contemporary academy, where funding cycles are short lived, students are consumers and free market competition forms a toxic kernel radiating waves of dysfunction from its very core. Road culture suffers deep down from the same inalienable sickness as the rest of our society and to fail to acknowledge this would be to miss the point.

Of course the barriers to personhood which afflict those on road are not comparable to the majority of those working within academe. The roads embody a kind of neo-liberalism *unleashed*; where the state seems only able to effectively alienate rather than incorporate; meaning that arms of the state are mistrusted (Earle, 2011). Those on road must navigate a 'minefield' of state agencies, community violence, familial breakdown, loneliness and poverty all in the quest to 'go get it'. This has been termed 'going legit' (Bourgois, 2003); achieving culturally equitable inclusion in society; consequently, moving toward the realization of legitimate personhood. Road culture is a subculture born out of this experience of social exclusion, though it is still one that is heavily influenced by mainstream notions of common sense. Like Hebdige's account, the subculture can carry 'revolting styles' but many of these are 'innovatively' (Merton, 1938) mobilised by those involved in the subculture as part of a symbolic struggle to gain legitimation and reach broadly recognised success goals. This leads us to reflect more deeply on this present socio-political conjuncture and how it is intimately tied to road life.

The Present Conjuncture

The importance of understanding the material, historical and discursive threads of 'the present conjuncture' was argued by Stuart Hall as a vital component in any political analysis (Hall, 1996). The present conjuncture for this study sees a world divided; in nations all over the west far right parties are increasing in popularity. The rise of UKIP in Britain along with the election of Donald Trump on the other side of the Atlantic reflect feelings of frustration amongst

electorates regarding a lack of representation of their interests. However, this rise also hints at a contradiction as the people choose champions in the mould of Nigel Farage and Trump; *men who come from elite backgrounds with little legitimate evidence of genuine commitment to social change which may benefit those they claim to represent. Perhaps this is indicative of the practical limitations involved in democratic change via electoral candidacy or maybe it is an indication of the way domination operates in the now.

There is a sense of genuine grievance and melancholia amongst the many dispossessed citizens of the West left marooned in the wake of neoliberalism and free market economics. Commentators such as Atkinson (2015) and Waquant (2008; 2009a; 2009b) have demonstrated (from economic and sociological perspectives respectively) the great reduction in the volume and levels of security of traditional working class jobs, but also the retrenchment of welfare states and social security throughout Europe and the United States. As Atkinson (2015) points out there is little evidence to show that retrenchment in welfare was enforced by some fiscal necessity, but instead was a deliberate policy direction pursued by the likes of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan during the 1980s.

Evidence suggests that both globally and nationally the neo-liberal turn initiated by Thatcher and Reagan has led to increasing polarisation between the rich and poor in many places around the developed world (ibid). The extent of this can be considered truly frightening; as according to Oxfam (2014) the wealth of the richest 85 individuals on the planet is equal to that of the poorest 3.5 billion (Hill-Collins & Bilge: 14). Such a situation is reminiscent of Marx's (1844) theory of increasing misery which holds that as capital concentrates at the upper most 'pole' of society insecurity and hardship at the opposite 'pole' would increase. As part of this he held that the 'surplus population' would increase and the levels of misery amongst working class people would grow along with the development of capital accumulation (Marx & Engels, 1954).

The extent to which many of Marx's predictions relating to the doctrine of increasing misery are true have been widely debated (for example; Veblen, 1907; Meek, 1964; Bronfenbrenner, 1973; Wood, 1987; Laclau and Mouffe, 1987; etc.) and it is not the purpose of this discussion to establish the suitability of his analysis for contemporary times. However, Marxism continues to offer ideas which can provide an interesting departure point. Calling it the 'inequality turn', Atkinson (2015) illustrates how in many post-industrial western nations, the proportion of wealth concentrated amongst the elite has risen and the gap between the rich and poor expanded. Marx was correct in his suggestions regarding the concentration of capital

expanding the distance between the 'poles', however his assertion that this would cause increasing misery to the point that "the expropriators are expropriated" (Marx, 1954: 763) and the capitalist mode of production would be dismantled, has failed to materialise. This raises important questions regarding the legitimation of the current state of inequality worldwide.

Inequality and Legitimation

In my work I have looked to the writing of Jock Young (1999; 2007) to understand how increased insecurity and inequality may be associated with blurred meaning and social boundaries in late modern society. He argued that work for the poor is not the same as work for the rich, with the former involving monotonous, alienating and relatively low paid activities. Despite there being a minimum subsistence level of social security in most post-industrial western nations the real value of these payments is generally decreasing and does not meet the commonly imagined level of income necessary for a good life. For example, in the UK since the banking crash or 'great recession' of 2008 the subsequent Conservative led governments have pursued 'austerity' policy agendas. This has tended to involve reducing public spending; in particular, there has been a focus on reducing the welfare bill. Of these measures, 36% are said to fall on 20% of the population, who are categorised as already living in poverty (De Agostini et al. 2014).

During the post-recession period the cost of a 'minimum basket of goods' has reportedly risen between 25-33% (JRF, 2014) whilst incomes of those on state assistance have been squeezed by cuts to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Morris, 2016), as well as the additional Bedroom Tax. The result of this cocktail is that those vulnerable to the least secure and most poorly paid employment are having their minimum subsistence level reduced, with the former Prime Minister David Cameron saying that this will deliver 'fairness' for taxpayers (ibid). This lowering of the level of subsistence matches Young's (2007) analysis of an economy which requires people to accept poverty wages and insecure employment in order for the status quo to function. So, as employers offer more poorly paid, 'flexible' and short term work; the social security system has to adjust accordingly in order to subsidise the shortfall in wages as well as penalizing those who do not enter in to employment.

Morris (2016) argues that the Coalition and Conservative governments have been producing a set of 'moral' arguments to justify changes to the welfare system which are essentially political in nature. They build arguments mainly around 'fairness', a word synonymous with justice, which has been vacated of its meaning, to construct a picture of the unemployed 'scrounging'

off the 'hardworking taxpayer'. They then conflate this with broader issues such as fraud and deficit reduction to bring closure to an account which seeks to, in David Cameron's own words, 'change the way we see ourselves' (TheGuardian.com, 2010). This attempt to bring a shift in perception has observable outcomes which seek to embed a certain market centred way of organizing society, prioritizing the interests of business over the quality of life of citizens, especially the poor. This shifting of the terrain of social justice has been recognised as a form of 'articulation' (Clarke, 2008; 2015) a notion derived from the work of Stuart Hall (1978). This is important ideological work which mobilises anxieties and resentments in order to establish partial perspectives in to broader notions of common sense (Hall et al., 1978; Clarke, 2015).

The result of this often means forcing unemployed people to accept short-term non-typical forms of employment, which can also involve being 'self-employed'. This can reduce employers' responsibilities to pay for national insurance contributions, sick leave and fringe benefits (Rubery, 1994; Dex and McCulloch, 2016). Though there have been increases in protection in some areas over the years, such as; maternity leave for part-time workers and redundancy payments for those working 16 hours and upwards with a minimum of two years' service (Dex and McCulloch, 2016), this can still be regarded as a move towards creating a flexible workforce. In reality the recent welfare cuts are an acceleration of something which has been happening since the late 1970s. For example, in 1992 unemployed people were required to take any reasonable job providing it offered at least 16 hours of work, which was a reduction from the previous 24 hours, or risk losing their benefits (Dex and McCulloch, 2016). The moral opportunism of recent governments in the wake of the recession represents a new charge in the battle to lower subsistence levels of the poor in order to make them more malleable to the demands of non-committal flexible employers. Ian Duncan-Smith aptly demonstrates the government's approach thus:

> "Britain cannot run a modern flexible economy, if at the same time, so many of the people who service that economy are trapped in dependency on the state." (Duncan-Smith 2014)

This push has seen the creation of a welfare system which more resembles that of the flexible workforce. Similarly, the rights of those on welfare have been eroded and replaced with 'responsibilities'. The changes to the assessment of those receiving incapacity benefits has helped to erode any notions of security even for the most vulnerable recipients of state assistance. This is combined with an increased financial incentivization for the 19 tier one organizations which provide unemployment services to selected job seekers under the Work

Programme; which sees 75% of their payment dependent on placing claimants in to employment (Shutes and Taylor, 2014). This has resulted in a system disproportionately weighted towards the interests of privately owned and mostly profit making organizations. This is an approach to unemployment which embodies market fundamentalism through and through; poor people are transformed in to commodities whose value is inseparably tied to their participation in the market.

Added to the assault on those with the lowest incomes, political rhetoric around the value of social mobility has been valorised by government (Reay, 2013). This is in spite of Britain having amongst the lowest actual social mobility rates in the developed world (Causa and Johansson 2009; OECD 2010). The demographic shifts caused by the move from manual to service economy which attributed to an increase in structural mobility, allowing more formerly blue collar workers in to white collar employment (Savage, 2007) are over. We now live in a society characterised by the shrinking rather than expansion of professional employment (Blanchflower, 2012). The Wolf report (2011) showed that the fastest growing jobs were educational and care assistants which rose 91% and 21% respectively between 2001-2009. This remaking of the labour market and its consequences for aspirations of social mobility:

> "Far from becoming a society of hyper-rational and high-powered 'knowledge workers', as theorists of postindustrial society predicted, the United Kingdom is becoming a society of care workers, cashiers, computer technicians and educational support staff while the size of the professional-managerial section of the labour market is falling slightly. In such a competitive context, the highly educated children of the middle and upper classes will find ways to keep all but the most determined children of the working classes out." (Reay, 2013: 669).

Structural limitations in employment mean that social mobility is especially difficult for those from more marginal backgrounds. Various studies have demonstrated that in this situation of limited possibilities, the privileged will mobilise their resources in order to reproduce their social status, carrying advantage over to their children, effectively freezing out young people who lack these social and material assets (Hartas, 2012; Reay, Crozier, and James 2011; Reay, 2013; Weis and Cipollone 2013; Savage, 2015). The aspirational New Labour generation in this study find themselves in a double squeeze, whereby the bottom is becoming an increasingly intolerable social location, whilst the pathways to successful careers are becoming less obtainable. This makes sense in relation to increasing levels of symbolic violence and 'class

warfare' (Reay, 2013) being unleashed by Conservative led governments as they attempt to reassert social control in these times of rhetoric and broken promises.

Evidence shows that street cultural formations, such as road culture, usually develop in communities experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage (Ilan, 2015). There have also been observations that despite poor communities' heterogeneity they share experiences of being the centre of moral panics in the form of media and political castigation (Waquant, 2008). This sets the scene for the symbolic struggle which I wish to elucidate in this thesis. As material hardship increases, social mobility ebbs away and forms of culturally based inclusion become more crucial to successful outcomes; many young people on road face a challenging and hostile world. This thesis focuses primarily around the *personal, market orientated, spatial* and *gendered dimensions* of the struggle which ensues from this inequitable set of circumstances.

Bourdieu & Hall

Central to the subsequent exploration of road life in neo-liberal Britain is the work of both Pierre Bourdieu and Stuart Hall. The dimensions of the influence each of the former have had to some extent reflects the nature of their work. Bourdieu's grand theories including ideas surrounding capitals and the symbolic struggle form an integral part of the theoretical structure of the thesis. These concepts enter in to process of theoretical layering around my own central and underlying concept of the munpain, upon which I argue the symbolic struggle takes. In contrast Stuart Hall himself stated that he was not a theorist of grand treatise, instead his work was often centred on timely and incisive interventions in key issues of the time in which he worked (Hall & Back, 2009), this is reflected in the way Hall's work is utilised in the context of road life. Subsequently I will briefly reflect on how both thinkers work has been mobilised in this thesis, beginning with Pierre Bourdieu.

Bourdieu

The notion of symbolic struggle I work from in this thesis is derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1979), who states that a struggle takes place between different classes and factions within society in order to define a specific understanding of the social world, which of course is most suited to their agendas. These can take place in "…the symbolic conflicts of daily life, or vicariously, through the struggle between the specialists of symbolic production" (ibid: 80). In the context of the roads this struggle takes place between what is understood as a more mainstream political value system and an alternative street cultural value system. These do not exist in isolation from one another, as discussed earlier, and the borders of each are

porous. However, this thesis states that in their everyday battles and through the work of specialised cultural producers (in this case in the form of Grime artists, see chapter 4) those on road engage in this symbolic struggle for value.

This struggle take place via the accumulation and exchange of capitals (economic, social and cultural) (Bourdieu, 1979; 1986; 1987) which involves the deployment of forms of value (which vary across social space or fields). By exploring this speculative trade off, I hope to show that displays of what I have termed road capitals are often strategic attempts at integration. In this chapter I seek to demonstrate some of the ways in which those on road mobilise different kinds of capital with a view to making it in the mainstream. However, as the term road capitals suggest the variations of social, cultural and economic capital found on road are often subject to a degree of disfavour. Where forms of exclusion delimit their capability of accruing more mainstream forms of value, they will try to mobilise alternative value systems, with a view of eventually influencing or gaining access to more mainstream fields of power, making this form of symbolic struggle more than just the micro struggle of each marginalised individual seeking mainstream inclusion, but a broader collective struggle over value and values in British society.

These concepts are layered over the concept of the munpain; the everyday embedded experience of multiple forms of marginalisation in a world saturated in inequalities and contradictions. In response to these everyday injustices young people on road mobilise their forms of capital in to value production; for example contemporary Grime & UK Rap music are forms of commodifiable capital that has been mobilised in such a way that it has caused a transformation in the British popular music canon and not only the trajectory of the young people directly involved in its formulation (something which will be explored more in Chapter 4).

Hall

Following the logic of Hall's own assertion (Hall & Back) his work, though central to the thesis, makes critical interventions in areas relating to race and working class experience in Neo-liberal (Thatcherist) Britain. Where Bourdieu helps us to understand the symbolic struggle Halls provides the ballast which informs the changes in contemporary British cities since the Windrush. Building on the example of UK Rap & Grime music above his work on 'new ethnicities', an idea which sought to marry the structural and post-structural, helps us understand how temporality and cultural hybridity have created new sets of meanings in

Britain. This has contributed to the blurring of the centre and the periphery in a way the 'cold and classafatory' (Skeggs, 1997) manner of Bourdieu's analysis struggles to.

Hall's work also contributes crucially to the concept of the munpain, particularly in relation to issues of race and class. In various areas of his work he touches on the historical racialized and classed discrimination in areas such as housing and police harassment particularly effecting the black British community (Hall et al, 1978; Hall 1982; 1999). This is important structural-historical context, more importantly though Hall helps us to understand how historical racialisation continues to seep in to our permeable present. He reminds us how the feelings of the blurred peripheries can also be indicative of the re-articulation (in both the sense of being uttered, but also connected to the past) of racialized discourses in contemporary times. On road this reminds us to think critically about both the expression of, but also the cultural treatment of canonical images of things like black masculinity.

In Chapter 2 on the munpain Stephen's account of life as a young, working class, black man on an inner city council estate and the imprisoning feeling that accompanies the expectation of the performance of a certain form of masculinity, is aided by a Hall inspired lens. Stephen's story fits in to a historical binary of representation of the black (male) subject; '…racism constructs the black subject: noble savage and violent avenger' (Hall, 1996: 28). Hall helps us to understand that these (mis)representations 'cripple and deform' as their power subjects many individuals to experiencing themselves through their lenses. This is true for both racialized experiences of race and class, experiences which are often sutured to one another; as contemporary portrayals of poverty and benefit dependency coalesce with representations of black and working class masculinity, working both to fetishizing and deform. These are contradictions which are lived in the everyday lives of the young people in this study, and create problematic situations arising out of the seemingly prosaic

Hall (1988) also intervenes in another critical area of this thesis; he helps us to understand the draw and appeal of Thatcherism amongst the groups who were dispossessed in its wake. This is crucial in understanding the symbolic struggle, as helps to communicate the complicity and level of embedded interest those on road have in the preservation of the status quo. Looking to the conclusion of this thesis, again we turn to Hall to help us to understand how Marxian notions of false consciousness are inadequate as to why young people wish to struggle for inclusion in an unjust system.

These interventions, along with the meta-theoretical dependence on Bourdieu will become clearer as the work goes on. In the next section as I set out the structure of the thesis, helping the reader to navigate it in relation to the key ideas around which the analysis of the four spheres (personal, market orientated, spatial and gendered) of cultural struggle are built.

Structure of this Thesis

The thesis is divided into 7 chapters in addition to this introduction. It proceeds with a methodology that frames the context for the research, the methods employed and my own position vis-a-vis the field. I explain that my social contact to the field of my research has been a lifelong one, and this is what makes the study ethnographic. I also seek to outline the ways in which my closeness to the field was accompanied by a certain distance from the world of academe, something which had considerable implications for the research design.

Chapter 2 begins the data analysis segment of the thesis by investigating the way in which the symbolic struggle outlined in this introduction begins from the intimate sphere of '*personal*' experiences. This chapter developed out of early stages of analysis which subsequently operated as a sensitizing concept (Blumer, 1954) informing my analysis throughout. This chapter contains one of the largest theoretical contributions of the thesis, that of the *munpain*, a portmanteau of the words pain and mundane. It seeks to demonstrate how the circumstances of the present conjuncture have led to a situation whereby every day and mundane aspects of poor young people's lives have become unliveable. This is the result of the recent waves of symbolic violence and material hardship levelled against poor and excluded communities in Britain; leading to a kind of social annihilation whereby certain ways of being and social identities have become so objectionable people have to actively perform to manage their social status, in order to avoid disappearing into the nothingness of social abjection.

The munpain is a theoretically challenging chapter to begin with, and in a recent discussion with my supervisors was likened to introducing my readers to my analysis with a crack on the head with a theoretical hammer (metaphorically speaking of course). It is also a chapter that deals with intimate aspects of people's feelings and experiences dealing with social exclusion and stigmatisation on an everyday and mundane level, making it an emotive and challenging area to encounter. In spite of this I feel it is crucial to begin my analysis of symbolic struggle from the perspective of my respondents', helping to frame this cultural struggle for value firmly in their experiences of de-legitimation and feelings of personal deficit. This is to make

clear from the very beginning that this is a symbolic struggle, of this moment, not taking place on a level playing field where actors are competing for increased leverage in the wider social world. Instead, it is a struggle taking place in a situation of domination, whereby those on the margins are struggling to assert their humanity and right to a 'liveable life' (Phoenix, 2007; Butler, 2004; 2010; 2012; Cruz, 2013).

The thesis then moves on to chapter 3 'Going Legit – Road Capitals', which mobilises a Bourdieusian capitals framework to demonstrate how those who have been stripped of value seek to enter the world of recognition. In this chapter I engage critically with Sandberg's (2008; 2009) notion of 'street capital', arguing that road capital*s* (plural) should be understood via the multiple categories of cultural, social and economic capital. It should be recognised that those on road are agentic actors working to mobilise these same categories of capital in order to evade the munpain, however, they often would mobilise these forms of capital within the street cultural field, making the conversion to symbolic capital more problematic. Several examples are offered in order to illustrate this, with a view to building in to chapter 3 'Grime' which seeks to elucidate further how this form of market orientated cultural struggle plays out in practice.

Chapter 4 focuses on the cultural production of grime music and the ensuing symbolic struggle for value and legitimation. I introduce the concept of *canonbalisation* to help demonstrate the way in which more powerful cultural actors seek to extract value from these cultural productions whilst still de-legitimating and condemning the voices of their curators. This chapter develops on the framework provided in the capitals chapter by showing the ways in which road cultural, social and economic capital are particularly vulnerable to appropriation and denigration from more powerful *market* actors, yet a cultural scene and industry requiring a multitude of skills has still developed with the help of technological innovation.

Chapter 5 examines some of the *spatial dynamics* involved in this cultural struggle; critically examining the role of law enforcement, with contemporary urban policing and anti-gang measures coming under particular scrutiny. I mobilise my analysis of how young people, men particularly, engage in local value systems via what I have termed *new neighbourhood nationalisms* (Back, 1996). This is a process which involves the collapsing of broader sets of local (in Appaduri's [1995] sense of the word) and national discourses in to the space of the neighbourhood. The possibilities offered by new media have intensified this process; allowing for the attainment of previously unrealisable levels of value and recognition, but also creating new sets of risk as the cultural market place and street worlds collide. I argue that policy

directives, the gang industry (Hallsworth, 2013), and neighbourhood level policing fail to acknowledge the realities of spatially defined road practices; perusing a policy which contributes to feelings of exclusion and the munpain, via multiple negative interactions with this highly visible arm of the state.

Chapter 6, my final data chapter, deals with issues of *gender* on road. Throughout the thesis I have tried to integrate the voices and perspective of female participants, but there was a leaning in respondents' accounts which tended to resist this. This was problematic as the female respondents in this study showed themselves to be competent and well informed commentators on road life, leading me to term female involvement as the *living paradox* of this study. This was the most difficult chapter to write as a male researcher close to the community I conducted my research in. It could be regarded as somewhat problematic to fasten a gender chapter to the end of the thesis as an afterthought, and to some extent I would accept this criticism. However, it is also reflective of the paradox which ran throughout my interview encounters, playing in to other problematic themes. It highlights the extent to which the roads, though not in a hegemonic sense, are a male dominated space – yet still a space where women operate and form a central part of the culture, despite this tending to be only reluctantly recognised amongst male participants.

In this chapter I seek to open up on some of the internal gender dynamics involved in the broader symbolic struggle deeply rooted in road life. This chapter examines women's trajectories in to road life, their status as informants, as well as the intimate sphere of love and relationships. This chapter utilised both male and female voices in order to illuminate the gender dynamics at play; in reality the accounts of women in this study elucidated as much, if not more about men; information which perhaps otherwise would not have come to light.

In chapter 7 I look to reflect on the empirical and theoretical terrain covered, considering which tools and perspectives have been most productive and articulate the contribution to knowledge claimed in the thesis as well as outlining the ways in which the insights from this project might inform policy, practice and future research.

Chapter 1: Methodology Outline

Before embarking on this chapter I want to give the reader some advice in relation to the way in which it is intended to be read. There are two explicit areas which might be considered to be omissions in relation to conventional practice and methodological literature. The literature pertaining to insider research (see e.g. Roseneil, 1993; Humphrey, 1995; 2007; Wolcott, 1999; Brewer, 2000; Coghlan, 2003; Hodkinson, 2005; Hodkinson & Deicke, 2007; MacRae, 2007; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Mercer, 2007; Taylor, 2011) has been left to one side. There is also no designated ethics section where I describe the ins and outs of the ethical dilemmas involved in the practical research process. The reasons for this are because I feel that there is sufficient literature which addresses issues such as 'going native' (Zinn, 1979; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984; Blake, 2007; Taylor, 2011) which has strong undertones of the anthropological work of Malinowski (1922), which I find problematic and also mildly offensive. With some of the implications being "…that all natives are the same native, mutually substitutable in presenting the same (male) point of view" (Narayan, 1993: 676).

Instead I wanted my methodology chapter to be *all about ethics* in the broader sense, rather than allocating a specific section to a limited notion of ethical research practice. This project took place in a particular neo-liberal academic ethical climate, whereby being different made the work challenging to conduct within institutional settings. I feel that spending time telling that story offers more sociological potential, helping to develop our collective understandings, than a rehashed account of why doing research in familiar settings should be considered valid. The largest section of this chapter is about failure; failure to access white middle class managed institutional research settings and how this impelled me as a minoritised researcher to pragmatically redesign my project in such a way that *I* could carry it out. I do not wish to avoid questions relating to my relationship to the field my research was carried out within, but I also want to make some important points about the way in which the expectations around ethical research are in themselves both gendered and racialised. It pains me to have to describe at length my relationship to the participants of my study without being able to describe my relationship to the academy, along with formal institutions safe for research activities, and I argue that the expectation of such is reflective of a broader social context of silencing (Glynn, 2014).

As a consequence of this approach my methodology chapter attempts to balance the need for a descriptive account of what I actually did along with a critical engagement with our expectations for ethical research. I do this by first outlining what have been the broad aims of my study. I then move on to the 'story' (Alasuutari, 1995) of how my project came to be as it is, exploring how the experience of failure reflexively shaped my understanding of 'research I can do'. I then move on to the turn to narrative inquiry I took as a result of this process, exploring some of the literature outlining my pragmatist (Dewey, 1925; 1929) inspired theoretical framework. After establishing this I spend some time explaining the sampling methods I used. I also include a section on the collection of secondary contextual data which I use in the chapter on Grime music. I then explain the grounded theoretical mode of analysis I employ in order to establish the guiding concept of this work 'the munpain'. Finally, I reflect briefly on whether this work, which utilised narrative interviews as its primary data collection method, can be considered an ethnographic piece.

Aims of This Study

Road culture is a UK specific derivative of broader street and popular cultures, finding its influences in transatlantic black popular culture (Gilroy, 1993) as well as many other diasporic cultures emanating from Africa, the Caribbean and even the middle east. The phenomenon of road culture is appearing increasingly in criminological gang literature (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009; Earle, 2011; Glynn, 2015). These encounters with road culture, although interesting and informative, start from the perspectives of men who enter the criminal justice system.

Anthony Gunter (2008; 2010; 2016) provides the most broadly framed venture in to this UK specific subcultural domain; one which is not limited to the study of gangs or crime. His study utilised observational methods, whilst working at a local youth club, combined with historical insights relating to the east London neighbourhood it was conducted in. The insights provided by Gunter's fieldwork and subsequent analysis provide an important grounding for future studies of life on road. Key to Gunter's contribution was a 'road culture continuum' which helps to understand road life as comprising of more than criminal or gang related elements. Those who engage in 'criminal lifestyles' occupy only the extreme margins of road culture, with the majority of youths who participate in life on road not engaged in such activities, most of the time. This is important in establishing its relevance as an area of interest beyond criminology alone. Instead Gunter argues that road life is much more banal, forming the day to

day rituals and practices urban young people engage in as they journey through and socialise in their local neighbourhoods.

Although there have been many ethnographic projects focussed on street culture in the USA and other places in the world; UK specific road cultural formation is an area which requires some further development. The work of Gunter and the criminologists who have looked at road culture previously informed my approach to designing the methodology for this study. Consequently, I decided that taking a broader grounded theoretical approach would help to draw out and build on themes which are missed by the narrower lens of criminological studies. This led to the initial research questions being quite broad and open:

- What is road culture?
- How long do people stay 'on road' in relation to their trajectories, and why?
- What kind of narratives have young adults constructed around their involvement in road life?
- Which socio-political structures can be observed to be influential on road?

In order to address these questions, I developed a qualitative research design, focused on the generation of life history interviews with young adults for whom 'the roads' were, or had been, a part of their everyday lives. The data collected varied from that of many previous studies, including that of Gunter, as no kind of real world observation was used, instead in depth narrative style interviews were utilised. My own positionality was a factor in this decision, as being an insider within my own community network, I felt using direct observation may be an intrusion into participants' personal lives, blurring the boundary between where real life ends and research begins. However, due to this closeness the interviews were extremely rich and I would argue offered deeper insights in to the lives and opinions of participants than many other studies would be able to gather, offering more about *why* (Charmaz, 2009) people acted as they did as oppose to just how they did it. These insights were given in an artificially created 'interview' situation, which although still bore risks of over disclosure, gave participants more control over what the wished to share. In order to engage meaningfully with my research questions this study took a grounded theoretical approach and allowed the data to influence theory, meaning that these questions took me in some unexpected directions.

This has been a project determined to understand something about young adults and road life. It has involved listening to people and trying to understand what is important to them, how

they feel their lives have gone, and how they could have been better or worse. This study seeks to add to the patchwork (Mirza, 2009) of tales of times spent on road, critically examining the power relations involved in shaping the trajectories of young adults. The study presented many ethical and methodological challenges, many of which were tangled, somewhat haphazardly together. The project that has made this thesis possible rose up out of the debris of another planned project which sought to conduct fieldwork in a school setting. In my initial attempt to conduct fieldwork there were a lot less ethical tripwires but, perhaps somewhat ironically, that was the project that failed. The final project arguably became a more intricate and delicate, but also a more robust and intriguing one. In the sections below I will explain why I chose a particular methodological path. I will discuss the methodological dimensions of this project which includes the processes through which I came to this research design, reflections on my insider status in the project, the methods of data collection and analysis employed and the ethical dimensions of the project. This chapter reflects the approach of Alasuutari (1995) in that it tries to tell the story of this research project, whilst also trying to be clear and transparent about what was done, what worked and what I would have done differently, working in this vein I will begin to share with you a bit about how this project came about, and how it rose from the ashes of a project that never quite worked.

Failure – Telling the Story

I returned to academic study, in the form of a social research methods Masters in 2012, winning an ESRC funded place at the University of Sussex. This came a year after graduating from the same university as a 21-year-old with little or no interest in returning to academic study. On graduation I expected to be eligible for a reasonably well paid graduate job and a path to a more affluent life. Of course coming from a poor ethnic minority background, the post-recession job market was a barren and hostile environment; and I spent the next year working in the same minimum wage retail job I had when I was a student, whilst sofa surfing from place to place.

During this period a friend told me about the ESRC scheme and with the help of Luke Martell who had previously supervised my undergraduate dissertation, I applied. I remember being intrigued reading in an A-level textbook about Phillipe Bourgios' (2003) study of the crack dealers of El Barrio, a topic which spoke to some of the recent experiences of my youth, and finding it hard to imagine what the life of a sociologist might look like. In the end I concluded that it was perhaps something more privileged people did. Yet, I myself was about to embark

on a career path which I could not quite picture, but remained captivated by the subject matter and potential for discovery.

I wanted to use this project to investigate road life, something which I had lived in and around for a lot of my adolescence, understanding it mainly in practice. Studies such a Bourgois' helped me to understand that this could be something of interest to the academy whilst remaining close to my own lifeworld. This closeness, in a world where as a new graduate, white middle class pretentions confronted me at every turn, felt safe and authentic. As my research training developed, so did my ideas and expectations in relation to what constituted proper research. My training taught me that I should seek institutional settings for conducting safe and ethical research, utilizing methodologies such as action research. In the end the project I designed involved returning to my former school, which had some emotional ties for me and which I was able to approach as a successful 'insider', due to my position as a doctoral researcher and because of similarities between my own identity and those of the student body.

The research questions for this original project related to aspiration and social mobility. I was interested in understanding how young people raised in a context where street culture had some resonance understood aspiration and what kind of expectations they had of their lives. This project worked with a 'minefield analogy' that conceptualised less advantaged young people as having to contend with unexpected events and 'critical moments' (Thomson et al., 2002) as they traverse their everyday social environments. The study was to be an examination of how students with a variety of levels of immersion in road life understood and coped with their own and outside expectations of success and failure.

This project hit serious stumbling blocks at the point of gaining access to the school, even after permission was verbally granted. The project could have worked in another set of circumstance (with another researcher) or perhaps if I chose to proceed in another location. However, for a number of reasons I felt compelled to take a change of direction. Before the end of my first year of PhD study I had been in contact with the school I wished to conduct my research in and had provisional agreements in place. By Christmas of my second year, and after several visits to the school, some successful others less so, I still had not been granted formal access to conduct my research. One condition for access was the completion of a Disclosure Barring Service Check (formally CRB). The external check arrived within a matter of days yet the internal process within the school lasted for around three months, which is not what we (the senior teachers I was liaising with) had anticipated. Over this period, I chased this

process up more or less weekly, on two occasions being instructed to visit the school to then be told on arrival that the relevant person was on annual leave. When taken as a standalone instance, this seemed to point to bureaucratic inefficiency in the school, but when I later reflected both with my supervisors and independently on my experiences at the school I felt that perhaps I was a 'body out of place' (Puwar, 2004). Below is an extract from a piece of reflective writing I wrote about a visit I made to the school:

A particularly poignant moment in the conversation came whilst we were discussing ways in which we might work to facilitate access to enable me to work with students at the school. I fear that reciting it word for word is impossible but the conversation went something like this:

Yusef: Do you think I might apply as a learning mentor? As then I would be in the school full time.

Teacher 1: I think you could apply, and we would support you with that, but it would be very difficult… You're not the type that they want; they want these blonde haired, blue eyed, Oxbridge types

Teacher 2: We love you and we think you're a perfect fit, as you would relate so well to the students, but I agree you might find it very hard to get a position like that here

Teacher 1: They hired that Charles Webber, he was in your year I think

Yusef: Yeah I've seen on Facebook he's working here

Teacher 1: They want people like him; he's quite right wing in his views isn't he?

Again it's important to stress that this is not a word for word transcription but what struck me incredibly hard, was the way in which I was actively divorced from my community, the young people in the school, because I was too much like them. Whether this is an accurate depiction of the attitudes within the school now, it was one echoed by others in the community, as I later discussed this conversation with a peer who also went to South London Comprehensive:

Dee: Fuck 'em, they only hire white guys there now, everyone knows they're racist.

Though that's a strong assertion, it's interesting to think about in terms of the lines along which we relate to people. My sameness in relation to the student body seemed

to be what invalidated me and what meant, according to common knowledge; I wasn't right to be a learning mentor. It also struck me that the gatekeepers in the school weren't representative of the communities they served.

In later discussions with my supervisors and another academic at a different university I disclosed details of this conversation, this is when I began to understand the gravity of my experience of returning to the school. It would be wrong to say that at any time I had been overtly racially discriminated against, but the feet dragging and passive aggression I experienced also made it apparent that I was not especially welcome. In the above abstract my lack of whiteness was identified, though my race was not explicitly acknowledged, it was a factor which contributed to a feeling that I was less than qualified for the position. Puwar (2004:68) illustrates below the normality (in relation to politics) of the white body constituting a political individual:

> "One of the primary ways in which racial domination is reproduced is through the unstated yet overriding somatic norm that underlines somataphobic constructions of the abstract political 'individual'… There is a subtle positioning of the universal body as a white male body, one that is beyond bodily particularity, while the others remain marked by their gender or racial positioning" (Puwar, 2004: 68).

I began to feel the same feeling as when I was a fresh faced graduate entering in to the professional world, whereby my difference became a hindrance, and all the things, unsaid but implied, in my assimilatory education became apparent. This incident was what caused a shift in my thinking relating to, not only my methodology, but also the focus of my study. Conducting insider research is not only complicated in relation to engaging with the target population of your research, it is also inflected with power relations which effect relationships with gatekeepers as well as within the academy. Learning this was important in the process of designing a practically realizable research project. All the specialist training I had received in my Social Research Methods master's degree felt as if it was designed for an 'abstract political individual' Puwar speaks of, and required some specialist tailoring in order to fit to the needs of a non-traditional insider researcher.

In a sense the 'minefield analogy' was turned on me as a researcher and away from my initial target demographic. The following sections describe how I navigated the minefield of the non-traditional social researcher, encountering stumbling blocks whilst searching for and arriving at plateaus of security. This methodological tale is cautionary but also reflective and celebratory.

'Research You Can Do' – Turning to Narrative Method

When reflecting on the problems I encountered with my initial research design I received an important piece of advice from my academic supervisor Rachel Thomson; 'Do research you can do!'. This sounds almost ludicrously straightforward, however, it raises serious questions about the way researchers are trained. I was not able to negotiate the obstacles that blocked me from realizing my ambition of creating a participatory research project at the school that I had attended. However, I began to realise that despite some pathways being blocked due to my personhood, others were more open to me than other researchers with differing personal biographies. My positionality did not necessarily preclude me from doing good, ethical, research. Understanding what my positionality meant in relation to my project was centrally important in this process, helping me to redesign the project so that it aligned with my strengths and with ideas and methods from my education – rather than dogmatically following examples of good practice from my methodological training.

The research project of today relies heavily on my own networks and local knowledge of actors in the community. Seeking to interview people who may not be attached to any specific institution means there is nowhere to withdraw to. Added to this many may reject such a methodology as lacking academic rigor and being myopic in its approach (Alvesson, 2003; Anderson & Herr, 1999; Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994). However, adapting this project to utilise my community networks enabled me to access a group of participants, who actually had definitive experience of road life. This cultivated grounds for a more rigorous and exact study of experiences of life on road. As I will go on to explain, my closeness to the field meant that doing any form of observation felt too invasive and ethically complicated. Instead I turned to narrative inquiry as a body of work that would help me facilitate the telling of people's stories in ways that might be productive for my participants and for me- providing reflective space to explain not only what had been happening, but how and why as well.

Narrative inquiry is a method which has proliferated from the margins of a variety of social research disciplines (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000). Researchers from fields as diverse as anthropology (Bateson, 1994; Geerz, 1994), psychology (Polkinghorne, 1988; Murray, 2000; 2003; Emerson & Frosh, 2004), psychotherapy (Coles, 1989), Sociology (Thomson et al., 2002; 2003; 2004; Holland & Thomson, 2009), transition studies (MacDonald, 1998; 2006; MacDonald et al., 2001; MacDonald & Marsh, 2002; 2004; 2005) history (Spence, 1982; McLeod & Balamoutsou, 2001), education (Clandinin and Connelly, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; 1994; Casey, 1995; Dorries & Haller, 2001 Marshall & Case, 2010) and beyond.

Connelly and Clandinin (2000) cite the work of Marcus and Fischer (1986) who viewed this growth in the use of narrative in research as so revolutionary it formed an 'experimental moment' in social inquiry. The academic interest in narrative is mirrored by a narrative turn in popular culture with the telling of personal stories operating as an everyday method for sense making. Researchers (typically anthropologists) point to the strong oral traditions in other cultures around the (usually 'developing') world in order to evidence the centrality stories play in shaping people's understandings of the world. I do not contest this, indeed possibly the earliest sociologist Ibn Khaldun was heavily immersed in the strong traditions of oral prose and poetry which were common in the Islamic world during his time (Rosenthal, 1958). Stories also provide the form through which we access meaning and information here in the west, whether it is news stories on the radio, the early socialization evident in children's fairy tales, or the moral stories emanating from hyper dramatized television soap operas. It seems that humans have (whether innate or socialised) a tendency to develop an ear for stories, something which led Jerome Bruner (1987) to describe us as a species of '*homo narrans'*.

Narrative work requires an understanding (in reality a perspective) of/on what narratives are, how they relate to knowledge and how they should be analysed, amongst other things. There are many ways of understanding narratives, which has implications for how they are analysed. While I am sympathetic to critical theory and Marxist or neo-Marxist traditions I found that I was compelled to treat the narratives that were being shared with me in a way that departs from the characteristic readings in these fields. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007: 19) regard Marxist contributions to social research and knowledge creation to be a welcome '…tonic for Pollyannaish liberal social policy that seeks a solution to all social problems through programs of individual self-improvement'. However, they point to a key ideological 'border' which separate Marxism and critical theory from the pragmatic relational ontology which narrative researchers commonly ascribe to.

The core difference between the two is the Marxist tendency to reject ideology as 'false consciousness'. The Marxist ontology varies from positivist and other ontologies by viewing the external conditions of the social world as requiring (or being determined to encounter) mass social change. Rather than being a mere reflection of society, critical theory and Marxism often seek to intervene in it (ibid). This in itself perhaps is not radically different to many narrative enquirers, indeed I myself have found the work of Marxist thinkers such as Gramsci enlightening in regards to understanding the social structures which shape human life. However, it is the traditional Marxist notion of ideologies which undermines the narrative

approach as it regards experiential data as being mystified by ideologies which prevent people from seeing the true material conditions of society (ibid).

> "Marxism privileges the macrosocial material conditions of life as the primary influence on human life and thinking… narratives are frequently considered obstacles to be overcome on the way to a more realistic understanding of the causes of human experience." (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007: 17)

This view of ideology mystifying everyday judgement is one that I have found problematic. I agree that individuals in practice are all partial and very few if any could be said to be experts in their own lives, something which includes academics (Back, 2007). Nevertheless, I believe in their partiality they can indeed unveil something about the material and emotional conditions of the world; which themselves could be regarded as existing in a dialectical relationship. In my approach to understanding narrative I have leant heavily on the work of Connelly & Clandinin (2000) and Clandinin & Rosiek (2007) and their interpretations of the work of John Dewey which they use to build a pragmatic relational ontology which:

> "…takes the immediacy of lived experiences, specifically its narrative qualities, as a fundamental reality to be examined and acted on. According to this view, all representations of experience— including representations of the macrosocial influences on that experience—ultimately arise from first-person lived experience and need to find their warrant in their influence on that experience." (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007: 49).

This position is basically both pragmatic and relational one. It is pragmatic in the sense that it accepts that little can be known outside of experience and that all knowledge is somehow derived from and folds back in to experience. Another way of putting this is:

> "…what you see (and hear, feel, think, love, taste, despise, fear, etc.) is what you get. That is all we ultimately have in which to ground our understanding. And that is all we need." (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007: 8).

It is relational in the sense that it views human experience as involving an interaction between the interior of a person and the exterior world. In this way I feel that a relational and pragmatic ontological approach not only has the capacity to acknowledge the influence of structures in people's lives but also the flexibility to understand how these are negotiated as they 'land' on individuals. This also necessitates the adoption of a transactional epistemology,

which emphasises the importance of multiple perspectives in the research process, incorporating the "…influence of social structures and processes at micro and macro levels during analyses" (Lal et al, 2012: 8). It also means that the researcher too should be regarded as subjectively positioned in relation to their understanding of the social world, as opposed to being neutral observing somehow from beyond its boundaries (Charmaz, 2009).

Paying exclusive attention to structure and ideology would alternatively risk missing the ways in which people cope with and subvert these structures in their everyday lives. The narrative tradition has been used in this way by thinkers in the Critical Race Theory (CRT) tradition, where stories are used to challenge and intervene in structural injustices. In this way it too shares aspects of the narrative and Marxist approach as, observed by Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), but unlike the Marxists it treats narratives as vitally important in shedding light on and speaking out against the injustices encountered in lived experience. A strong theme in CRT is one of developing counter-narratives which serve to challenge ideologies of racism, using the perspectives of people's stories. In this way the stories of minoritised people are valued, not disregarded, and used to elucidate the ways false ideologies of racism enact injustice in the lived world. This has epistemological consequences for how people's narratives should be treated:

> "It is not enough for us to tell our stories. We must use them as text for research and interpretation. Giving narrative form to experience creates a rich evidentiary record for analysis and assessment of complex social processes… In embracing the use of narrative as cultural text, practitioners of the Word must consider and employ methodologies of research and interpretation that draw upon the wealth of articulated experience and feelings contained in our stories. These methodologies must also serve to give legitimacy and authority to this way of knowing." (Lawrence, 1991: 2283).

Lawrence (ibid) describes as narrative as a 'contextualizing methodology'. He argues that minoritised people's perspectives are stripped of, or lack contextual information due to the particularity of their experiences. This leads to them being dismissed as meaningless due to the often white reader lacking the contextual framework of understanding which makes all stories intelligible. He argues something similar to Tyler's (2013) notion of postcolonial amnesia, whereby more powerful actors often try to frame phenomena in a kind of ahistorical vacuum which overlooks injustices experiences by collectives of minoritised people in favour of a 'colour blind' or whitewashed interpretation. Lawrence (1991) holds that it is vital to bring

stories of those experiencing injustice in their everyday lives to light as they constitute emotive evidence that challenges attempts by the powerful to use ideology to cover up wrong doing.

The idea of inviting, collecting and sharing the narratives was a key ambition for this study. My aim is to hear and communicate what life is like at the hard edge of society; how people make sense of this experience and try to cope. Of course like all stories they are partial in both senses; limited and incomplete as well as told from a particular perspective and biased (Back, 2007). However, collectively they tell us something about a shared experience, across an array of subjectivities, of life on road in a variety of spaces during a particular time span. It is in this way I have understood and analysed them; as a patchwork quilt (Mirza, 2009) each telling a story of a life lived on the margins of neo-liberal Britain, which together comprise and intelligible whole, elucidating things about the collective experience of life on road.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) acknowledge the limitations of this ontological position citing its risk of myopia. They advocate for the proper training of narrative researchers so as to make them aware of the socio-structural conditions of their epoch and enthused by a desire to change them for the better. People, especially poor people, have to live lives which give them the best chance of surviving and succeeding in the world, it is the job of those trained in the art of the sociological imagination (Mills, [1959] 2000) to help make the connections. It is not because I think people are not capable of understanding such issues, on the contrary my position holds people's accounts as valuable because they can, but it takes engagement in elusive academic texts involving meta-theory which often enables the sociologist to make the connection and allow their imaginative interpretations of the world to be available to those who need them.

Project Design – Collecting Primary Data

Over the course of 2016 I worked with twelve people conducting unstructured interviews with both male (5) and female respondents (7), providing the primary data for the study. Participants were all aged between 20 and 30 at the time of the interviews. Ethnically the participant pool was varied with mixed race, South American, black African, black Caribbean, white Irish (mixed British) and Arab respondents. Not all respondents were born in the UK but all have lived here for a large part of their lives and spent time in the English educational system. Issues surrounding race are important to this study, although I deliberately sought to recruit a mixture of respondents in relation to their racial heritage. This was semi-successful as

there were some meaningful discussions relating to race, ethnicity and religion but they would have benefitted from some more structured questioning relating to these issues.

This is a relatively small sample size, and actually represents a slightly smaller number than initially anticipated, but as Benner (1994) argues often sample size remains fluid during the fieldwork process. Guest et al (2006) suggested that 12 interviews were sufficient in their study if West African sex workers, and additional interviews offered little new insights, though Morse (1995) argued that sampling size is elastic and elsewhere reminds us that trying to "…predetermine sample size is a futile task" (Morse, 2015: 22). The main reason behind the sample size is one shared with many narrative studies; that of the 'extensive' (Jones, 2003: 42) nature of narrative methods of investigation. In this case long interviews and subsequently 'labour-intensive analytical procedures' (ibid) contributed largely to limiting the number of interviews which took place. Small sample size can still have consequences for the validity of a study due to a lack of 'variation and depth' in the data (Morse, 2015: 22). This can limit understanding by not creating a detailed enough picture of the phenomena under observation.

Unstructured interviews were also utilised in order to avoid potentially restricting the depth of the data collected (Morse, 2015), an approach that does not foreclose what it is possible to say or what might be relevant to the project themes (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Of course this raised issues of its own including limiting the potential for thematic saturation in subsequent analysis (Guest, et al, 2006). I feel though that generalisability and saturation is a difficult aim in relation to a fluid subcultural grouping. Instead, I felt that given the rich data I had collected provided textual evidence for the themes I drew out. As Guest et al (2006: 77) observe:

> "Ultimately, themes should be able to be linked to data points; that is, one should be able to provide evidence of a given theme within the text being analyzed".

My choice of participants was guided by purposive sampling (Patton, 1990), and a grounded theoretical approach that helped me think about what kind of person might enable me to develop and extend emergent understandings (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The theoretical approach which guided this was Gunter's (2008) road culture continuum and the idea was using my local knowledge base to gather participants who had all been involved in some way with road life but who had a variety of experiences amongst their collective trajectories. This was to try to catch the breadth of experience amongst those on road, with a view to try to

examine what common elements might have shaped their experiences. This search for heterogeneity did not follow an 'extreme or deviant case' (ibid) approach as it was not a quest for polar opposites, instead it was more of an engagement with everyday difference. This follows the logic of both grounded theory and the road culture continuum which states the vast majority of young people do not occupy the 'spectacular' (Gunter, 2008) end of road life thus any attempt to direct the study exclusively towards this extreme would cause the study to examine phenomena through an astigmatic lens, blurring out a large majority of experiences of road life. Instead intensity sampling better captures the logic behind the selection of participants:

> "Intensity sampling involves the same logic as extreme case sampling but with less emphasis on the extremes…. Extreme or deviant cases may be so unusual as to distort the manifestation of the phenomenon of interest. Using the logic of intensity sampling, one seeks excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest, but not unusual cases." (Patton, 1990: 171)

In this way intensity sampling was used to seek cases of individuals who had spent time on road but varied in their levels of involvement, family lives, education and trajectories. It was also about selecting cases who had 'rich' narratives which they were willing to share with me. This meant accessing gang active and former gang active participants (with little mainstream employment history) as well as those with little formal education but some work history; university graduates (ranging from Oxbridge to former polytechnics) and those who had accessed work based training programs. In reality these categories were somewhat blurred and temporal, which reflects the reality of the continuum, hence why the diversity amongst participant trajectories was important in illustrating this.

I used my local knowledge to ascertain what constituted a rich sample. Generally, all participation was preceded by several conversations outlining what the research was about and seeking to understand whether participants felt they had enough experience to speak on the subject of road life. These could be experiences engaging with criminality but mostly it was considered as a cultural category and was reflected in peer group interests including; music, fashion, activities and physically spending time socializing on road. Mostly it was judged on how meaningful a concept road culture was to a participant and whether they felt qualified and willing to talk about it.

Interestingly, this combination of theoretical and intensity sampling found some support in the data with participants often reflecting on difference amongst their peers and a level of ambiguity surrounding the great variety of reasons people may end up involved (at least for some time) with road life. This kind of mutual recognition of difference also led to two incidents of purposeful snowball sampling (ibid) where on one occasion a more 'active' participant suggested I interviewed a friend of his with similar experiences to his own and a young woman recommended I interview a friend of hers because of the differences between their trajectories in to road life.

Due to the sampling model I was able to select 'rich' cases who would be prepared to share intimate reflections on their lives. As I was not going through gatekeepers (as is typical in most subcultural youth research) I could ask questions which perhaps as a youth professional you may not be able to as well as access slightly older young adults who might not be accessing local youth services any longer. It also enabled me to develop an unstructured active interview approach (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995) as participants were generally relaxed enough to engage in a more conversational (and intuitively normal) style of interview.

The result of this is that often the data gathered contained detailed insights in to participants' trajectories and family lives. It also provided more of a space for people to reflect on how they felt about things, on a personal, but also more of a collective level. Rather than observing participants' behaviours in the world, I was able to listen to what they thought about themselves and others in their communities, allowing to address issues of why things happen as opposed to merely how (Charmaz, 2008). I feel that this gave a unique insight which redirected the focus of the study, away from a more rational choice style analysis, to something more resembling cultural criminology; emphasizing the import of how people feel in shaping their lives and trajectories, as well as understanding the social structures which may have cultivated such feelings (Mills, [1959] 2000).

Secondary Data – Providing Cultural Context

Road culture has a close connection to UK Grime Music. The lyrical content of the music speaks about the experience of social exclusion and the aspirations and attitudes it shapes. The practices of the music scene also provide public spaces through which communities can gather, enabling solidarity and trouble, as well as the creation of audiences beyond the locality.

Road life's almost intrinsically public nature (Gunter, 2010) made it possible for me to engage in cultural observation and analysis throughout the research, including online ethnographic observations in relation to Grime music and the policing of this scene. This material is integrated into the chapters. No artists were actually interviewed for this project, as there would have been serious issues of access and anonymity. Instead I drew on the array of material made public by various Grime artists describing and depicting their experiences and cultural reference points. I combined these with accounts from my research participants to help elucidate some of the cultural aspects to life on road.

My conviction that the musical culture of 'the roads' deserves a place in this thesis was in part a response to Hallsworth's (2013) claim that the roads 'do not have culture' due to a heightened presences of hedonism – a claim I find both misguided and elitist. I am a fan of UK urban music so I compiled and analysed an array of music videos, articles, and vlog style posts by artists active in the UK music scene. Most of these artists are commonly described as Grime musicians, although some might regard themselves more generically as comprising a part of the UK Rap scene. The relation they have to road culture is a tentative one and much of the association is due to many of them having a history of mentioning road life in interviews and their lyrics. It is important to emphasise that music is a part of UK urban culture as well as broader popular culture and transatlantic black diasporic culture (Gilroy, 1993), but these things should not be totally conflated. I have made no judgement as to what level of 'activity' in road life any of the artists featured have ever or will ever have and I focus on their cultural contribution to the urban scene, a broad cultural category, which road life has an iterative relationship with.

