

Theories of Punk and Subculture

In academic discussions of punk there are two (near) certainties: that the Sex Pistols and Malcolm McLaren will be namechecked, and that the work of Hebdige will be discussed. Hebdige's (1979) book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* was foundational in theories of punk. More than this, however, the book proved to be central to the development of a theory of 'subculture'. The academic history of punk has, ever since, been intertwined with developments in the conceptualisation of subculture.

Over the decades much has been written about subculture. The original literature spawned a range of new conceptualisations: 'post-subculture', 'scenes' and 'neo-tribes', alongside retentions of—or returns to—'subculture'. This chapter will provide a brief review of the history of 'the subculture debate' before turning to more concrete discussions of how theorists might proceed in such a contentious discussion. More specifically, the development of a body of academic work on punk will also be examined throughout this chapter.

The first two sections of the chapter provide the 'pre-history' of the subculture debate, introducing first, the concept's origin in the work of the Chicago School before moving on to consider the work of the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). I then go on to discuss the evolution and debate that has occurred around 'subculture' and 'punk' and contextualise these within the wider theoretical developments of late modernity, individualisation and globalisation.

Although important theoretical work has been done by both subcultural and post-subcultural theorists, I argue that in order to proceed with an academic analysis of a subculture the concept needs to be regrounded (Bennett 2011; Pilkington and Omel'chenko 2013). To do this, the academic lens should be refocused in order to place subcultural participants within their wider historical, social and geographical contexts. I advocate for a view of the connectedness (Smart 2007) of all these facets, arguing that a holistic approach will ultimately result in a greater understanding of the significance of subculture.

SUBCULTURE AND THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

The use of subculture as an analytical framework first came to prominence with the work of sociologists at the Chicago School. Their work focuses on a variety of aspects of urban culture, most notably gang culture and deviancy (Cohen 1955; Whyte [1943] 1955).

The work of the Chicago School took place at a time (the early twentieth century) when there was great preoccupation, and consternation, with delinquency amongst the young. Whyte's descriptions of gang culture in *Street Corner Society* ([1943] 1955) set the foundation for a focus on delinquency within the school's work on subculture. This would shift with subsequent theoretical development; however, the setting up of subcultures as either against or separate from normative cultures remains a distinct element of the concept.

Whilst the Chicago School's conceptualisation did not foreground a requirement of 'youth' for membership of subcultures, the groups they focused on certainly were young. The 'rise' of the teenager during the 1950s led to more acute concerns amongst wider society regarding the delinquency of these 'youth subcultures' (Goodman 1960). Subculture, therefore, became inherently linked with youthful practices. This discourse remains, rather erroneously, today, even as more recent research has noted that subcultural practices persist into and through adulthood (Bennett 2006; Bennett and Hodkinson 2012).

In A.K. Cohen's (1955) theorisation, subcultures arise in a 'problem' solving capacity. Where individuals lack status in wider society, they will group together, forming new norms that imbue them with alternate modes of claiming status. In this we see the kernels of later developments of 'subculture' that focus on resistance to wider society (Clarke et al. [1975] 2006; Williams 2011), or the claiming of subcultural capital (Thornton 1995).

SUBCULTURE AND THE CCCS

The concept of ‘subculture’ found a new home in the UK during the 1960s and 1970s. A move towards a Gramscian emphasis on the role of cultural hegemony in Marxist class struggle led to the emergence of the field of cultural studies, first at the CCCS. Subcultural work at the CCCS focuses on the cultural expression of disaffected working-class youth in the UK, most notably groups such as the Teds, Mods, Skins, Punks, and Rastas (Hall and Jefferson [1975] 2006).

Two particular strands emerged from studies produced at the CCCS. The first draws more explicitly on the Chicago School and conceptualises the practices of *resistance* amongst these youth groups. The second formulation of subculture, encapsulated most famously by Hebdige (1979), focuses on the *stylistic* practices of young people.

Subcultural Resistance and Class

The CCCS conceptualisation of subculture proposes that such groups consist of predominantly working-class young people; subcultures were positioned as subgroups of working-class culture. Subculture is viewed as a response to class oppression and the hegemonic cultural domination of the middle class. However, as a subgroup of the working classes, these young people’s resistance was deemed to be against their ‘parent(s)’ culture’ rather than middle-class hegemony. Thus their resistance is understood as symbolic, rather than as a direct political challenge (Clarke et al. [1975] 2006).

In contrast, middle-class youth are viewed as members of ‘counter cultures’ rather than subcultures. Counter cultures, whose resistance was against their parent(s)’ middle-class culture, were considered to have more political potential. “Even when the working-class subcultures are aggressively class-conscious, this dimension tends to be repressed by the control culture, which treats them as ‘typical delinquents’. Even when the middle-class counter-cultures are explicitly anti-political, their objective tendency is treated as, potentially, political” (Hall and Jefferson [1975] 2006: 48). By dint of their supposed different class positions, subcultures’ and counter cultures’ political potential was viewed differently.

There has therefore been much debate over the political potential of these working-class youth subcultures. As their resistance was largely determined to be symbolic, without posing any material challenge to the status quo, subcultures were viewed as inadvertently *reinforcing* social structures (Clarke et al. [1975] 2006; Cohen [1972] 1997; Willis 1977).

Debate over the structural determinism of the CCCS understanding of ‘subculture’ has raged, forming one facet on which ‘post-subculture’ came to be based (see later in this chapter). Although the CCCS did not negate the influence of other structural factors (for example race, see Critcher [1975] 2006; Hebdige 1979), it is argued that they laid the emphasis on class as the most important factor determining the social nature and political relevance of the subcultures (Muggleton 2000).

Later defences of ‘subculture’ suggest that critiques of the CCCS’s structural determinism were based on a misinterpretation on the part of the post-subculturalists (Shildrick and MacDonald 2006; this is discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

Subcultural Style

One of the most outwardly notable aspects of these ‘new’ subcultures were their stylistic practices. These formed the basis of Hebdige’s (1979) work. Hebdige conducted a semiotic analysis of the clothing and behaviours of Teddy Boys, mods, punks, rastas and skins. In mundane everyday objects, he argues, members of subcultures seek to create their own identity; by appropriating and recontextualising artefacts through practices of *bricolage*, they seek to challenge the rest of society.

In placing so much emphasis on the outward style, particularly the clothing, Hebdige’s readings of subcultures position practices of consumption as central to subcultural identity and resistance. Although widely critiqued, this influence is felt throughout later theorisation on subculture, and more specifically on punk.

Internal Critiques in the CCCS

Whilst many later theorists have critiqued the work of the CCCS as a whole, it is important to remember that the CCCS was a collective: a number of academics working in a similar field but with often distinct positions. As such, some of the criticisms of the CCCS’s body of work as a whole come from *within* the CCCS itself. McRobbie and Garber ([1975] 2006) lamented the gender bias in the work of their colleagues and how this affected ‘subculture’ as an analytical framework. The majority of the CCCS’s output had focused, rather uncritically, on male-dominated subcultures. McRobbie and Garber worked to redress this balance through their focus on feminine ‘bedroom’ subculture.

A methodological critique came from within the CCCS, from G. Clarke ([1982] 2007) who said; “attention should be focussed on what youth actually *do*, [...] rather than ‘reading’ the stylistic nuances of a chosen sub-culture. Where styles are considered, the analysis should fully take into account their importance for working-class youth *after* what has been taken to be a moment of incorporation” (249). G. Clarke therefore recognised that subculture has wider influences on young people’s *practices* as well as on their style.

