URBAN MULTICULTURE

YOUTH, POLITICS AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN A GLOBAL CITY

MALCOLM JAMES

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For Nicole and Sonny

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1
Introduction

On the East side of the River Lea, Canary Wharf's monuments to capitalist wealth dominate a largely residential landscape smattered with high-rise blocks (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). For over a hundred years, this watery border between Tower Hamlets and Newham has separated the inner city from the fringe. Looking down its banks, the warehouses, chimneystacks and old docks are testament to its industrial heritage and colonial past. The Olympic development, Westfield Shopping Centre and the dockland's Excel complex mark its official future. Here, through 150 years of constant population, cultural and infrastructural change, a complex multiculture has grown up. This book is a story of that multiculture and the hundred or so young people who lived there between 2007 and 2012.

Newham occupies a particular place in popular and academic imaginaries. Through the docks and the Blitz, it is often thought of as the home of the white working-class as a font of British pluck, luck and courage (Gilroy 2004). On the basis of its superdiverse demographics (Vertovec 2006), it is also sometimes celebrated as an example of post-racial conviviality. The youthfulness of its population (LBN 2006a, p. 3; 2010a) and the long-term deprivation experienced in the area (LBN 2010b, p. 45; Noble et al. 2008, p. 86) ensure a never-ending stream of researchers romanticising the inevitability, or surprising lack, of urban conflict.

My original contact with Newham was not disconnected from these streams. Prior to my PhD, I had been working for a quango[1] that was evaluating a national programme of funding for faith-based communities. This programme was born of the obsession with interethnic violence that followed the 2005 London bombings. Newham was deemed to be a good site to assess the impact of this programme. Over two

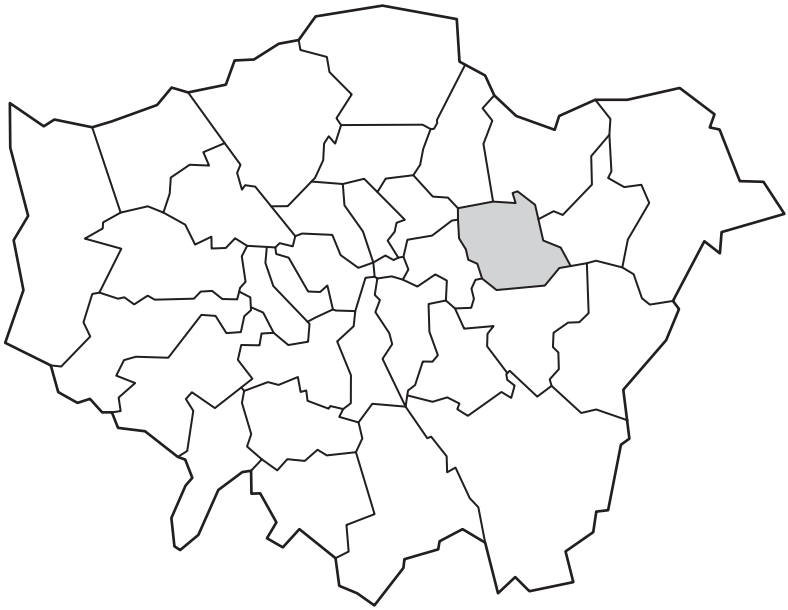

Figure 1.1 Map of London, showing Newham

weeks I met with funding recipients and produced a report. The report was shared with the relevant central government department, and after 'influencing policy-makers' by telling them what they wanted to hear, I left the job frustrated and conflicted. While I had started to learn about the complexities of urban multiculture in this location, I had barely scratched the surface. At the same time, I had contributed to a system of knowledge that sought to contain and manage the everyday forms of life I would latterly seek to understand.

Over the preceding year, I maintained relations with some of the contacts I had made in Newham. I got to know others through my partner who worked with youth and community providers in the borough. Developing longer-standing experience I had in youth, popular education and community development work, these conversations became a PhD proposal, a successful ESRC funding submission, the beginning of the PhD and an opportunity to listen again.

Arriving back in 2007, it was the end of the New Labour era and the beginning of the cuts to local and national expenditure. Sandwiched between the 'Summer of Knife Crime' in 2008, which ran into the 2010 General Election campaign (BBC 2008a; 2008b; Watt 2010),[2] and the

Figure 1.2 Simplified streetmap of Newham

2011 'Riots', the fieldwork period was a time when the scourge of urban youth featured prominently in the news. The fieldwork period was also coloured by moments in popular culture: the TV show *Britain's Got Talent* spawned the success of the streetdance groups Diversity and Flawless; Chris Brown's self-titled debut album (2005a) had gone double platinum; and grime artist Giggs was about to release his underground hit 'Talkin' the Hardest' (2009).

However, moments of less widespread acclaim also resonated through the fieldwork. In 2010, Upcoming Movement, a small hip hop/grime group from Leyham,[3] Newham, released a video for a track called 'Kill All a Dem'. Its nihilistic proclamations knitted together the gangster style of Giggs with the 'Summer of Knife Crime' and the 2011 'Riots'. However, while it seemed to confirm the apolitical and anti-social perception of youth culture, it confounded these claims by drawing attention to

the many contradictions of urban living. Its promotion of territorial warfare was built on an ethics of sharing. Its communication of black diasporic music was made through white bodies. Its supposedly apolitical character was at odds with its reflexive consciousness and its political challenge to social injustice. Its use of YouTube signalled conformity to commercial communication, and connection to the dialogues of the sound system and pirate radio.

Based on a two-year ethnography of three outer East London youth clubs, this book tells the story of young people living at this moment. It unpicks how Newham's working-class past shaped its residents' day-to-day existence. It addresses how they were racialised, classed and gendered, how they navigated, resisted and subverted marginalisation, and how they measured their horizons against those set by Canary Wharf and Westfield Shopping Centre. It explores young people's politics through their reflexive evaluations and visions beyond injustices, and how these related to new forms of cultural technology. It also considers how young people made rules and friends, and negotiated post-code boundaries and narratives of white and autochthonous belonging. While it explores the antagonistic and convivial character of local interactions, it does not ignore the 150 years of migration and movement that gave form to this particular configuration of urban multiculture. Within this constellation, then, this book is a story of urban multiculture in outer East London.

To introduce these themes, this chapter develops in four parts. The first provides contextual and historical information about the borough. The second situates the book within a range of academic debates about multiculture, marginalisation and youth politics. The third foregrounds the methodological approach taken in the research. The fourth part outlines the main arguments contained in each chapter.

From marshland to migrant metropolis

Newham has been described as the 'outer inner city' by some (Millington 2011) and the 'fringe' by others (Dickens 1857), and authors 150 years apart have written about the relation between its social life and its location (Dickens 1857; Hall 2007). Prior to 1840, much of the south and west of Newham, in which many of the young people I knew lived, was unpopulated marshland (Powell 1973). From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, good river and rail transport (LBN 2003), and Newham's position on the fringe of the Metropolitan Building Act and the London County Council (Hall 2007, p. 83), brought noxious

industry, housing and migration to the area. Industry and cheap housing attracted a new population, and from then on, people came to the borough from all over the country, indeed the world, as they still do today.[4] Parish records show the dramatic increase in the population of the area. In 1851, the local parish contained 18,870 people. By 1881, it had reached 128,953 and by 1912 it was populated by 300,860 people. This level would be sustained until the 1930s (Vision of Britain n.d.). By the second decade of the twentieth century, there were 335 manufacturing, engineering and construction firms connecting the River Lea to the London Docks (Powell 1973). The docks themselves, monuments to Victorian imperialism and colonial trade (Hall 2004), employed thousands of people. Newham was one of the industrial centres of the empire. Through its sugar refineries, groundnut trade and P&O shipping lines (Bloch 1995), it was a nexus in the colonial web which connected the Caribbean, West Africa, Australia, India and the Middle East to the 'Motherland'.

Through these trades, national and international migrant workers came, stayed and went, providing cheap labour as they do today for global capitalism. In 1911, some 40 per cent of the population of the original parish (half the size of today's borough) had come from outside the area (HMSO 1911). While most were from rural counties to the east and south-east (involving considerable journeys for their time), there had also been large influxes of Scots and Irish, and smaller though significant influxes of 'foreigners' – a term used in the Census to describe a wider population of non-British migrants. In 1911, some 1 per cent of the borough was made up of 'foreigners' (HMSO 1911). Non-British migrant workers were employed in local industries and lived in local housing. 'In 1901 the company of Moore and Nettlefolds . . . alone employed 150 immigrant workers . . . By the 1920s most of the shops on the Barking Road were owned by Europeans' (LBN no date) and Crown Street had been nicknamed 'Draughtboard Alley' because of the mix of black and white people living there (Bloch 1998, p. 13).

By 1931, some 62 per cent of the population of the borough had been born there, 34 per cent were English but born outside the borough, and the remaining 4 per cent included 2,207 Scots, 1,327 from the Irish Free State, 450 Indians, 397 Sri Lankans, 1,793 Europeans (including 447 Polish and 282 Russians), 168 Canadians, 108 Caribbeans, 200 Australians, 164 Americans and 137 Argentinians (HMSO 1931). Of the 282 Russians, many were Jews fleeing persecution (Bloch 2002, p. 13). Three Jewish cemeteries were built in Newham between 1857 and 1919 for the large Jewish population to the west of the borough,

in Whitechapel and Spitalfields. By this point, Leyham also hosted the largest black community in London (Bloch 1995, p. 40; 2002, p. 13).

From marshland to industrial and colonial hub, the Second World War brought further change to the borough. As a result of its central importance to industry and trade, Newham suffered heavy bombing (Aston Mansfield n.d., p. 11). Many of the foreign seamen who had become part of the life of the area were evacuated and didn't return (Bloch 2002, p. 14). A quarter of the houses (over 14,000) were destroyed through aerial bombardment and the landscape was remodelled. Bomb craters and temporary Nissen hut shelters,[5] which became permanent homes, were features of everyday life (Bloch 1998; Harris and Bloch 1995; Hobbs 2006, p. 121). After the war, the landscape underwent another transformation, and 8,000 new permanent dwellings were built to replace the housing stock lost through aerial attack and the continued clearance of the 'slums' (Powell 1973, p. 49).[6] The slums were the 'poor-quality' houses of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries built, often on flood plains, for migrant labourers. To replace them, large estates were built first in the low-density 'garden city pattern' before the introduction of high-density blocks (Powell 1973, p. 56).

Further change came about through the decline of industry and the resulting unemployment. Between the end of the Second World War and the early 1960s – the period dubbed the 'Golden Era' (Dench et al. 2006, p. 18) – there was nearly full employment. In the following 40 years, industrial employment contracted by two-thirds (Hall 2007, p. 85). Between 1967 and 1974, employment at the Royal Docks declined from 7,180 to 4,068 positions (Hill 1976, p. 2) – the equivalent of 20 per cent of all jobs in the area. The cause was mechanisation, containerisation, changing transit practices and the building of the deep-sea port at Tilbury (Hill 1976, pp. 3–5; Hobbs 2006, p. 122; LBN 1976, p. 19). From 1966 to 1976, there were 24,000 job losses in Newham. In 1976, male unemployment stood at 11 per cent and 6,000 people were chasing 300 vacancies (Canning Town Community Development Project 1976). Employment in the borough has never recovered. High levels of unemployment continued through the 1980s and 1990s when the local authority became the largest employer (Hall 2007, p. 85). The urban fabric of the borough also continued to be remodelled. Many of the high-rise flats built after the Second World War were knocked down and replaced (Canning Town Community Development Project 1976, p. 9). New areas of marshland were reclaimed for Beckton's 7,500 new homes, and the post-industrial dockside heritage was converted for private use (LBN 1980). This recent phase – connecting the Excel Centre

to the Stratford Eurostar terminal, Westfield Shopping Centre and the Olympic site – has been called the 'Arc of Opportunity' (LBN 2010b, pp. 16–17) (see Chapter 7).

Contemporary statistics on demography and deprivation provide further insight about this location. At the time I conducted the research, 250,000 people were living in Newham and about 79,100 (32 per cent) of them were children and young people aged 0–19 years (LBN 2006a, p. 3; 2010a; 2010g).[7] At 8 per cent higher than the overall figure for London, this factor made it the local authority with the highest proportion of young people in the UK. By 2011, the Census reported that 308,000 people were living in Newham (LBN 2015a) and 86,200 (28 per cent) of them were children and young people aged 0–19 years (LBN 2015b) – an increase of 7,100 children and young people.

The young people I worked with were ethnically diverse, not just in terms of many individual groups but also in terms of mixed ethnic groups. This diversity and mixedness was evidence of the history of long-term migration to the borough. In 2001, Newham had the largest proportion of non-white ethnic groups in the country (61 per cent) (ONS 2001),[8] and among children and young people (0–19 years old) this ethnic diversity was more pronounced. Census data from 2011 placed Newham as the most ethnically diverse London Borough, according to Simpson's Diversity Index (GLA 2011). At the time of conducting the research, 77 per cent of children and young people living in Newham were from 'Black and Minority Ethnic' groups and 23 per cent were 'White British' (LBN 2010a). As testament to the history of migration, the young people who made up this 77 per cent were not recent arrivals. The vast majority had been born in the UK (87 per cent) with only 6 per cent born in Africa and 6 per cent in Asia (LBN 2006b, p. 5). The largest minority categories for children and young people in 2001 were 'Black African' (17 per cent) and 'Bangladeshi' (14 per cent) (LBN 2006b, p. 4).

This diversity was also not static but was continually changing. Closer inspection of 2001 Census data shows that within the 0–19 age bracket the spread of ethnic diversity by age was uneven. For example, while there was an even spread of 'White' and 'Bangladeshi' young people across the 0–19 age range, the proportion of 'Black African' young people was highest in the 0–4 age bracket (LBN 2006, p. 4). This reflects more recent African migrations to the borough. The 'mixed' ethnic population of the borough was also growing and was expected to double in proportion between 2001 and 2016. Analysis of 2011 Census data shows that across the borough and within households,

ethnic diversity was increasing (Jivra 2013). Again, these changes were registered most strongly among the young. Reflecting recent 'Eastern European' migration,[9] the white population (which already included Irish, Scots, Romany and Greeks) too showed growing complexity with an increase in the 'Other White' category projected to rise from 4.5 per cent in 2001 to 5.7 per cent in 2007 (LBN 2010g).

The 2009 School Census supports these findings. It shows that 10 per cent of children on the school roll were of 'White British' origin, with 'Asian' (43 per cent) and 'Black' (26 per cent) young people together making up more than two-thirds of the school population. These figures also show 7 per cent of the school population as 'White Other', which included Eastern European young people, again suggesting an increase in line with post-2004 migration. Some 6 per cent of young people in the School Census were 'mixed' (LBN 2010e, p. 11). First-language data from the School Census of 2007 (LBN 2007b) showed that the tenth largest reported first language in Newham's schools was Lithuanian (734 pupils), and Polish was 13th (415 pupils). This compares with 13,778 English speakers, 4,244 Bengali, 3,974 Urdu, 1,907 Gujarati, 1,499 Somali, 1,380 Punjabi, 1,300 Tamil, 996 Yoruba, 735 Portuguese and 328 Albanian.

However, demographic changes in Newham were not simply accounted for by young people arriving in the borough and settling down. A number of the young people I worked with moved through circular migration patterns – leaving, coming back and leaving again as family members sought employment in different parts of the world (see Chapter 2). These 'new migrations' did not have the same characteristics as post-war migrations. Whereas Caribbean and Asian immigration of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was characterised by workers from 'less developed' and post-colonial countries migrating to and settling in the fast-expanding industrial economies of Western Europe, North America and Australia (Castles and Miller 2003, pp. 68–93), 'new migration'[10] is identified with, among other things, circular migration patterns. Some of the Eastern Europeans who arrived in large numbers[11] post-2004 came, left and returned (Rutter et al. 2008, p. 8).[12] Other young people moved through the migrant labour circuits of the Gulf States before returning to Newham. Consequently, while some children and young people came and settled in Newham, others left and came back again, often more than once.

These demographics were played out in different ways across the three youth clubs. For the most part, the hundred or so young people I worked with had been born in East London, though some had their

origins in Latin America, Africa, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Asia. Of those born in East London, many were 'mixed' and nearly all had histories of migration that took them, via their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, outside East London to the English regions, to Irish Gipsy and British Romany populations, to Ireland and Scotland, to Greece, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, Kenya, Albania, Romania, Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, France, Spain, Portugal, Jamaica, Barbados, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the list went on. Some of these histories were more distant, some more recent, but most were within four generations. Some young people passed through Newham from Romania and went 'home' again. Others left for Dubai and Saudi Arabia, or to Kenya following their family's labour migrations, but came back 'home' to Newham. Only a small minority were unaware of a family history outside East London.

More specifically, of the three youth clubs I worked at, Leyham had a largely white and mixed-race population, with a smaller number of Asian, Latin American, Eastern European and black African young people. The After School Club comprised mainly mixed-race and British black African young people from first- or second-generation refugee backgrounds, in addition to a smaller number of black Caribbean, Asian (Central, South and South-East), Eastern European and white British young people. The Albanian Youth Project was based around an Albanian-speaking community group. The young people who attended had been born in Kosovo, Albania and the UK.

These patterns of migration and settlement contributed to the general 'population churn' (Mayhew 2009, cited in LBN 2010b). Census data from 2001 reveal the extent of movement in and out of Newham. In the 12 months prior to the 2001 Census, 5 per cent of the population had moved within the borough (the highest percentage among all the London boroughs), 6 per cent of the population had arrived from outside Newham and 6 per cent had left the borough (LBN 2006, p. 5). Again, such movements were increasing and becoming especially prevalent among young people, in particular for the age range 0–15 (LBN 2006, p. 5; Mayhew 2009, cited in LBN 2010b). Many young people I knew had moved house or were planning to move. A 2009 study for Newham Council suggested an increase in these types of mobility. Between 2007 and 2008, '19.5 per cent of the population either migrated into or out of the Borough compared to a London average of 13.6 per cent' (Mayhew 2009, cited in LBN 2010b, p. 13). In 2007, movement to the suburbs (mainly to the east and south-east) had increased by 25 per cent from 2003 (LBN 2007a, p. 33). These migrations were

multiethnic rather than 'white flight' (Finney and Simpson 2009, p. 92) and were facilitated by augmented spending power, middle-class aspirations and, in Stratford – as a consequence of the Olympic development – rising house prices.

All of this meant that the young people I worked with understood the geography of their lives beyond the local confines that post-war scholars assumed they would keep to (Parker 1974, p. 28). Moving house, and knowing others who had moved house, meant that at a local level they knew not only the five-minute radius from their homes but all over the borough, to past houses and to the homes of friends and family. From international migrations and holidays they knew the streets of Kampala and Paris, the hills of northern Albania and the drive through Germany to get there. However, in others ways their geographies did bear resemblance to the working-class communities of yesteryear. Some did not know how to get to Liverpool Street Station but they knew how to take the same train, in the other direction, to Essex – to the seaside and to family members on the estuary. They knew how to get to Stratford but had no idea how to get to Leyton just a mile further up the road. Most were also aware of local territorial restrictions, postcodes and the potential danger of getting 'caught slipping' (see chapters 3 and 4).

However, this urban multiculture cannot be understood through demographics alone (Solomos 1986). Deprivation, poverty, low educational attainment and unemployment were also formative conditions of these young people's lives. While I was working at the youth clubs, the recession was beginning to bite. Newham was preparing to experience the largest public spending cuts in London (BBC 2010), while already enduring the biggest increases in unemployment, claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance and housing repossessions in the capital (MacInnes et al. 2010). In 2007, the year I started, Newham was the third most deprived London borough and the sixth most deprived in England and Wales. It ranked as having the second highest 'extent of deprivation' of any district in the country (Noble et al. 2008, p. 86): 60 per cent of Newham's Super Output Areas were in the top 10 per cent most deprived in England and Wales; 46.9 per cent of children in Newham were living in poverty, notably higher than the London average of 32.5 per cent (LBN 2010b, p. 45), and this poverty was deemed persistent (British Household Panel Survey 2008). Average levels of income were low, with 28 per cent of people in the £10,000–£20,000 income bracket and 16 per cent in the £0–£10,000 bracket (LBN 2010e, p. 141). The south and west of the borough, where I worked mostly, was among the most deprived in Newham (see Figure 1.3). Reflecting

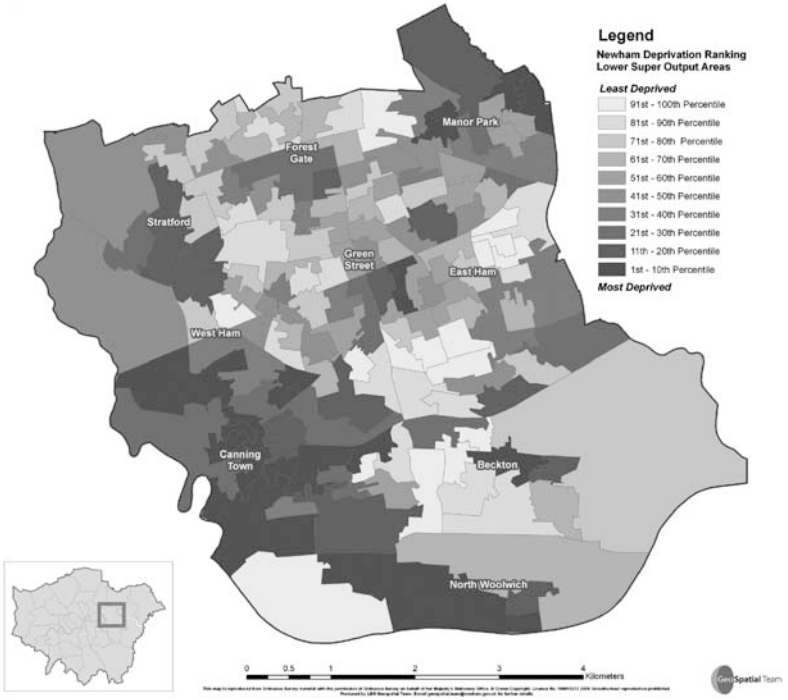

Figure 1.3 Index of multiple deprivation, Newham ranking 2007 (LBN 2010d)

these figures, the majority of the young people I knew came from low-income families, some experienced intense poverty, and the majority, though not all, would have experienced deprivation across some or all of the seven domains of deprivation: income; employment; health and disability; education, skills and training deprivation; barriers to housing and services; living environment; and crime (Noble et al. 2008, p. 13).

Again, although some young people I knew did achieve highly (see Chapter 7), overall, educational attainment was low. For the academic year 2008/2009, Newham was the third-lowest-achieving borough in London at GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) level: 64.8 per cent of young people achieved five passes at grades A*–C and 47.9 per cent achieved five passes at grades A*–C including English and maths (LBN 2010f). However, as with deprivation, educational achievement was uneven across the borough's schools. The school closest to Leyham Youth Club, attended by most of the young people at that site, was among the lowest-achieving in the country with 29 per cent of

young people achieving five passes at grades A*–C in 2010. However, other young people I knew attended a school that achieved 84 per cent at the same level (BBC 2011).

On leaving school, many of the young people I knew were looking for work, and some were taking college courses. Work was not easy to come by. In September 2009, some 53.9 per cent of young people in Newham aged 16–24 were economically inactive. This compared with 44.1 per cent for London (LBN 2010b, p. 44). Taking college courses was a popular choice for young people and was encouraged by careers advisers. In 2005, some 77 per cent of school-leavers stayed on in education or training, with only 1.2 per cent going on to employment without training (LBN 2006, p. 27). In between taking courses and finding jobs, young men and women remained unemployed for long periods of time. Some young women worked sporadically as volunteers in the youth clubs so they could get the skills and accreditation they needed to become youth workers, teaching assistants and nursery nurses. Other young people hung around in the park or at home. Amid negative media attention, the recession and with poor grades, finding work wasn't at all easy.

Aside from the recent arrival in Stratford of the 'cleansing class' (Amin unpublished, p. 21) – a coalition of the middle-class, cosmopolitans, consumers, businesses and global investors brought to the area because of the Olympics, Westfield Shopping Centre and Eurostar – the borough remained largely working and lower middle-class. Except for one Starbucks in Stratford, independent cafés, fast-food outlets, independent stores and mainstream high-street chains such as Boots and JD Sports populated the borough's high streets. Many people were employed in low-skilled occupations. In 2010–2011, some 18 per cent of the population were working in 'elementary occupations'[13] (ONS 2010) compared with the 9 per cent London average. Reflecting jobs in the local authority, schools and hospitals, 'professional occupations' made up the second-largest category of employment at 16 per cent. The London average during the same period was 25 per cent (LBN 2011).

In summary, Newham was a youthful and highly ethnically diverse borough. The diversity, most evident among young people, was increasing in complexity not only as a consequence of migration to the borough but also because of home-grown mixedness. The churn and population movement to which these demographics attested played out in movements both within the borough and within neighbouring regions. However, the lives of young people in Newham could not be understood solely on these terms. The population was relatively deprived. While some found work and others would go on to do so, low

educational attainment, poverty and high unemployment were realities for many young people I worked with.

Urban multiculture, marginalisation and youth politics

Having presented a demographic outline of the area, this section provides an overview of academic literature on urban multiculture, marginalisation and youth politics.

In British sociology, the study of urban multiculture is associated with a body of work conducted in the 1980s and 1990s that explores changes in urban youth culture through addressing key post-war shifts. These shifts included post-colonial migration, the ethnic reconfiguration of urban society in a post-industrial context and its mediation through diasporic forms of culture, such as music (Back 1994; Gilroy 2000). Early studies focused on the interplay between black (principally Jamaican) and white working-class youth cultures, exploring how cultural syncretisms were formed (Hebdige 1987; Hewitt 1986; Jones 1988). They addressed how struggles against racism and class oppression were mobilised together, and how black and white styles were borrowed and shared to make sense of young peoples' urban realities. Later work by Harris and Keith developed this analysis by exploring the local and diasporic connections maintained by British Asian young people (Harris 2006) and the continued creativity of urban space (Keith 2005). These largely ethnographic works are, then, indispensable for understanding the recomposition of urban multiculture and for challenging naive and racist assumptions about urban life.

However, their prescient contributions do not exist in perpetuity. The last two decades have seen hip hop become a global industry, and associated music, style and forms of resistance detach themselves from prior racial affiliations (Gilroy 2000; Kitwana 2002; Patton 2009). Neoliberal marginalisation has individualised the collective experience of oppression, and black resistance against racism and white resistance against class oppression reliant on former solidarities no longer hold as they once did (Bennett 1999; Jones 1988; Nayak 2003). The sound system, a focal point of urban culture and politics, has been dislocated by pirate radio and fragmented by YouTube. That is to say, while contemporary urban multiculture is connected to what came before, the relationships between class, culture and race have shifted.

This book's exploration of urban multiculture is concerned with these social, cultural and technological transformations. To engage with these shifts, it develops the concepts of performance and dialogue.

Performativity (Butler 1988; Gilroy 1993) allows it to engage with the ways in which urban multiculture has continued to change. It permits the book to address how urban multiculture in outer East London is acted out from certain racialised and classed sociohistorical scripts (Butler 1988), how these scripts are constituted in the context of diaspora (Gilroy 1993) and how these acts cite and exceed what came before (Derrida 1976). Performance also allows this book to make contingent links to the performance traditions (Keil 1972; Small 1987). 'Dialogue' complements this conceptual toolbox, providing a microsociological language through which vernacular culture can be explored. In the context of performance, dialogue provides the means for understanding the different times and spaces through which digital/analogue and virtual/physical interactions occur (Bakhtin 1981; 1986a).

For the sake of clarification, then, this book's use of the term 'urban multiculture' is concerned with the 'urban' as a space in which culture is constituted; 'culture' as everyday, artistic and expressive; and 'multi' as the interface of these creative and situated dynamics with the racial reregistering of multiethnic Britain. 'Multiculture' should not be confused with 'multiculturalism'. Building on a notion of anthropologised 'culture' conflated with ethnicity,[14] 'multiculturalism' refers to a largely non-existent British policy of citizenship based on ethnic difference (Gilroy 2012; Lentin and Titley 2011; Younge 2011). 'Multiculture', as applied in this book and as applied elsewhere,[15] is concerned not only with citizenship and ethnicity but also with culture (and multiculture) as everyday creativity and art (Williams 2002 [1958]). This notion of multiculture is conditioned by, but not fixed to, national boundaries and racialised kinship groups. It attends to the global flows of culture and people that have connected the social life of Newham to the rest of the world. This is multiculture in the context of diaspora (Brah 1996; Gilroy 1993; 2010; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Moten 2003; Vertovec 2003; 2004; 2007). It attends to the performance and citation of diasporic flows in specific locations. It is concerned with how young people's performance of culture today is different from, but related to, what came before (Amin 2010; Butler 1993; 1997a; Gilroy 1993).

Just as urban multiculture has been transformed, so too has marginalisation. Work on urban marginalisation has historically addressed the various ways in which working-class young people have long been positioned as out of order. Humphries draws attention to Victorian discourses on social order and the characterisation of working-class young people as immoral and unhygienic (Humphries 1981, p. 11). Valentine explores post-Second World War discourses on the detachment of

working-class children from parent culture, and associated concerns for youth as an indeterminate and commercialised stage of life (Valentine 2004, pp. 5–6) – responses to mods' violence, punks' anarchy and skinheads' performance of 'aggro' are consistent with this approach (Clarke et al. 1976; Robins and Cohen 1978, p. 83). An analysis of 'moral panics' shows how working-class and black young people are labelled as violent and anti-social by middle-class institutions (media, politicians, people in power and society in general) to substantiate their own hegemonic position (Cohen 2002; Hall et al. 1978).

In contemporary outer East London, marginalisation is located at a related but different conjuncture – a neoliberal conjuncture defined by individualism, commodification, privatisation and the marketisation of social life (Hall et al. 2015). Following deindustrialisation, the social and economic foundations of working-class communities were decimated and their labour, kinship and social structure replaced by projects of self-interest (Winlow and Hall 2006, p. 8). In this context, marginalisation became not so much something that was done to you but something you did to yourself, that you should take responsibility for (Bauman 2001; Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001, p. 23). With structural factors removed from the dominant analysis of social inequalities, the consumer horizon was discursively opened up to all. Its attainment became a dream. Failure in this dream became the mark of marginalisation (Bauman 2001; Miles 2010; Valluvan et al. 2013; Winlow and Hall 2006, p. 5). Indeed, as the 2011 'Riots' demonstrated, it became associated with criminality, social decay and futureless futures.

These forms of classed marginalisation correspond with racialised marginalisation. In the Victorian era, working-class populations of the East End were categorised in terms of 'dirty whiteness', relating to colonial discourses on population control (Bonnett 2000; Booth 1890; Mayhew 1861; Sims 1883). In post-colonial times, categorisations developed alongside the supposed criminality represented by black and brown bodies (Alexander 1996; 2000; 2005). This intersection is made explicit in *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978), which shows how dominant discourses on nihilism and detachment were used by the media, politicians and the police in the 1970s to create a moral panic about black and working-class young men. It is further elaborated in Alexander's work, *The Asian Gang*, which discusses how Asian working-class young men became constructed as an unstable and dangerous social category (Alexander 2000) – a precursor to today's anti-Muslim racisms (Kumar 2012, p. 139; Kundnani 2007, p. 30).