My use of this kind of contextual material was used for chapter 4 of this thesis on Grime music. as I wanted to reveal something the ingenuity of these texts and to suggest that they have a part to play in the development of sociological and cultural understanding of social exclusion. All of these testimonies were made public via YouTube and other online publications, and have been referenced and treated as such. Gatson (2011: 252) described this as 'disguised' but not deceptive observation, as although the producers of online content are unlikely to expect that it may be used for research purposes, they have though offered up their public subjectivities for open access:

> "The contemporary publicly accessible website carries with it an expectation of being under some level and type of observation, and it is questionable whether anyone participating in such sites has a reasonable or defensible expectation of being

unobserved, or indeed of being able to control the observers' intentions or uses of such observation." (Gatson, 2011: 252).

This does not mean that there are no ethical limits to this kind of cultural research. I did not analyse or collect Twitter or Instagram posts, but chose instead to use material posted on YouTube or in online newspapers or magazines. I felt that this data was more reflective of the well-considered public selves artists tend to produce as part of their public image. Song lyrics, in particular, contain elements of public experience but also are protected by the carapace of artistic license making any unintended readings of their work an issue of cultural interpretation and less so their own personal accountability.

Data Analysis - Grounded Theory and Inductive Research

This project took an inductive approach to the research process. This meant the study lacked a formal hypothesis, something which was reflected in the breadth of the research questions, and instead sought to build theory directly from the data. In some ways this study loosely drew on the grounded theoretical tradition (Glaser & Straus, 1967). This is an approach which claims a shared heritage with the narrative tradition in the shape of the American pragmatist tradition (Lal et al, 2012). The extent to which grounded theory influenced the design of this study was reflected in the design of interviews along with the ways in which the focus of the project was allowed to develop. This was done by utilising Strauss' and Corbin's (1998) 'first principle' of grounded theory; attentiveness to change. This derives from a belief that neither strict determinism nor non-determinism manage to grasp social phenomena, making understanding change vitally important. From the beginning, this project has encompassed change in relation to its focus and design.

This also fits with grounded theory's commitment to allowing analysis to emerge from the data. In this project life on road was the subject area I was interested in investigating, though it soon became apparent that in order to properly gain insight in to this area my approach would have to change (see above section on Research You Can Do). This is what led to my decision to engage in open ended unstructured narrative interviews in order to create space for people to speak about their lives on the roads. The lack of a strict framework in the interview encounter was designed to allow interpretative space for myself as an interviewer to respond to things people said in the moment as well as reflect and develop inquiry after the interview was complete.

Like all approaches this one had its limitations such as creating especially long and rich transcripts which became difficult to manage and limited the number of participants I could engage. However, the depth of these interview encounters forced me to think about things I had not before considered, therefore shaping my analysis. I began to develop theory from these "background ideas that inform the overall research problem" (Charmaz, 2003: 259) with the concept of the 'munpain' emerging as a sensitizing concept (Blumer, 1954). The 'munpain', served as an idea which focusses largely on how everyday experiences of social suffering makes people feel and motivates their 'performative management' of this phenomena. This grew out of the things people said to me about their lives and experiences on road. The original interview conversation which sparked this idea was when I spoke to a respondent (T) about the popular theme of 'pain' in grime music. This was a question based on a view from the outside, a view of road life presented and manufactured to some extent to meet the demands of popular culture. T was vexed by this line of questioning and went to describe everyday occurrences of rejection, humiliation, boredom and hardship and told me that was the 'real pain'.

In this way the study, like many others, leant on selected aspects of the grounded theoretical approach in order to help develop new theory (Hodgkinson, 2015). It is through this process which shaped this thesis and forced me to try to accept and recognise change both within my work and the world which surrounds it. My job was to respond to it with rigorous analysis and creative interpretation as Patton (1990: 434) describes:

> "Qualitative evaluation inquiry draws on both critical and creative thinking – both the science and the art of analysis." (Patton, 1990: 434)

The active interviewing techniques discussed earlier complimented this method of analysis by offering co-produced transcripts already brimming with social theoretical insight. Grounded theory fit in well with my own positionality to the research subject and in the following section I will talk in more detail about being an insider researcher, and what to extent this could be considered to blur the distinction between narrative inquiry and ethnography.

Ethnography or Not To Be?

> "What is ethnography for us? Most importantly it is a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly *in its own terms,* the irreducibility of

human experience. Ethnography is the disciplined and deliberate witness-cum-recording of human events" (Willis & Trondman, 2000: 5)

The crux of the dilemma surrounding whether or not this study constitutes an ethnographic one is essentially the purposeful lack of any real world observational, participant or otherwise, fieldwork. All of the data which was analysed for this project came from interview encounters or online ethnographic data collection. This raises the question of whether there was sufficient 'sustained social contact' with participants in the field for this project to be considered an ethnographic one. Many of the other features of ethnographic work are present, or at least according to Willis' and Trondman's (2000) *Ethnographic Manifesto*. There is a concerted attempt even via the method of data analysis was designed to engage theory and 'sensitizing concepts' in order to tease 'out patterns from the texture of everyday life' (Willis and Trondman, 2000:7). I would also argue that culture has been treated as an issue of central importance with people's 'increasing imperative to find and make their own roots, routes and 'lived' meanings' (ibid: 8) one of the main areas of social life explored.

I argue that the work is also 'critical focused' and seeks, by engaging theory, to understand how the 'conditioned being' (Pickering, 1997: 172) interacts with cultural policy and politics. This has been done in the context of 'austerity Britain' with attention being paid to policy speak and directives which affect/effect those involved in this study in a variety of ways. I have sought to challenge policy orientated understandings of problems and phenomena in order to try to focus on 'actual ways of life' (Willis and Trondman, 2000) which are not notions conjured by policy experts or politicians, but those actually living a life on road.

This leads me full circle to whether or not my relation to participants in the field can be considered sustained enough to consider myself an ethnographer. My answer is yes, because although the fieldwork that forms the content explicitly used for analysis comes from time limited interviews, the relationships which facilitated them do not. The reason I have been obliged to approach and analyse my data in an ethnographic way is because I have been around some variation of street culture for most of my life, with a fluctuating level of involvement. The people in my interviews do not just exist to me as fixed in that momentary transcript, but as people whose lives have interwoven with my own in the time before and since. The reason I chose not to use methods of explicit participant observation was because I wanted to give people the opportunity to give a co-constructed account of their social world. I feel my positionality resembles Dorothy Smith's (1990: 87) assertion that 'there is no such thing as non-participant observation', in that as much as I am an observer, or more accurately

a researcher, in the social world I study, I am also an active participant in it. This exposure is a key element in what makes me able to offer grounded ethnographic insights which seek to challenge stereotypes and overly functional policy readings and directives. As Hammersly and Atkinson (1983: 23) explain:

> "…it is difficult for an ethnographer to maintain such preconceptions in the face of extended first hand contact with the people and settings concerned." (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1983: 23)

My 'insiderness' distinguishes this project from almost every other study on road life and even street culture more broadly. Most ethnographers access communities via institutional gatekeepers and professional contacts. Typically, researchers spend time working as or alongside youth and social workers in order to gain access and build trust with those they wish to research. I have lived my entire life in Brixton south London, and through my own local and broader networks I have been able to build a sufficiently rich participant cohort for the purposes of this study. This though, has not been without trial and it is another contribution this study makes to the ethnographic literature. It has posed ethical questions, as well as those regarding who is really able to engage in community based research. It has highlighted limitations in both the training and accessibility of both researchers and communities, particularly honing in on the level of elitism, and even potentially racism, aiding more conventional white middle class researchers and forcing those from less traditional academic backgrounds down less well trodden paths.

Conclusion

Writing this methodology chapter was a challenge for a few reasons. Mostly, as with a lot of academic writing, there is never enough space to say everything you would like, so decisions have to be made in relation to necessity. I have chosen not to talk at length about insider research in the traditional sense, not because I do not see it as problematic, but because I think it is my relationship as someone different in the academy which has affected this project more. Whilst the academy wants to know how close and inflected your view of your field is, it turns something of a blind eye on itself. My belief is that as neo-liberalism encroaches deeper and deeper in to people's psyches we need to speak more about how we accommodate difference in a professional context. Doing this is not straight forward, as it has both terrible and magnificent potential, but a profession which prides itself on reflexivity faces the prospect espistemicide (Hall, 2015) against those that embody difference if it cannot get a handle on its

own dominant subjectivity. In a sense when you work from academia's margins much of the methodological planning involved in your work becomes about ethics and authenticity – what you can say, or do, or get away with, without falling outside of the canon of legitimate knowledge and watching your career go down the toilet.

Chapter 2: The Munpain – Starting from the Bottom

In this chapter I develop the concept of munpain, naming the everyday existential suffering which emerged from the data. This concept has become the organizing concept for the thesis, capturing the base experience of social exclusion from which subsequent chapters flow. The chapter engages predominantly with two vignettes derived from the data which provide emotive and vivid demonstrations of how the munpain manifests in practice. These form the main body of the chapter and provide the raw materials for subsequent analysis and theoretical developments. The chapter draws on a wider selection of resources to aid in this process including academic literature and policy documents along with popular cultural texts and commentaries from a range of study participants; all of which seek to enrich analysis and provide important cultural contextualization. My aim is help to demonstrate the relationship between contemporary forms of social exclusion, which are commonly understood at a structural level and the inner feelings of those who live on society's fringes.

I chose to begin the thesis by focusing on the intimate experience of personal deficit, loss and marginality, as I believe this provides the emotional energy, nourishing the angst that drives the symbolic struggle for recognition and value – ideas that are addressed in the rest of this thesis. In essence the munpain is the process of suffering which comes about when people's social positionings (Bourdieu et al., 1999) are made intolerable. This can be regarded as a kind of social annihilation whereby identities become unliveable and therefore require adjustment via processes of performative management (Goffman, 1963). This is something which is arguably particular to the present conjuncture of socio-economic, technological, migratory and political shifts as outlined in the introduction. Insecurity and blurring of identity and meaning combines with widespread precarity (Young, 2007; Lee & Koffman, 2012; Standing, 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; McDowell et al., 2014) leading to a renewed focus on cultural inclusion and exclusion as a primary force for social cohesion in society (Young, 2007). This situation involves the suppression of difference and critical readings of history, leaving those on the margins with problematic cultural resources with which to interpret their social world. This was evidenced in many of the accounts shared with me during the research process, with poverty emerging as a focus of anxiety. Alicia describes how '*being broke wasn't an option*' for her in her teenage years, leading her to orient towards immediate gratification over long term goals:

Alicia: Yeah and 'cause I got used to that life, I always had my own money basically, and 'cause, you know, there was no, no *being broke-being broke wasn't an option*, I think because I didn't have a lot growing up… 'cause I didn't have a lot growing up I think when I-once I was able to make money it like erm, I dunno, sort of like an obsession, I *had to do what it took to make money*. You know 'cause I was independent when I moved out when I was 17 I had to do everything-like do what it took and… yeah, I dunno if I should say this…

Alicia's account is typical of others in the study who describe their entry into road life a result of a pre-existing sense of malaise (Mills, [1959] 2000). Experiences of poverty were often central, but belonging and identity were also important factors in road cultural orientation. Participants spoke about getting into road culture as part of a search for meaning and social fulfilment. Although each journey was unique, a common theme was that road cultural activity would begin and often peak between the ages of 12-18, a time when poor young people have limited social choices and are also often experiencing formative stages in their identity development. In the following extract Jeremiah explains how he became involved in road life through spending time with extended family in the Midlands area, where he would not be under such strict supervision from his father. Interestingly he juxtaposes his cousin's malaise when reaching adulthood; facing realities of his failed footballing ambitions, with the hedonism offered by life on road:

Jeremiah: But erm my proper introduction was in Leicester… would go up for at least a week and stay with my cousin James who is like three years older than me. So like, yeah he's like three years older than me, he lived in like-kind of like a grimy part of Leicester and like my cousins, so like in Leicester there's like two main gangs… erm… the group who was most about it was one that was like one that was affiliated to one of them … one of my cousins Hulk, and I think when he was 16 he was like 6 foot 3, 6 foot 4 and weighed like 17 stone at like 16, he was humungous, and people called him Hulk like when he's 25 people still called him Hulk, and errm, so he was like proper on it and they all were. And when I used to go up there and see them, like at 7 or 8 or whatever, he was still quite young. And he used to be on his football, but as soon as he realised he wasn't gonna be a footballer, at like 14, shit started to… And that coincided with him smoking weed and realising girls. And he was like I'm not gonna be a footballer and it was like *girls! Drugs!* Do you know what I mean? Like *Partying! Alcohol!* Der der der *fights!* Der der der, so there was all of this gang stuff as well. All

kicking off and then his, our older cousins and some other cousins on his mum's side, that was when he was old enough to start chilling with them, so then what happened is not only am I chilling with my older cousin, but my older cousin's older cousins. So then like I'm seeing all mad shit going on, so like when I'm going to Leicester that was like when I was really getting exposed to it.

Yusef: Did you enjoy it though going to Leicester?

Jeremiah: Ah yeah it was amazing. So if you think like, cause like there were certain time where it was proper dangerous and we were like fully exposed and we had to run away from people that probably would have stabbed us up and whatever else. But generally I was quite protected because I was always rolling with like older people, so I was quite protected. And I always enjoyed it but like it must have done some damage…

Jeremiah's existential musings on lifestyle, value and belonging contrasts with, yet enriches, Alicia's account of intolerable poverty. Other interviews also shed light on the way that street cultural tropes could be deployed as a resource mobilised against the malaise of growing up in poverty. Moussa explains that one of road culture's biggest appeals for young people living in social housing is the transgressive sense of style is offers; a form of value which can be recognised in wider society:

Moussa: …it's cause the whole world; I think it's a human being thing to go against the grain init.

Yusef: Do you think it's a road thing?

Moussa: it's not, it's not cause most of the man that's actually the biggest people, they was causing problems at their time init, even religious people; Moses, Jesus, they're all the rebels, they're all the criminals, they were the ones against the state, where people were looking at them like 'oh don't go with them people, they're gangsters' or whatever they had a label for them at the time init like, so I think that's what the glory of it is, 'cause you're against the establishment, you're-you're and the people like the people that go against the establishment init…

These accounts illustrate some of the ways in which these symbolic struggles are initiated, rooted in a sense of malaise, anxiety and feelings of deficit. However, these early encounters with alternative value systems can also entrench feelings of situated suffering, as Jeremiah

previously alluded to, when he spoke about the potential for damage, or as Moussa puts it 'really and truly [you've] fucked yourself up in the long run init'. Once involved in road life everyday struggles do not suddenly go away. Over time, as adulthood creeps in, they can become more acute as notions of accountability, journeys through the criminal justice system and material difficulties develop. Before we delve further in to the intimate sphere of the munpain I will outline some of the ideas which underpin its development and inner workings; including those relating to the study of everyday life. I will begin with a short discussion of the mundane.

Everyday Grounding

The study of everyday life has the potential for being understood as 'counter intuitive' by social commentators who argue sociology should be exclusively concerned with matters of great import (Moran, 2005; Scott, 2009). Susie Scott (ibid: 1) responds to such considerations by reminding us that 'everyday life *is*' the bigger picture; that micro-level practices are tied into macro-level configurations. Indeed, she argues that the sociology of everyday life has been present in many influential sociological works (e.g. Rowntree, 1901; Willmott & Young, 1960; Becker, 1963) which sought to unravel macro-level forces by observing the ways in which they played out in people's day to day existence. This historical context defies the relatively recent recognition of micro-sociology as a strand of sociological thought worthy of attention; leading Scott (2009: 3) to describe it as an 'absent presence' within the discipline.

Scott's reminder that everyday life has been ever-present in sociology shares much with Henri Lefebvre's thoughts on why the quotidian is so often overlooked. He regards everyday life as acting as a kind of 'residual deposit' (Lefebvre, 1991 [cited] in Moran, 2005: 8) left trailing in the wake of more celebrated aspects of contemporary society. Thinking in this way the everyday forms the dregs of what it left once conventional knowledge systems have drawn out all 'superior, specialised, structured activities' (Lefebvre, 1991: 97 [cited in] Moran, 2005: 8).

This notion of an absent presence is part of the rationale for foregrounding the munpain as the lead data chapter in this thesis. I felt it important to start my analysis in the everyday lives of participants, journeying outwards. This, I hope, is an important way to help focus analysis around the way in which participants use their agency in response to the social structures they observe in their surroundings. It is also to emphasise the importance of observations and material that might be lost in broad macro discussions. As Lefebvre (2003: 84) puts it:

"It… [is]… not a case of dissolving the individual in the collective and the private in the

socio-political, but of raising them to the collective and historical level, and so to the political level…"

Having said this, the approach of cultural studies (the sociological tradition upon which this study tentatively locates itself) to the examination of the everyday has been problematised (Moran, 2005). Moran (ibid) has characterised cultural studies as presenting everyday life either as 'ritual' or as 'popular consumption' orientated approaches. He argues that ritual based approaches find their origins in an ethnographic heritage. He draws on the work of Willis (1990) to demonstrate how cultural studies reads everyday practices as 'grounded aesthetics' (Willis, 1990: 21 [cited in] Moran, 2005: 9) which works to transgress the banality of working class realities with meanings imbued with fun and leisure. This emphasis on resistive practices brings us on to Moran's second characterisation; popular consumption. He draws on the work of Fiske (1989) and his work on 'micro-politics', a view which emphasises the ways in which commodities, once purchased, can resource individuals with modes of resistance in everyday practices.

Moran (2005: 11) argues that both in respect to ritual and consumption practices, cultural studies 'produce[s] a limiting notion of the everyday that values the creative and recreational over the banal and boring'. He says that this limitation requires more attention to be paid to quotidian routines that reside so firmly in lay knowledge that they hide pervasive and potent power relationships. In this regard he looks to Antonio Gramsci's (1971: 323) notion of 'spontaneous philosophy' which seeks to mobilise 'common sense' practices as part of the toolkit of the everyday philosopher.

I recognise Moran's concerns relating to cultural studies and everyday analysis. These concerns reflect those of my own in relation to the study of road life more broadly, where ultra-violence and hedonism attract more analytical attention than perhaps they should, leaving the prosaic aspects of life under-reported. I regard the munpain as forming a part of a base set of experiences people encounter in their daily lives. As such I hope to separate out the mundane and resistive elements of everyday life without losing track of their interconnectedness. My examination of the everyday is less about routinised features of life such as the expectations surrounding waiting at a bus stop (Moran, 2005; 2010), and more about the ways in which the everyday social expectations and stigmas people encounter, permeate in to these experiences. It is about thinking about 'what is at stake in our daily encounters' (Back, 2015: 1) and engaging in an examination of both the "wider spectrum of life experiences from the despair and social damage" down to "the ordinary triumphs of getting by" (ibid). The munpain is the

guiding analytical tool which I have devised in order to help elucidate this set of everyday experiences. Here, I wish to briefly proceed by explaining some of the interior mechanics of the munpain, leaning on an adaptation of the Meadian (1933) notions of 'I' and 'Me', which will help to illuminate the process.

The 'I' and the 'Me'

In order to help explain the processes involved in the munpain I have utilised the Meadian (1934) notions of the "I' And the "Me", in an adapted form. The "I" of the self is strongly influenced by our biographical, locational, racial, cultural, familial and immediate material realities. It is the part of the self which is virtually unknowable, yet it is also the 'perpetual self' (Rock, 1979); one which is totally immersed in experience. The 'I' then is the location where symbolic violence lands, via the immediacy of experience. This self is not static, but growing and evolving, yet still remains more consistent relative to the "me" selves projected in social situations. The extent to which an "I" self becomes apparent in outward projections is variable, depending on situation and audience. This being said many instances of renegotiated "Me" selves form a part of the process of transformation and development in the "I" self. The two are interdependent and exist as part of an internal-external praxis influencing the way in which an individual processes and projects in to their social world. As Mead ([1934] 2015: 178) puts it "The 'I'… calls out the 'me' and responds to it".

In this way the "I" self, though representing a somewhat more consistent habitual interior, is still socially inflected in a fundamental way. This interior self has social preference derived from either exposure, immersion or inclination to certain attitudinal approaches to the social world. These habitual attitudinal patterns can transform over time or relatively rapidly in light of new information or sets of circumstances arising, but their consistency also effects the type of "Me" selves projected in to the external world.

These selves are relational to a variety of stimuli including immediate individual interactions, institutional and cultural influences as well as meta structural and ideological discourses. Mead's (1934) 'generalized other' is an interesting tool to help understand this process, as an individual's understanding of self as well as performative behaviour is guided by this generalised sense of expectation which helps individuals to discern what is accepted normative behaviour. In this context these generalized others appear to have observable categorical manifestations such as in the prevalent expectations in local street cultural spaces juxtaposed with those in religious settings such as the church or the mosque. The expectations

of parents, of the school, of society more generally, all have discernible impacts influencing both the "I" and the "Me". Charlotte, a 25-year-old woman from south London, provides an interesting example of what it is like when these marked culturally influences on identity and behaviour collide. Elsewhere in her interview and in this thesis she speaks about being 'born on the roads'; she claims a sense of road cultural belonging other participants lacked and envied in the context of local urban spaces, yet as she matured and became aware of broader social attitudes towards her, she became 'mortified' (Cooley, 1922):

> Charlotte: I don't know, like, then I, I changed, I became so against it that I almost pretended that I wasn't like that, do you know what I mean? Like in my head I became so like *'oh my god you speak a bit road'* [impersonates posh voice and mannerisms] *'oh my god you do that'* like I just wanted to be so far removed because I was embarrassed when I realised…

Charlotte's comments reveal the embarrassment experienced when she sees her former self from another point of view. The kinds of bodily demeanour required on road left her vulnerable to ridicule beyond these neighbourhood spaces. This realisation causes Charlotte injury and motivates her to transform the "Me" she presents to the world resulting in complicated feelings about her sense of self and value. Charlotte relied heavily on canonical narratives (Bruner, 1991; 2004; 2009) of being a self-made independent business woman and of being capable of postmodern market orientated malleability. She continues by saying:

> Charlotte: Lack of knowledge, understanding and sometimes-some people it's too, *late*, they're so conditioned, they're so *hurt* and they're so conditioned and they're so tunnel visioned in the way that they feel, will make money and also that comes down to discrimination from the other class and you know, everyone's judgemental, that they honestly believe, that's their-*that's the only way. They honestly genuinely believe that*, *and that's sad simply because no one's ever shown them anything more!* You can see something but if you-if you don't understand it it's not gonna penetrate your mind, you're not gonna, and also if your very much-what I hear a lot is, especially from young black boys, iiisss '*ah dats what white people do, but that's a white ma'-*do you know what I mean? That's what the-that's how they distinguish it. So between them and their friends and their community, if they go and do that, *they're a sell out*…

Here Charlotte describes two discernible modes of collective understanding colliding, this time outside of herself in the social world. She herself indicates the internal, not bodily but

psychological, injuries caused by symbolic violence carried out by 'the other class'. This induces shame to the "I" of a person, which leads to her claiming that once devalued, people strategically withdraw from systems governed by a particular form of generalized other. White people (middle or upper class white people specifically) are seen to symbolise this generalized other, with inferences made about the power of this group to hold knowledge and limit the opportunities for personal development for those on road. There is a strong racial undertone in the use of the term 'white people' which alludes to a long history of racial discrimination limiting specifically black but also perhaps other minoritised people's access to opportunities.

Charlotte's analysis of this situation is that people on road have a negotiated view of themselves in society. They recognise the broader societal impetus to be successful but the injury to their sense of selfhood causes them to emphasise inclusion in the social behavioural expectations of certain discernible 'generalized others'; those operating in the alternative value system in their locality (Mead, 1934) over others associated with mainstream society. This leads to what she claims to be a kind of collective withdrawal on the part of young black men from mainstream corporate masculinities in favour of more street orientated presentations of the self; "Me".

It is noteworthy that Charlotte presents herself as existing beyond the confines of those who have not seen 'anything more'. Her own personal biography is telling in relation to this as she speaks extensively about an older cousin who mentored her and also experience of being engaged by a youth advocacy charity as broadening the scope of her experience, causing her to understand the world anew. This being said, Charlotte's interview (like others) were characterised at times by a palpable sense of contempt expressed in part by the imitations of the voices of others. In the above she can be seen particularly emphasizing annunciations using the letter 'd' instead 'th' and using an impression, typically of a stereotypical 'road guy', with humorous undertones which implied a certain kind of idiocy.

This is something which was marked throughout this study, a kind of self-ambivalence (Goffman, 1963) and distancing juxtaposed with immediacy and informed telling. It could perhaps be read as part of the interview process whereby certain, often contradictory, selves were presented. This was done perhaps as part of the inconsistency of recalling a narrative which contains shifting dispositions or for the purposes of being both an expert and moral critic in the interview setting. These attitudes may well have been variable depending on the context of the individual or collective others they were aimed at.

I would argue these instances of disjointedness and irony reveal something of the social suffering plaguing the participants of this study. Later in the chapter the work of Frantz Fanon is drawn on in order to help develop the analysis of the "I" and the "Me" in practice. The foregrounding of experience is vital in this analysis because it intimates something about what is commonly not articulated in speech, but is the result of an immersion in experience. Frantz Fanon was a pioneer of analysing the psychological impacts of racism, exposing the individual and collective impacts of historically and structurally imbedded symbolic violence. In the following section I will explore the 'lived-through' experiences of the munpain elucidated by the participants of this study, as well as an example from Grime MC Bugzy Malone, drawn from the wider popular culture connected to the roads.

Road Life and The Munpain

It was rare in this study for the munpain to be verbalised explicitly; my understanding of the munpain came from a process of interrogating silences. Martin Glynn (2014) described these as moments where things went 'unsaid' but were 'visibly noticeable'. He adapted Serrant-Green's (2010) notion of silences in his study of black men, crime and desistance, observing how often black men would 'suffer in silence'. He argued that his participants systematically used silence as means to protect themselves from the 'agents of their oppression'. In a song reflecting on his time in prison and the possibility of returning, the grime artist Bugsy Malone talks of remembering the smell, the atmosphere and the lighting - commenting that the '*silence speaks louder than the bell that has been ringing for the last 15 minutes*' – noting that the bell may be alerting guards to a suicide or incident of self-harm– but they 'don't care' and a law of the prison is that 'you never ask how did he get there' (BBC Radio 1Xtra, 2016) [Emphasis added].

For Bugzy the silence was inexorable, embodied within it were many of the monotonous corporeal features of prison life, whilst also containing something impalpable. This is a feature of the munpain more generally, bridging the physical and metaphysical realms of existence. The extract above provides powerful imagery containing ominous undertones, with Bugzy hinting at the psychological suffering which can manifest in such spaces. Feelings of dehumanization and anonymity propagated by the neglect of the 'officers' as well as the feelings of confinement and institutionalization. In the midst of this steely institution the absence of explanatory power wielded by inmates impresses a feeling of muteness on the listener, that lack of voice, leaving only overwhelming silence reverberating inside the concrete walls. On the roads these silences are everywhere.

Typically, these silences were focused around the minutest details of a person's day to day life, but they were of real importance in many ways. The munpain does not manifest uniformly, it is insidious; forcing its way in to the quiet places of a person's life, infusing their fears and insecurities. The silence perhaps reflects the less knowable areas of a person's self, the "I" which is less easily put in to words. Quite counterintuitively the moments of high drama could be regarded as offering respite from the quiet times, from the incessant boredom that poverty in the midst of prosperity might bring. It also reminds one of the most alienating features of social exclusion and oppression; the effects of rampant individualism on the soul of a person. In terms of its impact on the lives on road explored in this thesis, the munpain was the starting point, the sickness that road related activities promised road to alleviate. For many the roads, in the most literal sense, were the only place to go. Stigma is an important part of the munpain, and could make talking about difficult. T however broached it head on. Twenty-three years old at the time of interview, T already had a long history of gang related activity, and although he revels in the status this brings him in the locality and beyond, he proved to be a subtle analyst of the ways in which this notoriety worked. In his interview he spent time explaining to me that most gang members are on benefits and being gang active does not equate to a stereotypical Mafioso lifestyle (see chapter 5). He also seemed to be trying to communicate that, although many gang active young people experience trauma, it is not always the things that make the headlines that are important.

Yet, he also alluded to a different kind of social suffering based in his everyday experiences of trying to get by living on a south London council estate. He focused on minute moments of reflection and social interaction which did not contain any speech or explicit drama. I give his account significant attention because it shows us the importance of the implicit and the mundane in shaping everyday meaning:

> T: Everybody's broke, struggling, the pain, it's just pain man. Pain can be-it's pain, everything's pain, you wake up one day and then you find out that you got a fucking congestion fine for £65 and then on top of that you're on bail and then on top of that there's no toothpaste, its more pain, you gotta break in to another tenner-you know what I mean it's just pain, all angles, so that's pain man. Everything's pain in London, everything's pain… That pain is just no money, then there's a lot of things to do, angles to go to, clubs, parties, you got no money to go, no clothes to go, that's *paaaiiin, paaaiin.* Then on top of that you got to go sign on Jobcentre, the girl you just spoke to last week that you told you own a BMW, she's just seen you in the Jobcentre, that's

> *PAAAAIIIIINNN*… Then they sanction you when you're late, give you more pain, put you in rent arrears, it's just more pain, then you have to phone people, say can I borrow some money, then you pay your rent, then that person's phoning you know saying 'where the fucks my money?' It's pain more pain, the pain don't stop, it just continues, *pain, pain every day*.

In this extract I was asking T about Grime music and why 'pain' was a recurring theme, this was one of the few times during my interviews when the silence was broken. T, perhaps vexed by my line of questioning lifted the lid on the banalities of life on road; in his account the frustrations are multiple and extend into many areas of his life. Negotiating various penal and welfare arms of the state has its own intrinsic problems, but also balancing the negative associations of being a 'welfare scrounger' with his local reputation and self-esteem required constant work which at any moment could be undone, as evidenced by his anxiety around being spotted at the Job Centre.

One of the central elements of the munpain manifesting in T's life is exclusion from activities relating to popular culture, something highlighted earlier in relation to post-subcultural studies' somewhat naïve fascination with elite stylistic cultural forms. To be young in a large city like London is surely to have the opportunity to be on the cutting edge of the youth scene; instead T tells a story of watching on from the side-lines. A combination of limited access to urban space due to local beefs and police harassment is interwoven with a lack of economic capital, the inability to have the correct 'clothes to go' (cultural capital, see chapter 3) shows the way in which exclusion manifest viscerally, through the appearance of the individual and the places they can physically inhabit. His description of 'pain all angles' shows how all-encompassing these minute problems can be, in the quiet moments when you first 'wake up' you're being hit by multiple frustrations, having to manage the limited capital you have to make an almost unrealizable outcome. It's telling how T's munpain transcends the public and private experiences of his life; him describing an interaction (with what I understand to be a semi fictional woman) and then his feeling where he is publicly exposed and humiliated is also intimately connected with his love life and feelings of belonging and desire. As with Charlotte's account discussed earlier there is a strong sense that masculinity, desire and sexuality are intimately entangled with the negotiation of the munpain. These issues will be returned to in chapter 7.

Let us also contextualise T's account against the backdrop of the recent Conservative and Coalition government welfare reforms. Increased conditionality and incentivization for welfare

service providers has been accompanied by a widespread political and media based moral panic (Cohen, 1980; 2002) surrounding access to welfare; with folk devils often painted in the form of 'benefit scroungers'. As discussed in the introduction this has had symbolic and material effects on people's everyday existences, with both material resources and social standing depleting amongst the unemployed. We can visualise a kind of pincer move on poverty, or more precisely poor people, who are being both materially and epistemologically flattened. They (poor people) are the ones blamed for their circumstances and their 'dependency' on welfare support is portrayed as being an innate character deficit within individuals, who lack the moral fortitude to integrate themselves in to (what is in reality a competitive market orientated) society. This is reflected in a report by highly influential right wing think tank The Centre for Social Justice:

> ".... the only real way out of poverty for your family is work. As the fabric of society crumbles at the margins what has been left behind is an underclass, where life is characterised by dependency, addiction, debt and family breakdown ... [T]he inner city wasn't a place; it was a state of mind—there is a mentality of entrapment, where aspiration and hope are for other people, who live in another place…" (Duncan-Smith 2007:4–5 [cited in] Slater, 2014 :961).

This short extract is clear in directing blame at an 'underclass' for causing the breakdown of social cohesion in British society. Individual and familial deficits of work shyness, hopelessness and mental entrapment are seen to be to blame for the formation of such an abhorrent and divisive group. However, this account completely ignores any socio-political contributing factors which may have caused people to end up on welfare support as a result of a shortage of well-paid secure employment (Slater, 2014). It has also been observed that since the neo-liberal turn, that the most desirable jobs and opportunities available tend to go to those born in to higher socio-economic positions as evidenced by the almost total cessation in social mobility (OECD, 2010; Reay, 2013; Bloodworth, 2015) and the cementing and expansion of inequality (Harvey, 2005; Atkinson, 2015). As I will point out throughout this thesis there are an array of micro level inhibitors which may well effect someone like T's trajectory in to paid employment.

T's account does not depict someone who is devoid of aspiration, in fact his munpain is centred around the frustrations drawn out from his struggle to realise his ambitions. He wants to be a late modern consumer attending parties, driving luxury cars and dressing in designer clothes. However, he is caught in a bind; if he chooses to try to enter in to legitimate

employment he has little realistic chance (considering his skills, contacts, experience and qualifications) of being able to reach his lofty ambitions, especially not in the short term. Indeed, given the insecure low status employment available to him, whether he stays on benefits or not, the system is set up to humiliate him. The creative destruction (Harvey, 2005) which has taken place in the wake of the Coalition and Conservative welfare reforms is the destruction of people's self-esteem and status. Below he builds on his initial statement, speaking about the status of young men labelled as gang active in his community. In this instance his attention is directed exclusively at the police, but a similar set of themes emerge, relating in this instance to the social stigma of 'outcast' status in relation to the real interpersonal relationships young men have with other people in their communities. He asserts that people *like* (as in view him positively) him, and his friends, and that in itself riles the police who carry out powerful ideological work in order to pathologise and exclude them; in this instance being liked is political as it asserts a base level of humanity:

> T: So… and I think it's part of that as well that just gets the police more angry.

> Yusef: What because people like you?

> T: Yeah because they see that people actually do like us and we're not just like outcasts, people do like us-the shopkeeper likes us, it's just the police that give us a hard time. Our shop keepers are close with us, chicken shop-he's close with me, my concierge loves me, my neighbours love me, it's just the police that give me a hard time, it's no one else. So it just goes to show.

What T highlights above is his everyday existential struggle for dignity. He works exhaustively to present an external self to the world which meets the criteria for societal admiration, yet he risks being exposed and humiliated by the social structures, which are supposedly there to support his quest to live in dignity, at every turn. '*Pain, pain, everyday'* is his description of this battle with banality; as he pays one bill or fine, another one arrives on his doormat. The money required for the presentation of a 'respectable' (Skeggs, 1997) public persona is whittled away by government cuts to welfare, Job Centre sanctions, increased public surveillance in the form of traffic cameras and increasing cost of living. T is left to pick up the pieces of himself in a world where the relative cost of a tube of toothpaste represents a weighty reminder of where you really stand on the social spectrum. As Jock Young (2007) observes, economic inequality brings about modes of humiliation that are material and emotional – operating simultaneously 'on a day-to-day… and… ideological level'.

Possibly the most pertinent moment of humiliation for him was the thought of being spotted coming out of the Job Centre. If someone is out of work, in many cases they will need to claim state assistance, making a trip to the Job Centre a prosaic everyday activity in theory. However, the structurally imbued form of recognition associated with claiming Job Seekers Allowance and other social security has become one of abjection, meaning that this is now a trip loaded with the potential for instances of injurious symbolic violence. The vivid character of this scenario calls to mind a famous instance of humiliation describe by Franz Fanon in *Black Skins, White Masks*, one which caused Fanon himself to "…burst apart… [with] the fragments… put together again by another self" (Fanon, 1952 :82). Like T's story, Fanon describes a moment of interaction, he is looked upon by an Other; a white child. The context of this story was his own personal migration from an upper middle class family in Martinique where he claimed he was not made acutely aware of his 'blackness', however on his arrival in France he was confronted for the first time by the Other. Indeed, it is worth noting that he stated that in his youth in the Antilles he too read and enjoyed stories about famous white explorers battling with 'native savages'. It was only within the social context of French society where the colour of his skin was endowed with this racialised conception of blackness, and he realised that the entire history of western racial injustice had become tied in to his own pigmentation:

> "'Look, a Negro!'
>
> It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile.
>
> 'Look, a Negro!' It was true. It amused me.
>
> 'Look, a Negro!' The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement. 'Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!'…
>
> …assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. In the train it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person. In the train I was given not one but two, three places…
>
> On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? But I did not want this revision, this thematization. All I wanted was to be a man among other

men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help to build it together." (Fanon, 1952 :84-85).

I do not wish to conflate issues surrounding racism and class based prejudice, I do however believe there is a similarity in the processes captured in T's and Fanon's stories. In T's account the symbolic violence which has exuded from society's upper echelons became momentarily, in an instance of individual interaction, attached to his being. He faced losing control of the selfhood he presents to the world; the postmodern privilege of identity construction denied to him and leaving him stripped down to be viewed as something he did not wish to be. I do not believe that Fanon in his account did not wish to be black, but it was only at this moment that he understood himself to be black in the context of colonial discourse – classified through the eyes of a white child, and at that moment denied the subjecthood that he had previously taken for granted. What I am arguing here is that the historical and present structures of representation seep deep in to everyday life. Fanon could not control the sets of meanings, with their bloodied history, which were connected to the colour of his skin in a similar way to T's angst at the prospect of losing control of his selfhood.

In the material world T belongs to a group who have limited access to stable, well paid legitimate employment. He is from a minority ethnic group which brings with it further potential axes for discriminatory treatment. This is something which sits with him at the level of the "I" and he knows for the sake of continued material existence he must seek welfare assistance at least sporadically. He talks explicitly elsewhere in his interview about how most 'gang members' claim benefits and live in their mum's houses. Due to the pressures drummed up by macro level transatlantic actors he has to manage the abjection associated with this by projecting an exterior identity which promotes notions of the competent consumer (through the purchase of a luxury car) and distances himself from poverty and abjection. This is a central part of his existential struggle. The focus on individual deficit over structural understanding has created a generation determined to make it for themselves, not so much for the rewards which in themselves are unfulfilling, but in order to be divorced from the worthless selfhoods contemporary discourse has inscribed on them. One of the father figures of existentialism contemplates such a situation below:

> "…when the ambitious man whose slogan is 'Either Caesar or nothing' does not get to be Caesar, he despairs over it. But this also means something else: because he did not get to be Caesar, he now cannot bear to be himself… this self is now utterly intolerable to him… what is intolerable to him is that he cannot get rid of himself… He would not

have become himself by being Caesar but he would have been rid of himself"

(Kierkegaard, 1941: 16)

T's BMW was a material object which was purchased to give an impression of capability and prestige. It contributed to an external performance of the self, a "Me", which represents Caesar in the above extract. The external impression given by the luxury car was in total opposition to the one he feared as he contemplated being spotted coming out of the Jobcentre; that is the self he wished he could be rid of. That is the self which represents a part of his material realities; it is intolerable. For swathes of young people across Britain who cannot realise the dizzying heights of late modern self-fulfilling consumer lifestyles (Young, 2007) it is the latter self they are left alone with. Many will try to performatively manage their exterior presentation, but this is only driven in order to mitigate the munpain they experience in the selves ("I") they have that ultimately do not match up. In this way contemporary neo-liberal capitalism has a very unique ability to make people despise themselves and make the most intimate aspects of their lives unbearable. In this way structural inequalities are active in the most minute desires and day to day suffering in the lives of young people on road, something which has been observed elsewhere by Bhaba (1994: 21):

> "…it is precisely in these banalities that the… violence of a racialized society falls most
> enduringly on the details of life: where you can sit, or not; how you can live, or not;
> what you can learn, or not; who you can love, or not. Between the banal act of
> freedom and its historic denial rises the silence…".

Bhaba touches on many of the same real world issues as T, citing one's (in)ability to just do normal things as one of contradictions where the 'silence' rises from. Exposing the forgotten histories, and I would argue, stifled presents, of the denial of freedom. This silence also rose from other related places, where the social expectation on the individual repressed their inner suffering. In the next section I will work with a discussion that took place with Stephen about the psychological costs of road life in which he opened up about some of the ways in which 'bonds that bind' (Goldberg, 1994) effect people in very private ways, as well as the limited resources available to them in order to deal with such issues.

'It's Not That Deep Man' – Coping with Stigma

In this section I present the second illustrative vignette showing how the experience of social stigma (Goffman, 1963) and stereotypical performativity can be problematic at an existential level. According to Goffman ([1963] 2009) stigma refers to the relationship between personal

attributes and societal values in the form of stereotypes. A person's attributes in themselves do not necessarily carry permanent social values, but it is their ways of being in relation to the contextual meanings active in their surroundings which create stigmatisation. Those carrying stigmas are regarded as 'tainted', 'unnatural', 'discredited' and 'not quite human' (ibid). Interestingly he observes the unusualness of those carrying the weight of stigma can confirm the conformity of others. Ultimately, Goffman observes that whether benevolently or malevolently; society often discriminates against those who are the victims of stigma, which works to constrain their life chances in some ways. In the following vignette Stephen explains how the stereotypes and stigmas relating to a certain kind of masculinity curtail the possibility for young men such as himself, potentially leading to emotional breakdown.

Just as with T, Stephen also has a history of being gang active. He is black, of West African descent and is known locally for his ability to utilise violence. This is perhaps partially perpetuated by his physicality, but also by stories which are often recalled by others, mostly presented in a kind of admiring light in order demonstrate his street prowess. Below, however, he reflects on what it is like to live with the social expectation of impenetrable masculinity:

> Stephen: *A lot of people do still.* Like there's a lot of people on road, like they might have that bravado like *'yeah reh reh reh'* the tough guy, but when the lights go out its just them and their thoughts and it can turn people crazy still, and I've seen it turn people crazy and they might feel depressed and, but people don't know that, and people just be like they be thinking like, like I said the whole road man joke, when people be running jokes I kinda get angry so like, you don't know what these people are going through, you lot just think it's a joke, joke, joke, joke, they'll shed light on stupid stuff but these stuff, there's a lot of people-I know a lot of people who go through that.

> Yusef: So you think on the roads it can be emotionally draining?

> Stephen: Yeah 'cause they don't feel-there's a lot of people that like they can't, there might be nobody they can talk to, you know what I mean? They might tell their bred-their friend like 'yo man, listen man, I'm going through something' and their bredrin might be like ***'man toughen up man, stop crying, it's not that deep man, just bitching'*** you feel me? You can't go to your friend and be like 'brudda man I'm going through suttim kinda mad' they'll just be like '[kisses teeth] listen man stop crying, toughen up man, stop moving like a *punk'* like or a bitch, do you know what I mean? You just laugh

like haha, **then you just go home and it's like-it's like who you gonna go to?** That's

why a lot of people kinda, that's why I know a lot of men confide in women and that,

they just doing all that

Yusef: Cause they're hurting?

Stephen: Yeah cause they're hurting and they think the women's gonna help it to heal

but it's not even *that* man. *It's just you understanding what's going on, it's just you*

understanding yourself [emphasis added].

Stephen is able here to articulate the agony of living behind the façade of impenetrable

masculinity in the everyday. The sources of anguish are many; coping with stigmatization and

being stereotyped, managing social expectations, feeling weak or inadequate, lonely and

unloved. All of these pressures are bubbling under the surface creating pressure. Stephen talks

about getting angry at people who 'joke' and make fun of road man stereotypes, which often

poke fun suggesting that a road man is stupid, savage and inherently violent – the connection

to historical racialised stereotypes is noticeable[1] . His anger can be understood as a muted

response; one where, due to his binds, he is unable to articulate what is wrong. We could

interpret Stephen as making visible the distinction between the self, "Me", that young men on

road are making public in order to live up to public expectation and their interior, "I", selves

which lie beneath. The kind of internal suffering he describes so eloquently is the munpain in

operation. Young men on road feel they have to present an exterior self to meet not only the

expectation of the 'collective other' in the abstract sense, but to deal with physical threats at

the local level. Combined with this is a feeling of existential insecurity whereby the hidden

injuries (Sennett and Cobb, 1988) to the self are left to bleed out; he observes how when

someone is alone with themselves the performance is over and people are left with their

suffering; feelings of inadequacy and self-remorse.

Though Stephen himself is a black male, our discussion extended to those who may not be

considered black by the dominant semantic system of blackness. He speaks of men on road

not being able to bring their true selves into being, having to repress their fears and feelings,

creating an uncomfortable background static which becomes excruciatingly audible when all

falls quiet. Reminding themselves of the contradictions, many of which may be mystified. For

---

[1] see Nichols (2016) for an example of how racialised stereotypes are reactivated through
internet memes

Stephen, part of this seemed to be the result of a degree of ontological insecurity about who he was and where he belonged in the world.

The bonds that Stephen alludes to are those of common conceptions of black and street orientated masculinity. The emphasis on being 'tough' and maintaining poise in the company of others is a particularly pertinent feature, as to fail in doing this opens a person up to further locally based violence and ridicule. In order to survive you must embody the Otherness of street cultural masculinity; you must exhibit the potential for violence (Glynn, 2013; Brookman, et al, 2011; Sandberg, 2008a; 2008b; Bourgois, 2003; Anderson, 1999), the coolness and most importantly the lack of emotionality. These are essentialised and ahistorical features of a certain Othered section of the population; the drawing of the margins which contain within them the reference points of shared societal morality, also bind those who make up their human limits. This account shows us the ways in which Stephen's own feelings of displacement are what led him to seeking shelter in an already constructed identity which perhaps does more harm than good. Stuart Hall's work on representation, particularly relating to his interpretation of Fanon, offers a particularly relevant account of the power dynamics which limit and 'deform' identity formation for those on the receiving end of forms of racialised symbolic violence, as we see in the extract below:

> "The ways we have been positioned as subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were a critical exercise of cultural power and normalization… they had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'… to subject them to that 'knowledge', not only as a matter of impose will and domination, [but] by the power of inner compulsion and subjective conformation… The expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. If its silences are not resisted they produce, in Fanon's vivid phrase, 'individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels'". (Hall, 1996b: 706).

In many respects those interviewed in this study embody the characteristics of Fanon's 'race of angels'. Diverse in their ethnic backgrounds and trajectories there are elements of uncertainty in their identities. Hybridity can easily be accompanied by flux; something which can contribute to a strong sense of insecurity. Essentialised canonical personhoods can be imposed and claimed to secure feelings of comfort and continuity. In reality one only has to look a little more deeply in to Stephen's story to understand this:

Stephen: Naah I didn't, I was confused still, I was proper lost, I didn't know what I wanted to do, I just, going with the flow.

Yusef: And what happened? What's the story there, what happened next?

Stephen: I just got involved in dumb kinda gang stuff init, like silly gang nonsense.

Yusef: What kind of stuff?

Stephen: [yawns] like staying after school for fights, going home and changing clothes, going to the area-next areas to do all the nonsense, just getting involved in dumb stuff man. Like gang, the whole gang stuff init. This time-this is when I proper started getting disconnected with school as well, like I didn't care about school. The only reason I used to go school was just to keep my mum happy, so she didn't get no phone calls to say yeah, your son weren't in school today and reh reh reh. So…

Part of Stephen's trajectory which led him heavily in to more of the criminal elements of road life was the separation of his parents combined with the increasing threat of physical violence in his neighbourhood. He described a kind of critical moment (Thomson et al., 2002; 2003; 2004) whereby just as he was transitioning in to adulthood he felt he lacked guidance the most. In the community and more broadly he felt the draw of consumer capitalism, but did not receive much guidance in terms of career or personhood.

The school's inability to understand the immediate threats to his personal safety as well as the extent to which he was involved in local territorial conflict made accessing intuitional means to progression unsafe for him. Elsewhere in his interview he again acknowledges that maths (often acknowledged as being one of the most culturally neutral subjects on the curriculum, though even this is debated see e.g. Tate [1995; 2008]) is a worthwhile pursuit but questions the legitimacy of the rest of the curriculum, deeming it not meaningful in his life.

Stephen: I was disinterested as well, like I felt when I used to go school-like English all these things, like *I don't need these things*, like these thing aint gonna, teach me what's going on, cause **then** stuff started kinda getting real and I started understanding what was going on, so I used to think, maybe maths, maths would help me, but all this stuff like English, I was like *I don't need to know this* cause this isn't gonna help me, get through, erm my man up the street that every time I come back from school he's trying to take my phone…

Although a necessary passport to most forms of educational progress, learning GCSE English does not make an immediate impact in the life of a young person experiencing hardship and uncertainty, it could not equip Stephen in any way to face the challenges he was experiencing in his day to day life. A key aspect of what Stephen is expressing as being absent from the curriculum is any information on 'what's going on'. There is little exploratory or explanatory effort which makes sense of his experiences or even existence. Several times in his interview Stephen attributes many of his most difficult moments as being at least partially caused by feelings of being lost. In this way the roads are a cultural resource, a hybrid culture where youth perspectives take centre stage. When people have limited cultural resources available for identity or personhood building, it makes sense to look in to their immediate community for inspiration, or even just information. Such an occurrence is reminiscent in Willis' (1977) concept of *differentiation* whereby the axis upon which the commonly associated exchanges within educational institutions becomes dislodged, due to the lack of possibility for future exchange as well as the absence of innate value in the knowledge being transmitted. In this case an 'annihilation of the future' (Orwell, [1933] 1961) takes place; with the irrelevance of the curriculum meaning that young people may often look elsewhere for value and meaningful notions of selfhood.

In such situations, according to Willis (1977), it is the spheres of experience outside of school and other institutional reference points which are being used to build notions of culture and self. These are class based experiences, locally mediated and adapted experiences of being a part of the contemporary urban poor. Despite the commitment to individual wealth accumulation and status, demonstrated in the desire to 'go legit' (which I explore in detail in the next chapter), there is a collective experience of struggle which runs throughout the narratives of the participants of this study that binds them, the common experience of being oppressed. The common experience of being 'lower class' (Mckenzie, 2015) creates a set of schematic reference points upon which people can relate to one another. These are arguably unique to the young and conflict with previous class based notions, however:

> "[a]s these are taken up and recreated in concrete settings, they are reproduced and strengthened and made further available resources for others in similar situations". (Willis, 1977:113).

I wish to argue that this lack of acknowledgement of young people's experience, in relation to externally impose structures like education, creates the necessity for road cultural performativity; and that these tensions are not coincidental. They derive from and are

symptomatic of the silenced legacies of Western colonial domination, which seeks to alienate marginalised people from their sense of personhood and struggle. Tyler (2013) uses the work of Stoler (2011) to speak of a 'collective amnesia' whereby western nation states 'actively forget' the violence of their colonial past. Binding essentialised identities can be regarded as being a consequence of this process of active forgetting as people are commonly denied access to the tools required in order to grasp and retell their new ethnicities (Hall, 1996a) making them limited in their abilities to tell the stories of who they are and how they came to be; becoming lost. It is interesting to juxtapose notions of active forgetting (Stoler, 2011) with Tom Slater's policy orientated adaptation of Proctor's (Proctor & Schiebinger, 2008: vii) term *agnotology*. This approach examines how some notions come to be recognised as knowledge and other things disappear in to obscurity:

> "…the study of ignorance making, the lost and forgotten… focus[ing]… on knowledge that could have been but wasn't, or should be but isn't" (Proctor and Schiebinger, 2008: vii) cited in (Slater, 2014: 950).