Willis (1972) proposed that the CCCS as a whole needed to spend more time locating subculture within wider culture, arguing that: “[t]here has not been a vigorous analysis of the status of the culture a sub-culture is supposed to be ‘sub’ to. The notion implies a relative positioning which seems to give an altogether misleading sense of [the] absoluteness and dominance of the main culture” (Willis 1972: xlv–xlvii, quoted in Blackman 2005: 6). Subcultural theorists should, therefore, consider the relationship(s) between subcultures and wider cultures.

PUNK AS STYLE, PUNK AS ART

Punk Style

The foundations for the academic understanding of punk were laid by Hebdige (1979) in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. His focus on the ‘spectacular’ style of punk pertains within and beyond academia.

Hebdige, in line with the rest of the CCCS, focused particularly on the homological ‘fit’ between punk style and punks’ (supposed) working-class position. “Punk claimed to speak for the neglected constituency of white lumpen youth [...] ‘rendering’ working classness metaphorically in chains and hollow cheeks, ‘dirty’ clothing [...] and rough and ready diction”(Hebdige 1979: 63). “The safety pins and bin liners signified a relative material poverty which was either directly experienced and exaggerated or sympathetically assumed, and which in turn was made to stand for the spiritual paucity of everyday life” (Hebdige 1979: 115). The stylistic practices of working-class young people formed a large part of his focus and analysis of subculture.

However, through punk’s ‘signifying practices’, Hebdige argues that punks occupy a rather different position in regards to class resistance than the other working-class subcultures studied by the CCCS. Through absurdity and their ‘otherness’, punks, rather than being positioned

inside the working classes and resisting their parent culture, are positioned *outside*. “The punk ensembles [...] did not so much magically resolve experienced contradictions as *represent* the experience of contradiction itself” (Hebdige 1979: 121). Punk was therefore set apart from other subcultures in terms of its resistant potential.

Problematic, for punks and for theorists, was Hebdige’s construction of punk authenticity and his emphasis on practices of consumption. He (justifiably) bemoaned consumer culture’s tendency to appropriate subculture, “irrespective of the startling content of the style: punk clothing and insignia could be bought mail-order by the summer of 1977” (96). With this Hebdige set up a hierarchy that recognised only those punks who shopped in London’s Kings Road as ‘original’ punks. “As soon as the original innovations which signify ‘subculture’ are translated into commodities and made generally available, they become ‘frozen’” (96). Punks who had not witnessed its inception could not claim to understand it. “The style no doubt made sense for the first wave of self-conscious innovators at a level which remained inaccessible to those who became punks after the subculture had surfaced and been publicized. Punk is not unique in this: the distinction between originals and hangers-on” (122). This discourse thereby erases as authentic the experiences of punks from anywhere other than London and from a very specific time frame (Cobley 1999). It also removes agency from anyone who interacts with mass culture, positioning them as passive consumers of whatever the media is currently pushing (Hodkinson 2002).

The most glaring errors in Hebdige’s work stem from his methodology. He understands himself to be an objective outsider, schooled in reading the underlying meanings attached to punk’s symbols, able to gain a better understanding of punk than the punks themselves; “it is highly unlikely, for instance, that the members of any of the subcultures described in this book would recognize themselves reflected here” (Hebdige 1979: 139). This attitude would see generations of later academics, with personal experience of punk, criticise his appropriation: “[I] was left feeling that it had absolutely nothing to say about my life as I had once experienced it” (Muggleton 2000: 2). In Chap. 5, some of the participants in this research project discuss their own ideas of punk and subculture.

Laing’s (1985) *One Chord Wonders* followed Hebdige in adopting a semiotic approach. Laing rehearsed Hebdige’s analysis of the clothes and behaviours of punks, but widened the scope. Laing investigated

the *artefacts* of punk (recorded music, zines and clothing), the *events* of punk (key performances of punk both live or on television, also including instances of censorship) and the *institutions* of punk (shops and record labels, record companies and the press) (vii).

Studying punk in the context of post-punk developments, Laing was able to take a broader and less deterministic view of the implications of punk. Laing made it clear that punk was not only a working-class subculture, and further critiqued the emphasis on purchased punk clothing: “true punks made their own outfits, the ‘posers’ merely bought theirs” (1985: 124). He interrogated the political economy of punk record labels and distribution networks, a theme that would continue to dominate academic studies of punk (see later in this chapter). His understanding of punk recognised that it is complex, perhaps only coalescing around an ‘alternative’, but ‘recognizable’ ‘identity’ (131).

Punk Art

The next major trend within punk studies was the interpretation of punk as an artistic movement. A number of studies emerged that argued the central position of the Sex Pistols and, in particular, Malcolm McLaren’s role in early UK punk (Marcus 1989; Nehring 1993; Savage 1991). These three works all drew out the links between punk and art school graduates (or drop-outs), placing punk in a lineage of avant-garde, Dada, and Situationist art.

The power of Hebdige’s emphasis of the importance of ‘original’ punks over ‘hangers on’ was compounded by the importance that these three texts placed on the Sex Pistols and Malcolm McLaren. This pervasive discourse has led to this band continuing to dominate punk theory (see Crossley 2008) and cultural representations of punk in television documentaries and museum retrospectives. This led to Sabin’s (1999) complaint; “how many more times must we hear the Sex Pistols story?” (2). The discourse that punk ‘died’ with the end of the Sex Pistols is, therefore, a powerful one. This is especially true amongst UK-based scholars, as post-1979 the dominant cultural ‘leftover’ was post-punk, positioned self-consciously as different to punk. Around the rest of the world, however, punk mutated into other forms; punk therefore lives on (Gololobov et al. 2014; O’Connor 2004; O’Hara 1999; Thompson 2004; Wallach 2008).

LATE MODERNITY: INDIVIDUALISATION AND GLOBALISATION

Later developments in subcultural theory, namely the shift from subculture to post-subculture(s), took place under the influences of wider shifts in sociological thinking. Subcultural theory had drawn heavily on postmodern semiotic methods. However, in the late twentieth century postmodernism came under fire from a group of theorists who believed that there had been insufficient social change to justify the concept of *postmodernism*, instead proposing that *late* modernity was more appropriate. Late modernity, as a concept, placed emphasis on the individual, a conceptual development that proved key to post-subcultural debates. There was also a rise in debates on issues of globalisation that proved influential to later theoretical developments that aimed to move beyond the CCCS's ideas of locally bounded subcultures.

The importance of theories of late modernity, individualisation and globalisation go beyond their impact on later developments in the 'subculture debate'. They also contribute to discussions later in this book regarding how punk itself is conceptualised. I later show that punk came to be defined (academically) largely by its social practices, however Chap. 5 will argue that there is also value in understanding the individual's role within the subculture.

Late Modernity

Late modernity, also known as liquid modernity (Bauman 2000), was proposed as an alternative theory to postmodernity. It is argued that in late modern society, the key tenets of the shift from pre-modernity (or traditional society) to modernity continue to have effect. The governance of the nation state as well as the dominance of scientific and technological developments remain important in late modernity and continue to drive social change (Giddens 1994, 2000). This continuity places society within a longer period of modernity, rather than in a new—post—modernity.