In contemporary Newham, these longstanding concerns over black, Asian and not-white-enough working-class people have fed into worries about Eastern Europeans (Back et al. 2012). At the same time, codes of criminality associated with black urban cultures have been redistributed through the globalisation of cultural signifiers, such as hooded tops, hip hop and urban vernacular. Configured alongside bourgeois fears of working-class youth, and white supremacist fears of black, Asian and not-white-enough bodies, these symbols have become associated with multiethnic urban dangers and therefore also with their social management.

These forms of classed and racialised marginalisation have not gone uncontested. From the 1970s onwards, a consistent feature of ethnographic work on youth and urban culture has been an engagement with resistance. Drawing on Marxian and Gramscian framings, these works highlight the forms of resistance young people offered to bourgeois systems of social and economic control (Hall et al. 1976). Larking about (Willis 1977), defying the police (Humphries 1981) and displaying subcultural disorders of style and language were ways in which young people resisted middle-class order (Hebdige 1979; Jones 1988). It was also through these acts that they were seen to conform to dominant social hierarchies (Willis 1977), their embodied and symbolic revolutions co-opted into bourgeoisie white supremacist capitalism (Clarke et al. 1976).

Subversion in youth politics has also been addressed through young people's banal and everyday social practices. This work has focused on the challenges sustained to racial and classed categorisations through ambiguous, convivial and fluid acts of living (Amin 2008; Back 1994; Gilroy 2004). Alexander's work explores how Asian young men conformed to, but also complicated, their representation in official discourse through everyday acts of sociability and transgression (Alexander 2000). Back's work shows how young people in urban Britain live across racial borders, engaging in culturally syncretic practices (Back 1994). Gilroy discusses how everyday acts of conviviality, as a feature of urban living, provide alternative renderings of social life where race and nation cease to determine human relations (Gilroy 2004).

This text is also concerned with practices of resistance and everyday heterogeneity. A number of scholarly works contend that in the neoliberal moment, the orthodoxy of privatisation has erased former working-class struggles (Winlow and Hall 2006; 2012), that individual body-centred biopolitics has diminished post-racial demands (Gilroy 2010, p. 126), and that digital reproduction has fragmented the

possibilities of radical politics (Dean 2005; 2010). Whereas this book, in part, concurs with these observations, it is also interested in exploring the ways in which youth politics might exist beyond these analyses. In the context of neoliberal marginalisation, it is interested in the ways in which young people continue to struggle against oppression. It is interested in the ways in which these struggles conform to dominant society's position of young people, but also how they rupture social order. Beyond the struggle, it explores how they trace and project alternative politics and imaginaries that operate below dominant neoliberal order.

Field sites and relationships

Finally, some brief methodological details. As noted above, this study was conducted around three youth clubs in Newham, outer East London. As with other seminal ethnographic studies of urban culture, to which this research is indebted, youth clubs provided an accessible institutional setting in which young people could be engaged (Alexander 2000; Back 1994; Robins and Cohen 1978).

The first site, Leyham Youth Club, was located on the edge of a large park in the west of Newham. Fenced off from the rest of the green space, it consisted of a high-ceilinged building surrounded by a large outdoor recreational area. The building itself was divided into two: the larger 'front room' and the smaller 'back lobby'. The front room was used for a variety of activities, including indoor football, dodgeball,[16] table tennis and pool. It was equipped with a loud stereo system donated by one of the youth worker's brothers. The back lobby was half the height of the front room on account of the mezzanine level above. It contained a TV, an intermittently functional PlayStation and three virus-ridden computers with functioning Internet connections. The outdoor area was mainly grass, and in 2008, when I arrived, it was adorned with colourfully painted wooden swing-frames, the remnants of an old adventure playground.

This youth club, more than the others, was connected to the local working-class community. In terms of social networks, the vast majority of young people who came to the site lived within a ten-minute walk of the youth club. Most went to the local school, and when the youth club was closed they congregated in the local park. In a number of cases, these young people were the second generation of children who had attended the youth club. Many others had brothers, sisters and cousins who had formerly attended the summer schemes and regular evening

sessions. One youth worker had graduated from the youth club. A number of the others either had been local residents for a significant amount of time or had worked at the youth club for years. These social ties gave it a sense of permanence and connection to the local area. Along with the pubs, local independent stores, schools and community centres, Leyham Youth Club was spoken about as a community institution.

The community of which it was part had a certain kind of imaginary that I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2. Suffice to say, it was an area that remembered the labour it had provided to the factories of the River Lea and the docks. It also imagined itself through whiteness and, although the demographics told a somewhat different story. Nonetheless, the population of white British people in this part of the borough (which included Greeks, Irish and Roma that would not previously have categorised themselves so) was slightly larger than in other parts, even if small in national terms.

The second site, the After School Club, was housed on the second floor of a council 'hub'[17] and accessed by dedicated stairs at the front of the building. Entering the front door, young people passed the sports hall to the left, climbed stairs, passing the toilets and the landing, and went into the main area. In the middle of the main area were two pool tables and two table-tennis tables. Around the perimeter, soft seating was used restlessly by young men and women who chatted, sat, flirted and fought. The room to the left was called the Craft Room and contained board games, plus arts and crafts materials. To the left of the entrance was the Planet Room. At the entrance to the Planet Room was a wall-mounted flat-screen TV connected to a Wii and a PlayStation 2. The Planet Room had originally contained an analogue music studio, but was latterly transformed into an IT suite and contained ten networked computers. At the far end of the main area were the kitchen and the Star Room. The Star Room – a kind of wide corridor – contained soft seating and poster displays.

Unlike Leyham Youth Club, the After School Club did not have any particular connection to the local community. Although a few of the young people lived within ten minutes of the site, the majority were from further afield. Their common reason for coming to the centre was their attendance at the local school. As the name suggests, the After School Club was youth provision provided by Newham Council outside school hours. Attendance at the After School Club was not regular. Although generally there were about 50 young people in the sessions, up to 20 of these in any session might be new. This meant that relations were difficult to build. Again, unlike Leyham, the youth workers

often changed. As with other council sites, staff rotation was fairly frequent. Indeed, centre managers tended to change every few years. While a small number of staff were from the local area, most came from other parts of London. The high turnover of staff at the After School Club meant that after about a year I was the longest-serving staff member. In addition to this, the area in which the youth club was situated had a different social imaginary. Built on marshland reclaimed over the previous 30 years, the collective memory of the area was relatively recent. While it was true to say that some stronger kinship networks had developed in the local estates, the wider sprawl of residential housing in Riverside was not particularly imagined as a community.

The Albanian Youth Project was different again. It was based in the London Borough of Newham but was also part of a wider community network that extended across North and East London, with activities at a range of schools and community centres in that area. This meant that I was coaching football one week and then off to plan for an art exhibition the next. This made it difficult to work closely with any particular young person or to follow any individual story. This also meant that the group did not have ties to a particular locality, and indeed many of the young people who came to the different sessions would do so from different parts of North and East London. Started as a support group for Albanian-speaking people in the 1990s, the core group was made up of about 15 women, their children and occasionally husbands. This group had close ties of kinship and friendship, some of which extended back to Albania.

The stories told in this book are reflective of the young people I came to know at these different sites. These relationships were dependent on the amount of time I could spend at the different locations. As will become apparent, a larger proportion of the material in the book comes from young people around Leyham than from the other sites. This is because youth sessions at Leyham were more regular and, so my relationships with the staff and young people were stronger. I want to acknowledge here that the strength of the research relationships I developed at Leyham means that the three sites are not represented evenly. However, rather than be concerned with the unevenness of this presentation, I would ask the reader to encounter the material in this volume as faithful to the unpredictability and messiness of ethnography (and indeed of everyday life) (Alexander 2003; Rosaldo 1993). Rather than balance the material in a way that would misrepresent my study, or indeed remove the After School Club and Albanian Youth Project from the discussion, I have opted to retain them in the interests of

illuminating different dimensions of urban multiculture in outer East London.

The structure of the book

To respond to these debates and others, the book comprises eight chapters including the conclusion. These are divided into thematic areas relating to urban multiculture in outer East London.

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 temporally grounds the study by addressing how its present is related to its past. Its central argument is to caution against racialised and nostalgic accounts of the past by exploring how the construction of these pasts is based on powerful forms of remembering and forgetting. In more detail, Chapter 2 addresses the historicity of urban multiculture through a discussion of the past, and of memory. It shows how urban multiculture today cannot be understood aside from memories of what came before – memories that are in constant flux. In particular, it engages with the ways in which young people and youth workers of different ethnicities remember outer East London as the home of the white working-class. Developing a dialogic approach, the chapter explores how these nostalgias reveal the porosity of whiteness and belonging (autochthony) in a superdiverse place. Recalling the formation of Newham through 150 years of migration, it further addresses the often forgotten diaspora mnemonics of the borough, and their tensions with racialised nostalgia.

Chapter 3 addresses changing forms of territorial belonging, and its relation to race and culture. Territory (often in the context of the neighbourhood) has durable currency in youth, urban and multicultural studies, but today these former boundaries are being localised and exploded in new ways. This chapter addresses these reconfigurations in the context of diaspora and asks what these mean for the imbrication of race, class and gender in the city. Starting with the street, it shows how policing practices are informed by patriarchy, racism and middle-class norms. It shows how these develop through the neoliberalisation of the city and how, through the marketisation of the third sector, they correspond with youth-work practices. Moving to the youth club, the chapter then explores how youth-work practices also reflect dominant racial, classed and gendered modes for organising social space. In this regard, it addresses the development of the youth club as a neocommunitarian territory and explores the relation of neocommunitarianism to neoliberal ideas of privatisation and self-interest. Finally, the chapter explores the post-code practices among young people.

Prefacing a discussion on their diasporic formation in the following chapter, it analyses how the patriarchal, racialised and classed practices of the post-code resisted the practices of the youth club and the police, while also operating through the same lexicons and social hierarchies.

Chapter 4 engages with cultural performance. By addressing how global youth culture is locally performed, it explores what young people's cultural performances revealed about shifts in urban multiculture and cultural syncretism. Through analysing young people's music, dance and video-making, the chapter addresses how multiculture has changed and how it has stayed the same. In particular, it explores how the performances of race, class and gender in outer East London tell a tale of the interface between global youth culture, and local history and context. It shows how groups of young people drew on diasporic and local cultural forms to make sense of their everyday lives. It shows how commercial hip hop and R'n'B provided young people with dance forms that projected their move from being 'hoodies to haute couture', at the same time as it confirmed their marginalisation from this dream. It addresses how young men cited feminist and emancipatory US hip hop symbolism alongside patriarchal and racialised British grime to make sense of their relationships with young people in the local area. It also addresses how global and local cultural symbolism were mobilised in YouTube grime videos to perform post-code violence. By addressing these forms of citation and cultural performance, the chapter draws attention to the ways in which new cultural syncretisms were formed and racialised, and classed assignations of safety and profanity developed.

Chapter 5 addresses the significance of YouTube music videos for the transformation of cultural technology in outer East London. Establishing the relation between cultural technology and urban multiculture, it explores the changes and continuities between urban multiculture's association with sound systems, pirate radio and YouTube music videos. The overall argument of the chapter is to complicate theses on the decline of intimacy and radical politics through digital reproduction, and instead to argue that while this is the case, intimacies have also transformed in connection with analogue and physical realties. In each case, the chapter establishes how the cultural technology related to the wider media ecology, how it was constituted in social relations and how it was constitutive of social relations. This entails exploring how it was conditioned by mechanical and digital reproduction, and how these technologies were part of the struggles and demands of young people. Particular attention is paid to ways in which cultural technologies

were performed and what their dialogues revealed about the changing relation between cultural technology and urban multiculture.

Chapter 6 addresses youth politics. Through an exploration of online music videos and one girl's story, it engages with, and questions, prevailing academic discourses on the decline of youth politics under conditions of neoliberal marginalisation. Foregrounding a multisided methodology, it discusses how young people's political performances did indeed conform to the neoliberal matrix – as privatisation, consumerism, masculine violence and racism permeated urban life. However, beyond this, it also explores young people's struggles against these dimensions of neoliberal marginalisation. It addresses how young people used the lexicons of privatisation, consumerism, masculine violence and racism to convey struggles. The chapter argues that these struggles – referred to as 'negative politics' on account of their anger, rage and abject positioning – most characterise youth politics in outer East London. However, beyond this, the chapter also looks at the persistence of radical politics in the same locations. It addresses how the politics of marginalised young people cannot, and have never been, subsumed in a liberal dominant/abject framing. Rather, radical sociabilities and horizons persist. The overall aim of Chapter 6 is to understand how young people's politics are simultaneously conformist, agonist and possibly radical in contemporary outer East London.

As Chapter 2 looked to the past, Chapter 7 turns to the future. It questions how the future appeared to young people living in outer East London. Addressing shifts to neoliberalism, it explores the aspirational horizons projected by middle-class young people in outer East London, and how these were constitutive of the marginalised and alternative horizons of working-class young people in the same location. In this way, the chapter investigates how aspirational futures depended on the racialised and classed foreclosure of other futures, and how beyond this fatalistic binary, alternative future scenarios were sustained. Addressing the absence of ethnographic studies of the future, this chapter draws on material from participant observation, video projects and interviews in which young people of different migratory trajectories, ethnicities and class backgrounds projected their individual and collective horizons. It begins by addressing how some young people self-policed in accordance with a whitened and middle-class 'politics of aspiration', and how they consequently projected their lives through the education–professional–consumer trajectory. Focusing on a group of British-Albanian young women, it explores the navigation of this trajectory through the lens of British-Albanian womanhood. It explores

their approach to education, occupation and consumption, and the built environment of new Stratford Town. Situating aspiration as a white middle-class discourse, open to British Albanian young women, it also uncovers the kinds of disidentifications these young women made, both racialised and classed, in order to navigate their path. The second part of the chapter looks at the flipside of aspirational discourse addressing how white middle-class notions of aspiration are maintained through the foreclosure of other young people's futures. It explores how working-class and not-white-enough young people self-policed their horizons along the education–professional–consumer trajectory and how they practised their own forms of disidentification to explain their social position. The final part of the chapter explores the possibility of horizons that look beyond this binary. Building on the discussion at the end of Chapter 6, it shows how young people projected alternative futures through acts of sociability and sharing, and through alternative projections of justice and the to-come.

The book concludes by addressing key debates discussed in the individual chapters and by resituating these debates within the research context. It outlines the principal transformations in urban multiculture and some conceptual frameworks required to engage with these. It ends by making some wider political points with regard to the imperative of addressing the UK's changing urban multiculture; the continued allure of whiteness; the marginalisation and criminalisation of young people; and the requirement to take seriously the social and political content of young people's performances and practices.

2
The Multicultural Past

Neil [a first generation Canadian], Jay [a second-generation Indian], Tessa [a third-generation Scot] and me [Welsh, English and new to Newham] were in the kitchen making a cup of tea when a conversation started about the decline of the East London community. They discussed the loss of community spirit and blamed it on people not speaking English or knowing English history. They blamed the Indians and Pakistanis for the language and cited a Polish worker on the second charge. He had apparently claimed that Henry VIII had killed the Pope.

(Field Diary, November 2009)

I was out with Besa, Eva, Alma and Jeton. We interviewed a woman outside Newham market. She was from the Philippines. We asked her what she liked about the local area and she said the fresh fruit and meat. She never mentioned 'home', but in his video analysis of the conversation Besian assumed she associated fresh products with 'home'. He did. For him they were associated with Albania.

(Field Diary, December 2009)

They laughed about accidents they had, and comedic situations they had found themselves in: falling down a hill or having a cow run at them. At the same time as being memories of Albania, they were also just memories of events. I participated in these memories, not on the basis that I was Albanian, or had been to Albania, but on the basis that I too had similar stories to tell.

(Field Diary, March 2009)

Over the two years I worked in Newham, I learned a lot about the memory practices of young people and youth workers. Like the quotes above, these practices drew attention to competing nostalgias of 'home' and post-national recollections, at the same time as they addressed exclusive memory practices tied to whiteness and national belonging. As with all aspects of social and cultural life, urban multiculture's contemporary form references what came before. This chapter explores the memory practices of young people and youth workers to address urban multiculture's relation to the past. As will become clear, what came before is not static but under constant revision.

This discussion is advanced through developing a dialogic and diasporic approach to collective memory practice. Memory as 'practice' allows the chapter to focus on the lived production of memory as creative and plural, as opposed to viewing memories as facts or essences – as history (Billig 1995). Viewing the memory practices of youth workers and young people as 'collective' provides the means for thinking about memory as more than an individual act (Halbwachs 1992). Young people and youth workers remembered pasts individually, but they also remembered collectively (Ricœur 2004). To move beyond the national confines of East London's popular memory, the notion of 'diaspora' permits an appreciation of the field of memory practices young people practised; a field formed through the trajectories and interactions of multiple 'homes' (Brah 1996) and cultural flows (Gilroy 1993).

The view of collective memory taken in this chapter is also dialogic rather than phenomenological (Bakhtin 1981). Phenomenological accounts hold subjective experience as primary (Halbwachs 1992; Ricœur 2004). This occludes the plurality of the past in favour of the subjective present, thus leading to a tyranny of the now – the problem of 'small time' (Bakhtin 1986). So, while this chapter explores the past projections of young people and youth workers, it does so with attention to how these practices of the present were made over 'great time' (Bakhtin 1986). The approach allows for an appreciation of the 'tracing' and instability of memory (Bennett 2005; Derrida 1976; Spivak 1976). Viewed in the context of 150 years of migration from the UK, Europe and the world, this approach makes it possible to view Newham's past as a 'fan of history' in which different memories are folded down one on top of the other (Benjamin 1978), and it makes it possible to understand how any of these pasts can be resurrected in the service of the present. As Bakhtin explains,

> Even *past* meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of the past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) – they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue's subsequent development along the way they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival. The problem of *great time*.
>
> (Bakhtin 1986, p. 170)

Supported by these insights, the chapter explores memory practices in outer East London. Specifically, Part I investigates the maintenance of memories of whiteness and belonging, and how these memories were shared among a multiethnic population. That is, it addresses how racial hierarchies are reformed through memory practices, and how the ambivalence and allure of whiteness and class loss coexisted in a 'superdiverse' place (Vertovec 2006). Part II analyses what these memory practices forgot, by discussing the existence of other memories of home and belonging that existed alongside investments in whiteness. It also addresses how memory practices in Newham's diaspora space complicated national and ethnic constructions of home. Through an exploration of solidarity, the possibility of living other people's pasts, and a presentation of the ways in which national and ethnic memory are deconstructed, it shows how Newham's mnemonic folds afforded young people the possibility to remember and interact beyond the constraints of nation and race.

Part I: The ambivalence and allure of whiteness and class loss

The golden era in popular culture

Whereas great time opens Newham's present to a plurality of pasts, popular fictions of the area tend to root its current condition in a selective truth of what came before. In literature, film, academic texts and TV documentaries, East London's past is portrayed not through migration but as the historic home of whiteness, community and working-class morality. This is evident in numerous works that meld together Bethnal Green in the east with Barking and Dagenham in the further east. A subgenre of books on the old East End community dedicates itself

to the resurrection of this essential memory (Gudge 2009; Hector 2010; McGrath 2002; O'Neill 1999; Worboyes 2007). Feature films such as *The Krays* (Medak 1990) and *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (Ritchie 1998) tell similar tales of a priori whiteness, morality and community, sentiments exemplified in the title sequence that accompanied the BBC's controversial *White* series (BBC 2008). The episodes opened with the popular English anthem, 'Jerusalem', played as an image depicted the blacking-out of a white man's face with scripts from non-English languages – the erasure of a white memory through non-white immigration. Tying this message to East London, episode 6 was set in Dagenham. Located in the post-war period, these works activate the nostalgic fissure between the romanticised spirit of the Blitz and decline through immigration. In these accounts, the Blitz, associated with white East London and a British blend of morality – 'pluck, luck and resilience' (Gilroy 2004, p. 96) – is contrasted with the immorality of post-colonial and non-white immigration.

This re-emphasis on white historical entitlement is registered in academic work too. In sociology, Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957) documented the close kinship networks of Bethnal Green families, and as with work on Newham (Hill 1976; Hobbs 1988) it posited white terrains and close-knit communities, paying little attention to the contested and multiethnic formation of the area (Keith 2008). The revival of this narrative came in the form of *The New East End* (Dench et al. 2006). This skipped the intervening 50 years of population and cultural changes in East London to reinvest in assumptions of white permanence. Investing in white legitimacy and East End nostalgias, *The New East End* cemented in sociological analysis the myth of the 'golden era' (Dench et al. 2006, p. 18) – also called the 'classic period' by Hobbs (2006, p. 122).

The golden era was the period of near full employment after the Second World War. It existed in fact, but was invested with racialised romanticism when the decline that followed it was narrated not through deindustrialisation but in relation to immigration. Whiteness then became associated with the golden past and non-white and immigrant bodies with the declining present. On this basis of legitimacy and loss, the text exculpates 'indigenous' Eastenders' hostility to 'newcomers' (Alexander 2011; Farrar 2008; Keith 2008; Moore 2008) – or conceives of racism as East London's inheritance. In so doing, it contributes to the melancholic conjuncture described above while ignoring the well-documented phenomenon of recurring nostalgias for better times (Williams 1973); the urban as a historically constituted space of

strangers (Tonkiss 2006); Newham as a site of anti-racist struggle; and whiteness as a racial signifier that is traced and negotiated rather than being fixed to bodies and territory.

While these texts invest in a racialised history of Newham, other works note the 'imagined' existence of the white working-class community in the area (Foster 1999; Mumford and Power 2003). Often seen as a solution to academic arguments that posit the past as essence, these works are nonetheless problematic for the ways in which they ignore great time. These texts pay attention to projections of whiteness. In so doing they complicate the de facto historic legitimacy of the above accounts but nonetheless fall short of understanding whiteness as a process. Relying on a version of Anderson's imagined community (Anderson 1991) they posit an originary community from which the wider collective becomes perceived. In this way, they disregard the layered histories of belonging in East London and the reformation of whiteness through migration. In this way, they reify whiteness and inadvertently legitimise a priori belonging.

Political discourses on whiteness in East London also present history as essence rather than as something that traced. While fieldwork was under way, East London Labour MP Margaret Hodge pronounced that the historic entitlement of 'indigenous' white working-class people in her East London borough was beyond 'the legitimate need demonstrated by the new migrants' (Hodge 2007; Sveinsson 2009). Maurice Glasman and East London MP Jon Cruddas trod a similar line on immigration through their Blue Labour initiative.[1] Like the literature, films and TV documentaries above, these discourses sought to instrumentalise a notion of East End working-class whiteness and a priori belonging for political gain by contrasting it with the illegitimacy of the immigrant.

These developments in political discourse occurred alongside frequent national pronouncements on the death of multiculturalism (Cameron 2011; Phillips 2005). This was the idea that working-class people had suffered disadvantage not because of the erosion of the welfare state or the uncontrolled advance of neoliberal capitalism, but because of multiculturalist policies and their black and minority ethnic beneficiaries. Multiculturalism, then, became reinvented as a set of policies that promoted black and minority ethnic self-interest. Its extension from anti-racist solidarities in the post-war period was obfuscated. In this context, disadvantage became labelled 'white', and following the official response to the 2005 London bombings, *Our Shared Future* (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007),[2] the needs of the white working class started to be promoted, providing racial, rather than classed,

explanations of economic disenfranchisement. Together, these political discourses had the effect of promoting whiteness, historical entitlement and loss, masking the injustices of neoliberal capitalism, and making illegitimate black and minority ethnic people's struggles (Bottero 2009; Gillborn 2010; Sveinsson 2009).

In Newham, these discourses had particular local resonances. When the research started in 2007, Newham Council, the body responsible for the administration of one of the UK's most ethnically diverse boroughs, was in the process of reconstructing service provision. In concert with the national discourses presented above, the white working-class were promoted and multiculturalism rejected. As explained to me by a senior council official, this was occurring through promoting the language of 'inclusivity', downplaying 'cultural preservation' and 'targeting' engagement more at the white working-class than black and minority ethnic residents. This policy shift was noted to be particularly urgent in Newham because of its ethnic diversity. In this way, rather than confound the possibility of white historic ownership, Newham's history of immigration (and resulting ethnic diversity) heighted its necessity. As Newham's history of immigration was dismissed, so too were past struggles against racism in that location (Bell 2002; Campaign Against Racism and Fascism and Newham Monitoring Project 1991; Sadler 1991; Visram 1986; 2001; 2010; Wemyss 2008; 2009).

How youth workers traced whiteness and loss

Connected to these popular and political discourses about the whitened East End were youth workers' and young people's narrations of the past. Youth workers who had grown up in Newham in the post-war period also relayed stories of the golden era. These were memories of full employment, national resilience and communal living, exhibited during and after the Second World War. They were memories of the various chemical and rag-stripping factories[3] that existed, and the possibility of leaving one job at lunchtime and getting another by the end of the day. They told of close-knit families, and of aunties, grandparents, cousins and friends just around the corner. These scenes of family and work life were part of innocent childhoods pieced together from fragments of history into coherent narratives to make sense of uncertain presents. Holidays were in caravans on Canvey Island; children played knockdown ginger, hopscotch and two balls up the wall; TVs were just coming into the area; the doors were left open; crime was honest and the local mob would get you deals for your Christmas presents just as long as you didn't 'shit down their street' (Tessa).

Tessa, a female youth worker at Leyham, born and brought up around the Royal Docks, with a migratory history that took her back to Scotland, explained to me how, at that time, everyone 'felt safe and secure'. The streets, the home, the workplace and the docks were the physical settings for Tessa's golden era. Highlights included England winning the 1966 World Cup, West Ham winning the 1966 FA Cup, painting everything 'claret and blue', the Silver Jubilee street party of 1977, and the 'bunting and flowers'. These were 'splinters of messianic time' (Benjamin 1968a) pieced together to make sense of the present.

These nostalgias were contrasted with the loss that occurred at the end of the golden era. The 1960s onwards saw the collapse of local industry (Canning Town Community Development Project 1977; Hall 2007, p. 85; Hill 1976; Hobbs 2006; LBN 1976) and soaring unemployment (Canning Town Community Development Project 1976). Lynn, a youth worker who had grown up in Leyham and was from a Romany family, explained that while some from Newham had found jobs in different parts of the country, or through government schemes, many were left unable to feed their families. This dislocation was compounded by the effects of the slum-clearance programme reinstated after the Second World War. Lynn explained how people left homes they had grown up in and moved, often against their will, to other parts of the borough to take advantage of new properties with indoor toilets, bathrooms, hot water and central heating. The result of these changes, she said, was the end of community spirit.[4]

Memories of loss were made sense of through the term 'cannon fodder'. This provided a coherent narrative for the way that the East End working-class 'ha[d] been shit on for years and years and years'. It was used by Tessa to link the deaths of East End people in the First World War – literally 'cannon fodder' – to family members being sent off to fight in the Second World War, to the horizons envisaged for her first son at the hands of the middle-class education system ('more cannon fodder') (see Chapter 7) and to the life chances of young people at Leyham Youth Club in a time of middle-class aspiration and consumption. In this way, she explained the uncertainties and declines that she saw around her, through the idea that East End people were always destined to die a social death at the hands of the powerful. These were a collection of war generals, local authorities and middle-class consumers. As Tessa explained when talking about the parents of young people,

> And [the parents] do stuff with [their young people] on the weekend and they are pretty good with them but you can see the difficulty in

> it, and it is difficult, and it is all because you've got to have this and you've got to have two cars and you've got to have mobile phones and they've got to go to Spain and Butlins in one fuckin' year. You know, everything's pushed at them. You make money, make money, make people richer and richer and our little society is just falling on its face and what do they do with the kids 'we'll lock them up. Give them an ASBO [Anti Social Behaviour Order] … Give them an ASBO. I really do feel when these people go on about racial harassment. I think come down and … see how the East End people have been getting on. I got to go Malcolm, but that's how I feel. I feel that we have been shit on for years and years and years, I really do. So no I don't vote. Fuck 'em. They should have blown up the houses of Parliament. Guy Fawkes should have succeeded then.

In this narrative, Tessa also positions her analysis of class loss against the demonisation of the white working-class as racist. Her comment 'I really do feel when these people go on about racial harassment' is a rejection of the labels applied to white working-class populations locally and nationally (Murray 1990; 1994) (see Chapter 7) and an acceptance that racism is the inherence of a history of working-class criminalisation and marginalisation.

Although the locus of nostalgia for the golden era was remembered in terms of class and community loss, it was also remembered through loss associated with post-war immigration. By looking to blame migrants for post-industrial decline and the anxieties caused by social fragmentation under neoliberalism (Yuval-Davis 2012, p. 156), it followed a familiar history of blaming racialised others for wider social problems (Banton 1955; Humphries 1981; Jones 1971; Richmond 1954). In this way, immigration overlaid class loss and became its own source of resentment. The illegitimacy of migrants then concurrently established the legitimacy of those bodies that could lay claim to the traditional white working-class community – the one that was imagined to exist before the immigrants arrived. At the time of conducting the research, this form of memory practice had identified new strangers – Eastern European migrants.

These whitened memories of belonging were 'autochthonous' (Geschiere 2009). They corresponded to myths of entitlement (Moore 2008, p. 356) and to majority discourses on belonging (Yuval-Davis 2012). However, these memories of belonging were not confined to white bodies. Whiteness in the UK and East London is a popular phenomenon (Bonnett 2000). Different (but not separate) from the US examples of racial uplift (Newitz 1997; Roediger 2007; Wray 2006) and Victorian ideas of whiteness as bourgeois or elite (and 'dirty white'

as savage) (Booth 1890; Mayhew 1861; Sims 1883), autochthony in East London grew out of a history of white popularism that followed imperialism, the welfare state, the Second World War and post-colonial xenophobia (Bonnett 2000). This popular condition of autochthony meant that whiteness was widely distributed and indeed could be traced by people of various ethnicities and migratory trajectories.

This is not to say that the memory practices of black and Asian youth workers were the same as their white counterparts. While they mourned the loss of autochthonous community, and the decline brought by new immigration (particularly Eastern European migration), they did not mourn the loss of white community. The white community in Newham was a highly problematic place for many black and Asian youth workers. In the 1960s, black people living in the area had their windows smashed, until they left. The area had a National Front presence (Husbands 1988), and the descendants of the mob who gave out Christmas presents to those lucky white kids were also the local National Front activists, and not so beneficent to young black and Asian kids. Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, serious street-level racism continued around Leyham. Black and Asian youth workers commented on the area's reputation for racism and the daily incidents of racist abuse they endured. Not only did these youth workers not mourn the loss of the white community, they also thought it a good thing that the most ardent racists had left for the hinterlands of Essex and Kent.

Ryen and Jay were two youth workers at Leyham Youth Club. Ryen, in his early 20s, was black and had grown up in the local area. Jay, in his early 30s, was Asian and had been working around Leyham for the last decade. They explained their experiences:

Ryen: I did know this area before, because I actually lived in Leyham for a bit as well. I lived here back in the early 90s … But due to racism my family moved out of the area.
Me: When was that?
Ryen: '93, '94.
Me: Because there was quite a lot of racism then?
Ryen: Yeah there was. This area was mainly white people in the area.
Me: And was it bad?
Ryen: Yeah, bad. There was quite a lot of racism.
Me: What kind of thing?
Ryen: 'Dirty coon', 'niggers'.
Me: Just like walking down the street?
Ryen: Yeah, just walking down the street.
…

Me: What do you reckon Jay?
Jay: Yes, definitely. I've been here for about 11 years and when I started there was one culture and it was really tough for me.
Me: Do you mean a white area?
Jay: Yeah, a lot of white children and stuff like that. I found it really hard because I am from a different background, because I am Indian …
Me: Did you use to get racism stuff before, at the beginning?
Jay: A lot, a lot. … another thing that I notice about people that are racist, they don't want to be here. They moved away and that's true. They want to be somewhere that they feel comfortable.
Me: They've gone to Essex or Kent or stuff like that?
Jay: That's it. That's so true.
Me: So do you think the area's improved round here, got better, got worse?
Ryen: I think in certain things it has got better, like multiculturalism [increased ethnic diversity] has improved the area.