Slater (2014) effectively demonstrates how right wing, heavily funded, think tanks play an important role in 'deflecting reality'. By using quasi scholarly research, combined with an array of support across large media organizations, the Conservative led government, conspired in effectively saturating the public sphere with specific frameworks of understanding society and the welfare state. These frameworks largely ignore any structural features of the creation of poverty but instead rely heavily on a narrative of 'personal responsibility' (Morris, 2016; MacDonald et al, 2014; Hoggett et al, 2013). What is interesting is that both of these positions hold a similar explanation for the ways in which power inflected, historical and political, processes influence the kinds of canonical narratives that come in to being; upon which people draw in order to make sense of their existence:

> '…like the noun ignorance, which shares its etymology with the verb ignore, forgetting is not a passive condition. To forget, like to ignore, is an active verb, an act from which one turns away. It is an achieved state. (Stoler, 2011: 141) cited in (Tyler, 2013: 33)

My argument is that neo-liberal capitalism requires people (especially poor people) to be wrenched from history and the social structure, set adrift, each becoming responsible for their own survival. It becomes a case of sink or swim. Without the connection to history or the foundation provided by coherent social analysis people live at the mercy of great waves of common sense, public opinion and stereotypes, all of which seem to appear inexplicably from

the deep. In this ocean the only life raft is value (in the form of capitals, see chapter 3), the greater the amount one can accumulate the safer they become. For this to work people cannot self-realise; self-realisation will tell them immediately they are not at sea at all but firmly on the land – the munpain is the everyday suffering brought on from the denial of intrinsic human value.

'Silent suffering' of this kind could represent the broken threads of history weaving to present moments of contemplation. These are experiences of both being and seeing the other; the benefit scrounger, the hoodie, the hyper masculine road guy, the teenage mum. These binaries are in contrast with the life histories and experiences of participants, they represent one telling of society, one laden with unequal power relations. The munpain represent the moments where these conflicting histories of the present meet in the individual reflections of a person. Where they bear all the weight of monoculturalism as they attempt to re-member; piece together their existence:

> "History is a process by which people must come to terms with a past that will not go away, a past that cannot be pacified by narrative. History is a non-linear struggle between irreconcilable stories... History cannot be resolved through narrative closure. Its pain can only be managed" (Dimitriadis and McCarthy, 2001: 70).

Those living on road rarely have access to alternative tellings of history in educational settings. However, interrogating the silences; the quiet moments where the contradictions come to fore, create the feeling that some inherent wrong is there. Stephen's closing remarks resonate here; *'It's just you understanding what's going on, it's just you understanding yourself.'* Living and coping with the munpain gives rise to a kind of awareness that something is or might be wrong but it often falls outside of the canon, making it a kind of unspecified 'malaise' (Mills, [1959] 2000). These tacit contradictions can only intensify the anguish, leaving the individual and collective no other option but to find ways of coping with the pain, ways of finding a way to lead a liveable life (Pheonix, 2007; Bulter, 2010; 2014; Cruz, 2013). These coping strategies in themselves can lead to further silence and potentially violence.

In a discussion surrounding the violent and volatile actions of characters in author Toni Morisson's novels *Beloved, Jazz and Paradise,* Dimitriadis and McCarthy (2001) observe the othering process active in Manichean notions of good and bad. They note the moral ambiguity of the world her characters inhabit; though different from exoneration, there exists no straightforward or binary narrative resolutions to many of their actions. This is in stark contrast

with the linear and definitive notions of good and bad, and their subsequent canonical groundings in a universalist telling of history, which attach themselves to notions of progress and civilization. This can be extended to life on road in the sense that the proliferation of ultra-violence is one of its most remarkable traits, however, the explanations as to how this comes in to being are limited. Acknowledging the struggle of the everyday can help to explain the ways in which historical and present situations feed into this overarching sense of destruction which many commentators of road life immediately observe. As Dimitriadis and McCarthy (2001:76) put it 'struggles with evil are day-to-day and mundane in the context of a community that does not have the luxury of simply 'exorcising' evil'.

The 'evils' of the historical and present contradictions cannot be easily exorcised on road. Sometimes they can only be managed perfromatively in order to make everyday life liveable. This anguish is overlooked as a driver of destructive action; misunderstood or misrecognised (Bourdieu & Wacquent, 1999) and fed back in to the discourse of abjection by more powerful actors. I suggest that it is only by paying attention to the munpain that the logics of practice (Bourdieu, 1990) of life on road can truly emerge. The minutiae of the social world hold many of its secrets, and though revealing them can entail much risk, it is essential in understanding the level of violence which is enacted not in the 'active' moments but in the ordinary ones. It is likely that the munpain is an influencing factor behind many of the high profile episodes of violence on road. Understanding how large structures and histories weave in to people's everyday lived experiences is what studying the munpain is all about. These are things which must be taken seriously; treated with care and respect if we are ever to get a grasp of what is happening. How in a world of raging inequality combined with little material redistribution or social mobility (OECD, 2010; Hartas, 2012; Reay, 2013); it is not wealth which drips down from societies upper echelons, but anxiety.

Getting by in a world where you are what you eat, and wear, and drive; when you are someone of little material means, surviving is something which must be celebrated. Paying attention to these everyday battles opens up much broader conversations about value. We do not think long and hard enough about why we value or detest certain things. Thinking at both the macro and micro levels enables us to etch out an image of the interactive iterations taking place between these interconnected social spheres. What this thesis seeks to explore is how people experience and navigate this specific kind of social suffering and how their responses can be both inspiring and terrifying; sometimes at the same time.

La Petite Misere - Social Suffering at the Margins and Intersections

The munpain is therefore, a way of understanding symbolic violence; along the intersectional lines of class, race, stereotype, gender and many more social constructs which channel suffering down to land on the shoulders of the individual. It conceptualises and names the spaces where the ontological and existential collide in everyday lived realities. The ways in which a trip to the corner shop or a glance in the street, the clutching of a handbag, can link in to broader forms of symbolic violence and their subsequent asomatous injuries. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence attempts to explain the process by which social suffering is enacted. Bourdieu (1979) argues that the social world can be understood via symbolic systems which provide the logic and legitimation for the organization of society. This means that those with the most 'symbolic power' seek to use it to impose definitions of the social world which best suit their specific forms of capital. This is a process which takes place across a variety of powerful and less powerful actors which makes it a form of struggle:

> "The different classes and class fractions are engaged in a specifically symbolic struggle to impose the definition of the social world that is most consistent with their interests… for the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence… the power to impose… instruments of knowledge and expressions of social reality" (Bourdieu, 1979: 80)

The results of this struggle dictate the meanings which shape our everyday lives, framing social experience and subjectivity (Toffanin, 2012). The symbolic forms of domination resulting from this have served to legitimate class based, gendered and racialised forms acting 'not only on the bodies' (ibid: 23) of dominated people, but also 'through' their bodies by dictating forms of recognition, normative behaviours and manufacturing complicity. However, we must realise that these forms of racial, class based and gendered domination do not happen in isolation from one another, and part of understanding symbolic violence is recognizing how it seeks to strike people through their individual 'intersectional axes' (Hill-Collins and Bilge, 2016; Gillborn, 2008; Cho et al, 2013) which combine multiple dimensions of their identity including their race, gender, sexuality and social class.

The intersectional approach (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; 1994; 1997; 2010; 2014; Crenshaw & Thomas, 2004), originally formulated to highlight the multiple disadvantages experienced by black women in the USA, encourages us to examine the multiple axes of domination simultaneously. This is the way that I understand symbolic violence for the purposes of this study; as accessing the multiple axes of a person's identity in order to help in the othering

process which legitimates dominant meanings in society. The effect of this is to perpetuate individual deficit models and feelings of isolation, as people respond to the make-up of social suffering they experience as they view the world from the '…vantage point… grounded in the complex social facts that condition' (Harrison, 2008: 3) their lived realities. In relation to the munpain I try to understand symbolic violence and social suffering intersectionally. I do not make constant reference to the individual axes along which specific forms of symbolic violence travel, because I view them as being entangled. The stories of participants experiences of everyday misery cannot be separated out as purely racialised or classed or gendered experiences. They are experiences of symbolic exclusion which happen because they form the borders of the gnoseological order (Bourdieu, 1979) which regulates their differences as 'abject' (Kristeva, 1982; Tyler, 2013). This is where I see symbolic violence as helpful, because it is relational to the makeup and history of specific conjunctures of social order.

The idea of the munpain elucidates how certain forms of symbolic violence are unleashed on dominated people; eroding the space for the legitimation of difference and consolidating the, to borrow a term of bell hooks (1994; 2000; 2004); the white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy. The key to understanding the different intersections of exclusion is how they are placed beyond the realm of the liveable by the symbolic order, that is why in this chapter and throughout this thesis I have included the interventions of politicians and other stake holders to show this process actively taking place.

What are essentially class and group based experiences, can appear to people as individualised. The idea of munpain can be thought of as a kind of *positional suffering* (Bourdieu et al., 1999) which provides a starting point for explaining how structural phenomena are felt in contemporary society. As a sociologist I have sought to show how these experiences, even in their divergent manifestations, have shared qualities and sources. The munpain is specifically about the everyday accounts and experiences of relative social suffering, or *la petite misere* as Bourdieu (1999) called it.

Contemporary works of British sociologist Diane Reay helps to provide a vocabulary for the emotional life of the excluded. Reay (2005) brought to the fore the emotional experiences bound up in class based positionalities. This approach pushes sociology to its outermost limits, that being (somewhat ironically) the interior of the human being:

> "…feelings of ambivalence, inferiority and superiority, visceral aversions, recognition, abjection and the markings of taste constitute a psychic economy of social class. This

psychic economy, despite being largely ignored in both everyday common-sense understandings and academic theories, contributes powerfully to the ways we are, feel and act." (Reay, 2005; 991)

This process of making connections between the interior emotional realms of the individual and broader macro processes (ibid) is what the munpain enables us to do. It demands individualised emotional suffering be connected to broader structural phenomena such as class, racism and gender inequality. These trickle down affects (not effects) of societal issues contribute to the making and maintaining of functional selves, as individuals strive to have 'liveable lives' (Phoenix, 2007; Butler, 2010; 2012; Cruz, 2013) in relation to social expectations beyond their control. As Reay (2005: 923-924) observes 'class operates just as powerfully at the individual level as it ever did on a collective level. It troubles the soul and preys on the psyche'. It reaches the individual via the crisscrossed wires of intersectionality, and can be connected back to broader structural events.

In a sense my investigation of munpain demonstrates some of the ways in which experiences are to some extent shared. This process of abjection was not lost on the participants of this study living 'on road'. At various times they reflected on their own class positions, explaining how their social location made them feel and how it motivated them to respond. Othering is not just something which is discussed at an abstract level in academia it is something which happens on a daily basis and has real consequences for how people live their lives. Below one Stephen speaks about the othering process and how it enables certain people in society to define themselves against 'the scum':

> Stephen: So you can point the finger at, *that's exactly what I mean with the whole roadman thing, exactly with the whole road man thing, like haha you're the scum, ner ner, you know what I mean?* And it's like that's why I think the whole roadman thing has become something for everyone to poke fun at!

It is clear across Stephen's account that this process touches him personally, and although at various points he distances himself from active road life, he demonstrates an intimate understanding of how it feels to cope with the weight of stigmatisation. Stephen provides some of the most insightful commentary on what I have called the munpain, describing in great detail how it can make a person feel to represent the human embodiment of society's filth.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I will examine the cultural struggles which ensue from this process of creating outsiders. This manifests differently for different people depending on their own personal set of circumstances, but we can have little doubt that the manufacture of social exclusion, the process used to bond society in this late modern neo-liberal era, is somewhere at its beating heart. In the next chapter I will look at how many of the interviewees in this study sought culturally equitable inclusion in society, and consequently an escape from the munpain. The munpain haunted these accounts however, and as they performatively managed this social suffering they often resorted to the accumulation of capitals – in this instance road capitals. These are capitals (Bourdieu, 1985) similar to those in a conventional sense which are built around a contiguous but differing value systems, which allowed those who experience social exclusion on road the ability to accumulate value, which could be recognised and endorsed by those sharing certain subcultural standards. The strategies behind the accumulation of road capitals was eventually to be able to convert or exchange them for more conventional modes of capital, however as we shall explore this is by no means a straight forward process and the depths of the munpain lurk throughout ready to drag those who try, to even deeper depths of despair.

Chapter 3: 'Going legit' - Road Capitals

How do people develop strategies in order to attach value and meaning to their lives? If the munpain is characterised by experiences of worthlessness and purposelessness, then achieving recognition and purpose can help in alleviating it. Utilising examples from the data, I argue that young adults on road are involved in systems of capital exchange, both at the symbolic and material levels. This accumulation and exchange is common to contrasting narratives: it encapsulates the project of 'going legit' and making a break in to the 'mainstream' labour market and cultural value system.

The ephemeral nature of criminal and illegitimate success was not lost on participants of this study. Many of them understood that, even those at the height of success in street cultural economies, would not be able to maintain this forever. This understanding was behind the drive to go legit, a way to survive in the longer term and gain legitimacy. The failure to go legit could mean physical or social death. When asked to consider what happens if you stay on the road your whole life, participants thought of prison or death; as T explains unequivocally below:

> Yusef: Mm. what happens to guys that stay on the road?
>
> T: They go jail or they die 100%. If they stay on the road, outside the estate every day, pedal bike, you're going jail or you're dying 100%. Or you're gonna stay on the estate on your pedal bike, until you're about 40.
>
> Yusef: Who's that happened to?
>
> T: It's happened to someone, couple people I know, I really wanna save them the embarrassment.

As Jock Young observes (2007: 38) "the poor are not left behind stranded in the inner cities, deserted by capital, they live in intense and self-involved market places and their eyes are on the outside world". I do not wish to present the roads as a wholly differentiated space; this chapter seeks to demonstrate how, in fact, value systems on road are often orientated towards the realisation of and inclusion in broader societal values. In this chapter I develop ideas around 'street capital' (Sandberg, 2008; Sandberg and Pedersen, 2011) to help demonstrate how this takes place. Capitals form one strata in a layering of theory in this

thesis. This is designed to help build outward from the personal struggle of the munpain in to the economic and cultural market place; a location where value can be won and maintained.

Capitals are fluid and geared towards certain social fields (Bourdieu, 1985). Road capitals can, with some risk involved, potentially be traded for more broadly recognised forms of capital, involving a high stakes strategy for inclusion. By exploring this speculative trade off, I hope to show that displays of road capitals are often strategic attempts at integration. In this chapter I seek to demonstrate some of the ways in which those on road mobilise different kinds of capital with a view to making it in the mainstream and subsequently break free from the munpain. In order to do this, I will start off with a brief explanation of the concept of capital which derives from the work Pierre Bourdieu (1986). I will then discuss some of the different usages of the term 'going legit' and how it can be understood. After this I will spend some time thinking through Sanberg's (2008) notion of 'street capital', explaining that his distinction between cultural capital and street capital is over-deterministic in that it fails to acknowledge the aspirational desire and material potential of those on the street to 'go legit'. Instead, I propose we understand road cultural value exchange as existing within the existing spectrum of capitals; providing examples of economic road capital, road social capital and road cultural capital from my data. I will finally discuss the gendered dimensions of road capital, an area where I find more synergies, but also differences with Sanberg. I argue that women are broadly disadvantaged on road, but can access gendered modes of cultural capital as well as developing strategies for accumulating more male dominated forms of road cultural capital.

Understanding Capitals

Gunter (2008) plots young people's 'activity' in the underground economy along a continuum increasing and decreasing in relation to their needs and the opportunities available to them. This study contends that this kind of movement is often strategically measured, and in the majority of cases is geared towards attaining eventual inclusion in the 'respectable' (Skeggs, 1997) labour market, usually manifesting in aspirations of entrepreneurial endeavour. The metaphors of capital are useful analytical tools when examining such goings on; originating in the work of Bourdieu (1979; 1986; 1987) but later adapted by Skeggs (1997) who recognised their utility but sought to breathe life in to their 'cold and mechanical classificatory manner' (ibid:10).

The four metaphors of capital identified by Bourdieu (1986) are; economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and finally symbolic power. Economic capital is largely monetary, making

it especially relevant in relation to 'going legit'. Cultural capital is the effective appropriation of prized cultural forms; these can be embodied (for example what are often described as soft skills, which can have huge impacts on employability), objectified (which related to specific forms of property of which the economic value is culturally defined, such as intellectual property or works of art) and can also take institutional forms like educational qualification. Social capital is all to do with networks, the broader and more influential the network the greater the advantage that can be derived from it. Finally, symbolic capital has some varying definitions, though Skeggs (1997) describes it as the process whereby a person's capital is legitimated and converted in to symbolic power. Bourdieu stated that many differential compositions of capital exists across the social spectrum (Reay, 2004) with individuals and families able to transfer one form of capital in to another, for example economic capital could be transferred into cultural and social capital via the investment in elitist private education:

> "The conversion rate between various kinds of capital... is one of the central states or struggles between groups, each seeking to impose the hierarchy of capitals most favourable to its own endowment" (Wacquant, 1998: 27).

However, the capital which is recognised as symbolic varies across social space, or what Bourdieu described as the varying 'fields' of social life. So to borrow an appropriate example from Wacquant (1998); the use of Black English vernacular, a specific form of slang, can be regarded as important on road but within the school environment it attracts heavy sanction, carrying negative connotations. Actors in certain fields carry differential symbolic power in the setting of institutional and normative standards; thus Wacquant observes that the greater the power of the group the higher the value of the connections to it. Conversely, subjugated group associations can have the opposite effect. Keeping this in mind it is important to note the ways in which the disparities in symbolic capital and power between different groups in different fields effects their ability to 'impose their hierarchy of capital' (ibid) through culture and the arms of the state. The emphasis here is on recognition or as Wacquant (1998) describes it 'misrecognition'; which dictates the leverage of the capital available to an individual across social space. This is important to consider when thinking about transitioning from the 'underground' economy to the 'mainstream'.

It is the imbalance of power between groups, each vying for influence, which leads to the state of hegemony. The vast inequality in capital means that groups can wield and maintain hegemonic influence via the struggle and exchange of capital or in Bourdieu's terms; symbolic power. This is also why hegemony is and must always be maintained, adapted and reinvented,

because it is the result of constant struggle and compromise. Moi (1991) views Bourdieu as providing a micro-theoretical approach; offering up a detailed account of the 'mundane' spaces in people's lives where symbolic violence is unleashed in order to enforce the legitimacy of powerful groups, such as the bourgeoisie or political class. The work of Gramsci speaks to the more general and political consequences of this legitimacy. This kind of overlap between hegemony and symbolic power/violence as an articulation of the nuance and complexity of domination is alluded to by Hall in his essay *Gramsci and Us*:

> "We can only understand this diversification of social struggles in the light of Gramsci's insistence that, in modern societies, hegemony must be constructed, contested and won on many different sites…" (Hall, 2002: 232).

It is also an interesting way of understanding the way things come to be as they are, as opposed to a grand conspiracy theory. Where actors are unleashing common sense symbolic violence they are perpetuating and enforcing a doxa (Bourdieu, 1994) which is held as truth. They are working within the confines of their common sense understandings of phenomena in order to further self and specific collective interests (e.g. class based). So with a working understanding of capital in mind perhaps it is time to re-contextualise these explanations of social forces in to the scope of this study. Following in the same vein as Skeggs (1997) this analysis of 'going legit' seeks to exemplify the emotional and aspirational politics of class. The ways in which people attempt to dis-identify with their abject class based positionings; attempting to mobilise capital from the roads, they strategically seek to integrate in to the legitimate labour market, leaving behind precarious insecurity in exchange for comfort and respectability.

'Going Legit'

One of the strongest themes emerging from the interviews was the notion of 'going legit', it is important to understand how this works, as its realisation seemed often distant and idealised. In essence the idea of going legit is where a person who has spent time 'stacking' (saving) money from labour in the underground economy seeks to use this capital to enter the 'legitimate' labour market on more equitable terms than previously possible. During a time of increasing start-up costs and soaring mortgage deposits, one can see the way in which this can build a bridge for the less advantaged to attain similar standing to those who may inherit wealth or more easily access higher paid 'legitimate' employment. This analysis shares much in

common with Merton's (1938) theory of anomie, along with Agnew's (1992; 2001; 2007) accompanying notions of strain.

Merton's idea is that society is broadly held together by consensuses which centre around socially ascribed goals and the legitimate means of attaining them. Breakdown in the social order can occur when either means or ends are adhered to so rigorously that the other is disregarded, thus causing imbalance. Though he cites over-bureaucratization as an example of means being put ahead of desired ends, the main focus of his and most other discussions are when inequitable means to achieving *socially induced* goals cause a breakdown in adherence to institutionally legitimised means. If such a situation becomes too widespread it can cause a breakdown in values and social cohesion; *anomie.* The connection in the contemporary situation on road is palpable:

> "The process whereby exaltation of the ends generates a *literal demoralization*, i.e., a deinstitutionalization, of the means is one which characterizes many groups" (Merton, 1938: 675).

In this way we can recognise a certain unscrupulous aspect to this notion of 'going legit'; thinking back to the earlier discussion of the inequitable nature of current conjuncture it is easy to see how institutionally recognised modes of attainment could require 'innovative' adjustment (Merton, 1938). The experience of alienation in the form of the munpain could be regarded as a 'strain' factor in decisions relating to criminal endeavour (Agnew, 1992; 2001; 2007). Indeed, the concept and even phrasing, of 'going legit' is far from new in the context of street cultural studies which have also been contextualised by the shifting work patterns and increased economic polarisation taking place since the neo-liberal turn. Phillipe Bourgois (2003) headed a chapter with the same phrase, and in it explored the forays of the street orientated men of *El Barrio* into the mainstream service economy of New York. The desire for the men to 'go legit' was tied in to an idealisation of the American dream whereby any man, through hard work, could live an outdated patriarchal ideal of being the respectable sole provider for an entire family. Tellingly, Bourgois describes how the erosion of manufacturing jobs reduced the opportunities available to men to work in an environment where they felt their masculine selfhoods were sufficiently valued, leading to them being vulnerable to feelings of humiliation as a result of working in the lower echelons of the service sector. He also observed that the manual jobs the men *could* get were increasingly precarious; in terms of stability, safety and ethics. As a result, men's hopes of legitimate employment were not realised in any sustained way. Instead, they 'took refuge' in street culture, adhering to an

alternative value system which integrated their masculinities in a way more intuitive to them. The irony of this is that in order to avoid humiliation the men put themselves at risk of far worse things such as drug addiction, prison and violence. This illustrates the power of the impact of symbolic forms of violence can have on a person's selfhood.

The common sentiment between those on road and the men in *El Barrio* is captured in Bourgois' title – *In Search of Respect*. The desire to go legit on road is to do with achieving a respectable status in society. Similarly, to the men of El Barrio, this can lead to frustration and the pursuit of status in alternative value systems, however, the key difference was that there was a hope amongst my participants that street status could be exchanged in order to secure inclusion in the mainstream economy. The primary mode of accrual was economic and there was often little question that money, or a lack of it, was where a lot of social suffering started:

> Moussa: Yeah like you can't explain everyone's situation in one go, but *I bet you the start of it is because they didn't have enough ps* (money) and they're in a situation because they was poor or something like that. Like your mum probably wouldn't be on drugs if she had grown up in a rich family in Ashford in-in Tunbridge or something like that. *You probably would not be in the situation if down the road* your family had you straight financially or something like that.

This notion of going legit is not exclusively about work; it is about a broadly defined respectability – something Skeggs suggests involved 'judgements of class, race, gender and sexuality' (1997: 2-3). It is about living with dignity and social value, not being the folk devil symbolically hunted and harangued. The ways in which participants went about trying to achieve respect varied depending on their level of inclusion in society. It did not always involve crime but would often involve the manipulations of a variety of selves in order to build value in a variety of settings. In Anderson's (1999) study of street culture in the USA, he also commented on the aspiration amongst most of the people immersed in street life of being or becoming 'decent' folk. This meant sharing in broader middle class American values of respectability, though many struggled to make this transition permanently. This was said to be due to the lack of job opportunity available and the need to become street smart in their neighbourhoods in order to defend against the possibility of violence, leading the poorest demographic to resort to 'code switching' – that is strategically embodying both dispositions where and when they needed or were able to. This is also reflected in the words of Bev Skeggs (1997: 3) who notes "…different groups have differential access to the mechanisms for generating, resisting and displaying respectability".

Respectability is not an innate quality within an individual but is a result of their positioning in relation to society's margins. It can be thought of as a measure used to locate people on the social spectrum and thus the absence of respectability is often a sign of the injurious impacts of symbolic violence. The 'search for respect' is not a choice but an everyday existential struggle which has been observed by other researchers in the contemporary British context. For example; Steve Hall et al, writing in 2013 (:39), explained that:

> "…the fundamental appeal of crime has… more to do with acquiring the money necessary to make one's way up the mountainside to a place that represents the impossible paradox where social escape and social distinction converge…".

Many of my participants spoke at length about how important money was in their lives. It was something which could change their material circumstances and enrich their lives in a variety of ways, as Sandra illustrates:

> Sandra: When I was like younger all I cared about I was money, I used to think that like money solved everything.
>
> Yusef: Why's that?
>
> Sandra: I don't know I guess I'm quite materialistic, I guess like growing up when I was young we were like really broke and then when I got a bit older, not even older, for like a middle section of my life my mum was really well off and everything seemed better at that time so I was just sort of the opinion that if you have a lot of money things are okay…

Legitimate money was regarded as preferential to road money, but only if it could be accessed in such a way that humiliation could be avoided, which led many to speak about entrepreneurship as a viable means of transition between the two. There were some who were less focussed on money but those individuals tended to have access to other forms of inclusive social and cultural capital. There often appeared a necessary relationship between building respect on the road and making it in the mainstream; whereby in the quest to make it to the place where 'social escape and social distinction converge' (Hall et al, 2013: 39) a strategic mastery of both dispositions was necessary.

From Street to Road Capitals

Road capitals (plural) are a concept I have developed from Sandberg's (2008; Sandberg and Pedersen, 2011) concept of 'street capital' (singular). Street capital for Sandberg is similar to Bourdieu's (1985) concept of cultural capital in that it involves culturally significant forms 'deposited' within the individual helping them to gain mastery of their specific field of life. In the mainstream this ranges from academic qualifications, to a title or family name, right down to the bodily hexis (Bourdieu, 1978) of mannerism and speech. On the street according to Sandberg there is a similar observable process whereby, young men particularly, can be observed to be engaging in strategically adapted behaviours in the attempt to demonstrate mastery of the street cultural field.

This accumulation of street capital is orientated strongly around the need to exhibit the potential to do violence. There is evidence from a range of studies on street culture which support the notion that violence is used as the primary mechanism of value; for the creation and marking of hierarchies (Vigil, 1987; Anderson, 1999; Pavis and Cunningham-Burley, 1999; Winlow, 2001; Sandberg, 2008; Bourgious, 2003). For Sandberg the willingness to use violence is the core organising principle for street capital. In this way he regards street capital as being a means of value accumulation for people who have almost no stake in more mainstream society, something which was powerfully characterised by one of his participants, who proclaimed; 'I'm nobody' (Sanberg, 2008: 165).

So effectively, Sanberg's notion of street capital is a last resort for the dispossessed, it represents a way, through the use of violence, 'nobodies' can have a hope of accessing some kind of personhood. There are parallels between this notion and what I have observed amongst those on road, though I believe it is not something limited to violence and in fact it is also something those on road attempt to leverage in order to realise their aspirations of 'going legit'. This is somewhat contrary to Sandberg who claims that:

> "While there are many parallels between street capital as conceptualised here and cultural capital as conceptualized by Bourdieu, there are also important differences: first, street culture is not a field in an orthodox interpretation of Bourdieu. For example, the street lacks formal institutions and its autonomy can be questioned. Second, Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital is characterized by transferability in social space. Street capital accumulation is specific to street culture, and having street

habitus will be disadvantageous in other social arenas. Thus, the long-term
'effectiveness' of street capital is limited". (Sandberg, 2008:156-157).

This is something which must be properly qualified, as it is a statement which contains truth, it just lacks some nuance. I agree that street habitus could be disadvantageous in other social arenas and the long term effectiveness of street orientated value accumulation is limited, as T pointed out at the beginning of the chapter. I also agree that an 'orthodox' reading of Bourdieu may mean that street cultural landscapes such as the roads do not strictly conform to definitions of fields. However, Bourdieu's own justification for his adaptation of Husserl's term habitus, where he claimed that social theory must have an accumulative quality; meaning that adaptation is necessary to build upon contributions and 'reactivate' them to increase the real world relevance (Bourdieu, [1992] 1996: 253) [cited in] (Laberge, 1995: 133) leads me to believe that this is a notion which could be adjusted in order to allow more fluidity to the concept of value accumulation on road.

In this way I regard such an interpretation of Bourdieu leading to a limited reading of the agency and aspiration of those on road. I contend that the notion of street capital is too limiting and static, representing only part of a variation of cultural capital, in the form of embodied forms of value mostly relating to the potential to do violence. It also fails to recognise the aspirational dimension offered by the quest to go legit and the ways in which value in street cultural fields can be mobilised for exchange with other forms of capital in other social spaces, particularly the variant ways actors of differing disposition may utilise the roads as a space to acquire capital they need in order to enter in to exchanges elsewhere (see chapter 4 where I discuss Grime music and value in more detail). I wish to argue that road capitals (plural), similarly to street capital, provides a means for structurally dispossessed people to accrue and display self-worth. Like more conventional explanations of capital in order to be understood, road capital, needs to be broken down into categories of: economic capital, social capital and cultural capital dimensions. Sandberg's notion of street capital provides a partial demonstration of what I argue to be road cultural capital, which is part of a 'cultural toolkit' (Swidler, 1986) those on road access in order to ward off the munpain. That is why I prefer to use road capitals, in the plural sense, to demonstrate how comparable forms of capital are being accrued and exchanged in a street cultural setting.

Economic Road Capital

Most of those interviewed understood their own disadvantages in monetary terms, seeing the accumulation of money as the key element in their own social advancement. The ways in which they envisioned this improvement varied; ranging from realising certain kinds of consumer lifestyles (Young, 2007) via holidays and conspicuous consumption, through to the ability to becomes self-employed in order gain greater status and autonomy in the legitimate labour market, as Charlotte explains below:

> Charlotte: I've just started as a business consultant and I'm helping small businesses, I've worked with two people. Ermm [clears throat] I want to get in to a pre-school, obviously I'm helping my friend set up her arts and crafts nursery where we're gonna focus on children with sensory disorders and so on and I want to open aaa social enterprise for children-primarily autism but I don't want to pigeon hole it… [money is] what I call freedom units. I don't see money I'm not a materialistic person, *but money brings freedom, yeah?*

Although economic capital on road is a key aspiration for people, it is a means to realising other forms of capital and ultimately social movement and self-fulfilment or as Charlotte describes it 'freedom'. It is regarded as important as a means of exchange. There are of course limitations as much of the economic capital which is often alluded to by participants requires engagement in the underground criminal economy, which entails great risk for varied levels of reward. Below Stephen summarises this, reflecting on the ephemeral nature of such endeavours, highlighting the importance of getting out whilst you are ahead:

> Stephen: …the whole point of the road stuff is for you to get what you can and then *get out*. So if you think like you make as much, like get as much money as you can and then if you feel, okay tax free money as you can, and you think 'like cool, I've made enough let me go and do this', let me go and get a job now, while I got this in the savings so I don't have to worry about rent for a long time, I can just rack up on this, do you know what I mean?

This strategic accumulation of economic road capital was something several respondents had engaged in. It is important to remember that such strategies are not developed in a vacuum and often at various junctures in their trajectories they had tried to 'go legit' by other means. Moussa offers an interesting account of such a trajectory, where although building a repertoire of other forms of road capital, he had endeavoured to enter the labour market on more

culturally equitable terms through obtaining a university degree in construction. As we will see below, sometimes going through institutionally endorsed means of progression is just as fraught with risk as the street and ultimately leaves some people in the same place.

'They're Gonna Choose George Osbourne'

In this time of low social mobility and high aspiration many of those who took part in this study have had to overcome legitimate material hardship and still have struggled to enter stable well paid employment. At the time of the interview Moussa was a recent university graduate, graduating two academic years prior to the interview, who had struggled to get into suitable stable employment. On graduating he realised that the degree he had worked hard to attain, in difficult circumstances, was not the golden ticket in to well-paid graduate programmes he had been led to believe. This now empty promise of dignified employment had previously motivated him to stay out of the underground economy - defying many of his peers and refusing to engage in the low level drug trade. On experiencing the frustration of years of material and symbolic sacrifice Moussa felt humiliated; feeling that he had chosen the wrong pathway to success for someone of his background. Below he discusses some of his experiences, along with some general musings, about foraying in to the legitimate job market:

> Moussa: …its tied in to poverty man. Really and truly if everyman were getting good jobs yeah and they were getting ps [money] from it, they would come off the roads really and truly. But you see 'round-there's no way, they can't it's not even possible. They can't even *imagine, how* [laughs], how to construct a CV, let alone get a job. Alright, a CV, fair enough you'll go Jobcentres and they'll help you yeah, but as soon as you get in to job centres they'll fuck you about bruv, you know what I'm saying? They'll say ah go to do this and they'll tell you-they'll make you go through some fucking maths things yeah, they'll make you do your times tables again basically yeah. They treat you like a mug, *like an idiot.* And they'll make you go through them tings there and they'll make you sign on, without you knowing, like that this ain't helping nothing, you see like making you do things-and like why am I gonna go and get a job, how am I gonna get job? Like so you do your thing init, like you need an instant-like even for me yeah if I wasn't gonna get this construction-'cause I can get a CSCS card and I can get a job tomorrow and switch it up the next day, instantly. I can't do this interview, wait a month, yes or no, I need instant *now*, yes? alright, plan ahead, start saving up for this. But when you're all applying for jobs and that and saying ah we got you on shortlist, we g-g-g-got your interview, you got your test before the interview, you got *a*

whooooole bag of processes to make you fuck up, you understand like, to make you slip up or to cancel you out. And more time they're not gonna choose man like man, you know, like straight away, *as soon as they hear man's voice compared to the next man that's speaking like, George Osborne or something like that, they're gonna choose George Osborne*, they're not gonna choose man, unless they got their *equality right, where they **haaaaavve to choose** someone like me* [laughs] you understand like.

Yusef: They don't have to

Moussa: They don't have to but they're gonna maybe, just to make them look a bit better in terms of the ethnicity, diversity or whatever they got… But I seen it man, I applied, I've had mad good grades yeah and I've been applying [for graduate jobs], but *I didn't get one interview bruv, not one interview!* I was like man, I'm thinking maybe I'm applying for that shit wrong man, *but it wasn't me,* obviously it was the recession and that like, but like *not one interview*!

Moussa has developed a sophisticated understanding of the social and cultural capital required to enter in to well-paid legitimate employment. Simply having a degree level qualification does not prepare you for the hyper-competitive graduate job market. There is a feeling in this account of a world going back on its promises, whereby just as he battled against the odds to become qualified, the goal posts were moved. It became evident that it was more about who you are, rather than what you have to offer; Moussa's selfhood was the wrong selfhood. The environment was so alien to him he struggled to project an image of himself in to the world which potential employers might desire, as hard as he had tried to get there, Moussa could never become George Osbourne. It adds some gravity to his statement when we bear in mind that Mr Osbourne rose to the lofty position of Chancellor of the Exchequer holding a GCSE as his highest mathematical qualification. Though this interview took place before Osbourne left the Cabinet, his subsequent appointment as editor of The London Evening Standard whilst continuing his work as a MP and an advisor for Blackrock for which he reportedly earns over £600,000 a year (Skynews.com, 2017), shows the way in which Moussa was able to recognise and analyse privilege in operation in a sophisticated manner.

In relation to this set of circumstances Moussa faced a kind of existential crisis; questioning the values that his trajectory to date had been based on. He mentions that he accessed training in order to become a holder of a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card, this enables him to work on building sites on a contractual basis in order to operate the heavy

machinery needed for excavation. This is well-paid work but is usually only contracted on a weekly or monthly basis as it is only required for short periods during a build. I actually met Moussa on the day of the interview as he was leaving one such site, where he was operating heavy excavation machinery completely alone, giving the impression that safety standards for such precarious employees may well be overlooked on occasion. In this way Moussa was sucked in to the precarious labour market, able to only sell his labour on a casual basis, despite having invested heavily in a university education, resisting the initial allure of the fast money available out on road.

This is not the whole story. Prior to getting his CSCS card, Moussa and some peers had set up a drug line out of London and started to make good money. His plan was to raise enough economic capital to start small businesses which would serve the construction industry, utilising his legitimate expertise. After coming to the realization that he may never be able to access the quality of employment he aspired to; Moussa understood that he already held the required status and contacts he needed for this kind of criminal activity. In this environment he was, figuratively speaking, George Osbourne and the world made much more sense to him. This was a selfhood which felt more authentic; the odds of him becoming 'Caesar', in the Kierkegaardian sense, on road were still long, but they felt more realistic than graduate employment. His exploits on road soon drew the attention of the police though, and Moussa was subsequently processed through the criminal justice system, despite graduating from university with a clean criminal record:

> Yusef: What was you doing, trappin [selling drugs]?

> Moussa: Yeah I had a little green [cannabis] ting, I little-nothing big and that but I could have made money and that if-if I was by myself, you understand like, I would have made a lot of money bruv, 'cause I was doing at one point it was like a box a week, you understand like, it was-it was proper… but because when the feds were on man's shoulder, it was only that time that man got nicked, bruv man would have draws on me bruv, the feds would be be errr trying to find the draws the could smell it but couldn't find it, they had the dogs and everything, couldn't find nothing. 'Cause I was being so cheeky, they would take me, strip search me at the station, then have to bring me back to my car and I'll be like *'alright lads, see ya later!'* [does cockney accent] they did that like 4 times in a week bruv, I was mockin it every 4 times, they boomed down my door, if they found a spliff or something like that, you understand? But because of other people's problems that how I got mixed in that and I caught-I-I

got charged with it init and I caught possession with intent init, but because his evidence is now tied joint enterprise to his [his friend also involved in the operation] ting and he's pleading guilty , if I've gone not guilty and I go to trial, and if I go to trial for weed, it's stupid init, so I just took the guilty, man's still on suspended sentence init, but mans-I haven't been in trouble since, 'cause I've been rolling by myself most times, I'll link mandem sometimes but I'm not doing too many things outside of my own thing, I'm moving by myself these times.

In this extract Moussa emphasises that it was not down to his own failure that his street enterprise nosedived, as his road selfhood was legitimate. The circumstances under which he was arrested were to do with the friend's car he was riding in not having a valid M.O.T, and thus could be regarded as being outside of his own control. Even in failure he could maintain more poise and control on road, despite the hazards being far greater. On road he could rely on the masculinity he had developed over many years, it shielded him from humiliation, preserving his dignity. Contrasted with his account of negotiating the Jobcentre where he was made to feel '*like an idiot'*, even in failure his road performative management could shield his sense of self-worth. He played the game and the stakes were high; he got a few cheeky victories over on the police and ultimately even though he failed, that's just the way things go.

The incident clearly did have an impact on Moussa and since then he has observed a change in his own behaviour. His conviction was the spur which motivated him to enter in to the casual day labour market he spoke about in the earlier extract. His criminal conviction might further inhibit his chances of getting the elusive graduate job he once craved, though in reality by his own account he may have never been able to access that anyway. When people become starved of the means to establish legitimate selfhoods they must adapt ways of being which attach value and purpose to their existence. If one value system excludes you, you enter another. Moussa's story leads us on to think more about the kinds of cultural and social capital valued on road. When we reflect on his story here, we must remember that despite Moussa turning to the roads in a difficult moment, that his plan was always to achieve legitimate labour market inclusion by using his road economic capital to start several small businesses. This might seem unrealistic but it is something which most are confident can be done, however, this kind of inclusion requires the ability to manage capital flows both on road and in the mainstream.

Road Social Capital

In order for young people to transition from road life in to more mainstream understandings of inclusion, they must be able to manage multiple pressures and call on support from a range of social locations. When thinking about Moussa's plan to go legit; consider the kinds of social capital he was calling on in order to make it realisable. Through his youth he had developed a range of contacts on road, who admired his mastery of hyper masculinity, making them keen to develop drug networks with him. However, what is unclear is how Moussa would have tried to transfer that road economic capital, from cash, in to legitimate investment capital.

If we think back to Stephen's earlier reflections, he considered that road money could be used to pay rent and perhaps offer an opportunity for someone on road to gain some breathing space from the munpain, in order to then enter legitimate employment from a more secure economic position. Stephen obviously had in mind the limitation of his own social network, considering the laundering of illegitimate money unrealistic and instead thinking in generally smaller terms than Moussa.

It is important to consider social capital on road as it can be a core stumbling block inhibiting young people's transitions. Their road social capital was their fall back when times go tough, as there was always a network of people who could supply them with drugs or provide them with recognition and a feeling of belonging. This uneven distribution of road social capital in relation to their ability to access more formal forms of social capital is a strong explanatory factor in many of the decisions they made to lean towards criminality, especially when times get tough. In spite of this there were others in the study who observed times where their road social capital was an important factor in aiding in them moving forward towards a legitimate trajectory. This was illustrated well in Jeremiah's story; he eventually studied at Oxbridge and now has a professional job in the third sector, yet there were many times in his teens when he required the support from those in his familial network on road in order to maintain his social standing as well as his personal safety.

Jeremiah's Story

Jeremiah, a mixed race man now in his late twenties, spent his youth moving a number of times between London and the Midlands; during which time he experienced many of road life's challenges. His dad was a single father committed to obtaining an education, but during his studies he often experienced financial, relationship and health problems which sent the family in to flux. The result of this is that Jeremiah suffered financial and emotional insecurity

as he had to move around different neighbourhoods; each time having to acclimatise himself to the surroundings, measuring his own local social stature on road and adapting his behaviours accordingly.

It was his set of more middle class orientated interests, such as literature and art, which helped him to manage his transitions between social fields and made him adept at managing his social status amongst peers, along with his long term ambitions. In his interview he reflects on the difficulty that came with this, effectively having to develop a kind of double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903). This highlights that respectability and status can be attained from a variety of sources.

In his youth he used the roads more as space for fun and socialising, in a similar vein to many of those in Gunter's (2008) study, which helped to provide an outlet for some of his frustrations as well as providing a space to help him gain perspective. Throughout much of his adolescence he invested in his academic future, and despite spending several years living in the middle east after converting to Islam, he eventually realised his potential on returning to Britain.

His trajectory towards respectability was by no means easy, and it demonstrates the necessity for a combination of conventionally recognised capital with exceptional talent and a degree of luck in order to make such a transition. It also is a testament to the variety of experiences on road and how those who wish to make the transition through legitimate means must make sacrifices. Jeremiah describes difficulties in accessing immediate solutions to problems both on road and in relation to education. One such incident happened after he moved schools, something which happened several times, and upset the local status hierarchy. He began to have problems with an older boy in the school which resulted in several confrontations and put his personal safety at risk. He was fortunate that he had a large network of male cousins close to him in age who were able to attend the school and mediate the conflict. Local subcultural conventions combined with an apparent lack of efficacy in dealing with such matters precluded him from turning to the police or the school for assistance. Turning to either of these could have reduced his social status and attracted further ridicule and aggression. He describes his experiences below:

> Jeremiah: But anyway we went to Leicester and that like year in Leicester-that 9 months was probably one of the worst in my life, like *it was horrible.* Like we got there, in the space of a year we lived in like two-three different places, erm it was *horrid*, my

dad lost loads of money when we were up there, got scammed by like a landlord, one Asian brother, *baare drama*, like he was just getting-he got *super depressed*, started taking bare shit out on me, like for the most minor things. Er I remember like I broke my arm, I remember like breaking my arm and when I broke my arm I remember like this guy in my school a couple years older than me, like because I was in year 9, like he *tried to bully me.* Like cause what happened was I had started the school and all the girls were like *'AAHHH it's a London guy!!'* and all the guys were like ah sick! And when I started the piffest girl in the school was in my year, and she was going out with like *'the guy'* in the whole school, who was in year 11, like do you know what I mean?

Yusef: Yeah yeah

Jeremiah: And this guy was nuts, like I think the week that I started he got arrested because he got his samurai sword out in the middle of the street was trying to fight people with it, like seriously, like he was nuts I think he had like schizophrenia or something. So erm he tried to er, I-so I basically-she was on it and they had broken up, so I moved her up [chatted her up] basically, like, and I didn't know about the background between the two of them. So then like I broke my arm a month later and then when I broke my arm that's when he started to like try bully me. And I remember for a couple of days, 'cause I think I didn't wanna get all my cousins involved, because I lived in the same area as my school and like they all lived far away and all these people lived there, and like I didn't really want to bring drama to my dad's yard as well because there was so much shit going on as it was and I was like I don't really wanna be having all this drama. So for a few days I want kinda having it and I was just like *'cause I couldn't do anything with a broken arm*, do you know what I mean? And I remember once he came and like tried to twist my finger whilst my arms *broken*, like in a brace. So I was think *this guy's taking the piss* so eventually I told my cousins init, and they came down and it all got sorted and it was fine after that.

Jeremiah's cousin attending his school helped to make the space safer for him. Without this show of support, the insecurity of his living situation could have had a seriously adverse effect on his schooling, with young people who experience such difficulties at greater risk of truancy or exclusion. His cousins prevented him from having to engage in violence himself and risk sanction from the school or the police, which too would have worked against him in his quest for a successful and legitimate transition. He was also protected from the stresses of the adult world which his dad represented, as involving his dad at a time where he was experiencing

personal difficulty was in itself problematic. If he had not been able to access forms of road capital his own legitimate trajectory could have been jeopardised, displaying how essential forms other than economic road capital are in making successful transitions and going legit.

Jeremiah's story shows us that having access to social capital across differential social fields is key in making a successful transition from the roads to the legitimate labour market. Below I will consider the kinds of cultural capital required by those on road. This will help us to understand the balance Jeremiah had to strike and why being able to access road social capital can help some young people to gain value through less audacious street orientated displays.

Road Cultural Capital

Road cultural capital is possibly the most complex and also divisive form of capital separating those on road from the social inclusion many of them aspire to. The money offered by economic road capital, if managed in a certain way, is a *relatively* neutral asset. Road cultural capital is different in that it is carried in the bodily hexis (Bourdieu, 1978) of the individual, therefore it is often ever present and is visibly perceptible. Part of the issue in relation to exclusion is that road culture and those associated with it are often stigmatised for a variety of reasons, meaning that their mode of being is already problematic in relation to 'going legit'. As we saw with Moussa; it was his bodily hexis (not speaking like George Osbourne and his race, not looking like George Osbourne) that marked him as different, and problematic for the mainstream. The same cultural capital made the accumulation of economic road capital more straightforward. This story echoes the predicament of the 'lads' in Willis' (1977) famous study *Learning to Labour*, whereby the kind of bodily hexis (Bourdieu, 1978) required for success in education was rejected in favour of more working class forms of cultural display. On the roads a similar situation occurs, as due to the immediacy of the local urban environment, young people are motivated to develop ways of being which can help them to navigate a treacherous local landscape. Stephen's experiences of community violence demonstrate well why someone needs to become adept at survival here:

> Yusef: I hear that, is it common, in your life have you had people pull knives or guns on you?
>
> Stephen: Yeah… yeah…
>
> Yusef: How did you feel when that happened?

Stephen: I don't know I just had to react init like I-I been stabbed twice so I know how it feels and all that. But you just have to react man, but like I said man, it's all just getting yourself in to these kind of situations, you just need to know what you're doing

Yusef: Do you feel lucky that you survived?

Stephen: Yeah, you have to, 'cause you never know that could have been the last time- that's what I'm saying all this-a next person taking your life, why does he deserve-he's not God, he don't deserve to all of them stuff, no man, no matter if you believe in God or not, *no other person deserves to take your life, that's your life*.

Yusef: I hear that, do you think the road is a kinda struggle in itself

Stephen: Yeah

Yusef: And getting off the roads is kind of like

Stephen: Yeah you can say tomorrow I don't want to do this no more, but remember my man that you punched in his face two weeks ago, he might be looking for the get back, so you might be trying to speak to him like 'yo brudda I'm not on none'-and then he just gets you, know what I mean?

What Stephen is demonstrating here is that there is no easy transition out of road life. The more road capital one accrues the hotter is becomes and the harder it can be to make a transition in to legitimate work, something which Sandberg (2008) was right about to a certain extent. Even if you want to stop it does not mean you will be given the chance to, thus to ever drop your guard is to take a risk. The roads are a space where recourse to violence is common and unpredictable (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009) and the adoption of a bodily hexis which keeps you safe can be a matter of life and death. This is where road cultural capital is closest to Sandberg's notion of street capital, where hyper-masculine performativity via the threat of and actual use of violence becomes a vital tool in keeping oneself safe as well as exerting your own will over others. This is also his justification for separating street capital from cultural capital as 'it is difficult to transfer to other social arenas' (Grundetjern and Sandberg, 2012: 625). However, as I intend to elaborate later hyper-masculine performance and road orientated cultural capital is not just about violence it also carries a transcendent aesthetic which as Ilan (2015) describes in his discussion relating to the advertising industry, is something which can be commodified and traded across fields

<u>Hyper Masculinity</u>

No discussion of hyper-masculinity on road can be limited to status or capital accumulation, as there are many deeper rooted intricacies at play. hooks (2003) speaks in great detail about the historical association of African American men and hyper masculine behaviour, as well as Glynn (2014) who spoke of the weight of negative labelling and inequality forcing black men specifically in to hyper-masculine dispositions. Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) speak of the emotional enmity bred amongst those on road by the repeated exposure to high levels on violence; living in an environment where the risk of bodily and emotional harm is prevalent is extremely difficult to navigate, so to accrue capital in such a situation one must be prepared to tackle it head on:

> Stephen: …yeah man it's got its gains and it's got its thing, but everyone needs to know what they're playing with because like I-like I-this whole road stuff ain't for everybody.
>
> Yusef: Why not?
>
> Stephen: It's not cause cause there's people out here that, that's willing to go further than you, let me put it like that.
>
> Yusef: Further than you, how?
>
> Stephen: Like *anything*, if you've got a problem with someone you might just think yeah I'm gonna beat him up, that guy might think I'ma stab him. You might say he's gonna stab me, I'm gonna shoot him and then he might think oh he wants to shoot me, I'm gonna shoot him in front of his mum [trails off], you know what I mean? So it's a dangerous-it's a little dangerous game you're playing, like you might be doing stuff, get arrested, get caught up with the police, you might be like alright I'm not gonna tell on him, but the guy might be like I'm not doing no jail I'm gonna tell on him and say it's [trails off], you know what I mean? So it's a bit of a risky business man, you need to know what you're doing."

Above Stephen speaks about the risks involved in doing business on road; he weighs up the benefits of fast money against the risks of becoming a victim of violence. He conveys the necessity of being prepared for violent escalations in conflict, explaining that only those with sufficient street smarts should attempt to engage in this risky business. Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) claim that as opposed to older more organised career criminals young

people on road use violence less strategically and are more likely to use weapons as the result of conflicts not related to 'business'.