Bauman (2000) argues that liquid modernity can, however, be marked out as distinct from modernity due to two factors: firstly, the loss of the narrative that society, technology and science could 'progress' us towards a utopia; secondly, a rise in the levels of deregulation and privatisation of economies. These have accompanied a shift in our roles in society from citizen to individual.

A change in our relationship with space and time, Bauman (2000) and Giddens (1991) argue, is a key factor shaping pre-modern, modern, and late modern periods. Globalisation, hyperconnectivity and hypermobility form the distinct late modern element of our understanding of time and space.

Individualisation

It is suggested that the ‘detraditionalisation’ (Heelas 1996) of modern society has given rise to greater individual agency: ‘individualisation’ (Beck 1994; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Individuals have many more choices available and far greater opportunities to shape their own lives. For example, whereas ‘traditionally’ a son would follow his father’s career, “work is now rarely approached as fate” (Giddens 1994: 91). Moreover with marriage no longer as closely tied to property rights, there has been an erosion of societal demands to make a ‘good match’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The availability of education to all arguably gave rise to far greater social mobility and control over the choices that one might make in life than in earlier traditional societies. In these areas, and many more, these theorists propose that individuals are faced with a plethora of choice in which the challenge is “to stage manage [...] one’s own biography” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 4). Choice is therefore crucial in the creation of identity in theories of individualisation.

With the emphasis in late modern times on ‘living one’s own life’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), far greater importance was placed on every choice made. If we accept this individualisation thesis, it is no logical leap to understand how the management of one’s (sub)cultural life can be seen to be driven by choice. Indeed, the possibility and fluidity of the process of individualised biography construction is a central aspect to the post-subculturalists’ critiques of ‘subculture’.

However, both Giddens’ and Beck’s understandings of these phenomena as twentieth century developments are problematic. Smart (2007) rightly criticises this as ahistorical (see later in this chapter), with high levels of individual agency present throughout history. Smart suggests that despite this problematic aspect, theories of individualisation should not be disregarded but that their foregrounding of individual agency should be tempered. She reminds us that individual agency is “embedded in culture and history, with these qualities manifesting themselves

through forms of everyday behaviour which are not radically different to action in the past” (Smart 2007: 26). Smart puts forward a theory of society based around ‘connectedness’ rather than ‘individualisation’.

The point about the idea [of connectedness], however, is that it sets the sociological imagination off on a different intellectual trajectory to the one initiated by the individualization thesis. With the latter, one is directed towards gathering information and evidence about fragmentation, differentiation, separation and autonomy. And it also becomes a mindset or inferential framework through which information is interpreted. This tendency needs to be counter-balanced by an awareness of connection, relationship, reciprocal emotion, entwinement, memory, history and so on. (Smart 2007: 189)

This theory of ‘connectedness’ will prove key to the arguments presented in this book. I will endeavour to gain a closer understanding of Dutch punk by ‘embedding’ (Pilkington and Omel’chenko 2013) individuals’ lives in their connected social world; be that historically, spatially, or socially.

Globalisation

With the rise of individualisation and detraditionalisation in late modernity came the dominance (certainly in Western understandings) of globalisation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The twentieth century saw an exponential growth in connectivity between disparate areas of the globe, heightened mobility for many, and greater transnational economic structures. This posed great problems for social theorists more used to discussing locally bounded society and cultures. Work on globalisation theories had previously encompassed models of discrete local or national societies communicating and interacting with each other, often unevenly. Dominant conceptualisations focused on the relationship between cultural ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’ (Shils 1975; Wallerstein 1974).

For those working on processes of individualisation in late modernity, globalisation offered yet more evidence of the erosion of traditional communities in which people lived their lives. Now, “people spread their lives out across separate worlds. Globalization of biography means place polygamy; people are wedded to several places at once” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 25). Globalisation therefore has implications for individualised identity construction in late modernity.

The cultural implications of heightened global connections were huge. For Appadurai (1996), increases in cultural flows contributed primarily to the way in which people understand their place in the world: for global, connected cultural communities to be possible, if often largely *imagined* (for ‘imagined communities’ see Anderson [1983] 2006). Appadurai (1996) recognised that, for the majority of the twentieth century, the United States had formed a cultural centre to which much of the rest of the world was peripheral. However, he argued that the late twentieth century rise of mass media and increased migration resulted in a change to the modern experience of culture. Mass media “tend to interrogate, subvert, and transform other contextual literacies” (3). The immediacy of these new media possibilities, taken together with the mass migration of people “create diasporic public spheres” (4). He argued that cultural flow was exceedingly complex, and “the United States is no longer the puppeteer of a world system of images but is only one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes” (31). Globalisation has resulted in cultural flow operating in multiple directions.

However, a lot of sociological work on theories of globalisation have taken a more nuanced view of the limited opportunities of globalisation. Discussions encompassed issues of continued locality, of changing perceptions of spatiality with the ‘shrinkage’ of the world, and of historically contingent uneven interactions between economic/cultural centres of the west and the rest of the world.

One concept that emerged, and which was picked up in post-subcultural theory (see later in this chapter) was ‘glocal’. Robertson (1995) first applied ‘glocal’ to sociological discourses of globalisation, borrowing the term from the business world in which it is used to describe “the tailoring and advertising of goods and services on a global or near-global basis to increasingly differentiated local and particular markets” (28). He argues that discussions about the globalisation or Westernisation of the world had lost sight of the role of the ‘local’. Historically, the construction of ‘local’ identities (such as nations) occurred in parallel with the development in understandings of the ‘global’. Therefore we see that, conceptually, glocal and local have always been dependent on each other. Robertson states that adopting the term ‘glocalization’ would reassert the place of the local in these debates, allowing a refocusing on the ways in which global and local concerns may intersect.

A number of theorists critique the emphasis on a rather flat model of globalisation in which everyone had access to its benefits, and few

experienced its disadvantages. Pries (2005) reminds us that whilst “[t]hese increases in flows and movement have created new dimensions of lived experiences and perceptions, and have broadened mental maps and spatial imaginaries” (168), the application of these flows have been “distributed very unequally over the globe” (167). Hannerz (1992) agrees, arguing therefore for a retention of the ‘centre/periphery’ conceptualisation in the context of a global flow of culture in recognition of these inequalities. Hannerz suggests that any sphere of culture has its own centre, or potentially multiple centres, of influence with culture flowing in multiple directions between them. This multiplicity enables a deeper understanding of cultural ‘flow’ whilst maintaining a theoretical framework that allows this ‘flow’ to be unequal.

People from both center and periphery, and from different centers and different peripheries, engage in the ongoing management of meaning within them to a greater extent as both producers and consumers, in a joint construction of meaning and cultural form. Although a relatively even distribution of knowhow among them provides the basis for some degree of symmetry in the management of meaning, however, elements in the organization of these cultures still draw them into the center/periphery framework. (Hannerz 1992: 249)

Massey (1993) argues for a deep understanding of the multifaceted levels at which people’s access to globalised mobility takes place. Massey highlights how this shapes culture in uneven ways depending on who has access to higher levels of mobility. Massey further reminds us of the importance of considering mobility and cultural flow in the context of social relations that are both borne out of and also affect mobility and cultural flow. “Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway-differentiated mobility: some are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don’t; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it” (61). Globalisation has therefore not been a force for universal good.