Nonetheless, youth workers and parents of various ethnic backgrounds and migratory trajectories mourned the loss of 'community'. As part of the recurring construction of golden eras (Pearson 1983; Williams 1973), they too told tales of childhood, morality and simple pleasures. These childhoods had common features. Youth workers, some only in their 20s, with migratory trajectories that connected Jamaica with Ireland, England and India, told me how there used to be more innocence and less crime, drugs and gangs. They told me how children played on the streets and doors were left wide open. They also associated loss with new migrants – particularly Eastern Europeans. They identified immigration with cultural decay: alcoholism, violence, the problematic occupation of public space (drinking in the park, hanging out on street corners), black-market business practices, gangs and the lack of street safety. These ideas of moral and social decay were further played out through discussions about welfare shortages and a lack of jobs for young people, again attributed to immigration. One youth worker, who arrived in the UK from Guyana 40 years ago, thought that new migrants hadn't been in the country long enough to start taking housing, jobs, welfare and the 'food out of the mouths' of British people. In this way, the incompatibility of the old nation with new people was retraced and maintained across ethnic boundaries. In this way, the exclusions and historic delegitimisation that had been enacted in the past were retraced and practised in the present.

The breakdown of golden era notions of community, rising crime and street violence was generally verified by the fact that people 'kept to their own' or 'didn't talk over the garden fence' anymore. Youth workers regularly commented on the loss of community and attributed this loss to the rise of consumer capitalism and individualism. However, while the youth workers did ruminate on these structural issues, the problem of 'people keeping to their own' was also used to identify the problematic memory practices of Asian communities. Perceptions of strong cultural memory among Asian communities were written over structural uncertainty and changing forms of social interaction. These cultural memories were fetishised and envied for having maintained the close-knit community that the English had lost and could not regain. For those who invested in St George's Day as a crumbling bastion of a purer past, the celebration of Eid and Diwali were symbols of this. The liberal rejection of St George's Day – 'political correctness gone mad' (personal communication) – then fed back into this racialised memoryscape, making nostalgia for the golden era all the more painful.

The dialogic formation of immigration and class loss, and its mutability across racial boundaries, was vividly demonstrated one evening at Leyham. Three youth workers – Neil, a first-generation Canadian who had lived in the borough for about 20 years; Jay, a second-generation Indian who had worked in the borough for the last decade; and Tessa, a third-generation Scot, also born and raised in Newham – stood with me in the kitchen making a cup of tea. I am white, was brought up in Hertfordshire, live in North London and have a migratory history that connects South Wales to Bristol and South-West London. The topic of conversation was the decline of East London community. The loss of community spirit was lamented and they concluded that it was unlikely to return while people didn't speak English or know English history. They all blamed the Indians and Pakistanis for the language and cited a Polish worker on the second charge. He had apparently claimed that Henry VIII had killed the Pope. Sifting between the Second World War and William the Conqueror, we all clutched for fragments of our GCSE or O-level official history. After a while, it turned out that none of us had an accurate account of those events in the 1530s. Anyway, it didn't matter, and as they were concluding that it was a good thing that they were all really accepting of difference, Neil said: 'Shhh! Ed's mum is coming.' Ed's mum was black and everyone was quiet.

The conversation demonstrated the plurality and creativity of memory practices associated with whiteness and loss, and their creative use of

cultural and racial codes. The three youth workers of different migratory histories and different embodied experiences were able to collectively lament the decline of community located in the golden era. They did so with recourse to local stereotypes about Indians and Pakistanis, and they linked this effortlessly to the newer violation presented by the figure of the Polish worker, who was seen simultaneously as an illegitimate presence and a direct threat to British 'history'. We were all accorded access to this conversation through our connection to Newham's past. As a new arrival in the borough, my white skin and its relation to the melancholic nation gave me this dubious privilege. Neil's white skin and time in the area facilitated his. Tessa, white, and born and brought up in the borough, had no charge to answer. Jay's brown skin was also not an inhibitor to this discussion. While he did not celebrate the same idea of white community as the other two did, he was still able to access and use memories of whiteness to make his own autochthonous claims.

Based on this discussion, Neil, Jay and Tessa concluded that they were all really tolerant of difference. By this they meant that despite their perception of these cultural problems, they were happy to get along with people of different backgrounds on a day-to-day basis. The contested history of their discussion, and the different exclusions it entailed, became apparent with the physical presence of Ed's mother's black body. Ed's mother's body brought into relief the different kinds of historic legitimacy enjoyed by Polish, English, Welsh, Scottish, Canadian, Indian and black Caribbean migrants in the area, and the different bases from which their collective and nostalgic lament had been possible. While we all had access to white memories, the ways that we accessed them depended on our bodies, on the collectivity of the lament and on the presence of 'others'.

How young people retraced whiteness and loss

My original interest in dialogic memory practices and their challenge to the popular fictions of the white East End did not start with the youth workers but with the young people at Leyham Youth Club. Specifically, the idea for this chapter began while I was observing young people's rituals for St George's Day at the youth club. At the time, I assumed that because the area was so multiethnic there would be little, if any, interest in the occasion. I was mistaken, however. Increasingly, St George's Day and the St George Cross have been mobilised in the service of national melancholias (Gilroy 2006), and Leyham was no exception. These memory rituals, or everyday acts of memorialisation (Alexander 2013), had a particularly strong resonance in the

youth club. Unlike some of the other youth clubs that would celebrate Divali, Eid or the African Cup of Nations with equal interest, Leyham focused on English and Christian festivals. Like Christmas and Easter, St George's Day was a marked occasion and the youth club was dressed with associated symbolism.

In the run-up to St George's Day, the youth club had been decorated in the colours of the St George flag. Some 50 children and young people of various national, ethnic and linguistic trajectories sat around the craft tables making a selection of red and white objects. Participation in the rituals provided them with an official language through which to trace their own versions of whiteness and class loss. Tessa was making a red and white hat for Lynn to wear when she called the bingo at a local working men's club. Kylie, 18, sat down on the sofa with me to watch what was going on and I asked her what she thought. She told me that the rituals were important. 'They [have] their day, so we are going to have ours.' Forgetting Christmas and Easter, she continued, 'We still don't get a day off school though . . . *They* do for Eid and . . . I can't remember the rest of them [religious holidays].'

For Kylie, celebrating St George's Day acted as a form of protest against the cultural erasure she associated with multiethnic society, multiculturalism and political correctness. Indeed, the displays of red and white that coloured the youth club lent themselves to the same conclusion. Tessa and Lynn were making a statement that Leyham still remembered England. However, the table of young people seemed to suggest a more contested history. The ambiguity and allure of these memory practices resided with two women of Romany and Scottish heritage encouraging tables of multiethnic children to enthusiastically glue together red and white flowers.

However, while this event pointed back to the post-war conjuncture, brought to light national and local mythologies of whiteness, and demonstrated the tracing of whiteness and loss in a superdiverse place, it also left a lot of questions unanswered. During my two years at Leyham Youth Club, the ambiguity of these ritual practices, and exactly what they meant to young people, was filled by more banal moments.

Kylie, Molly, Dawn, Samantha and Josie were aged between 16 and 18. They had all been born in the borough, were white and had parents, grandparents and great-grandparents with migratory histories that connected Greece to Ireland, and Bethnal Green to the migrations of the Romany population. Kylie and Molly were friends, as were Dawn, Samantha and Josie. They were all working-class. Dawn and Samantha had achieved some grade Cs at GCSE and the others had fared less

well. Molly, Dawn and Josie wanted jobs, but along with 53.9 per cent of young people in the borough aged 16–24 (LBN 2010, p. 44) they were struggling to find work. Aside from Kylie and Molly, all the young women were living with their parents or guardians, although they wanted to move out. In addition to worries about employment and problems getting housed, they had concerns about crime, and perceived the area to be in social and economic decline.

As in the accounts presented above, these young women used memory practices to make sense of class loss through discourses on immigration:

Me: What do you think about migration in this area? Is there a lot?
...
Dawn: Lately it's been getting worse.
Me: Like what? What's worse?
Josie: More cultures are coming and they're taking all the jobs.
Samantha: More Russians.
Me: More what?
Josie: More Russians and Lithuanians and that; foreigners.
...
Me: Didn't it used to be like that?
Dawn: No.
Josie: Not as bad.
Samantha: When my dad grew up round here it wasn't. It used to be all one. I don't really mind but sometimes I do.
Me: Because of what?
Dawn: Crime has gone up.
Samantha: Yeah.
Josie: Crime has gone up a lot [pause]. That's like boys round here anyway.
Samantha: No... Yeah, there's a police thing on black crime, just on black crime only, so it must be affecting.

Molly and Kylie provided a similar analysis:

Molly: Another thing that has annoyed me, right. As I said, I got kicked out by my mum and dad and as I said I am living in a B&B. Someone comes over from Lithuania, Poland ...
Kylie: ... they get a flat straight away.

Molly: . . . anywhere. They come over with their black bags and they're in a flat within two weeks. Why has it taken me so long? Because all of the people who come over from their countries get the flat and stops me from getting the flat. And I think they should prioritise. The people that lives in this country, the people that are born in this country should be prioritised before the people that come over.

Through these analyses, the young women traced memories of loss and decline, and, as with the previous examples presented in this chapter, they did so with reference to the figure of the immigrant. Samantha makes direct reference to this historically layered practice. Tracing the memories of her father, she says: 'When my dad grew up round here [crime, unemployment and immigration] wasn't [so bad]. It used to be all one.' In this way, she shows how her father's memory practices of class loss and whiteness are used to make sense of her present situation.

The young women also acknowledge shifting parameters of whiteness. Molly and Kylie are careful to distinguish between those that are 'born in this country' and 'people that come over'. In this way they exclude the immigrant while they acknowledge that nostalgias for the golden era are not only available to those with white skin. However, at the same time that the young women acknowledge the mutability of white memory practices, within autochthonous parameters, they also demonstrate how these are constrained by older forms of racism. Their largely xenophobic narratives contain traces of older racial exclusions. The previous section discussed how the body of Ed's mother drew attention to the different embodied locations from which claims to white memory were possible. Samantha, Dawn and Josie, above, also end their discussion of loss and immigration with a statement that takes them back to the alien figure of the young black male associated with post-war moral panics and social decay (Alexander 1996; Gilroy 1987; Hall et al. 1978; Solomos 1988; and see Chapter 4 of this book).

These memory practices were negotiated alongside the young women's own migratory histories. They were the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of migrants. In this way, the young women were part of a dialogic history of 'becoming white' (Brodkin 1998; Dunbar 1997; Ignatiev 2009; Roediger 2007; Wray 2006). It is notable that while the young women were negotiating 'becoming white', previous generations of their own families may not have been white enough. This shows the powerful alliances and ambiguities of race and culture in local constructions of British nationalism (Gilroy

1987). The young women acknowledged how some members of their families had different claims than themselves to local belonging. Molly explained how her mother was Greek and how they had a Greek uncle living with them who didn't speak much English. She said he was 'so Greek' he was 'basically black'. She meant that while she was white and belonged, her uncle didn't because he was not white or English enough. In this case, his darker skin and inability to speak English denied him access, in her eyes, to Newham's past. However, while her uncle made clear her family's contested access to local forms of white belonging, he did not subvert her own claim. In fact, it was through the presence of her uncle that she negotiated her own place in Newham's history.

This articulation of whiteness also enabled Molly to blame those who were not white enough for the economic and social hardships she dealt with. Whiteness and Greekness, in this sense, had a very different meaning from the kinds of ethnic identity mobilised by the middle-class children. Reay et al. (2007) have discussed how middle-class children can use minority ethnic identities as social capital. However, Greekness was not available to Molly as a form of capital; rather, it was whiteness that provided her with mobility. Through overlaying structural disadvantage with immigration, and phenotypical racism with xenophobic exclusion, the young women 'became white'. In this way they remembered pasts not available to their parents and grandparents. This form of memory practice made sense of being working-class and marginalised in a superdiverse place. It also made sense because, not in spite of, the young women's migrant backgrounds.

These memory practices showed how whiteness was traced rather than permanent. The openness of tracing meant that whiteness and its association with nation was mobilised by young people and youth workers of different migratory trajectories. This did not mean that white, black, Greek, Romany and Asian people practised memories of belonging in the same way, or that xenophobia and phenotypical exclusion disappeared. Rather, it showed how national, cultural and racial ideas of autochthony were overlaid and interpenetrated. Built at national and local levels, these memory practices referenced national discourses about the East End, the death of multiculturalism, the plight of the white working-class and the St George Cross, but they also attended to local narratives of class loss, immigration, dislocation and post-industrial decline.

The generational differences between the accounts also show how these memory practices were in flux. The ways in which the older and younger youth workers and the young people themselves traced

memories was dependent on their social context. While memories of a white past were traced, and indeed verified, through oral histories across the generations, the contemporary criteria of young people for whitened belonging were framed around being born in Newham. In this context, the myth of indigenous permanence as a criterion for accessing whiteness became opened to a more malleable, but nonetheless exclusive, idea of belonging to the earth that respected young people's experiences of increasing ethnic diversity in the area.

Part II: Diaspora mnemonics

Built through 150 years of constant migration and movement, memory practices of whiteness and loss were only one aspect of Newham's diaspora mnemonics. Whereas Part I explored how whiteness was traced, and how loss was coded through immigration, Part II looks at memories that are 'forgotten' (Connerton 2009) or silenced (Bakhtin 1986b; Nietzsche 1983) when outer East London is remembered as white. This discussion broadens the focus from Leyham Youth Club to engage with the Albanian Youth Project and the After School Club. This expanded lens provides an insight into the diaspora mnemonics of Newham and their associated negotiations and tracings.

To engage with these sites, Part II opens Newham's fan of history to overlapping memories from elsewhere. Historical works on the long-standing Asian, African and Caribbean presence in East London complicate the memories of whiteness explored in Part I (Bell and Garfield 2002; Garfield 2009; Padfield 1999; Visram 1986; 2001; 2010; Wemyss 2008; 2009). They draw attention to the ways in which spaces of migration, such as outer East London, are made through the memory of many homes, and how these memories renegotiate and displace fixed notions of permanence and belonging (such as Britishness and whiteness), at the same time as they seek to reify and capture essences of elsewhere (Boym 2001). Brah's work on 'diaspora space'[5] is useful here because it permits an engagement with near and far memory practices as the simultaneous dislocation of fixed notions of history and belonging, and the renegotiation of pasts in a new context (Brah 1996, pp. 204–205). This process of renegotiating pasts in a new context provides a means of understanding mnemonic plurality, displacement, negotiation and refixity in outer East London and of understanding how it can be that people with different national trajectories can share mnemonic affinities across national boundaries, because of where they find themselves at (Brah 1996, p. 208; 1999, pp. 7, 12).

Mnemonic plurality

As noted in the Introduction, the After School Club comprised a highly fluid population, including young people who had recently arrived in the borough as the children of labour migrants or refugees. As these young people arrived in Newham, they negotiated embodied and mediated forms of memory to make sense of their dislocation and relocation.

As a newcomer to the club, Serena's memory practices were illustrative of the continued arrival of new memories in Newham's diaspora space, and how these were laid down alongside others. When I met her she was about 14 years old. Having recently settled in the area from Portugal, she didn't speak much English but what she lacked in language she made up for through gesture and performance. Serena interacted well with the other young people and spent her time associating with the young women, taunting the young men and playing practical jokes. Alongside these interactions, she made reference to her past in Portugal, often by comparing facets of outer East London culture to those of Lisbon. As she did so, she shared her national dislocation and negotiated her place in the youth club.

Many of these negotiations took place through mundane dialogues, contributing to the background murmur of the club. However, one evening, as the young people were leaving, Serena decided to make a more spectacular intervention. As the young people were making an orderly exit from the club, Portuguese pop, shortly followed by Serena, burst into the stairwell from the computer terminal next door. The performance was intended to disrupt the relative calm of the queue but it was also an attempt by Serena to make sense of her past in that location.

Her dramatic intervention didn't quite have the success she hoped for. On the one hand, her practical jokes were so frequent that the young people ignored her provocation. On the other hand, while her recent dislocation was immediate to her, dislocation itself was not novel to the young people leaving the building. In fact, in the context of this diaspora space, Serena's memory of her past was just another fold in the club's fan of history. Her claim to national difference was one of many.

After the crowd left, I spoke to Serena, feeling she wanted recognition for her actions. Posing the question I thought she wanted to answer, I asked if she was Portuguese. She said that she was, and that because she was she always listened to Portuguese music. For her, at that moment, Portuguese pop music provided Serena with a means of reifying and expressing her memory of another home and for negotiating a new

sense of belonging in Newham. For the departing young people it was nothing new. It was another memory of home among many, another fold in Newham's diasporic fan of history.

As Serena's intervention receded into time, the diasporic memory practices of the After School Club continued. *Kampala via Boda Boda* played out from YouTube, offering John, a British Ugandan, shots of that capital city from the back of a motorbike. The digital video, and the screen interface, provided a connection to a home he had lived in, and a place where family resided. It provided an intimate connection to another time and place that made sense to him and to his life in Newham. His friends, largely uninterested, occasionally glanced over. Like Serena's intervention, this ambient lighting and intimate displacement were entirely routine.

Negotiating hierarchies of belonging

However routine, these diasporic memory practices also needed to be negotiated in Newham's hierarchies of belonging. As Brah notes, diasporic memory practices are not relative to one another; rather, they exist in a social matrix structured through racial, classed and gendered axes of power (Brah 1996, p. 209). Memory practices in Newham, then, became ways in which young people negotiated their places in these hierarchies, and therefore their place in Newham.

In Part I of this chapter, I discussed how young people traced whiteness with reference to other national homes in order to negotiate their racial, classed and gendered position in Newham's hierarchies of belonging. To expand these discussions to other national pasts, I now turn to young people who attended the Albanian Youth Project.

One of the most regular participants at the group was Eva. At 14 years old, she was becoming independent and establishing her identity as a middle-class British Albanian woman (see discussion in Chapter 7). This negotiation of her social position entailed a process of associating and disassociating herself from different subject positions (Skeggs 1997; 2004). With regard to her memory practices, it entailed associating and disassociating herself from her mother's past. Through these means she negotiated her place in Newham's social hierarchy.

These practices and their relation to Newham's hierarchies of belonging became apparent as Serena sought greater independence from her mother. Eva's assertions of independence had started to make her mother worry that they were becoming estranged, and in an attempt to create empathy, she assured her daughter that she remembered what it was like to be 14. Eva set her straight, telling her it was 'ancient

history'. What she meant by this was that her mother's memories of the past, based on what Eva considered to be the conservative upbringing in northern Albania, were distinct to the ideas of femininity, independence and middle-class mobility she held to be part of her forward trajectory. However, while Eva disassociated herself from these versions of her mother's memories, she associated with other aspects of her mother's Albanian past. Through forms of nostalgic memory practice (familiar to many migrant communities), Eva participated in a range of private and public cultural activities organised through the Albanian Youth Project, facilitated by her mother. In the context of Newham's diaspora space, and alongside her middle-class and gendered individualism, these aspects of her Albanian past were available to her to make sense of her place in Newham's hierarchies of belonging, in ways that they were not available to the working-class young women discussed in Part I.

These interpersonal engagements could not be understood aside from the wider discursive frames with which they were in dialogue. Just as young people negotiated their pasts with friends and family, they also negotiated them in relation to narratives of eurocentrism that characterises the UK's ongoing orientalist attitude to the East (Said 1978).

Endrit, 14 years old, recalled how every year he and his family drove to Albania for their summer holidays – a fairly common journey among the Albanian-speaking families I knew. The journey took Endrit from England, through France and into Central Europe. He used the journey as a means of communicating his own story of dislocation and migration, and therefore of making sense of his place in Newham. While describing the journey, he told me about the smell of the countries he passed through. He thought that France stank, especially Paris, and he thought that London smelled bad too. He held this in contrast to the fresh air and pure water of Albania. In sharing his memories of home and in retracing the route that had originally brought him to the UK as a refugee, Endrit constructed Albania as a green and pure land that existed in contrast with the overdeveloped Western European metropolises.

However, this construction of nostalgic purity and essence was not only the way in which he made sense of his dispersal and loss; it was also a means of addressing a history of European civilisation he felt excluded from. By remembering Albania as a green and pure land, he was confronting the widely held stereotypes of the East (and in this case Albania, and Albanians) as premodern (King et al. 2003). By romanticising Albania's nature and purity, Endrit was confronting his own embodied existence in a discursive field of Western progress and Eastern stagnation. His story of his journey home, then, provided a vehicle

through which he traced and negotiated his own belonging in Newham by engaging with orientalist and cold-war discursive fields constructed through binaries of Western modernity and Eastern backwardness.

Folds and affinities

Residing in Newham together, these diverse memories were negotiated in the same social context. This meant that at the same time as memories of national homes were reified to negotiate Newham's hierarchies of belonging, they also folded into each other, permitting the sharing of memories across national boundaries.

These folds of memory and their complication of national essences became apparent one afternoon outside Queen's Market in East Ham. As part of a documentary video project that sought to understand how young people understood themselves in their local environment, Eva (introduced above) and her friends were conducting interviews with local residents. The young women had successfully interviewed some of the stallholders, and moving onto the street they encountered a woman distributing leaflets for a local church congregation. Feeling emboldened by their experience in the market, they stopped her and asked if she would mind speaking on camera.

As the interview ran its course, it transpired that the woman with leaflets was from the Philippines. Eva asked her what she liked about the local area. She said she liked the market because, as in the Philippines, there was cheap, fresh fruit and meat on sale. To me it seemed the woman was stating an economic preference for the market. However, when Besian (a peer of Eva's and fellow member of the Albanian Youth Project) cut the material together into a final film, he added the caption '[she liked] cheap food, fruit and vegetables . . . but most importantly it reminded her of home'. Like Endrit, above, he remembered Albania in terms of purity and freshness, and interpreted the woman's comments in the same nostalgic vein. That is to say that he related to the woman's dislocation and constructed her past through his own. While we cannot know if Besian's interpretation was right, it was nonetheless demonstrative of affinities and overlaps in memory possible in diaspora space. His interpretation assumed a diasporic commonality and affinity that transcended national boundaries.

These forms of diasporic affinities threw up constant ambiguities in national order. As noted above, the After School Club's population was nationally diverse and fluid. This meant that while young people and youth workers were interested in fixing each other in national histories and trajectories, it was not easy to do so. Participants at the club were

regularly assumed, inaccurately, to be from the same country, and young people often played with their families' national histories to disorient their location in hierarchies of belonging. These forms of carnivalesque formed the basis of a shared sense of humour among the young people that stripped national and ethnic identity of some its baggage.

There were many examples of these kinds of memory practice. One took place in a dialogue between a youth worker, Mel, and two young men with the same Congolese surname. Standing around the pool table, Mel, whose own parents were Indian and English, asked if her interlocutors were brothers on account of their shared surname. Her question was uttered in the context of common dislocation and rooted in a curiosity over their relationship, but also in the surname, and therefore of provenance. Kane replied, 'no', they weren't, and if they looked alike it was because they were from the same tribe. He said that there were only two tribes in the Congo. The response was perfectly weighted to play on the ambiguities of national pasts in the context of the club, while at the same time providing the plausibility necessary to draw Mel into the joke. Kane had reasoned correctly, and probably based on previous rehearsal, that Mel was unlikely to be familiar with the ethnic composition of the Congo. After waiting enough time for her confusion to publicly register, laughter was shared and Mel was given to realise that they were brothers. Attention returned to the pool game. The dialogue revealed how the After School Club provided a space in which national order could be mocked at the same time as it showed how such play was possible because of the affinities of dislocation shared between the staff and young people.

At the same time as reified memories of home provided the basis for negotiating social standing, concurrent mnemonic dislocations provided the basis for forms of affinity that could not be contained within national solidarities of belonging and home. These affinities took the form of shared, overlapping and ambiguous memories, but they also took the form of empathy. Through shared experiences of dislocation, and through accompanied experiences of racism, young people complicated national order not only through collective memory practice but also, and relatedly, through vocalised empathy with other migrants who were experiencing racism.

These forms of empathy came to my attention while I was working at Leyham Youth Club. Kevin was a 13-year-old at Leyham who had Barbadian and Irish grandparents. He lived close to the youth club and attended the sessions when he didn't have homework to do. He was keen to help me with my research and in an interview I asked him about

migration in Newham. Kevin's response to my question challenged the autochthonous practices discussed in Part I and did so on the basis of relating his past and future projection of dislocation to those of others:

Kevin: Yeah, there is quite a lot, Lithuanians. There is nothing wrong with that. It's just, I hate it when people say, 'You must speak the language if you come into this country'. I think it's very rude. And some people say in my Spanish class, in Spanish, 'I don't like terrorists cos they are taking up all the space and jobs.' I thought, 'How can you say that? You don't know what they have been through. How do you know they don't want to make a new start of their lives? How do you know? . . . They've probably had a miscarriage or whatever. You can't see things, you must know things to say things.'

Me: So you think it's rude that people say that?

Kevin: Very, because if I didn't come from England and I lived in Ireland and I wanted a new life, or came from Afghanistan or whatever and I wanted a new life, then I wouldn't like someone to do it to me.

Kevin understood that xenoracism existed and that it was related to ideas of belonging and loss, which also related to discourses on terrorism. Using miscarriage as a metaphor for a form of trauma, he empathised with the anxieties of dislocation and resettlement.[6] Rather than accept the xenoracism of his classmates, he challenged it by imagining how it related to his own past and future movements.

He was not alone in this way of thinking. Freddy (a peer of Kevin's at Leyham) recalled that when he was younger, discrimination had made it difficult for his father to get work. Like Kevin, this memory led Freddy (whose parents were Colombian) to be critical of the idea that Eastern European people had taken English people's jobs:

Freddy: Yeah, I think there is a lot of racism. I don't mean just in London but in immigration as a whole in England. They say that Eastern European people took English people's jobs but . . . I don't reckon. I reckon yeah it could be to do with that they [building contractors and other employers] were getting cheap labour. But if you are a better worker than someone else then [that person is] going to get sacked. I think it also has to do with that they came over to find a job so they will be [prepared] to work more and harder than other people who take it

> for granted to have a good paid job . . . A lot of jobs here you can sit around and not really do a lot and get good pay and people take it for granted. And if someone else was to come from another country they would work for the money that they earned. So, I think it's really important.

In this way, Kevin and Freddy's experiences of dislocation and the forms of xenoracism that surrounded them were used as the basis for empathy with other migrants to the borough. Rather than trace whiteness and claim greater legitimacy to outer East London by associating new strangers with loss, they acted in solidarity with their fellow diasporians and in this way contested the hierarchies of belonging based on whiteness.

Summary

Located between the golden era and the perceived decline brought by immigration, popular culture, political discourse and sociological analysis posit a reduced history of outer East London. By forgetting the dialogic creativity of whiteness as a popular and traced category of being and knowledge, this history serves national melancholias and white invisibility. It also does a disservice to the complexity of everyday memory practices in Newham. Through an ethnographic investigation into whiteness and loss in Newham, this chapter has unpicked the reified histories associated with the golden era, unfolding Newham's fan of history to show the dialogical formation of racial hierarchy, and the porosity and allure of whiteness and class loss in a superdiverse place. The chapter has shown that while there was nothing whole, permanent or timeless about whiteness, nonetheless it functioned to create autochthonous narratives based on racial and national hierarchies of belonging that overlaid phenotypical racism with newer xenophobias. The necessity to exclude on the basis of an a priori myth of belonging found common resonance among youth workers, parents and young people of different migratory trajectories. However, this did not imply that all exclusions were the same. The different embodied histories and experiences of people still affected the way they accessed the soil.

The historical and social conjunctures in which these practices of whiteness and loss occurred were particular. While they were part of a national formation of post-war nostalgia they were also specific to Newham, and to Leyham. Taken forward in Chapter 3 through a discussion of the politics of territory and defensive community formations, they drew attention to the history of migration in the area (and the

resulting superdiversity) at the same time as they were predicated on forgetting that same past. And they drew attention to the long history of economic stagnation at the same time as they were predicated on replacing this notion of loss with the figure of the immigrant.

These forms of racialised legitimacy functioned through what they forgot. But what was silenced still existed in the fan of history and in the memory practices of young people. Newham was made through 150 years of migration that brought with it memories of many different homes. Some of these homes were national essences but their ubiquity and their openness to appropriation gave rise to forms of ambiguity that became estranged from their national and ethnic anchors. Personal memories and projections of migration were used in solidarity with other migrants against the dehumanising consequences of xenophobia. Through cultural production, different memories and trajectories were played together in uncomplicated alliance. In some spaces, the openness to different pasts and the uncertainties involved in defining where people were from allowed for interactions that were temporarily stripped of racial and ethnic hierarchy. Young people whose national origins were mistaken found themselves in the position of living memories for their friends. This resulted in disinvestment from nation and race, and openness to mnemonic play that worked against the hierarchies of belonging sustained in popular culture and practised in everyday life.

3
Territory

This chapter addresses territoriality in outer East London. Territory (often in the context of the neighbourhood) has durable currency in studies of urban and youth culture. This chapter examines the transformation of territory as a dimension of urban multiculture. Focusing on Leyham Youth Club, with some material from the After School Club, it argues that to understand the politics of territory in outer East London, it is necessary to understand how different territorial practices and performances interact in the contemporary neoliberal context. For example, it is necessary to understand how young people's post-code conflicts relate to the policing of urban space and to the neocommunitarianism of the youth club. Additionally, therefore, it is necessary to note how policing practices have expanded and how communitarianism is being redefined through neoliberalism and autochthony. Central to understanding these different, and interrelated, practices is an appreciation for the ways in which race, gender and masculinity are imbricated into the fabric of the city – that is, the ways in which exclusive and inclusive racial, classed and gendered geographies of the city relate to post-code conflicts, policing and communitarianism in the neoliberal moment.

In this regard, this chapter offers a slightly different take on territory from those more commonly found in work on youth and urban culture. Rather than focus on the formation of young people's territories (like Back's work on neighbourhood nationalisms; Back 1994), or explore the state regulation of urban space (Graham 2010; Minton 2009), it engages with the ways in which the territorial practices of the police, the youth club and young people are intertwined. In this way, it attempts to provide an account of territory that respects the relational qualities of urban space as a dimension of urban multiculture.

To make these explorations, the chapter is divided into sections that correspond to different arenas of territorial practice identified through the ethnography. After framing the chapter in literature on youth and urban space, the second section addresses policing, how policing created territories of inclusion and exclusion that corresponded to racialised and classed orders, and how through neoliberal third-sector arrangements the youth club was co-opted into this work. The third section explores the territorial practices of Leyham Youth Club. Related to the first section, it discusses how youth club practices defined zones of racial, classed and gendered exclusion outside and within its perimeter. The fourth section addresses the neighbourhood politics of young people. Anticipating some of the analysis in Chapter 4, it explores young people's post-code conflicts. In particular, it examines how they corresponded to the neocommunitarian practices of the youth club, and the racial, classed and gendered exclusivities of policing in the local area.