Stephen's analysis seems to add nuance to this perspective, though holding a broad consensus regarding the high levels of unpredictability and violence on road, he suggests that to some extent all dealings on road are related to status and capital accumulation. This is because being disrespected for whatever reason may give off the impression of being vulnerable, which in turn can affect status and capacity to accumulate capital in the casual or underground economy. He goes on to explain that it is not just a case of being able to do violence, as he recognises that perpetual violence ultimately leads to destruction, instead he contrasts different dispositions he's witnessed on road; the street smart guy and the savage:

> Stephen: Is it more dangerous, yeah by far, because you're dabbling, it goes back to when I said there's certain people out here with different kind of concepts. You might have the guy that just wants the money, he's not on nothing, he's just a cool guy, but he's kinda street smart, but you can have the guy who's just a savage
>
> Yusef: Mmm, is it better to be a savage on the roads?
>
> Stephen: Is it better to be a savage on the roads?
>
> Yusef: Yeah
>
> Stephen: [long pause] there's perks-yes and no.
>
> Yusef: What are the positives about being a savage?
>
> Stephen: You're less likely to get troubled, and you're gonna be able to handle yourself, so when people are coming to approach you, they'll be reluctant to, you know what I mean, they won't be *willing*. Like ah man if we do this to him man, this is gonna happen, ah I dunno man cause I'm not really trying to have that problem 'cause he looks like he won't stop. But certain people… if you're not-it just depends man and other people they might not be, they might just be on their money be like yeah I can do that and he's just gonna carry on, like 'ah my man robbed him and he didn't do nothing so I'm gonna do it too'"

Here Stephen explains that being able to 'handle yourself' is essential, claiming that being a 'savage' (someone known for hyper-masculine outbursts of violence) deters potential conflicts as other actors consider the risk to themselves, but can increase the risk by perpetuating

violence. In this way hyper-masculinity is an important but also volatile way men on road to accumulate capital, with failure display such behaviours potentially leaving young men vulnerable, meaning their economic and cultural capital (their reputation) can be easily stripped from them. Stephen recognises that there is a variety of strategies which can be effective for capital accumulation on road. Being 'street smart' suggests something closer to the balance struck by Jeremiah, using his road capital when and where he needed it but limiting his own hyper masculine performativity. What Stephen is communicating here is all forms of capital are hot, they are all balanced on a knife edge, whether you are savage or street smart, things can fall apart depending on the individual's ability to rise to the set of circumstances which arise.

This has been evidenced in various studies in the UK and the USA in localities where many people compete in markets (mostly illegal drugs) outside of any formal regulations violence and its threat often serves as the 'regulating' principle (Hales, Lewis and Silverstone, 2006; Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). This also follows the logic of Glynn (2014) when he argues that young men on road do not always have a choice when it comes to exhibiting hyper-masculine behaviour and dispositions, as not doing so would leave them vulnerable, making them unable to be 'self-sufficient' in a shark infested local economy.

I argue here that hyper masculinity in itself serves as a kind of cultural capital on road, a form which can be instantly exchanged for symbolic power within the field, via the action of actual violence, but can also very quickly become their undoing. I look to the writing of Ta Nehisi Coates (2015) for inspiration in this matter; he, like Glynn, speaks of the socio-historical roots of hyper masculinity in the ghettos of Baltimore. He describes racism in America as ultimately a visceral experience "it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth" (ibid:10). This is a situation similar to that on road, being exposed to the insecurities of the market driven policies (as well as racism) and the accompanying strategic policing of urban space leads to a condition of actual physical insecurity for those on road. Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) highlight the lack of any judicial processes of mediation for road based conflict, 'beef', creating a situation of 'nakedness' (Coates, 2015) against the hostile world of imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 2000; 2004).

Hyper-masculinity, along with conspicuous consumption, serve as forms of cultural capital; glinting shards capturing broken reflections of contemporary consumer capitalism as they are scattered into the dark chasm of the munpain. In a space where people are devoid of conventional forms of capital, stripped naked and sacrificed to appease the gods of the

market, young men seek to 'armour' (Coates, 2015) their fragile bodies with impenetrable hardness. The image they seek to promote is one of control over their bodies and mastery of their environment. Hyper-masculinity and conspicuous consumption serve as embodied and objectified forms of cultural capital on road; vital in the maintenance of the self against threats to the body and ripe for exchange with other forms of capital. Below Coates (2015:14) describes how the conspicuous style and the embodiment of hyper-masculinity fuse in to an embodied image:

> "The fear was there in the extravagant boys of my neighbourhood, in their large rings and medallions, their big puffy coats… which was their armour against their world…The fear lived on in their practised bop, their slouching denim… the calculated angle of their baseball caps, a catalogue of behaviours and garments enlisted to inspire the belief that these boys were in firm possession of everything they desired" (Coates, 2015: 14).

I have included Coates experiences here because his literary style expresses more than just a functional purpose for hyper-masculine display – he alludes to an aesthetic. This is again where I depart from Sandberg's notion of street capital, as I seek to examine how road cultural capital has expressive artistic elements, which although are commonly expressed via inclusion driven forms of consumption still transcend limited notions of brute force.

Conspicuous Consumption and Road Cultural Capital

It's key to understand that specific symbols are important in the attainment of status. In Stephen's case, it is not stealing a loaf of bread to feed his family (something which he himself reflects on later in his interview), but the acquisition of luxury goods for which he risks his freedom. Road masculinity is intimately tied to an aesthetic performance. This is one of the transferable aspects of road cultural capital appealing to wide demographics of consumers who 'are seduced by its ostensibly transgressive character' (Ilan, 2012: 39). Both men and women tie the development of this aesthetic in with their consumption practices, with many becoming successful social media lifestyle vloggers. This was not lost on participants, who were also aware that road dispositions were being appropriated by less authentic actors. This is something Charlotte seemed to disapprove of:

> Charlotte: So these people who have loads of freedom units, that are educated, that have great friends, travelled the world lalala. You seem them all, they all want to wear their *cap back and their trousers low and, pick up the lingo like 'yeahh cuz'*. They want

to adapt to that what we call urban road culture where before that used to be something that people turned their nose up at *but now it's cool*. So because it's cool theres guys that I know that come from that kinda well to do family, but sell drugs… they put their freedom at risk.

Coolness is an important aspect of road cultural capital, and offers potential for mainstream recognition. This is something which only makes sense when one understands the extent to which wellbeing is tied to a person's consumer capital. On the roads, a space where conventional forms of capital are scarce, the visible lack of participation in consumption is risky. If the accumulation of sign laden-commodities is an exercise in social stratification, its absence serves to do the same; negatively impacting on the self-esteem of poor young people and visibly marking them as abject. This is evidenced by Tess Ridge's (2009: 2) study of children's experiences of poverty, noting that "lack of the same material goods and clothes as their peers… meant that children experienced bullying and were fearful of stigma and social isolation". This inability to participate in the shared goals of society is a central feature of the munpain; the urban poor now have to watch as their cities become increasingly populated by the rich, whilst images of the lifestyles of the super-rich are beamed in to their psyche via popular social media sites. This leads to young people struggling in both stand out and fit in; as in the age of consumerism, displaying distinctive value laden symbols –is paradoxically tied to conformity and inclusion.

This is a broad generalisation across society as well as on road specifically, and many people may contest the worth of material goods in relation to the accumulation of their status. However, it has been convincingly argued that "in social and cultural terms there is no single issue that dominates the modern psyche as much as fashion and consumption" (O'cass and McEwan, 2004:26), with many of the decisions people make in everyday life informed by their sensibilities in relation to consumption. On road, where relative poverty is a reality, forms of consumptions were seen as central to living what Judith Butler may have described as a 'liveable life' (Phoenix, 2007; Butler, 2010; 2014; Cruz, 2013). I argue this because in the absence of funds in an affluent society, many of those on road carry the burden of being delegitimised by virtue of being unable to express identities via consumer choice, leading them to being non-intelligible subjects.

Inability to consume was connected in to some of the most intimate aspects of life on road, with it being broadly frowned upon, those who did not show at least the ambition to consume often cited as undesirable. Below Sandra laments her former partner's lack of ability to

participate in forms of capital accumulation, connecting his inability to 'fit in' with being stupid:

> Sandra: Yeah, most, most road guys at the very least wanna get rich… Whereas he didn't really care about getting money. He didn't care about getting a job, he didn't care about getting at education… he didn't care about *anything*…

Many participants spoke of the frustration of not being able to fully participate in consumer society, exposing them amongst peers as being 'broke' or 'bummy'. Martin Glynn (2014:59) found echoes of similar sentiments in his study focusing on young black men on road, with participants citing their parent's inability to provide for them causing arrested development and pushing them into crime in order to keep up with their peers. In my own study Stephen shares his experiences:

> Stephen: But yeah then, you're starting wanting, you're wanting-you want more stuff, because when you're growing up seeing the guys, the older people like, you're seeing them in their Moschino jacket and Moschino jeans and 110s (Nike trainers) and Armani jeans and all of that. So I'm think ah man, now I need to start getting kinda money, 'cause you're starting to see that, when your mum by herself it's kinda hard for her to take care of 4 other children, so you're thinking man I need to stop asking my mum for stuff. So you're trying to do other little dumb crimes, like robbery-robbing men's phones, and doing shit like that, and then selling it in the market, and robbing laptops from the school and going to sell it in the market and stuff like that".

In his mid-teens Stephen came to the realisation he had to provide for himself, with the local casual economy providing the most easily accessible medium for doing so. From this extract it seems clear that young men find standing out and fitting in of crucial importance on road, effecting their perceptions of how others might feel about them. Wacquant's (2008) observation that when capital is scarce, consumption becomes *sin qua non* captures the spirit of Stephen's narrative, showing how other canonical narratives (such as the doting son) are overridden and overlaid. Conspicuous consumption is one of the ways that people on road can assert their personhood and make their lives bearable. Consumption as a form of cultural capital is intrinsically tied to economic capital, as the exchange of money for goods is almost always necessary in the acquisition of consumables. Here we can begin to see how interconnected all these forms of capitals are to one another and how those which bring young people closest to feelings of value and inclusion require the developments of other

forms of road capital which also mark them as different and abject. For Charlotte this web of value is captured by the notion that road culture is all about 'business', including most importantly the business of survival:

> Charlotte: *It is always business; it is always business.* When it's people planning to run up in people's houses with guns, whether it's people who sell drugs, whether its people that do fraud, whether its people that sell knock off clothes and phones, *it's always related to business because* what road culture is-road culture to me, the main similarity, the main basis of it, is generally survival. That is the basis of road culture. We can get in to the way people talk, the way people dress, that's just, that's just a different element but in terms of actual road culture and also road culture everyone's kinda generally had a similar ideal, everyone-everyone wants to have that *power, everyone wants to look the best, everyone wants to have the best car, everyone wants to have that chain, everyone wants to be* **respected**, you know? And I think that also comes from if you don't have nothing, or, if you don't feel loved or you don't feel in control of your life-where you've felt *rejected.*

Road Capital's Gendered Dimension

In this section I wish to demonstrate that road cultural capital has a gendered dimension, which largely disadvantages women. In spite of this women are still able to utilise gendered forms of capital in order to gain social status on road. I also examine a gendered account of street capital (Grundetjern and Sandberg, 2012) arguing that it is useful in helping to understand how gendered variations of capital operate, but that it should be considered as a field based variant of more widely recognised cultural capital, as it can be exchanged more readily across fields than street capital would have us believe.

Bourdieu's notions of capital have been criticised because of their androcentric nature (Laberge, 1995; McCall, 1992). McCall (1992) worked to integrate gender analysis in to notions of cultural capital and habitus in order to rectify this flaw. She identified a specific form of feminine embodied cultural capital; 'gender capital'. This operated in certain situations allowing some women to draw on their 'feminine dispositions' in order to help them to navigate male dominated symbolic systems (Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010). It should be noted that, though this form of cultural capital can work to aid those of specific feminine dispositions, it is understood by some as short of transformative action as it fails to overturn or drastically alter the patriarchal symbolic order (Skeggs, 1997).

This adaptive task has also taken up by Grundetjern and Sandberg (2012) in relation to Sandberg's (2008) own notion of street capital, specifically in relation to women operating in the drug economy. Again I would describe this as a variant form of gendered cultural capital (McCall, 1992; Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010) as opposed to street capital, but the gendered distinctions sketched out by Grundetjern and Sandberg are useful all the same. They draw out the contradiction seen across criminological literature more broadly regarding whether women are passive victims of street worlds (Adler, 1993; Maher, 2000) or whether they themselves were mobilizing in similar ways to those of men. Grundetjern and Sandberg (2012) argue that though the street orientated drug market is a gendered economy putting females at a serious disadvantage; women utilise 'practical rationality' (Bourdieu, 1990) in order to engage in approaches which manage their peripheral position. This is how they propose to flesh out a middle ground between the two perspectives of female victimhood and the female perpetrator.

They identify four approaches women in their study used in order to combat their disadvantage in the world of illicit drug retail. The first three; desexualisation, violent posture and emotional detachment were geared towards engaging in typically masculine practices. Desexualisation and emotional detachment are somewhat interconnected, though the former involved downplaying feminine characteristics and attractiveness, in order to avoid entering in to sexual relationships with men involved in the business of drug dealing. The latter involves utilising a 'poker face' which is used to give an unaffected façade, which is also important in the process of warding off men's sexual advances, as well as being helpful in public spheres helping to promote a cool and hard disposition. The final is similar to much hyper-masculine display in that it seeks to deter physical violence from others by exhibiting instances of and potential for doing violence.

The fourth was a more gender neutral set of practices termed 'service-mindedness' which mobilised around notions of entrepreneurship (Grundetjern and Sandberg, 2012). This is a set of practices made use of some women's more typically feminine qualities such as being a mother; utilising qualities like reliability, organisation and loyalty. This reflects a strand of street capital or road cultural capital eluded to by Stephen earlier; being 'street smart'. In this way women could move up drug hierarchies quickly by helping established male dealers to run their operations in a professional manner, and also deflect potential police attention (ibid).

 Broadly speaking the evidence from my own study supports many of Grundetjern and Sandberg's (2012) findings which emphasise the importance of strategies. This study has a

more general demographic in that it is not explicitly dealing with those involved in the illegal drug market, but instead a continuum of actors involved in road culture. However, both male and female participants in this study had been involved in drug retail and there were some observable differentiations.

Charlotte was one of the female participants in the study who had sold drugs in the past. She told me that in general women play a subordinate role in many criminal activities on road, but that she herself was more akin to being regarded as one of the guys:

> Charlotte: I can only talk from my experience and what I've personally seen, but what I was doing, I was the only female that was *visual*, do you see what I'm saying?

> Yusef: Mmm

> Charlotte: That I played a very similar role to the males like you said, but then you talk of maybe females that are connected but like in a more placid-passive, role. So say they might, they might facilitate people meeting up at their house, they might get paid some money to do some documents, or I don't know-be the middle man, so, basically women are generally used to take the heat off the guys. Guys think that women are lower-under basically under the radar, that's not the case anymore. So generally that's what women do, women kind of, are a distractions or a scapegoat, for the big operations, generally they're not the leaders of the road like, do you see what I'm saying? They're always part of something, and what I've learnt in my experience of road culture, they tend to be quite disposable, the-the-they're there to be used… by the males, do you see what I'm saying? Whereas me I suppose, I was there as a benefit, but I don't feel like I was there to be used. I was quite *fortunate* in that scenario to kind of have a certain position.

> Yusef: Do you think yeah, because that to me sounds like a power imbalance

> Charlotte: Exactly, that's exactly what it is… generally, especially with, especially with females. Females work on emotion, okay, *men don't.* The way-men and women their brains are wired very differently, and females generally, are more errrm analytical, more practical and so on, but females work on emotion, they're more-more impulsive on emotion. So generally there is an emotional tie [coughs]. Whether it's someone's, part of something that because-like for instance for me, my emotional tie, was my responsibility I that I felt towards my siblings. That was my emotional tie that pushed

me in to that, that was… separate to what I was in to, but I learnt it from the lifestyle that I came from. Whereas a lot of other females it might be a guy that they like it might be their partner, might be someone that they're seeing, do you see what I'm saying? So a lot of girls are manipulated, they're kind of offered something or they're kind of-they're kind of made to feel comfortable, offered some kind of securities, some kind of love, some kind of money, some kind of 'I'll buy you takeaways', some kind of *something* that makes them *feel* like that person cares. So in return, they're then offered something or asked to do something, *and that's usually where it starts.* And then you believe it's because *you want to do it*, because you're like 'ah yeah maybe I'll have some money, maybe I'll have some this' but what you're really doing is *you're working for somebody*, you're-you're doing something for someone else…

She seems to mobilise around similar notions to Grundetjern and Sandberg's (2012) 'service mindedness' whilst imagining women's involvement in criminal aspects of road life. However, she also inverts this by claiming she herself was '*visible'*; by which I argue she means that she was recognised as equal to the men she socialised and did business with. This is quite a complicated narrative to unpick as it has many contradictory aspects. Broadly Charlotte seems to agree that women are disadvantaged on road, seemingly claiming that 'service-minded' inclusion is in many instances a lower form of inclusion which can lead to women being 'used' and not valued, making it a lesser form of road cultural capital. Her own ability to function in the same way as successful male actors do, was because she had been socialised in to street culture early on, due to her having an often dysfunctional family life and the usage of illicit drugs by her parents. It is not clear if she herself claims to be exhibiting emotional detachment, but she clearly feels as if emotionality is a factor in women's disadvantage and subsequent exploitation on road. Despite Charlotte's proclamations about being one of the guys, her own trajectory in to selling drugs is somewhat contradictory and resembles more the notion of Alder (1993: 91 [cited in] Grundetjern and Sandberg's 2012: 632), who claimed that men in criminal worlds "bent the rules for the 'ladies'" out of a chauvinistic sense of chivalry. Her account is further problematised by the unexpected move she makes between her involvement in the drug trade and her love life, where she describes being in an abusive relationship with a different man from the one who supplied her with drugs; both times however alluding to a sense of naivety and gendered disadvantage on her own part:

Charlotte: …I had a bit of morals, I was like that's stealing, [laughing] I can't do fraud, yeah I don't do that. And theeennn… and then I was like this long, started selling weed,

that didn't make no money so I started-*same thing*, just selling drugs, *drugs drugs drugs drug dr-hard drugs*.

Yusef: So mostly you were working for people?

Charlotte: [pause] yeah but not in the way that most people usually work for other people. I was very lucky, even though it's fucked, I was lucky in that like the person who first *put me on* as they call it, hes' like 10 years older than me, so he was 23 when I was 13, that's when I first started doing it. In fact I didn't mean to do it [clears throat] but we're still friends now and I spoke to him befor-I stopped speaking to him for a while 'cause like to be honest I think it's a bit fucked 'cause I was a little girl, why did you kind of thing-and he was like, he was like the truth is we're from very similar places and I didn't know any better, so I was actually just tryin'a help you. He was just like *'you was 13 and you was getting paid like £250 a week, it's not like I was bumping you'* or whatever he was like '*I get it now, I wouldn't let my daughter do it but at the time that's what I was doing so the only way I could help you was to bring you in on it'*.

Yusef: Is that a bit like, when you talk about the roads, the community, in terms of damaged people understand damaged people and that sometimes the line between abuse and… something else

Charlotte: Care [laughs]

Yusef: Yeah care is like

Charlotte: Yeah its ma-is like-yeah, yeah… it's like the same its weird… so yeah that's what I used to do, he taught me everything. I used to spend my days from 7am up doing all that, then come back, and then I'd spend the night sitting, bagging up trainer boxes of heroin and coke…

Yusef: Mmm

Charlotte: And I didn't know, I didn't know things like obviously at first like when you touch those things they go in to your blood system or, there's lots of things I didn't know, the same way [clears throat] in my head I thought, you know, when you meet someone and you like each other and you have a physical relationship, *that's forever*, like in my head that's what I thought. So when I did that when I was 13 that's what I

thought, and then I, I was rudely awakened it wasn't like that. There was like a baby mum, there was some next girl, there was some *slackness* going on, *it was crazy*.

Yusef: Is this-which boy is this with? The first boy…

Charlotte: This is my first ever boyfriend [clears throat] and thenn… that's when I started feeling as if I had mental health problems, so I'd be in the doctors, *dunno what's wrong with me, dunno what's wrong with me*, like *dunno whats wrong with me*. But erm, yeah and that turned quite abusive, like erm when I was, when I was living there he started doing things like bringing girls… there while I was there

Yusef: Mmm

Charlotte: So I was like *naaaaaahh I'm not involved,* and it's so weird to say it. Basically he would force me physically, aggressively force me, when I didn't want anything to do with him. And that…

Yusef: Forced you?

Charlotte: To have sex… like when someone like holds you down and that kind of craziness. But then in my head because we've already done it, even though I didn't want to-I didn't know anything so it's like *oh maybe, that's just like, normal* I dunno. Ermm…. And it was like to be honest I've just learnt, I've learnt a lot through my *mistakes*, which I never planned to make mistakes, do you know what I mean but if you don't know nothing and you don't have anyone you kind of make it up as you go along. And then as you get older and certain people from different places see it, and they judge you on it that's when you realise that it's wrong and then you kind of like carry 'round that burden of embarrassment, do you know what I mean? Ermm

This dynamic perhaps transcends the scope of capital accumulation, which is why this thesis contains a chapter which specifically explores issues related to gender dynamics, love and relationships. What can be drawn out from this supports notions that within the field of street culture women, though displaying agency, were in many instances 'structurally constrained' (Grundetjern and Sandberg's 2012) in a patriarchal cultural context. This strategic approach was also utilised by Alicia who, when she ventured in to the drug business as a teenager; took a measured approach which accounted for the ways in which she was structurally limited by her road capital composition. In the extract below she talks about how she would use a friend's romantic connection to a male drug dealer to gain possession of small amounts of

marijuana. She chose to only sell the drugs within the confines of her all-girls school in order to minimise the risk of being out-muscled by male rivals, as she explains below:

Alicia: Yeah, I did. I did like in school put my entrepreneurial days [laughs] I did go on to sell weed.

Yusef: Ah okay, so girls can trap as well? They don't just do stuff for guys?

Alicia: Yeah

Yusef: And what's it like for a girl selling weed and drugs and that

Alicia: Errrmm, it was easy because, well for me it-you did run the risk of getting robbed, but what I did I kind of stayed it in-left it in the school, so it was like, you know, I went to a girl's school so it was quite easy to like-to kind of, how do I say? Have the advantage, dominate, the industry.

Yusef: So that was your location?

Alicia: Yeah… So that's what I did

Yusef: So you exploited that niche in the market yeah 'cause there was no mandem there to shot

Alicia: Yeah, and I was very entrepreneurial

Yusef: So who was you picking up off and stuff?

Alicia: Well this is the thing, was

Yusef: Were you working for yourself or were you on a line?

Alicia: Well it wasn't, it was funny because it was-there was-I didn't have a line, I would just-people knew that I had it so they would come up to me during lunch. And I had a friend a Vietnamese friend who basically got made homeless because her mum caught her smoking cigarette and she ended up staying at mine and then through her I ended up meeting our link errm who was he boyfriend at the time, so luckily it was all profit because he would *give us* all the weed*,* and we would just split it.

Though Alicia's operation was small scale and relatively unsophisticated it demonstrated a keen understanding of her own capital composition in relation to the male dominated market

place. Although she had the road social capital to acquire drugs, even for free, she understood that her specific composition of road capital meant she would be vulnerable if it became well known that she was in possession of drugs and cash. On this occasion Alicia recognised she herself lacked the capacity of hyper-masculine performativity, but at other times in her trajectory she displayed the importance of being able to mobilise another form of culturally valued capital, that of feminine charm and desirability or 'gender capital' (McCall, 1992). This is an area underexplored by Grundetjern and Sandberg (2012), perhaps due to the limitations involved in only interviewing women in relation to succeeding in the drug market. For women in this study however, surviving or thriving on road was not limited to being personally involved in the drug market, and one feminine form of cultural capital some women were able to make use of was desirability.

Alicia mobilised this in two ways during her trajectory, firstly by working off the cards as an exotic dancer and secondly by entering in to a relationship with a successful male drug dealer who could materially provide for her. Indeed, Laberge (1995) noted how women can use specific feminine forms of cultural capital in male dominated arenas. She examines the case of Manon Rheaume, the first female ice hockey player in the American National Hockey League. She notes that Rheaume's 'feminine charm', rather than invalidating her in a male dominated league, was leveraged as a valuable form of gendered cultural capital. She claims that the star athlete gained media attention and sponsorship over and above her male colleagues leading her to conclude "…that her feminine beauty and charm worked as assets that helped her beat out other players who 'only' had athletic ability" (Laberge, 1995: 143). This arguably meant that Rheaume's social status merely reproduced the symbolic order as it was (ibid), however, it demonstrates how gendered forms of cultural capital can be utilised strategically by individual women in male dominated settings.

Aside from being off the cards, Alicia working as an exotic dancer was not a form of criminality, but not all forms of road cultural capital need include criminality. In this instance Alicia utilised her desirability in order to exchange for other highly valued forms of capital including economic capital, which was then in turn used to further develop her cultural capital in the form of appearance enhancing surgeries and an extravagant lifestyle. She explains more in the following extract:

> Alicia: Okay well, basically, you know like, when I got older… I thought it would be a good at the time to start stripping. So you know because of that mentality *I did*.

Yusef: Okay, and how did that go?

Alicia: Good.

Yusef: Make money?

Alicia: Yeah.

Yusef: How long were you doing that for?

Alicia: About 4 years.

Yusef: Do you think that's something a lot of girls in the community do, or some girls?

Alicia: Well there's, you know, in America it's like a big thing for girls to do that

Yusef: Do you mean like in the hood?

Alicia: Kind of. I would say that was what it was like for me

Yusef: That was like before Instagram and that init

Alicia: Yeah. So yeah I did that.

Yusef: What kind of girls did you meet doing that?

Alicia: Do you know what, 'cause I did it in a very lucrative place… you know it was a very, fabulous life sort of thing. And it wasn't, there was a lot of coke, like a lot of girls were on coke, doing drugs, you know like to work and stuff. I didn't personally enjoy doing that, so I just kept a-probably just drinking alcohol while I did it, and it was just a *social*, you know, obviously there is a dark side, you know, erm, yeah it was very sociable, but the good thing was that we all had money so we would go out, go on holiday, surgeries, whatever you needed you know, to keep that appearance going.

Yusef: Yeah, yeah.

Alicia: And that's what I got sucked in to.

Yusef: And how do you feel about that life on reflection, because that's a-4 years, so that's probably 'till quite recently no?

Alicia: I started when I was 19

Yusef: So it was up until like 3 years ago no?

Alicia: Yeah and it wasn't-it was on and off, I wasn't constantly doing it, it was on and off, it was just whenever I needed money and stuff but I *literally didn't have to do anything else!*

Yusef: So it was like flexible work

Alicia: Yeah. And erm, yeah it helped me through my studies and it helped me through living alone and independent er and was very flexible and I had time to do other things.

Yusef: So do you feel like it was an empowering experience?

Alicia: It was; I feel like it was [laughs]. I do look back sometimes, and I don't miss it but I'm just like I'm glad that I did it because I lived a different life.

The economic and further cultural capital Alicia gained from her time working in a strip club helped her move forward in variety of ways. The money she made helped her to get through university as a mature student, which in the future she hoped would improve her job prospects. The added road cultural capital also helped her to attract a successful drug dealer partner who helped to materially provide for her, in this way helping her to attain some of the economic capital whilst transferring some of the risk away from herself. She explains how the forms of value both herself and her partner had accumulated were vital in connecting them, in her own words 'you attract what you radiate':

Yusef: Is he road guy?

Alicia: Yeah amongst other things.

Yusef: Whats a road guy like?

Alicia: He did-he did erm sell stuff,

Yusef: He used to what?

Alicia: Sell stuff. And erm live quite a flamboyant life, that's kinda what attracted me to him the fact that, you know, he was like basically at the time we kind of attracted each other, because we both had the money, we lived that flamboyant life and you know it was, yeah it was like, two, young people, errrm two hood rich young people [laughs]

Yusef: What's hood rich?

Alicia: Hood rich, erm, basically this is what erm basically not being wealthy, we're just hood rich, it's not

Yusef: What's the distinction?

Alicia: Okay most people when you're in the hood you don't really have money, people in the hood are poor

Yusef: Yeah so its relative?

Alicia: Yeah and most people, you know, in the hood, put-don't have nice cars, you know, struggle, probably on benefits. We didn't, we could do whatever we wanted at the time, because we had the funds, so that's what I mean hood rich. Well I drove an alright car at the time, he drove a good car as well, we could party, we could travel, *we could do whatever basically,* and that's what attracted us [inaudible], I believe that you attract, what you radiate, what you give out, yeah and that's what I was giving off and yeah, I'm completely different now though.

As with many other forms of road capital this came with some serious limitations and implications (which we will explore further in our chapter on gender), but Alicia's trajectory displays the way that road capitals are more fluid than in Sandberg's (2008) notion of street capital. The capitals she accumulated were valued both on road and across other fields, allowing her to become 'hood rich'. She did concede however, that despite attempting to mobilise the money she had earned in to the property market, she failed to attain more widely recognised status as wealthy; which for those who wish to go legit is preferable:

Alicia: Yeah, yeah. I'd rather do it the clean way, obviously now that I'm a Christian I can see-erm Muslims I think have this saying its haram-haram money isn't it when you do the road life, drug money all that dirty money basically, its-its *sin* money. Erm I don't want that anymore, I want, halal money [laughs]

Yusef: Halal money yeah?

Alicia: Yeah [laughs], because that's how you become wealthy instead of hood rich. And it's more respectable and you don't run the risk then of maybe not being around for your daughter, you're allowed to, you know, with that kind of money you can actually get, more, credit and get a mortgage, and you know, you can do more things

with it basically. And I want my daughter to grow-I don't want my daughter to grow up, you know-with the circumstances that I did, I want to make her life the best possible... that's my future.

Alicia's account signals a good end point for analysis. She sums up well the nature of road capital and the aspiration amongst many young people on road for culturally equitable inclusion. She mentions both the morally objectionable status and capital flow limitations which inhibit the transfer of road capitals across other fields. However, her aspiration remains and the parallels between the lifestyle she coveted and attained, and broader accounts of lifestyle orientated late modern popular cultures (Young, 2007) are clear to see. Many young people on road may be operating in 'intense and self-involved market places' *yet* 'their eyes *are* [firmly set] on the *outside world*" [emphasis added] (Young, 2007: 38).

Conclusion

My aim in this chapter has been to demonstrate that those on road demonstrate aspiration and endeavour. This does not mean they do not engage in destructive behaviours, on the contrary many have done violent and morally questionable things. Nonetheless, these destructive behaviours could be regarded as a feature of the 'creative destruction' of neo-liberalism – whereby any space can become a market place. For those on road who have been systematically excluded from conventional forms of value, modes of capital exchange have come to characterise parts of their lives which others might regard as personal. As Charlotte explains, on road all areas of a person's life become 'business'.

When a society systematically denies groups of people a sense of self-worth, they will take it in the ways that they can. Humiliation and rejection breed contempt and desperation; many of those on road know the munpain well and fight daily to be free from it. Road capitals provide a framework for understanding how people try to leverage alternative value systems to attach value to themselves. The holy grail of this process of road capital accumulation, however, is to go legit and those who gain status on road will commonly try to make a transition in to the mainstream, though their chances of success seem to be slim. This helps us to understand why violence seems to be so pervasive, especially in relation to interpersonal disputes, due to their importance in relation to feelings of self-worth and public standing. People need to feel like and be recognised as somebody, and an affront to someone's status whether in love, friendship or trade can provoke deadly responses: on road *everything is business* and you can never feel assured in saying 'I don't want to do this no more'.

In the following chapter I will build on the work presented so far to show how creative industry, in the form of Grime & UK Rap music, has been used to forge a path to culturally equitable inclusion via a process of symbolic struggle. Artists have been able to take stock of their cultural landscape and marketise their experience and hybrid culture to provide something unique, fresh and new to a market place which values their transgressive style. Of course this is not a completely straightforward process and they experience (and create) many pitfalls along the way. The chapter aims to both demonstrate and celebrate how those on the fringes of societies have the potential to impact meaningfully on British society, providing political commentary as well as highlighting deep set problems and inequalities.

Chapter 4: Grime and the Symbolic Struggle

In this chapter I wish to build on the work of the previous chapter to demonstrate how UK urban music like Grime and UK Rap can be observed to be art forms engaged in a symbolic cultural struggle over value. I show how conventionally non-valued forms such as hybrid identities and street cultural dispositions are utilised by young people to develop opportunities and struggle for legitimacy. This is a "…logic of cultural struggle" operating within "…and against hegemonic codes" (Mercer, 1987: 49). The urban music scene in the UK is hybrid both in its outputs and origins; offering a range of perspectives, making it "… a particularly modern way in which cultural utterances may take on the force of 'political' statements" (ibid: 49-50). Through the process of canonbalisation I wish to demonstrate that this is a struggle inflected with unequal power relations, which more powerful groups wield to help preserve the status quo. However, this is not a struggle in vain as, though often in commodified ways, urban artists in the UK perforate their dispositions, ways of knowing and being, in to wider popular culture. I wish to challenge more static approaches like street capital to demonstrate how young people form the margins are not content remaining there always and are, despite the long odds, battling for more widely recognised forms of legitimacy and social status.

In order to do this the chapter at hand will first explore the hybrid make-up of the contemporary metropolis and how this forms a base of syncretic experience upon which young people can relate, but also how it is subjected to debasement in relation to its status as culture. I will then move on to explain how recent advances in technology, particularly in relation to social and new media have helped to push urban music to new heights, but have also caused a shift away from its roots in sound system culture. I then start to connect the dots by showing instances, both lyrical and drawn from interviews, of 'cultural utterances', of both Artists and interview participants, which make 'political statements' (Mercer, 1987) about the complexion and common sense values of Britain. Finally, I address the process of canonbalisation, displaying how these contestations around common sense and legitimation are met by more powerful actors, including former Prime Minister David Cameron and the BBC, in the struggle over symbolic capital.

Hybridity & New Ethnicities On Road - Grime

Anthony Gunter (2010) made explicit his 'hesitation' describing road culture in exclusive racial or ethnic terms. He looked to the hybrid musical forms emanating from the UK's urban council

estates, such as; Grime, Garage, House and Jungle, citing the contributions of young working class people of many ethnicities in creating these new syncretic cultural accomplishments. The data from this study supports this viewpoint and develops it. Multiculturalism is not dead, neither is it unproblematic, but the evidence shows that there are young people of many ethnicities including those of; South American, West African, North African, Irish, British, Caribbean and European descent all participating in life on road. Some of these young adults were born in the UK of 2nd or even 3rd generation migrant families, whereas others migrated here within their lifetime. The experiences of life in the metropolis for all people, ethnic minorities and whites, is radically different to that of the Windrush generation. As observed by Back (1996); the terms of multi-ethnic communities have been being negotiated and re-negotiated, with new meanings and cultural forms rising and falling away over time.

All of the participants in this study were educated here in the UK, as Back (1996) observed of his research cohort; they 'grew up together'. Stuart Hall described the development of Caribbean cultural identities being mediated by continuity and rupture. He described how cultural heritage both from Africa (mostly in the form of Pan-African myth building) and the Caribbean were active ingredients in shaping these identities; however, these juxtapose with ruptures (such as forced migration from Africa and later migration from the Caribbean) which cause discontinuities. This 'doubleness' is part of the process of hybridisation; cultural identity and notions of community do not stay the same across this doubling process, evident in the languages and practices of the Caribbean (which in themselves are rich and varied). The creole languages such as patois, the food, the music, the many black saints who Hall asserts find their origins in the many Gods of tribal Africa. All of these are manifestations in the now of the continuities and ruptures played out across history. Migration in to the metropolis does not put an end to this process, in fact it is a place where many cultures from all around the world meet, although in a specific context. This process of hybridity results in culture(s) which run in to one another, without stiff boundaries between them. In essence this results in cultures forming and re-forming as the available resources are capriciously accessed and juxtaposed with a variety of others. This kind of hybridity has been explained thus:

> "…hybridity can be understood as the ongoing condition of human cultures, which contains no zones of purity because they undergo continuous processes of transculturation (two-way borrowing and lending between cultures). Instead of hybridity versus purity, this view suggests that it is hybridity all the way down" (Tomlinson, 1999: 143).

Those in this study have experienced this doubleness living in the large towns and cities of Britain. In most cases they inherit the continuity of their parent cultures, which over time may themselves alter due to the ruptures caused by migration, subsequently growing up in a space where this is not the dominant culture. They share a common tongue, a curriculum, a playground, an estate or street, youth clubs, musical tastes, television shows etc. In this study participants cite common narratives on discrimination, disassociation with schooling, having fun, as well as instances of community conflict and violence. This set of shared experiences forms a base of commonality across difference upon which new hybrid forms can arise, comprising of a mix of the many available cultural resources. However, the idea that the 'roads' can be understood in cultural terms is challenged head on by highly regarded gang expert Simon Hallsworth who reflects on it with some distain:

> "We are looking at a culture that violates the very meaning of the term 'culture' (let alone subculture) if culture is meant in the simple anthropological sense of 'a way of life'. This is a way of life certainly, but one predicated precisely on the self-destruction of its inhabitants... for the same reasons, the concept of subculture is difficult to apply to this street world" (Hallsworth, 2013: 159).

His words reveal a degree of contempt for what he perceives as the senseless violence of those on road; almost invariably aimed at others facing marginalisation rather than at the powers from which their social suffering finds its source. He is right that the roads are a space characterised by violence, but it is a misunderstanding to say that there is no culture here, and that they struggle only against one another like crabs in a bucket.

I wish to argue that the 'road' is saturated with cultural activity and Hallsworth's suggestion that the nihilism present in the culture invalidates it is in fact a throwback to ideas of high culture and non-culture (Willis, 1990). I seek to argue that through everyday activities young people seek to battle the munpain and in Paul Willis's words "...creatively establish their presence, identity and meaning". He carries on, saying; "Young people are all the time expressing or attempting to express something about their actual or potential *cultural significance*" (Willis, 1990: 1). Willis develops the notion of 'grounded aesthetics' as a tool for understanding how young people make sense of the world. He argues that music 'is not just something young people like and do. It is in many ways the model for their involvement in a common culture..." (Willis, 1990: 82). By focusing on UK Rap and Grime music I hope to bring to life the grounded aesthetics that emanate from the roads. I will argue that road culture is engaged in a dialogical relationship with more mainstream forms of popular culture,

constantly representing and negotiating representation with broader audiences. This demonstrates a part of the struggle of those on the margins to find legitimacy ('go legit') by mobilising their own cultural capital derived from the resources available to them, helping them to depict and make sense of their social worlds.

Grime – Embracing New Technologies

If an academic or even casual observer takes the trouble to examine new cultural forms such as Grime or UK Rap music it is clear to see hybridity in action. These genres represent the cutting edge of cultural formation, though they contain much of the old, it is clear to see how multiple temporal and spatial influences come together instantaneously in the music people consume on road. Emerging technologies such as YouTube have created new possibilities in the realm of cultural expression. People are easily able to create content which can be accessed instantly all over the globe. Contemporary social media far outstrips, in terms of its audience and usership, what was available at the time Dimitriadis and McCarthy (2001:3) mused on its potential more than fifteen years ago, stating that these '…developments have the potential to stimulate the imaginative work of the broad masses of the people."

Grime artists have taken full advantage of the opportunities new media has afforded them, throughout its continued development. What started out as an offshoot from other genres such as; Jungle, Drum and Bass, Hip Hop, UK Garage as well as various others, has developed in to a subgenre in its own right. As Dizzee Rascal explains below during his interview with US radio station Hot 97; in its early forms Grime was a 'sound system culture' where, predominantly, teens would congregate at available local spaces and 'spit' live sets or hold clashes where artists would go head to head. At this time a conventional form of media, locally broadcast pirate radio, was a powerful method of dissemination. These were often situated in council estates and served limited geographical areas, with different parts of London at various times having their own stations, for example; On Top FM in south London, LayLow FM in west or Rinse FM in east:

> Dizzee: basically its sounds system culture… it's basically a sound system culture. You could compare it to the early days of hip hop, before Kool Herc and that… people like King Charles who basically, he just brought the sound system over, he was just copying King Tubby which again is a parallel thing to the UK because
>
> Rosenberg: the influence from the islands

Dizzee: Right the influence from Jamaican culture and sound system. At the time when I was younger I didn't understand that that's was what I was doing, I just, it was just in my area so it was really accessible to me, pirate radio stations like Rinse FM and Dejavu that spawned a lot of the big MCs that you've seen…" (Hot 97, 2016)

In those early days Grime was not only disseminated over radio but also via various DVD productions, including *Risky Roadz and Lord of the Mics*, where live sets and clashes (often filmed in artist Jammer's mum's basement) would be sold to fans via various independent retailers. MCs would also perform at raves doing live sets. It would not be unusual in those days to meet popular MCs on the streets of the West End, who might be there either visiting independent music outlets or to promote their new CDs and merchandise. The internet was also becoming available in an increasing number of homes, so downloading music via various (mostly pirate) services, such as Limewire helped to push it still further. The introduction of mobile phones with the capability to play MP3, as well as the ability to send tracks (for free) via Bluetooth was also a technological innovation which helped Grime as a genre to proliferate its output. Making it accessible to many youths who could practice the art of 'spitting' in inner city streets and playgrounds, using their phones to play instrumentals, feeding in to the outdoor communal nature of road culture. This was the precursor of things to come; artists in the early 2000s were already showing they were able to manipulate technologies available to them and diversify their business models to tap in to emerging niches.

Since then Grime has continued to occupy these spaces, with touring and club appearances still serving as a major part of many artist's incomes. However, sites like Grm Daily, SBTV and Spiff TV which help to amalgamate and promote Grime and UK music content in general have increased the audience as well as adding a kind of coherence to the landscape extending beyond geographical localities. This means you can now access MCs from all over London and even the UK in one place more so than ever before. Sites such as these, making use of their own YouTube channels, create and upload content featuring UK Grime artists for the masses to see. People like Jamal Edwards, who was recently honoured by the queen, are responsible for the technical innovations which have helped to not only further the cause of the Grime scene but also show the way in which it can create opportunities for youths of diverse skill sets, not just the MCs. A lot of artists now have their own YouTube channels and are able to generate income from the advertising revenues, exemplifying the way in which people power along with new technologies, have helped to fuel the scene.

This has not been a wholly straightforward process though and many artists have struggled over the years with their income and status as legitimate entrepreneurs limited by Police and state interference. Famously, the police interfered with rapper Giggs' record deal with label XL apparently trying to frighten them away from signing him. They have also been known to shut down shows, after performing risk assessments, preventing some artists from earning an income from their work, something which has been happening for many years:

> "Approached for comment as to why they tried to dissuade XL from signing Giggs and forced cancellation of his shows, the Metropolitan Police say they don't publicly discuss the issues surrounding specific individuals, adding: 'It is routine for police to work with licensed venues on a regular basis to identify and manage risk assessments for upcoming performances'" (TheGuardian.com, 2013).

This is not an indictment of the police, nonetheless it is a clear structural imposition on the Grime scene, limiting many artist's potential to 'go legit' and occupy mainstream celebrity status. This runs hand in hand with new, and more established, forms of urban policing and gentrification which have also limited the physical spaces which Grime artists as well as those on road in general can inhabit. Below Dizzee Rascal reflects on the ways in which the spaces which Grime originally emanated from have receded over time, instead being replaced by virtual ones:

> "But like I said a lot of those venues, they're not there no more, yeah because maybe there's a Starbucks now, or they built luxury houses, especially after the Olympics… if you grew up in London, a lot of people have been pushed out, which I feel has taken a lot of, again, the culture away, but it's crazy at the same time because grime has got, well seems like it's got even bigger, you know what I mean, world-wide, but I think a lot of that is because of social media too..." (Hot 97, 2016).

In his study of road life Gunter (2010) observed how, especially during the winter, road culture may converge with 'bedroom culture' (McRobbie & Garber, 1976). He noted that girls especially may like to spend time together at each other's houses as opposed to always outside literally on the roads. The finding of this study go much further than this stating, that with the help of new technologies and in response to structurally imposed physical constraints, road culture has been sequestered from the physical spaces it was formerly found concentrated in. The paradox pointed to by Dizzee Rascal above highlights such phenomena. Even whilst urban space is becoming less and less habitable to poorer people, the cultural

produce (I say produce as in this context it is made available to consume) brought in to being by these people is becoming more and more widely available.

This does not mean that road culture no longer exists on the streets, far from it, but it exemplifies responses to raised costs of living and falling social mobility. Urban policing has become more sophisticated with widespread use of CCTV, criminal record checks, discrimination in employment, lack of job opportunities and a retrenchment of state support including Educational Maintenance allowance. Where opportunities for living a desirable life have been taken away from young people living in these environments, they have mobilised their cultural resources, making use of new technologies to create opportunities for themselves. So what kind of cultural resources are these young people mobilising and why does it speak to so many people?

Hybridity, New Ethnicities and a Unified Voice

> "I'm going to catch my dreams for the whole universe to see
>
> My dreams don't include university" [Ard Adz] (WindyMusicEnt, 2011)

Above is a 'bar' from Brixton based rapper Ard Adz, from a song called Dream Catchers. In it he dismisses the conventional routes to success offered by the university. This at first glance could be the extent of the analysis, however this links in to a much deeper undercurrent of thought. The very word university contains in it suggestions of the universal, an entire universe of knowledge (Goldberg, 1994):

> "The universe of discourse that the university has been taken conceptually to signify gave way immediately to… the insistence that the university stood for and on the unwavering and singular standard of universal truth. Local knowledge was effaced in the name of universalizing local standard as rationality required" (Goldberg, 1994: 3)

The university is widely held as a bastion of progress in both the personal and societal sense, yet Adz is alluding to a universe of imagination beyond the institution. The university is a point of reference for him, and perhaps also of antagonism; he cites the rise of new media as transcending the role of the university in defining the canon – the cultural knowledge that *counts*. This captures a part of what makes Grime and road culture so engaging; it is able to embrace the diverse feelings and cultural inclinations of young people in the moment, speaking outside of top down narratives of contemporary life in Britain. In a sense it speaks from and for the margins.

In ways that other commentators cannot, Grime artists effortlessly express what it is like to live in the multicultural urban centres, with a view from below. They not only access but embody the hybrid culture of the modern day big cities, expressing and exploring the current trends, gender identities, common troubles and linguistic forms of the moment. Henry Louis Gates argued that renewable common cultures materialise from such conditions of 'free exploration' of intricate hybridity (Goldberg, 1994). This is conveyed well in many of the seeming contradictions to be found in Grime tracks, where artists grapple with the complexities of their existence – as illustrated below in east London MC and actor Kano's track *This Is England*:

> "I'm from where Reggie Cray got rich as fuck
>
> East London who am I to fuck tradition up
>
> Jellied eels, pie and mash, two pints of that Pride on tap,
>
> Polo top, pair of Stans, flat cap and Burberry mac,
>
> Some ASBO kids on the crack here
>
> Super Tenants on a park bench, brown packet
>
> Yeah, that's the hood, yeah that's the hood,
>
> I'm just a 2pac nigga in a town fulla Suges,
>
> Tryinga be straight in this town full of crooks
>
> Know when you've never seen a man buy a Bentley with a book
>
> We take to water like a duck, headed to the green
>
> But keep getting caught up in the rough
>
> Story of my life, and I'm just giving you the crux" (Kano, 2016)

In this extract the listener is taken on a journey which moves effortlessly, but rapidly, from the idealised historical white working class east end to the '90s hip hop scene of Los Angeles. The influences of the aspirational British working class are clear; the nod to pub culture, the dress code as well the celebration of the Crays and their economic success intermixed with the rejection of education as a viable route to such glories. The title of the track also touches on a

phrase commonly associated with far right racist movements, renegotiating ownership of both the phraseology and Englishness in general. In the mix of all this the reference to Tupac and Suge Knight is underpinned by the extent to which US hip hop is part of the common culture shared by the consumers of Grime.

My reading may not capture Kano's intention, but I will hope to show the connections between road culture, Grime and hybrid ethnicities which have the potential to generate and mobilise cultural value. Stuart Hall told us that much of the old exists in the new, something echoed in Kano's synthesis of space and time. He draws freely on a broad range of influences reworking them in to an expression of England that, while not completely new, will be unrecognisable for some. Brixton based Grime artist and YouTube personality Big Narstie also offers a vision of a new England, embodied by his fan collective the Base Defence League, playing on the name of far right group the English Defence League:

> "The revolution is now, this is our England, this is a new England, no colour no creed, one love, one nation, one peace, legalise the weed… Man don't care about colour, BDL my brother, Man with dough or man from the gutter, BDL my brother… fuck the Babylon, BDL my brother" (BigNarstieVEVO, 2016)

Narstie's homage to this 'new England' celebrates the multi-cultural nature of England's urban centres. The use of the term 'Babylon', a derisive term used amongst the Rastafarian community to describe western states and their use oppressive structures against minoritised people, gives a hint to his Jamaican heritage. This said, Narstie grounds himself in the now, an England united along class ('man with dough or man from the gutter') and racial lines, standing together against the historical racisms of the west. There is little mention of gender or sexuality in his call for a truly united, United Kingdom, which could too be a signifier of the historical and cultural stimulus active in his analysis. Both Narstie and Kano seem to be drawing their new ethnicities from what Hall would call their 'diasporic experience':

> "Well, I think that is the key moment in a sense, in that it's the big creative explosion… amongst second-generation black people. It was born out of British racism and anti-racism, rather than the colonial context or slavery. It's born out of that direct experience of the metropolis." (Hall & Back, 2009:7).

Narstie seems to be speaking directly to the new claims of the far right; that Britain should be for 'British' people, by contesting the very definition of what that means. Commentators such as Modood (1994; 2010; 2013) observe that new racisms tend to emphasise 'cultural' aspects

of difference, rather than arguing for an essentialised biological difference between races. Following this belief; it is more commonly held that certain cultures are incompatible with Britishness and therefore it would be better for them to exist elsewhere. This feeds much of the anti-immigration rhetoric which has become part of contemporary political discourse in the UK, which often points to isolated incidents of crime or extremism in order to justify their claims of insurmountable differences. If one takes a look at the political campaigning of Nigel Farage, this kind of rhetorical shift from biological to cultural otherness can be clearly observed. In the next extract, Farage gives an account of the 'discomfort' he feels being sat on a train in which other languages aside from English are being spoken, offering the implicit suggestion that non-Anglo culture represents an erosion and contamination of British culture:

> "Do I think parts of Britain are a foreign land? I got the train the other night, it was rush hour, from Charing Cross.. it was not till we got past Grove Park that I could hear English being audibly spoken in the carriage… Does that make me feel slightly awkward? Yes, it does. I wonder what is really going on. I am saying that and I am sure that is a view that will be reflected by three quarters of the population…"
> (Telelgraph.co.uk, 2017)

Accounts such as the this rely on an 'articulation' (Hall, 1996c) between far right ideals and common sense; appealing to common sensibilities and experiences over wider political ideals such as cosmopolitanism, secularism or multiculturalism. Gilroy (2001; 2004; 2005) observes that this kind of process taps in to a communal feeling of 'postcolonial melancholia' whereby sections of the British population feel a sense of 'loss' and cultural erosion living in multicultural Britain, something which is tangible in Farage's bemusement at not able to work out 'what is going on'. This feeds nostalgic, if somewhat selective, notions of a Britain of the past where everyone spoke to their neighbours and shared homogeneous cultural and biological origins. This is reminiscent of the Nazi party's mobilization, or articulation, around ideas of gemeinschaft, which idealised a racially 'pure' utopian vision of Germany's past and most dangerously sought to bring it in to being in what was then the present. In an interview for Channel 5 news, regarding the lack of diversity in the 2016 BRIT Award Nominations Big Narstie challenges such temporal cultural ideals:

> Narstie: I think what it is yeah, everything is still very segregated, like, I think it's a two-way thing, the independent urban scene and you guys think that we don't belong with you guys

Anchor: Is there anything wrong with that?

Narstie: Yeah, there is. Because we're all one, BDL my brother, Base Defence League. Like England is not 1960s England, do you know what I mean? It's a multicultural, cosmopolitan place!" (5 News, 2016).