Discussions of individualisation and the position of individuals and subcultures in a global world have shaped many of the subcultural debates that followed and will be discussed in the rest of this chapter. Moreover, Chap. 4 of this book will return to these debates, focusing particularly on Massey’s (1993) mobility as a facet of cultural flow to situate the Dutch punk scene in a global punk context.

POST-SUBCULTURE

In the wake of the rise of the concept of individualisation, theories pertaining to subculture experienced similar shifts. With academic focus now on individuals and their agency, the CCCS's conceptualisations of subcultural groups came to be viewed as overly rigid and fixed around structurally determined group identities. Muggleton and Weinzierl (2003), amongst others (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004), developed an argument that contemporaneous youth groupings were *post*-subcultural.

Muggleton's (2000) work focuses on style. He argues against the CCCS position that style has meaning for a semiotician to read, proposing instead that style is "a symptom of postmodern hyperindividualism" (6). Subcultures, therefore, are "manifestations of self-expression, individual autonomy and cultural diversity" (167). Style and the postmodern fluidity of style became the most important subcultural indicator in many strands of post-subcultural theory.

The rise of post-subcultural theory led to a questioning of the very usefulness of the term subculture. Redhead (1990) charged that "subcultures were produced by subcultural theorists, not the other way around" (25), whilst Bennett (1999) stated that subculture "has arguably become little more than a convenient 'catch-all' term" (599). This opened up the floodgates for waves of theorists to coin new terms they felt best fitted the groups on which their own studies were based. Bennett (1999) and Malbon (1999) describe dance cultures as *neo-tribes*, Straw (1991, 2001) and Stahl (2004) prefer *scenes*, whilst Hodgkinson (2002) argues for a modification of 'subculture' for goths.

Neo-Tribes

'Neo-tribe' is a concept postulated by both Bennett (1999) and Malbon (1999), utilising Maffesoli's (1996) concept of *tribus*. "[T]he wandering mass-tribes [...] [which are] less a question of belonging to a gang, a family or a community than of switching from one group to another [...] characterized by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal" (Maffesoli 1996: 76). Theorists' emphasis has shifted away from conceptions of the fixed group identities of subcultures to highlighting individuals' temporal identities, arguing that just as these identities are fluid, so are the 'groups' around which they coalesce. The fluidity of these neo-tribes forms a stark contrast to the cohesive groups that formed the core of the CCCS's subcultural studies.

Within a particular neo-tribe there is no strong adherence to rigid styles or tastes. This freedom, Bennett (1999) explains, stems from late modern consumer society. This retains the CCCS's emphasis on consumption as contributing to the formation of identity but views consumption as a site of *pleasure* rather than symbolic resistance. Blackman (2005) and Hesmondhalgh (2005) view the concept of the 'neo-tribes' as focused rather uncritically on practices of consumerism above other social practices with which young people might be involved. However, Bennett (2005) counters that his understanding of consumption is far broader and 'includes dancing, listening to the radio, watching television, reading magazines, and so on' (256).

Malbon (1999) suggests a theory of 'experiential consumption': the storing of experience as memory that contributes to identity. Malbon is especially interested in the way in which 'the crowd' is experienced and how this experience is consumed and reproduced, thereby acting as part of *sociality*. Malbon does not view post-modern society as structure-less; he uses Maffesoli's (1996) concept of 'sociality' as his structural framework. "Sociality may be defined as the common sense or human nature that underlies the more formal aspects of social life. [...] Sometimes seemingly invisible, at times secretive, and often elusive, sociality has been described as the dark underbelly of society and society's norms, mores and civilising processes" (Malbon 1999: 24). The crowd therefore remains important, this 'being togetherness' as a form of *empathetic sociality*, which Malbon translated into a collective form of 'experiential consumption' (Malbon 1999). Similar themes would later emerge, drawing on Fine and Kleinman (1979), to argue for the importance of understanding affective social bonds (Pilkington et al. 2014).

Scenes

The concept of 'scene', as proposed by Shank (1994) and Straw (1991, 2001), puts more emphasis on geographical location and musical heritage than either 'subculture' or 'neo-tribe'. The concept 'scene' has been used to describe groups that draw upon international music culture (Straw 2001). However, it has also been used to describe specifically local groups that rely on face-to-face contact (Shank 1994). These differing conceptualisations have proven confusing. "In many cases, the term seems to be used to invoke a notion of the musical (and music-associated) practices occurring within a particular geographical space.

[...] Meanwhile, other writers are using the term to denote a cultural space that transcends locality” (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 29).

For Harris (2000), however, this multiplicity was part of the attractiveness of ‘scene’ as a concept as it reflected the complexity of the geographical space in which musical practices operate. “The implication is that scenes include everything, from tight-knit local music communities to isolated musicians and occasional fans, since all contribute to and feed off a larger space(s) of musical practice” (25).

Despite this confusion, ‘scene’ proves useful in retaining a focus on the geographical and the historical. The concept allows for both spatial and temporal differences within a worldwide movement such as punk—useful, as the term ‘punk’ has been understood in very different ways in its many incarnations all over the world. The emphasis on geographical locations, when looking at each specifically local cultural heritage can help in explaining this diversity. ‘Scene’ also retains an emphasis on music, an important aspect that is all too often lost in favour of analysis of style, consumption and ritual.

However, beyond the musical, historical and geographical, ‘scene’ largely lacks much further sociological rigour; it does not address other aspects of the social such as identity, ideology, structure, style, consumption or politics.

‘Scene’ is further complicated by being in common vernacular usage, especially by punks. “When punks use the term ‘scene’ they mean the active creation of infrastructure to support punk bands and other forms of creative activity. This means finding places to play, building a supportive audience, developing strategies for living cheaply, shared punk houses, and such like” (O’Connor 2002: 226). Scenes can also be non-local: “The ‘scene’ is the Punk community and the word they use to describe it. There are local scenes, national scenes, and worldwide scenes. The subsections of the Punk movement also use the term to describe themselves, e.g., the Straight Edge scene” (O’Hara 1999: 16). Similar to O’Hara and O’Connor, when ‘scene’ is used in this book it is used in terms of the punk *vernacular* rather than pertaining to any of the differing *concepts* of ‘scene’.

Moving Beyond Post-subculture, Defending Subculture

Not all theorists agreed that the terms ‘subculture’ should be dismissed (Hodkinson 2002, 2004; Shildrick and MacDonald 2006). Some felt

that there was enough merit in the CCCS concept that, with a little updating, it was still workable.

Shildrick and MacDonald (2006) charge that the post-subculturalists misread the work of the CCCS when critiquing its overemphasis on structure. Particular importance was therefore placed on the interaction between structure and agency in the ‘subculture debate’. Shildrick and MacDonald (2006) criticise the post-subculturalists for taking the assertion of individuals’ agency too far, arguing that “social divisions still shape youth cultural identities” (126). They suggest reviewing the way in which the CCCS approached the matter, pointing towards their more nuanced “intertwin[ing]” (137) of social structure and individual biography than are present in the concepts offered by post-subculturalists. They also draw attention to the CCCS’s emphasis of subculture as shaped by *three* factors: culture and biography, in addition to structure (Clarke et al. [1975] 2006).

Some, such as Hodkinson (2002, 2004), therefore choose to retain the nomenclature of ‘subculture’. He called for an emphasis to be placed on determining subculture through four indicative criteria of *identity*, *commitment*, *consistent distinctiveness* and *autonomy* (2002: 29). In doing so he hopes to move beyond (working) class resistance to focus on the diverse cultural practices and identifications of those involved whilst retaining some degree of cohesiveness. It is on the basis of these four indicators that he concludes that the UK goths of the late 1990s could be understood as a subculture.