Literature

In urban and cultural sociology, territory has been widely debated. Despite claims that young people's identification with the local is on the wane (Featherstone 1990), territory has maintained its place as a persistent frame of social relations (Shildrick 2006; Watt and Stenson 1998), with its recomposition providing a lens through which shifting inclusions and exclusions of neoliberal Britain can be understood (Knowles 2003; Sibley 1995; Swanton 2010).[1]

Seminal ethnographic studies of the 1970s provide a useful starting point for thinking about how transformations in territory, class, race and masculinity might be periodised and understood. Studies of 1970s Ted and skinhead culture explored class and territory (with whiteness and masculinity as latent vectors of analysis). These studies considered how young men in industrial Britain performed territory to make sense of their exclusion from bourgeois society, and also how territorial acts were used in this context to mark out white privilege and masculinity (Clarke 1976; Jefferson 1976). The study of Teds shows the nostalgic performance, and violent defence, of a reified white parent culture. The study of skinheads demonstrates how whiteness was traced and defended against ethnic heterogeneity. Reading them alongside feminist scholars, they further highlight how the streets of industrial and then post-industrial England (including East London) developed as masculinised public arenas negotiated through the acts of hardness, toughness and violence in which young people, and institutions of

the state (e.g. the police), participated (Massey 1994; McRobbie 2000; McRobbie and Garber 2005; Rose 1993; Tonkiss 2006).

Studies on urban youth from the 1980s onwards developed these insights through a more concerted focus on race and gender. They demonstrated how in ethnically diverse places, the practice of territory in relation to race was transforming. Whereas previous works had addressed the defence of mythical white territories, these newer studies, many of which had been conducted in London, showed how through the migration of people and culture the racial composition of the city had changed. They noted how rather than maintain separate enclaves, black, white and Asian young people in post-colonial Britain navigated across racially coded inclusive and exclusive territories (Alexander 2000; Back 2005; Gunter 2010, p. 123; Harris 2006).[2] While still drawing attention to the ways in which white racism made the city (Keith 1995), they highlighted how in fluid locales young people of different ethnic backgrounds created and coded diasporic nationalisms across supposed racial boundaries, drawing on territorial symbolism from white English, Jamaican, South Asian and US popular culture (Back 1994, pp. 66–71, 106–122; Gunter 2010, pp. 94–99; Harris 2006).

Expanding the initial focus on social class, these studies further addressed the reconfiguration of masculinity. They noted how neighbourhood affiliations of young black and white men were cemented by doing 'badness' (Gunter 2010, p. 97) or through 'talking big' (Back 2005, p. 29) – forms of masculinity that themselves related to the syncretic intersection of Jamaican, South Asian, US and English parent culture. They noted how these forms of territorially continued to be important for negotiating and maintaining personal relations and social (racial, classed and gendered) hierarchies in the city, and echoing some of the earlier studies on Teds and skinheads, how classed and racialised young men created forms of positive relation that resisted their exclusion on these terms.

Like their precursors, the inclusions and exclusions between groups of young people (predominantly men) were set in wider social structures. Returning to earlier works, Willis and Humphries had shown how working-class young people negotiated their place alongside middle-class young people, but also how these interactions were informed by their setting in dominant bourgeois social structures institutionalised in the police and school systems. As such, working-class young people made sense of themselves not only alongside other young people but also through resisting (and consenting to) the state's constraint on their collective production of the local environment (Berman 1986; Harvey

2008; Isin 2000; Lefebvre 1996; Marcuse 2009; Merrifield 2011; Mitchell 1995; Soja 2010). Feminist analyses demonstrated how in addition to being conditioned by bourgeois hegemony, these social relations were patriarchal. The use of social space accorded with ideas of public and private/male and female entrenched in British society through industrial relations (Massey 1994; McRobbie 2000; McRobbie and Garber 2005; Rose 1993; Tonkiss 2006). Alexander and Back's work on race developed these frames, addressing how dominant social structures produced classed, gendered and racialised geographies of the city. They note how structural racism gave rise to racialised sociospatial demarcations, and how young people navigated, resisted and consented to these. In particular, they demonstrated how Asian and black young people resisted hegemony by turning their racially criminalised territories into positive affiliations at the same time as these same practices confirmed their place in racialised, gendered and classed delimitations of the city (Alexander 2000; Back 2005).

Alexander and Back's accounts of race, class, masculinity and territory also note shifts between the binaries of exclusion and inclusion – 'third spaces' (Bhabha 1990; 1994; Soja 1996). They draw attention to the newness that arises from territorial negotiations, carefully documenting how the everyday negotiations and contestations of the city give rise to sites of creativity that often exceed their categorisation. Back's discussion of syncretic nationalisms and Alexander's discussion of the banality of friendships and everyday life both explore these dimensions of urban culture (Alexander 2000; Back 1994).

Policing territory and partnership working

Building on this literature, this chapter opens by considering the policing of territory around Leyham Youth Club and the After School Club. This allows the book to address how expanding neoliberal policing practices affected the territorial practices of the youth club and young people. In particular, this section addresses how, facilitated by cuts in public funding at the beginning of the Conservative tenure, and by New Labour's neoliberal service-delivery frameworks, policing practices of the streets became intertwined with the territorial practices of the youth club.

Around Leyham Youth Club and the After School Club, policing of the streets corresponded to the wider history of policing the working-class city. That is to say, policing practices maintained discursively defined territories of inclusion and exclusion. These territories of inclusion and

exclusion corresponded to classed and racialised moral-spatial designations of order and disorder (Gough and Franch 2005). Of the numerous officers who attended the youth clubs (mainly local police and police attached to the local park), all spoke of the street in these terms. Through their training and interpolation of dominant discourse, they understood the street as a site of disorder and the youth club as a site of order, where the disorderly could be contained. Although different officers had different takes – some related the disorder of the streets to the panics about gangs and knife crime that were circulating at the time; others recognised the overinflated character of these discourses, but nonetheless argued that young people on the street caused disturbance for local residents – all designated the youth club as the site where young people should be spending their time, and the street as out of bounds. Consequently the street and the youth club formed a moral spatial binary for policing the area, the one defining the other. The youth club became the site of order in which the disorderly of the street (the young people) could be contained.

These discursive territorial designations became concrete through policing practices. On the street, young people I worked with experienced the regular violence of stop-and-search, including the, at the time, ongoing (illegal) practice of being stripped in the back of police vans (Newham Monitoring Project 2014). At the hands of community support officers, they were frequently moved on from the stairwells of council flats and street corners. With the street cast as a site of potential criminality, as a local community support officer confirmed, young people did not need to have done anything wrong for these exclusions to take place; they just needed to be suspected of it.

These policing practices were classed, corresponding to bourgeois ideas of good public life institutionalised in the authority of the police, and dependent on the exclusion of working-class young people from public space (Humphries 1981). They were also masculinised. They took places in the historically masculinised public space of the street and were reflective of hegemonic associations between good public life and strong independent masculinities – present historically in society and exaggerated in the police through its specific role in maintaining authority over others (Broomhall and Barrie 2012; Dodsworth 2007).

They were racialised. At the time of the research, stop-and-search disproportionately affected black and Asian young people (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2010), and legal cases for racism against Newham police officers had been brought (Newham Monitoring Project 2012). Nonetheless, around the youth clubs the racialisation of territory

did not occur through police officers casting racial slurs (although there is evidence that these were the content of private dialogues in the back of police vans) (Newham Monitoring Project 2012). Rather, the racialisation of territory took place through the use of IC codes – the ethnic codes police use to describe suspects or offenders.[3] Central to neoliberal governance, categories such as IC codes were used to contain and manage the heterogeneity and therefore uncertainty of the local environment – in this case its ethnic diversity (Foucault 2003).[4] As supposed infractions look place on the street, IC codes were reported back over the radio, allowing an institution with a history of racism to assign and manage the ethnically diverse territory through categories of racial threat. Policing the streets around the youth clubs therefore amounted to a classed, racialised and masculinised practice through which young people were categorised and acted upon as disorderly. These practices made concrete the categorisation of the street as a site of disorder and the youth clubs as sites of order, where the abject could be managed.

The discursive distinction between the disorder of the street and the order of the youth club did not entail a police absence from the youth club (Sharkey and Shields 2008). On the contrary, the designation of the youth club (as an orderly space for the abject) entailed policing of that terrain too, and over the course of the ethnography the neoliberal mechanisms of 'partnership working' and 'community policing' ensured that the youth clubs became closely intertwined with the criminal justice agenda.

The service-delivery framework of 'partnership working' was central to New Labour's social policy mantra. In Newham, and across England and Wales, the death of Victoria Climbié and the subsequent writing of *Every Child Matters* (HM Government 2003) led to an Integrated Youth Support System designed so that no more children would fall through gaps in the welfare system.[5] Combined with the increased responsibility of third-sector organisations to provide local services – a key move in opening the public sector to 'the market' (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Jessop 2002; Peck and Tickell 2002) – youth clubs were encouraged to enter into local service-delivery partnerships with other agencies, including the local police. On the police's side, these relations were pursued through the policy of 'community policing'. This encouraged local forces to work with partners in the provision of law and order in their area, such as private security firms and youth clubs (Mitchell et al. 2013, p. 60).

Through these neoliberal agendas, the distinctions between youth club and youth work, and police and policing, were blurred. Orders

emanating from police liaison meetings would reach the youth clubs and new courses for provision would be set. At the After School Club, partnership meetings resulted in changes to the opening hours. About six months after I started volunteering, the provision times shifted from 7.00–9.00pm to 7.30–9.30pm. The police had informed the director of Youth Services that trouble was occurring in the local area after 9.00pm. This actually amounted to the young people talking in the car park after leaving the youth club – the club the police ironically wanted them to attend. Nonetheless, their collective presence was deemed a 'hot spot' and the police intervened by altering the opening hours. Through similar strategy meetings, joint working initiatives were established whereby youth workers took part in outreach work with the police, travelling around local areas in unmarked police cars, or on foot (with local officers) to talk to young people. In this way, youth workers helped soften the image of the police, the police collected intelligence they otherwise would not have had access to, and the lines were further blurred as to where the youth club as a supposed site of order began and the street as a site of disorder ended.

Similarly motivated, the police attended youth club sessions to 'improve relationships' with local youth. The police were overwhelmingly distrusted by the young people they were most interested in, and, while the streets contained avenues for escape, the youth club provided a captive audience. They also provided an ideal site for intelligence-gathering. They could, and did, ask youth workers to name 'suspicious' young people, and requested permission to see the register and personal details kept on file (although this was declined). Through partnership working, the police and the youth workers shared intelligence on young people. The police in Newham maintained a list of those most at 'risk' of committing criminal activity. The list was shared with youth service providers who monitored the respective individuals. I saw police officers drinking their tea while conducting surveillance. They stood outside while 20 young people played in front of them. As they watched the young people climbing through the smaller apertures of the climbing frame, they openly discussed who might have been responsible for a spate of local burglaries. One young man had already been asked to appear in a police line-up. He hadn't been convicted yet but his dexterity on the climbing frame seemed to make it increasingly likely.

A number of youth workers were sceptical of these initiatives. Sabiha, the centre manager at the After School Club, was concerned that trust with young people was being eroded, so refused to cooperate with her local authority bosses over such initiatives. Will, a youth worker at

Leyham, had different reservations. He knew that any perceived friendship with the police carried the risk of young people thinking he was a grass. The consequences of this might be his parents' home, where he also lived, getting its windows smashed. Other youth workers were, however, more enthusiastic. Leyham's manager, Neil, advocated partnership working for developing local forms of citizenship and reducing disorder among young people. He explained to me:

> I am a believer in the whole happening, right. Use it as a whole. Knife crime won't be stopped by zero tolerance from police, right, but it can be stopped by zero tolerance from police; it can be stopped from us working our trade and working it properly; teachers educating – a whole – all departments coming in and working with it. There is a positive end to it, if they have patience and if the whole works.

In this way he supported partnership practices as good for youth and community work, and in this way facilitated the increasing indistinction between policing and youth work. However, his positive approach to these practices was related not only to his views about good youth and community work but also to the budget cuts being undertaken at the time.

For most of the time I worked at Leyham Youth Club it was under threat of closure. It had previously belonged to the local authority. Eight years earlier as part of the privatisation of youth services in Newham, the council had handed ownership of it over to a third-sector organisation that now ran the site. As part of this arrangement, the local authority had agreed to fund the youth club for the first few years while the new owners put fundraising strategies in place to facilitate its transition to private management. This grace period had come to an end but was being renewed on an annual basis while the new owners continued searching for revenue streams. The feeling among the staff was that this arrangement would continue, but this did not take into account the long-term intention of the council to streamline (scale down and semiprivatise) the youth service, or the public spending cuts about to hit the borough. In 2010, Newham undertook among the highest public spending cuts in London (BBC 2010). As a result, funding was prematurely ended and the staff (the few that were permanent, most were sessional) put on redundancy notice. Confronted by these cuts, partnership working became part of the strategy for keeping the service alive. The police had become increasingly influential in setting borough-level social policy, and establishing strong relations with them meant

Neil could better influence the future of the youth club, and therefore protect the provision for local young people and the livelihood of his staff. In this context, partnership working was popular both because it appeared to offer an attractive model for locally empowered youth work, and because, in the context of the cuts, the youth club needed the police on side to remain viable for council policy-makers.

However, as resources ran dry, partnership working with the police became something that was seen not only as desirable and politically apposite, but also as increasingly necessary for the security of the site and the safety of the staff. Before the cuts, the youth club's partnership with the police had operated with relative autonomy. Cooperation had existed alongside a strong youth work agenda that included a vibrant programme of games and activities delivered by an enthusiastic workforce. As the cuts hit, equipment could not be replaced when broken and staff morale suffered. With nothing to do and no one to do it with, the young people started making their own fun, mocking the youth club's authority. At the same time, attendance rose sharply, and many new members arrived, some with challenging behaviours. Whereas a year earlier they would have been easily integrated, a demoralised workforce ceded authority. There were regular fights, abuse towards staff, bullying, the breaking of youth club property, and misuse of the site (going behind the building, going up to the mezzanine where youth workers had their desk spaces). In this environment, staff became concerned about their own physical safety, and, although some were uncomfortable with the decision, the partnership with the police, and their presence, was deemed increasingly necessary. The police became indispensable allies, and their drop-ins became all-night visits. In these ways, through partnership working in the cuts, policing became intertwined with youth club practices, and the disorderly of the street were criminalised in the orderly space offered by the youth club.

As policing, and the police, moved from the streets into the youth club, so too did the corresponding forms of resistance. Seeing the streets as their own, and as a site of relative freedom compared with the home, school or youth club (Valentine 2004, p. 83), the young people often protested against the police presence there. Using the masculine vernacular of street contest, young people (male and female) responded to the police's masculine aggression by teasing their authority through shows of male bravado (swaggering, kissing teeth and aggressive posturing), and indicating indifference and resistance to their power. As the police entered the youth club, these resistances followed them. The community support officer who moved them on from street corners and council

flat stairwells was routinely goaded. Young people called him a 'wanker' behind his back (loud enough for him to hear) and tried to steal his hat. They wanted him to retaliate so they could confirm he didn't have the power to arrest them. What he took away from them on the street they sought to win back in the safety of the youth club. The police were called 'officer' sarcastically – a term of abuse rather than deference – and were continually challenged to arrest them for any number of real or invented crimes. In this way, the young people sought to make a mockery of the authority they embodied at the same time as they identified what was at stake in their presence at the youth club. Jack, 14, was often at the forefront of these endeavours. Led by him, a group of young men climbed onto the roof of the adventure playground to shout and direct pelvic thrusts at the five police officers assembled below. To their amusement, the officers could do nothing. Their uncomfortable looks and insincere smiles showed their authority and masculinity had been called into question. In this way, the young people's resistance to the police in the youth club corresponded to the forms of masculine public authority embodied in the police officers present.

However, while these acts of resistance were more graphic than what would have been permitted on the street, and while they marked shifts in policing the local terrain, rather than disrupt the criminalised delimitations of order and disorder the young people confirmed it. The ridiculing largely took advantage of the safety of the youth club and therefore stayed within the police's delimitation of public space. It also fed the police's criminalisation of particular young people, and the gendered and classed codes on which they based these categorisations.

More serious threats to the policing of inclusion and exclusion came through the subversion of the neoliberal categories that officers used to manage the local terrain. As noted above in the brief mention of IC codes and in the discussion of orderly and disorderly territories, the police used specific categories to manage criminality in outer East London. While resistances within these categories could be contained, movements between them created serious problems for their system of territorial management. In particular, the demographics of the local area caused specific problems because many of the young people in Newham did not fit easily into the 30-year-old IC ethnic codes used by the Metropolitan Police to describe, assign and thereby control potential criminality. Likewise the movement of young people between friendship groups and different territorial and institutional allegiances meant the police had a hard time locating order and disorder. As Kevin, one of the young people at Leyham, pointed out, friendship groups fluctuated;

young people were friends one day and not the next; and everyone seemed to know everyone, even if they were not directly friends with them. Kylie, a young woman at the same youth club, voiced similar sentiments in an interview:

> There's people in Thamesbury School who live round here who will still have a fight with a Leyham person. And there is people in Central School who live round here who will still have a fight with a Leyham person. Even though every Leyham person round here goes to that school, lives in this area.

The disorderly consequences of territorial and ethnic heterogeneity for policing the local area became apparent one evening. At 9.00 am, Mandy, one of the youth workers, was having a cigarette when five young people, including Abs, came over from the park. Abs was a 16-year-old mixed-race or Asian (we didn't know, and that had not previously been an issue), young person who sometimes attended the youth club. They said a woman had been shouting at them and they had shouted back. There was a commotion and concern for the safety of the youth club. It died down and then the police came over – first the police responsible for the local park and then one of the local policemen. According to them, a mentally ill woman had run away from her carer, caused a disturbance with some of the young people in the park (or the other way round) and the police had picked her up. Again, it died down. Then we heard a police helicopter. Soon, five police cars and a police van were onsite. They were apparently after Abs, who had been seen running away. They believed Abs was carrying something, maybe a knife, and rumours started circulating. From snippets here and there I, and everyone else, tried to put together a narrative of what had happened. Texts were sent and mobiles rang. While the police knew very little of what was going on, the young people and most of the staff knew something.

Later on, the police came over again. They couldn't catch Abs and said he was 'taking the piss', using it as a 'badge of honour'. They said he was deliberately flouting order and wanted to put a stop to it before disorder started to spread. To do this, they needed more information, but their categories for social control were too crude. Abs was the number-one suspect but the police's only evidence was that they had seen an Asian boy of his build fleeing into the dark. However, Karlee, one of Abs's friends, was adamant it had been a mixed-race boy with lighter skin. Karlee might have been lying to protect Abs, or telling the truth. Either way, racial profiling wasn't straightforward in a place like Leyham, and

she knew that. The police asked around but nobody grassed. Knowledge of Abs was easy to deny. An infrequent visitor, Abs' ambiguous location between the youth club and the street was to his advantage. 'They say they know nothing to protect themselves,' Molly said afterwards. Keeping silent was a statement of solidarity against the police and something all the young people had a vested interest in.

Later on, I was standing with Neil, the centre manager, when Kylie came over. 'Why are the police in the youth club again?' she complained. I sympathised. Neil explained that they wanted to see the young people's registration forms so they could identify Abs. He had consented. He was returning a favour – protection for information. But he also explained the reciprocation was only in principle. He didn't keep registration forms. It had always seemed an oversight, but the lack of compliance in this technology of surveillance now seemed necessary. Neil explained that although he wanted to help, he couldn't. It seemed as if he had played this game before. Keen on partnership working, further funding and protection, Neil wanted a relationship with the police but not at the expense of grassing on the young people. A few months later, Abs came back. I guess it had blown over. I didn't ask. He just told me he wanted to keep his head down, 'do something positive', and we started playing pool.

During the time I worked at Newham, the inclusions and exclusions consistent with classed, racialised and gendered policing of the street became part of the youth club. Facilitated by the cuts and neoliberal service-delivery frameworks, territorialised practices of moral and social management were transforming. As this occurred the masculinised resistances of the street became part of the youth club but still consented to the racial, classed and gendered terrains used by the police to manage the local area. The resistances that most seriously challenged the growing policing of the city were those third-space practices that subverted their codes of territorial management. These confounded the neoliberal technologies for managing social space, and when Abs made this public he was identified as using it as a 'badge of honour' – a rallying cry. The police's response was empathic – and a helicopter, five police cars and a van were sent out to pursue one (mixed-race or Asian, we still didn't know) young man.

The youth club, fencing and the neocommunitarianism

In February 2010, the building of the new fence commenced (Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3). It was the third incarnation of border architecture at

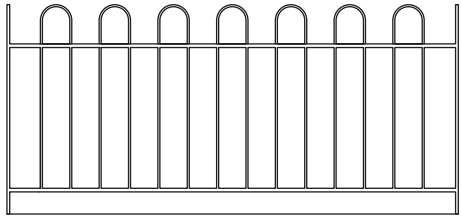

Figure 3.1 Victorian park fence

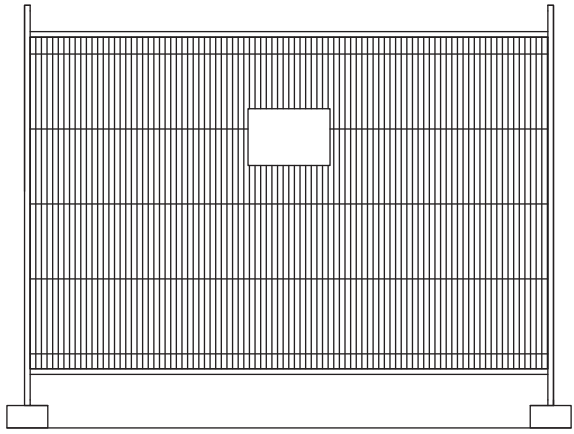

Figure 3.2 Temporary builders' fence

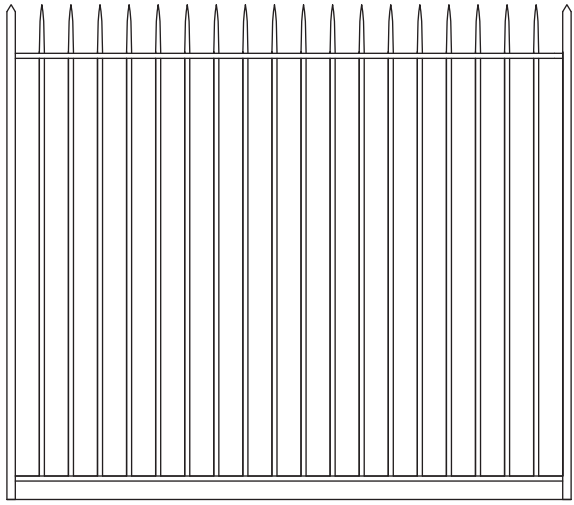

Figure 3.3 Eight-foot steel fence

Leyham Youth Club. The first incarnation was a boundary indicator – a simple wrought-iron fence – the kind common to many Victorian parks. At four feet high it kept some footballs in, but any physical protection it offered was based on consent rather than strength. During the reconstruction of the adventure playground, it was argued that a more assertive structure was required to protect the investment from perceptions of increasing youth disorder. The second incarnation was a temporary builder's fence. Standing seven feet high, it restricted physical movement and protected the nascent construction. This more aggressive structure provoked nightly attack and, far from dispelling the lingering threat staff felt from the outside, it augmented it. The final fence was eight feet high, made of steel bar and enclosed the perimeter of the youth club. Cemented into the ground, it could not be overturned. Although justified through the need to protect the adventure playground, any physical protection it provided was minimal. Scaled on a nightly basis, it attracted more attention than it deterred. As Will, one of the youth workers, said, '[having] no fence would be more effective'. He was right. But the real purpose of the fence was not to physically prevent entrance to the site but – like the gated community[6] – to make a statement of force, construct a threat and locate a moral territory – a moral territory in a neoliberal context that extended from the youth club, out through the iron bars and into the autochthonous community.[7]

This procession of fence-building was part of the youth club's neocommunitarian development. In Marxian geography, neocommunitarianism describes the territorial arrangements contingent with neoliberal society. It describes the spatial changes that occur when a centralised welfare state becomes privatised and entrepreneurial (Brenner 2001; 2004; Harvey 1989; MacLeod and Godwin 1999; Peck and Tickell 2002; Peck 2002; Purcell 2003; Russell 2005; Swyngedouw 1997; 2000). At the time of the research, neocommunitarianism was synonymous with the discourses and territorial practices of 'community empowerment', 'active citizenship' and 'community ownership' (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Civil Renewal Unit 2004; Jessop 2002; Peck and Tickell 2002).

'Community ownership' at Leyham Youth Club was narrated as the collective responsibility of staff and young people for the youth club and the local community. As the manager explained,

> [I would like to see] complete ownership of the club because if they had complete ownership, I could draw . . . a graph of ownership.

> I could draw friendliness, respect of ground rules, respect of each other, right? If they had ownership, right? This is their club. If you want to come into our club, don't wreck it, you go by our ground rules. So I think ownership – that is what I am trying to create – ownership first amongst all things. I wouldn't get the vandalism. I wouldn't get the cheek. 'Hey man, this is our club, don't wreck it.' I've seen holes punched in walls. If there was ownership, the peers of the club would be going, 'Hey this is ours. Don't wreck ours.' This is our little place . . . I think people are very apathetic. My philosophy is that people don't talk over the fence. When people used to talk over the fence they used to have this philosophical thought process, whether they knew it or not, and that talking over the fence would be like the butterflies starting the hurricane. It would start that. You would get this instant talk all over the community, this instant action and integration all over the community. Now it is a closed-door community.

In this way, Leyham's model of community ownership corresponded to prevailing third-sector ideas about localised collective responsibility, which in turn were made sense of in relation to ideas about community and belonging.

As noted in Chapter 2, around Leyham Youth Club, 'community' was an autochthonous construct, and territorial belonging was dependent on racialised, and nostalgic, constructions of belonging and loss. In this way, at the same time that community ownership was informed by, and reacted against, neoliberal ideas about privatised responsibility, it was also filled in with autochthonous constructs of belonging and loss, made palpable through particular narratives about the life of the youth club. One particularly powerful narrative of this kind was the myth of the old adventure playground.

When I arrived at the youth club, the fate of the earlier adventure playground was suggested by the charred but colourfully painted stumps left standing around the site. Most of the young people were not old enough to remember the original structure, but like me were regaled with stories by staff and older siblings that brought the former glory of the youth club to life. Through these tales, the old adventure playground was missed, and the attack that ended its life condemned. Although we all knew it had been burnt down, no one was quite sure how, and this uncertainty gave rise to conjecture used to make sense of contemporary threats to the fabric of the site. Some workers thought the original arson was done out of malice – an attack against the youth club

as a symbol of order. One youth worker thought it was born out of frustration – the young people did not have the means to consume the way richer kids did, so they destroyed what they had. In all these accounts, the fictitious young people said to have carried out the attack were condemned, and contemporary disorder and order were imagined on these terms. But as Kylie, one of the young people, pointed out, wasn't it just an accident, a shelter on a Saturday night, and then a fag, and then some booze and then a lighter, and then . . . 'It's just common knowledge, ain't it?' she said. Kylie was drawing attention to a series of accidental actions through which the boredom of leisure time had been alleviated. This was perhaps a more accurate reflection of unintended consequences, but this common knowledge was washed away in a desire for narrative that made sense of a territory that had lost its former glory to the threat from beyond.

In this way, Leyham Youth Club's particular version of neocommunitarianism was constructed through autochthonous discourses of belonging and loss, and through neoliberal discourses of self-responsibility. These narratives were made concrete through specific territorial practices. One of these practices involved maintaining the perimeter fence.

In the context of public masculinity, it was the responsibility of male youth workers to maintain the perimeter fence and in so doing they intertwined themselves in the 'architecture of social control' (Davis 1990). Although the relationship between male authority and the site was enshrined in youth club policy – the club could not be opened unless at least one male worker was present – the relationship between masculinity and territorial viability became most obvious when threats to the site were identified. For example, if youth workers received intelligence that young people from another area were coming down for a fight, the fence was practised as the limit of youth club authority and the line that male youth workers had to defend with their bodies to maintain the viability of the service.

The long, lawless nights[8] of the winter months were accompanied by increased masculine fencing practices, and Fireworks Night in particular created apprehension. The week before this annual event was devoted to discussions of threat and the need for heightened vigilance. Given the fate of the former adventure playground, arson was a key concern and young people were anticipated to use the cover of darkness to launch a rocket attack. On Fireworks Night 2009, Neil had stayed on to provide additional male support and, together with Will and me, spent the evening tracking young people as they circled the perimeter, just outside the reach of the floodlights. Peering into the darkness, we strained our

eyes, listened for cracks, sniffed for traces of gunpowder and imaged the order we were protecting through the disorder we were defining.

These territorial practices of order and disorder also occurred at the youth club. At a banal level, youth workers used a number of different practices to manage the space. Closing the door to an open-access area could facilitate an environment amenable to serious discussions and workshops. Likewise, if the privacy afforded by a closed door or a screen was leading to, for example, inappropriate sexual behaviour between a young people then the door could be opened. These activities depended on the coordination of the body of youth workers, not just on the individual. From the perspective of the youth workers, sessions ran well when boundaries were observed and when members of the staff team knew what each other were doing.

As I settled in at Leyham, I tried to learn how the rules of the space worked. Aside from the studiously ignored 'Ten Rules' posted on the youth club wall, which included things like 'no cycling inside', 'no playing football inside' and 'no fighting inside', there was no guidebook on how to do this, but generally none was required. Basic regulations were obtained habitually (Merleau-Ponty 1989). Through interacting with the staff, the building and young people, I picked up what I needed to know and applied it. As I did this, young people sought to assess my competence through minor infractions. No fighting, cycling or playing football inside may seem unambiguous but in fact these straightforward principles had many grey areas. Did cycling a bike halfway into the front room break the rules? Did a play fight constitute 'fighting' or 'play'? Did doing a couple of keep-ups inside equate to 'football'? The answers depended on individual dispositions, on the collective knowledge of the rules at the moment, and on the young people's desire to push the boundaries. In this way, whereas it had previously seemed that the youth club and youth workers set regulations for bodies in space, it soon transpired that young people played an equal role in negotiating the grey zone of the youth club's territorial order.

My introduction to this territorial practice came literally 'at the hand of Scott'. I met Scott on my first day at Leyham Youth Club. He was about 14 and had grown up in the area before a recent move to Dagenham – a fairly common migration associated with a higher standard of living. However, with friends in the Leyham area, he regularly returned to the youth club. On my first day, when Neil was showing me around, he sauntered over, offering a grin and a hand to shake. Surprised, but also pleased, I reciprocated. But before our palms met, he withdrew. He smiled; Neil smiled. Scott had simultaneously welcomed

me to, and rejected me from, the youth club. Like my hand, I had been left hanging.

The interactive nature of rules, and their dependence on the moods of the people involved, meant that youth workers and young people solicited the boundaries in different ways. A fight at home before a session started, money problems, an argument at work could all lead youth workers or young people to respond very differently to infractions.