In this short extract Narstie shows an awareness of the changing make up of 'cosmopolitan' Britain. When the anchor questions whether the cultural separation between the predominantly black influenced urban music scene and more mainstream institutional forms of recognition is even problematic, Narstie responds indignantly. He recognises the contribution (at least since the 1960s) of diverse 'urban' cultural forms to the make-up of modern Britain, observing that 'we are all one', perhaps not in the sense of homogeneity, but we share a common cultural landscape where an array of cultural modes, contribute actively. He seems to reject notions of cultural exclusivity in favour of an approach which recognises and rewards the contribution of people of diverse backgrounds and dispositions. Importantly, Narstie also rejects the possibility of returning to some past Britain, telling the anchor 'this isn't 1960s Britain'; again he seems to be confronting the far right head on, demonstrating that Britain has to move on from its colonialist history and accept the changing face of a globalised world.

This is not to say Big Narstie embodies a totally new and unrecognizable Britain, Narstie often speaks of himself as an 'ordinary bloke' who shops at Poundland. Sometimes he will speak in a Jamaican accent and other times he might relate stories he receives in his comedic agony uncle (Uncle Pain) segments to the lives of archetypal white working class characters in Eastenders, of which he appears to be an avid follower. In many ways he just speaks from the now, he is not immune from problematic common sense notions, but at the same time by virtue of his positionality many common sense notions become contradictory and require adjustment. What makes Narstie, Kano, Dizzee Rascal, Adz and many other MCs special is at various moments they blur, question and probe the divide between the centre and the periphery (Dimitriadis and McCarthy, 2001) of Britishness.

This break and flux operating between the old and the new is something which characterises everyday life. Young people on road perform these identities as Dizzee Rascal suggested earlier, most often inadvertently, they are just accessing what is available and speaks to them. Dimitriadis and McCarthy state that such "hybrid postcolonial subjects…" form "…the gateway between the Old World and the New…". They are the cultural expression of continuity and

rupture in action, bearing and sometimes perpetuating the contradictions of patriarchal, class based, nationalistic and racial inequality which envelop their presents and histories. Paradoxically, difference is what they have in common, and across it some forms of commonality can be established. This is a part of the voice of contemporary urban youth, embracing contradiction, re-membering histories and enunciating the now. Below Skepta explains his realisations and motivations behind his work:

> "I've realised that there's art in everything we do in London… Suddenly a photo of two boys sitting on a wall in tracksuits with a dog can go online and be considered a sick photo. That's what we've done to London… You have to understand… that's all I've ever wanted: for London to have a credible musical voice. I will honestly, honestly die happy knowing that I saw it happen." (Timeout.com, 2016).

This search for a credible voice came through in interviews. Jeremiah commented on the importance of Grime, in fact in quite a similar vein to Skepta himself, explaining how looking at the musical landscape in the UK compared to 10 years ago filled him with pride. As a genre it stakes a claim for the unique voices of the UK alongside those located in USA as a part of trans-Atlantic popular culture. Though sharing many of the patriarchal aspect of American Hip-Hop, Grime offers those in the UK a platform to articulate the complex specificities of their experiences, creating cultural leaders as well as offering alternative discourses and opportunities to youth living on and around the roads:

> Jeremiah: …*it's quite nice,* I was actually saying to someone the other day, I don't know what it was or what I saw, b*ut there was a moment where I felt really proud, I felt really proud of being from London, and like being a bit older and seeing like, the older, olders, like Crazy Titch battling with Dizzee Rascal and like almost having beef… and then ten years later Dizzee Rascal is a millionaire and Crazy Titch is in pen for life! And then you got all these young guns making-doing their thing getting hundreds of millions of views on YouTube,* well millions, probably not hundreds of millions

> Yusef: Between them probably they've done that

> Jeremiah: Well yeah between them yeah. *I actually genuinely felt proud to be a Londoner and to be like do you know what I mean, like **an endz Londoner*** [someone from a road active neighbourhood], do you know what I mean?

> Yusef: Do you feel like that's *our* scene?

Jeremiah: Y*eah I genuinely do feel like that!* And that's not just Grime, like, any kind of UK Rap, or Grime, any kind of do you know what I mean, anything in like that category, like I feel like an ownership, and like I feel proud of it, even if it's not like high quality or the substance isn't always there, but I still feel it represents a lot about **what we're about,** so like, if that makes sense?

Here Jeremiah reflect on how cultural work done by those on the Grime scene has offered a wider representation of the specific form of youth culture he and others identify with. Later he spoke about how that offered a distinctive identity from the US hip hop scene as well as offering what he called 'multiplicity' across the scene whereby there was now a landscape with a variety of actors who might represent both different neighbourhoods and differing sets of dispositions, tropes and interests. This was particularly interesting as Jeremiah himself describes himself as more distant from the roads since embarking on a professional career, but the music offers an intangible but historically routed connection to a part of his identity and his generations collective voice. This represents something akin to Skepta's notion of a 'credible musical voice', whereby many of those across the multiplicity of the road cultural continuum can find a sense of authenticity and belonging in the UK music scene.

However, as alluded to in the previous section, those on road also share common experiences and have to negotiate the policing of their hybridity. Cameron's famous speech where he pronounced multiculturalism a failure, aligned with the introduction of the Britishness test were resounding statements from central state powers that they intended to control or *canonbolise* the discourse on what it meant to be British. By canonbolise I mean actively and forcefully promoting a discourse on Britishness for the nation to consume. Tearing away at hybridity and forcing it to the margins.

Grime as Cultural Struggle

"Shut out from access to illusion 'of making it', this marginalized urban formation of modern diaspora culture sponsored a sense of style which answered back against these conditions of existence." (Mercer, 1987: 46).

The above quote offered by Kobena Mercer offers us a powerful framing for the process of cultural struggle interwoven in contemporary urban expression. As we have seen in chapters 2 & 3 young people on road respond to their exclusion by mobilising attainable forms of value. Part of this struggle though, is being able to exchange the cultural forms of capital accrued

(Sandberg, 2008). I have developed my own term 'canonbalisation' to help understand the process through which the legitimacy and value of cultural creation is consumed and destroyed by powerful actors. The term deliberately plays with and entangles notions of 'the canon' (as authorised culture), the 'canon' (as a weapon of destruction) and cannibalism (as a mode of consuming and excreting human value). I argue that monoculturalist agendas seek to define and limit the canon of acceptable and valued cultural formations and ways of being in Britain and that this involves a process of canonbolization. Any value (which often relates to the extent it can be monetised and sold for consumption) is stripped and consumed, whilst the remnants which are undesirable are destroyed and delegitimised.

This process limits the ability of those on the margins seeking to connect values to their personhood or culture, unless they are willing to jettison any undesirable aspects of their being or art. In the context of Grime music this can mean forcing artists to 'make pop', rather than making music which speaks of the socio-political realities of life on the margins. This can be considered as being a part of a wider agenda discussed in the chapter 2 which seeks to control the limits of what is considered legitimate knowledge that which must be actively forgotten. The violence of this process is that it forces those unwilling or unable to conform to move closer to an existential abyss by delegitimising their experience and preventing cultural capital exchange between more mainstream and marginal spaces. As Mercer posits, being 'shut out' does not preclude these young people form 'answering back' and engaging in a battle to have their cultural formations recognised more widely. This section documents some obvious cultural political statements from grime artists as well interactions with protectors of the status quo, as we will see below as I summarise a direct public exchange between the political elite and a grime MC.

During his time as leader of the Conservative Party, before being elected as PM, David Cameron famously crossed swords with Grime Artist Lethal Bizzle. Bizzle took issue with Cameron claiming that urban music incited violent crime amongst the youth. He took to the Guardian opinions section with a response entitled *David Cameron is a Doughnut* (theGuardian.com, 2006)*.* He implored Cameron to 'look deeper' at issues at the core of society in order to help make a positive change. He highlighted class stratifications as a source of Cameron's ambivalence towards urban music stating; "you live in a different world, and you don't experience the things that kids go through today" (ibid).

Cameron responded in an article in the Daily Mail (DailyMail.co.uk, 2006) by reciting some of Lethal Bizzle's lyrics that included the mention of the use of offensive weapons, maintaining that this could spark violent outbursts in some youths. Though there is a proliferation of hypermasculine performativity, violence and ostentatious posturing in certain Grime artist's music, Bizzle was asking Cameron to examine the issues which might make this so, and recognise the potential for music as an art form and industry to appease the hardships that influence its content. Skepta made a similar claim in his viral rant, which went on to become an exhibit at the Tate Modern, saying that rap music resonates because it voices what people to think and feel:

> "And that's why the people listen to all this rap music and stuff. Because a lot of people would say that ah it's the rap that's influencing what's happening, but it's not, it's what's happening that influences the raps, because if we weren't going through it we wouldn't be rapping about it. And it's like that's what these people are listening to this rap music, because they finally feel there's somebody out there that relates to them, somebody out there that's been through the same stuff as they've been through. And he's the voice, he's the voice of their emotion. He's the guy that's speaking all the things that they wanna say, everything. You can see from the you know, the BB [BlackBerry Messenger] statuses, the WhatsApp statuses, the tweets, the Facebook statuses, what people, are taking and quoting from these rappers." (Joseph Adenuga, 2012).

This claim has some validity in that silencing bigotry and violent content in cultural expression does not tackle it at its source. In chapter 6 (on gender) I will explore how patriarchal systems operate on road, observing the silences which surround the violence they unleash. The music however, in a way, highlights the power dynamics active around gender on road which is lived out in real life. This is not a justification for derogatory treatment of women in rap music, however encouraging people to look deeper helps them to see the ways in which interfering with cultural forms of expression does little to change, and in fact entrenches, the exclusionary cultural and material practices which help to bring it in to being in the first place. Cameron, along with other political observers, seem to struggle to engage on this deeper level and instead seek to control multiplicity by homogenising and abjectifying it; appropriating progressive and worthy discourses such as fairness, equality and feminism in the process. Skepta also clearly indicates the way in which road orientated forms of cultural capital are being valued more widely due to their sense of authenticity. This again demonstrates how

marginalised dispositions can gain traction in popular culture and gain more inclusive forms of value. However, assimilating such movements in to the western canon of power enables central western powers to try to contain the multiplicity emanating from the roads in a similar way to that commonly observed in the following:

> "The dominant response to this proliferation of difference and multiplicity, again, has been to suppress the implications for rethinking the ethical, political, and epistemological basis of education by imposing a program of homogeneity and deploying the divide and conquer tactics of ressentiment. To a large extent, such hegemonic approach is deeply informed by the long history of intellectual and academic colonialism… where Anglos define the history and other groups serve as the objects of such definitions." (Dimitriadis and McCarthy, 2001:117).

This process can also happen via the economic appropriation of cultural forms, as they become loaded with value it is inevitable that corporate bodies will take an interest (Hebdige, 1979; Moore, 2005). As demonstrated earlier by the Giggs and XL fiasco, major record labels and radio stations seek to mitigate their interest in capital with corporate responsibility. They want to give airtime to artists that will make them money more than those who necessarily bring to the surface the undercurrent of experience of life on the margins. Below Skepta explains how the launch of BBC1Xtra, supposedly a station designed to cater to the urban youth scene, began to *canonbalise* it:

> "1Xtra took the power away from us…Our pirate shows used to influence what records grime fans would buy. But suddenly it was in [the BBC's] hands and they went: "Bang! We've got you now! Make pop or we won't play you!" (Timeout.com, 2016).

This experience of cultural marginalization has material consequences, as artists who do not perform to the canon often find it difficult to bring in continuous revenue. The experience of Grime artists and the way difference in cultural expression is managed by more powerful groups speaks to the wider experience of life on road. Indeed, much of the political potential involved in the dissemination of urban music can be sapped out by this form of appropriation (Moore, 2005). This can lead to a watering down and often imitation of these cultural forms as they are stripped of their more threatening elements and incorporated in to the canon, as Mercer explains below, the incorporation and neutralisation of symbolic threats are a crucial part of a hegemonic process:

> "…dominant commodity culture appropriate[s] bits and pieces from the otherness of
> ethnic differentiation in order to reproduce the 'new' and so, in turn… strengthens its
> dominance and revalorizes its own symbolic capital." (Mercer, 1987: 49).

The struggle for legitimate value and status is a continuous one on road and often its attainment can be ephemeral and contingent. Ilan (2012) has argued that in response to this type of limitation artists have increasingly sought to 'mute' their road connections in order to appease industry pressures. Going legit is more than an individual attempt at security; it is a collective aspiration for inclusion. This reflects the fact that the roads represent the margins, but their eyes are focused intently on the centre (Young, 2007). They want all of what individualistic neo-liberal capitalism has to offer in terms of postmodern self-expression and fulfilment, yet they exhibit in the clearest possible way the naivety of the postmodern movement in its treatment of power. That is why we live in late modern times, because the promises of postmodernity are exclusively for those privileged enough to enjoy them; the past still haunts the majority who have to live in the shade of history's dark shadow, still dimming their existential potential – bringing with it the asphyxiating fog of the munpain.

Conclusion

Cultural expression and vivid performativity are the weapons of the poor against the immersive dullness of the munpain. Whether consumeristic or artistic, these ordnances fire brilliant displays determined to erode the walls of society's centre, broadening the canon in the process. New media has helped to bring this quest for inclusion to new heights with Skepta recently winning the 2016 Mercury Prize, beating the late David Bowie in the process, for his album Konnichiwa. We can see this is a movement which has carried an impact. It has encountered resistance though in the forms of the inevitable dysfunctions caused by the hardships of its source of inspiration as well as from attempts to prevent the altering of status quo from the elite. We see this is a battle for value, not a straightforward demonstration of it.

In the next chapter I examine further how the overlooking and misrecognition of forms of value on road help to fuel social exclusion via the portrayal and policy response to certain kinds of crime. I will show how value is still in the mix and how certain societal values are used to override and delegitimise local value systems in order to entrench the social order based on othering. I will pay particular attention to the moral panic surrounding gangs as it reared its head again after the London Riots of 2011, leading to specific political and policing responses

which failed to understand the nuances of what I argue is essentially a social and not

exclusively criminal set of problems.

Chapter 5: Crime, Policing and Power

"Their lives and deaths accumulate into statistic of motiveless and meaningless crime. How to identify those who are guilty, acquit those who are innocent! How to perceive the morality of *Carnival* within a universal plague of violence! That is our play" (Harris, 1985:14).

Crime is not just a criminal problem but an expansive social problem, which can be viewed in a variety of ways, not just through the moralising lens of the powerful. Understanding crime in the context of a world beleaguered by injustice, means one has to think critically about morality and power, before deciding where to apportion blame. As Gunter (2010) admits, it is difficult to speak about life on road without meaningfully engaging in a discussion on criminality in some way. This chapter will highlight the complex the issue of gangs - a term under which much activity on road is commonly grouped by police and policy makers. I will then offer an alternative understanding of the kind of criminality, commonly attributed to gangs, on road by examining inter-group conflicts; which I have characterised as a 'new neighbourhood nationalism'. This should provide a contrast between the porous and ambiguous definitions used on road to the rigid ones deployed by more powerful groups, which in many instances evidence a poor level of understanding, and possibly worse, the enforcement of disciplinary categories. Finally, I will examine participants' experiences of policing on the ground in order to demonstrate how categories may be operationalised to heighten social exclusion - reaffirming boundaries between those included in and excluded from society. This analysis hopes to demonstrate how the symbolic struggle which I observe throughout this thesis operates on a spatialised neighbourhood level and how that translates and interacts with the broader forms of struggle involving more powerful actors. Before I begin this analysis I will spend a short time reflecting on the current conjuncture, considering the political and academic responses to the 2011 London riots as a case in point.

Everybody's Reading the Riots

Within this study I use biography as a tool to understand the context and logic of practice of crime on road as the solution to situated problems. It also helps to de-essentialise people's motivations for involving themselves in deviant activities, which have varied greatly across individuals and their trajectories. An interesting example of how criminality is homogenised can be found in the wake of the 2011 London riots where delinquency, broken families and gangs were largely blamed. However, when LSE and The Guardian ran a rapid response

research project on the social disturbances, a varied picture began to emerge. In the mix of all the media frenzy it may be forgotten that the spark that set Britain's major urban centres alight for almost a week was the killing of Mark Duggan at the hands of the metropolitan police; at their heart the riots were about injustice.

This sense of rage at injustice evokes some of the feelings inherent in the munpain. It insinuates social injury which leads to feelings of ambivalence and disillusion. It also helps us to understand the multiplicity of the sources of this trauma, which become entangled, resulting in collective rage and violence. In the riots this was aimed at large chain stores supplying status symbols which are often marketed as products that can help people accumulate value, as well as upholding the systems of everyday understanding which underpin their acquisition (Scott, 2009). Wacquant (2008) addressed various disturbances in France, the USA and Britain being as 'mixed riots', whereby a variety of grievances led an array of individuals, comprised of differing demographics on to the streets for a multiplicity of reasons. He cited Mike Davis (1992) who described the LA riots as being 'as much about empty bellies and broken hearts as it was about police batons and Rodney King'. According to Wacquant (2008:23) the demands of the majority of youths involved in neo liberal era urban riots matched up with those of working class young people more widely; '…decent jobs, good schools, affordable or improved housing, access to public services, and fair treatment by the police and other agencies'.

This analysis seems to match with the findings of the Reading the Riots project in that 64% of those involved in the disturbances were from neighbourhoods in the poorest fifth in the UK, versus only 3% from the richest fifth (Newburn et al., 2011). The racially diverse nature of the disturbances again highlighted that motivations were unlikely to relate to the concerns of a single ethnic or racial demographic. The most common frustration seemed to be in relation to policing, where only 7% of those interviewed thought the police do a good or excellent job. The report reflected that "…many of our respondents, living in opposite ends of the country, used versions of the same phrase to describe the force: 'The police is the biggest gang out there'" (Newburn et al., 2011: 18).

This account differs from the explanations of the disturbances given by the political elite and the media, where gangs and moral degradation were widely blamed. Below is an extract of a speech given by then Prime Minister David Cameron, which serves as an example of this political response; where after cautioning against oversimplification of the causes of civil unrest, he goes on to homogenise them entirely as being about 'behaviour':

"Of course, we mustn't oversimplify.

There were different things going on in different parts of the country.

In Tottenham some of the anger was directed at the police.

In Salford there was some organised crime, a calculated attack on the forces of order.

But what we know for sure is that in large parts of the country this was just pure criminality.

So as we begin the necessary processes of inquiry, investigation, listening and learning: let's be clear.

These riots were not about race: the perpetrators and the victims were white, black and Asian.

These riots were not about government cuts: they were directed at high street stores, not Parliament.

And these riots were not about poverty: that insults the millions of people who, whatever the hardship, would never dream of making others suffer like this.

No, this was about behaviour…

…people showing indifference to right and wrong…

…people with a twisted moral code…

…people with a complete absence of self-restraint…

…Do we have the determination to confront the slow-motion moral collapse that has taken place in parts of our country these past few generations?

Irresponsibility. Selfishness. Behaving as if your choices have no consequences. Children without fathers. Schools without discipline. Reward without effort. Crime without punishment. Rights without responsibilities. Communities without control. Some of the worst aspects of human nature tolerated, indulged - sometimes even incentivised - by a state and its agencies that in parts have become literally de-moralised" (Gov.UK, 2011).

Interestingly, Cameron addresses the diverse demographics involved in the unrest but only in order to dismiss their concerns on the basis of there being no single unified purpose. Instead, he identifies the root cause of the problem as being in the deficit 'nature' of certain sections of the population. To say that this disregard has a uniform motivation would be to invert the phenomena, however the lack of social focus in political and judicial discourse seems startling. MacDonald and Marsh (2001:383) observe that certain commentators typically "…*overemphasize the choices* and *underemphasize the constraints* facing so-called underclass

youth". In the following section I wish to demonstrate how in the UK this kind of responsibility shifting political posturing has led to a non-coherent and potentially dangerous policy approach to issues of street violence. This will lead me on to talking about some different ways which local level conflict can be understood in relation to the notion of symbolic struggle in the neo-liberal context.

Gangs?

When it comes to policing one of the most important conflations to address is to do with gangs. In the wake of the 2011 disturbances, gangs were held publicly responsible for orchestrating and carrying out the riots by and large, however in hindsight this was found to be a falsehood (Newburn et al., 2011). It is not that I do not believe gangs exist in the UK, indeed both Stephen and T by their own admission have a history of gang involvement. However, others who engage in similar activities, such as Moussa or Jeremiah earlier in his life, have not been a part of any self-proclaimed gang, showing how more nuance is required in understanding this. The gang debate in the UK has echoed this level of ambiguity for some time, with Downes (1966) even claiming that British gangs do not exist at all. Reflecting this, Marshall et al (2005) have described the 'definitional issues' involved in the understanding of gangs in the UK. They note that often stereotypical racialised notions of gangs are too readily reached for by the media. This was not helped by the shortage in UK based gang research, which until recently, left academics and policy makers reliant on experts from the USA, despite suspicions that the two situations (Britain and the USA) may not be that readily comparable (ibid). It is also noteworthy at even amongst literature in the USA itself there are those who do not readily accept more dominant criminological attempts at gang definition (Brotherton, 2004; Brotherton and Barrios, 2004; Brotherton, 2008).

This problem has been reflected in the more recent British scholarly debate surrounding the issue. Some commentators resist the terminology gang as they fear its stigmatising effects (Campbell and Muncer 1989; Alexander, 2000; Sanders 2002; Sullivan, 2006) and others note that some of the more troubling and destructive policy directives adopted in the UK borrow from US inspired approaches to problems of youth delinquency (Newburn 2002; Wacquant et al., 2004). Ralphs et al (2009) posit that this westward looking policy direction is the result of contemporary theoretical discourses surrounding 'risk' (see e.g. Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991; Garland, 2001). In this context, troublesome youth historically constructed as 'folk devils' (Cohen, 1972) have seen the concerns surrounding them 'elevated' to the status of armed

'ruthless assassins' posing a 'high risk' to the public good (Ralphs et al, 2009: 484). This leads them (ibid) to claim that this risk management style response in itself creates new risks for young people.

Of course this has led to studies which have debated whether or not the use of the terminology 'gangs' is helpful in the UK context (see e.g. Aldridge et al al., 2008; Sharpe et al., 2009) and if we do continue to use it how we should understand what it means. Some commentators argue that gangs are loosely connected clusters of peers (Batchelor, 2009; Bannister, et al, 2010; Hallsworth, 2013) whilst others maintain they are more structured and coercive (Pitts, 2008). However, there is a risk that this debate might in itself be missing the point. As Densley (2013: 173) notes, any attempt to conflate the issue of street violence in London with gangs, would be 'dangerous', repeating the failures of US gang interventions; 'by isolating gangs and their members from the social contexts in which they act'. Densley (2013: 170) argues that in reality the 'emerging' British gang problem is a direct response to the political and socioeconomic conditions of our society. He describes gangs as the 'bastard children' of 'social processes that promote upward mobility and material wealth', but due to the lack of structural possibility more often result in, at term he borrows from Pitts (2008: 39) 'sociolcultural exclusion'.

Of course thinking about context also has its pitfalls. Some commentators often cite the influence of hip hop and grime music in glamourizing gang lifestyles (Centre for Social Justice, 2009; Heale, 2009; Hagedorn, 2008). Though some do at least add the caveat that computer games and films have to be held equally accountable (Centre for Social Justice, 2009). As argued in chapter 4, I feel that music is often reflective of broader cultural arrangements, and I also feel suspicious of those who wish to over-assign accountability toward less powerful actors. In this study there was evidence to show music is reflective of common 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1977).

 In relation to gangs, participants showed fairly sophisticated levels of understandings which helped this study to develop a contextual awareness. Those who had been involved in gang activity could recall both interactions with the police but also media representations of their collectives which they took issue with, highlighting the potential disharmony between local understandings and state or media sponsored interventions. Such issues raise the poignant question; whether or not criminological and policy narratives are complicit in cementing

society's hegemonic processes (Ewick & Sibley, 1995; Brotherton, 2008)? This apparent disharmony which I later broaden out in relation to a variety of participants experiences of the police, helps to develop a view that many policing interventions work to establish and maintain status quo in the increasing absence of meaningful social policy approaches.

Neoliberal Gangs & Surplus Populations

Densley (2013) locates the UK in stage 5 of a 6 stage response to gangs identified in the USA; stage 5 involves the forming of specialist gang units designed to repress gang activity, as a direct response to public and (possibly predominantly) media led hysteria. However, as we will see in the next section on new neighbourhood nationalisms, young people on road mobilise around localities and group membership in a multiplicity of ways. Group membership is often about belonging and machismo, yet young people of various dispositions may identify with the 'neighbourhood', and this includes those that may not ever engage in criminality or be a member of an active gang. Gunter's (2010) road continuum provides an alternative framework for understanding how young people on road move between levels of criminal 'activity' on road depending on other variables in their lives, meaning that often they are not 'career criminals' per se. This has consequences for policing, as persistent offenders and/or gang members may well be conflated with those who simply share the space. Below Ralphs et al (2009: 490) explain how the police may come to identify who is an active gang member:

> "The police employed similar strategies to those of rival gangs when evaluating whether somebody was a gang member, most often based on being seen in the company of known gang members [was] [t]he way young people were labelled as 'gang members' or 'gang associates'".

The problem here is that the company someone keeps, or even the locations they spend their time, are becoming used as an indicator of criminality or gang membership rather than actual evidence of such activities. Given the complexity of the picture of life on road which has emerged in this study, such an approach to policing the diverse array of young people in the public space amounts to attempting to do brain surgery with a butter knife, thus such police tactics will be categorised broadly under the terminology 'trawling'; that is insufficiently discriminate policing methods resulting in repeated and consistent contact with the police. Though some of the young adults in this study were former or semi active gang members they still found police tactics relating to their involvement in gang or criminal activity a source of frustration:

Yusef: So do you think the police have got the wrong idea about what a gang is?

T: *Definitely, definitely,* definitely.

Yusef: What do they think a gang is?

T: They think gangs-small gangs in London, they-it's like they compare us to mafia men in Italy. *We're nothing like that,* we don't move kilos of coke-well most of us are on benefits, do you know what I mean? And it's like the way they put us in the media is like we're some *big drug dealer-killer*-if we was we wouldn't be in the area still living here with our mums paying, rent. Do you know what I mean it doesn't make sense? So we're not some big drug dealers that, have a lot of money, no its nothing like that, its- we're just kids who grew up in an estate and we was friends together, but we all used to like go out and do wrong things, and got in to problems with boys from other areas, that's all that it is to it... like-*so even I watch a programme-a show on channel 4* [show was aired on BBC1] *the other day*, they said-they arrested a guy who's about *35 years old, I know the guy, he walks to the same shop as I do, he's got three children and they said **that guy is MAD Gang!** He's not MAD Gang!* That guy, even though he's in the wrong selling drugs, he's just tryina feed his family ***he is not part of a gang,*** *he doesn't go to Darkwell and Mossley, Stamford and try to attack* other gang members, all he does is sell drugs when needed... that's it.

T's gang appeared in more than one episode of the show, one involving gang investigation (to which he was referring above) and the other the policing of a local street party, showing the police going to great lengths to prevent known gang members from attending. T's account highlights a 'listening gap' (Simmons, 2011) between police intelligence and local understandings. The programme in question was part of a series aired on BBC1 in 2015 about the Metropolitan Police called *The Met: Policing London*. In the programme they gave detailed accounts of the structure of the gang T was a member of, stating that it had an organised hierarchy (represented visually by them in the form of a pyramid) whereby members were actively rising up the ranks. They conducted raids on the houses of boys from his neighbourhood, publically naming them, and making assertions about their rank and status in the gang.

Such an approach is identified by Hallsworth (2013), who describes it as 'gang talk'; a set of notions which are enforced from outside but do not reflect the actual evidence on the ground. He argues that an industry has been created around the problem of gangs which re-produces

itself by conflating issues and feeding them in to moral panics causing public and political anxiety. In developing his argument Hallsworth builds on the work of Deleuze and Guttari (1988), borrowing their trees and grass metaphor. He explains that in the West people integrated in to mainstream ways of thinking tend to think in terms of *trees*; structured entities which can be understood in a top down way, emphasising the importance of structure and hierarchy. Grass on the other hand does not have such a predictable structure. He explains that often people attempting to deal with issues relating to gangs have 'trees growing in their heads' and cannot see the ways in which not only gangs, but street culture in general mimics the ways of grass.

It is logical to understand life on road in this way, like grass, or weeds, it is mostly formed in transitional spaces. It grows from the margins within whatever physical or virtual spaces it is able to utilise. Tree like institutions such as schools or the police have an inability to imagine a world where structures are uncertain, pervasive and dynamic in this way; leading to many improper definitions and interventions. In the above extract T is telling us as much; to him his gang does not have a hierarchal structure, its membership is porous and opposed to being all powerful, he paints a picture containing a degree of vulnerability and fatalism.

At the time of interview T was 23 years old, the man he refers to in the extract is a 35-year-old man from the local area. He saw a clear distinction between the activities of his former gang and those of the older man. He highlights the conflation between the fact they share the same local space and the man's supposed gang membership. Walking 'to the same shop'; being on the estate and even involvement in crime does not equate to gang membership in his eyes. T's gang was comprised of him and his friends, his generation living in the moment, together on the estate. The older man may have had some interaction with gang members by virtue of the fact they share a space, but the gang in question was comprised of younger men predominantly engaged in separate activities.

The very public nature of this confusion matches closely with the idea that the UK is in stage 5 (Densley, 2013) of its gang response. Publically identifying gangs, their structures and their members in an effort to show the public how actively the police are engaging with the problem, is an observable feature of this. This account highlights the extent to which, from the perspective of young people on road, this narrative is constructed by the police from the top down. The account of gang membership offered by my participants is more fluid and whilst some people may be active gang members, others may just be acquainted with them, or even just share the same space.

Ralphs et al (2009) explained how often young people from a neighbourhood may befriend gang members as a strategy for self-preservation, knowing that this would make it less likely for them to be victimised; this could be regarded as a form of road social capital. They also might have close friends or family members who are involved in gang activity which makes contact with them unavoidable (Anderson, 1999). As I have illustrated here, less criminally inclined young people may also involve themselves with gangs as a way to gain status amongst those within the wider community:

> T: …And then there was other people like Roberto, everyone knows this fucking clown, we would send him shop at 3am, but he was part of the batch, as feds will say MAD Gang, do you know what I mean?... As they get older you just never hear from them again. They just stop, they just become normal civilians in life… Those are the people that's just there-just for the fun and got nothing to do, and they like the things that comes with it, like the girls and shit.

Again T is making a distinction between sharing space, or even spending time together and really being a part of a gang. He is showing us that other people on road are using the gang as a strategy in order to accumulate road capital, though in reality those at the centre know that it is just a façade. So you might have a young person who dresses, speaks, spends time with and by all accounts looks to be 'a part of the batch' but in reality is not active and may in fact themselves be vulnerable to exploitation:

> T: A lot of people, like the weak ones, they get pressured in to working for the bigger and stronger gang members, and they end up in jail for them and you get me.

From the perspective of young people on road police strategies for combating 'gangs' become another feature of a landscape laden with risk, a veritable minefield. The 'trawling' methods employed by the police make swathes of young people, who may just be engaging cultural expression, following fashion, making use of public space and meeting with friends; at risk of criminalisation. In this way the moral panic surrounding gangs is utilised to 'cleanse' public spaces through the use of the criminal justice system, opposed to opening youth clubs and creating community orientated solutions. Limited youth activities in poorer areas, combined with the limitations on space they are able to access as a result of community violence, leaves young people with limited options. Indeed, one interesting intricacy highlighted by T was that the moral panic surrounding gangs was one of the rationales for closing youth services on some neighbourhoods:

> T: What happens yeah, there'll be a youth club, then the youth club will be alright for three years when only like 8 people attend it, but then when like 40 people start attending it, the police will start putting in applications to get it closed down because it's a gang area, where apparently gang members meet up and shit. Which to be honest we do meet up in it, but if not in there we'd just be in the street, so yeah.

We could think of this policy conjuncture as one in which young people on road are being forced in to the streets where they can be swept up by the police. Since the 2008 financial crisis youth services in Britain have been hit hard; UNISON (2016) have recently reported that at least 35,000 hours of service provision have been removed. This is reflected in the 350 youth centres which have been forced to close and the 2000 jobs lost between 2012-2014 (ibid). The gang policy also licenses an approach that punishes all young people on the roads due to the activities of a minority. Using the moral panic surrounding gang activity to reduce youth services and increase surveillance makes the landscape more desolate. Given the recent influx of wealth and observable shifts in demographics in neighbourhoods like Brixton, Hackney and even Peckham, it appears that young people on road are being caught up in the policing arm of gentrification, and being at the bottom of the spectrum leaves them vulnerable to increased police attention (Fitzgerald, 1999; Quinton et al., 2000; Waddington et al., 2004), something which has led to such groups becoming known as 'police property' (Cray, 1972; Lee, 1981; Reiner, 1992). Hallsworth and Lea (2011: 145) demonstrate how this style of policing places young people in public space at risk through '…pre-emptive criminalization, accompanied by CCTV and intrusive surveillance…' in order to cleanse public space and make it safe and attractive for 'mobile capital'.

As we already know those on road are part of a generation of aspirant individualists. Despite dealing with issues of poverty and social exclusion, many of them dream of 'going legit' and status is of huge symbolic importance. Those who gain status via local value systems may struggle to integrate in to a system whereby they are only qualified for the most menial jobs. The mobile capital flooding in to their localities does not benefit them, as in order for it to be an attractive locality, they must be physically removed from the space. Phenomena such as trawling are effective when your goal is not the pursuit of justice but rather the protection of public space for the use of global capital. Jock Young (2007) explains that in order for late modern societies to function effectively in a time of precarious material and ontological conditions; a process of othering is essential for creating and maintaining status quo. Thus, this apparent lack of connection with actual events with life on road may not be wholly about a

lack of police intelligence and more about taking control of meaning to promote a certain kind of social order.

This raises questions around the agentic response of groups of young people to this set of social conditions. Parts of the broader gang literature hold that young people do perform kinds of resistance, though this ironically embeds their exclusion and subordinate social status, as their development of oppositional culture carries them further from the mainstream (Vigil, 1988; Moore, 1991; Bourgois, 2003). Others regard their response as more pathological and destructive, leading to further punitive social control as they further destroy opportunity for those in their spatial environments (Anderson, 1999; Scott, 2004). Brotherton (2007) invites researchers to create social constructs which better correspond to our observations (of what he calls 'street organisations'), as opposed to reaching for tired and misappropriated gang narratives. Bearing this contextual framing in mind, I will go on to offer an alternative understanding (opposed to the simplistic rhetoric of gangs) of how the symbolic struggle plays out at a spatial level.

I argue that many of the experiences of young people on road are real world manifestations of neo-liberalism in action. In light of this they exhibit 'projective' (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) agency which is geared into some future orientated outcome. Of course thinking about the future in a neo-liberal world often means securing short term projective outcomes. As young people navigate their neighbourhood and engage in localised (Appaduri, 1995) cultural and symbolic understandings; a symbolic struggle for value ensues, whereby young people accept that nothing is given and everything can be taken away (Anderson, 1999). In order to help explain this I have re-worked Back's (1996) notion of neighbourhood nationalism, mobilising particularly around the way in which a variety of cultural flows collapse in to the spatial neighbourhood context.

Beef – The New Neighbourhood Nationalism

Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) explore the street term 'beef' in their study on gun crime in Britain. Beef is a descriptive term for conflict or tension which can, but does not necessarily, pertain to violence and crime. They emphasised the multiple sources of beef, something which made the roads a more dangerous and unpredictable space than that occupied by more traditionally recognised organised criminals. They identify the ways in which criminality crosses into the world of the banal, where violence can arise from ordinary situations and not exclusively in the realms of those who participants might describe as the most 'active'. As we

have seen from a previous chapter, status is an essential form of capital for economic or even reproductive survival. This specific form of conflict is predominantly reported by males. Often it is drawn up of opposing collectives who share a common rivalry and relatively close spatial confines. Sometimes it can lead to serious incidents of violent crime and even murder, but in many instances it only involves posturing and even artistic expression and play.

McKenzie (2015) spoke about how the male participants in her study understood their locality in terms of a territory, which required protection. At the same time, it was a place of safety where they could be themselves and socialise with their peers free from interference (some of the time). This kind of attachment makes sense in relation to the munpain, the boredom associated with contemporary urban poverty limits the leisure choices available to young men on road, causing them to become attached to the locality which also entraps them. Below T exhibits elements of all of this in his description of what a typical day might have been like on road in his teenage years:

> T: Erm yeah like when I was younger 14-15-16, come out at like 10, pedal bike, pedal to the estate, see, everyone, my friends, they're on their pedal bike, then we say suttin like 'you lot think you're braver than me? What? I'm gonna pedal to Darkwell now, let's see who's following', then I'll pedal at the front, just for fun because we're all bored, then we'll pedal through Darkwell, see the other Darkwell boys, say 'Fuck you lot! Harmstead! H! H!'. Throw some rocks at them, pedal away, they'll chase us, then we'll get to Harmstead again.

Later in his interview T describes beefing with boys from other neighbourhoods being at least partially motivated by the need to find 'something to do' (Cohen, 1973). The conflict between the rival areas was well known on a local level and boys who participated in it revelled in a degree of notoriety. There are multiple fibres active in this account of experiences of community and making identity on road. The confines of the physical space, devoid of recreational activities, led to groups of youths with little to do. One of the ways in which they were able to break the mundane was by 'catching joke' (Gunter, 2010) and messing around; something which could lead to machismo style egging each other on.

The territorial rivalry between the local areas was to some extent a source of excitement, creating a touchstone against which the admiration of their immediate peers could be secured, strengthening feelings of local belonging. Hallsworth (2013) refers to Lyng's (2005) notion of 'edge work' when describing such phenomena, observing how group fighting or

venturing in to a rival's territory could be regarded as pleasurable activities; where there was risk, there was also fun to be had. This seemed to resonate with T as during his interview as he reflected with some nostalgia about his time on road:

> T: [pulls on cigarette] Honest opinions, it was fun. Because, you run out there [exhales], you cause havoc, you let out your anger in the way you wanna let it out. You have fun with your mates, you have a drink, you smoke a bit of weed. You're unemployed, you don't pay shit, you're young, you have no bills... you're just, reckless-young, wild and reckless. And was, to be honest it was the funnest times of my life…

In order to explore this, I have adapted Les Back's (1996) notion of neighbourhood nationalism. This is a wonderful tool which Back uses to describe how the complexities of identity and racism oscillate between wider and local levels. He describes how the identities of the young people in his study are informed by multiple intergenerational, macro and micro influences, which make up starkly contradictory discourses. He found in many instances young people of both black and white heritage would negotiate these inconsistencies by collapsing their definitions down to neighbourhood levels using reference points from their immediate experience in order to promote more unified meaning making and multi-racial inclusion. Back (1996: 220) explains:

> "The nation is thus shrunk to the size of the neighbourhood resulting in the emergence of a kind of 'neighbourhood nationalism'. The syncretic culture I have briefly discussed acts as the symbolic capital which furnishes this identity, an over-arching reference point which is made more resonant by the shared experience of school and street and the culture which emerges from these locations. The inclusive definitions that are promoted within this concept stand in opposition to a racialised version of national belonging."

Back found that there was a multiplicity of sources from which new meanings and terms of inclusion were being forged within the local space. In this study I observe that to some extent these new meanings can transcend the space of the immediate neighbourhood in to bordering areas and even towns, cities and perhaps nations. My usage of neighbourhood nationalism differs from Back's original handling. For him it was a tool for understanding identity formation, whereas in this chapter I use it to explain the ebbs and flows of structure and agency which influence certain kinds of activity. There is also the added difference that we now live in an intensely digitalised and connected age which has altered the pathways along

which structure and agency travel. The space of the neighbourhood has been blurred by the transcendental movements of new digital media, which has permanently changed the shape of interaction. Influences on and messages emanating from the neighbourhood now have a far greater reach, which has complicated the formation of local systems of belonging, and consequently also conflict.

This new neighbourhood nationalism sees groups of (predominantly) boys of different estates, schools and areas engaged in 'beef' along lines of mutual recognition, with the line of difference being drawn along the spatial localities; the *intangible concrete nations* they occupy. The mutual recognition involved in this was critical, as when speaking about beef participants took it as almost a given that the opposite party in a conflict was involved in the roads in some way. This contrasted with other kinds of criminal activity such as fraud or theft where victims may not be involved with life on road. Beef relating to spatial and group membership usually ran along lines of similarity. T likened this to football hooliganism, observing the similarities whereby both parties were subscribing to a certain subcultural understanding of the conflict:

> T: They're from that area and we're from this area, and it's-they've either disrespected someone from our area and it's something to do. It's like asking, what started Arsenal and Tottenham… It's the same thing, that's a gang init-they don't like each other and they fight when they see each other, but nah that's just a football club we're *fans*, do you know what I mean?

Similarly, to football hooliganism, there is not always a clear root cause of the conflict, leading to the conflict cooling off and heating up at various moments. The spatial lines drawn up in such conflicts were vague and within relatively small localities. They might come into contact via shared amenities such as; leisure facilities, Job Centres, colleges or social gatherings. This could mean that someone could run into rival groups on an off chance and depending on the nature of the interaction this could spark further escalations in conflict. Below Moussa elaborates on his first encounter with a group of youths he had several run-ins with over the course of an academic year, which eventually escalated in to a stabbing:

> Moussa: Bruv this youth Jake yeah, I don't know how he got in to problems with them yeah, but a there's a few Far Water youths, and a couple of them from-they were claiming Darkwell but they weren't Darkwell, but yeah 'cause I even asked a couple of my bredrins and they were like nah man they were just Far Water youths init. So cool

man come out the school, everyone's running to me yeah, I don't know why, but everyone's running to me, 'cause my bredrin Jamal lives around that area yeah, so they knew me straight away as being his bredrin init, and they know what he's on init and 'cause I'm his bredrin they think I'm the next best thing, that's what I've concluded from what-why they come up to me so fast init. But yeah as soon as the Far Water youths come out the school, everyone came up to me *'ah Moussa there's youths outside, you gonna back it, you gonna back it?'*. I'm laughing, I'm thinking what's going on init, I come outside and I see youths clocking me straight away, like they've never seen me before, like straight away, like they've never seen me before and I'm like *'what the fuck you looking at bruv?!'*. So then straight away I've inherited it, *straight away*, because man have put me in a situation init. The youths are chatting shit, I banged one of them and one of the youths is shouting grab the taser, grab the taser-I can't see him-the police officer is outside anyway, watching this anyway, and he knows what's going on, he knows what they're trying to do, they're trying to rob youths from my school init. So obviously I rocked it [fought them], I dropped [knocked down] 3 of them, no word of a lie, I dropped 3 of them and even the policeman, he never spudded me but I got a nod - *'you know what, was gonna sort it out for you but I saw what you done'* [white working class accent] 'I left you to it' init. So I didn't even get in no trouble for that. After that I think I gained a quick reputation in the school, as the school saviour init".

The spatial 'neighbourhood' in this instance is the school, which Moussa had arrived at post-16 to study for his A-levels. His tie to the school links him to the conflict, as the boys were initially there to rob students. Other pupils at the school recognised him as someone who could engage in beef with the boys due to his associations with other known guys in the area. In this way a level of mutual recognition was established prior to the encounter. Already the local and transient factors are at work with wider concepts of recognition tying in with local figures and spatial conflicts. As he first lays eyes on the boys an instance of mutual recognition takes place as they 'clock' him and he engages them in conflict. Active throughout this account is the adulation of his peers who look to him to protect the space even when there is a police presence, as he gains the reputation as 'school saviour'. Interestingly he even claims that he gained respect from the school police officer who seems to have witnessed at least some of the events unfold and congratulated him on his performance.

The above example displays how conflicts and culture work within the spatial confines of the neighbourhood (Appaduri, 1995). Groups of boys (and potentially but much less often girls) who may or may not be already aware of one another cross paths leading to further conflicts. There is recognition both within the community and between the active parties involved in the conflict - drawing on shared notions of masculinity and local associations, connecting the local with more transcendent cultural elements. This example also shows how neighbourhood conflicts tie in to local value systems and can help to cement bonds and positions of status in the community.

A second example shows how conflict can be perpetuated in a more culturally inclined way through social media and musical expression. Rival groups would sometimes engage in 'dissing' over social media whereby they disrespect members of other groups. This is something which has been identified as having serious inflammatory potential in places like Chicago where street violence is endemic (Patton et al, 2013; 2013; 2016; Blevins et al, 2016; Wijeratne et al, 2015). I would argue this demonstrates a kind of transcendent cultural influence over the various groupings, whereby they are able to communicate over mutually recognised forms of social media, as well as using familiar expressive forms such as rap music to disseminate their messages (Rose, 1994). It is also indicative of the way in which such conflicts are made public, often locally, but also sometimes nationally and internationally. Highlighting the way in which culture moves between local, trans-local and global levels. Below T explains how this would be used strategically to gain notoriety, but how it also was one of the causes of the beef:

> Yusef: What did you get in to problems with other areas for?

> T: It was stupid things like erm sending-like sending is a term, in slang when you like- like you diss somebody in a song. So it's just was stupid things like that, we'll be dissing other people in a song so that we could get more views on Myspace.

Dissing can breed rivalries over much larger geographical spaces, between neighbourhoods of young people who may well have not physically crossed paths, at least as often, prior to the widespread use of social media. These conflicts often stay within the confines of musical expression and feed more in to the hip hop tradition of beef or clashing/sending as it has often been known on the Grime scene, however, just as with the aforementioned they can also on occasion boil over or perpetuate existing 'real life' conflicts.

This new platform has helped to take road culture off the streets and into the bedrooms, and living rooms of people everywhere. It has helped to develop a more coherent scene where faces, collectives and neighbourhoods become visually familiar, as opposed to notoriety spreading by word of mouth; which previously enabled a degree of anonymity outside of the confines of respective areas. Over recent years' artists from these areas have begun to make an impact on the popular music scene (see chapter 4), but this visibility and recognition has also resulted in increased risk for those involved. As young people who engage in beef over social media and gain a reputation, or as stated below; become 'certified', they become visually recognisable to hundreds of thousands if not millions of people. This increases the risk exponentially, it is easier to identify a person you may have had conflict with and thus make it more possible to engage in revenge attacks, but public figures also become a focus for others on road who may wish to gain fast notoriety. Below T explains how being 'certified' can boost someone's music career but at the same time makes normal activities, such as working a public facing job, potentially life threatening:

> Yusef: Why would it boost your career?

> T: It gets you more views if you know what I mean. They know what you're rapping about is actually like, you're not lying if you know what I mean…

> Yusef: When you're more about it yeah?

> T: Yeah and more respected…

> Yusef: Why don't people on road just get normal jobs then?

> T: 'cause most people, well kno-people you've had problems with will know your face, and the last thing you want is someone seeing you walking out of H&M phon-making a couple phone calls, saying guess who I just saw in H&M, the next thing you know three people's in there waving their knife across the counter at you. It's called slippin' that the gang term for it, that's the last thing you wanna get caught, caught slippin'

> Yusef: So you think a job is slippin'?

> T: Yeah definitely unless you work in like Brighton, or Norwich or Ipswich, but if you've caused gang problems in London I don't think no where's safe for you in London.

> Yusef: Why's that?

> T: London's a small place. The worlds a small place let alone London…
>
> Yusef: [laughs] I hear that. So why is life so dangerous for a gang member?
>
> T: Because there's just so many people out here doing the gang life, do you know what
> I mean? So many people-young people out there trying to prove that point, *they're
> certified*, so…

There have been various instances where UK artists have been filmed being assaulted or humiliated with the recording then uploaded onto the internet. Artists are not the only ones who are vulnerable to this risk as their friends will often appear in their videos, becoming identifiable as part of a 'neighbourhood' collective. This visibility also penetrates the criminal justice system with things said or simply being present in a 'hood video' used in prosecutions to add extra charges such as intent, or as evidence of 'gang involvement' used as part of a push for a guilty verdict[2]. This illustrates the previous insight that capitals on road are 'hot' and how, if they are managed incorrectly, they can become extremely dangerous. On the one hand you have the increased feelings of belonging and the public recognition for individuals and their collectives; representing more positive side of this kind of neighbourhood nationalism. On the other you have the many risks involved making everyday activities extremely difficult due to the heightened probability of being attacked and/or recognised by the police.

When writing about something such as this it can seem like a bit of a game, something young people engage in to pass the time, which to some extent it is. It is a game in as much as Bourdieu understood individual social actions as a game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), played in specific fields (Bourdieu, 1990), where players engage in strategies constructed using the information collected via their habitus to meet specific ends. This said, the real life experience of such activity is very serious, occasionally ending in violent episodes, humiliation and even death. It is important to take the logics of practice involved in such processes seriously and treat people's subjectivities with respect. Below Stephen reflects on how beef and gang activity (primarily manifesting in an inter neighbourhood conflict) inhibited his ability to pursue other interests, and even go to school:

> Stephen: Like I can go jump on the bus and that, and a person from that school, I know
> the school, another person from that school might try me, another person from that
> school might try me, like someone that lives-like someone that's meeting their friends

---

[2] see for example, (DailyMail.co.uk, 2017)

from where I live, they might try me, so I just... I just, I got disinterested with school and that... It was, that school I went to was kind of a warzone man. Mmm and a lot of people kind-this was the time that a lot of stuff started happening to people in my school. I think someone like a couple people got-passed away already, one of them got hit and one of them was through gang violence already and the school was kinda tainted with that and it was in the newspaper for all that gang stuff so everything started getting tainted and the school they were just hanging on to what they were hanging on to

Yusef: What was that?

Stephen: Like I don't know man, but school was nuts man.

Yusef: Did they try to help you?

Stephen: Mmm in certa-in certain ways yeah but there's only so much they can do. You know it's up to the person if they're going to listen and take you in, you know, you can't force them, there's only so much they could have did to help me.

Yusef: So then the early times where you got involved with the roads, do you feel like you had a choice?

Stephen: I can't lie I *did.* But what it was the stuff I wanted to do, it was intertwining, for like-say someone said rah they're doing a football tournament there, if we win everyone wins a PS2 or something. They be like *ah yeah let's do it* but then they're like [voice drops a bit] but it's in that area, then it's like *'ooooooohhh'* and they're thinking like 'let's go' but then you're thinking like ahhh it might not happen [trouble] be like ah lets go but if I do take my knife or a weapon or something… so that's how we used to do it, but I'd say, yeah man, I'd say probably from about 13 I came aware of what was going on, properly, like I kinda proper got aware of it, still. Cah when I was younger-I kind of catch on to things quick so I kinda become aware of how things was working, get me?

Stephen's account adds yet another dimension to the relationship between neighbourhood nationalism and beef; the way in which members of a community who may not even be considered as 'active' or even really fully understand what is happening can be pulled in to conflicts. It is not enough to say that neighbourhood nationalism or beef come into being purely out of boredom as disengaged youth look for something to do, Stephen's account

shows there is more to it than that. Stephen tells me that he had a choice when he began to get involved with road life, but he also makes it evident that things seemed to just happen. He was submersed, not by choice (Anderson, 1999), in an environment where conflict, sometimes based around various neighbourhood nationalisms, was already active. Relevant institutions such as the school or family seemed to not have a grasp of what was happening on the ground. Being identified by boys from other schools as being from his school made him a potential target, as well as boys active in his neighbourhood. This led to him accruing status and putting in work of his own in order to fend off some of the threats to his safety. As he became more involved in local status hierarchies the risks to his safety increased, complicating other areas of his life further. Football was one of the constants in Stephen's life, something he still seems to be passionate about to this day (hoping to become a UEFA licensed coach), yet his local gang activity was beginning to interfere with it, making it difficult for him to pass through certain spaces.

'Intertwining' was the perfect word to explain what happened to a lot of the participants in this study. The roads, in the abstract as well the physical sense, varied in importance throughout their lives, yet seemed to entangle itself with many of the other aspects of it. Whether it was work, opportunity, leisure, religion or family, amongst many others; road life had an impact in some way. This recognises that subcultural and cultural group membership is not exclusive, as T succinctly points out, there is a wide variety of people with a variety of interests on the roads:

> T: …everyone has their own dreams… [pulls on cigarette] some people just want a family, a house and a car man and a good job. Some people want the bigger things [blows end of roll-up] be footballers, actors, you know what I mean everyone on the road is a normal human, they want the same thing anyone else wants.