It remains important to recognize that even the most substantive of subcultures will retain elements of diversity, that some individuals will adopt elements of their values without any particular commitment, and that even the most committed participants are not somehow isolated from other interests or priorities. At the same time as emphasizing these elements of fluidity, though, this book seeks – by focusing in relative terms on levels of identity, commitment, coherence and autonomy – to infer that subcultures are more notable for their substance than for their ephemerality. (Hodkinson 2002: 33)

Crucially, in setting out four determinants for ‘subculture’, Hodkinson (2002) suggests that the concept should not be applied uncritically to a group. Instead the practices should be evaluated to test whether or not ‘subculture’ is more appropriate than one of the other, more fluid, post-subcultural terms such as neo-tribe.

REGROUNDING THEORY

More recently there has been a move away from this ‘subculture debate’ towards a regrounding of theories of youth cultural practice (Pilkington and Omel’chenko 2013). Bennett himself noted that much of the work of the post-subculturalists had lacked an “in-depth analysis of the dynamic interplay between structural experience and cultural consumption in the formation of local instances of youth cultural practice” (Bennett 2011: 502). Such interplay is crucial to regrounding subcultural theory.

This theoretical work draws on the best of subcultural and post-subcultural theory, to produce “a more effective mapping of a contemporary youth cultural terrain in which youth identities forge an increasingly complex mix of global and local cultural influences” (Bennett 2011: 502). Pilkington and Omel’chenko (2013) aim to prioritise “neither ‘structure’ nor ‘culture’” and instead study “the social structures that include/exclude young people; individuals’ negotiations of them; and the youth cultural trajectories that ensue” (209). Some theorists retain the terminology of ‘subculture’, whereas others do not.

Williams (2011) places his work within the paradigm of ‘subculture’. His conceptualisation is developed through a symbolic interactionist framework. He strikes a balance between the fluidity and fixedness of groups of people, focusing on the way that subcultural norms develop through interactions between (and beyond) members. “Subcultures refer to culturally bounded, but not closed, networks of people who come to share the meaning of specific ideas, material objects, and practices through interaction” (39). In this reconceptualisation of subculture, Williams treads carefully between elements of structure and agency, fixity and fluidity. Moreover, by understanding that subcultural practices are affected by interactions with those *beyond* the subculture itself, he embeds participants in their wider social and cultural contexts.

A key component to these developments is Fine and Kleinman’s (1979) concept of ‘communication interlocks’, drawn on by both Williams (2011) and Pilkington et al. (2014). Fine and Kleinman suggest that cultural communication takes place through a variety of connections. “Small groups are connected with many other groups through a large number of interlocks, or social connections” (Fine and Kleinman 1979: 8). These may consist of individuals who have membership in multiple groups, intergroup communication, multigroup communication

or communication between groups and non-members (8). Subcultures are hereby understood not as fixed worlds, separate from the rest of society but embedded within wider social and cultural practices. Subcultures are “affected by outside cultures just as it affects them” (Williams 2011: 42).

In these conceptual developments, therefore, the subcultures themselves are embedded within wider culture. In starting from this position it is possible to understand how subcultures spread and operate. Williams (2011) argues that subcultural practices, artefacts, and ideas may spread via these ‘communication interlocks’: “subcultures are not restricted to particular groups or areas, but can spread through whatever channels of social interaction exist” (Williams 2011: 40). Moreover, the embeddedness of subcultures within wider culture allows us to view cultural practices as constrained by social structures, whilst allowing individuals the possibility to (re)negotiate these.

I argue that the grounding of subcultural theory in understandings of connectivity can be further extended. A model of intersubjectivity (Crossley 1996) can help us understand the process by which meaning is shared and created within the relationships in multiple intersecting communication interlocks. ‘Intersubjectivity’ explains how verbal and non-verbal means of communication operate through shared systems of meanings, which are based on assumptions that both/all parties are privy to (Crossley 1996). It also explains how cultural meanings are created and shared “*between* individuals” (Wan 2012: 109). Intersubjectivity does not require meaning to remain fixed: rather, cultural meanings, processes and understandings are able to evolve (Crossley 1996; Wan 2012). Crossley explains ‘intersubjectivity’ in terms of community cohesion:

Much is acquired [...] in education of both a formal and an informal form. We grow up and live in communities and those communities both structure our learning experiences and teach us about life and how to live it. This ensures that assumptions are shared and thus that the symbolic cement of the lifeworld is reproduced through both time and space. Having said this, common-sense assumptions are not static. They change as the structure of communal life changes. (Crossley 1996: 92)

The applicability of intersubjectivity to subcultural research can be seen in the way that understandings of the foundations of subculture, for example, its systems of thought and common practices, are created

intersubjectively. This occurs not only within communication between participants but also with those in other communication interlocks; sub-cultural (or punk) meanings are created as much by shared assumptions within the group as with shared assumptions beyond it. Intersubjectivity is therefore crucial to understanding the creation of a “sense of [sub-cultural] self” (Crossley 1996: 71) and recognition of these identities (Gillespie and Cornish 2010; Honneth 1995).

Substance and Everyday Practices

Having established the importance of viewing subcultures as embedded in wider cultural life, it is not a large leap to recognise the importance of embedding subcultural practice in everyday practice. In failing to pay enough attention to this, earlier subculture and post-subculture theorisations often achieved only a partial understanding of the subject positions that members inhabit.

One of the major problems with subcultural theory was its emphasis on a ‘subcultural identity’ which while arising out of structural positions also seemed to transcend all other identities that members of subcultures could inhabit. As Angela McRobbie puts it, ‘Few writers seemed interested in what happened when a mod went home after a weekend on speed.’ Members of musical scenes are not simply ‘teds,’ ‘mods,’ ‘punks’ or ‘northern soulies,’ but also mothers, sons, husbands, and workers. Furthermore, they may also, for example, be fans of ‘Coronation Street’ or the Stoke City football club. (Hollows and Milestone 1998: 96; with reference to McRobbie 1990: 68–69)

Discussions of ‘everyday life’ should therefore be brought to bear on understandings of ‘subcultural life’ (Pilkington 2014a: 14). Understanding intersubjectivity in ‘communication interlocks’ (Fine and Kleinman 1979) allow us to see how “common cultural reference points and practices are diffused both across (sometimes apparently hostile) ‘subcultural’ groups and between ‘mainstream’ and ‘subcultural’ groupings” (Pilkington 2014a: 13).

To this end, Pilkington suggests concerning ourselves with the substantive *cultural practices* in which individuals take part, without attempting to separate out those practices that may be ‘alternative’ from the ‘mainstream’. This is important because “‘subcultural’ lives are not

separate from but embedded in and constrained by ‘whole lives’” (13). Whilst the mundanity of many everyday cultural practices has left them marginalised in subcultural debates, Pilkington argues for the “inclusion in the field of vision of a range of everyday communicative, musical, sporting, educational, informal economy and territorial practices, not just ‘spectacular’, style-based, cultural practices” (13).

The investigation of individuals’ everyday cultural practices allows us to understand their whole lives, both the elements over which they retain agency and the structures that constrain them. We see how they participate in their chosen subculture and how their practices affect others, and this helps inform us as to what subcultural practices consist of. Moreover, we can better locate the subculture itself within wider social practices and structures. Taking this into account, Chap. 6 will draw on participants’ wider political activities in order to understand the political significance of punk.