Managing the space on these terms was generally balanced with other aspects of youth work: talking to young people, building relationships, teaching, solving problems and participating in games and sports. However, when youth clubs were busy, or when staffing was short, softer skills were put to one side and youth workers concentrated on maintaining territorial and moral order. In these situations, if boundaries were transgressed, youth workers took action through 'banning' or 'barring' young people from attending the youth club. Banning was rare when staff morale was high, resources were plentiful and the collective body of young people and youth workers functioned towards a habitual equilibrium (Merleau-Ponty 1989). However, it became more commonplace as staff and financial resources ran dry. In these situations, while staff were often aware that boundary-breaking was related to wider personal problems, if not simply the lack of activities, they felt forced to revert to a kind of rotten apples theory – and rogue young people were discarded to preserve the rest of the barrel. Employed in this way, the ban functioned as a local form of exception (Agamben 1998) and enforced the youth club's idea of order and community. The inside was ordered and moral because the place where the banned young people were sent (outside the fence) was disordered and immoral. As funding cuts and staff shortages became more acute, and large numbers of new young people arrived, the ban was increasingly employed.

While both male and female staff evoked the ban, in the last instance what lay behind the command was the threat of masculine authority – the ability (not necessarily carried out) to physically remove a young person from the club. Occasionally as a male worker (although I was officially a volunteer) I stepped into this role. The first young person I banned was Jack. Introduced above as the young person who aimed pelvic thrusts at the police, he had been causing trouble for Jane, a sessional worker, in the front room, and in this masculinised context he knew that as a woman she was unlikely to physically discipline him. As I walked into the room, Jack threw a shoe at one of the other young people. I shouted at him and told him to get out. Testing me, he didn't move, and without thinking I pushed him out the front door. He had

called my masculine authority into question, and therefore the authority of the youth club. Disappointed by how I had acted, I spoke to Jack and his friends outside. They were not shocked, or even annoyed. In fact they expected it. Jack professed boredom as the reason for throwing the shoe. I sympathised. With stretched staffing, broken pool cues and oversubscribed computers, there was little to do. Still feeling guilty, I walked back into the room and apologised to Jane for undermining her. She was only disappointed I hadn't acted sooner.

As the effects of the cuts started to change the balance of youth work and policing, young people used the codes of masculine violence established on the streets to resist the hegemony of the youth club and the police. The escalation of these transgressions began one evening in a confrontation between Will and Ross. At the time, Will had problems at home affecting his capacity to 'take a joke'. So rather than 'laugh Ross off' when he acted up, Will shouted at him, and Ross, who was also encountering problems at home, rather than accept the telling-off, made a raspberry at Will. Will banned Ross for a week. Needing to defend his masculinity in front of his friends, Ross refused to go. His mum was called and in the end Ross left, vowing to come back the next day. The day after he teased Will by scouting the perimeter of Leyham Youth Club on the handlebars of Nathe's bike.

This event did not signal a sudden downturn but rather a slow shift in control over the space. One of the major features of this slow shift was the increasing masculinisation of youth club governance embodied principally in Will. Will's willingness to make use of his physicality to prevent the youth club from closure was, for a time, sufficient to maintain control over the space. However, the pressure took its toll and sapped his enthusiasm for the job. Each of his increasing absences was marked by serious transgressions from the young people, to which other staff could not respond. Longstanding symbolic boundaries were the first to be broken. Young people ran around the back of the youth club, where builders' materials were kept, they climbed on cars, smoked in front of the building, refused to register their names or pay their subs, and on a couple of occasions went up into the staff offices. Augmented levels of violence and abuse accompanied these shifts, and racism from some white young people towards black and Asian young people and youth workers became increasingly commonplace.

These contests fed out onto the street, and in a related incident Will's brother was attacked at the local pub. Following the attack, a few weeks later the young men involved returned to the youth club to steal the Wii controller, but more importantly to further mock Will's authority

over the territory. Days later, Will was sitting outside when he was shot at with a catapult and had a lump of concrete thrown at him. That was the end for Will. He decided to leave the youth club. Pushed into the role of bouncer, he had been outmuscled.

The neocommunitarian territory was negotiated not only between the staff and young people but also between the young people themselves. These further drew attention to the ways in which negotiations of community and territory were racialised and gendered in this neoliberal context.

Among the young people, 'the dozens'[9] provided one means of negotiating territory, with the categories of profanity indicating who was considered inside or outside of the moral territory of the youth club. Sarah, a youth worker, and Kylie, one of the young people, were the club's most proficient practitioners and regularly traded 'your mamma' insults. They moved from 'your mum sells crack' to 'your mum sold her teeth for crack' to 'your mum sold her whole house to a Lithuanian for crack'. The 'whole house' was used to accentuate the insult; the figure of the 'Eastern European' represented racialised scandal and humour; and the invocation of the mother symbolised defilement of the sacred by patriarchy (Legman 1975, pp. 704–727). 'Your mum sold her whole house to a Lithuanian for crack' won.

While the dozens was used to mutually affirm belonging, it also maintained and negotiated autochthonous territories by casting those who did not belong as objects of scandal and ridicule. In this example, these forms of humour were fed by the media depictions of Eastern European men as violent, drunk and criminal (*Daily Mail* 2006a; 2006b), which followed the accession of Eastern European nations into the EU and their subsequent migration to Newham. This was part of a local understanding of profanity which also encompassed 'Poles', 'Russians', 'Lithuanians', 'Kosovans', 'Gypsies' and 'crack heads'. When a chair went missing, for example, Kylie joked: 'Poles came and took it.' This was synonymous with 'Pikeys took it' or 'crack heads took it'.

These forms of profanity were part of a wider discriminatory repertoire used to define inclusion and exclusion. When we played football, Tommy and Nigel wound Pawl up by saying his mum was 'Russian' and 'Romanian', even though they knew that she was Polish. Insults directed at him were often prefixed with 'you little Polish …'. During the 2010 World Cup, Will invited the young people to sit round and watch the England game with the words: 'We should all sit round and support our country.' He didn't quite mean it as it sounded but Nathe seized on it

and said to Pawl: 'Your team is Poland.' In this way, Pawl's otherness on Leyham territory was sustained.

The white territory of the youth club was also maintained by ridiculing the black body. One evening, Kylie and Josie were playing the dozens with Nigerian accents – a reference to the character George Agdgdgwngo in *Fonejacker*. It wasn't immediately clear whether this play was racist, everyday or even subversive. However, Ryan, a black youth worker, responded as if the banter was partly directed at him. As if to dispel any remaining doubt, the round of dozens finished when Dawn semi-seriously suggested they go and beat some people up. Daphne suggested 'Club Afrique or the Polish hairdresser' as venues.

With regard to gender, the public masculinity of the youth club was maintained through forms of ridicule aimed at young women who transgressed patriarchal rules for social relations. In fallouts over relationship breakdowns, for example, young women might be labelled 'slags' by young men and women alike. In this way, young men policed female forms of conduct separate from the rules they applied to themselves, and young women policed appropriate forms of femininity between each other. After the breakdown of Josie and Nigel's relationship, accusations of this kind evolved into a division between the young people at the club – most of the youth club supporting Nigel and only a very small group of loyal female friends supporting Josie. In an attempt to bolster her status, she made a public show of getting along with the male youth workers, thus exacerbating accusations of promiscuity from her detractors. Tensions rose and by the end of the evening there was a small gathering outside waiting to confront her when she left. Conforming to the masculine script for public contest, coordination for a fight was ongoing and mobiles were pinging and ringing. When Daphne (who had a reputation as a good fighter) turned up, physical violence was on the cards. Josie was adamant she could 'have her'. Anything else would have been capitulation.

That evening the youth club closed and the workers left. I never saw how that night finished. But later that week, Josie was a notable absence. Her apparent black eye was put down to an accident. When I asked where she was, nobody wanted to say. They weren't going to grass. Then a few weeks later she came back. Walking in she announced proudly: 'Josie is back.' She was dressed in a baggy oversize T-shirt with a flower clip in her hair. Her assertion on the space was masculinised but her dress feminised. She was using her femininity in the context of masculine territoriality to negotiate her return to the space, and in this sense consent to the hegemony of both.

The procession of fencing at Leyham was consistent with its development as a neocommunitarian territory defined through classed, gendered and racialised practice of inclusion and exclusion. Exacerbated by the neoliberal cuts, the exclusions at the perimeter were reflected in the exclusions within the youth club, practised by the young people and youth workers. As resources and morale were reduced, racial, gendered and classed forms of violence increased, and the viability of the youth club as a site of legitimate public order was called into question.

Young people and post-codes

> Yeah, so just down the bottom of my street, we come under [Millfield]. We've got the [Carpenter's] Road. That side of the road is [Leyham]. Both E xx. This side can't go over to the other side. There's a dividing line. And at [Park] Estate, that's bad over there, that comes under E xx. If you don't come from that area. That's E xx area. You've got E xx there. It goes straight round and you're not allowed on that estate at all.
>
> (female youth worker)

The final section of this chapter addresses how young people's neighbourhood practices, and in particular those of the post-code, were intertwined with the territorial practices of policing and of the youth club addressed above. This pre-empts discussions in Chapter 4, which addresses the relation of the post-code to forms of diasporic popular culture (Figure 3.4).

In East London, defensive neighbourhood practices have historically been organised through fairly fluid friendship, peer and family networks (Downes 1966; Willmott 1963; 1969; Young and Willmott 1957). At the time of the research, this was also the case, but whereas earlier incarnations had made reference to local neighbourhoods (e.g. Stepney, Plaistow and Bow), contemporary practices made reference to post-code boundaries. As the quote above from a female youth worker indicates, these practices created a complex pattern of borders engrained into the spatial imaginaries of young people. Defence of these boundaries was usually carried out by small groups of young men but on occasion could encompass large numbers of young people (male and female). Although there was much trouble-free movement between neighbourhoods, especially where access was facilitated through family and friends in different parts of the borough, or through anonymity, there was substantial violence associated with incursions – a practice

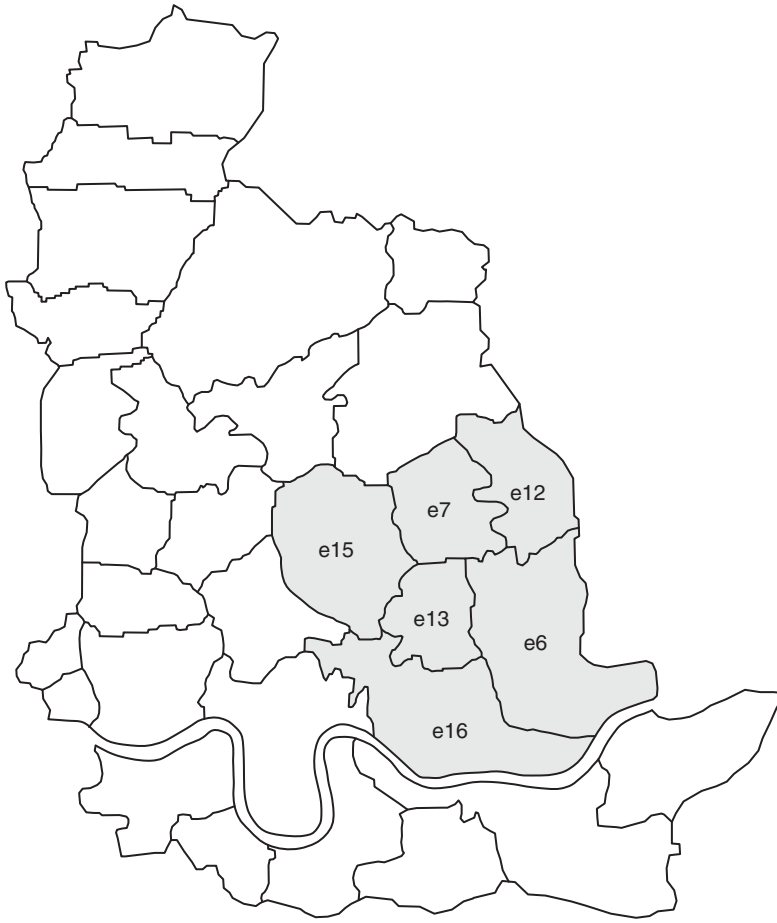

Figure 3.4 Map of Newham post-code areas

referred to as 'slipping' – and numerous credible stories of young people being beaten and stabbed for these infractions.

As with the police and the youth club, these territorial practices played out in a neoliberal context and as such shared many of its racial, classed and masculinised registers. The direct relation between the territorial practices of the police, the youth club and young people started to become apparent at an event called Friends of Leyham Youth Club. This was part of Neil's vision for 'community ownership'. The vision, Neil said, was about 'everybody coming together', young people, parents and

representatives from local service providers, in the interests of establishing a local form of ownership. In the preceding days, young people had been consulted about the meeting and had agreed to attend; senior figures in Leyham's parent organisation, the local police, other service providers and parents were invited; and food was laid on. On the night, 30 local young people came to discuss their needs, local facilities and the future of the youth club. Parents and local service providers did not appear, and the police arrived after it had all finished. The parents were thought to be too scared or too busy, the local service providers uninterested and the police's absence was somewhat ironic seeing as they came nearly every other night.

One of the group activities explored young people's understanding of 'creating ownership'. It revealed how young people understood their territorial practices in relation to dominant classed, racialised and gendered scripts also drawn on for practices of policing and youth work. It showed how they viewed community ownership in terms of protecting the youth club from threat – highlighting security, CCTV cameras and a greater police presence around the centre – and, relatedly, how community was understood in relation to post-code rivalries described in terms of 'jealousies'.

'Jealousies' referred in particular to the rivalry with the Millfield post-code. As noted above, the contemporary rivalry between the two post codes was built on a longstanding antipathy between two working-class neighbourhoods with bad relations said to go back to the time of the people's parents. This rivalry can be traced back to boundaries defined by industrial-era kinship networks, pubs and labour groupings (Downes 1966, p. 201). Young people sustained this rivalry through oral histories of fights, tit-for-tat retaliations and occasional incursions. Most said they wouldn't walk in Millfield alone. This rivalry between two of the most deprived parts of the borough was racially marked. As discussed, Leyham had an autochthonous collective imaginary, and young people and staff there associated Millfield with more recent African immigration to the area. In this way, and related to racialised policing practices and neocommunitarian fencing of the youth club, the order and inclusion of the Leyham post-code was established in relation to the racialised disorder associated with Millfield.

Over the time, I was working there, there were numerous incidents between young people from the two areas, with the focal point often being Leyham Youth Club. One of the more serious revolved around the rumoured stabbing of a young man in Millfield by a Leyham youth. One evening, after a night off, I arrived at Leyham for my shift and asked

Will, who was running the youth session, what had happened the night before. He told me 15–30 black kids had come over from Millfield with baseball bats looking for a Leyham youth who had stabbed a Millfield youth in a local park. As was often the case, the narration of the event contained multiple strands and a good deal of subterfuge, necessary to protect vulnerable individuals from bourgeois authority. In this way, the arrival of the armed young people was explained as a conflict over selling weed, and as the result of an argument between an ex-boyfriend and girlfriend. While these both probably contained elements of truth, the most persistent and well-substantiated account explained the incident as part of the racialised post-code conflict between the two areas. The stabbing was attributed to an unidentified Leyham young man said to have gone out 'hunting black people'. The arrival of Millfield youth at Leyham Youth Club was the response.

This incident highlighted the extent to which territorial practices in Leyham were underwritten by whiteness, but it also showed how conviviality persisted across these demarcations. As the dust settled on that evening, black and Asian young people, some of whom lived in Millfield and had searched for the perpetrator, continued participating at Leyham.

However, the territorial practices were not only racialised but also classed. As noted in the discussion of neoliberal policing and youth club practices, working-class young people experienced exclusion in their everyday navigation of the city. This left many with a desire for alternative forms of inclusion filled by post-code identification. At the same time as young people expressed concern about navigating the city, they also expressed pride in post-code monograms. People talked about their 'manor' in these terms and sharing affinities with those from the same 'endz'. The post-code was therefore an alternative neocommunitarian practice. It was a positive response to neoliberal privatisation that in the case of the Leyham post-code drew on autochthonous constructions to orient its moral compass (Back 2005; Sharkey and Shields 2008).

As with the territorial practices of the police and the youth club, masculinity was conveyed through forms of talk and action. Post codes had reputations for hardness with Millfield, Hackney, Bow and Limehouse all known for prodigious violence. Other had reputations of honour. When a group of young men egged (pelted with eggs) and assaulted a Chinese man in a local park in Thameside, the consensus among the young men there was that it could not have been peers from their post-code. According to them, egging would have been an honourable action but a beating was excessive. In their eyes, only Millfield youth would

stoop to that. In terms of action, physical confrontations between young people conformed to the wider masculinised context for negotiating public space. Beatings, stabbings and threats of violence drew on the same repertoire used by the police and the youth club.

In this way, post-code territoriality created an alternative A to Z of racist, classed and gendered geography that drew on, and consented to, patriarchal, white and bourgeois scripts practised by the police and the youth club in the context of neoliberal privatisation (Back 2005, p. 28).

Summary

Building on the discussion of autochthony and whiteness in Chapter 2, this chapter has sought to identify transformations in territorial practices in outer East London. With respect to the literature on territory and urban multiculture, it has demonstrated how contemporary territorial practices must be understood in the context of neoliberalism. It has addressed how, through partnership working and community policing, racialised and classed exclusions have extended into the youth club. It has also shown how the privatisation of social space has related to the rise of racialised and classed forms of defensive neocommunitarianism in youth clubs and among young people's practice of the post-code. These have been explored in their appropriate temporal contexts, noting both how these territorial practices trace what came before and how they are incorporating new social and spatial contexts. Contingent with the development of public space as a masculinised arena of toughness and violence, the chapter has also shown how the police, the youth club and young people practice forms of masculine territoriality to defend their own insecurities. Overall, by addressing hegemonic and resistant practices, it has shown how in the neoliberal moment the destructiveness of racism, patriarchy and bourgeois authority is entrenched and transformed in neoliberal outer East London.

In Chapter 4, the territorial practices are brought into dialogue with the diasporic flows of hip hop. I explore the local and global ways in which hip hop chaos (nihilism) and territoriality were conflated, and how young people used the aesthetics of nihilism to communicate and move beyond post-code violence and anti-sociability.

4
Cultural Performances

Between spring 2009 and the beginning of 2010, Leyham Youth Club moved to the rhythm of three music and dance pieces. The first of these was *Leyham Dances*. Inspired by the hugely popular *Britain's Got Talent* (ITV 2009), it was a collective effort at 'streetdance' – a hybrid of break dancing and athletic, group dance routines popularised through the all-male dance groups Diversity and Flawless. Imitating the Saturday night TV format, young men and women organised practice sessions and choreographed routines. The second was a set of YouTube dance videos made for the attention of a local producer. Performed by three young men, and recorded on and soundtracked by mobile phones, these brought Missy Elliot into dialogue with grime, and streetdance into contact with breaking. The third performance, launched at the beginning of 2010, was a hip hop/grime video called 'Kill all a dem'. Made by a trio of rappers, it drew on US, Albanian, Jamaican and British influences to perform a local post-code conflict.

In different ways, these performances provided an insight into the transformation of urban culture in outer East London, and in particular into how global and commercial culture was being cited to make sense of young people's location in outer East London – thereby overlaying older cultural forms. This chapter, then, engages with cultural performance. By addressing how global youth culture was locally expressed, it explores what young people's cultural performances revealed about shifts in urban multiculture. It is based largely on material from Leyham Youth Club, where I was responsible for working with young people to generate video content for YouTube.

The performance of urban multiculture

In the 1980s, studies of British urban young people focused on the incorporation of black diasporic culture into working-class youth culture.

In addressing these transformations, they noted the syncretism between Jamaican and working-class culture, and the resulting forms of music, politics and style performed by young people living in the UK's post-colonial cities (Gilroy 1987; Hebdige 1987; Hewitt 1986; Jones 1988). These same themes were latterly addressed by work which focused on the interplay between South Asian, black and English working-class culture (Harris 2006; Sharma et al. 1996).

At the same time as these works documented the cultural syncretism of the period, they also challenged assumptions in public discourse about race and nation. Their focus on diasporic cultural forms (Gilroy 1987; 1993) and the micropolitics of everyday life (Jones 1988; Nayak 2003) drew attention to, and deconstructed, investments in race and nation, and associated claims to authenticity reflected in the accusation of young people 'faking it' (black culture) or being 'traitors to [their] kith and kin' (Rosso 1981).

Located two decades after these studies were conducted, the performances discussed in this chapter nonetheless trace these earlier cultural forms. However, they also draw attention to new social contexts, meanings and politics. While performances in this chapter trace Jamaican culture, they also cite hip hop – both the US commercial and global (e.g. Albanian) iterations – and British grime. In this way, they draw attention to older cultural forms at the same time as they highlight the influence of new circuits of migration and culture. They also draw attention to a new social and economic context. The more stable categories of class, and class struggle, of a recently post-industrial Britain had been replaced by neoliberal marginalisation and the individual or group as a site of failure. Consequently, avenues of getting by and escape had also altered. The signs of emancipatory freedoms and alternative publics (sound systems and breaking circles) (Back 1994; Banes 2004; Gilroy 1987) remain present, but these are narrated alongside a lexicon of celebrity, individualised struggle and money-making.

In order to explore these issues, the chapter engages with the conceptual language of performativity (Butler 1988; Gilroy 1993). Building on the concerns of the studies above, performativity allows the chapter to pursue the ways in which urban multiculture has continued to change. As will be demonstrated, it allows the paper to address how performances were acted out from certain racialised, gendered and classed sociohistorical scripts (Butler 1988), how these scripts were constituted in the context of diaspora (Gilroy 1993), and how these acts 'cited' and exceeded what came before (Derrida 1976).

Starting with *Leyham Dances*, and moving to discuss the acts of dance and music performed in YouTube videos, the chapter addresses how performances of urban multiculture have changed and stayed the same. In particular, it addresses how cultural performances in outer East London have transformed in relation to neoliberal, global and commercial youth culture.

Leyham Dances

At Leyham Youth Club, Josie and her friends regulated the youth club stereo. At their behest, we listened and danced to Kiss FM, Heart and Magic, and a mixture of burnt CDs containing bashment, dubstep, grime and R'n'B. In June 2009, Michael Jackson died and we danced to his 'best of' compilation on loop. This different music and the associated dances formed the bedrock of many of the sessions at Leyham Youth Club, the different genres drawing attention to the diasporic formations of the youth club's performances.

From Easter 2009, these spontaneous productions were caught in the national fever of *Britain's Got Talent*, and for a few months the dancescape of Leyham Youth Club was transformed. The first section of this chapter responds to that moment and seeks to unravel what Leyham Youth Club's particular citation of Simon Cowell's multimillion pound format revealed about the transformation of urban multiculture in that location.

Leyham Youth Club's particular rendition of *Britain's Got Talent* was *Leyham Dances*, which sought to recreate the aspirational values of Saturday night TV in an outer East London youth club. The big-theatre, audience-oriented version of hip hop embraced by Diversity and Flawless, two of the most popular acts of the year, was cited to provide celebrity culture solutions for young people's marginalisation. In this way, as young people drew on its commercial registers, and those of associated dance music they had selected, they sought to make sense of their classed, gendered and racialised marginalisation in neoliberal Britain.

Leyham Dances started when Joe, 18, and Natalie, 16, asked if they could teach streetdance to a group of 10- to 15-year-olds at a half-term playscheme. Natalie had formerly been a regular at the youth club but had been absent since she was lured to Thamesmead and beaten up. Joe, her friend, was a local young person whose mother had worked at the playscheme years earlier. Inspired by the success of Diversity and Flawless, both were keen to put together a rival East London dance troupe.

Over the Easter holidays, they held daily practice sessions, demanding commitment and punctuality from their young participants – part of an ethos of hard work and commitment that correspond to neoliberal ideas of discipline and corporeal order. Mapped out on a blackboard by Natalie, the plan was to practise daily, do some smaller shows in local community halls, graduate to Stratford Circus Theatre and finally take the O_2 Arena by storm. Beyond this, they envisaged replicating the business model of Diversity by founding a chain of dance academies across East London. Their friends would teach the choreography and, when they had raised enough money for a laptop, they would cut together their own dance tracks, again in the *Britain's Got Talent* mould.

Joe and Natalie were sincere about their work. They were 'the choreographers' – the leaders and the creators. They were the Marlon 'Swoosh' Wallen(s) and the Ashley Banjo(s) – the choreographers of Flawless and Diversity, respectively – and they imagined their success in these terms. Joe in particular aspired to Wallen's mainstream traction. He admired his 'sick' choreographed moves and the dexterity with which he cut tracks together. The admiration for Wallen's and Banjo's technical flare was combined with envy for their public acclaim and commercial reward. From the *Britain's Got Talent* studio – where Amanda Holden described Banjo's choreography as 'second to none' – to breakfast TV, both Wallen and Banjo had been openly commended. They had also made money. Flawless received £100,000 for winning *Britain's Got Talent* in 2009 (*Britain's Got Talent* 2009). For a few months, the rags to riches trajectory or, as Flawless claimed on its website, 'Hoodies to Haute Couture' (Flawless 2009) seemed possible. After all, Diversity was an East London crew, so why should it be different for Natalie and Joe?

Their investment in the celebrity dream made sense of Natalie and Joe's marginalised biographies. Following her 'happy slapping' in Thamesmead, Natalie had become depressed, and rather than sit her GCSEs had stayed in bed. With no qualifications and little chance of getting a job, she was thinking of joining the army, believing, perhaps hopefully, that women did not see active service. At the same time, she had moved beyond the McKenzie, Nike and Adidas tracksuits of her younger peers and sported her own version of Shoreditch haute couture: ironic 1980s fashion, fluorescent colours and legwarmers. Streetdance, then, seemed to offer her a future preferable to the army or unemployment, and one that was in keeping with her fashionable femininity.

Joe's biography was not dissimilar. Two years her elder, he mixed retro hip hop (hats, headbands and glasses) with a more contemporary

US urban repertoire (basketball tops and oversized coloured string vests). He was a skilled break dancer, and the loose-fitting clothes and other sartorial props were all part of the effect. Joe had also not done well at school and, after leaving at 16, he had got a job as a teaching assistant but was sacked when they found out he didn't have the requisite qualifications. Now, aged 18, he had spent the best part of the last year unemployed. He thought he might do an NVQ level 2 in teaching, but like Natalie saw choreography as a preferable way out.

Leyham Dances was, then, conceived as response, by a young man and woman, to their marginalisation – a response that conformed to, rather than resisted, the structures of their oppression. The Saturday night TV dance format presented an object for sale to a commercial audience rather than a space for dialogue and struggle (Keil 1972). Their ideas of discipline and corporeal order were rooted in discourses of aspiration and individual attainment that permeated youth work and education at the time. Their self-presentation emulated Shoreditch's bourgeois class mobility, and their identification of money-making and celebrity success were redolent of its horizons. All of this was reflected in their music choices and their citation of US hip hop/R'n'B. The dance group's most practised tracks were 'Freeze' by T-Pain featuring Chris Brown (2009); 'Wall to wall' by Chris Brown (2007); and 'Yo (Excuse Me Miss)' by Chris Brown (2005b). An allegory of hoodies to haute couture, Brown had grown up in a small town in Virginia to become an extremely wealthy double-platinum selling artist by the age of 16 (RIAA 2012).

Practices for *Leyham Dances* took place in the front room, which provided enough space for 10–20 dancers. During practice sessions, they organised themselves in an audience-facing, *Britain's Got Talent* formation and performed their version of Brown and T-Pain's dance moves,[1] interspersed with moves from the global breaking vernacular. Slave shuffles, minstrel dances, James Brown, Michael Jackson,[2] Irish jigs to flashdance, clowning to krumping, ancient Africa dance, Puerto Rican kung fu and Russian dance – all these were the non-original components of this iterative process that had taken the breaking circle to Saturday night TV (Banes 2004; Holman 2010). *Leyham Dances* was another node in this diasporic nexus – a node where the festive components of breaking with their inbuilt challenges to plantation life and white supremacy (Kitwana 2005) shifted to a format that sought the approval of consumers and commercial judges.

When dancing to the track 'Freeze', young people copied the lyrics and video by acting out the word 'fly' in the line 'You think I'm fly, don't you?' To do so they stood on one foot and leant forward with

an arm outstretched. When they were asked to 'Freeze!' they did just that, holding position until the music continued. As they performed the moves, they altered the meaning to make sense of their bodies in the local club environment. This was particularly notable in the ways they cited and performed the sexual and racialised content of the video.

'Freeze' is about T-Pain, who is a black male musician, inviting a black woman to dance like him and with him. In the video, T-Pain plays himself, sings and has the central role. The woman performs for him, occasionally as a puppet on a string. This is a sexualised and patriarchal performance in which T-Pain takes control of the female body as a plaything. He asks the women: 'Can you tick, tick, tick, tick pop, lock and drop it?' 'Pop' refers to popping the hip to the left and right; 'lock' to moving the hips in a locked central position; and 'drop it' to bending your knees and dropping your bottom to the floor before springing back up.[3] The movement is influenced by Jamaican dancehall. Unlike authors who have discussed the sexual freedom of related dance forms (Cooper 2004; Miller 1991; Noble 2000), in T-Pain's rendition the move does not appear as a site of female agency but of patriarchy. For T-Pain the woman is his muse. The only voice she is given is through the sexualisation of her bottom, vagina and hips. In this way, as hooks might argue, through his domination and subjugation of the black woman, T-Pain wins back some of the manhood taken from him by a white supremacist society (hooks 2004).[4]

As part of the performance at Leyham Youth Club, these racialised and gendered symbols were reworked to make sense of the Newham context. In faithful response to T-Pain's invitation, the women in *Leyham Dances* popped, locked and dropped it, while the male members continued in separate routines. However, unlike the original video, the young women did not perform for the male dancers. Instead they faced an imaginary audience while the men performed separate breaking moves: handstands, chest pops and robotics. This was not liberation from patriarchy or sexualisation; rather, the movement from the intimacy of the dancehall to Saturday night TV formats was further evidence of the commercial success of patriarchy and white supremacy in the UK context.

It was also evidence of the construction of gender in that location. While the young women performed the feminised routine, the young men showed off their masculine strength and agility. The submissive sexuality of the young women was built alongside the strength and authority of the young men. Coherent with the ultracommercial format of *Britain's Got Talent*, both were employed to convey a gendered

vision of success, referred to elsewhere as 'post-feminist' (Attwood 2009; Gill 2007; 2008; Gill et al. 2005; Harvey et al. 2013; McRobbie 2009).

Partly corresponding to the banality of difference in the borough, unlike earlier scholarly discussions of authenticity and cultural syncretism, *Leyham Dances* was performed without accusation that the young people were 'faking' black cultural forms. Natalie and Joe were both mixed-race. They had white and black parents and/or grandparents. The dancers were mixed-race first- and second-generation black African, Eastern European and white British (in the complex way that whiteness is discussed in Chapter 2). However, although accusations of 'faking it' no longer stood, new constructions of authenticity had arisen. A more faithful rendition of T-Pain's pop, lock and drop was indeed possible. At the After School Club, for example, children of similar ages regularly practised paired or collective dancehall moves with little concern from the staff. At Leyham Youth Club, however, such performances were profane. Foreman has noted that while some forms of black culture can be appropriated into dominant narratives of whiteness, others remain dangerous (Forman 2002). At Leyham Youth Club, then, the convergent and commercial black popular culture characterised by *Britain's Got Talent* was assimilable, but dancehall moves, and therefore black feminine sexuality, were not. At the same time *Leyham Dances* was conditioned by the banality of ethnic difference, it was also scripted by the acceptance of commercial formats for black popular culture and the rejection of intimacy and black female sexuality.