Theoretical tools such as neighbourhood nationalism can help us to understand and potentially help reduce levels of exclusion on road, but they should not contribute to essentialising young people. By this I mean that not everyone subscribes to one kind of idea, and even if they do exhibit involvement in something like neighbourhood nationalism via inter-neighbourhood conflicts, the drivers for such activities should not be regarded as universal. The logics of practice underlying such activities are affected by biographical as well as structural factors and each person will experience exclusion or hardship differently.

This form of neighbourhood nationalism is not exclusively about violence, it is about belonging, justice and value. Through the process of conflict, competing 'neighbourhoods' are able to endow value on one another, as much as they are able to take from each other. The mutual recognition involved *shows*, even when hatred is at its peak. Conflicts may be physical or lyrical, yet they are all struggles over value, providing pathways into inclusion and recognition. In this way I regard many of these actions as projective (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) as they are agentic attempts to transcend abject social status and its accompanying feelings. This may not always be helpful at the level of the nation state, but the collapsed nation amongst their local cultural community provides the context whereby such activities can foster alternative feelings of status and belonging, albeit always contingent and negotiated.

In the final section I will spend more time explaining in detail some of the interactions with the police described by participants in this study. From this evidence base I hope to support the conclusion this chapter builds towards, that not only are policy makers poorly equipped when it comes to making sense of youth violence, their misreading of young people's symbolic struggle for inclusion leads to them perpetuating and engaging in the struggle on the part of the status quo. This happens via a multitude of negative interactions with law enforcement, enforcing feelings of exclusion amongst this marginalised group, perhaps reflecting the fact that they could be considered 'police property' (Cray, 1972; Lee, 1981; Reiner, 1992).

Policing: Pain, Race and Malpractice

> "They turned Mark Duggan to a suspect, he was a victim, do you really think that's justice? Aye brother fuck feds, oi nigga fuck this, they got me crying on a track they probably love this" (MoStack Music, 2016).

In Britain mistrust between the police and marginalised communities has been prevalent (Lee, 1981; Macpherson, 1999; Bowling, 1999; Bourne, 2001; Sharp & Atherton, 2007). This was broadly reflected in the experiences of participants who spoke of having predominantly negative experience of the police. These instances were often retold through a lens of justice; with the police becoming a physical and symbolic force drawing the parameters of inclusion and exclusion. Sometimes participants recounted experiences of injustice and malpractice on the part of the police force, but others just expressed feelings of sadness and powerlessness when confronted by the hard edge of the state.

<u>Terri</u>

Terri was one of several female participants with a harrowing experience of urban policing. At the age of 14 she was just finding her way on the roads. A friend from a local youth project took her to a party, which she said was happening at her cousin's house. Later this turned out not to be the case and Terri was raped by two boys. This is a difficult experience in itself, and due to the topic at hand this chapter does not allow the analytical space it deserves. However, the police response described by Terri increases the level of distress she experienced, supporting the central argument of this chapter. Here I will include a brief extract from her interview:

> Terri: Okay, so anyway, I was quite young, I went to a party and I was raped by two boys…
>
> Yusef: How old were you at the time?
>
> Terri: I was 14…I remember going with the youth worker-so erm I told her and erm she was like well you need to call the police. So me and the girl who took me there [to the party], she said it was her cousin's house but obviously it wasn't her cousin, we called the police, I remember going in the police car-but she was next to me talking about how she used to ring police as a prank and how she used to do this and that, and I was like oh yeah I remember being a kid and being in B&Q and calling the fire brigade but, it just was just stupid. Obviously the people in front heard this and didn't think we were serious, and you know, what was worse, sorry, there was a lot of blood as well, my clothes-my skirt was bloody, and I remember giving them the evidence and I don't think they ever even bothered, I don't think they ever even looked in to it [voice starts to break as she wells up], and that sort of point, you know, you lose a lot of trust for these people who are supposed to protect you. So I remember them just looking at me, you know, like, you know, *that actually happened*, and, *I was angry and hurt as well*
>
> Yusef: So you feel like they didn't believe you?
>
> Terri: Well, because they didn't believe me, they said look there's another girl we've just spoke to-that's in hospital right now, she's beaten and bruised, *she actually went through something*. So because I didn't have bruises on my face, *they didn't even bother to look, whatever anyway!*

Yusef: So do you think that the police took, you on kind of face value on who you were with and...

Terri: Who I was with, and, I think they let me down, personally. Ermm and also obviously back then I was very-*I used as much slang as I could so I could be cool*, like, yeah I was coming at a different angle, yeah probably if I approached them now and spoke properly and said all this happened blah, blah, blah, they definitely would-course they would approach it differently...

She points to the external projection of her and her friend determining her access to justice. This is something which caused her to 'lose a lot of trust' in those who were appointed to protect her. The assumption that Terri was wasting police time seems to have been acted upon callously, when the police told Terri about another victim who deserved their help; as opposed to her who did not. Her experience does receive some backing in academic studies (Gilmore and Pittman, 1993; Frazier and Haney, 1996) with Jordan (2004: 29) claiming that "...stereotypically based judgements continue to impact negatively on police perceptions and decision making". This placed Terri on the outside of the dominant symbolic order, leaving her later in her interview reflecting on the fact that being with a man who could demonstrate the potential to perform violence was important to her feelings of security. She herself became the victim of domestic violence, perhaps indicating that alienating experiences such as these leave women particularly vulnerable (Hille, 1999; Kabeer, 2000). In the next extract we move on to consider claims that such 'stereotypically placed judgements' (Jordan, 2004: 29) not only increase feelings of exclusion but actively endanger lives.

T

T spoke at great length about police malpractice particularly complaining about the misuse of and often inaccurate nature of police intelligence. In the extract below he speaks at length about an incident where he felt that the police used their local intelligence in order to put his safety in jeopardy, it begins with him attending a friend's court hearing[3] when he got in an altercation with a member of court staff and was arrested:

T: He was in a court case, because he got-his court case got not guilty, one of the police officers said to his-whispered to his mum '*fuck you, you black cunt*' and I said

---

[3] Alice Goffman (2015) provides an interesting account of the social significance of court hearings.

'you what?' that's all I said to him and on camera he leaned over and punched me in the face, because of he wants to abuse his power. One of my friends… didn't like the fact that he just leaned over and punched me, so he leaned over and punched him and he got thrown straight in to prison. They nicked me… took me to Darkwell police station, I was wearing a jumper, which I had designed… [which was associated] the area that I associate [with]

Yusef: Mmm

T: The police said 'ah yes…' …purposely they took me to Darkwell police station because my jumper said Harmstead and they know, they're aware of the gang problems between Harmstead and Darkwell. So they brought me to Darkwell police station, before they brought me there, they took me to the car park and they ffff-I don't know how else to put it they fucked me up, like they fucked me up completely. When they took me to the bottom of the police station, I thought I was gonna get put in a cell and arrested, for something, with a charge. When they took me to the sergeant, the sergeant said 'where's your phone and anything you've got on you', I handed a £10 note and a BlackBerry, they took it off me and told me to fuck off, as they've told me to fuck off I've gone up stairs, they said 'you're getting released', I said I'm waiting for my friend, they said 'don't worry about your friend he's going jail'… They took me upstairs to the police station and I asked the woman politely, ah I skipped a bit, the part where I said my jumper said Harmstead I had a body warmer on top, they took my body warmer knowing that I'll have to go home wearing a Harmstead jumper in the middle of Darkwell. So as I've gone upstairs I asked the woman in reception can you call me a cab please, she said no we can't do that here. As I've walked out of the police station, I've walked-I've walked-I've walked for like 4 minutes, because my name was well known, I saw 4 schoolboys and they started saying '*T, that's T!*' and it caused a lot of attention, people started looking at me, as I was walking I looked back and I saw three boys coming towards me on a pedal bike, I had no choice but to run all the way from Darkwell to Harmstead, it's about 2 and a half miles, 3 miles, roughly and I had to run there. As I got there my t-shirt was like a towel… so then when I got to my house I sat down, I sparked a spliff, I sat down and I thinked, I said all these boys that have been murdered in other areas, when they say for example like, a lot of cases they found boys dead in another area when that boy knows he shouldn't have been in that area, did he go to that area or did the police just

drop him there, because it's happened a lot of times, where even they've arrested me and they've just put me in the van and said we're going to take you to Darkwell and drop you off, and make you walk home, or we're going to take you to Mossley and make you walk home, and they say it as a joke but it's only happened to me once. So it makes me think is it them that puts these boys in this area and then them boys end up dead, you never know. So yeah I'm not happy with the police system at all man.

This is a difficult account to decipher, and it may not have been included in the analysis if it were not for a very similar incident reported in a similar geographical area, in another study. Densley (2013: 25) describes a situation where 'Member 36' claims he was cuffed by the police, put in a van and taken to a rival neighbourhood. This situation ended in a similar fashion with the young person having to travel home on foot through hostile territory and in this case he claimed he was robbed of his mobile phone. Densley's response was measured but he stopped short of confirming it; claiming that 'it's easy to dismiss the above as the neurotic musings of a disgruntled gangster'. He explained how the Met Police's Territorial Support Group use 'scary' smash and grab style tactics which could lead a casual observer to perhaps think 'the cops are robbing the robbers'. It is impossible to validate either statement, however the presence of such similar accounts across two separate studies carried out by two quite different researchers, is very worrying. The participants in both studies claimed they failed to report the incidents as they felt no one would believe them. In this instance the young people's lives were allegedly put in danger, their property taken from them and they had little or no recourse for justice.

This is illustrative of both the physical and symbolic violence common in road orientated young people's encounters with the police. Whether or not either account is wholly accurate is not the crucial factor, it is more that this encapsulates something about how people on road experience the police. Broadly speaking the police were another hazard in an already dangerous world. They represent a wrecking crew who not only have the power to both physically and materially strip people of their freedom and possessions; but on a symbolic level also, the police had the power to smother a person's narrative and silence their dissent.

It seems that the many reported instances of antagonistic interactions with the police amongst young people on road have contributed to lowering their moral standing in the community (Smith, et al., 1983; Fitzgerald, et al., 2013). The police represent the strong arm of a society laden with inequality and social suffering. Negative interactions with the police creates symbolic cement of exclusion reinforcing already existing axes of exclusion from 'mainstream'

society. Bradford (2014) found that there was support for such an idea and that perceived fair treatment from the police could help individuals to identify more inclusively with groups the police are thought to represent and protect. This of course could operate in the reverse direction with perceived unfairness and illegitimacy in police behaviours perpetuating feelings of exclusion:

> "The experience of negative policing styles could serve to encourage a pre-existing or nascent sense of difference and alienation from the wider social and political community. The police are a highly visible representation of the state, a concrete instantiation of its (often failed) claim to protect and represent all its citizens. The included and excluded may draw important lessons about their status from their experiences of policing." (Bradford, 2014: 3).

The accounts above depict a situation where people have, in different ways, been made to feel less than citizens. They have questioned their access to justice and even the value placed on their lives by the police. These moments in the biographies of young people on road have the potential to influence their trajectories by heightening a sense of exclusion as well as increasing material hardship and physical risk. Bradford (2014) argues that such experiences can have a negative impact in cooperation with the police, which is something felt acutely on road, where police cooperation is broadly received with distain. I would argue that despite the attitude towards police cooperation, the symbolic power of the police helps to entrench the normative acceptance of inequality and injustice in the UK, as my next vignette demonstrates aptly.

Stephen

In the final example below Stephen describes how he feels he is targeted by the police for stop and search interventions, because he is black. Though generally expressing strong reservations about the police, he also expresses a feeling of resignation in the face of what many might call injustice. Stephen is critical of what he perceives as other people's dramatized reactions to police stop and search, and instead expresses a belief that is a part of everyday life, underpinned by racialised stereotypical judgements which circulate broadly:

> Yusef: What's your experience of the police like?

> Stephen: I've got bad experiences with them... I got kind of a bad rapport with them, but I don't really-don't get me wrong it's their job, like I'm not, at the end of the day...

if they… stop me I might be a bit annoyed but at the end of the day it's their job and at the end of the day like I said I'm the stereotype init, so if they see me and I'm driving and they stop me or something I won't be surprised like *'Ahh why you stopping me man? Derderderder'*. It's like cool; what did you want? Let them get on with it, not gonna have nothing, let me go.

Yusef: So you think if you fit the stereotype you have to get used to them stopping you?

Stephen: Yeah, you have-*you know how it goes*, like everyone's gonna be oblivious to…

Yusef: I hear that still

Stephen: At least we're not in America, 'cause what are the Americans doing, 'cause compared to the police in America we're lucky man.

Yusef: I hear that still. So what's the stereotype you think you fit in to?

Stephen: The black guy.

Yusef: So what do they think about the black guy?

Stephen: I dunno, he's up to something probably. Hes up to suttin, you know

Yusef: And where do you think they got that from?

Stephen: Statistics man, and I can't lie its statistics don't, men lie, women lie, numbers don't

Yusef: [laughs]

Stephen: It's true man, crime man it's a whole statistic, predominantly in London black people do the most crime, predominantly, so…

Yusef: You think so?

Stephen: Yeaaah. 'cause when I go to prisons in London that's who I see, that's who you see. If you go to a prison in London the majority of the prison Is going to be black, I guarantee.

Yusef: I hear that.

Stephen: If you go outside London maybe the majority's white but inside London, all the kids are predominantly black.

Stephen's interactions with the police naturalised the criminalization of 'the black guy' in his account. This is resonant of Jock Young's account of the way social exclusion is enacted despite the increased possibilities of late modernity; when experiencing the 'vertigo' of possibility, acts of symbolic othering are crucial in reaffirming status quo; causing "…an acceptance of the world as it is, a mode of realism and an essentialist notion of identity built around one's position of class, gender, ethnicity, place and nation" (Young, 2007: 4). Stephen, though slightly negotiated on an individual level, broadly buys in to stereotypical accounts of black men and criminality. He affirms this via his own experience of the police and criminal justice system. He claims that statistically black people do the most crime, thus justifying this intrusion. However, statistics can lie, or at least lack explanatory power, for example the arrest rate for black men in the UK being two to three times higher than that of white men (Ministry of Justice, 2014) does not explain the relationship between institutional biases within the police and actual numbers of crimes committed. For example, the same set of statistics (ibid) tells us that if you are a black male in the UK you are five times more likely to be stopped and searched, making use of this tactic 'disproportionate' (Bowling & Phillips, 2007). This heightened level of stops increased the likelihood of detection amongst this demographic exponentially, potentially indicating that our justice system could be biased at every stage from detection to sentencing. Indeed, Reiner (1992) claims that "the catastrophic deterioration of relations with the black community" is one of the most damaging issues effecting their legitimacy in the UK.

Stephen's response bears out none of these possible interpretations of the 'numbers'. He offers a kind of pragmatic acceptance of where he stands in relation to status quo, being a young black man living on a council estate. Despite his negotiation of this stigmatization on a personal level, he openly accepts his belonging to a group of criminally inclined people. Thus displaying how the police have the symbolic power to influence people's feelings of exclusion from mainstream society, making them a kind of cultural reference point in themselves; hardening the borders of society via innumerable interactions with individuals.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which the process of othering actively affects those on road and their attempts at salvaging remnants of social value. Many of the everyday

activities they engage in, helping to accumulate capital and avoid the munpain, are read as indicators of otherness by state actors and used to justify a crackdown. Being a black man in a car, or being out in large group of friends have all been described as activities which carry police sanction. It is not to say that the police should not intervene in instances of local violence, but that a more concerted effort must be made in preventing the sets of social circumstances precede them, whilst exhibiting the cultural competence to understand when activities are not criminal at all.

The solution to relative poverty and the accompanying munpain is not to further exclude and strip young people of value, in reality this can have disastrous social and material consequences. Featuring collectives of young people on television and depicting them as organised crime collectives may simply validate them within their local value systems whilst alienating them beyond it. Political moralizing undermines the legitimacy of the law and police, as those on road understand the inherent injustice of a world where MPs can steal public money without sanction whilst they struggle to traverse their local neighbourhoods without police harassment.

It exemplifies ways in which the munpain is entrenched in the everyday lives of young people; making them less bearable. Being humiliated as people go through your pockets in the streets, or jump out of a police van shouting at you are visceral experiences of social exclusion which harangue everyday lives on road. These experiences are important because they tell the story of how the munpain is lived at the micro level, yet still showing ways it is externally enforced. In reality we live in a society which seeks to eat away at the existential security of the less privileged in order to enact control over them as well as the included majority; we are perhaps the most insidious of all moments in the history of social control for this reason.

In the following chapter I will keep in mind all that I have already outlined about the munpain and value systems in order to examine how these bear down on the most intimate area of people's lives – love. In this study I was able to speak to both men and women about road life and one unintended consequence of this was that we ended up speaking extensively about gender. This created the opportunity to both think about women's involvement in road life more generally, as well as the intimate parts of both men's and women's lives. I hope that this will be illustrative of the true weight of the munpain and the experience of social exclusion in inflicting incorporeal injuries.

Chapter 6: Gender and Road Life

This chapter seeks to make sense of the gendered relations inherent in both male and female experiences on road. This is a tentative account which hopes to present some of the features of women's involvement in life on road as well as the dynamics which play out between men and women. These cover issues of street cultural participation, but also; love, relationships and parenthood. Issues of male violence came to the fore in interviews with women, and some of these are addressed, but rather than exploring individual instances in great detail, I choose to examine the relationship and broader gender dynamics which may be leaving women particularly vulnerable; I do this by thinking critically about what it means to be a 'baby mother'. I will begin this discussion by talking about what I term the 'living paradox' of women's involvement in road life. A situation where many sought to diminish female contributions to the street cultural sphere, in spite of the fact that in interview encounters, women proved to be active cultural contributors.

The Living Paradox

Making sense of women's involvement in road life was one of the most challenging aspects of this research. Partly because I'm a man, but largely because the roads are generally caricatured as an exclusively masculine space. Tellingly, it is the criminal association with the subculture which justifies this reading, as most men felt women were not 'active' on road. However, as we have seen throughout this study, the subculture encompasses much more than just criminal activities. Indeed, women have proven to be well informed in all aspects of road life; including criminality. This shows that participants' claims that women are not active participants in road life are unfounded. However, this does not mean that women and men have identical or equal levels of involvement.

The women in this study have shown evidence of being more than just informed observers, demonstrating crucial understanding in areas which were commonly missing from male participant's accounts. This is contrary to the claims of many participants. The 'living paradox' has been demonstrated throughout this work with perspectives from both genders operating side by side, helping to illuminate life on road. This can be contrasted with many of the accounts of participants who were asked about how women fit in to road life, something I discussed with T at some length:

Yusef: I hear that. So where do you think women fit on road?

T: The women love us.

Yusef: [laughs]

T: They come around the gang members all the time. Go on social media, twitter, Instagram, they love us, they love it. Women love-they love it, most women they like men that are-have a bad side, do you know what I mean? So yeah the women-the women love it and that goes to show the police do stop us-stop the young youths in the area, most of the time they're with 10 girls, 9 girls, that are happening willingly to be there.

Y: So women on road what do they do? If they love road guys where do they fit?

T: Women on roads, there's not really a lot of women on road, it just they come to the area, you know? Every woman has their, like um sexual needs and stuff so they come to the area you know. But nah they don't go and commit offences with the lads, nothing like that, they just have a nice time with them, like get drunk and sex that's it.

Y: Mm, I feel you. So are there any girls in road that put in work?

T: Mmmm theres-there's a few… theres a few.

Y: And what are they like?

T: They're just um… they're just girls, with funny personalities. But when I say put in work they don't like, put a hoodie on and go and attack other people, they will just like tell us if someone else is coming to the area or something, little things like that. Yeah they're just normal girls, most of them have kids, work… they're classed as good characters to the community.

In the extract above T pays little regard to women's contributions to road life, instead claiming that they mostly interact with it via romantic relationships with active road men. Despite his dismissive tone, T is touching on something a lot of participants in the research stated, that is that women tended to get involved with road life via male gatekeepers. This could be men who they had romantic relationships with, or it could be brothers, cousins or older men. This is something which strikes a chord with the findings of Jody Miller (2008) in her study of African American women, urban inequality and gendered violence. She found that whilst men

dominated public space in deprived neighbourhoods, women tended to stay indoors, due to fears of becoming the victim crime, particularly sexual violence.

Road culture is ultimately a public subculture, largely played out in public spaces such as the street and on the estate. In the earlier part of T's account, the girls he mentions travel in from outside the neighbourhood. There is no mention of girls who live in the neighbourhood of which, of course, there are many. It seems that one of the reasons participants tended to disqualify girls' involvement in life on road is because they tended to spend less time 'out on the block'. Gunter (2010) mentioned that the girls in his study on road tended to engage in 'bedroom culture' (McRobbie & Garber, 1976) much more than their male participants. This fits in with Miller's (2008) observation about girls and street culture; as she observes that young women preferred not to be out, especially in the dark, unless accompanied by trusted (often male) companions, due to the differential risks to women at night time. There was evidence of similar incidents of street violence and sexual violence towards women in this study, where offences were typically committed by young men either on road, on public transport or at social gatherings.

Women in this study made little connection between these forms of violence and their use of public space, though, in their accounts incidents of male perpetrated violence were recurrent themes. It seems there was a tendency for women to avoid spending a lot of time in (risk laden) male dominated spaces on road, however, they seemed (not always but in general) more adept than men at crossing cultural boundaries such as making friends not involved with road life and also entering in to employment. So although women were less attached to the neighbourhood and less present on the streets they seemed to move into wider public spaces more easily. This was a finding of Sheila McGrellis' analysis of gendering of sectarian spaces in a Northern Irish city. Where while young men become effectively trapped in religiously coded neighbourhoods, young women showed the ability to move freely:

> "Young women are seemingly more adaptable, treating boundaries as fluid, colonising leisure spaces and using these spaces to explore and embrace difference and previously uncharted spaces" (McGrellis, 2005: 527).

The main reason women were seen as not contributing to road life was their lack of engagement in more 'active' and conspicuous forms of criminality. It seems that girls' limited participation in inter neighbourhood conflict and other high profile road 'activity' led to many regarding them as fringe actors. In reality women play a central role in road life, however, the

risks they face in local spaces are dissimilar to those of men, results in them mobilising differently within urban space and the subculture more generally. Here Alicia explains how she understands the roads:

> Alicia: Or road life or anything like that, *I've come across it*, because of the people and the areas that I live in, but I've always tried to keep myself away from that, but I do see that there's a lot of women that erm end up, you know, like losing out."

Alicia's analysis here is quite telling, throughout her interview she described a whole set of experiences where she became involved in life on road, including; a period spent living in hostel accommodation, having a partner who was involved in road life as well as a brief period supplying drugs acquired from a friend's boyfriend. In this way she has '*come across it',* but in doing so she has had to negotiate the risks and benefits involved in each instance. Her closing statement is pertinent (reflecting the discussion on gendered capitals in chapter 3) alluding to a *different* set of risks.

This is also true from a structural perspective as the risks for less privileged women falling in to poverty are higher than those for men. Women have been found to on average earn around 17% less than men as well as being more than four times as likely to be in part-time rather than full time employment (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2005). Added to this, women are far more likely to end up as lone parents taking care of dependent children. 27% (2million) of households with dependent children in the UK are headed by a lone parent (Office for National Statistics, 2014), with 90% (around 1.8million) of all lone parents being women (Gingerbread, 2010). Of course social class has been found to have a hand in determining this too. By 16 girls from less privileged backgrounds (with fathers doing unskilled work) are six times more likely to become lone mothers than those with fathers working professional jobs (Rollingson and Mckay, 2014).

This combination of micro and macro factors means that women experience gender specific risks. They have to mediate not only the threats posed to them in an unpredictable local space, they also have to manage and maintain against the backdrop of neo-liberal patriarchy. This is another feature of the munpain whereby contemporary urban suffering runs along the axes of people's existence, meaning that women's experiences on road will often have distinct features from those of men's. If we look for women in the exact same ways as we might for men, we may think they are absent. But if we assume that gender is a site for the production

of difference, it not only makes sense to search for them in different spaces, but to understand these spaces as existing in relation to those spaces that are coded as masculine.

Lisa Mckenzie (2015) wrote at great lengths about the 'missing men' of the St Anne's estate where her fieldwork was based. She described how, whilst doing research with the women of the estate how men would appear only fleetingly, often leaving upon her arrival. Of course she did not have to go far to find them, they were as much a part of the local community as the women, however due to gendered differences in social security and policing, it did not make sense for them to live full time around the women of the estate. In the study of subcultural life on road the problem seems to be in reverse; the challenge being to account for the involvement of women. A broad conception of road culture allows us to look beyond the rigid confines of the street or youth club and try to understand more intimate aspects of the home and the family. This is something which Angela McRobbie holds as a limitation of most subcultural research; that is, the inability to really penetrate the intimate existences of respondents:

> "If we look for the structured absences in this youth literature, it is the sphere of family and domestic life that is missing. No commentary on the hippies dealt with the countercultural sexual division of labour, let alone the hypocrisies of 'free love', few writers seemed interested in what happened when a Mod went home after a weekend on speed, only what happened on the streets mattered" (McRobbie, 1991: 113).

One of the differences between the responses from men and women in this study was that the latter exposed more about the intimate and mundane aspects of road life. They explored issues of love and the family, which men tended to avoid discussing in detail, as well as showing an active level of participation in the workings of the street. Before I examine these intimate spheres in more detail I shall proceed to briefly consider women's trajectories in to road life, starting by considering the possibility that their involvement is mediated by male gatekeepers.

Male Gatekeepers?

The drivers for involvement in road life could be seen as broadly similar between men and women in many ways. The desire for belonging, status and money were amongst the main reasons cited for both. The complication which was mentioned in the case of many women was the requirement for a male gatekeeper as a point of entry, sometimes bringing them around the 'mandem' as a friend or girlfriend. For the girls in this study, this often happened

around the ages of 13-14 and they would end up spending time with guys a few years older than themselves. In hindsight this raised concerns for many of the women as to what extent the relationships they struck up early on were genuine or whether they were being exploited. Below Charlotte speaks about this in some detail:

> Charlotte: Mm so what I've noticed, from generally, generally it tends to be young girls that get in to the road culture. And it's for the same thing, I tend to thin-it's a sense of acceptance and community…. usually through *a male*... And it's usually that the girl, might like the male, or, the male may come to her with a proposition, or maybe she's in a very tough situation where she's got nowhere to go or whatever... And she asks for an opportunity because she has no other option, that's how women get in to it, from what I see… That's the first place that they feel… accepted, expressed or part of a community, whether it's good or bad or whatever, that's what I think it is.

Charlotte's explanation clearly leans towards the belief that women enter road life via manipulative relationships with men who look to exploit their desires for love and belonging. Despite this, her account of her trajectory on road claims that her involvement was more akin to a man's (see chapter 3 for a critical assessment of this). She explains that she was socialised in to street culture at an early age due to her familial situation (Anderson, 1999). In this account she is acknowledging that women are in a vulnerable situation but is unwilling to diminish her own agency. Essentially Charlotte presents two types of women who get involved in road life; those who are 'born in to it' and those, who are perhaps in a less materially precarious situation, but become attracted to the coolness of road cultural forms. What is implied here is that the latter kind of girl is more likely to enter in to road life via male gatekeepers and also could be more likely be enter into exploitive relationships with them. This is something I shall proceed to problematize in the following section.

Road Life and Trajectories – How Do Girls Get Involved?

The connection between involvement in road life and other contextual factors in young women's lives is one that became apparent throughout the interviews with female participants. In this way there are clearly contextual elements in their trajectories beyond typically depicted initiations by male gatekeepers. These factors involve exposure to local communities immersed in road life, combined with familial and personal factors which created the conditions which led to their participation. This does not necessarily invalidate the significance of men as gatekeepers but does suggest that women have lived around and had

interactions with aspects of road life independently from romantic and familial relationships with men.

These contextual factors were important; drawing both young women experiencing material hardship and those from more middle class homes. Most of them described living in areas and going to schools where road culture was already prevalent in some form. However, the trajectories of young women getting involved in life on road were also varied. Usually some set of traumas ranging from familial breakdown, to (often racist) bullying at school would form 'critical moments' (Thomson et al., 2002) for these women, triggering them to search out new environments and kinship groups for leisure as well as survival. This problematized the notion of male gatekeepers inducting women in to a life they previously had no prior notion of; partly due to the fact that often many of the participants actively sought out the roads, aiding them in identity formation and realising feelings of belonging.

In the example below there was some conflation between black diasporic popular culture and road culture, but it was clear that Terri was beginning to become attracted to the 'coolness' of street cultural forms (hooks, 2004). Terri describes coming from a lower middle class home and entering in to a school environment where middle class dispositions were less valued amongst the neighbourhood peer group. Being from a mixed Chinese and White British background, she struggled to fit in amongst peers mostly of black African, Caribbean and White origins. Feeling bound by her racial and class backgrounds, she began to become fascinated with the coolness of black diasporic cultural forms, which are an important influence on road culture:

> Terri: Yeah, then I joined high school… I remember high school was a shock because I was so shy and sensitive, you know, people were so brazen, I just wasn't used to it, you know, in primary school you're surrounded by people of all ethnicities and cultures but it doesn't faze you, you don't see the difference, you're just surrounded by, you know, other children. And I just think in high school things came to light that I was… *Chinese, or half Chinese even*, but that I was looked at as different, and that was probably because it was me and one other boy in the school. I suppose that only came to light when I joined high school, and then it sort-of dawned on me... I remember being, you know, everyone calling me a boffin-I did really well, first year of high school I was doing really well, I had a little group of friends, and again they were from a sort of middle class background I guess you would say. Ermm, yeah, so anyway, my, I'm trying to set up to that I was quite, erm, *a naïve person*... So my life more *started with*

successes and *was followed by struggles*, really… [one day] we went on a trip to France, and I remember, for some reason you know my friends weren't going… and I had to sit with another girl, aaand she was *so out there, she was an amazing character*, just, you know, really loud [snaps fingers] … And she was just in to a whole other culture, you know, I had been in to what my friends had been in to before, which is like; Nirvana, erm, you know, a bit of, more rock, a bit grungey, you know it's just a different culture, erm and I-it was just more like, erm [lowers voice] *white, I hate saying that*, but you know what I mean, just like white middle class, just sort of just different *Indie vibe* I guess. And then she showed me, now this sounds ridiculous, I feel really silly saying this, but she showed me… I remember her showing me an erm, Destiny's Child album aaand, to me this like a whole other world [snaps fingers] I was like *'whaaat is this? I like this music, this is really good'* and then she also sort-of showed me, she was like, oh I don't always have to go where my mum says, sometimes I just stay out late... And I think that was sort of like the first beginning of my life taking a different route… I really thought that being smart and being reserved, it just wasn't cool...

In this extended extract Terri starts to flesh out the beginnings of her later absorption into street culture. Entering in to a new school environment unsettled her and she began to experience bullying, which would escalate in time. Her 'white middle class' disposition did not prepare her with the appropriate 'road capital' or perhaps more fittingly 'school yard capital' she longed for in order to gain the respect of her peer group. Part of this was the recognition of 'coolness' embodied in black cultural forms such as R 'n' B music (the genre commonly associated with Destiny's Child) as well as the seemingly 'brazen' dispositions of her fellow students.

Terri's race became a critical factor in her ontological precarity (Young, 2007) in that she was part of a small minority group in her neighbourhood. Her mixed heritage and white middle class temperament, combined with a lack of an ethnically similar community, led to her not feeling confident to rely on aspects of Chinese culture in the formation of her identity. Haavind et al (2015), documented similar issues for Chinese girls aged 11-12 in fitting in with multicultural peer groups. Their intersectional analysis noted that as racial demographics shift so does the 'field of available differences' (Thorne, 2005; Haavind et al, 2015) opening new forms of 'difference that can make a difference' (Bateson, 1972; Thorne, 1993; Haavind et al, 2015). This analysis which seems appropriate in this instance, as Terri's Chinese heritage only

'came to light' once she started secondary school. Road culture in this environment was a resource which could help her realise her ambitions for feelings of love, belonging and acceptance, but it was also laden with risk and hardship. This reflects Haarvind et al (2015) findings that "…the emotional experience of rejection helps propel their active use of categories to redeem themselves" (Haarvind, et al: 2015: 308). As Terri sought to mobilise herself around 'cool' identifiers such as becoming an MC and a graffiti artist, she embodied similar notions to the girls in the aforementioned study; that "[a] Chinese girl is definitely not cool in the present, but she might be in a not too far future" (Haarvind, et al: 2015: 313).

Similarly, other women described their local neighbourhood as playing an important role in socialising them in to life on road, however the critical moments which led them there were different. Sandra describes going to a school where white middle class culture predominated, whilst having immediate and extended family members who were active on road. This is an almost reverse image of Terri's experience, though facets of belongingness and naivety permeate Sandra's narrative in equal measure.

Sandra describes how despite living around street culture for large periods of her life she never really became critically aware of it until her teens. Her mother was a single parent, on and off, to six children and Sandra describes how at various points throughout her narrative she struggled to juggle a successful career in London with their care. This eventually resulted in Sandra having to move in with her dad, who had by then started a new family. Despite being a career woman, her mother was described as a disciplinarian and as demonstrated in the extract below, she displays a more critical awareness to the dangers road culture could play in her daughter's life than Sandra's white (lower) middle class father.

Sandra describes how her father's lax parenting style and other commitments led to her getting involved in life on road. This contextual information is vitally important in understanding her involvement beyond a chance encounter with a male gatekeeper on a bus. An array of forces were at work; the absence of adult supervision being a recurring theme for both men and women in their early encounters with life on road. This combined with Sandra's perhaps more innate sense of belonging on road, due to her familial and neighbourhood surroundings, were important factors aside from the influence of the male gatekeeper, as becomes apparent below:

> Yusef: I feel you. So what about the roads, when did you first get involved in the
> roads?

Sandra: I think this is part of when I moved in with my dad really, because I could do what I want and go where I wanted and didn't have to be home by 7 o'clock [laughing]… but [pauses] I met a guy on a bus… and he took me to a park… I was about 13-14 and there was just like hundreds of people, and I think like I met everybody between the age of like 13 and 16 in my entire town that night… yeah so I was speaking to this guy [after their night out together] and then one of my friends was having a house party, a civilised house party not a road house party. And I went and this boys text me asking what I was doing, I said I was at this party, he asked if he could come... So he came with all his mates and next thing I know everything's kicking off, there's police, windows are through, things have got stolen… and it was just all going mental… and then… the police came and they were like asking me about it and I didn't know what to say, I said I didn't know the boy's name [laughs] so they were like 'so you invited him to a party and you didn't know his name?' [laughs] I was like *nope* no idea…

She goes on to describe how from these early interactions with street orientated men, she became romantically involved with another boy on road:

So yeah all of this hood life it was new to me. I can't have been very old so it's not a surprise it was new to me, but so I started dating this friend [a friend of the boy on the bus] … of his, and I think I was about 14 or 15 at the time and he was 19, and I never really thought anything of it… I dunno I guess I was a bit naïve… And *theen…* [I was at his house and] I found a Disney film and I went to go put it in the video player and the video player was just full of, like… white stuff wrapped in cling film, and I was like *what the hell.* So I called my friend… she was like 'It's crack'… I thought that was like stuff what happens on Adulthood (a film depicting life of urban teens in London) not like in real life. So like I just didn't say anything, I just pretended like I hadn't sen it, like I didn't know what to do [laughs a little] … I just that like *no that can't be like… real life…* And then… I remember being asleep in his house and his house got raided [by the police] and I was just like what is going on? And then, like my mum, and my brothers and stuff knew I was with this boy but I don't think my mum really knew like… that he was a bit rough, so she told my brothers to leave me alone like… '*she's just got her first boyfriend just leave her be'.* And then I was on the train with my mum and I thought she was asleep and he phoned me talking about court dates and stuff and I was having a conversation with him, and I thought my mum was asleep not listening. And then,

she wasn't, she was awake and she told my brothers like I've changed my mind do what you want, like she shouldn't be with that boy blah blah bah. So I was asleep at this boy's house … [and] my brothers phoned me and were like we're outside this guy's house you'd better come outside now. And I just remember thinking like *craap* and like getting all my clothes on as quick as I could and I went outside and they were like *'tell him to come out the house!'* but he was on tag so I was like 'if he comes out the house police are gonna come and you'll all get arrested so you shouldn't make him come out the house'. And they took me to my mum's house and they took my phone off me, they cut up my sim card so I couldn't get in touch with him or anything and I was literally like *'what am I gonna do?!'*… and then I messaged his friend to ask if he's sen him and he said he's just been arrested and remanded and I was *'HUH?!'* no he hasn't like' thinking that this boy's just like lying to me, but it turned out he had… and he's spent most of his life since in prison, I think he's been out for about two months in between all his sentences in total… And then from then on I just seemed to get with drug dealing ex-cons.

Yusef: Why do you think that is?

Sandra: Probably because that's the kind of people my mum used to go out with [laughs]. Drug dealing ex-cons… I think, like I said before, at that age I just thought that money solved everything and if someone had money then I would have a happy life… I think that was sort of like my outlook

This extract provides a more explicit depiction of 'active' road life, which many participants tended to imagine when speaking about it. This varies from Terri's account which was more implicit; one which set the scene for things to come. However, there are some clear similarities as well as differences. Sandra is clearly caught up in the spectacle of road life. Her description of discovering the drugs in the VHS player as being like something which happens only in films highlights some of the more theatrical aspects of narrative creation on road. Sandra included many instances of the spectacular. Her early, possibly slightly inebriated, interactions with the police. The excitement of a public youth culture which seemed to be clandestinely going on, whilst also including 'everyone between ages of 13 and 16' in town. The broken windows and the beef. All of these factors drew her in. Sandra belongs in a way Terri struggled to. She describes how she is able to form friendships, based on a form of mutual recognition, with other girls involved in the subculture. However, the munpain haunts her too.

The ostensible excitement and fast money of road life contrasted with the more mundane aspects of Sandra's life. She described how during some periods of her childhood her mother struggled for money, often with the children receiving either her care or financial support, but rarely both in great measure. Often lacking parental supervision and feeling financial pressure Sandra was desperate to have money and enjoy her life:

> Sandra: …well at first my mum had a house in Leicester and I lived there with my mum and then she got a job in London and use to just like leave us (laughing) and just like go to London for a week, but obviously I was only like 12-13 so in the end I ended up just moving in with my dad and my mum just like moved to London… full time… She said errrm, if I want money then that what's gotta run. I have to pick a struggle either I get her money or her time… [laughs quietly]

> Yusef: What and you chose her money?

> Sandra I didn't really get a choice… but if I had I probably would have chosen the money…because, when you grow up broke it's not like, I never had a super fun time being broke. I thought it was dreadful… so… I like to have what I want and my mum had 5 kids like… being broke was just like, I hated it. I couldn't, we couldn't go anywhere, couldn't go on days out. Think how much it costs to take 5 kids to the cinema, like we could never do anything. So… life just seemed, better with money, but that's because as a child you don't see everything else that goes on… you just see arrr I didn't get a new Playstation. You don't see that oh now that I've got my new Playstation my mums got a drug dealer boyfriend that beats her up every evening like… you don't really, you're oblivious.

In a sense this account embodies aspects of the aspirational qualities of, what Jock Young (2007) described as, the subject of late modernity. Contrasted with the desires for 'brute comfort' of post war society, late modern 'striving subjects' seek self-fulfilment, experiences and narrative construction. Being 'broke' causes a serious derailment in the fulfilment of these desires; of self-expression tied in to consumption. As we have seen elsewhere, single parent households are often squeezed. The 'double burden' (Hervey & Shaw, 1998) of family and work life can produce a situation where neither can prosper. For Sandra not only did the lack of material support fall below par, but her situation fostered an unacceptable lifestyle of doldrums poverty. It is difficult to argue that there was not some element of agency in her involvement with road life as a response to this. Faced with the 'insubstantial building blocks'

of late modernity (Young, 2007), she forged a narrative; an identity. She made choices in relation to the immediate resources available to her in the community as she battled with the anonymity of contemporary urban hardship.

It seems some women have more choice in their interactions with road culture than others, but for all of them it oscillates between being a resource and a burden. Whether born on the roads like Charlotte, or 'choosing' to integrate in to the subculture like Terri or Sandra, there are times where it serves to meet the needs of these young women, helping them to belong and forge (sometimes lasting and other times temporary) identities. Sometimes it enables them to meet their base needs for material survival or helps them to realise a lifestyle unobtainable to many. This degree of agency is highlighted in Sandra's description of her closest sister, who left road life behind, married a white middle class man and became a solicitor. Despite sharing many of the same experiences, upbringing and hardships; they chose different paths. Though of course there are social variables in each of their lives which go unaccounted for in the passage below, such as the timing in their trajectories of the death of their mother and Sandra's unexpected pregnancy a short time later. In spite of this Sandra does something which other participants were wary of; she tells us, that despite its dangers and draw backs, she loves road life:

> Sandra: yeah, she, was around different people to me and she… yeah made different choices. But at the same time me and Gemma, we were around basically exactly the same people at exactly the same time, in exactly the same place and she turned out completely different so… She went to the same school was me, she was 2 years above me… we had basically all the same friends in school and out of school… but, one day her friend got like stabbed really bad and he nearly died and she was just like I hate this town and moved… and never came back… [long pause] but I was just like *I love it!!* [laughs loudly] … I stuck around.

This contrasts with Charlotte's far less celebratory account. She is cynical about women who would want to get involved with street culture due to the high levels of social suffering and potential for destruction. This could perhaps be explained by Charlotte experiencing more extreme forms of deprivation and exclusion. Charlotte fears living her entire life on the margins and wishes to cast off any association with a group she perceives as holding low social status, whereas Sandra feels somewhat differently. She is attracted to the fun and aesthetic elements of road life, whilst also enjoying more freedom to make lifestyle choices. This section has helped to demonstrate that, although women's involvement in road life can be considered

relational to men and masculine dominated spaces, their trajectories and contextual factors provide a more rounded understanding. I will now look to build on this examination of the early involvement of women on road, by exploring in detail the dynamics of intimate relationships between men and women involved in this street cultural formation.

Love and Relationships

Love and relationships played an important part in female participants' narratives – perhaps predictably less so in men's. In a post-industrial western world traditional male lower/working class occupations have been eroded and been replaced by low-paid and low status services sector jobs. Added to this, it has become increasingly difficult for a single breadwinner in a low status job to be able to financially support a family or partner not in work (although recent welfare reforms have set about attempting to dissuade secondary bread winners from staying in or entering the workforce e.g. see; Macleavy, 2011). This has to some extent eroded the solidified patriarchal household structures which once existed; purportedly diminishing the status and influence of lower class men in society.

For the male participants, when they spoke of relationships at all, they cited the need to impress women with ostentatious lifestyles and designer products. This is an area I touched on in chapter 3 (Road Capitals) and has been a recurrent theme throughout the research. This is commonly referred to as 'stuntin'; a symbolic display which communicates certain lifestyles and material qualities of life to others. Conspicuous consumption forms a central part of it, but that is not its full extent. Just having nice things is not enough, it is the quintessence of excitement and status. Jock Young (2007), following in the same vein as Jack Katz (1988), describes how crime and subcultural arrangements are not merely a rational economic response to exclusion, but are also expressive. In a time where status, self-fulfilment and lifestyle are valued beyond the limits of mere materialism, growing value is placed on luminary lifestyles; meaning many (but definitely not all) on road aspire to living extra-ordinary lives:

> "Just go down to the right club in Dalston, East London, or Brixton in the South, look at the gold, the jewellery, watch how the action mixes with the ragga and the jungle, look at the swagger… the guns are not just instruments they are sexy, his is not a job, its excitement, this is not an alternative to work, it is a sensual riposte to labour." (Young, 2007: 5).

Though Young's observations about the clubbing experience in Brixton are probably outdated, given the extent to which gentrification has changed the face of nightlife in the area. He still

makes an important point; the embodied masculinities, the money and the lifestyles of young successful roadmen are attractive. More traditional patriarchal family structures are still valued, but they are also mundane and boring to some extent. As we have seen elsewhere, road life is a source of excitement, and this plays an important factor in love and attraction too. Below Stephen elaborates on this, claiming that a large part of the posture and image young men on road aspire to is geared in to attracting women:

Yusef: Why do you think image is so important?

Stephen: I dunno, it's the way, its girls man, its girls that drive it man.

Yusef: Do you think a lot of road man are just doing it for the girls?

Stephen: **Of course!!** *I know man ain't dressing up for men, that's-trust me*

Yusef: [Laughs]

Stephen: I know its girls man, they're like yeah girls like this. And I've seen girls say all that talk, I like my boys that wear blah blah blah, I like my guys that wear blah blah blah.

What Stephen's account demonstrates is how road capitals are intimately tied in to love and desire. Value on road is not just about status for status' sake, but its vitally important in the struggle to find adoration and belonging. Being valued means that you are desirable, you can provide excitement and a lifestyle which can be flaunted via social media. This compares favourably with the prospects of entering into low level service sector or manual employment, which comes with few of the trappings of excitement or monetary rewards. Sandra elaborates on this further below:

Sandra: …and then I moved to Hertfordshire; got a job, went and did my A-levels, had a boyfriend who had a job but he used to *bore* me. And I spoke to my brother about it I was like he *bores me* and me and my brother was like *he's not road enough for ya*. So me and him split up and I got pregnant… by… [long pause] a guy, that isn't even road that was just tryin'a be, so it came with all of the implications of having a drug dealer boyfriend and none of the benefits [laughs a little]

Yusef: What would have been the benefits?

Sandra: Money… holidays, clothes, cars…

These transient relationships Sandra describes account for the opposite side of the same coin which was demonstrated in Stephen's analysis. She describes the importance of exhilaration in a relationship, regarding it as almost intrinsic to road life. Not being 'road enough' constitutes, in Sandra's account, lacking in excitement; being a *'bore'*. This is relational but not completely unified with the material benefits she later describes, such as holidays, cars and clothes. Those are material benefits to be expected, but they are not necessarily entirely unobtainable for a working family, they are merely the necessary material trappings to the excitement of road life. Sandra's account embodies Young's (2007) declaration that 'brute' material comfort is not enough on its own, but has to be accompanied by self-fulfilment and excitement.

Both participants also hint at some of the limitations, or perhaps more aptly, real life consequences of such approaches, which I shall return to examine more closely later. However, it is important to demonstrate that such practices are not limited to subcultural communities, but have been found more widely. Writers have noted in wider society the tendency for men to engage in acts of conspicuous consumption in order to aid in the seduction of women (Sundie, et al, 2011; Miller, 2008; 2010 Griskevicius et al., 2007; Saad, 2007; Sundie, 2003).

Sundie et al (2011) explore the implications of such processes; arguing that humans engage in acts of sexual signalling in order to attract partners. They that men tend to become motivated to conspicuously consume in order to attract women, whom mostly regarded as short-term prospects. They claim that women read such signals in a similar way, citing evidence that conspicuous consumption 'may be most prominent among men pursuing a sexual strategy that involves low parental investment' (Sundie et al, 2011: 14). This argument did not emerge from an ethnography or anthropological study of some distained and stigmatised community, but from a sample of university students, which authors sought to make generalizable. Such an analysis fits with the framework of the highly precarious state of Young's Vertigo of late modernity (2007) and the levels of precarity and hardship found amongst those on road, which eroded conceptions of tomorrow. It is the structural conditions of *laissez-faire,* whereby the short term interests of the market place dominate human existence which has cultivated a situation of short termism, especially amongst the least well off. This is commonly reflected in popular culture; such as the popularity of the expression YOLO (you only live once) which was used in the hook of Drake's *The Motto* (Drake VEVO, 2012); a phrase seems to demonstrate how the indeterminate nature of anything, bar the certainty of uncertainty, has seeped in to

popular consciousness. This is a situation which leads Bauman to describe the 'love experience' as something which is almost a late modern spectre of love:

> "…in a consumer culture like ours, which favours products ready for instant use, quick fixes, instantaneous satisfaction, results calling for no protracted effort, fool-proof recipes, all-risk insurance and money back guarantees. The promise to learn the art of loving is a (false and deceitful, yet keenly wished to be true) promise to make 'love experience' in the likeness of other commodities, that allure and seduce by brandishing all such features which take the waiting out of wanting, sweat out of effort and effort out of results." (Bauman, 2003: 7)

I would argue that the munpain creates a situation where, as the result of a variety of 'deficits', vast swathes of the population suffer from stigmatization and exclusion which limits their ability to participate fully in consumer society. As we have seen this also makes them vulnerable to its dangers. As they attempt to performatively manage their social suffering they must create in order to attach value to themselves, whilst working to distance themselves from stigma. In relation to love this has led to a situation whereby a kind of dance takes place; men and women engage in and respond to symbolic performances designed to personify desire and coolness. The resulting relationships having both interior and exterior qualities, with desirable men and women seeking those who can offer a lifestyle of self-fulfilment and short term gratification.

Men hunt down the most attractive women, who have had the least interactions with other men, whereas women search for those who can embody the expressive thrills of outlaw masculinity whilst also materially providing. In a way it's a search for trophy partners, who can help aid in the immediate fulfilment of the self. It is a commodified 'love experience', which in its exhilaration helps one to forget about tomorrow, the tomorrow which social suffering already contributed largely to annihilating. This dance helps young people on road participate in theatrical relationships, sometimes (definitely not in the majority of cases) engaging in unsustainable lifestyles. Those reserved, not for working men and women, but for superstars and celebrities, in these relationships they wear and bask in each other's status:

> "In the dazzling shine of the chosen [partner], my own incandescence finds its glowing refection. It adds to my glory, it confirms my glory and it endorses it, it carries the news and the proofs of my glory wherever it goes" (Bauman, 2003: 18).

The 'love experiences' provided in the examples above are fleeting, more to do with desire and infatuation, often leaving difficult realities in their wake. As we have seen in chapters 3 and 5 on road capitals and neighbourhood nationalism, being on road is often fraught with risk. Lifestyles which offer the most reward are often the riskiest, and if they do implode the return to the nothingness of the munpain is felt all the more acutely. Stephen opened up on these risks in relation to relationships from a male perspective, explaining how the performance can come apart at the seams, revealing a gritty backdrop of neoliberal urban living:

> Stephen: No but that's the-the whole point of it it's when you're on the road it's like, there's beneficial… of course the girls are gonna like road men because if they're seeing a man with ferragamo belt and ferragamo shoes and he's driving like, a 63 plate Kompressor, they're gonna be like *'wow, look at what he's doing, imagine what he can do for me'* so they're thinking about stability and gains, it's only until it starts-starts-shit starts getting real, like his door starts getting boomed, he's on an operation, they're finding her and arresting you, they're saying you're a part of it that's when they're like hold on I don't want, you feel me so [slaps palm on fist]…

His experience tells him that when such lifestyles are funded by criminal activity, they cannot last forever. Like much of life in late modernity, living in the moment also means being prepared to expect the unexpected. As we saw earlier in Sandra's account, even some limited interactions with the police and criminal justice system could be a part of the thrill, however, they also have some harsh realities. Below Terri describes how her life plans got side-tracked by the incarceration of her then partner and father of one of her children:

> Terri: He's in jail right now, he's doing 8-he's finishing off an erm-he's been in there for 6… for gun crime-like I almost feel like I can't escape the roads because all my family and friends are connected to it I'll never be able to get away from that. And now, I had planned to have a better life with Gemal, I'd planned to I'd started studying to be a teacher, I had wanted to have a good life, but then we ended up arguing, he put his hands on me, we split up and then man goes… to bloody [prison].