Beyond Youth

Refocusing the lens from the spectacular to the whole lives of participants further enables us to view how interactions might shift as people age. ‘Subculture’ as an analytical framework has historically centred on the cultural practices of groups of *young people* through the early work of the Chicago School. This was consolidated by the CCCS and much of the post-subcultural literature. However, any empirical evidence of contemporary subcultural gatherings will confirm that a wide variety of age groups are, and have been, involved. By retaining a focus on young people we negate the opportunity to both fully represent the subculture, and see how, for example, “punk as an identity [...] must be managed and negotiated in the context of other everyday circumstances” (Bennett 2006: 226).

However, there is a growing trend to critique the ties between youth and subcultural engagement. Recent work (Bennett 2006; Bennett and Hodkinson 2012; Davis 2006; Hodkinson 2011; Pilkington 2014b) has sought to pay more attention to the ways in which ageing and the presence of different age groups affects subcultures.

A key facet of this work has been the way in which subcultural members must negotiate ‘adult’ responsibilities as they age. Hodkinson (2011, 2012) has particularly focused on older goth couples negotiating childcare and raising (goth) children. Pilkington (2014b) and Fogarty

(2012) discuss the ways in which subcultures come to resemble families as older members ‘mentor’ and ‘advise’ younger individuals. Bennett (2012) situates subcultural life alongside everyday work commitments, and Hodkinson (2011, 2012) and Haenfler (2006, 2012) discuss how everyday commitments as well as aspects of the ageing body coalesce to result in different approaches to stylistic practices.

A number of these themes, particularly the solidarities and tensions (Pilkington 2014b) between different generations are examined in terms of the trajectory of the Dutch punk scene in Chap. 3.

Resistance

‘Resistance’ and its role in the conceptualisation of subculture remains contentious. Subculture’s origins in studies of delinquency mean that youth cultures have historically been positioned in opposition to middle-class or mainstream hegemonies. Whereas Hodkinson’s (2002) reconceptualisation of subculture sought to explicitly sever “its automatic link with resistance [and] class conflict” (29); for Williams (2011) ‘resistance’ remains central, as subcultures exist for and because of marginalised, non-normative young people searching for an “antidote to everyday life” (10).

Leblanc (1999) and Haenfler (2006) also contend that resistance remains an important facet of subculture: in Haenfler’s case, for straight edge, and for female punks in Leblanc’s study. Both argue that these forms of resistance do carry political potential, unlike the model of resistance espoused by earlier understandings in which subcultural members were positioned as ultimately reinforcing their subordination (Clarke et al. [1975] 2006). Haenfler (2006) believes that the practices of straight edge form a distinct challenge to mainstream society by rejecting norms of, for example, drug and alcohol use, and through being vegetarian or vegan and anti-sexist. In allowing members to have the social and cultural space in which to challenge norms and to create their own alternatives, the subculture “has real consequences for the lives of its members, other peer groups, and possibly mainstream society” (194). Leblanc (1999) suggests that we need to look beyond subcultural behaviours to include ‘discursive’ and ‘symbolic’ acts as also providing resistant potential (18).

In advancing his understanding of ‘resistance’, Williams (2011) developed a multi-dimensional mapping of the concept (92–105). He uses

three axes (although suggesting that there may be more), postulating that subcultural—and individual—resistant acts (including thoughts, feelings and behaviours) range from passive to active, micro to macro, and covert to overt.

A young person who identifies with the punk subculture may engage in relatively passive acts of resistance, such as buying punk music or a punk T-shirt, yet reading the CD-insert or song lyrics may lead her to engage in more active forms of resistance. She might hide her subcultural affiliation from her parents, but proudly display subcultural paraphernalia in front of peers or other adults. The resistant actions in which she engages may involve criticizing her peers in a personal diary or participating in a social justice demonstration with thousands of other people. In other words, one member of a single subculture may engage in many different types of resistance in their everyday lives, each with its own (set of) consequences. (Williams 2011: 105–106)

In including a range of possible resistant activities, Williams certainly takes a number of ‘everyday’, sometimes highly individualised actions, but all of these are related specifically to subcultural lives. However, it remains important to retain a wider lens on individuals’ *whole* lives (Pilkington and Omel’chenko 2013) and a full range of potentially resistant practices.

In widening my own lens beyond subcultural lives, in Chap. 6 I also shift the researcher’s gaze from subcultural resistance to everyday political activities. As Leblanc (1999) argues, “resistance is primarily [...] a form of political behaviour” (18). Given that ‘resistance’ is so interlinked with subcultural activities (Clarke et al. [1975] 2006; Haenfler 2006; Leblanc 1999; Williams 2011), it is necessary to extend the understanding of which activities might have political importance, in order to better understand the way in which punk and punks are culturally embedded in wider society (see Chap. 6 for this discussion).

Authenticity

In spite of the problems with Hebdige’s (1979) discussion of the importance of originality in punk, authenticity remains a strong discourse within subcultural literature: particularly that focused on punk (Williams 2011).

Early conceptualisations of authenticity argued that subcultural forms were diffused and defused by the mass media. Whilst Muggleton (2000)

may have critiqued the CCCS's work on subculture, he does not develop their understanding of authenticity beyond being tied to mass media practices. Instead he queries 'subculturalists' relationship to the media, arguing that it is less passive than the CCCS believed.

Later work on authenticity as a concept developed in two directions: practices and identity. Moore (2004) viewed punk as having two distinct periods: the 'culture of destruction' found in early US and UK punk, and the 'culture of authenticity' found in the 1980s US hardcore scenes. Authenticity, for him, was linked to punk's economic practices.

The 'culture of authenticity' [...] developed as young people attempted to insulate themselves from the culture industry and consumer lifestyles in their search for expressive sincerity and anticommercial purity. Those who embraced the do-it-yourself approach transformed media and consumer identities into independent networks of cultural production, which enabled a sense of local community, allowed spectators to become participants, and created a space for public debate and dissent. (Moore 2004: 323)

Wallach (2008) saw that punk authenticity in Indonesia was tied to quite rigid practices of significations. Punks would employ a narrow range of markers, practices, and styles, which were drawn quite explicitly from originator scenes. Authenticity was therefore claimed by replicating other 'authentic' markers.

The idea that authenticity might be tied to identity was developed by Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1990), whose work indicated that authenticity was linked to strength and length of commitment to a particular subculture. Williams (2006) added that different subsections of subcultures might have different standards regarding how to acquire authenticity.

Williams (2011) critiques the CCCS's realist approach to subcultural identity and proposes instead a social constructionist understanding in which authenticity is made real through subcultural interaction. "Authenticity may be seen as some sort of ideal, highly valued and sought by individuals and groups as part of the process of becoming. Alternatively, authenticity may be something strategically invoked as a marker of status or method of social control" (140). We see that authenticity can be understood as tool in the creation and maintenance of individual (or group) identity, based on intersubjective understandings of what markers are needed to claim authenticity.