In summary, the collected performances of *Leyham Dances* identified particular transformations in urban multiculture. It noted how global commercial hip hop and Jamaican dancehall was cited to make sense of classed, racialised and gendered exclusions in neoliberal outer East London. Rather than provide an alternative site of dialogue, intimacy or emancipation, it sought succour in the replication of transformed patriarchal, white supremacist and neoliberal capitalist forms – forms that were predicated on the marginalisation of the same young people. At the same time as these drew attention to the persistence of dialogic cultural formation and its continued undermining of racial hierarchy, they demonstrated how racism, patriarchy and class oppression were renewed and sustained in outer East London.

Leyham Dances ended when the youth club's neighbours had had enough of the loud music, and the youth workers enough of Natalie and Joe's demands. At that point, their performance of marginalised, commercial and diasporic multiculture ended. The young people did eventually put on a show, but it was not the theatre performance they

had hoped for. Instead they dressed in uniforms (black trousers and white tops), did their hair, and performed to a group of volunteers, parents and youth workers in a local community hall.

YouTube videos

Leyham Dances had ended but the performances continued. Standing by the vending machines in the corner of the front room, young people showed off their moves. Jack had learned how to body-pop his torso; Freddy responded with simple footwork. The spontaneity, provocation and response were instantly recognisable as dialogues more reminiscent of the breaking circle than *Leyham Dances*' imagined Saturday night theatre. Will, one of the youth workers, watched. East London dance group K.I.G.'s 'Head shoulders kneez & toez' (K.I.G. 2008) came on and Jack, Lewis and Nathe started the routine before inviting others to join. Playing the patriarch, Jack went over to Josie and elicited a response by touching her head, shoulder, knee and toes. 'Head, shoulders knees and toes,' sang K.I.G., with Jack echoing the now sexualised provocation from the 'mandem' (a group of men): 'Ladies, let me see you go down low.' To the time of the music, young people started twirling pool cues and throwing pool balls in the air. Noel adjusted the wristband on his new, sky-blue Adidas tracksuit and, highly conscious of his body, started playing table-tennis with choreographic precision. Stacey and Torri came over to the table. Torri started rubbing her hands in a circular motion on the surface while Rachael moved in behind her to complete a sexual sequence.

Over the next few months, these spontaneous performances mutated into dances uploaded to YouTube by three young men. For the attention of a local producer, rather than an imagined weekend TV audience, these drew attention to additional transformations in urban multiculture. They showed how the symbolism of emancipation (in this case, black feminism) could, through the interface of US commercial culture, be cited in performances of white masculinity.

Jack, Lewis and Nathe, aged 14, were white young men who lived close to Leyham Youth Club and attended regularly. One evening, they asked me to film their dance moves for YouTube. The dance sequences they were keen to capture were partly choreographed, and in this way reminiscent of Diversity and Flawless, but they also included elements of freestyling taken from the breaking vernacular. Whereas *Leyham Dances* imagined the capitalist consumer as the audience, their work was

oriented towards a local conversation with a producer, K-Line. K-Line had something of a mythic status among the young men and they looked up to his particular brand of white masculinity and to his 'blue and white staffs' (Staffordshire bull terriers). According to the trio, K-Line, 18, had heard they could dance and had suggested they appear in his music video.

As with *Leyham Dances*, the young men's biographies were central to their investment in the production. Lewis, like Joe and Natalie, was caught in *Britain's Got Talent*'s lights. He was considering a career in streetdance and had already auditioned for Diversity. Having failed, he had signed to a lesser-known local troupe. Streetdance was also a means through which he hoped to build masculine esteem among his peers. Lewis had been bullied at the youth club by Nathe, Jack and others. His unwillingness to respond physically had prolonged the aggression. Dancing, however, was providing him with a public masculinity he could perform. Through his recognition as a dexterous and agile dancer he had won newfound popularity.

Whereas *Leyham Dances* had used the main stereo and large areas of floorspace necessary for the theatre format, these dances were defined by mobile communication (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of shifts in cultural technology). The three boys required no more than a small piece of grass, a loudspeaker and a camera. Sony's Walkman range of phones facilitated both. They had among the loudest speakers, and the volume limiter could be taken off –'chipped' – by following a few simple online instructions. One young man I worked with offered this specialist knowledge for cash in the school playground. The videos were shot on their phones, uploaded to YouTube and shared with peers by Bluetooth. On YouTube they joined countless others, with Giggs's early video 'Talking da hardest' (2009) being emblematic of this genre.

Facing the camera, and therefore K-Line (in addition to the less considered online audience of potentially millions), the young men did not engage with the text of the tracks as literally as *Leyham Dances* had done. Nonetheless, their routines traced and remade diasporic traditions. Their incorporation of humour corresponded to British slapstick, and to African slave dances that parodied the moves of white slave owners (Banes 2004; Holman 2010). The young men used the wave roll, pulling in an imaginary rope, being shot and being electrocuted to add humour to their act. The walks off at the end – hand to the camera – were also reminiscent of the breaking circle.

Whereas *Leyham Dances* had embraced the sounds of T-Pain and Chris Brown, Lewis, Jack and Nathe moved towards heavier tracks, including Missy Elliot featuring Ciara 'Lose control' (2005) and an untitled track by K-Line himself (2010). Both were bassy, made use of techno riffs and were good to dance to. Appropriately, the Missy Elliot track drew on 1980s breaking culture, making extensive use of a vocal sampled from 'Body work' by Hot Streak (1983). 'Body work' featured in the 1984 film *Breakin'* (Silberg 1984). However, Elliot's video is not about break dancing but is a homage to the African-American musical tradition of the 1920s – the first time black people in the USA had portrayed themselves in mainstream theatre, first to a black and then to white audiences (Robinson 2007).[5] Ciara, who features in the video, situates herself in the emancipatory movement. Elliot stays centre stage for the majority of the video and, as is the case with many of her other works, does not perform as an object of sexual desire for the male gaze. Her grinds assert feminine power and freedom rather than a predisposition to patriarchal authority. In this sense she reproduces a commercialised version of 'slackness' also evident in ragga (Noble 2000), dancehall (Cooper 2004) and carnival (Miller 1991).

However, as performed in Leyham, these messages underwent a substantial revision. This was most apparent when Missy Elliot was performed back-to-back with K-Line's own recording. While K-Line's grime music resonates tonally with Missy Elliot's, and is evidently part of the same diasporic nexus, his message of white patriarchal territoriality was distant from Elliot's commercialised emancipatory feminism. In the track 'Untitled' (K-Line 2010), K-Line emphasises his own ability as a rapper and states his claim to the soil – through being 'born and bred' in the post-code area – which he equates with whiteness and the 'white-boy scene' (see chapters 2 and 3 for further discussion of whiteness in the area). He advertises his sacred, masculine protection of this autochthonous zone with the violent warning: 'I'll bang you once. I'll bang you twice. I'll bang you again like Jesus Christ.'

When freestyling in the back room of the youth club, his politics were similar. As he reeled out his lyrics, he gave respect to Leyham and himself. He then turned to construct his own racial belonging by poking fun at Natalie, quipping 'your mum's white, but your dad's black', before turning to chide a white young person for having a black mum – a comedic turn that provided him with space to address his real concern: the loss of authentic white belonging in East London. K-Line was not alone in his use of black popular culture to pursue white patriarchal

territorial politics. Another young man whose performance I recorded rapped:

> Big up to the white boy scene/It's like xxx, xxx, xxx /Big up to the Leyham Youth Club/xxx, xxx, all them crew/It's got the vibes, and it's like . . . /Come on wild with a swing and a punch/Thing that I hear is a crack and a crunch/See you go, I take her out for lunch/And get [her] to suck my cock like it's munch/Come on wild with a swing and a punch/Thing that I hear is a crack and a crunch/See you go, I take her out for lunch/And get [her] to suck my cock like it's munch/See yeah, cos u knows I'm back/Everyone knows I'm back on the track/We're out! [Walks off with his hand to the camera.]

Unlike the development of South East Asian or Hispanic hip hop scenes in San Francisco, this was not a construction of community identity in the face of invisibility (Harrison 2009, p. 134). Rather (as discussed in chapters 2 and 3), it was a defensive articulation of whiteness and masculinity based on mythologies of loss, and on a right to local history and public authority. Performed alongside each other, these tracks raised important questions about the ways in which black cultural forms could be cited to conjointly support the white patriarchal claims and neoliberal aspirations of marginalised young men.

The trio's videos were then evidence of the citation of commercial black diasporic cultures to make sense of local constructions of patriarchy, whiteness and class loss. Their availability to the young men was facilitated by their commercialisation. In this way, in addition to the area's superdiverse demographics and long history of cultural syncretism, breaking and Elliot's version of feminist emancipation could be cited and performed without accusation of 'faking it' by such protectors of authenticity as K-Line. Rather than rehearse an alternative public dialogue, or emancipatory horizon, these commercial outputs were compatible with the performance of neoliberal horizons, public masculinity and white territoriality, and therefore to the young men's own oppression along these same axes.

'Kill all a dem'

As Jack, Lewis and Nathe's enthusiasm waned, the music and dance continued. Doneao's 'Devil in a blue dress' (Donae'o 2007) came on and Josie bobbed around the pool table in an Adidas tracksuit making large energetic sweeps with her arms. Sticking Lewis' baseball cap under

her hoodie, she ducked down, hiding her face. Dawn and Abi, two of her close friends, joined in behind her, swaying like chorus girls. They were the peripheral female bodies that complemented Josie's masculinised and centre-stage routine. Exaggerated but not ironic, Josie too was translating global hip hop's public masculinities to make sense of her relationship with the territory of the youth club.

Out of these vibrations came the final production. 'Kill all a dem' was a music video performed by a trio of rappers called Upcoming Movement and produced locally by Hustler and Ice. It wasn't made in the youth club, and Upcoming Movement did not attend Leyham. However, a number of the young people I worked with partook in the filming, and the subsequent distribution of the final work over Facebook and YouTube. Arriving at Leyham via the youth club's computer terminals, the video was an allegory of Josie's swagger, citing a range of symbols from global hip hop to communicate local constructions of masculine violence, territoriality and anti-sociability.

Like Professor Green's 'Upper Clapton Dance' (2009), Sway's 'Little Derek' (2006), No Lay's 'Unorthodox Daughter' (2008) and many smaller productions, 'Kill all a dem' was steeped in the London philosophy of gritty (grimy) realism (Bramwell 2012).[6] It was shot in black and white to capture the stark reality of street life. Simple post-production techniques were used to highlight the colour of the bandana – the sign of territorial affiliation and the centre of the video's message. This 'stylized urban realism' (Zuberi 2010, p. 179) was complemented by the music and lyrics. As the video ran, the slow, creeping and orchestral music, with its air of suspense and premonition, played into the youth club. The track opened with three haunting notes played on a synthesised piano.

The lyrics played through the scene of stabbing someone from a rival area, bagging him up and taking him to Epping Forest – resting-place of unmarked graves. Verse after verse, the track presents scenarios of extreme physical violence, stabbing, shooting and death, the banality of which accentuates the message. Anti-sociability is focused on other working-class young people – the 'cats in the endz'. As with Giggs' track 'Talking da hardest' (2009), choreographic attention is paid to the theatre of conflict – the gun is drawn, heads turn and the opposition is confronted. And all of this is justified through the defence of territory. Territory is demarcated through references to local landmarks. Violence is the necessary response to whoever transgresses these boundaries. Every verse comes back to the chorus: 'Kill all a dem'.

The film opens (see Figures 4.1–4.6) with a shot of angry-looking young white men before cutting to a face covered with a territorial bandana. In the next image, the former message is anthropomorphised in an alert Staffordshire bull terrier. These shots are interspersed with handbrake turns, wheelies on motorbikes, and a solo performance from Wiskin in which he makes shooting gestures. Most of the video is taken up with shots of the three front-men rapping in front of other young men, who also vocalise the words of the track.

Through this performance, 'Kill all a dem' cites a mixture of black Atlantic and global hip hop symbolism to make sense of gender, race and class in outer East London. Unlike the performances above, this is

Figure 4.1 Still from 'Kill all a dem': Staffordshire bull terrier (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

Figure 4.2 Still from 'Kill all a dem': bandana and hood (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

Figure 4.3 Still from 'Kill all a dem': Upcoming Movement with territorial bandanas (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

Figure 4.4 Still from 'Kill all a dem': roadsigns marking the territory (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

conveyed through an oppositional stance to neoliberal inclusion, which nonetheless conforms to its axes of oppression.

As with the grime genre more broadly, the video draws on references to US rap territoriality (Zuberi 2010). The US 'hood is found in the producers' names, Hustler and Ice – a reference to Ice-T's Los Angeles-based film, *New Jack City*. It is also communicated through the use of bandanas to signify territory (Forman 2002; 2010; Gilroy 2010b). Evidence of this is starkly provided in the north of Newham where one post-code

Figure 4.5 Still from 'Kill all a dem': front man and shooting gestures from backing group (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

Figure 4.6 Still from 'Kill all a dem': handbreak turn (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

area is nicknamed the 'Bloods' and another the 'Crips'. Both use the colours of their LA counterparts. In 'Kill all a dem', this form of territorial symbolism is made through the use of the grey bandana – 'grey bandanas marking the territory'. The grey bandana (changed to orange in the video to facilitate post-production effects) is a local territorial symbol. The video shows young people wearing the bandana, covering their faces with it and wearing it round their wrists.

These citations are combined with an array of local symbolism, which pertains to older neighbourhood rivalries and newer autochthonous post-code formations. These include the use of local tube stations, the local park, road and pedestrian signposts, the flyover, and the disused and graffitied railway line. They also include the presence of the young people themselves, who are embodied and mobile defenders of the post

code. Kempy warns: 'if I catch your mandem slippin', they will get beat down so severe'.

These diasporic and local symbols make sense of old and new claims to the soil. As was noted in Chapter 3, the performance of the Leyham post-code traced whiteness and autochthony over working-class neighbourhood rivalries. Fronted by three white young men, the citation of diasporic black culture for white and autochthonous claims seem inevitable. However, the production, filming and participation in the video by black and Asian young people complicated this narrative. It suggested that loyalty to the collective performance came before ethnic fealty (Gilroy 1994, p. 52), but also that autochthony could be performed by black and Asian young people, at the same time as white young people could perform hip hop without 'faking it'.

Upcoming Movement's performance of alternative public masculinity also cites US hip hop.

The video's construction of masculinity – further highlighted by the peripheral role played by women in the video – draws on the hardened male bodies of global hip hop and working-class culture. The interface with British and American artists, 50 Cent, Jay-Z and Lil Wayne and Giggs are evident in the shooting gestures, skidding cars, jumping motorbikes and a Staffordshire bull terrier.

These diasporic masculinities are performed to make sense of the young people's struggle for authority over public space. As with its junglist and grime forbears, the hanging instrumental, the haunting synthesised notes and the heartbeat drum could also be heard as oppositional responses to the urban marginality, anti-sociability, surveillance and police harassment experienced by the young people (Beaumont-Thomas and Natty 2013; Reynolds 1998, p. 354). In the cinematography, the freedom of publicly owned space – the park, under the flyover, the disused railway line – is contrasted with surveillance by the state. The bandana references the 'hood but also surveillance evasion. The shots of CCTV cameras at the beginning of 'Kill all a dem' appear again as the video continues. Police officers make an appearance through an engagement with a group of young men and women sitting on the disused railway platform. The lyrics state 'I'm doing the crime, I ain't doing the time. 999 people on the phones', noting Upcoming Movement's intention to defend their post-code as they defy their criminalisation by the police (Figures 4.7 and 4.8).

The demand for the young men to appear publicly in this way is highlighted by the release of the *Behind the Scenes* footage for the video (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011b). Using cuts from UK funky and

Figure 4.7 Still from 'Kill all a dem': surveillance cameras (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

Figure 4.8 Still from 'Kill all a dem': surveillance police (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011a)

Swiss Albanian, UK and US hip hop, *Behind the Scenes* provides an upbeat soundtrack and colour video that departs from the grimy realism of its predecessor (Figure 4.9). The screenplay shows the everyday humanity of the protagonists behind the façade. It shows the front-people getting the verses wrong, young people smiling at each other and winding each other up, and the producers practising camera angles to generate the desired videographic effects. Rather than define the lives of the young people, it reveals how 'Kill all a dem' is part of a public performance of opposition masculinity that draws on hip hop codes to make sense of young people's relationship with their public exclusion.

With regard to labour marginalisation, Wiskin's reference to Giggs, casual crime, easy money and smoking weed tie back to hip hop renditions of easy work, quick reward and relaxation – or 'getting paid'

Figure 4.9 Still from *Behind the Scenes* 'Kill all a dem' (Ice Films Entertainment et al. 2011b)

(Gilroy 2000). This is a reference to US cities in the 1980s when a desire for upward mobility and being financially remunerated was being recognised among black audiences and artists who were grappling with what it meant to be black and paid (Baldwin 2010, p. 162; see also Eric and Rakim 1987). This conjuncture is reconfigured through 'Kill all a dem' as they make their own enquiry into marginalisation and money in neoliberal outer East London. This becomes then not simply an orientation of Leyham to the American Dream but rather the reformulation of a vernacular that makes sense of, and communicates, the struggle for capitalist wealth on another fringe. In this context, Wiskin's 'hustle' – 'Crime pays so I gotta do it part time/Make a hustle a wonder like Stevie' – connects a local history of informal earning and low-level criminality (Downes 1966; Hobbs 1988) with the rise of the (outlaw) consumer in the USA and the UK.

Ryan, one of youth workers at Leyham, elaborated:

Ryan: I think they are looking at rappers. There is no positive role models no more. The sad thing is it is a lot of young black kids that are getting involved in that …

M: It affects the white kids as well?

Ryan: Yeah it does affect the white kids as well. Yeah, to be bad, girls love a bad boy. When you are on TV girls are like wow look at this guy. He's got chains, he's got money and the young boys are

> watching and thinking okay the girls must like this. If I be like this, you know? That's what I believe really. Once you start making money and once you start being good, you have people who want to start looking good too and then you have competition. You have to change your image, acting up.

However, it is important to note that the performance not only traces patriarchy and capitalism from hip hop to make sense of neoliberal marginalisation in outer East London; it also cites its forms of sociability. In addition to being a pronouncement of turf war, the production relied on borrowing and remixing across the same territorial boundaries (Gilroy 2000, p. 199). The video shows young people freestyling over Nocturnal's remix (2009) of Scratcha DVA's (Rinse FM and East London artist) instrumental, also called 'Kill all ah dem'[7] (DVA 2010). The instrumental is not unique and it is tonally similar to Wiley's 'The Matrix (Instrumental)' (2010 [2001–2006]). In this way, Upcoming Movement's 'Kill all a dem' exists in a nexus of appropriation and reuse. This is far from plagiarism. As with Wiley's 'The Matrix (Instrumental)', Scratcha's version of 'Kill all ah dem' was made to be shared and remixed, and has been covered by numerous artists, including Dollar da Dustman (2011) and Tinie Tempah (2010). Collaboration is further evident in the use of technology and language. The camera shots are face height and, in all but sound and image quality, are faithful to the previously discussed genre of grime videos that are captured on mobile phones and uploaded to YouTube. The language of 'Kill all a dem' mixes Jamaican, London, US and Arabic vernaculars, West Coast rap terms and British prison vernaculars. In this way the diasporic formation of the performance shows the development of new hierarchies of oppression as it draws attention to the persistence of collaboration and the challenge this sustains to privatised and racially categorised forms of neoliberal life.

'Kill all a dem' is an oppositional performance of public inclusion. It cites capitalism, patriarchy and 'hood symbols from US hip hop to make sense of local configurations of neoliberal marginalisation, post-colonial racialisation and public masculinity. These struggles and conformities existed alongside dialogue and cooperation premised on sociability and openness that, very much part of the same diasporic nexus, existed in a paradoxical relation with the forms of antisociability and exclusive neocommunitarianism that it also helped generate.

Summary

Building on the arguments of chapters 1 and 2, this chapter has drawn attention to the transformation of cultural performance in the context of contemporary urban multiculture. It has shown how contemporary cultural performances traced older forms of British urban and Jamaican culture at the same time as they cited newer forms of Jamaican, British grime, and US and global hip hop culture. The commercialisation of these cultural forms entailed that radical freedoms and struggles contained in earlier acts became available as scripts with which to narrate the capitalist, patriarchal and racist oppressions of the neoliberal era, and with which to make sense of a set of ongoing struggles against neoliberal marginalisation. These iterations of conformity and struggle existed alongside a persistent ethics of sociability and sharing that denied the bending of art to commodity and human relationality to categories of territory and race. Finally, all the performances existed in a historical context of cultural syncretism and ethnic diversity. While these processes had led to some forms of cultural and racial difference becoming banal and unremarkable, new racisms were also defined around belonging and authenticity.

Chapter 5 develops these discussions about cultural performances to explore their relation to cultural technology and in particular to the transformations between sound systems, pirate radio and YouTube music videos.

5
Circuitries of Urban Culture

While *Britain's Got Talent* and Chris Brown were playing through the youth clubs, YouTube was also becoming popular. Although literacy was to spread rapidly, at the beginning of 2008, knowledge of these platforms was limited. Only a few of the young people knew how to upload videos to YouTube. Nonetheless, by the beginning of 2009, it was used widely as a televisual and home movie interface – the latter facilitated by the affordability of mobile phones with cameras. By the end of 2009, young people talked of being 'addicted to YouTube'.

It was during this increase in popularity that Gavin, who was responsible for Leyham Youth Club at the time, suggested I start a YouTube channel and populate it with footage of youth club activities. I was still a relatively ambiguous figure at the site (neither a youth worker nor a parent), so some of the young people were unsure who I was. When Gavin told them I was working on YouTube, and some young people spread the story I was working for YouTube (out of genuine misunderstanding or wilful misdirection), I became 'YouTube Man'.

A few miles away, the increasing popularity of YouTube was also changing the After School Club. Before I arrived, the Planet Room was home to a thriving studio producing grime and dubstep tracks. Mainly unreleased, these, and the forms of social life they documented, had been stored on PC hard drives. Shortly after I arrived, these CPUs were being carted out of the building by Newham Council facilities division. Their replacements were 12 shiny, empty, very popular, flat-screen Dells that young people used for watching, listening to and discussing YouTube music videos.

This chapter is located at that time. It explores YouTube music videos (as cultural technology and performance) to address transformations in the circuitries of urban multiculture. To do this, the first section theoretically grounds the versions of 'cultural technology',

'media ecology' and 'performance' used in this analysis. Building on this foundation, the second and third sections review two cultural technologies (and their media ecologies) central to scholarly work on urban multiculture: the sound system and the pirate radio. The final section draws on ethnographic material to explore YouTube music videos and associated performances. These three technologies are selected because YouTube music videos were prominent around the youth clubs but also, as the chapter seeks to demonstrate, because they document in social, cultural and technological terms the transformation of what Bradley has referred to as 'sound system culture' (Bradley 2014).

Cultural technology, media ecologies and performance

To address YouTube music videos, the chapter starts from the premise that technology is constituted in, and constitutive of, social and cultural relations – that is, technology does not simply determine society, nor does society simply determine technology. Following Williams, this understanding of technology is referred to as 'cultural technology' (Williams 1974). In this chapter, cultural technology provides a framework for exploring how the sound system, pirate radio and YouTube music videos were constituted in, and constitutive of, urban multiculture.

The chapter is further framed by the assumption that technology cannot be understood in isolation. This is made evident by work on digital technologies through the metaphor/methodology of the network (Dean 2010; Terranova 2004). However, with analogue technology, the same is also true. The acetate record, the stylus, the microphone, the amplifier and the speaker, for example, all form part of the sound system and cannot be understood in isolation. Fuller's term 'media ecologies' encompasses both these digital and analogue assemblages to provide a framework for understanding how media objects interact. It is employed in this chapter to address these analogue and digital relationalities and their transformation over time (Fuller 2005).

To explore the ways in which the sound system, pirate radio and YouTube music videos are intertwined in social relations, the chapter further develops theoretical tools provided by the related concepts of dialogue and performance. This enables it to engage with the ways in which composition, communication and listening have transformed in relation to cultural technology (Small 1987).[1] Reviewing sound systems and pirate radio, before focusing on YouTube music videos, this

approach permits the chapter to explore the changing relationships between culture, society and technology, and to discuss what the implications of this are. Equally, it permits the chapter not to approach these cultural technologies as discrete containers of time and space but to understand how they feed into each other as fluid cultural and technological systems through which mundane cultural, technological and social transformations take place.[2]

Sound systems

To understand the significance of YouTube music videos, it is necessary to explore their relationship with sound systems and pirate radio. Starting with the former, sound systems appeared in the UK in the 1950s after the arrival of sound system operators from Jamaica (Bradley 2013, p. 214).[3] In technological terms, these sound systems were massive stereo systems specialising in bass response. Indeed, the reggae tracks, first imported from Jamaica and then produced in the UK, were made for their particular sound (Back 1994; Gilroy 2002 [1987], p. 216). In addition to speakers and amplifiers, the 'media ecology' of the sound system included records, record players, microphones and the location itself. The technology of the record allowed for dub tracks[4] to be placed on the B-side of vinyl pressings, enabling artists to use microphones to freestyle over instrumentals.

However, the sound system was always more than 'a cliff face of speaker boxes . . . powered by amplification of apparent intercontinental capabilities. It was, quite literally, the community's heartbeat' (Bradley 2000, p. 4). That is to say, as a cultural technology the UK sound systems of the 1970s and 1980s was constituted in the social relations and economic realities of the country's predominantly working-class black population.

Responding to their socioeconomic position, the technologies of the sound system were relatively affordable and ubiquitous. Tracing the conditions of their emergence in Jamaica, record players were widespread and cheaper than most instruments and, while the speakers and amplifiers were not, electricians, cabinetmakers and hobbyists bought and put together component parts to achieve the sound at a fraction of the cost of manufactured kit (Huxtable 2014). In terms of their social reality, the sound system was a response to the absence of Jamaican, and then black British, music on the commercial airwaves. It was contingently a means of providing entertainment and a focal point for bringing people

together in a hostile and often racist environment in which black men were barred from much of the cities' licensed nightlife (Bradley 2000, p. 215; Huxtable 2014, p. 40).

Although sustained in the margins of bourgeois capitalist society, the sound system was nonetheless conditioned by its ideologies. Like the gramophone, it was designed with mechanically reproduced music in mind, initially recordings on the acetate record. To frame the implications of this relation, it is helpful to introduce a debate between Benjamin, and Adorno and Horkheimer (Adorno and Levin 1990a; 1990b; Horkheimer and Adorno 1997; Benjamin 1968b). Writing before and after the rise of fascism in Germany, these authors were concerned with the relation of mechanical reproduction to fascism. Their shared concern was that the aesthetics of mechanical reproduction paved the way to fascism by saturating social life with convergent codes that detached society from the authenticity and humanity in art (what Benjamin refers to as 'aura'). Whereas Adorno and Horkheimer were famously pessimistic about the role of mechanically produced aesthetics in this moment, Benjamin understood art's aura as also capable of formulating revolutionary demands. Returning to the sound system and the acetate record, we can therefore appreciate both how this cultural technology conformed to the convergence of culture industry and how it made possible revolutionary art.[5]

At the same time as the sound system was constituted in this social matrix, it was also constitutive of it. Tracing a tradition of black vernacular culture, it communicated the shared experiences of everyday life and its struggles against bourgeois white supremacy (Back 1994, pp. 199–200). It functioned as 'the recorded documentation of an alterative living history of the black presence in Britain' (Henry 2006, p. 7), a space in which black Britons could tell, intellectualise and become conscious of social justice, black rights, anti-racism and against police harassment with people who understood and had sympathy with it (Henry 2006, p. 8). That is to say, it provided 'a crucible in which new versions of history and experience [could] be voiced' (Back, cited in Huxtable 2014, p. 13). As it shared these new versions of history and experience, the architecture in which the sound waves resonated transformed town halls and municipal buildings, 'suspend[ing] the temporal and spatial order of the dominant culture' (Gilroy 2002 [1987], p. 284), and generated demands for identity and political representation that could not be contained with the British political system (Gilroy 2002 [1987], p. 267).

Returning to Benjaminian optimism, the technologies of mechanical reproduction provided by the culture industry were manipulated to this end. Dub plates were laid down and pressed for the specific use of particular sound systems. Through DJ techniques such as rewinds and pullbacks, skills further advanced under hip hop, and record players became instruments rather than simply sound reading devices. At the same time as conforming to some ideological aspects of capitalist mechanical reproduction, anti-capitalist principles were advanced with labels removed from records to place the emphasis on communication rather than profit (Gilroy 2002 [1987], pp. 219–221).

Wound up in these constituted and constitutive versions of cultural technology were the performative and dialogic aspects of sound system culture. The sound system was run through the dialogue between various personnel: individual and joint owners, operators (who ran the rig), selectors (who cued up the records) and MCs or toasters (responsible for the lyrical work) in addition to a host of support roles (Back 1994, p. 189). That is to say, unlike commercial forms of artistic expression, dialogue and collectivity rather than individual ownership were key (Keil 1972). Correspondingly, beyond the operators, the dialogues of the sound system included the audience, who far from being passive recipients of the music were co-producers of the cultural technology. As with other forms of African diasporic music, the sound system sought dialogue with its audience through its lyrics and sound. The selectors and MCs would feel and listen to the pleasure on the dancefloor and respond (Back 1994, p. 189; Gilroy 2002 [1987], p. 217). The sound would be manipulated to address the desires of the audience and changing acoustics of the space. Through lyricism, the MC would engage intimately with the audience and their needs, experiences and hopes to the extent that they could become one with the collective consciousness of their co-producers. As Henry notes,

> The point is I have often experienced performances where the Deejay's ability to locate me within the narrative, through their particular skills as wordsmiths, actually had me considering whether the thoughts were theirs or my own.
>
> (Henry 2006, p. 201)

In return, the MC would be engaged with the audience to the extent that the audience participation overwhelmed them (Back 1994). This collectivity was underpinned by the penetration and rhythm of bass through the collective body (Huxtable 2014, p. 32). 'The sheer physical force, volume, weight and mass of it was hard, extreme and excessive' but also

'soft and embracing . . . enveloping, immersive and intense' (Henriques 2003, p. 451).

In summary, the material basis of the reggae sound system of the 1970s and 1980s was craft technologies, inexpensive consumables and urban architecture coupled together to produce collective-body-shaking bass. The sound system was intertwined with black experiences in the UK at the margins of the culture industry and bourgeois, white supremacist society. From here it both embraced and rejected the ideologies of capitalism, generating demands for social justice and alternative political representation. These responses and demands were worked out through the dialogues of the sound system, as intense, collective and intimate coproductions took place on the dancefloor. All of this entailed a shared knowing and collectivity that were in the moment, and were created live and unique for the event (Henriques 2011, pp. 216–221).