Terri and Stephen are both heading to similar conclusions in regards to the unpredictability of love and relationships on road. Whether it's police intervention, familial breakdown, beef or any of an array of potential hazards; when living life on the margins episodes of destabilization are felt acutely. As described earlier, there is limited security in all areas of life and limited potential for men from poorer backgrounds to establish traditional patriarchal familial

structures, which can provide the necessary trimmings of late modern life. As a result of these limitations people (both men and women) often somewhat naively enter in to the game, a kind of charade, a 'love experience' full of thrills and desire.

Things Fall Apart – Domestic Violence, Baby Mothers and Banality

Even when things are going okay, the façade can begin to wear thin and the realities of relationships on road can begin to set in. As discussed in Chapter 3 (Road Capitals), Alicia enjoyed the high life at various times in her trajectory. Her partner was a successful drug dealer, who seemed to avoid major dramas which might affect his ability to bring in an income, however, she still began to feel reality bite. As she became a mother and also got more involved with organised religion, her needs changed. The lifestyle of her partner made him an ephemeral presence, with the demands of the roads taking up a lot of his time and attention. Whilst she still felt he was a good provider, the excitement began to abate and she described her situation thus:

> Yusef: So it's like, what's interesting with you telling me this it's like the road money kinda give stability in one way but takes it away?
>
> Alicia: Yeah and more time because they have to be on the road so much, in order to be successful and that takes time away from the family and that, that is a very big issues of ours, I mean he's *never around*, I'm the main errm carer for my daughter and it has been difficult because I've never been a mum and you know I have-I dunno what to do with a child sometimes.
>
> Yusef: Mmm
>
> Alicia: You know and he doesn't understand, he sees it as a woman's role to look after the kids while he goes out and makes money but it is, you know, it is-we are losing a lot, you know missing out on a lot and that's the real
>
> Yusef: I suppose because there's no annual leave, there's no
>
> Alicia: Exactly, there's no holiday, there's no sick pay, they have to [inaudible], so yeah. That's is what-erm that is why we've had issues and our relationship is kind of, I wouldn't say fall-like basically it's falling apart basically because of all-because of the roads as well, so it's a good thing and a bad thing.

'Falling apart' sums up Alicia's description. The excitement of her earlier life where she and her partner enjoyed expensive holidays, cars and attended parties begins to unravel as circumstances change. She fears that due to the nature of the activity her partner engages in, that they may end up back in a difficult situation financially, especially as she has been out of the workforce for some time caring for her daughter. Added to this, as a first time mother she feels inadequately equipped to deal with parenthood alone. One of the core issues she seems to be raising is the tension between traditional family values and late modern living.

On the one hand the opportunities for lifestyle realisation the roads can offer could seem to erode traditional family structures, yet on the other it seems to cement traditional gender roles and inequalities. Despite Alicia having the most constant level of contact with her daughter's dad out of all of the women with children in the study, in a lot of ways her account floated somewhere between that of a single parent and someone in a committed relationship. On road the term 'baby mother' or 'babymum' is often used to describe such a situation, whereby a woman is a mother of a man's child yet the level of commitment to both parenting and the relationship seems to rely heavily on the woman. Though this is not always the case, this was the typical situation depicted by participants.

The dynamic of father and baby mother relationships seem to vary dramatically, yet the terminology often carries negative connotations. This has been highlighted in the United States, where 'babymama' stereotypes aimed at African American single mothers (Chaney & Brown, 2016; Tyree, 2009; Gilkes, 1981) are often regarded as derogatory. Academics are particularly critical of the ways in which American Hip Hop perpetuated these negative stereotypes using babymama as a pejorative term. This is a terminology which has definite trans-Atlantic origins, and its translated use in a British context is still relatively unexplored. The terminology baby father, which is the gendered inverse to baby mother, was used in McKenzie's (2015) study, yet the term received little scrutiny. Despite its apparent elusiveness to researchers, this term has translated over as part of a wider set of moral panics surrounding working class mothers, of a variety racial groups, which seeks to position them in a derogatory light (see; Tyler, 2013; Skeggs, 1997; 2004; McKenzie, 2013; 2015). There were misogynistic undertones to many of men's accounts when discussing women on road, yet there did also seem to be some variation in the use of the term baby mother, with its meaning being fluid at times, something I shall go on to explore.

A woman can be in a committed relationship with her partner and still be referred to as their baby mother or she can be almost totally estranged from them. Sometimes the connotation is

that she is of lower regard in the man's opinion than a girlfriend would be; other times someone's baby mother is regarded as an important and valued person, sometimes both. Below I discuss with Stephen the broad usage of the term:

Yusef: I dunno, like what's a baby mother, how does that fit, is that something that's common?

Stephen: Yeah baby mothers are mad common man, these girls, I don't know what goes through their head, they just get sold a dream and they have the youth and then it's like what next? Baby mothers, I dunno man, some man use certain man's baby mothers anyways, I dunno man about the baby mother stuff because I don't have a youth.

Yusef: But you think a lot of other people do?

Stephen: I dunno man there's some good baby mothers though man, there's good women out there who take care of their kids, I see a lot of them.

Yusef: Mmm

Stephen: So I dunno man, in terms of, I dunno man

Yusef: What is a baby mother?

Stephen: What is a baby mother?

Yusef: Yeah

Stephen: Like the mother of, someone you have a child-the mother of your child basically, if you're a man.

Yusef: I hear that but why is that different to like a girlfriend?

Stephen: I don't know, certain man just might not be with them and they might say my baby mother, or certain man might be with their baby mother and still call them baby mother. It's that label init 'baby mother'.

Yusef: I hear that, so you think it's kinda broad, it's not like a category

Stephen: Yeah it's a broad, it's a broad thing, especially in this kind of urban community baby mother is a broad kinda, it's a label.

Yusef: And how do you think man on road treat their baby mothers?

Stephen: Some of them treat them good, and some of them do care about their baby mother. I've heard kinda people say 'rah I heard you talking' like some altercation might happen like 'don't disrespect her man 'cause that's my babymother'. But some guys might be just like yeah she's my baby mother but she's an idiot, so, you know what I mean?

I want to argue that this broad use of the somewhat derogatory terminology is part of what Majors and Bilson (1993) described as the 'cool pose'. This was a performative coping mechanism some African American males were observed to be engaging in, in order to navigate their social world:

"The purpose of posing and posturing – being cool- is to enhance social competence, pride, dignity, self-esteem and respect. Cool enhances masculinity." (Majors and Mancini, 1993: 105)

Jody Miller (2008) utilised the idea of the cool pose; combining it with the idea of the 'playa', which many of the participants in her study regarded as a 'prominent model' of male behaviour. The 'playa' is socially rewarded for being heteronormatively sexually promiscuous and via male peer groups is encouraged to engage in 'sexual conquests without emotional attachment' (ibid: 154). She described how young men would embody aspects of the cool pose, such as 'detachment, control of emotions, aloofness and toughness' (ibid) in order to enhance their social standing. This often led to young men treating women they were romantically involved with in a derogatory manner in front of peers, withdrawing affection and projecting a cool and detached persona.

Miller argues this is one of the ways in which hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1997) manifests itself in street cultural communities. This in itself is problematic as often those who embody the type of masculinities valued on road, themselves suffer subjugation in relation to hegemonic forms of masculinity valued in the corporate world. However, valued forms of masculinity on road, such as those embodied in the 'cool pose' help to entrench unequal gender relations on the streets and in the homes of urban communities in the UK. This is evidenced by the use of the term baby mother as a kind of distancing tool, enabling men to create a level of ambiguity regarding their emotional investment and level of responsibility towards their partners and children.

Perhaps evinced in the limited responses of men in the study when it came to issues of love and relationships, expressions of tenderness and commitment are not a highly valued part of the repertoires of men on road. Rather, such expressions could be regarded as signs of weakness and vulnerability. This is definitely not true in all cases, but in many cases maintaining aloof dispositions in relation to romance was an effective coping mechanism for men under pressure to present impenetrable facades of masculinity and coolness. Some of the men in the study appeared to value something resembling the 'playa' or 'gyalist' (as it is known in the UK) mentality, often speaking about women as accessories to the lifestyle; emphasising that not only is the lifestyle somehow incompatible to traditional relationship ideals, but also the pulls of attraction and desire on road can be so strong that conventional inhibitions are often cast aside. Interestingly T offers an account which demonstrates an inverted perspective to Alicia's concerns regarding the immoral nature of active road life:

Yusef: okay, but they're not involved in serious relationships on road?

T: Um yeah, some some, some are yeah. Like for an example Jermaine, but he's old now and he's-and I couldn't class him as on road, but when he was nah he wasn't in a relationship. Most people on road, on road actively aren't in a relationship.

Yusef: Why's that?

T: 'Cause it's like you know it's not gonna last init, if you're like you're just active on the road, you know it's not gonna last at all.

Yusef: Why's that?

T: 'Cause there's just too many girls, on the road and stuff, and too many distractions for a relationship yeah.

Yusef: What kind of distractions?

T: On-if you're like on road actively and you're an active drug dealer, what type of girl is gonna want to support you anyway and be with you, you know what I mean?

Yusef: So you think active road guys get the least girls yeah?

T: Yeah I think the active ones, they get the least wives, but get the most, ah how can I put it, loose women.

T's response itself is indicative of the cool pose. His differentiation between 'wives' and 'loose women' is an attempt to systemise women based on notions of respectability (Skeggs, 1997) relating to perceived levels of promiscuity (Miller, 2008). His account offers a damning verdict on women who wish to involve themselves with men who sell drugs. The contradiction here being that men are actively involved in morally questionable practices which are known to reap, at least temporary, lifestyle and status rewards which are valuable in the local dating scene, yet much of the iniquity is projected on to the women who they seek to attract.

Like Miller (2008), I believe that much of masculine posture on road is geared towards (not consciously) producing and maintaining gender inequalities. In a setting where traditional patriarchal structures have been eroded, adaptive forms of symbolic struggle come in to play. Much of the ambiguity surrounding the term baby mother could be regarded as forming a part of this, as men attempt to impose control over women. It levies a set of unequal norms around parenthood, emphasising a parenting structure heavily dependent on the efforts of the mother. Stark (2013) notes that a common strategy amongst teenage boys is to meddle with their partner's birth control; resulting in girls dropping out of school as a result of pregnancy. The impact of unexpected pregnancy extends far beyond school however, and indications from this study show that relationships which categorise women as baby mothers create a vulnerability towards coercive control and domestic violence. It is vitally important to stress that this is not always the case, as Stephen told us earlier a lot of men and women engaged in relationships categorised in this way, treat each other and their children perfectly well. This having been said there were strong testimonies from female informants which highlighted the vulnerabilities certain relationship dynamics on road can foster.

Aside from Alicia, all of the women in the study who had children were single parents. For a variety of reasons, the dynamics in baby mother relationships tended to be ambiguous, often with women operating as lone parents with sporadic or little contact with their child's father. There was a variety of reasons for separation; most were together before and sometimes for a while after the birth of their child or children, though others were separated beforehand. Infidelity and instances of abuse were commonly reported, though not always cited as the reasons for these separations. The evidence from interviews in this study suggests that separation left women in a perilous situation whereby they were solely responsible for all aspects of child raising, generally dependent on benefits. Below Leona talks about her separation from the father of her child:

Yusef: So what became of that relationship?

Leona: Err, a very messy ending, erm the-the relationship went on a lot longer than the love and er, it became, erm, what did it become, I don't know. By this stage we'd had our daughter, I was living in a hostel… a lot of violence went on at that stage… and…I remember a point I remember a point… he grabbed me by my hair and dragged me to the shower and *stamped on my face, literally just stamped it against the tiles*, and then-*that bit was shocking*, obviously that was shocking to me, but he turned on the shower-like after he turned on the shower, obviously I was fully dressed, I had my clothes on and-and I sat in the shower and I let the shower run and I remember just thinking like *what the fuck, like this is not what I want for my life, this is not*-but he repeatedly kicked off my doors and anything that I put up, any way I tried to make this little **dump** home, I put up curtains that he, you know, dragged down. Anything I tried to do, something, or to give something to my child, to feel home or whatever, he tore it down… like and I tried to get him out for the *longest time, the longest time*, and then that-that was the final moment when I sat in that shower, I literally just got up *soaking wet* and where I used to live there was a lot of police around that area and I was like nah I'm-I walked out there just drenched and I just said to this woman you have to get this man out of my house and she-she, took me up the road to police officer who was standing there, and I-I was looking in-*in my heart-in my heart I didn't want to-want anything bad to happen to him, but it was impacting me so badly I-my mind was gone, my mind was absolutely gone. So when, I stood there and I just looked at this police officer, I was like I-I wasn't gonna say anything, like I wasn't prepared to say anything and then I looked around and he was leaving around and he was leave out the back of-like there was a fire exit, and he had my daughter a-and he had a bag and from then I was just like, I told the woman, and it was crazy.* And then when he left, I *could breathe, I could actually breathe*…

What became apparent from talking to women is that bearing a man's child created a kind of link between them and their partner or former partner which left the channels open for ongoing difficulties. Both men and women on road have spoken about the opposite sex 'trapping them' by intentionally coercing them into having an unwanted child. This is regarded as a way to ensure an extended relationship between both parties even if things are not going well. Though both men and women are said to engage in such undertakings, given the often unequal power relations between genders, in the baby mother dynamic this can have disastrous consequences for women in particular. Charlotte describes being caught up in such

a situation below, whereby an abusive relationship was extended by an unexpected
pregnancy:

> Charlotte: So he affected my confidence badly, and he's the only person that I had told
> about my upbringing, and every day he used it against me *'you're nothing, your*
> *crackhead parents, you're a slag,* look at this, look at that*, you're not worth nothing*
> *see no one ever loves you'*… And then erm, yeah I had enough so I left him and then
> after I left him, I found out I was pregnant literally like 4 days later. And I was like do I
> tell him or don't I tell him, because I don't wanna have a baby, but I was like *moral me*
> *'it's wrong if I don't tell him, I need to at least tell him'* [puts on silly voice]. So I told
> him and it was the worst mistake I ever did… Because I wasn't going to keep the baby,
> he locked me in the house for days like, *'that aint happening'*, then he had the cheek
> to turn around and tell me that 'why do you think I keep-why do you think I was asking
> you has your period come yet', ***he was trying to, get me pregnant!*** I was like *'you're*
> *sick!* Ermm so then through all that he had his sister and his mum phone me *'ah you*
> *can't do that; you'll be a murderer! If you don't want the baby, have the baby and we'll*
> *take it'*… yeah so he was like, and that's what happened, once I got to like 4 months,
> and obviously it couldn't go any further, yeah like even had 4 months I tried to book,
> an appointment and I started the process, and ermm yeah that didn't go down very
> well. Yeah and theeen, 'cause I knew, I could see my future, I was like this-*I don't want*
> *my child growing up in this, I don't wanna be attached to you, I don't want to be with*
> *you, I don't even love you, **you're mad I don't like you'***.

Though already an abusive relationship the arrival of their son extended this dynamic
indefinitely even after the pair separated. Having a man's child provides a kind of anchor which
allows dependence and domination to extend indeterminately, creating a specific kind of
coercive relationship. Coercive control is defined thus:

> "I define coercive control as a strategic course of self-interested behaviour designed to
> secure and expand gender-based privilege by establishing a regime of domination in
> personal life… the oppression involved is 'ongoing'… resulting… cumulative [harms]… it
> is multi-faceted, and… rational, instrumental behaviour… 'domination' is a political
> relationship… (Stark, 2013: 21)

A woman's earning power can be hampered due to child care responsibilities, especially if she
becomes a single mum with limited social capital. This can lead to a kind of poverty trap

whereby they find it difficult to re-enter the workforce due to already existing disadvantages compiled with parental responsibilities. Those that do work commonly have to earn enough to care for a family on a single income, which can be extremely difficult in the late modern period (Young, 2007). This can leave these young women vulnerable to financial exploitation and abuse, with the baby father often withholding child support as well as care for their child.

I would argue that this in itself is a form of coercive control; as due to limits on women's financial situation when independently raising children, men can use unregulated child support payments as leverage. It has been reported (Stark, 2013) that men will refuse to pay for essential items for children, leaving women desperately short of necessities as a form of punishment and emotional abuse. One instance of this again came from Charlotte's story. After her son was born prematurely, he suffered from an array of life threatening conditions. In the midst of this his father still sought to exert control and inflict harm on Charlotte by refusing to provide support in either the baby's day to day care or in essential items necessary to help with it:

> Charlotte: … like once-my son's first three years, I spent three years in hospital. There wasn't a month where I wasn't in hospital for a minimum a week. And I'm saying-I'm going from 'oh I think [he's getting better]-to like *he's in intensive care*… that's serious stuff, like all the time, not a little bit, so I just used to live in the hospitals. Like he used to have really bad reflux, like he used to vomit all the time, and one day when I was at the hospital and when I came back aaand the washing machine had flooded the whole house, and I didn't have anything so I asked his dad, because I never asked him [trails off]. I was just like would you be able to like [hiccups], for 20 minutes so I can take them to the launderette, he has reflux he vomits on *eeevvveerrryytthiiing*, like I'm sayin' I'd go through loads a day… And he was just like *'no'*. I had no washing machine for this baby and pretty much nothing clean, so I done all the hand washing. And I remember sitting in the hospital for three days with sick on me down my clothes, 'cause I had no one to come and watch him, while I went home… err so yeah it was just, it was depressing…

Though this kind of coercion perhaps does not seek to control a woman physically, it is a deliberate act designed to harm mother and baby. Another aspect where women were often disadvantaged by the baby mother dynamic related to ideas around respectability and promiscuity. Often once a woman has a man's child she becomes connected to him via reputation and often men exert expectation over a former partner's conduct, limiting their

ability to engage in further relationships. If we return to examine in more detail part of Stephen's earlier account:

> Stephen: …Baby mothers, I dunno man, some man use certain man's baby mothers anyways… I've heard kinda people say 'rah I heard you talking' like some altercation might happen like 'don't disrespect her man 'cause that's my babymother'.

What Stephen is hinting at is that once a woman bears a child for a man she can become a vulnerability and a threat to his 'cool pose' on the roads. Having a 'baby mother' who behaves in a promiscuous or disrespectful manner can harm a man's standing as well as causing jealousy and feelings of rejection. It is not unheard of for hostilities to arise or be perpetuated relating to women attempting to enter in to new relationships. There is also a possibility for other men to increase their social status by being seen to take advantage of a well-known man's baby mother. This creates a situation whereby even once separated, a man might seek to control his former partner's behaviour and limit her options in terms of moving on. This can lead to verbal assaults and threats as well as physical violence.

Sandra was one of the women who showed the most resistance and agency in relation to intimate partner violence; this was perhaps due to her having brothers and cousins who she felt acted to protect her, though even she felt like her choices were limited by the threat of violence from former partners. In her case her baby father had physically assaulted her whilst she was pregnant, but she felt he was not able to exert a great deal of control over her once she was separated from him. It was another former partner from before she had her daughter who concerned her. After he made threats against her and her family Sandra was afraid. Below she describes how she feels like she is limited to selecting partners who have status and the potential to do violence in order to deter former partners and other men from seeking to threaten or coerce her:

> Sandra: Because when I'm at home… Well, firstly most of the guys I know are trappers anyway, but when I'm at home I have lots of ex boyfriends and stuff that have hard feelings towards me. So I like to be with somebody that can look after me… And Tim from Hertfordshire who works in an office ain't gonna be able to look after me
>
> Yusef: So for whose safety is that, for your safety of theirs (Tim's)?
>
> Sandra: For mine, and my brothers, and my daughters. Because if I don't have a boyfriend to look after me, who's looking after me? My brothers, so then who's going

to end up in prison when they kill somebody? *My brothers*… When I was younger, like I think I was about 17, I was with my baby father. And my ex-boyfriend, phoned me… and said 'I'm bringing arms [beef] to your dad's house, and your man's house, right now'. And it was like 2 in the morning and I didn't know what to do, my brothers weren't answering the phone, I phoned my cousin, and he came… I dunno, that just scares me because… I know this guy and I know he has guns. And I know he's crazy and I know he hasn't got a lot to lose… He owes lots of people money, he ain't got many friends, dads a crackhead. Like I was probably the best thing that ever happened to him, so, he aint got a lot to lose, so… it is scary, like it is a real like… worry. Like sometimes I hear some of these guys go to prison that don't like me and I actually feel so happy like I feel safer. I know it sounds crazy like, maybe I'm just being over the top but… whatever… When I moved to Herts there was this guy and he was my friend but then I dunno he wanted to have sex with me and I didn't wanna have sex with him and he just hated me. And when everyone used to ask him why do you hate Sandra so much he used to say she told me to suck my mum, and that boy is so crazy like I would ever tell him that, like I don't have a death wish… But anyway that's what he used to tell them and he used to phone me and he'd be like 'if I ever see you, I'm gonna beat the life out of ya'. And then I used to be so scared and then, I was with Marvin [a later partner] walking through town and I saw him and my heart was racing, I thought 'oh my god this guy is gonna kill me'… He said safe to Josh and I was like '*oh, so I'm okay now*'…. And that's why, that's why I pick these guys.

Yusef: So do you think fear is a big part of relationships on road?

Sandra: *Yeaaahh*. Probably more so in other relationships than mine…

Yusef: Why's that?

Sandra: I have lots of friends that don't have big brothers or big cousins and stuff that will look after them. And they don't they don't leave their boyfriends 'cause they're scared. Scared in a lot of ways, like scared that he'll smash up their house… or, scared that he'll beat them up… scared for their kids' safety and well-being and scared about their financial future. They're used to having this constant stream of income, never having to worry about anything.

This is something which other women confirmed, with Terri for example suggesting that a partner who was formerly violent towards her is not violent toward his current partner due to

her having several brothers. What this also demonstrates is that even women who are not baby mothers are subject to such gender inequalities, frequently resulting in forms of coercive behaviour and gender violence. In the face of this, however, many women still show agency and endeavour, seeking to move on from abusive relationships. Though some of the women in the study who bore children for men on road still described facing limitations and occasions of verbal abuse from former partners, they were invariably determined to move on. They took on the responsibility of motherhood and excelled in raising children, often mostly by themselves in a situation fraught with financial hardship and risk. I close the chapter by allowing Sandra to demonstrate this; by describing how she has resisted patriarchal coercion relating to respectability, instead emphasising her happiness and wellbeing as the most important thing for her when contemplating relationships:

Yusef: Mmm. So have they ever tried to intimidate you?

> Sandra: Yeah and then I leave them… [laughing] that's probably why I've had so many boyfriends, but I think that's the thing like, girls are scared, like they don't wannna have like a bad reputation and have had lots of boyfriends and stuff. So they just stick with the same guy that's *evil*. I don't care what other people think like if people think I've had loads of boyfriends. I'd rather have loads of boyfriends and be happy in the end then stay with the same guy who wants to beat me up everyday…

Conclusion

This chapter has engaged with issues relating to gender on road and the symbolic struggle for value. My approach has involved considering how women's experiences vary from men's and how that might be rendering them invisible or unknowable. I have also explored how the munpain permeated the relationships between men and women reported by participants, considering how love amongst the disadvantaged becomes commodified. Like other commodities love is being mobilised to help battle against the onslaught of abjection, often with disastrous consequences. It is my belief that in this present conjuncture very few areas of human life have remained untouched by the munpain, marketization and the entrenchment of existing historical hierarchies. These have altered what it means to be human. Rather than acting as a 'haven in a heartless world' the family and intimate relationships are spaces where symbolic violence and contractual relations play out in powerful ways.

Of course this does not mean there is no hope, testimonies such as Sandra's show us that people do still have choices, and agency accounts for many of the decisions people make.

What this and previous chapters have evidenced is that people make these choices in the context of the world of culturally ascribed values, which they actively negotiate in order to lead liveable lives. Rather than giving up on human potential it is important to speak openly about the values which underpin the conventions of our social world. Much time is spent actively negotiating, but perhaps less focus is given to analytically examining the values which underpin what we do. In the closing section of this thesis I hope a meaningful discussion of this will help us to imagine a brighter future where the shaky promise of social distinction no longer wrecks families, breaks bones or takes lives.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has been built upon 12 narrative interviews conducted with young adults who have lived lives on road, along with more ethnographic orientated contextual data gathering. These have contributed to building a picture of symbolic struggle taking place amongst those living at our society's margins. Utilising a Bourdieusian (1979; 1986; 1987; 1989) framework of capital exchange and accumulation this thesis has documented the ways in which these young people struggle for value against a backdrop of stigmatisation and inequality. Though in many respects they lack the 'right' composition of capitals, those which are available to the middle classes (Skeggs, 1997), these young people have sought to *innovate* (Merton, 1938; 1968) in order to attach value to themselves.

This is a process which has, more recently, been taking place in the socio-cultural climate of neo-liberal austerity. Throughout this thesis I have documented how this is a symbolic struggle for legitimacy over value which powerful state actors are complicit in. Politicians, national media and the police have all been shown to be engaging in this struggle. The munpain has helped to illustrate the ways in which the symbolic work they engage in has contributed to a contemporary, but historically routed, sense of malaise (Mills, [1959] 2000) and particular kind of social suffering. As the powerful seek to exert control they make certain social positioning unbearable. Those who occupy them, then engage in a struggle to lead liveable lives.

This struggle is not a purely rational one, but one about feelings; those of belonging and status are significant. These reflect the desire to be included in society, which emanates from a hyper-aspirational generation of young adults. Their existence could observably originate in consecutive governments, both Conservative and New Labour led, who perpetually laid the blame for social dysfunction at the doorstep of the individual. Governments which claimed that poverty is a mind-set and a lack of aspiration is to blame for personal failings, have brought about a new configuration in class struggle as this highly aspirant generation crashes against the material barriers which come between them and their perceived destinies – this is the backdrop of this symbolic struggle, something I shall proceed to elaborate in more detail.

Feeling, Abjection and Legitimation

This study shares theoretical grounds with the fields of cultural studies and cultural criminology which argue that individuals cannot simply be considered as making a series of

'rational choices' (Ilan, 2013). In a world were insecurity is prevalent, understanding the way people *feel* is vital to conceptualising society (ibid). Heightened levels of uncertainty facilitate conditions for venomous social policy as people outwardly vent their frustration at having to maintain malleable market orientated personas in the face of the 'chaos of reward' (Young, 2007). This situation of perpetual uncertainty is seen to undermine many core 'meritocratic' ideals of western democratic society. People can no longer (if they ever were able to) guarantee that their hard work and adherence to politically legitimated values will reap suitable rewards. This has bred antipathy towards those at the bottom of society (dependent on various forms of welfare), who are framed as siphoning 'hardworking' people's taxes in order support lifestyles comparable in quality to many people in employment. We can think of this as a 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1977), built on feelings of resentment (Hogget at al., 2013) that is not only evident in contemporary discourse surrounding social justice and 'fairness', but which channels *affect* in a particular direction.

What in essence has occurred, is the creative destruction of poverty; not only is poverty materially unbearable, but it is symbolically insufferable. This is not because poverty is held as being innately wrong, but because its vestiges in society undermine the legitimacy of the status quo. This thesis has observed the ways that people respond to the existential dimension of the 'creative destruction' (Harvey, 2005) necessary to enforce and entrench neo-liberal ideals. This existential aspect is an important component in consent building (or more appropriately 'taking') which is connected with social elements of abjection (Kristeva, 1982; Tyler, 2009; 2014). In order to cement social divisions neo-liberal states have engaged in the existential annihilation of swathes of individuals, undermining their sense of self and agency and thus ability to resist the status quo. Harvey (2005) also observes that neo-liberal nation states use 'times of crisis' to further market-centred principles in law and social policy. The campaign to cut welfare enacted in the wake of the great recession is an example of this kind of existential creative destruction in action. In order to justify the moral imperative (Morris, 2016) which underpins their neo-liberal vision, people whose interests challenge the economic program were rendered abject; undermining their right to exist, making it intolerable to embody such otherness.

Over the course of this thesis I have argued that, at this 'conjuncture' those on road are caught in a new kind of socio-culturally exploitative class relationship. They stand on the receiving end of state and mass media perpetrated symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1979). This symbolic obliteration is tied to, yet is in many ways independent from, the economic base. It works

much like Gramscian notions of hegemony to aid in winning consent for unequal socio-economic relations, but also (and perhaps more insidiously) justifies processes which commodify the poor as units for exchange.

Suffering has become an offence which carries many potential penalties (Wacquant, 2009a; 2009b). These are material, such as poorly resourced and culturally unequipped schools, a punitive welfare state and culturally illiterate police force. All of these issues became apparent as influencing factors on how people feel about their place in the world. The space for respectable poverty has been eroded; being poor and living with dignity have become antipathetic notions, as the former is increasingly being spun as a social problem derived from some innate deficiency in those it affects. The 'respectable' poor are those who, despite poverty wages and job insecurity, get up every day and grind it out. This in a consumer society which demands aspiration, material accumulation and self-realization via exorbitant lifestyles perpetuated by social media and travel industries (amongst others), puts the less well off in an intolerable predicament.

Being (on) the Border

> "He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee" (Nietzsche, [1885] 2003:170)

This conjuncture has had serious consequences for, often minority ethnic, young people growing up in Britain's inner city (and poor suburban) neighbourhoods. The discursive spaces for the construction of meaningful narrations of their lives has been polluted with the rhetoric of disgust. It is not to say this is a new phenomenon, but it is a new incarnation at a specific conjuncture which must be understood. As many writers observe the erosion of traditional working class ways of life and values (including Young, 2007; Winlow, 2001; Hall, 2002; Hall and Winlow, 2005; Winlow and Hall, 2009; Hall et al, 2013 etc.), which in themselves have been idealised via the rose tinted glasses of nostalgia; being poor in society has taken on new meaning. Those born into low income, marginalised communities have been stripped of intramural value and respectability. In this sense they grow up to find themselves sinking in to a void, a space of nothingness.

When you form the borders of society, your labour is your social suffering, offering it in exchange for increasingly marketised workfare services (Shutes & Taylor, 2014), as well as providing the glue to bind a fractured society. You become a part of society's 'other'; you exist

as a spectre of what might be should the status quo crumble. Yet this representation is not what you are. In a sense those on road in this study exhibited feelings of nothingness. Whether their experience was of being categorised as a gang member, a young single mother, or a young black man; they expressed ambivalence about their identities and rejection of abject categorizations which might be attached to them. Yet they also expressed anxiety about who they are, their purpose and place in society. This is something commented on by Tyler (2009: 12) who observes:

> "…being told over and again that you are worthless, being subjected to racist or sexist abuse… the ever present threat of physical violence, erodes a subject's fundamental sense of who they are."

Life at the centre of existential class exploitation is a cataclysmic experience in many ways. In an already ambiguous and insecure world, you occupy a space of nothingness. There is little value and opportunity attached to your being. The result of this is young people who performatively manage their class positioning in society. They fight daily, in even the most mundane areas of their existence, to be something; and perhaps more crucially, not to be nothing.

Embodying the borders of society gives young people on road an immediate view in to the abyss; in many cases leaving them feeling 'abysmal'. This is different to the material hardship documented by Jack London (1904) in *'The People of the Abyss'*, which documented extreme poverty in London's East and West Ends amongst those who at that time suffered the fate of casual employment, sickness or disability. This is a different conjuncture, a moment where to live is to consume and accrue value. The abyss is an impending chasm devoid of value, getting sucked in to it means you are nothing and nobody. Ironically neo-liberal values of meritocracy and rampant individualism are the most readily available solutions; providing the promise of the good life to those teetering on the edge of nothingness.

The Politics of Munpain: A Sickness and a Cure

In this thesis I have argued that the people in this study pragmatically accept the world as inherently unfair and, by and large, if they want to survive they have to look out for themselves. With the void looming people will do what feel they have to, to get ahead. Many also questioned the legitimacy of the status quo and societal hierarchy, whilst still staunchly advocating for interpretations of its founding principles. On road money and status are heralded as the solution.

In his famous analysis of Thatcherism Stuart Hall (1988) explained that working class people's support of such values could not be easily dismissed as Marxian 'false consciousness'. Hall showed how the tensions of the old social democratic state led to the rise of neo-liberalism in Britain. The failings of Labour governments to place the interests of the working class ahead of capital translated into ways poorer people experienced the world. He spoke of poor people having to navigate unwieldly state bureaucracies; ever-extending dole queues and an overburdened National Health Service. In this way, calls for individualism and social order spoke to people on the lower rungs of society in relation to their experience. Such a thing cannot just be dismissed as 'false consciousness' because at its heart were many legitimate concerns which the left struggled to confront in a meaningful way, and for which the New Right seemed to offer solutions:

> "The point of popular morality is that it is the most practical material-ideological force amongst the popular classes – the language which, without the benefit of training, education, coherent philosophizing, erudition or learning, touches the direct and immediate experience of the class, and has power to map out the world of problematic social reality in clear and unambiguous moral polarities. It thus has a real and concrete grasp on the popular experiences of the class" (Hall, 1988: 143).

This is (arguably) the positive side of capitalism. Hall (et al., 1978; 1996) himself described such a process as 'articulation' whereby new (often class inflected) ideas are connected in to existing frameworks of understanding; connecting to existing common sense notions and moral panics. In relation to those involved in street cultural formation, who are made up of less powerful groups, their experience of what in this study I term 'the munpain' (a portmanteau of *mundane* and *pain*) influences their search for individualistic hope. The munpain depicts the way in which abjection is experienced in everyday lives. Demonstrated at length in chapter 2 this continuous existential struggle for value, epistemic and material survival; results in everyday aspects of a person's life, such as a trip to the Job Centre, potentially undermining their feelings of legitimate personhood.

It is this pain of the mundane, the social suffering of everyday life that people hope to escape from. It is something that many traditional left wing politicians fail to understand, as perhaps it has not been part of their existence. Counterintuitively, it is something poor people share more with advocates of traditionally right wing political views, as they both worry about their social positioning and fear losing what they have. It is this set of fundamental hopes and fears which underpins the lives of the people involved in this study and explains their adherence to

capitalistic notions of individualism. It is a great power they hope to harness to their will in order to facilitate the realisation of their dreams and their destinies (which it tells them they can ultimately control). This, the creative power of capitalism; to fasten itself to people's dreams and desires, is one which is continually underestimated:

> "What makes (capitalist) power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasures, forms knowledge, produces discourse…Thus the notion of repression has been… a disastrous notion as it leads to the grave underestimation of capitalism's innovative character and its ability to withstand crises." (Foucault, 1980: 119).

This is an underlying virtue of road life, one that gives rise to hope even at the depths of people's despairs. It provides a scaffold for their symbolic struggle for legitimation. People can turn their authentic experience of social marginalization into a product and narrative, which can be sold via the markets. New creative industries have facilitated a growth in this kind of enterprise. Marginalised young people can find feelings of belonging and shared personhood via local friendship groups. They can alleviate their munpain via their exploits in the streets which serve multiple purposes. This is what this study seeks to demonstrate; that social suffering invades the most intimate crevasses of people's existence, then provides the glimmer of hope which may alleviate it. It is both the sickness and the cure! Road life is much the same in this respect, as it seeks to respond to social marginalization it also cultivates conditions which make life harder for those in these communities. That is the twist in the tale of this thesis; making it a kind of tragedy, shedding light on contemporary social suffering, yet also explicating complicity and fostering of the socio-political conditions necessary for its seemingly interminable progression.

Lessons Learnt?

My findings have offered a new perspective, both on subcultural life and social class, but also relating to policy issues such as gangs. This paper has helped to unveil a political dimension to street culture, which perhaps existed internationally (e.g. Brotherton & Barrios, 2003; 2004; Brotherton, 2008; Conquergood, 1994; Conquergood, 2004) but not so much in a contemporary British context. I have demonstrated that an intersectional reading of class, racial and gendered discrimination should be utilised when thinking about street cultural

formation, helping to return to a subcultural model embedded in the political dynamics of social life.

Understanding how young people mobilise in order to find value helps us to understand behaviour which is used to legitimate their exclusion. The main thing working on this thesis has taught me is that we live in a world where those that *have,* need to be prepared to *give* more. This is not limited to a material sense, but in relation the intricately connected symbolic system. The election of governments who unabashedly promote privilege and shamelessly sponsor self-interest is symptomatic of the wider processes of articulation which provides the sickness and the cure on road. This anxiety, which in the UK stemmed from a then radical section of the Conservative party (Hall et al., 1978), has worked its way in to common sense discourse and feeling across the western hemisphere. Stuart Hall warned us in the 1970s that articulation was a problem of our time and the left has failed to sufficiently mobilise against it, with New Labour's attempts at mimicking it the closest it has come.

In relation to this defeat, those that wish for a different outcome need to mobilise around the values beyond value (Skeggs, 2014). Values of giving, compassion and caring are vital in the symbolic struggle because they undermine entirely the system of capital which exists in neoliberal society. If we cannot collectively be prepared to have less and give more, then we must accept the system we have, as it is and as it will be. The pursuit of these values holds the key to the path which extends beyond neo-liberalism. These values require the re-distribution of ideas and knowledge which are central to participation and inclusion. I consider it naïve to believe governments who wholeheartedly promote social exclusion will provide a solution, unless their hegemony is broken.

I do not believe there is a single way in which such a process of resistance can manifest, however, I do believe that it is unlikely that any such progressive interventions can come from state funded third sector projects. Models such as the Free University, which have popped up in cities such as Brighton and Liverpool, offer less diluted and more genuine promise of social transformation. Not because an impact statement gauges it to be so, but because their model of giving in itself is transformative.

I myself come from a marginalised background, and spent time on road in my youth. I have lost peers, both physically and emotionally, as the volatility of road life and my academic trajectory carried us away on separate tides. Perhaps, the thing that saved me was learning to value and understand the world in different ways. The university in itself is an ethnocentric

middle class space, but within it I was able to access a world of ideas which helped me come to terms with a society of inequity; helping me to maintain a belief that one day it could become better, if even in small ways. In the final section of this conclusion I wish to share a personal experience of bloodshed with the reader, in order to demonstrate my belief in values which can transform value.

Terrible Magnificent Lessons

> "The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise." (Mills, [1959] 2000:6)

In the above extract from C. Wright Mills' *The Sociological Imagination* he elucidates an experience I have come to know well. This process of sociological exercise is one which has developed along with my academic trajectory. The opaque world often becomes translucent in places as my own sociological imagination catechises things I observe; as I connect the invisible dots between global and local phenomena, something Mills himself construed as understanding the relationship between personal *troubles* and collective *issues*. This heightened awareness to both local and broader phenomena had particular resonance in relation to working on a project so close to home.

This study has been about trying to understand a world immanent to my own experience, through research involving people well known to me (for the most part). This has been an intellectual rollercoaster of an experience (not an expression one usually hears in academic circles), as the highs and lows, accompanied by uncovering more of what is wrong with the world contrasted with the dignity of those trying to make the best of it. This is something which has transcended across and beyond the research project and inevitably in to my everyday life.

In the context of the project itself it was difficult to come to terms with the details the data revealed. Transcription was a particular problem, as I found myself having to play and replay, listen and listen again to instances of horror, injustice and hardship taking place in the lives of people I often cared about. I felt it as an almost physical sensation as these tales travelled in to me via my headphones (those clammy extensions to my body which connected me with the machine) through my body down to the tips of my fingers and appeared, gradually, blinking back at me on the blank page before me – the screen of my laptop. It was not the tedium of transcription so much that bothered me, it was rebirthing the stories of pain; of rape and

assault, poverty and humiliation, for the purposes of analysis which I found draining. It was a process of confronting hardship in my community, having to try to understand it – to comprehend suffering.

It is fair to say that this was not the full extent of the data, and there were tales of triumph which also provided the means for hope. Most interviews would end with a short discussion about the future, which often cast a positive light on what can be done in the face of adversity. These adjacent parts formed the ambiguous and confusing accounts of people's lives, and trying to understand them also forced me to have to try to understand things happening in my own life.

Early on I experienced the vivid visions of reality offered by this new found sociological imagination as a gift. I started trying to offer Freirean inspired popular education groups in community settings, so I could share what I felt was this almost magical gift with the world. This broadly was a success, but not an unmitigated one. The world of neo-liberalism is a hostile one to ideas which do not grasp the values of individual accumulation well, and trying to make such projects work in such a framework was and is still challenging. In very few places did I find practical support and in many places I found roadblocks and difficulty. I soon realised by observing those I had worked with on such projects, the temptation to re-commodify these gifts, taking them further from people in pursuit of personal gain. Divorcing them from their origins and recasting them in to either inaccessible academic capital or popular but extremely compromised forms of public address, often becoming convoluted with motivational speaking rhetoric which goes against every ounce of the ethos of what I believed the gift to be.

I had been naïve; just because you have tools to understand the world, it does not somehow bring another world in to existence. The world of desperate neo-liberal early career academics is a real one, and people will do what they have to, to get ahead. Sometimes in the process of trying to understand the world you forget that you live in it, and the things you do will have implications in practice. This became evident also in my own personal life; as life carried, often timely, reminders of my own proximity to the world of my studies.

A couple of weeks ago, at the time of writing this, my younger brother was stabbed. Several young men jumped him with knives, and as he lay on the ground trying to fend off one attacker, whose knife had become entangled in his shoelaces, another dipped a large hunting knife in to his back. The entry wound was two or three inches long, to give you an idea of the size of the blade, but fortunately not too deep. By some stroke of luck, the knife struck his

shoulder blade causing it to pause, which according to the doctor would have prompted the attacker to pull it out, before it had the opportunity to travel through to his heart or vital arteries – life and death became a matter of inches and ultimately good or bad fortune.

Trying to process this incident brought forth a feeling that sometimes reminds me of Nietzsche's (2003) abyss, as every day I am confronted by aspects of society, which often times appear at best dysfunctional and at worst demonic, and try to get a handle on them. It is unclear to what extent this is something the vast majority of people do on an everyday basis; according to Bourdieu people are often times too immersed in the feeling of the 'game', to see such things. My sociological imagination (developed via praxis) tells me that often people experience 'a deadly unspecified malaise' (Mills, [1959] 2000: 11) where they get a feeling something is wrong but often are unable to pinpoint its sources, leading to such a feeling being put aside pragmatically due to the urgency of issues emerging from the field of practice. Thinking explicitly about the sources of this collective uneasiness (Mills, [1959] 2000) can be exhausting, causing one to focus on the negative and maybe lose sight of what it is to be human. Unveiling and understanding such things is an important part in resisting them, and I often try to imagine a world where such things remain opaque and thus can go unchallenged entirely.

This point returns me to the issue at hand. The assault was connected to local value systems and was done in the pursuit of recognition. This is a reading which finds its origins partly in practice and in part as the result of my own sociological imagination. The feelings of rage and indignation which arose as a result of what happened are also accompanied by the dousing envelopment of understanding. When the sociological imagination meets the reality of practice it is sometimes hard to know how to make sense of things, as the smoke rises from the flames of hatred and pain, the sociologist in me fights to reveal the world beyond the suffocating grey plumes.

What happened is what can happen in the streets, and it happens as much due to structural reasons as local agentic ones; that is part of what this research has revealed to me. However, balancing the insights of the sociological imagination with my life in practice has often been problematic, sometimes feeling that it requires far more privilege and distance than that which is available to me. Coming to know and reflect on these everyday experiences have formed lessons which will inform my praxis as a sociologist and more broadly as a human being long in to the future; each lesson has served as a reminder of Mills' insight in to the lived experience of the sociological imagination:

"In many ways it is a terrible lesson; in many ways a magnificent one" (Mills, [1959] 2000: 5).

Final Thought

My belief is that these terrible and magnificent lessons are ones we must confront and learn from in order to create a better world. In reality we have lost control of the powerful in our society and the only way we are to bring them in to account is by developing a stronger more informed democratic base. I believe academic research and subsequent new categorisations (Skeggs, 1997) are important in this. The ideas and imagination of the academy have a part to play, *but* we must find more ways of using our skills and understanding to promote the interests of the less powerful in practice. It is the power of ideas which saved me from rage and bloodshed and I dream of a world where these are available to more people at critical moments in their lives, as they were to me. These may seem like small, insignificant and immaterial things, yet I believe they are the beginnings of political accountability if they are mobilised sufficiently.

This may seem like some abstract rallying cry, but it is not one. I am saying to you, my reader, that we have spent a long time losing to the interests of capital, dragging us collectively further towards some unknown dystopia, and if we want it to stop we must try to imagine new ways of combating its creative destruction. Just like on road, if you do not like something or someone, the real question is; *what are you going to do about it?* Continually perpetuating a system whilst constantly bemoaning it will never change it. I will always endeavour to carry sociology, in some form, outside of the academy in the pursuit of my vision, because, even in the likely event that my work is ineffective, I sleep better at night knowing I tried. My final thought therefore is that capital is in, or perhaps out of, control; and if we do not like it, we must engage in creative and generous work to *try* and peg it back.

Bibliography

Adler, P.A., 1993. *Wheeling and dealing: An ethnography of an upper-level drug dealing and smuggling community*. Columbia University Press.

Agnew, R., 1992. Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency. *Criminology*, *30*(1), pp.47-88.

Agnew, R., 2001. Building on the foundation of general strain theory: Specifying the types of strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, *38*(4), pp.319-361.

Agnew, R., 2007. Pressured into crime: An overview of general strain theory.

Alasuutari, P., 1995. *Researching culture: Qualitative method and cultural studies*. Sage.

Aldridge, J., Medina, J. and Ralphs, R., 2008. Dangers and problems of doing 'gang' research in the UK. *Street gangs, migration and ethnicity*, pp.31-46.

Alexander, C.E., 2000. *The Asian gang: Ethnicity, identity, masculinity*. Berg Publishers.

Alvesson, M., 2003. Methodology for close up studies–struggling with closeness and closure. *Higher education*, *46*(2), pp.167-193.

Appadurai, A., 1995. The production of locality. *Counterworks: Managing the diversity of knowledge*, *204*, p.225.

Anderson, B., 1983. 1991. *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, pp.427-449.

Anderson, E., 1999. *Code of the Street* (pp. 107-141). New York: Norton.

Anderson, G.L., Herr, K. and Nihlen, A.S., 1994. Studying your own school. *Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin*.

Anderson, G.L. and Herr, K., 1999. The new paradigm wars: Is there room for rigorous practitioner knowledge in schools and universities?. *Educational researcher*, *28*(5), pp.12-40.

Atkinson, A.B., 2015. *Inequality*. Harvard University Press.

Back, L., 1996. *New Ethnicities And Urban Cult*ure: *Racisms and Multiculture in Young Lives*. Routledge.

Back, L., 2007. *The art of listening*. Berg

Back, L., 2015. Why everyday life matters: class, community and making life livable. *Sociology*, *49*(5), pp.820-836.

Ball, S., Macrae, S. and Maguire, M., 2013. *Choice, pathways and transitions post-16: New youth, new economies in the global city*. Routledge.

Bannister, J., Pickering, J., Batchelor, S., Burman, M., Kintrea, K. and McVie, S., 2010. Troublesome youth groups, gangs and knife carrying in Scotland.

Batchelor, S., 2009. Girls, gangs and violence: Assessing the evidence. *Probation Journal*, *56*(4), pp.399-414.

Bateson, G., 1972. *Steps to an ecology of mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. University of Chicago Press.

Bateson, M.C., 1994. *Peripheral visions: Learning along the way*. HarperCollins.

Bauman. Z. 2003. Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds. *Cambridge, UK: Polity P*.

BBC.co.uk., 2017. *The Met: Policing London.* Accessed at http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05z0tp0 03/08/2016

BBC Radio 1Xtra., 2016. Bugzy Malone Fire in the Booth Part 2. Accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbrXNrXEho8

Beck, U. 1992. *Risk society*, London: Sage.

Becker, H., 1963. Outsiders. Free Press, New York.

Benner, P., 1994. *Interpretive phenomenology: Embodiment, caring, and ethics in health and illness*. Sage publications.

Blackman, S., 2005. Youth subcultural theory: A critical engagement with the concept, its origins and politics, from the Chicago school to postmodernism. *Journal of youth studies*, *8*(1), pp.1-20.

Bennett, A., 1999. Subcultures or neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style and musical taste. *Sociology*, *33*(3), pp.599-617.

Bennett, A., 2005. In defence of neo-tribes: A response to Blackman and Hesmondhalgh. *Journal of youth studies*, *8*(2), pp.255-259.

Bhabha, H., 1994. K.(1994) The location of culture. *London in New York: Routledge*.

BigNarstieVEVO. 2016. Big Narstie - BDL Anthem. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unQkWxAOft0 17/05/2016.

Blake, M.K., 2007. Formality and friendship: Research ethics review and participatory action research. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, *6*(3), pp.411-421.

Blanchflower, D. 2012. "Let's Call Up Vince to Get us Out of this Mess." The Independent 30th July 2012 p.45

Bloodworth, J., 2016. The Myth of Meritocracy: Why Working-Class Kids Still Get Working-Class Jobs. Biteback Publishing (Provocations series)

Blevins, T., Kwiatkowski, R., Macbeth, J., McKeown, K., Patton, D. and Rambow, O., 2016. Automatically processing Tweets from gang-involved youth: Towards detecting loss and aggression. In *Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on Computational Linguistics* (pp. 2196-2206).

Blumer, H., 1954. What is wrong with social theory?. *American sociological review*, *19*(1), pp.3-10.

Bose´, M., 2003 'Race' and class in the post-industrial economy, in The Post-Subcultural Reader, eds D. Muggleton & R. Weinzierl, Berg, Oxford.

Bourdieu, P., 1978. Sport and social class. Information (International Social Science Council), 17(6), pp.819-840.

Bourdieu, P., 1979. Symbolic power. *Critique of anthropology*, *4*(13-14), pp.77-85.

Bourdieu, P., 1985. The genesis of the concepts of habitus and field. *Sociocriticism*, *2*(2), pp.11-24.

Bourdieu, P., 1986. The Forms of Capital. In handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education. Edited by: Richardson J.

Bourdieu, P., 1987. What makes a social class? On the theoretical and practical existence of groups. *Berkeley journal of sociology*, *32*, pp.1-17.

Bourdieu, P., 1990. The Logic of Practice, trans. *R. Nice. Cambridge: Polity*.

Bourdieu, P., 1994. Structures, habitus, power: Basis for a theory of symbolic power. *Culture/power/history: A reader in contemporary social theory*, pp.155-199.

Bourdieu, P., 1996. The Rules of Art. 1992. *Trans. Susan Emanuel. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press*.

Bourdieu, P., 2004. The peasant and his body. *Ethnography*, *5*(4), pp.579-599.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J., 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. University of Chicago press.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L., 1999. On the cunning of imperialist reason. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *16*(1), pp.41-58.

Bourdieu, P., Accardo, A. and Balazs, G., 1999. *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society* (pp. 123-129). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bourgois, P., 2003. *In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio* (Vol. 10). Cambridge University Press.

Bourne, J., 2001. The life and times of institutional racism. *Race & class*, *43*(2), pp.7-22.

Bowling, B., 1999. *Violent racism: Victimization, policing and social context*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

Bowling, B. and Phillips, C., 2003. Policing ethnic minority communities.

Bradford, B., 2014. Policing and social identity: Procedural justice, inclusion and cooperation between police and public. *Policing and society*, *24*(1), pp.22-43.

Brannick, T. and Coghlan, D., 2007. In defense of being "native": The case for insider academic research. *Organizational research methods*, *10*(1), pp.59-74.

Brewer, J.D., 2000. Ethnography Open University Press.

Briggs, D., 2010. 'True stories from bare times on road': Developing empowerment, identity and social capital among urban minority ethnic young people in London, UK. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *33*(5), pp.851-871.

Brookman, F., Bennett, T., Hochstetler, A. and Copes, H., 2011. The 'code of the street' and the generation of street violence in the UK. *European Journal of Criminology*, *8*(1), pp.17-31.