If viewed as an identity or a marker of status, it is important to understand the importance of 'subcultural capital' to the acquisition of

authenticity. Thornton's (1995) coining of 'subcultural capital' (drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) hierarchies of cultural capital) did not explicitly address authenticity in terms of identity formation. However, if "[s]ubcultural capital confers *status* on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder" (Thornton 1995: 11, emphasis added), then we see there is a relationship between this concept and that of authenticity. The relativistic nature of the conferring of both subcultural capital and authenticity, according to the norms and practices of the subculture in question, mean that the acquiring of subcultural capital can contribute to an individuals' authenticity, just as being authentic can count towards gaining subcultural capital.

Geographical Contexts

The rise of theories of globalisation led to a recognition that we could no longer talk of locally bounded subcultures (if ever we could). The post-subcultural turn also marked the point at which theorists grappled with placing their groups into their local and global contexts. A number of models have been proposed, including centre/periphery, glocal and translocal.

Debates over the nature of global/local influences on culture have often drawn on globalisation theories relating to the relationship between 'centre' and 'periphery' (Shils 1975; Wallerstein 1974). Within punk scholarship the United States or United Kingdom's scenes are often seen as the most influential around the world; the US/UK are thus positioned as the 'centre' to the rest of the world's 'periphery'. As discussed earlier, this stems from a problematic focus on notions of authenticity that is derived from an emphasis on originality in subculture (Hebdige 1979). Whilst the persistence of punk and its spread to new locations has erased the usefulness of viewing 'authenticity' as directly related to the original punk scene, there remains an uneven balance of power towards 'core', originator scenes.

Wallach (2008) discusses how bands such as the Exploited, the Ramones, and the Sex Pistols dominated discussions of punk in Indonesia. Similarly Crass and The Clash are the most regularly cited bands by research participants in this study of Dutch punk. This highlights how punks around the world still claim subcultural capital through demonstrating knowledge of these 'authentic' bands. Such practices reinforce hierarchies of 'core' centres and 'other' peripheries.

In discussing the punk scenes of Mexico City and Barcelona, O'Connor (2004) extend the centre/periphery model to include three tiers, with the United States positioned as the centre, Europe as semi-peripheral, and Latin America as peripheral (176). He seeks to uncover how global cultural signifiers are utilised in the creation of new, local, scenes. O'Connor recognises that local forms can affect the global but also that structural inequalities can limit this. He gives examples of the inequalities in the 'flow' of punk between Spain and Mexico, with Spanish bands more likely to be known in Mexico than the reverse. This recognises that the 'flow' of cultural influence is more complicated than a simple centre/periphery model suggests. With these arguments O'Connor advocates against Appadurai's (1996) earlier break from discussions of centre/periphery, in favour of a model of the global flow of culture.

'Glocal' was first applied to (post-)subcultural theory by Mitchell (1998) in a discussion of Australian hip hop. This form of hip hop draws on global influences, particularly from the United States and distils these through local experiences, marking it out as 'glocal'. Sydney's western suburbs form the historical centre of Australian hip hop; underprivileged and with a wide ethnic mix of migrant cultures, they are positioned as the Australian version of the American 'ghettos' from which hip hop emerged. Artists draw influences both from mainstream American hip hop and more marginalised Spanish-language hip hop and use these to reinforce their own 'otherness' in Australian society. "Although US rap was the inspiration, the local scene caught fire on the fuel that was already there" (4). Different global forms of hip hop interact with locality to produce Australian hip hop.

'Glocal'—in relation to youth cultural practices—was further developed by Pilkington (2004). She situates 'glocal' within a model of centre/periphery and argues that 'glocal' allows a more accurate depiction of subcultural affiliations on the periphery. Her work notes that conceptualisations of a globalised youth culture in which practices on the periphery reflect those of the centre were not applicable in Russia. Different structural positions of young people enable some to draw on global cultures, whilst constraining others who therefore focus more on the local. "[T]he 'global' and the 'local' are resources drawn upon, differentially, by young people in the process of developing youth cultural strategies that manage 'glocal' lives" (132). 'Glocal' therefore usefully highlights the structural influence on different global or local cultural influences.

‘Translocal’ illuminates a different interplay between the local and global. It argues that numerous local scenes have come to be constructed along similar lines, thereby connecting “groups of kindred spirits many miles away” (Bennett and Peterson 2004: 8–9). Hodkinson (2004) applies ‘translocal’ to his research on the UK goth scene. He understands this to be a “singular and relatively coherent movement whose translocal connections are of greater significance than its local differences” (144). Issues of identity and taste were shaped by translocal media formats, consumer trends, and the latest subcultural fashions. Participants often travel for their scenic participation, such as to gigs, clubs, shops or festivals, and yet the day-to-day experiences and infrastructure of the scene remained based around local social connections.

Bennett and Peterson (2004) discuss three other applications for ‘translocal’ in terms of popular culture; transregional music, the music festival, and the music carnival. Transregional music refers to global forms of culture, diffused by mass media, which have now been appropriated by many diverse local scenes; they give hip hop as an example. Music festivals serve as a ‘local’ scene that draws bands and attendees from all over the world together for an event that facilitates communication of *ways of doing* cultural participation. ‘Music carnival’ is a label given to a group of a band’s fans who follow them on tour, for example, the Grateful Dead’s Deadheads. The ‘superfans’ presence at each performance “energize[s] local devotees”, facilitating the communication of fandom at a translocal level (Bennett and Peterson 2004: 10). Understandings of ‘translocal’ provide a more nuanced view of complex patterns of cultural flow. However, it hints at a translocal parity that privileges the role of the ‘centre’, and therefore does not adequately consider the specificity of ‘peripheral’ experiences of subculture.

Webb (2007) highlights the complex interplay between local and global in his study of Bristolian trip hop. He argues that this cultural form could only have emerged in Bristol; the music’s genre-mixing was a result of the mingling of communities in the city alongside other factors such as the well-developed local music scene. In the 1980s many of Bristol’s musicians were engaged in hip hop of a style taken directly from New York, but a desire to do something different led to the instigation of a new ‘Bristol sound’. Trip hop did not remain local for long, with London and the rest of the United Kingdom quickly noticing and emulating the style. Thus cultural influences are drawn globally (from a

cultural ‘centre’) and take root in ‘peripheral’ Bristol, arguably situating Bristol as a *new* centre for trip hop.

In Chap. 4, I build on the theoretical work that has attempted to situate subcultures as part of a wider global whole. I investigate the way in which connections and mobility, both everyday and subcultural, have helped shape the Dutch punk scene and members’ understandings of its local/global position.

Historical Contexts

In addition to regrounding debates by emphasising both the whole lives of participants and the wider cultural context in which subcultures operate, it is important to avoid (post-)subcultural tendencies towards ahistoricity.

In critiquing theories of detraditionalisation and individualisation, Smart (2007) highlights Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s (2002) ahistoricism;

Whilst the idea of tradition is evoked, no specificity is provided so the reader cannot be sure if this passage refers to the pre-industrial era, the Victoria era or the early twentieth century. The idea that during this vague period people slavishly followed the prevalent rules and dominant beliefs is accepted without hesitation. A special moment in history having been created, that moment can then be compared with the present which, by dint of such a contract, looks challengingly different. But the past in this representation is little more than a straw man devised for the sake of argument. (Smart 2007: 18)

This argument is equally applicable to other theories that posit the role of individual agency and fragmented fluid (post-)subcultures as particularly ‘new’ (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004; Chaney 2004; Malbon 1999; Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003). In noting Shildrick and MacDonald’s (2006), J. Clarke et al.’s ([1975] 2006), and Fine and Kleinman’s (1979) understandings of the fluidity that was possible in subcultural membership, we see that the post-subculturalists’ claims of this fluidity as an element of postmodern consumer culture are over-emphasised.