Pirate radio

Developing from sound system culture, urban pirate radio made the shift from the dancehall to the airwaves. Originally used to refer to the sea radio pirates, such as Radio Caroline, since the 1980s, pirate radio has more commonly referred to unlicensed urban musical transmissions. This technology initially provided an additional outlet for reggae artists associated with the sound systems, followed by R'n'B, garage and jungle. However, as grime and dubstep succeeded these genres, pirate radio and pirate radio music became more closely connected. Just as reggae was made with the sound system in mind, grime and dubstep started to be produced for the pirate radio. Dizzee Rascal, one of the best known proponents of the grime scene, attributes his composition through game consoles, police siren sounds and other non-professional equipment as part of the 'you could do anything' possibility of pirate radio (Dizzee Rascal, cited in Bradley 2013, p. 382).

In terms of its media ecology, urban pirate radio includes an antenna, a radio transmitter and either a sound-reading device to play a prerecorded session or a link to a studio for live sessions (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 23). The studio, if there is one, also includes a transmitter, an amplifier, speakers, sound-reading devices, a sampler, microphones, computers and a mixing desk. The wider media ecology comprises landline or mobile phones, depending on the era, for phone-ins and text-message requests, and, of course, the radio network.

As with the sound system, the pirate radio was constituted in a particular social and economic context. Like the sound system

collectives, the economic reality of the pirates necessitated affordable technology. Similarly run for communication not profit, and surviving on donations of members, and sometimes through advertising, stations did not have much money to buy equipment or replace it. The craft ethos of the sound system – making skilled use of what was easily and cheaply available – was again applied. According to Hind and Mosco, a pirate radio could broadcast for a 20-mile radius on FM with 'a cheap cassette player, a length of wire, [and] a transmitter small enough to fit in biscuit tin' (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 119). The most expensive of these was the transmitter, and in the 1980s this could be replaced for £300 (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 36). The necessity of this ethos was compounded by the legal context in which the pirates operated. 'Born regulated' – first by the Post Office and then by a series of state actors, including Telecom, the Department of Trade and Industry and OFCOM (Fuller 2005, pp. 20–21) – the radio network was governed by various telecommunications acts that sought to criminalise pirate radio operations, and to make possible the confiscation of equipment (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 151).

The pirate radio also responded to a cultural and social reality shaped by institutional racism. With regard to the culture industry, black Atlantic music did not get airplay. This, combined with age restrictions on club nights and the cost of expensive import records, created a demand for alternative musical channels (Gilroy 2002 [1987], p. 250; Hebdige 1987, pp. 154–155; Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 23). With regard to social marginalisation, pirate radio provided a platform for DJs and MCs to communicate reggae culture. Over time it became an outlet through which grime and dubstep pirates addressed their concerns over CCTV surveillance, police racism and their marginalisation from neoliberal society (Hancox 2013).

The pirate radio was also conditioned by ideologies of the culture industry and in particular the commercial/military development of radio infrastructure. Used first for official propaganda and entertainment purposes (Hendy 2013, pp. 336–348), the radio network and the radiogram were developed to carry and communicate ideology through the human voice to mass audience. That is to say, while the FM signal could transmit the bass signal, radios built for the human voice were rarely equipped with amplification and speakers that were up to the task. Contingently, the intimacies of the dancefloor were not replicated through the radio.

However, the pirate radio was not simply constituted in this sociocultural matrix but also constitutive of it. Extending the demands of

the sound system, the pirate radio amplified fervour and provided new sites of dialogue (Fuller 2005, p. 13). Disrupting the public/private distinctions of the home, and indeed the privatisation of collective working-class life under Margaret Thatcher, it permitted a new generation of young people to hear their experiences played back to them in the intimacies of their bedrooms. In this way, as sound systems transformed the hegemonic space of town halls and municipal buildings, pirate radio transformed the regulated radio network. By hijacking the airwaves, it offered different accounts of living in the UK and provided different ways of thinking with and engaging in public debate. The sound of jungle music and grime both corresponded to and communicated the experiences of urban decay (Hancox 2013; Reynolds 2008). Grime in particular, reflecting on the exclusion from neoliberal consumer freedoms, communicated anger and encouraged retrenchment into protective communities (see Chapter 4).

Below these relations were a series of dialogues that comprised the pirate radio performance. Continuing the sound system ethic, the pirate radio was run as a collective. The station manager provided an aptitude for organisation, finance and day-to-day management of the studio (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 109). Technicians built and maintained the studio and transmission sites, while DJs and MCs brought musical and vocal aptitudes (Back 1994, p. 233). As with the sound system, these dialogues presupposed the audience, who were co-producers. The crossover of reggae MCs and DJs onto pirate radio is considered influential in instilling an ethics of grounded communication and rejecting the self-centred, one-way, commercial patter of mainstream DJs (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 33). Whereas sound system dialogues corresponded to the reach of the bass bins, and as such were principally face to face and in time, pirate radio dialogues related to the reach of the transmitter and as such new techniques for communication were developed. Mixtapes provided one such avenue. Sent into the station (not to their actual address as this would attract the regulators) by listeners wanting to get airplay, mixtapes were received by DJs interested in playing new music to their audience (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 25). Phone-ins and latterly text messages provided live feedback to the DJs. Encoded systems of text messages, rings and voicemails signalled approval, requests or rewinds. Discrepant communications also warned of the state's attempt to locate and shut down stations (Fuller 2005, p. 50).[6]

Corresponding to the increasing mobilities of late modern capitalism, these technologies shifted the time and space of the dialogue. The

mixtape was composed and recoded in a different moment to that when it was listened to. The text message did not need to be read when sent. The conversation with the DJs, MCs and operators of the pirate radio therefore relied on disjoined interactions. This entails different forms of intimacy captured in the following words:

> The thought of thousands of radios in London blasting out graphic-equalised dub into the early hours, with the DJs chanting roots and culture, is both surreal and inspiring.
>
> (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 36)

> Listening to pirate phone-in session like this I felt there was a feedback loop of ever-escalating exaltation switching back between the station and the hardcore 'massive' at home. The whole sub-culture resembled a giant mechanism designed to generate fervour without aim.
>
> (Reynolds 2008, p. 243)

It is important to note, however, that while disinterred from the dancehall, the disjointed intimacies of the pirate radio remained grounded in the experiences of the street. Not only were the experiences of the street central to the dialogue but the rules of the street related to the musical output of the pirate radio. Commenting on the tendency of MCs to clash in lyrical battles, Dizzee Rascal notes: 'because its on pirate radio, it's a lot less controlled, it's much closer to the street where anything goes, so it could get self-destructive' (Dizzee Rascal, cited in Bradley 2013, p. 384).

In summary, as with the sound system, the cultural technology of the pirate radio was built on craft technologies and relatively affordable consumables coupled to pirated and reformed urban media ecology of radio waves and towerblock rooftops. Through the pirated radio waves, shifting experiences of marginalisation were communicated between new audiences of young people tuning in from the former privacy of their homes. Redefined in late-modern feedback mechanisms, these young people contributed to alternative public dialogues denied by licensed radio and thus transformed the intimacies in the city. The pirate radio did not operate through face-to-face interactions or through the physical oneness of the in-time collective body. Its intimacies were disembodied and discordant, as time and space over a 20-mile radius was fragmented through mixtapes and text messages. Nonetheless, these discordant interactions were grounded in the rules of the street.

YouTube music videos around Leyham Youth Club

Having traced some of the connections between the sound system and the pirate radio, the rest of the chapter addresses YouTube videos. In keeping with Bradley's identification of the transformation of sound system culture, it particularly focuses on videos associated with black diasporic cultures. To do so it draws on ethnographic material to explore what, in addition to the shifts from sound systems to pirate radio, YouTube music videos revealed about the transformation of cultural technology in urban multiculture. As with the previous section, this is achieved by outlining what the media ecology of YouTube music videos is, how YouTube music videos are constituted in, and constitutive of, social and cultural life in outer East London, and how shifts in cultural technology can be understood through its performance.

As addressed in the Introduction, from 2008, YouTube use rocketed around the youth clubs I worked at, in terms of young people both watching music videos and also creating and uploading videos to the platform. This corresponded with the movement of grime personnel, who had their roots in sound systems, garage and British hip hop (Bradley 2013, pp. 368–387) to the YouTube platform – a movement that was facilitated by the spread of public and home Internet connections, the availability and affordability of mobile phones with cameras, speakers and Bluetooth, and the acquisition by YouTube of Google.[7] Just as reggae had been made with the sound system in mind and grime was intertwined with the possibilities of the pirate radio, so too were later grime outputs inseparable from the YouTube media ecology.

Most obviously, from 2008 the musical outputs heard on pirate radio routinely acquired music videos. However, in addition to this, YouTube music videos corresponded aesthetically with the technology. Returning to the analysis of 'Kill all a dem' in Chapter 4 (the YouTube video made by young people around Leyham Youth Club), the visual aesthetics of the video traced the home movie aesthetics of earlier British grime and hip hop videos – for example, the videos of London Posse (Muggs 2013) and Jammer's Lord of the Mics series (Lord of the Mics 2015) for the digital age. The quality of Giggs' 'Talking da hardest' was determined by the resolution of the mobile phone camera, and the angle of the video shots by the default chest height position for holding a mobile phone. Musically, as 'Kill all a dem' also illustrates, grime started to be influenced by dialogues possible through the YouTube platform. The instrumental (a citation of Wiley's 'The Matrix (Instrumental)' (2010 [2001–2006]),

the theme and the lyrics ('Kill all a dem') referenced the young people's dialogues on the YouTube platform.

As with sound systems and pirate radio, YouTube music videos corresponded to their social and economic context. With regard to the economic context, their proliferation in outer East London was made possible by the affordability and spread of mobile phones with cameras. Again, as Chapter 4 illustrates, many of the young people involved in making these videos were too young to go to clubs and did not have the money to buy CDs and MP3s, or dedicated sound and video recording equipment. This technology then provided young people with an accessible means of playing tracks, recording music videos and sharing them. It also provided young people with access to music they were interested in, in terms of both commercial releases being encouraged under Google's ownership of the platform and the non-commercial content of other young people.

As with the sound system and the pirate radio, YouTube music videos corresponded to their social contexts. Whereas sound systems existed because of the marginalisation of black working-class people from the bourgeois white public sphere, YouTube music videos also existed because young people in outer East London were marginalised from public debate and dialogue. As various authors have noted in relation to grime music, the police used risk assessment form 696[8] to close down 'black' grime events (Hancox 2009; Lowkey 2012; Pearse and Taylor 2009). YouTube music videos then provided an outlet for these marginalised forms of creativity.

YouTube music videos were also conditioned by the culture industry. However, where the convergence of sound systems can be understood accurately in relation to mechanical reproduction, YouTube music videos can be better understood in relation to the neoliberal ideologies of digital reproduction. These ideologies are captured in the concept of 'hypermobile privatisation'. For Williams, 'mobile privatisation' encapsulated the ways in which TV, in industrial capitalist Britain, connected different places and times (mobility) through individualised forms of consumption (privatisation) (Williams 1974, p. 26). At the time of the research, these mobilities and their privatisations were being advanced through the neoliberal logic of 'flexible [global] production, circulation of symbolic goods, [and] the expansion and incorporation of [individual] difference' (Cavanagh 2013, p. 172). YouTube music videos were then part of a speeded-up digital (hyper)circulation of symbolic goods connected to exaggerated forms of privatisation.

This had a material bearing on the quality of the performances. The focus on 'communication for its own sake' (Dean 2010, p. 21) meant that the quality of music videos was a secondary concern. Notably, the upload capacity of 100MB on YouTube (before September 2008 when it increased to 1GB (Gannes 2009) and the restricted video length for 'non-partner videos' – those channels that are not linked to YouTube's monetisation programme – entailed a convergence in the quality of the videos. At the same time in the wider media ecology, the quality of mobile phone cameras, and the practice of sound recording grime vocals on mobile phone voice recorders, produced a diminished audio-visual output. Taking the dance videos discussed in Chapter 4 as an example, Jack, Lewis and Nathe recorded dance tracks into their phones from a computer speaker. They then played the track from the mobile phone and recorded the dance and sound onto another mobile phone for upload to YouTube. This meant that they recorded a low-quality YouTube output from a low-grade computer speaker into a low-quality mobile phone microphone and played that through a low-grade mobile phone speaker. The sound emitted from the mobile phone was then recorded by another mobile phone. The final playback was a video with a dance track stripped of bass and only vaguely recognisable as the original through its tinny rhythm and distorted mid and treble.

However, the ideologies of digital reproduction led to other forms of convergence not present in the craft technologies of the sound system and pirate radio. Neoliberal hypermobility required YouTube's platform to be designed with a low user threshold. Its nominally global reach meant that it had the potential to be used by anyone. The entailed unambiguity implied closed coding. Unlike the sound system and pirate radio, which as craft technologies could be manipulated by skilled personnel to provide different sound qualities, Google dictated the sound and video quality of YouTube music videos.

Furthermore, algorithms designed to speed up the consumption of targeted video material conditioned the interactions and dialogues possible over the platform. Whereas sound system selections came about through dialogues between record labels, sound system selectors and audiences, on YouTube, young people's musical interests were led on paths and through architectures determined by ranking algorithms written by and for the commercial interests of Google (van Dijck 2013, p. 113; Lessig 1999).

These hypermobilities corresponded with the expansion and incorporation of privatisation (or individual difference). When young people in outer East London uploaded their music and dance videos to YouTube,

in addition to contributing to the exorbitant profits of YouTube, they 'broadcast themselves'[9] to potentially thousands of other devices, and in so doing rearticulated the sovereign curating-self enshrined in neoliberal ideology. These hyperprivatisations were compounded by the YouTube interface. Unlike Facebook, which is designed to facilitate social interactions, YouTube is little more than a broadcast platform for a massive repository of videos (Burgess and Green 2009, p. 58; Lange 2008; van Dijck 2013). At the time of conducting the research, text comments were possible on videos, users' video channels could be followed, and videos could be liked and favourited, but the platform was not designed to sustain social dialogues.

However, and as with the other cultural technologies discussed in this chapter, YouTube music videos were not only constituted by this social and cultural matrix but also constitutive of it. In addition to corresponding to hypermobile privatisation, the videos communicated young people's experiences of marginalisation and thus contributed to a shared and collective struggle (discussed further in Chapter 6). The still in Figure 5.1 is from an Upcoming Movement video, 'Time is up', discussed in Chapter 6, in which the young men directly engage with their marginalisation from the capitalist dream (note Citi Bank in the background). While the video makes use of YouTube, it also uses this platform to communicate opposition to these capitalist configurations.

In this way, at the same as it was conditioned by hypermobile privatisation, YouTube music videos gave young people the opportunity to share experience and maintain dialogues about collective struggles. And in this way this cultural technology continued to trace the politics of the sound system and the pirate radio, albeit through a digital medium.

Figure 5.1 Still from 'Time is up'

These politics were not detached from the physical and embodied realities of young people's lives. Just as the rules of the street informed pirate radio, so too they informed young people's grime videos. This much is evident in the performance of territory discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

These arguments about YouTube music videos' physical/virtual and convergent/alternative conditions become clearer as attention is paid to their performance. The performance draws attention to the ways in which YouTube music videos were made through dialogues, across analogue and digital media ecologies, and between physical and virtual sites.

As noted, one of the main uses of the YouTube platform was as a televisual interface, and, at both Leyham Youth Club and the After School Club, young people used that interface to play music videos to each other. These included mainstream outputs such as Paulo Nutini, Destiny's Child and Michael Jackson, popular grime tracks such as DJ Hoteppa, K.I.G. and lesser-known videos from the GrimeForum's YouTube channel. Although we might think of the human–screen interface as private and solitary (Turkle 2011), and TV audiences as passive,[10] these listening practices were in fact collective and active. Playing pop videos such as those of Paulo Nutini and Destiny's Child, generated discussions and evaluations. Moves from K.I.G.'s Head shoulders kneez & toez' (Donaeo Remix) were practised and evaluated at the After School Club based on who could best 'get down low'. The GrimeForum channel provided instrumental tracks such as Shaduno's 'Haunted House', over which young men in the same centre could work out their own lyrics.

These performances extended into more public compositions and communications that made use of media ecologies that interfaced analogue–digital and physical–virtual. Michael Jackson, DJ Hotsteppa and K.I.G. found their way onto burnt CDs that could then be played on the Leyham Youth Club hi-fi (a 70W per channel Kenwood amplifier attached to an array of speakers, including a bass driver) to overcome the sonic limitations of computer speakers. This apportioned an adequate soundscape for dancing. Extending from YouTube back to the dancehall, moving bodies then became the medium of communication as young people worked out the choreographed routines and developed their own repertoires from the breaking back catalogue.

These kinetics often stayed within the walls of the youth club but, assisted by the ubiquity of mobile phones with cameras, some started to be represented on YouTube. As discussed in Chapter 4, young people at Leyham Youth Club became increasingly interested in uploading their

music and dance compositions to YouTube. In this way they fed back into the archive from which they had drawn inspiration.

Tracing the citational practices of sound systems and pirate radios, these dialogues were part of wider interactions that extended well beyond the time and space of the youth clubs. Upcoming Movement's 'Kill all a dem' existed in a nexus of appropriation and reuse common to the black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993). It applied the principles of communication from the sound system and pirate radio to YouTube. As noted, 'Kill all a dem' cited Nocturnal's remix (2009) of Scratcha's instrumental 'Kill all ah dem' (2010), which in turn cited Wiley's 'The Matrix (Instrumental)' (2010 [2001–2006]) and Ruff Sqwad's 'Tings in boots' (Ruff Sqwad 2003), in addition to existing in dialogue with numerous contemporary videos made in a similar genre. The cinematography of 'Kill all a dem' cited late 1980s and early 1990s London Posse hip hop videos (Muggs 2013, p. 10) and Jammer's Lord of the Mics (Lord of the Mics 2015), in addition to being in dialogue with a genre of grime videos captured on mobile phones for YouTube.

The differences in these cultural technologies are important for understanding and evaluating how time and space were reconfigured through the performance. Corresponding to their respective moments, sound systems were principally based on face-to-face communications – the bodies and the bass existed in one moment and in one dancehall. Entering late modern capitalism, the pirate radio station shifted this dialogue to the airwaves and mobile phone transmissions. This brought different physical spaces into play (e.g. the bedroom) and different times. The text message, for example, was composed in a different time and in a different spatial and social context to the studio where it was received. Nonetheless, these communications were bounded by the pirate radio itself, which tied the different times and spaces to one sonic transmission.

Returning to 'Kill all a dem', the disjointed in-timeness of the pirate radio was further fragmented as the performance extended onto networked space with multiple horizons, interlocutors and social contexts (Sharma 2013). The movement through the network 'in several directions at once, decomposing and recombining, multiplying and aggregating into different contexts' detached the video from the space and time in which it was composed (Rubinstein and Sluis 2013, p. 30). It opened onto a multiplicity of horizons laden with uncertainties and ambiguities of interpretation. As Murthy notes in relation to Twitter and tweeting, tweets become removed from the face-to-face interactions of the psychical works as they are reinterpreted by users in different locations and

social contexts (Murthy 2012, p. 1067). They extend horizons in multiple directions, and speed up their arrival or slow down their coming – in the sense that people may never respond, or that an unintended consequence may arrive in real time (Larsen 2008, p. 149; Murthy 2012, p. 1068).

This indeed constituted a new form of intensity, distinct from the bodily in-timeness of the dancehall or the fervour of the pirate radio. This intensity was characterised both by digital real-time immediacy and the uncertainties of its deferral, by the intimate interface with the screen, by the interactivity of the media, and by the multiplication, repetition and mobility of the video to sites wide and unknown.

However, in the case of the YouTube video made by young people around Leyham Youth Club, all of these were connected to the street. That is to say, YouTube music videos' digital ambiguities and fragmentations were interpreted in relation to young people's physical environments. When the claim of 'Kill all a dem' – 'if I catch your mandem [groups of men] slippin', they will get beat-down so severe' – was released on YouTube it became open to multiple reinterpretations. The unpredictability of the utterance became apparent through the ensuing dialogues it generated – namely a small number of YouTube users who posted comments under the video to test the group's commitment to violence.

> lol man talkin bowt shankin [stabbing] bowt shankin.
>
> neva shanked someone but been shanked, dnt fink u know wat its like kid, and despite man stickin blade in me he looked horrorfied all u fannies r pussies mate.
>
> where u from u goats, look like faggots, 60 youngens wid some fat ass prick gimp.
>
> wat do u kno gangsters cum 2 da blocs an get duppied[11] [beaten up] sn u fat shit.
>
> This is awful. i would duppy all 3 of you who jumped on this track. on 1 riddim [rhythm]

The comments used digital media shorthand to call into question the veracity of the young people's claim. They mocked their style as unconvincing and slated their musical ability. They ridiculed the physical capacity of the young men to carry out their virtual assertions, questioned their experience of real-world confrontation and specified a

physical location to settle the score (outside the local McDonalds).[12] As the comments were posted, those associated with the video became worried about the physical fallout of their pronouncement and the owner of the YouTube channel deleted the more aggressive retorts.

Detached from their social contexts, these comments existed as signs without reference, and these absences left space for ambiguity and over-interpretation (Terranova 2004). The fact that they did not know their interlocutors, or have any information to ascertain in what context the message had been sent, but that they did know the reputations for hardness of certain local group of young people, caused concern. Their concern related to the possibility of a physical confrontation – one that was digitally mediated in such a way that it corresponded to an anonymous group of young people with ambiguous and decontextualised hardness and motivation.

In summary, we can say that at the same time as YouTube music videos in outer East London built on sound system and pirate radio culture, they were also qualitatively different from them. They used affordable and ubiquitous technology, and engaged in grounded dialogues. These grounded dialogues communicated shared struggles, if not demands. Unlike their technological interlocutors they did not rely on craft skills but used a platform and associated media with closed code that prescribed the kind, and quality, of the communications. In this sense they 'broadcast themselves' as they pursued predetermined relationships of feedback. Nonetheless, YouTube music videos did not correspond fully to the ideologies of digital reproduction. They were not fully digital, mobile or privatised. Rather, in addition to these conditions, they existed between analogue and digital, physical and virtual sites. They were integrated into, and could not have been performed without, the collective experiences in the youth club and on the streets, just as they also traced the organisational ethics of black Atlantic music culture.

Summary

This chapter has addressed the transformation of urban multiculture in relation to cultural technology. Through an analysis of the sound system, pirate radio and YouTube music videos it has sought to explain how these related cultural technologies are constituted in, and constitutive of, their sociocultural moments and how the particularities of these relations can be ascertained through their performative dimensions. Prefacing the sound system and pirate radio, the chapter has drawn attention to the ways in which YouTube music videos are inexorably

linked to the hypermobile privatisations of contemporary life, and in this way how they are complicit in the neoliberal capitalist logic of digital reproduction and attendant forms of advanced individuation. However, as the chapter has clarified, this is in fact only one aspect of the story of YouTube music videos. By making use of the affordable and ubiquitous technology, YouTube music videos are contiguous with the sound system and pirate radio in providing a means for young people to communicate their struggles and address their exclusions from public space. Conditioned by the neoliberal moment, these struggles are noted to be different in character and quality from those that came before, but they nonetheless exist. The chapter has further addressed the ways in which YouTube music videos continue to be connected to physical realities, and indeed to the tradition of sound system culture in this regard. The intersections between analogue/digital, physical/virtual, embodied/disembodied, located/disinterred moments of the performance highlight the ways in which the cultural technology of YouTube music videos correspond with uncertainly, fractured time, extended ambiguity and unreferable absence, and also how they connect to the body and the street.

Chapter 6 builds on this discussion to develop a clearer understanding of the transformation of mediated youth politics in the context of urban multiculture.

6
Negative Politics

The slow wind-down of my PhD fieldwork in outer East London coincided with the 2012 London Olympic Games. Coming after the Golden Jubilee of the same year, the London Olympics was the pinnacle of commercialised jingoism and neoliberal body politics. Located in the northeast corner of Newham, not far from the youth club I worked at, the River Lea had once again become the centre of empire, this time sponsored by Coca-Cola and Adidas rather than the East India Company and the Crown. Belching from the media centre were the neoliberal merits of individualised discipline and corporeal order.

Under this noxious cloud, a legacy was bequeathed: Newham's 'Arc of Opportunity [sic] (LBN 2010), a privately owned and secured crescent of land stretching from the Excel Centre to the Olympic Development and Westfield Shopping Centre. Dominating Stratford Town, Jess Ennis' ten-story mixed-race image provided context to the 'opportunity' on offer, and lent credence to Newham Council's branding as sanitised ethnic diversity for sale. Not far way, the Gillette and Adidas adverts hid the everyday Newham that the mayor, the police and the Olympic Delivery Authority were keen to obscure. Under these commercial masks resided the condemned Carpenters Estate and the residents who still lived there.

Over 17 Olympic days, this excess made everyday life unnavigable for ordinary residents of Newham as racial and classed marginalisation, already found in the policing of the borough and the private securitisation of the Arc of Opportunity, reached fever pitch. This did not pass unnoticed, and on park benches and street corners, serious deliberations took place. Working for a local community organisation monitoring police action around the Olympics, I shared in some of these conversations and listened to the politics they contained.

As the Olympics entered its second week, I walked through West Ham Park, ten minutes from the main site, and stopped to speak to a group

of Afghani and Kurdish young men sitting on a bench under a tree. Interested in the actions of the police, I asked how the Olympics were affecting them. Rather than trot out TV-derived platitudes of patriotism and aspiration, they expressed anger at being stopped (on the pretext of immigration checks), harassed and illegally strip-searched in the back of police vans. These were not new experiences but the Olympic Games had increased their frequency to absurd levels. Affronted and angry, they shared stories and reflections on the clean-up, its racial registers and its basis in their day-to-day marginalisation. In the glare of neoliberal whiteness, they noted how their brown bodies and associated cultural signifiers had become hypervisible. Against these injustices, heated debate was generated, and although these discussions did not provide alternative utopias, they seemed laden with radical possibility.

The park bench was one of a number of moments that resonated with the struggles I had encountered among young people in Newham's 348 other days of the year but had not fully understood. This chapter is a partial exploration of these days, some of the young people who lived in them, and their politics. Addressing a series of interrelated performances that occurred around Leyham Youth Club, London borough of Newham, the chapter discusses young people's politics by addressing their simultaneous conformity to neoliberal marginalisation, their struggles against it, and the possibly of radical politics beyond it.

Through an exploration of online music videos and one girl's story, it engages with, and questions, prevailing academic discourses on the decline of youth politics under neoliberal marginalisation. It discusses how young people's political performances do indeed conform to the neoliberal matrix, as privatisation, consumerism and masculine violence permeate urban life. However, it also explores young people's struggles against these dimensions of neoliberal marginalisation. It explores how young people use the lexicons of privatisation, consumerism and masculine violence to convey struggles. The chapter argues that these struggles – referred to 'negative politics' on account of their anger, rage and abject positioning – most characterise youth politics in outer East London. Beyond this, it tentatively explores the persistence of radical politics in these same locations. It addresses how the politics of marginalised young people cannot, and have never been, subsumed in a liberal dominant/abject framing. Sociabilities, sharing and alternative horizons persisted. At the same time as young people's lives were conditioned by marginalisation and struggles against it, radical undercurrents were faintly conveyed beneath neoliberal domination.

The overall argument of this chapter is to understand how young people's politics are simultaneously conformist, agonist and possibly radical in contemporary outer East London.

In order to make these points, the chapter starts by critically engaging with neo-Marxian and black studies theses on the decline of youth politics. In the proceeding section, these are developed through a discussion of the 'performative in the political' and through the concept of 'negative politics'. The rest of the chapter is taken up with an exploration of the politics of young people in outer East London.

Post-political pessimisms

Interested in youth politics in outer East London, this chapter is framed in critical relation to prevailing academic arguments about youth politics and their decline. In both neo-Marxian and black studies literature, authors have presented theses on the decline of youth politics under neoliberalism. While these arguments are fragments of larger bodies of work (which are sometimes in agreement but often in contradiction), they have nonetheless amalgamated in the popular sociological imaginary to cement the fact of youth culture's post-political condition. Through their interrelated analyses of working-class and black popular cultures they have come to assert a powerful narrative of youth apolitics in marginalised urban locations. These amalgams are addressed for what they reveal about youth politics under neoliberalism, and for what they overlook.

The neo-Marxian amalgam puts forward the idea that social structures during industrial modernity produced forms of community and political solidarity (Winlow and Hall 2006, p. 20). It notes that these contributed to identifiable working-class politics in the form of resistances against bourgeois education and policing (Humphries 1981; Willis 1977), which also intersected with black resistance against white racism (Alexander 1996; Bennett 1999; Jones 1988; Lawrence 1982; Nayak 2003). It notes how in their various guises these politics had horizons of better rights and in some cases revolutionary emancipation (Winlow and Hall 2012, pp. 466, 468; Scott 2013). The thesis continues that from the Thatcherite period onwards, political affinities based around labour, kinship and social structure were replaced by neoliberal projects of self-interest (Winlow and Hall 2006, p. 8). Through the political orthodoxy of privatisation, struggles against middle-class hegemony were individualised (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001, p. 23), and in the absence of collective politics, working-class young people were left

with the gnawing self-responsibility for their own failure (Bauman 2001; Beck 1992). Marxian resistances were consumed by capitalism's constant demand for novelty and new markets (Frank 1997). The individual was cast as consumer, and the ideology of consumption extended to everything, from objects to politics, space and human relations (Bauman 2001; Miles 2010; Valluvan et al. 2013). Self-worth and failure, citizenship and denizenship were now measured by unobtainable horizons of consumption made for middle-class consumers through working-class marginalisation (Winlow and Hall 2006, p. 5).

The neo-Marxian amalgam, then, charts the shifts from youth politics to apolitics in the neoliberal moment. In this account, forms of working-class solidarity are replaced by individualism. Forms of resistance become novelty-for-sale. Older forms of collectivity and care are replaced by consumerism. Visions of greater rights or revolution are written over with horizons of unobtainable spending power. Protest then, as the 2011 'Riots' demonstrated, is only possible through meaningless and irrational consumerist revolt; what Žižek referred to as 'zero-degree protest, a violent action demanding nothing' (Zizek 2011); and what Hegel might have referred to as a consumer 'rabble'.[1]

The black studies amalgam is differently routed through the declining black power movement, the rise of Pan-Africanist solidarity (Eshun 2003, p. 294) and the challenge to commercialised black popular culture by an art, music and literary scene referred to as 'afro-futurism' (Akomfrah 1996; hooks 2004, p. 17). According to the black studies amalgam, this moment provided the social and mental tools to sustain hope and imagine freedom beyond racist society (Dery 1994; Eshun 2003; Mayer 2000). The argument continues that, through neoliberalism, these alternative politics were replaced by individualist body-centred biopolitics (hooks 1992; 2004; West 1994), expanding discourses of professionalisation, neoliberal uplift and the marketisation of formerly radical messages as racialised dissent for those keen to invest in a taste of the 'other' (Gilroy 2010, p. 126; Hall 1996, p. 23; Henry 2006, p. 216). In the US context of post-slavery and urban deprivation, this decimation of collective struggle gave unchecked rise to the anti-sociability and nihilism found in the West's 'black America' and hook's discussion of hip hop (hooks 2004; West 1994, p. 24). In the UK, it has been related to the transformation of social hierarchies and the engraining of racism in celebrations of diversity and meritocracy (Gilroy 2013).