Bronfenbrenner, M., 1973. Samuelson, Marx, and their latest critics. *Journal of Economic Literature* Vol. 11, No. 1 pp. 58-63

Brotherton, D.C., 2004. What happened to the pathological gang? Notes from a case study of Latin Kings and Queens in New York. *Cultural criminology unleashed*, pp.263-274.

Brotherton, D.C., 2007. Toward the gang as a social movement. *Gangs in the global city. University of Illinois Press, Urbana*.

Brotherton, D.C., 2008. Beyond social reproduction: Bringing resistance back in gang theory. *Theoretical criminology*, *12*(1), pp.55-77.

Brotherton, D. and Barrios, L., 2004. *The almighty Latin king and queen nation: Street politics and the transformation of a New York City gang*. Columbia University Press.

Bruner, J., 1987. Life as narrative. *Social research*, pp.11-32.

Bruner, J., 1991. The narrative construction of reality. *Critical inquiry*, *18*(1), pp.1-21.

Bruner, J., 2004. Life as narrative. *Social research*, pp.691-710.

Bruner, J.S., 2009. *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Harvard University Press.

Butler, J., 2004. *Undoing gender*. Psychology Press.

Butler, J., 2010. *Frames of war: When is life grievable?*. Verso Books.

Butler, J., 2012. Precarious life, vulnerability, and the ethics of cohabitation. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, *26*(2), pp.134-151.

Campbell, A. and Muncer, S., 1989. Them and us: A comparison of the cultural context of American gangs and British subcultures. *Deviant Behavior*, *10*(3), pp.271-288.

Causa, O. and Johansson, Å., 2011. Intergenerational social mobility in OECD countries. *OECD Journal: Economic Studies*, *2010*(1), pp.1-44.

Casey, K., 1995. Chapter 5: The new narrative research in education. *Review of research in education*, *21*(1), pp.211-253.

Centre for Social Justice. Gangs Working Group and Antrobus, S., 2009. *Dying to belong: an in-depth review of street gangs in Britain*. Centre for Social Justice.

Chamberlayne, P. and King, A., 2000. *Cultures of care: biographies of carers in Britain and the two Germanies*. The Policy Press.

Chaney, C. and Brown, A., 2016. Representations and Discourses of Black Motherhood in Hip Hop and R&B over Time. *The Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, *3*(1), p.12.

Charlesworth, S.J., 2000. *A phenomenology of working-class experience*. Cambridge University Press.

Charmaz, K. 2003. Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Strategies of qualitative inquiry (2nd ed., pp. 249–291). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Charmaz, K., 2008. Constructionism and the grounded theory method. *Handbook of constructionist research*, pp.397-412.

Charmaz, K., 2009. Shifting the grounds: Grounded theory in the 21st century. *JM Morse et al.(2009). Developing grounded theory: The second generation*, pp.125-140.

Chatterton, P. and Hollands, R., 2002. Theorising urban playscapes: producing, regulating and consuming youthful nightlife city spaces. *Urban studies*, *39*(1), pp.95-116.

Cho, S., Crenshaw, K.W. and McCall, L., 2013. Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *38*(4), pp.785-810.

Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M., 1996. Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes: Teacher Stories––Stories of Teachers––School Stories––Stories of Schools 1. *Educational researcher*, *25*(3), pp.24-30.

Clandinin, D. and Rosiek, G., 2007. Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland, spaces and tensions. In. Clandinin, DJ Handbook of narrative inquiry: mapping a methodology.

Clark, D., 2003. The death and life of punk, the last subculture. *The post-subcultures reader*, pp.223-36.

Clarke, G., 1982. *Defending Ski-jumpers: A critique of theories of youth sub-cultures* (Vol. 71). Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Clarke, J., 2008. Living with/in and without neo-liberalism. *Focaal*, *2008*(51), pp.135-147.

Clarke, J., 2015. Stuart Hall and the theory and practice of articulation. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, *36*(2), pp.275-286.

Clarke, J., Hall, S., Jefferson, T. and Roberts, B., 1976. Subcultures, cultures and class. *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*, pp.9-74.

Coates, T.N., 2015. *Between the world and me*. Text publishing.

Coghlan, D., 2003. Practitioner research for organizational knowledge: Mechanistic-and organistic-oriented approaches to insider action research. *Management Learning*, *34*(4), pp.451-463.

Cohen, P., 1972. Subculture Conflict and working class community, Working Papers in.

Cohen, S., 1973. Some sociological problems in the study of adolescent violence. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, *66*(11), p.1131.

Cohen, S., 1980. Symbols of trouble: introduction to the new edition. *S. Cohen, Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers. London: Martin Robertson*.

Cohen, S., 2002. *Folk devils and moral panics: The creation of the mods and rockers*. Psychology Press.

Coles, R., 1989. *The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Connell, R.W., 1997. Hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. *Feminist frontiers IV*, p.22-25.

Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J., 1988. *Teachers as Curriculum Planners. Narratives of Experience*. Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027.

Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J., 1994. Telling teaching stories. *Teacher education quarterly*, pp.145-158.

Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J., 2000. Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, *6*, pp.94-118.

Conquergood, D., 1994. How street gangs problematize patriotism. *After postmodernism. Reconstructing ideology critique*, pp.200-21.

Conquergood, D., 2004. Street literacy. *Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy Through the Communicative and Visual Arts: Sponsored by the International Reading Association*, *1*, p.354.

Cooley, C.H., 1922. Human nature and conduct. *New York: Scribners*.

Corbin, J. and Morse, J.M., 2003. The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative inquiry*, *9*(3), pp.335-354.

Corrigan, P., 1979. Schooling the Smash Street kids Macmillan.

Cray, E., 1972. *The enemy in the streets: Police malpractice in America* (p. 169). Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Crenshaw, K., 1989. Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *U. Chi. Legal F.*, p.139.

Crenshaw, K., 1991. Mapping the margins: Identity politics, intersectionality, and violence against women. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), pp.1241-1299.

Crenshaw, K., 1994. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *The Public Nature of Private Violence*, pp.93-118.

Crenshaw, C., 1997. Women in the Gulf War: Toward an intersectional feminist rhetorical cristicism. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *8*(3), pp.219-235.

Crenshaw, K.W., 2010. Close encounters of three kinds: On teaching dominance feminism and intersectionality. *Tulsa L. Rev.*, *46*, p.151.

Crenshaw, K.W., 2014. The structural and political dimensions of intersectional oppression. *Intersectionality: A foundations and frontiers reader*, pp.17-22.

Crenshaw, K. and Thomas, S., 2004. Intersectionality: the double bind of race and gender. *Perspectives Magazine*, *2*.

Cruz, K., 2013. Unmanageable work,(un) liveable lives: the UK sex industry, labour rights and the welfare state. *Social & Legal Studies*, *22*(4), pp.465-488.

DailyMail.co.uk., 2006. *You're talking rubbish, Lethal Bizzle... lyrics about guns and knives do destroy lives.* Accessed at: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-390139/Youre-talking-rubbish-Lethal-Bizzle--lyrics-guns-knives-destroy-lives.html

DailyMail.co.uk., 2017. *Rapper, 20, who boasted about smoking drugs in a music video filmed at his flat where he masterminded a 24-hour 'ring and bring' hotline is facing deportation after being jailed for six years*. Facebookhttp://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4214620/Rapper-jailed-music-video-filmed-drugs-factory.html

Davis, M., 1992. LA intifada: interview with Mike Davis. *Social Text*, (33), pp.19-33.

De Agostini, P., Hills, J. and Sutherland, H., 2014. Were we really all in it together? The distributional effects of the UK Coalition government's tax-benefit policy changes. *Social Policy in a cold climate Working Paper*, *10*.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F., 1988. *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Densley, J., 2013. *How gangs work: An ethnography of youth violence*. Springer.

Dewey, J., 1925. 1958, Experience and Nature. Dover Publications, New York

Dewey, J., 1929. The quest for certainty: A study of the relation of knowledge and action. *New York: Minton, Balch.*

Dex, S. and McCulloch, A., 2016. *Flexible Employment: the future of Britain's jobs*. Springer.

Dimitriadis, G. and McCarthy, C., 2001. *Reading and teaching the postcolonial: From Baldwin to Basquiat and beyond*. Teachers College Press.

Dorries, B. and Haller, B., 2001. The news of inclusive education: A narrative analysis.

Du Bois, W.E., 1903. The souls ofBlack folks. *DuBois: Writings*, pp.357-547.

Downes, D.M., 1966. *The delinquent solution: a study in subcultural theory* (pp. 9-9). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Drake VEVO. 2012. Drake - The Motto Feat Tyga and Lil Wayne. Accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYDKK95cpfM 09/08/2016

Duncan-Smith, I., 2007. Breakthrough Britain: Ending the Costs of Social Breakdown. London: Centre for Social Justice

Duncan-Smith, I., 2014. Speech: *Jobs and welfare reform: getting Britain working*. Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/jobs-and-welfare-reform-getting-britain-working 14/02/2016

Earle, R., 2011. Boys' zone stories: Perspectives from a young men's prison. *Criminology and criminal justice*, *11*(2), pp.129-143.

Emerson, P. and Frosh, S., 2004. Critical narrative analysis in psychology. *Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan*.

Emirbayer, M. and Mische, A., 1998. What is agency? 1. *American journal of sociology*, *103*(4), pp.962-1023.

Equal Opportunities Commission. 2005. Women working in the private sector are being left behind in the struggle for equal pay. Accessed at: https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20070325120000/http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default5d57.html 29/08/2016

Ewick, P. and Silbey, S.S., 1995. Subversive stories and hegemonic tales: Toward a sociology of narrative. *Law and Society Review*, pp.197-226.

Fanon, F., 1952. Black Skin, White Masks. *New York: Grove*.

Ferrell, J. and Ilan, J. 2013. Crime, Culture and Everyday Life. In Hale, C., Hayward, K.J., Wahidin, A. and Wincup, E. (Eds.), *Criminology* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fischer, M.M. and Marcus, G.E., 1986. Anthropology as cultural critique. *An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences, Chicago*.

Fiske, J., 1989. Moments of television: Neither the text nor the audience. *Remote control: Television, audiences, and cultural power*, pp.56-78.

FitzGerald, M., 1999. *Searches in London: Under S1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984*. Metropolitan Police.

FitzGerald, M., Hough, M., Joseph, I. and Qureshi, T., 2013. *Policing for London*. Routledge.

Foucault, M., 1980. Power/knowledge: selected interviews. *New York: Pantheon*.

Fraser, A.D., 2015. *Urban legends: Gang identity in the post-industrial city*. Oxford University Press.

Frazier, P.A. and Haney, B., 1996. Sexual assault cases in the legal system: Police, prosecutor, and victim perspectives. *Law and Human Behavior*, *20*(6), p.607.

Garland, D. 2001. *The culture of control*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gatson, S.N., 2011. The methods, politics, and ethics of representation in online ethnography. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, pp.513-527.

Geertz, C., 1994. Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. *Readings in the philosophy of social science*, pp.213-231.

Giddens, A. 1991. *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge: Polity.

Gilkes, C.T., 1981. From slavery to social welfare: Racism and the control of black women. *Class, race, and sex: The dynamics of control*, pp.288-300.

Gillborn, D., 2008. *Racism and education: Coincidence or conspiracy?*. Routledge.

Gilmore, K.J., Baker, J.M. and Pittman, L.V., 1993. *To Report or Not To Report: a study of victim/survivors of sexual assault and their experience of making an initial report to the police*. CASA House.

Gilroy, P., 1993. *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.

Gilroy, P., 2001. Joined-up politics and postcolonial melancholia. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *18*(2-3), pp.151-167.

Gilroy, P., 2004. *After empire: Multiculture or postcolonial melancholia*. Routledge.

Gilroy, P., 2005. *Postcolonial melancholia*. Columbia University Press.

Gingerbread. 2010. Changing the Workplace: The missing piece of the jigsaw, London: Gingerbread.

Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L., 1967. The discovery of grounded research: strategies for qualitative research. *New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Aldine Transaction*.

Glynn, M., 2014. Black men, invisibility, and desistance from crime: Towards a critical race theory from crime. London. Routledge.

Goldberg, D., 1994. Multiculturalism: A critical reader. Wiley Pub.

Goffman, A., 2015. *On the run: Fugitive life in an American city*. Picador.

Goffman, E., 1963. Stigma: Notes on a spoiled identity. *Jenkins, JH & Carpenter*.

Goffman, E., 2009. *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Simon and Schuster.

Gov.uk., *PM's speech on the fightback after the riots.* Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-on-the-fightback-after-the-riots on 15/08/16

Gramsci. A., 1971. The Study of Philosophy., in Selections from the Prison Notebooks. ed. & trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Lawrence & Wishart London.

Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J.M., Sundie, J.M., Cialdini, R.B., Miller, G.F. and Kenrick, D.T., 2007. Blatant benevolence and conspicuous consumption: when romantic motives elicit strategic costly signals. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *93*(1), p.85.

Grundetjern, H. and Sandberg, S., 2012. Dealing with a gendered economy: Female drug dealers and street capital. *European Journal of Criminology*, *9*(6), pp.621-635.

Guest, G., Bunce, A. and Johnson, L., 2006. How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, *18*(1), pp.59-82.

Gunter, A.D., 2004. *Can't blame the youth: an ethnographic study of a black East London neighbourhood* (Doctoral dissertation, Bucks New University).

Gunter, A., 2008. Growing up bad: Black youth, 'road' culture and badness in an East London neighbourhood. *Crime, media, culture*, *4*(3), pp.349-366.

Gunter, A., 2010. *Growing Up Bad?: Black Youth, 'road 'Culture and Badness in an East London Neighbourhood*. Tufnell Press.

Gunter, A., 2016. 3 From bad to worse?. *The Subcultural Imagination: Theory, Research and Reflexivity in Contemporary Youth Cultures*, p.46.

Haavind, H., Thorne, B., Hollway, W. and Magnusson, E., 2015. "Because nobody likes Chinese girls": Intersecting identities and emotional experiences of subordination and resistance in school life. *Childhood*, *22*(3), pp.300-315.

Hagedorn, J., 2008. *A world of gangs: Armed young men and gangsta culture* (Vol. 14). U of Minnesota Press.

Hales, G., Lewis, C. and Silverstone, D., 2006. *Gun crime: the market in and use of illegal firearms*. London: Home Office.

Hall, B., 2015. Beyond epistemicide: Knowledge democracy and higher education. UNESCO

Hall, S., 1982. The Lessons of Lord Scarman. *Critical Soc. Pol'y*, *2*, p.66

Hall, S., 1986. Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. *Journal of communication inquiry*, *10*(2), pp.5-27.

Hall, S., 1988. *The hard road to renewal: Thatcherism and the crisis of the left*. Verso.

Hall, S., 1992. The West and the Rest: Discourse and power. *The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives*, pp.165-173.

Hall, S., 1994. The Spectacle of the Other. Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices.

Hall, S., 1996a. New ethnicities. *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies*, pp.441-449.

Hall, S., 1996b. Cultural identity and cinematic representation. *Black British cultural studies: A reader*, pp.210-222.

Hall, S., 1996c. Race, articulation, and societies structured in dominance. *Black British cultural studies: A reader*, pp.16-60.

Hall, S., 1999, October. From Scarman to Stephen Lawrence. In *History Workshop Journal* (No. 48, pp. 187-197). Oxford University Press.

Hall, S., 2002. Gramsci and us. *Antonio Gramsci: Critical assessments of leading political philosophers*, pp.227-238.

Hall, S.C., Jefferson, C. and Clarke, T., J. and Roberts, B.(1978) Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order.

Hall, S. and Back, L., 2009. At home and not at home: Stuart Hall in conversation with Les Back. *Cultural Studies*, *23*(4), pp.658-687.

Hall, S., 2002. Daubing the drudges of fury: Men, violence and the piety of the 'hegemonic masculinity'thesis. *Theoretical Criminology*, *6*(1), pp.35-61.

Hall, S. and Winlow, S., 2005. Anti-nirvana: Crime, culture and instrumentalism in the age of insecurity. *Crime, Media, Culture*, *1*(1), pp.31-48.

Hall, S., Winlow, S. and Ancrum, C., 2013. *Criminal Identities and Consumer Culture: Crime, Exclusion and the New Culture of Narcissm*. Routledge

Hallsworth, S. and Silverstone, D., 2009. 'That's life innit' A British perspective on guns, crime and social order. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, *9*(3), pp.359-377.

Hallsworth, S. and Lea, J., 2011. Reconstructing Leviathan: Emerging contours of the security state. *Theoretical Criminology*, *15*(2), pp.141-157.

Hallsworth, S., 2013. *The gang and beyond: Interpreting violent street worlds*. Springer.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P., 1983. Ethnology: Principles in practice. *Nueva York: Tavistock*.

Harris, T.W., 1985. *Carnival*. Faber & Faber.

Harrison, F.V., 2008. *Outsider within: reworking anthropology in the global age*. University of Illinois Press.

Hartas, D., 2012. The Achievement Gap: Are Parents or Politicians Responsible. *Bera Insights*, (2).

Harvey, D., 2005. NeoLiberalism: A brief history. Oxford University Press.

Heale, J., 2009. *One Blood: Inside Britain's Gang Culture*. Simon and Schuster.

Hebdige, D., 1979. Subculture: The Meaning of Style. *London: Methuen*.

Hebdige, D., 1995. Subculture: The meaning of style. *Critical Quarterly*, *37*(2), pp.120-124.

Hervey, T. and Shaw, J., 1998. Women, work and care: Women's dual role and double burden in EC sex equality law. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *8*(1), pp.43-63.

Hesmondhalgh, D., 2005. Subcultures, scenes or tribes? None of the above. *Journal of youth studies*, *8*(1), pp.21-40.

Hill-Collins, P. and Bilge, S., 2016. *Intersectionality*. John Wiley & Sons.

Hille, K., 1999. 'Gendered exclusions': Women's fear of violence and changing relations to space. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, *81*(2), pp.111-124.

Hodkinson, P., 2005. 'Insider research'in the study of youth cultures. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *8*(2), pp.131-149.

Hodkinson, P. and Deicke, W. eds., 2007. *Youth Cultures: scenes, subcultures and tribes* (Vol. 10). Routledge.

Hodkinson, P., 2015. Grounded Theory and Inductive Research. In: Gilbert and Stoneman Ed. *Researching Social Life*. Sage.

Hoggett, P., Wilkinson, H. and Beedell, P., 2013. Fairness and the Politics of Resentment. *Journal of Social Policy*, *42*(03), pp.567-585.

Holland, J. and Thomson, R., 2009. Gaining perspective on choice and fate: revisiting critical moments. *European societies*, *11*(3), pp.451-469.

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F., 1995. *The active interview* (Vol. 37). Sage

hooks, B., 1994. Outlaw culture. *New York: Rutledge*.

hooks, B., 2000. *Where we stand: Class matters*. Psychology Press.

hooks, B., 2004. *We real cool: Black men and masculinity*. Psychology Press.

Hot 97. Dizzee Rascal and Rosenberg discuss the history of grime, Skepta, and the whole UK scene. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8dOAYpWass accessed 19/05/2016

Humphrey, B., 1995. *Insider research, the process and practice: Issues arising from professionals conducting research within their own working environments* (No. Ph. D.(Ed.)). Deakin University.

Humphrey, C., 2007. Insider-outsider: Activating the hyphen. *Action Research*, *5*(1), pp.11-26.

Ilan, J., 2012. 'The industry's the new road': Crime, commodification and street cultural tropes in UK urban music. *Crime, Media, Culture*, *8*(1), pp.39-55.

Ilan, J., 2015. *Understanding street culture: Poverty, crime, youth and cool*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, K., 2003. The turn to a narrative knowing of persons: One method explored. *NT Research*, *8*(1), pp.60-71.

Jones, O., 2011. Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class.

Jordan, J., 2004. Beyond belief? Police, rape and women's credibility. *Criminal Justice*, *4*(1), pp.29-59.

Joseph Adenuga. 2012. #Underdog Psychosis No.1. Accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jOnj9I14hc 21/05/2016

JRF., 2014. *A Minimum Income Standard for the UK*, York: JRF

Kabeer, N., 2000. Social exclusion, poverty and discrimination towards an analytical framework. *IDS bulletin*, *31*(4), pp.83-97.

Kano, 2016. Kano - This is England. Accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPmNxobIoWI 06/05/2016

Katz, J., 1988. *Seductions of crime: Moral and sensual attractions in doing evil*. Basic Books.

Khaldun, I., 1967. The Muqaddimah. vol. 3. *Trans, by F. Rosenthal. Princeton University Press*.

Kierkegaard, S., 1941. The sickness unto death: A Christian psychological exposition for edification and awakening (W. Lowrie, Trans.). *Princeton: Princeton University.(Original work published 1849)*

Kristeva, J., 1982. *Powers of horror*. University Presses of California, Columbia and Princeton.

Laberge, S., 1995. Toward an integration of gender into Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *12*(2), pp.132-146.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C., 1987. Post-Marxism without apologies. *New left review*, (166), p.79.

Lal, S., Suto, M. and Ungar, M., 2012. Examining the potential of combining the methods of grounded theory and narrative inquiry: A comparative analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, *17*(21), p.1.

Lawrence Iii, C.R., 1991. The word and the river: Pedagogy as scholarship as struggle. *S. Cal. L. Rev.*, *65*, p.2231.

Lee, C.K. and Kofman, Y., 2012. The politics of precarity: views beyond the United States. *Work and Occupations*, *39*(4), pp.388-408.

Lee, J.A., 1981. Some structural aspects of police deviance in relations with minority groups. *Organisational Police Deviance. Toronto: Butterworth*.

Lefebvre, H., 1991. *Critique of everyday life* (Vol. 2). Verso.

Lefebvre, H., 2003. *Henri Lefebvre: key writings*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Loader, I., 1996 Youth, Policing and Democracy, Macmillan, Basingstoke.

London, J., 1904. *The people of the abyss*. Macmillan.

Lyng, S., 2005. Edgework and the risk-taking experience. *Edgework: The sociology of risk-taking*, pp.3-16.

Macdonald, N., 2001. *The graffiti subculture: Youth, masculinity and identity in London and New York*. Springer.

MacDonald, R., 1998. Youth, transitions and social exclusion: some issues for youth research in the UK. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *1*(2), pp.163-176.

MacDonald, R., 2006. Social exclusion, youth transitions and criminal careers: Five critical reflections on 'risk'. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, *39*(3), pp.371-383.

MacDonald, R., Mason, P., Shildrick, T., Webster, C., Johnston, L. & Ridley, L., 2001. 'Snakes & ladders: in defence of studies of youth transitions', Sociological Research-On-Line, vol. 5, no. 4.

MacDonald, R., Shildrick, T. and Furlong, A., 2014. 'Benefits Street'and the Myth of Workless Communities. *Sociological Research Online*, *19*(3), p.1.

MacDonald, R. and Marsh, J., 2001. Disconnected youth?. *Journal of youth studies*, *4*(4), pp.373-391.

MacDonald, R. and Marsh, J., 2002. Crossing the Rubicon: Youth transitions, poverty, drugs and social exclusion. *International journal of drug policy*, *13*(1), pp.27-38.

Macdonald, R. & Marsh, J., 2004. Missing school: Educational engagement, youth transitions, and social exclusion. *Youth & Society*, *36*(2), pp.143-162.

MacDonald, R. & Marsh, J., 2005. *Disconnected Youth?: Growing up Poor in Britain*. Springer.

MacLeavy, J., 2011. A 'new politics' of austerity, workfare and gender? The UK coalition government's welfare reform proposals. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, *4*(3), pp.355-367.

Macpherson, W., 1999. The Stephen Lawrence inquiry: report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny. *Stationary Office*.

MacRae, R., 2007. Insider" and "outsider" issues in youth research. *Youth cultures: Scenes, subcultures and tribes*, *10*, p.51.

Maher, L., 2000. *Sexed work: Gender, race and resistance in a Brooklyn drug market*. Oxford University Press.

Majors, R. and Billson, J.M., 1993. *Cool pose: The dilemma of Black manhood in America*. Simon and Schuster.

Malinowski, B., 1922. Ethnology and the Study of Society. *Economica*, (6), pp.208-219.

Marcus, G.E. and Fischer, M.M., 1986. A crisis of representation in the human sciences. *Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the human sciences*, pp.7-16.

Marsh, P., 1978. Life and careers on the soccer terraces. *Football hooliganism: The wider context, London: Interaction*, pp.61-81.

Marshall, B., Webb, B. and Tilley, N., 2005. Rationalisation of current research on guns, gangs and other weapons: Phase 1. *London: Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, University College London*.

Marshall, D. and Case, J., 2010. Rethinking 'disadvantage'in higher education: A paradigmatic case study using narrative analysis. *Studies in Higher Education*, *35*(5), pp.491-504.

Marx, K., 1844. The economic and philosophical manuscripts.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. 1954. *Capital. A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production.(Edited by Frederick Engels.)*. Moscow. Foreign Languages Publishing

McCall, L., 1992. Does genderfit? Bourdieu, feminism, and conceptions of social order. *Theory and society*, *21*(6), pp.837-867.

McDowell, L., Rootham, E. and Hardgrove, A., 2014. Precarious work, protest masculinity and communal regulation: South Asian young men in Luton, UK. *Work, employment and society*, *28*(6), pp.847-864.

McGrellis, S., 2005. Pure and bitter spaces: gender, identity and territory in Northern Irish youth transitions. *Gender and Education*, *17*(5), pp.515-529.

McKenzie, L., 2013. Narratives from a Nottingham council estate: a story of white working-class mothers with mixed-race children. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *36*(8), pp.1342-1358.

McKenzie, L., 2015. *Getting by: Estates, class and culture in austerity Britain*. Policy Press.

McLeod, J. and Balamoutsou, S., 2001. A method for qualitative narrative analysis of psychotherapy transcripts. *Psychological Test and Assessment Modeling*, *43*(3), p.128.

McRobbie, A. and Garber, J., 1976. Girls and Subcultures: An exploration. *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain. University of Birmingham, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*.

McRobbie, A., 1991. Settling accounts with subculture: A feminist critique. In *Feminism and youth culture* (pp. 16-34). Macmillan Education UK.

McRobbie, A., 2011. Reflections on feminism, immaterial labour and the post-Fordist regime. *New formations*, *70*(70), pp.60-76.

Mead, G.H., 1934. *Mind, self and society* (Vol. 111). University of Chicago Press.: Chicago.

Mead, G.H., 2015. *Mind, Self, and Society: The Definitive Edition*. University of Chicago Press.

Meek, R.L., 1962. Marx's "Doctrine of Increasing Misery". *Science & Society*, pp.422-441.

Mercer, J., 2007. The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education*, *33*(1), pp.1-17.

Mercer, K., 1987. Black hair/style politics*. New Formations, Winter Issue* pp.33-54

Merton, R.K., 1938. Social structure and anomie. *American sociological review*, *3*(5), pp.67

Miller, D., 2008. *The comfort of things*. Polity.

Miller, D., 2010. *Stuff*. Polity.

Miller, J., 2008. *Getting played: African American girls, urban inequality, and gendered violence*. NYU Press.

Miles, S., 2000. *Youth lifestyles in a changing world*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Mills, C.W., [1959] 2000. *The sociological imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Ministry of Justice. 2014. Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2014: A Ministry of Justice publication under Section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991. Accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480250/bulletin.pdf 14/09/2017

Mirza, H.S., 2009. Plotting a history: Black and postcolonial feminisms in 'new times'. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *12*(1), pp.1-10

Modood, T., 1994. Establishment, multiculturalism and British citizenship. *The Political Quarterly*, *65*(1), pp.53-73.

Modood, T., 2010. Still not easy being British: struggles for a multicultural citizenship. *ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ANTI-MUSLIM*, p.127.

Modood, T., 2013. *Multiculturalism*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Moi, T., 1991. Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist theory and Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture. *New Literary History*, *22*(4), pp.1017-1049.

Moore, J., 1991. Going down to the barrio. Temple Press.

Moore, R., 2005. Alternative to what? Subcultural capital and the commercialization of a music scene. *Deviant Behavior*, *26*(3), pp.229-252.

Moran, J., 2005. *Reading the everyday*. Taylor & Francis.

Moran, J., 2010. *Queuing for beginners: The story of daily life from breakfast to bedtime*. Profile Books.

Morris, L., 2016. The moral economy of austerity: analysing UK welfare reform. *The British journal of sociology*, *67*(1), pp.97-117.

Morse, J.M., 1995. The significance of saturation.Sage Pub Accessed at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/104973239500500201 05/04/2017

Morse, J.M., 2015. Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative health research*, *25*(9), pp.1212-1222.

MoStack Music, 2016. Shot By The Police Man | Gangster With Banter Mixtape. Accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z30iPVWk2jc 25/06/2016

Muggleton, D., 2000. *Inside subculture: The postmodern meaning of style*. Berg Publishers.

Muggleton, D., 2005. From classlessness to clubculture: A genealogy of post-war British youth cultural analysis. *Young*, *13*(2), pp.205-219.

Murdock, G. and McCron, R., 1976. Consciousness of class and consciousness of generation. *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*, pp.192-208.

Murray, M., 2000. Levels of narrative analysis in health psychology. *Journal of health psychology*, *5*(3), pp.337-347.

Murray, M., 2003. Narrative psychology. *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*, pp.111-131.

Narayan, K., 1993. How native is a "native" anthropologist?. *American anthropologist*, *95*(3), pp.671-686.

Nayak, A., 2003. Ivory Lives' Economic Restructuring and the Making of Whiteness in a Post-Industrial Youth Community. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *6*(3), pp.305-325.

Nyak, A., 2004. New transformations in youth studies: Production, consumption and identity. In *Leisure Studies Association Conference, Leeds, UK*.

Newburn, T., 2002. *The contemporary politics of youth crime prevention* (pp. 452-463). Sage Publications.

Newburn, T., 2011. Reading the riots. *British Society of Criminology Newsletter*, *69*, pp.12-14.

Newburn, T., Lewis, P., Taylor, M., Mcgillivray, C., Greenhill, A., Frayman, H. and Proctor, R., 2011. Reading the riots: investigating England's summer of disorder.

Nichols, B., 2016. Mexicans Be Like. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics (WPEL)*, *31*(1), p.4.

Nightingale, C. (1993) On the Edge. New York: Basic Books.

Nietzsche, F., 2003. *Beyond good and evil*. Penguin.

O'cass, A. and McEwen, H., 2004. Exploring consumer status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of consumer behaviour*, *4*(1), pp.25-39.

OECD. 2010. *OECD Factbook*. Paris: OECD.

Office for National Statistics. 2014. Families and Households: 2014. Accessed at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2015-01-28

Ohnuki-Tierney, E., 1984. " Native" Anthropologists. *American Ethnologist*, *11*(3), pp.584-586.

Orwell, G., 1961. Down and Out in Paris and London. 1933. *The Complete works of George Orwell*, *1*. Secker and Warburg

Oxfam., 2014.Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality. 178 Oxfam Brieifing Paper.

Patton, M., 1990. Purposeful sampling. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*, *2*, pp.169-186.

Patton, D.U., Eschmann, R.D. and Butler, D.A., 2013. Internet banging: New trends in social media, gang violence, masculinity and hip hop. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(5), pp.A54-A59.

Patton, D.U., Hong, J.S., Ranney, M., Patel, S., Kelley, C., Eschmann, R. and Washington, T., 2014. Social media as a vector for youth violence: A review of the literature. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *35*, pp.548-553.

Patton, D.U., Leonard, P., Cahill, L., Macbeth, J., Crosby, S. and Brunton, D.W., 2016. "Police took my homie I dedicate my life 2 his revenge": Twitter tensions between gang-involved youth and police in Chicago. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *26*(3-4), pp.310-324.

Pavis, S. and Cunningham-Burley, S., 1999. Male youth street culture: understanding the context of health-related behaviours. *Health Education Research*, *14*(5), pp.583-596.

Phoenix, A., 2007. Claiming livable lives: Adult subjectification and narratives of 'non-normative' childhood experiences.

Pickering, M. 1997. *History, experience and cultural studies.* Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.

Pilkington, H., 2004. Youth strategies for global living: space, power and communication in everyday cultural practice. in After Subculture, eds A. Bennett & K. Kahn-Harris, Palgrave, London

Pitts, J., 2008. *Reluctant gangsters: The changing face of youth crime*. Taylor & Francis.

Polkinghorne, D.E., 1988. *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Suny Press.

Proctor, R. and Schiebinger, L.L. eds., 2008. *Agnotology: The making and unmaking of ignorance*. Stanford University Press.

Puwar, N., 2004. *Space invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place*. Berg.

Purwar, N., 2004. Fish in and out of water: A theoretical framework for race and the space of academia. *Institutional racism in higher education*, pp.49-58.

Quinton, P., Bland, N. and Miller, J., 2000. *Police stops, decision-making and practice*. London: Home Office.

Ralphs, R., Medina, J. and Aldridge, J., 2009. Who needs enemies with friends like these? The importance of place for young people living in known gang areas. *Journal of youth studies*, *12*(5), pp.483-500.

Reay, D., 2004. Education and cultural capital: The implications of changing trends in education policies. *Cultural trends*, *13*(2), pp.73-86.

Reay, D., 2005. Beyond consciousness? The psychic landscape of social class. *Sociology*, *39*(5), pp.911-928.

Reay, D., 2013. Social mobility, a panacea for austere times: tales of emperors, frogs, and tadpoles. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *34*(5-6), pp.660-677.

Reay, D., Crozier, G. and James, D., 2011. *White middle-class identities and urban schooling*. Springer.

Reiner, R., 1992. Policing a postmodern society. *The Modern Law Review*, *55*(6), pp.761-781.

Ridge, T., 2009. Living with poverty: a review of the literature on children's and families' experiences of poverty.

Rock, P., 1979. The Self. In *The Making of Symbolic Interactionism* (pp. 102-146). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Rose, T., 1994. *Black noise: Rap music and black culture in contemporary America*. Wesleyan.

Roseneil, S. 1993. Greenham revisited: researching myself and my sisters. in Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography, eds D. Hobbs & T. May, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 177/208.

Rosenthal, F., 1958. Ibn Khaldun: The muqaddimah, an introduction to history. *Volumes I, II, III, Pantheon Books Inc., NY*, p.313.

Ross-Smith, A. and Huppatz, K., 2010. Management, women and gender capital. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *17*(5), pp.547-566.

Rowlingson, K. and McKay, S., 2014. *Lone parent families: Gender, class and state*. Routledge.

Rowntree, B.S., 1901. *Poverty: A study of town life*. Macmillan.

Rubery, J., 1994. The British production regime: a societal-specific system? *Economy and Society*, *23*(3), pp.335-354.

Rubery, J., Horrell, S. and Burchell, B., 1994. Part-time work and gender inequality in the labour market. *Gender segregation and social change*, pp.205-34.

Saad, G., 2007. *The evolutionary bases of consumption*. Psychology Press.

Sandberg, S., 2008. Street capital Ethnicity and violence on the streets of Oslo. *Theoretical criminology*, *12*(2), pp.153-171.

Sandberg, S., 2008. Black drug dealers in a white welfare state cannabis dealing and street capital in Norway. *British Journal of Criminology*, *48*(5), pp.604-619.

Sandberg, S., 2009 *Street capital*. Policy Press.

Sandberg, S. and Pedersen, W., 2011. *Street capital: Black cannabis dealers in a white welfare state*. Policy Press.

Sanders, W.S., 2002. Breadren: exploring the group context of young offenders in an inner city English borough. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, *26*(1), pp.101-113.

Savage, M., 2007. Changing social class identities in post-war Britain: Perspectives from mass-observation. *Sociological Research Online*, *12*(3), p.6.

Savage, M., 2015. *Social class in the 21st century*. Penguin UK.

Scott, G., 2004. 'It's a sucker's outfit' How urban gangs enable and impede the reintegration of ex-convicts. *Ethnography*, *5*(1), pp.107-140.

Scott, S., 2009. *Making sense of everyday life*. Polity.

Sennett, R. and Cobb, J., 1972. The Hidden Injuries of Class. *New York: Vintage*.

Serrant-Green, L., 2010. Introduction and overview of research with Black families. Manchester Uni. Press

Sharp, D. and Atherton, S., 2007. To serve and protect? The experiences of policing in the community of young people from black and other ethnic minority groups. *British journal of criminology*, *47*(5), pp.746-763.

Shutes, I. and Taylor, R., 2014. Conditionality and the financing of employment services– implications for the social divisions of work and welfare. *Social Policy & Administration*, *48*(2), pp.204-220.

Shildrick, T., 2003. 'Spectaculars', 'Trackers' and 'Ordinary' Youth: Youth Culture, Illicit Drugs and Social Class, PhD Thesis, University of Teesside, UK.

Shildrick, T., 2006. Youth culture, subculture and the importance of neighbourhood. *Young*, *14*(1), pp.61-74.

Shildrick, T. and MacDonald, R., 2006. In defence of subculture: Young people, leisure and social divisions. *Journal of youth studies*, *9*(2), pp.125-140.

Shildrick, T. and MacDonald, R., 2007. Biographies of exclusion: poor work and poor transitions. *International journal of lifelong education*, *26*(5), pp.589-604.

Shildrick, T.A. and MacDonald, R., 2008. Understanding youth exclusion: critical moments, social networks and social capital. *Youth and policy*.

Simmons, R., 2011. Leadership and listening: the reception of user voice in today's public services. *Social Policy & Administration*, *45*(5), pp.539-568.

Skeggs, B., 1997. *Formations of class & gender: Becoming respectable* (Vol. 51). Sage.

Skeggs, B., 2004. *Class, self, culture*. Psychology Press.

Skeggs, B., 2014. Values beyond value? Is anything beyond the logic of capital?. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *65*(1), pp.1-20.

SkyNews.com., 2017. *Former chancellor George Osborne has HOW many jobs?* Accessed at: http://news.sky.com/story/george-osbornes-evening-standard-role-raises-potential-conflicts-of-interest-10805063 on 02/04/2017

Slater, T., 2014. The myth of "Broken Britain": welfare reform and the production of ignorance. *Antipode*, *46*(4), pp.948-969. Vancouver.

Smith, D.E., 1990. *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge*. University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D.J., Small, S. and Gray, J., 1983. *Police and People in London: survey of Londoners* (Vol. 1). Policy Studies Institute.

Spence, D., 1982. Narrative Truth and Historical Truth New York.

St John, G., 2003. Post-rave technotribalism and the carnival of protest. *The post-subcultures reader*, pg.65-82.

Stahl, G., 2003. Tastefully renovating subcultural theory: Making space for a new model. *The post-subcultures reader*, pp.27-40.

Standing, G., 2011. The precariat: The new dangerous class. *London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic*.

Standing, G., 2012. The precariat: from denizens to citizens?. *Polity*, *44*(4), pp.588-608.
Standing, G., 2013. Defining the precariat: A class in the making. *Eurozine*.

Standing, G., 2014. Understanding the precariat through labour and work. *Development and change*, *45*(5), pp.963-980.

Stark, E., 2013. Coercive control. *Violence against women: Current theory and practice in domestic abuse, sexual violence and exploitation*, pp.17-33.

Stoler, A.L., 2011. Colonial aphasia: Race and disabled histories in France. *Public Culture*, *23*(1), pp.121-156.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1994. Grounded theory methodology. *Handbook of qualitative research*, *17*, pp.273-85.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1998. *Basics of qualitative research*: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Sullivan, M., 2006. Are "gang" studies dangerous? Youth violence, local context, and the problem of reification. *Studying youth gangs*, pp.15-35.

Sundie, J.M., 2003. Conspicuous consumption as a mating strategy. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: the Sciences & Engineering*, *64*.

Sundie, J.M., Kenrick, D.T., Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J.M., Vohs, K.D. and Beal, D.J., 2011. Peacocks, Porsches, and Thorstein Veblen: conspicuous consumption as a sexual signaling system. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *100*(4), p.664.

Swidler, A., 1986. Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American sociological review*, pp.273-286.

Tate, W.F., 1995. Returning to the root: A culturally relevant approach to mathematics pedagogy. *Theory into practice*, *34*(3), pp.166-173.

Tate IV, W.F., 2008. The political economy of teacher quality in school mathematics: African American males, opportunity structures, politics, and method. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*(7), pp.953-971.

Taylor, J., 2011. The intimate insider: negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research. *Qualitative Research*, *11*(1), pp.3-22.

Telegraph.co.uk., 2017. Mass immigration has left Britain 'unrecognisable', says Nigel Farage. Accessed at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/ukip/10668996/Mass-immigration-has-left-Britain-unrecognisable-says-Nigel-Farage.html

The Guardian.com., 2001. Full text of Tony Blair's speech on education. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/may/23/labour.tonyblair 02/02/17

TheGuardian.com. 2006. David Cameron is a Doughnut. Available at: **https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/jun/08/davidcameronisadonut** 22/05/2016

TheGuardian.com. 2010. David Cameron's speech to the Tory conference: in full. Accessed at: **https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/oct/06/david-cameron-speech-tory-conference** 03/06/2016

TheGuardian.com. 2013. Giggs: prison, police harassment, cancelled tours - When Will It Stop. Accessed at: https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/oct/05/giggs-when-will-it-stop 23/08/2016

Thomson, R., 2007. A biographical perspective. *Understanding youth: Perspectives, identities and practices*, pp.73-106.

Thomson, R., Bell, R., Holland, J., Henderson, S., McGrellis, S. and Sharpe, S., 2002. Critical moments: Choice, chance and opportunity in young people's narratives of transition. *Sociology*, *36*(2), pp.335-354.

Thomson, R., Henderson, S. and Holland, J., 2003. Making the most of what you've got? Resources, values and inequalities in young women's transitions to adulthood. *Educational Review*, *55*(1), pp.33-46.

Thomson, R., Holland, J., McGrellis, S., Bell, R., Henderson, S. and Sharpe, S., 2004. Inventing adulthoods: a biographical approach to understanding youth citizenship. *The sociological review*, *52*(2), pp.218-239.

Thorne, B., 2005. Unpacking school lunchtime: Structure, practice, and the negotiation of differences. *Developmental pathways through middle childhood: Rethinking contexts and diversity as resources*, pp.63-88.

Thornton, S., 1995. Club Cultures. *Music, Media and Subcultural Capital. Hannover and London, Wesleyan*.

TimeOut,com. 2016. Skepta: 'I'm not a rapper, I'm an activist'. Available at: https://www.timeout.com/london/music/skepta-interview-im-not-a-rapper-im-an-activist 21/05/2016

Toffanin, A.M., 2012. Research on violence against women: A sociological perspective. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Family Studies*, *17*(1), pp.15-30.

Tomlinson, J., 1999. *Globalization and culture*. University of Chicago Press.

Tyler, I., 2008. "Chav mum chav scum" Class disgust in contemporary Britain. *Feminist media studies*, *8*(1), pp.17-34.

Tyler, I., 2009. Against abjection. *Feminist Theory*, *10*(1), pp.77-98.

Tyler, I 2010, 'Designed to fail: a biopolitics of British Citizenship.' Citizenship Studies, vol 14, no. 1, pp. 61-74. DOI: 10.1080/13621020903466357

Tyler, I., 2013. *Revolting subjects: Social abjection and resistance in neoliberal Britain*. Zed Books.

Tyree, T.C., 2009. Lovin'momma and hatin'on baby mama: A comparison of misogynistic and stereotypical representations in songs about rappers' mothers and baby mamas. *Women and Language*, *32*(2), pp.50-58.

Ueno, T., 2003. Unlearning to raver: Techno-party as the contact zone in trans-local formations. *The post-subcultures reader*, pp.101-18.

UNISON. 2016. A future at Risk: Cuts in Youth Services. Accessed at: https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/08/23996.pdf 14/02/2017

Veblen, T., 1907. The socialist economics of Karl Marx and his followers. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *21*(2), pp.299-322.

Vigil, J.D., 1987. Street socialization, locura behavior, and violence among Chicano gang members. In *Research conference on violence and homicide in Hispanic communities. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA*.

Wacquant, L.J., 1998. Negative social capital: State breakdown and social destitution in America's urban core. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, *13*(1), pp.25-40.

Wacquant, L., 2008. *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Polity

Wacquant, L., 2009a. *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. duke university Press.

Wacquant, L.J., 2009b. *Prisons of poverty* (Vol. 23). U of Minnesota Press.

Wacquant, L., Gilligan, G. and Pratt, J., 2004. *Penal truth comes to Europe: think tanks and the 'Washington consensus' on crime and punishment1* (pp. 161-182). Cullompton: Willan.

Waddington, P.A., Stenson, K. and Don, D., 2004. In proportion race, and police stop and search. *British journal of criminology*, *44*(6), pp.889-914.

Waters, C., 1981. Badges of half-formed, inarticulate radicalism: A critique of recent trends in the study of working class youth culture. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, *19*, pp.23-38.

Weis, L. and Cipollone, K., 2013. 'Class work': Producing privilege and social mobility in elite US secondary schools. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *34*(5-6), pp.701-722.

Wijeratne, S., Doran, D., Sheth, A. and Dustin, J.L., 2015, May. Analyzing the social media footprint of street gangs. In *Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), 2015 IEEE International Conference on* (pp. 91-96). IEEE.

Williams, R., 1977. *Marxism and literature* (Vol. 1). Oxford Paperbacks.

Williamson, H., 2003. Status Zero youth and the' underclass': Some considerations. In R. MacDonald. *Youth, the 'Underclass' and Social Exclusion'*, pp.70-82.

Willis, P., 1977. *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. Columbia University Press.

Willis, P.E., 1990. *Common culture: Symbolic work at play in the everyday cultures of the young*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Willis, P. and Trondman, M., 2000. Manifesto for ethnography. *Ethnography*, *1*(1), pp.5-16.

Willmott, P., Young, M.D. and Young, M.D., 1960. *Family and class in a London suburb* (Vol. 960). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

WindyMusicEnt. 2011. Ard Adz & Political Peak – Dream Catchers. Accesses at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpYpXNLzQxI 11/07/2016

Winlow, S., 2001. *Badfellas: Crime, tradition and new masculinities*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Winlow, S. and Hall, S., 2009. Retaliate first: Memory, humiliation and male violence. *Crime, Media, Culture*, *5*(3), pp.285-304.

Wolcott, H.F., 1999. *Ethnography: A way of seeing*. Rowman Altamira.

Wolf, A. 2011. The Wolf Report – Review of Vocational Education. London: DfE.

Wood, J.C. ed., 1987. *Karl Marx's economics: critical assessments* (Vol. 1). Psychology Press.

Young, J., 1999. *The exclusive society: Social exclusion, crime and difference in late modernity*. Sage.

Young, J., 2007. *The vertigo of late modernity*. Sage.

Young, T., 2009. Girls and gangs: 'Shemale'gangsters in the UK?. *Youth justice*, *9*(3), pp.224-238.

Young, T., Fitzgibbon, W. and Silverstone, D., 2014. A question of family? Youth and gangs. *Youth Justice*, *14*(2), pp.171-185.

Zinn, M.B., 1979. Field research in minority communities: Ethical, methodological and political observations by an insider. *Social Problems*, *27*(2), pp.209-219.

5 News. 2016. Big Narstie: Lack of Brits recognition is bananas. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLE4Vod5e9M 21/05/2016.

Appendix

Name	Age	About
T	23	T is a notorious semi-active gang member based in the South London area. Originally of South American descent he was born in Britain. He spent the first 5 years of his life living in his parental homeland before returning to start school in the UK. He left school with no qualifications and was sentenced to three years in prison at the age of 16.
Moussa	24	Moussa is of sub-Saharan African descent and was raised on a council estate in South London. He has never been affiliated to any specific gang but has been involved in a number of inter friendship group and inter school disputes which have resulted in him being stabbed numerous times and having his skull cracked with a baseball bat, the latter leading his friend and paramedics to believe he would never wake up. He is an educational achiever, holding a Bachelor's Degree in construction. However, since graduating he has found it difficult to find meaningful employment and has been forced in to casual day labouring and short term work operating heavy machinery.
Jeremiah	29	Jeremiah is of mixed black Caribbean and White British heritage. He was raised by a socially conscious and aspirational black single father, mostly in the South London area, though was forced to move around incessantly in his youth. His father's choice to pursue education was critical in Jeremiah's trajectory, as on the one hand it equipped him with many of the tools which would help him to attend an exclusive Oxbridge university, but on the other led to high levels of materially deprivation and insecurity. Jeremiah was possibly one of the most successful participants in this study in mainstream culturally legitimated terms, but he was also the second eldest. He works in a professional job for a nationally recognised charity and earns a reasonable salary for his age. He is on a steady career path and has a promising future.
Stephen	23	Stephen is of black West African descent. He grew up on a south London housing estate, initially with both his parent, who later separated causing some difficulties in his life. Like T he is gang affiliated, yet in a less pronounced way, but is well known for his ability to do violence. Stephen has been stabbed twice. He has spent several spells in prison and shortly after participating in this study returned to prison for drugs offences. Stephen is good at sport, and is particularly keen on football, aspiring to be a football coach.
Kieran	29	Kieran is the eldest male participant in this study by a couple of months. He is of mixed West African and British heritage. Growing up in south

		London his aspirational mother managed to win him a scholarship to a private school. This ended disastrously however, as Kieran had trouble fitting in in such a radically different environment and was expelled from the school, having to return to state education. State school was better for Kieran, who after leaving school spent a few years of living precariously in hostel accommodation, eventually managed to get a council flat and an apprenticeship working for a unionised rail firm. He is the highest earning legitimately employed person in this study and now works as an engineer on the railways.
Charlotte	25	Charlotte is of mixed black Caribbean, white British and Jewish heritage. She is a single mother and left school with no qualifications. She was raised in very difficult circumstances with both her parents being drug users, she was responsible for much of the care of her younger siblings. She recounted many instances of domestic violence and drug use happening in her household growing up. After periods of homelessness and criminal activity Charlotte's life was changed by a young people's advocacy charity which helped her to get housing, skills and some employment. She also got to meet with then Prime minister David Blunkett to discuss youth issues. Later she became a single mother after her relationship broke down as a result of ongoing domestic abuse. Her son has a variety of developmental problems such as autism and pituitary gland deficiency. For the most part she is the sole carer for her son, but is still relentlessly ambitious, dreaming of providing a better lifestyle for herself and her son. She is an entrepreneur with a variety of skills including beauty and childcare.
Leona	24	Leona is of mixed black Caribbean and white British heritage. She was born in London but moved away to a commuter belt town after her mother discover she had been being sexually abused by her baby sitter's son. She started secondary school in this town but experienced racial abuse and exclusion. This led her to seeking out friends in London by utilising emerging forms of social media. Leona now lives in London with her young daughter, of whom she is the sole carer. She has ambitions to work in community settings as well having a keen interest in health and fitness.
Sandra	21	Sandra is of mixed black Caribbean and white British descent. She was the youngest participant in this study. She has moved between the South East and the Midlands throughout her life, though is now settled in the midlands area. Her mother died when Sandra was in her late teens causing some difficulty in her trajectory. She is a single mother of a young daughter and will soon be graduating from university.

Alicia	26	Alicia is of mixed Colombian descent. Her grandmother is black Colombian and the rest of her family are of Latin Colombian heritage. She on occasion points to her black heritage but rarely actively identifies as mixed race, preferring Latina or Colombian identifiers. She came to London as a young child and has lived in the South London area ever since. She recently earned a degree from a reputable institution. She is now a single mother to one daughter and is working part-time; hoping to build a successful career as her daughter grows older.
Jennifer	27	Jennifer is of mixed Caribbean and white British descent. Her mother is black Caribbean and her dad is mixed black Caribbean and white British. She experienced some hardship growing up in South London. Despite this she is now a senior teacher in a London school, several years after graduating from a top UK university.
Steph	29	Steph is of white Irish and British descent. She had a difficult early life, as both of her parents were drug users. Her mother died when Steph was young, of illness connected with her drug use. Steph was perhaps one of the most 'active' women in this study, in a road sense. She is now a mother to three children and is living outside of London.