We can see echoes of Williams’ (2011) and Pilkington and Omel’chenko’s (2013) proposition to embed subcultural life in wider

cultural life in Smart's (2007) call to understand individual agency as "embedded in culture and history, with these qualities manifesting themselves through forms of everyday behaviour which are not radically different to action in the past" (26). We therefore need to take a more grounded historical approach to understanding subcultures and can do this by uncovering everyday and subcultural practices in their historical context.

REGROUNDING PUNK

Punk in 1977 in London was not the same things as punk in 2007 in Atlanta (or even in 2007 in London). And while the label 'punk' is readily affixed to people and practices in both places/times, the meaning of punk has been interpreted differently as it spread around the globe. (Williams 2011: 39)

Over the last forty years, punk has spread over the whole world. Countless new musical subgenres have emerged, as well as other movements based on practices (for example, straight edge [Haenfler 2004, 2006]) or politics (for example, riot grrrl [Downes 2012]) or anarcho-punk (Cross 2010; Dunn 2011). As the label 'punk' comes to encompass more and more, it becomes harder for academics to pinpoint what punk might mean. Indeed, it is not only academics who struggle with defining punk but also punks themselves (see Chap. 5).

Yet there have been many attempts to answer the questions posed by Pilkington (2012); "why, thirty-five years on [do] we continue to talk about 'punk' when it is hard to find a punk who looks like a punk, sounds like a punk or describes him or herself as a punk"? (262). This section will discuss a number of the ways in which punk has been understood in the wake of the subcultural debates.

Economic Practices and DIY

In discussing the various developments of punk, Thompson (2004) gives an overview of seven distinct periods and places in which new punk scenes emerged: the New York Scene, the English Scene, California Hardcore, Washington, D.C. Hardcore, New York Hardcore, Riot Grrrl and Berkeley Pop-Punk. In discussing each of these it becomes clear that in his understanding these various punk scenes are bound by an

ideological position in relation to economic practices. Like Laing (1985) Thompson discusses the DIY record labels that—he argues—are crucial to each scene. He makes it clear that an anti-capitalist and anti-commercial ideology is a prerequisite for punk.

Alternative economic practices, DIY practices and anti-capitalist ideologies, form the basis of a number of punk studies, including Gosling (2004), Dale (2012), Dunn (2012) and O'Connor (2008). There is a great deal of debate over the potential that DIY may—or may not—offer in order to resist corporate cultural hegemony within both subcultural literature (O'Hara 1999) and academic writing (Dale 2008, 2012). Ventsel (2008) located the economic practices of punks and skins within their wider everyday lives by uncovering networks of reciprocity in an informal, underground and semi-legal economy.

Similarly, Moore (2010) situates punk historically in wider economic contexts and suggests that punk, as a DIY movement, is an expression of post-Fordist alienation.

[Punks] had been left with scant opportunities to find creative fulfillment in their day jobs, no guidelines for transforming a culture of consumption into meaningful existence, and unable to participate in the spectacles of mass media as anything but spectators. [...] [They] sought to take control over what they consumed, transformed passionate consumer tastes into a basis for cultural production, and created a scene they could call their own. Doing it themselves, they made the ephemeral world of consumption into grounds for durable identities and participatory community. (Moore 2010: 62)

Social Practices

A number of ethnographic studies have emerged that focus particularly on the social practices of punk. In these works, punk as a subculture emerges through the actions, interactions, practices and understandings held by participants. In grounding the subculture in these practices we can better understand punk's place within punks' lives.

An important addition to the punk canon is Leblanc's (1999) *Pretty in Punk* which gives voice to—often marginalised—punk women. She furthers the discourse of punk as a resistant identity, focusing particularly on the ways in which women use punk to fight normative femininity, although this struggle often takes place within a masculine-coded subculture, complicating matters.

Haenfler (2006) focuses on the straight edge subgenre of punk, investigating how subcultural practices provide conflicting gendered experiences for ‘edgers’ both male and female and how practices and identification with the scene changes as participants age. The importance of straight edge is portrayed both in its guise as a social movement *and* as an individual identity, guided by the straight edge philosophy.

Whereas both Leblanc and Haenfler focused primarily on punk scenes in the (central) United States, Gololobov et al. (2014), O’Connor (2002, 2003, 2004) and Wallach (2008) have contributed ethnographic studies that take in various other (more peripheral) punk scenes. O’Connor’s work focuses primarily on the experience of punk in Mexico. He contrasts this with punk in other locations (Barcelona, Washington, D.C., Austin, Texas, and Toronto) in order to understand punk’s relationship with globalisation. Wallach uncovers the social experiences of punk in Indonesia and the opportunities it provides for self-expression. Gololobov (2014), Steinholt et al. (2014) and Pilkington (2014b) explore punk in various locations in Russia—Krasnodar, St. Petersburg and Vorkuta (respectively)—seeking to understand what unites very different formulations of punk. They conclude that “[p]unk exists not as discrete formation, politics or aesthetics, but as a set of non-exclusive and unfixed transnormative cultural practices and in the affective bonds generated in the process of their enactment” (Pilkington et al. 2014: 211).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has served to provide a brief overview of the historical development of ‘subculture’ as a theoretical framework and of ‘punk’ as an object of analysis. ‘Subculture’ has had a contentious history with a great many theorists adding to, developing, or sometimes even rejecting it as no longer of use. The trajectory of academic work on punk is intertwined with the ‘subculture debate’, with a number of theoretical developments relating to subculture drawing upon studies of punk for their empirical basis. It is therefore vital to locate where this book sits in relation to these debates.

This book adds to the work of Williams (2011), Bennett (2011) and Pilkington and Omel’chenko (2013) in seeking to ‘reground’ subculture. The post-subculturalists’ critiques of structural determinism in the foundational work by the CCCS were often rather overstated, and therefore sometimes fell into the trap of arguing vociferously for an

equally problematic opposite: an exaggerated emphasis on individualism. Rather than furthering an argument on 'subculture' versus 'post-subculture', this book will draw on the positive developments that have been made towards a more theoretically rich understanding of subcultures. With a recognition that subculture as a concept has had a complex past, I choose to continue to use this terminology. I thereby root this book within the trajectory of the many attempts to uncover the complexities of the subject positions of punk individuals within wider culture.

In order to do so, this book places its punk participants at the foreground of refining our knowledge of what punk—and subculture can mean. In focusing on participants' discourse and their practices it gives centre stage to their punk subjectivity. This book does not delineate punk from the mainstream but instead embeds punk as a part of whole lives and punk subculture as part of wider culture. It unpicks the ways in which individuals are agents in the intersubjective creation of subcultural meaning whilst locating them as (active) subjects (in the maintenance and adaption) of complex structural factors.

Subculture cannot be disentangled from culture. Punk practices, people, lives, places, values, resources and so on cannot be understood in isolation from wider society. Subcultural groups are bound by social structures, just as they help create and reinforce them. Historical contexts shape individual, subcultural, and cultural trajectories. Individuals draw on subcultural—as well as cultural—resources in forging their own, meaningful, lives. Drawing boundaries, be they historical or spatial, around subcultures is therefore problematic. Instead I propose a holistic approach in which a deeper conceptualisation of subculture is attained through viewing the connectedness of individuals and their subcultural practices.

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