In this rendering, the collective politics of freedom are replaced by the embrace of capitalism, individualism, patriarchy and racialised body

politics – namely, 'the ruling values of imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (hooks 2004, pp. 141–142). Sites of transformative interventions become the politics of domination (hooks 2004, pp. 140–141).

Returning to outer East London, these two amalgams with their different routes, ontologies and epistemologies have merged in assessments of youth politics. As evident in discussions about the 2011 'Riots' (Bauman 2011; Starkey 2011; Winlow and Hall 2012; Zizek 2011) and in evaluations of urban youth culture more broadly, these have been used to identify the absence of youth politics in contemporary urban Britain.

Negative politics

While these neo-Marxian and black studies amalgams usefully illuminate youth politics' conscription to neoliberalism, they also restrict engagement with ongoing and contemporary struggles. To explore the continuity, rather than only the departure, of struggle in the neoliberal moment, this chapter proposes the concept of 'negative politics'.

Negative politics provides analytic space to address forms of neoliberal capture and also to attend to contingent struggles against neoliberal marginalisation in outer East London. Building on the above, it provides a means of understanding how young people performed neoliberal oppression, and also how they struggled against and possibly exceeded it. These politics are denoted 'negative' on account of their struggle (and rage)[2] because their agonism is predominantly a form of protest and because consequently they do not project positive utopias as formerly understood. However, this is not to say that these struggles do not rupture or contain other utopias.

To engage with these politics, a modified version of the concept of 'performativity' is used. Butler and Athanasiou's 'performative in the political' outlines a framework for politics as 'a struggle with the norm, a struggle implicated in that which it seeks to contest' (Butler and Athanasiou 2013, p. 99). This focus on the struggle allows the chapter to move beyond the analyses of neoliberal capture (addressed above) and to make intelligible the everyday politics with which young people in outer East London are engaged (Butler 1988; 1997b; Butler and Athanasiou 2013, p. 99). That is, the 'performative in the political' provides a means of addressing how contemporary youth politics are acted out in a white, middle-class, patriarchal and capitalist normative matrix; how young people struggle against this matrix by making use of

resources from the same script; and how these struggles challenge and reclaim agency from the matrix (Butler 1993, p. 3).

However, this chapter does not assume that all youth politics can be subsumed in a Western liberal political tradition in which marginalised young people struggle for agency and against abjection (Tyler 2013). Rather, as has been widely noted in black studies and urban culture literature, youth politics can sometimes be better understood through its exclusion from, not its inclusion in, Western liberal models of being. While these forms of politics are embroiled in the maintenance of the normative matrix, through both their rejection from it and their complicity in it, they have also functioned apart from it, operating on a lower register, in a minor key (Gilroy 1993; Harney and Moten 2013; Iton 2008; Johnson 2003) – as formerly elaborated in writing about the politics of the blues, sound systems and pirate radio stations (Back 1994; Ellison 2001; Fuller 2005, p. 50; Gilroy 1987; Goodman 2009, p. 32; McKittrick 2006; Woods 1998; Weheliye 2005). Through this approach, the chapter considers that contemporary youth politics in outer East London might still be connected to these undercurrents, and that it might also trace the radical politics of exchange, relation, justice and utopia these contained. Rather than accord that the politics of marginalised young people have suffered irreconcilable late modern rupture, or that this is the only register in which youth politics is performed, this approach to negative politics allows for an understanding of political transformation in outer East London that addresses its conformities, its struggles and also its possibly radical imaginaries.

Performances of marginalisation

Having foregrounded these conceptual tools, the rest of the chapter explores youth politics in outer East London by engaging with the performances of a nine-year-old girl called Kristen and two YouTube videos.

The analysis starts with a discussion of how young people's negative politics conformed to neoliberal marginalisation. It then addresses how they struggled against it, and concludes by considering how their performances might also contain radical politics beyond it. This analysis opens with Kristen's performance of marginalisation. Her story grounds the initial discussion of negative politics in a biographical plane by discussing her neoliberal precarity, individualisation and consumerism, and her constitution against the neoliberal horizon.

Before exploring the politics of these performances it is worth recalling a few socioeconomic statistics mentioned in the Introduction. At the time I was working there, Newham was home to London's highest increase in Jobseeker's Allowance claimants (MacInnes et al. 2010), 53.9 per cent economic inactivity among young people (LBN 2010, p. 44), the second highest 'extent of deprivation' of any district in the country (Noble et al. 2008, p. 86), and 46.9 per cent of children living in persistent poverty (LBN 2010, p. 45). It was also experiencing the largest public spending cuts in London, driven forward by the Conservatives' 'austerity' agenda (BBC 2010). In terms of education, the secondary school closest to Leyham Youth Club, which many of the young people attended, was among the lowest-achieving in the country (BBC 2011). Many young people at the youth club did not attend school regularly and a handful were expelled before completing their GCSEs. Building on Wacquant's work on 'advanced marginality', these 'precarious' (Merrifield 2014; Standing 2011) social conditions can be understood as the effects of 'neoliberal marginalisation' (Wacquant 2008).

In this context, Kristen was a nine-year-old, white, working-class girl who attended Leyham's After School Club and then attended the Leyham Youth Club between 2008 and 2010. I came to know her through working together on dance and video-making projects. Kristen went to the local primary school before attending the neighbouring secondary school. She lived moments from the youth club in a small terraced house that she shared with her three siblings, her mother and her often-absent father. She was a shy person, seemingly uncomfortable with herself and with social relationships, and prone to sudden outbursts of aggression. However, she was also curious and sociable within her own comfort zones. Youth workers had a largely negative opinion of her. Some described her as a 'sociopath' on account of her having tortured animals to death (although it was not clear whether these were daddy longlegs or dogs). Among young people and youth workers, she had a reputation as a grass and could be relied upon to give the illicit back story to events. This was seen as a shameful trait, something akin to talking to both the police and other powerful and untrustworthy representatives of the bourgeois establishment (which sometimes included PhD researchers).

Kristen's politics can initially be accessed through understanding her home life. She was from a poor family that received clothing assistance from local charities. Like other families, hers sought prestige in consumer objects they could not afford. Kristen's mother got into debt buying branded consumables for her children, such as tracksuits, MP3

players and phones. In an attempt to mitigate the long, low-waged hours she worked, these items functioned as tokens of care and attention. Kristen's home life was violent. Her father's occasional return was associated with aggression as he tried to assert his authority on the family, in an attempt to recoup economic and masculine powerlessness and assuage his self-responsibility for failure. Similarly struggling to come to terms with his own powerlessness, Kristen's brother, 12, was violent to his mother, and his mother to him. At the same time, he was the victim of the violence of other young men trying to establish their positions in society.

That is to say, Kristen lived in a poor family, was surrounded by youth unemployment and a local history of disenfranchisement, and connected to this experienced masculine violence and anti-sociability as men and women around her used aggression to try to rectify their own gendered failure in a system stacked against them. She understood the importance of consumer objects as items of prestige and care.

This social and historic context informed Kristen's day-to-day performances, and one afternoon these informed her acting out of a street robbery. We had just come back to Leyham Youth Club after Christmas 2010, and I asked Kristen what her Christmas had been like (the assumptions I made revealed a lot about my class privilege). She didn't say whether she enjoyed it but reeled off a list of presents she had been given: two tracksuits – an Adidas one that was too big and a McKenzie one that she was wearing but had 'scuffed up'. She had got it muddy in the playground. The McKenzie tracksuit had a hood and a zip that went all the way from the waistband to the top of the hood. When zipped up fully it completely covered her face. I asked, jokingly, if I could zip it up. She looked at me to gauge my intentions and said I could 'if you promise to undo it'. This was a moment of trust. In the end, she decided to zip it up herself, not all the way, just leaving just enough space for her eyes. Then she acted out a street robbery. Changing into a threatening posture, she demanded I give her my money. I felt the prefigured middle-class discomfort, unzipped her face and the performance ended. She told me with bravado, but no irony, that she was going to be a street robber when she grew up and walked off.

Although I will go on to suggest this performance contained agonist and possibly radical undertones, it was also an example of Kristen's constitution through neoliberal marginalisation. The performance of the street robber highlighted her conformity to the neoliberal matrix. She was given branded goods in a Christmas associated with accumulation. These goods were poor substitutes for interpersonal care and

were consequently treated with disregard. She referenced the good's brand names because her moral life and social standing were mediated through consumption. She knew that McKenzie and Adidas were more expensive and had a higher social value than their unbranded counterparts. Her hooded tracksuit represented anti-sociability and capitalism idealised because of her marginalisation from a middle-class matrix of consumer spending and individual power. The full-length zip was appealing because it exaggerated the threat represented by the anonymous hooded masses, as coded through global-commercial stereotypes of hip hop, black youth and masculinity – symbols that middle-class white discourses obsess about.

Together, these symbols provided her with the means to perform the street robbery and project her future vocation. The street robber allowed her to imagine a versions of 'get rich or be criminalised trying [sic]'[3] particular to the context in which she lived. In this way, she limited her future against the middle-class and white consumer freedoms that were predicated on her marginalisation. In this way, Kristen's everyday performances of precarity, consumerism and individualism were constituted in a sociohistorical matrix complicit in her marginalisation.

Around the same time that Kristen performed the street robber, Upcoming Movement was working on two hip hop/grime videos. These videos – which Kristen would latterly come to know through their YouTube transmission in the youth club's back lobby – preceded the release of 'Kill all a dem'. Upcoming Movement's members were from poor families and were connected to the same extended friendship and familial networks as Kristen. Their videos spanned their final years at school and the beginning of precarious employment, where like many peers they bounced between college courses, unemployment, low-paid and low-skilled jobs, and involvement in informal street economies. Unlike Kristen they did not regularly attend Leyham Youth Club but their YouTube output had become infamous at that site following the 2010 release of their first video, 'Kill all a dem' (discussed in chapters 4 and 5).[4]

The two videos discussed in this chapter are 'Time is up' and 'Hometown glory'. 'Time is up' was uploaded to YouTube in December 2011. By January 2012 the video had 1,350 views.[5] The lyrics are autobiographical and tell the story of young men struggling to live in a marginalised place. They were influenced by 'politically conscious' hip hop artists such as Lowkey and Immortal Technique, and a range of smaller outfits from the Albanian diaspora. As with the lyrics, the sound and visuals of the video draw on a symbolic repertoire associated with

Figure 6.1 Still of Canary Wharf and the Millennium Dome

black Atlantic music cultures as located in outer East London. The slow piano melodies are influenced by 1990s UK garage. The colour imagery is of the two front-men rapping in front of Canary Wharf and the Millennium Dome, as seen from the north bank of the River Thames (see Figure 6.1).

Like Kristen's street robber, Upcoming Movement's 'Time is up' is a performance complicit with neoliberal marginalisation. By narrating the daily 'grind' of life, the group illuminates its relation to precarious and hard labour. Building on skateboarding vernacular, it situates this labour against the hard curb of life: 'Skateboarder life, I'm on the curb and I'm grinding', and in this way signals its members conformity to this way of living. In the video, 'grinding' endorses a dogged work ethic through which structural marginalisation can be accepted by claiming the grind as agency – as a project of the self. Through the grind, Upcoming Movement members take responsibility for their own destinies and in so doing constitute themselves as abject for failing to reach middle-class consumer horizons. The move to individualisation and away from evaluations of structural marginalisation colours their presentation of interpersonal relations. At the same time as they take responsibility for their own failure, they blame other marginalised young people for keeping them down. These young people are referred to as 'haters', a popular term used to describe someone who denigrates or holds back sovereign projections of ambition. In these ways, Upcoming Movement's performance consents to neoliberal marginalisation by privatising responsibility for its members' own and other's failures.

These neoliberal performances of individualised failure are contrasted against horizons of consumer success. In addition to providing a

night-time lighting display that suits the creative desires of the producer and rappers, and one that cites grime's fetishisation of capitalist symbolism (Hancox 2013; Shystie 2011), Canary Wharf and the Millennium Dome provide semidistant mirages of the unobtainable horizon of global wealth and spending from an East London vantage point. These unobtainable, commercial horizons can be understood as conditioning Upcoming Movement's future through a perpetual climb towards death. The lyrics are laden with metaphors of toiling towards this to-come – one day they will have the 'paper' or 'skrilla' (money) to reach it. The members' acceptance of this ascent is related to God and spiritual transcendence. The appearance of God in their lyrics works with their word play on 'saviour' – 'sooner or later I'll be the Saviour' – providing a supernatural escape from, and rationale for, the grind of everyday life. Ultimately it is God that will save them, and their 'family and friends', because Upcoming Movement will have failed in its attainment of 'skrilla', resulting in the members 'going away' – which in the context of this track means social death (prison) or actual death. In these ways, 'Time is up' can be interpreted as a post-political performance of marginalisation that uses diasporic symbolism to express complicity with precarity, individualism and middle-class consumer horizons.

Whereas 'Time is up' addresses the future, Upcoming Movement's second video, 'Hometown glory', explores the contingent ever-expanding and overinvested past (Scott 2013). 'Hometown glory' was uploaded to YouTube in January 2012, and by January 2014 it had 1,892 views. It makes use of a speeded-up version of Adele's 'Hometown glory' (2009). Fitting the title of the track, the colour imagery is of the local geography. It includes shots from a moving car, street scenes, housing, Canary Wharf, roadsigns and going to the shops. It shows three front men rapping to the camera in garages and alleyways (see figures 6.2–6.4). Again, the lyrics are 'politically conscious' but this time melancholic, reflecting the style of Devlin's first album, *Blood, Sweat and Beers* (2010).

'Hometown glory' also performs precarity through labour scenarios. The track reflects on the need to engage in informal street economies (selling weed), and the subsequent penalties of these economically necessary activities. These punishments are accepted and equated with the hard-and-fast rules of life: 'Life's a bitch. It fucks you if you're rude to it.' Upcoming Movement's subordinate position in the capitalist hierarchy is further conveyed through the video's location. Shot in covered garages, it uses the realism of the grime genre to communicate the

Figure 6.2 Still of Newham housing

Figure 6.3 Still of Upcoming Movement in underground garages

Figure 6.4 Still of road scene with Canary Wharf in the background

members' conformity to living distant from the mirages of Canary Wharf that provide backdrops for other shots.

In 'Hometown glory', individualisation appears as privatisation of personal failure. The figure of the crying mother is used to stress their inability to support the sacred and gendered centre of the family, and working-class society. The mother is pictured as a protector and nurturer of the young men who lies, that in the face of their marginalisation, 'everything is going to be all right'. In the lyrics, Upcoming Movement take responsibility for protecting and providing for the struggling matriarch: it's 'Hard when you see a mother cry/No money in her pocket and see her struggle by.' In so doing the members make themselves (as men), not the state, responsible for her predicament and turn to the informal economy of the streets to aid her, which they recognise will result in their criminalisation.

This privatisation of structural failure against a horizon of uncertainty leads to an overinvestment in melancholic pasts and in particular the working-class community that has been loved and lost (see Chapter 2). Their engagement with Adele's 'Hometown glory' is important here, because Adele's track is precisely about working-class images of London's past and the gritty beauty of something authentic lost to contemporary neoliberal society. Building on this imagery, the local area is physically commemorated by driving around the streets, and wearing a t-shirt adorned with a post-code monogram. These melancholic territories are directly related to a 'Great' Britain that underpins popular white nationalism's relation to melancholia in the local area (see Chapter 2). The UK is noted to be in decline: 'The government took the "Great" and put the "fake" into Britain.' Upcoming Movement relates this loss to the members' simultaneous desire to belong to, and alienation from, the nation. In particular this is noted by rejecting being killed in the employ of the British Armed Forces, 'Why fight for the country that don't want us?', and therefore simultaneously valorising a 'Great-er' Britain, as a territory that might have been worth being killed for. In this way, 'Hometown glory' conforms to marginalisation through a located and diasporic expression of precarity, individualism and consumerism framed by the loss of a racialised golden past.

Through these interpretations, we can understand how Kristen and Upcoming Movement perform and consent to their marginalisation in the context of outer East London. They demonstrate their constitution in, and of, the racialised and classed precarity, individualism, privatisation and consumerism that structure their marginalisation.

The performance of negative politics

While these performances were demonstrative of post-political neoliberal conformity, they also exhibited struggles against it. In this section, Kristen and Upcoming Movement's performances of negative politics are brought closer together to explore their protests against precarity, individualism and consumerism in the context of outer East London.

The section above detailed how Upcoming Movement's 'grind' might be understood as conformity to a life of low-paid and precarious labour. However, the grind was also a protest against the structural injustices that made this form of living necessary. When Upcoming Movement performed the lyrics 'But I'ma carry on grinding 'til my time is up' it reflected on practices conditioned by the members' marginalisation. In this way, at the same time as they accept precarity they also evaluate it. In this context, the grind also figures as a protest against its injustice and a questioning of its necessity. This position is further supported by the track's evaluation of the atomisation of social life, the tax system and the unjust wealth held by the few, which ends with the demand that the government acknowledges 'the life that we're living', the struggle they are going through, and associated with this the 'reason why crime is high'.

Glancing across British grime and hip hop it is easy to identify artists with similar politics. No Lay, Dizzee Rascal, Roots Manuva, Wiley, Skinnyman, Devlin, Braintax, Task Force, African Boy, Lady Chann, Lioness, Lowkey, Akala, Sway and Sowetto Kinsch all make use, in different ways, of angry social realist aesthetics to engage with the injustices of immigration, unemployment, border security, nationalism, anti-sociability, bankers' bonuses, patriarchy, misogyny, poverty, criminalisation, the penal state, surveillance and imperialism. To this extent, Upcoming Movement is referencing debates in British grime and hip hop genres. However, its discussion of 'the grind' and 'the life we are living' is more than the faithful citation of music that the members relate to. Rather, returning to Butler and Athanasiou's discussion of the performative in the political (Butler and Athanasiou 2013), it is the lexicon through which they perform their politics. The 'grind' and the 'life we are living' is the language through which they can make sense of their social context.

Similar dynamics are evident in Kristen's engagement with consumerism and individualism. In Kristen's story, consumer objects appear as verifications of individual spending power and as substitutes

for haptic care. These objects, which symbolise the absence of bourgeois status and love in Kristen's life, become sites of protest and are treated angrily: they are 'scuffed' in the adventure playground. In this way, Kristen, through wearing the tracksuits and internalising the alienation they symbolise, conforms to the neoliberal matrix, but at the same time they become part of the lexicon on which her struggle draws. By turning her anger on the tracksuit, she registers protest against what it stands in for; she registers protest against her marginalisation.

Robbing, rather than attacking me, is further symbolic of her struggle against a society based on consumption, at the same time as it represents a struggle to reclaim power over other individuals, and in particular over representatives of dominant white, middle-class and patriarchal norms. It is worth restating that I was positioned by many of the youth workers and young people as privileged. Being brought up in Hertfordshire, living in north London, speaking 'posh' and having a 'nice' bicycle were all references for this. These referents had such currency that one of the youth workers sustained the rumour that I was the *Secret Millionaire* – a popular TV programme at the time – and had come to save poor East London youth. In this sense, when Kristen acted out the robbery against me, she conformed to the abject script written for her – the script of the street robber – and the privileged script written for me. But the robber was also the language she uses to contest her abjection on those terms. The robber provided her anger with a character and narrative to protest against me (as the embodiment of privilege). That is to say, at the same time as she reinscribed it, she also contested her marginalisation from neoliberal society by mobilising symbols from that same lexicon.

'Time is up' and 'Hometown glory' registered protests against individualism and consumerism through their imagery and lyrics. With regard to the imagery, at the same time as the individualist and commercial horizons provided by Canary Wharf and the Millennium Dome locate Upcoming Movement's performances in an everyday built environment of marginalisation, and in a commodified hip hop tradition, they also provide symbolic means to protest against this landscape of limited opportunity. That is, they serve not only as negated horizons of aspiration but also as mirages against which Upcoming Movement registers its protests. This is evident in the way in which Upcoming Movement employs a series of counter times and spaces in tension with the dominant spatiotemporal registers imbricated into capitalist architecture. The darkness of night can be interpreted as an antidote to the grind of the neoliberal day (Sandhu 2007). The shots in garages appear as subterranean spaces of existence under the shadow of Canary Wharf.

The lyrics register explicit anti-individualist and anti-consumerist statements. Upcoming Movement rejects the 'evil brutality' of atomised life, and notes that 'money is the root of it'. Valuing money over sociability is rejected: 'Ever see ya guy turn snake [grass] for some skrilla [money]'. And this neoliberal (im)morality is equated to a form of spiritual and actual death: 'taken over my Satan' where your body is 'left on the pavement' (because you have been killed for your greed), your 'soul in the sky, shaking hands with the pagans [the moneyed heathens]'. This contrasts with the sacrificial versions of death that can be achieved through the sanctified and conformist life of 'grind'.

In this way, Upcoming Movement's and Kristen's performances struggle against the injustices of neoliberal precarity, individualism and consumerism but remain limited by its lexicons and by its horizons. They are demonstrative of a negative politics that knows what is wrong but struggles to find a language and horizon for what is right.

Radical possibilities of negative politics

To end this chapter, I want to suggest that we can move slightly further in this analysis and tentatively listen to the radical undercurrents of these negative politics. In so doing, this chapter does not suggest that politics in outer East London are defined by their radicalism, but remarks that alongside neoliberal intoxications and negative politics, alternative possibilities were tentatively audible. To clarify, the proceeding analyses' openness to the possibility, and even inevitability, of radical politics in social struggle is not equivalent to arguing that through these politics their marginalisation is 'magically recovered' (Clarke 1976).[6] Such an argument would not accurately account for the strictures of neoliberal marginalisation, and the prominence of negative struggles, outlined above. Rather, this chapter is arguing that in addition to marginalisation and struggle, other politics are audible, and that these merit sociological attention.

The persistence of alternative utopias was first evident in the acts of kindness and sociability that existed beneath neoliberal alienation. Kristen and Upcoming Movement's performances of negative politics could not be reduced to individualism or protest against it. For example, Kristen asking me to do up her hood was indicative of the human feeling, trust and receptivity that endured underneath the privatised self. Although her experiences of violent individualism led her to distrust people, in nearly letting me do her hood up she was open to an interaction based on reciprocity that preceded and momentarily trumped

the anti-sociability that she performed in her street robber. Similarly, Upcoming Movement's use of the pronoun 'I', or 'we' in 'the live we are living' did not only reference individual interests but was rooted in collectivism. It resonated with Jamaican Rastafarian 'I and I' and similar hip hop tropes (Woods 2007). Upcoming Movement's stories of hardship and struggle were therefore not only concerned with the members' own experiences. Rather, their personal stories worked as vehicles to communicate solidarities with their wider community and with artistic expressions that looked outwards from their moments of strife. In both cases, this did not mean that Kristen and Upcoming Movement overcame neoliberal marginalisation – certainly this was not the case – but they were also not fully determined by it. Given the depth and reach of neoliberal individualism, that kindness and solidarity persisted beneath its scripts is evidence of the perseverance of a form of radical politics in that location.

Upcoming Movement's participation in diasporic dialogue was not contained by consumerism and protest against it. It drew attention to the persistence in outer East London of diasporic dialogue as a feature of urban multiculture (see Chapter 4). Through its reuse of Adele's 'Hometown glory', the group registered pop-mimicry and anti-consumerist protest, as Adele's commercial output was copied and pirated. However, beyond this it joined in dialogue with other similar performances on YouTube (including prominent artists such as High Contrast) that also adopt Adele's track in creative ways. As such, the performance connected to a system of relationality and exchange that extended from the sound waves of the sound system, to the radio waves of the pirate stations and the digital coding of YouTube.

Further, the track's exploration of 'the lives we are living', and Kristen's street robber, presented alternative models for justice. The chapter has shown how Upcoming Movement's evaluations of the injustices of the system – that pits the marginalised against each other, values money over sociability, and criminalises people who are struggling to make ends meet – can be understood as a struggle. However, it is also a point of rupture. By engaging in the struggle it becomes possible to imagine a system in which the future is not criminalisation, and may be more accurately to propose a scenario in which the moral content of criminality is reversed. Kristen's performance of the street robber offers an example of this. Her struggle against marginalisation is also the point when an alternative model of justice is brought into being. In a system which is itself criminal, it offers informal earning as a model for justice and moral living – as a form of utopia.

Finally, these alternative politics corresponded to imaginaries that extended beyond these young people's marginalised neoliberal horizons. This is not to say that the performances' envisioning and engagement with other times and spaces is akin to former projections of emancipation, but it is to note that alternative utopias persisted alongside neoliberal marginalisation. This persistence was evident in the ways in which Upcoming Movement and Kristen performed imaginaries of living. With regard to Upcoming Movement, the covered garages and the sky provided spaces outside of the neoliberal matrix in which alternative ways of living could be imagined. Again, this imagery cited hip hop and grime aesthetics, but at the same time it provided evidence of the persistence of darkness and outer space as sites at which racial and classed exclusion, and the productive time of the capitalist day, could be transcended (Akomfrah 1996; Ellison 2001; Gilroy 2002 [1987], p. 284). As is the case with their prior manifestations, these locations, beneath the gaze of Canary Wharf, provided spaces for radical imagination.

Again, this is substantiated in Kristen's street robber. While the street robber signalled a retreat into the anonymous figure of neoliberal marginalisation (the hooded youth), and a symbolic struggle against bourgeois and haptic deficits, it was also a space in which a more radical escape from the struggles that she faced outside it was possible. In a joint interview with Kristen, her friend Marta told me that when she danced, she experienced 'a happy place, so all the anger goes away'. Consistent with the analysis above, 'happy' for Marta referenced the neoliberalisation of affect at the same time as it symbolised a profound rupture in, and imagination beyond, the strictures of the dominant matrix. In that moment of partial darkness before the street robber was visible, it is possible that Kristen, too, out of necessity, experienced a place that transcended or persisted below the strictures of the street robber.

Summary

Through the intertwining of three performances, this chapter has attempted to explore the negative politics of marginalised young people in outer East London. It has argued that while the negative politics of young people conformed to neoliberal marginalisation, they performed the same lexicon to struggle against it. These struggles that might otherwise appear to be neoliberal conformity are meaningful and merit attention in their own right. They are revealing of young people's agonist and rupturing relation within the neoliberal matrix. Beyond this,

the chapter has tentatively drawn attention to the persistence of radical political tropes. It has suggested that while alternative imaginaries have undoubtedly been transformed under neoliberalism, they have not necessarily ended. Alongside the conformity and the struggle, radical registers of relation, justice and imagination persisted.

This chapter has attempted to reopen a discussion of youth politics in outer East London. By exploring the negative politics of Kristen and Upcoming Movement it has sought to look beyond and below post-political pessimism, to understand what youth politics are in the neoliberal moment, where they conform, where they exceed, and what radical possibilities they might still sustain. As such, it has hoped to demonstrate that while scholarly work on the absenting of radical politics from young people's performances helps to identify the transformative effects of neoliberalism on youth politics in the context of urban multiculture, it fall shorts of providing a framework for what transformed contemporary politics might look like and entail.

The proceeding chapter develops the analysis of with futurity and utopia that have been begun over the last few pages. As Chapter 2 sought to understand how urban multiculture relates to pasts, Chapter 7 ends by evaluating how it is also conditioned by futures.

7
The Multicultural Future

'Cultural translators', business strategists, consumer psychologists, marketing experts, global multinationals and consultancies all try to unlock the impending desires of so-called Generation Y[1]– the cohort of children born between 1979 and 2000 (Hoffman 2007; Lancaster and Stillman 2010; Lazarevic and Petrovic-Lazarevic 2007; O'Neill 2009; Quinn 2005; Tapscott 2009; Yarrow and O'Donnell 2009). These educated, middle-class, wealthy young men and women are courted as the future pioneers, navigators and consumers of technological, individualised and globalised advances (Harris 2004, p. 15). On the constitutive outside are those who lack aspiration. These young people are classed and racialised in negative relation to dominant culture. They represent the uncertainties and dystopias of the world to come. Through these young people the negative implications of individualisation and globalisation – the breakdown of community and the increasing polarisation between the rich and the poor – are viewed (Harris 2004, pp. 4–5). These young people haunt adult society 'because [they] reference our need to be attentive to a future that others will inherit' (Giroux 1996, p. 10).

Given the centrality of children and young people in accounts of the future, the relative absence of ethnographic enquiry on the subject is surprising. While social scientists have been co-opted into numerous analyses of future 'risk' (Bessant et al. 2003; Cairns and Cairns 1994; Kronick 1997; Newburn et al. 1999; Richman and Fraser 2001), they have ignored at an everyday level how young people produce and experience their futures. Sociologists have produced work on 'youth transitions' – longitudinal analyses of family and labour in late modernity – but have largely left to one side young people's projection of their own horizons (Henderson 2007; Thomson 2009). Ethnographers have worked diligently on collective memory and history but have

ignored the importance of the to-come that is manifested in all everyday practices (Appadurai 2004, p. 60). This chapter is somewhat different. It invites an understanding of futurity through the performances and practices of young people.

As Chapter 2 looked to the past, this chapter turns to the future. It questions how the future appears to young people living in outer East London. Addressing shifts to neoliberalism, it explores the aspirational horizons projected by middle-class young people in outer East London, and how these were constitutive of the marginalised futures of young people in the same location. In this way, it investigates how aspirational futures depended on the racialised and classed foreclosure of other futures. However, it is also concerned with identifying forms of futurity that persisted beneath neoliberal conformity and dominance.

Addressing the absence of ethnographic studies of the future, this chapter draws on material from participant observation, video projects and interviews in which young people of different migratory trajectories, ethnicities and class backgrounds projected their personal and collective horizons. The chapter begins by addressing how some young people self-policed in accordance with a whitened and middle-class 'politics of aspiration', and how they consequently projected their lives through the education–professional–consumer trajectory. Focusing on a group of British-Albanian young women, it explores the navigation of this trajectory through the lens of British-Albanian womanhood. It explores their approach to education, occupation and consumption, and the built environment of new Stratford Town. Situating aspiration as a white middle-class discourse, open to British Albanian young women, it also uncovers the kinds of disidentifications these young women made – racialised, gendered and classed – in order to navigate their path. The second part of the chapter looks at the flipside of aspirational discourse addressing how white middle-class notions of aspiration are maintained through the foreclosure of other young people's futures. It explores how working-class and not-white-enough young people self-policed along the education–professional–consumer trajectory and how they practised their own forms of disidentification to explain their social position. The final part of the chapter explores the possibility of horizons that looks beyond this binary. Building on the discussion at the end of Chapter 6, it looks across different moments of the book to show how young people projected alternative futures. Through an exploration of urban heterogeneity, sociability, sharing and social justice it addresses alternative futures not captured in the neoliberal matrix.

The tools for this analysis are found in phenomenology, hermeneutics and cultural theory. In phenomenology and hermeneutics the concept of the 'horizon' refers to a vision that any young person has from a standpoint in their life. As Gadamer notes, 'The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point' (1989, p. 302). As young people move towards the horizon (towards their future), it expands in front of them so that it is never truly closed (Gadamer 1989, p. 304). As discussed in Chapter 2 with regard to memory, time is an individual and collective practice. Young people exist in the world with others and consequently their horizons are fused together (Gadamer 1989, p. 303; Ricœur 1984, p. 220). Through these interactions, individual and collective understandings of the future are qualified and transformed in unstable and creative ways (Alcoff 2006, p. 45; Gadamer 1989).

As with memory practices, the horizon is produced to make sense of the present. It is produced in what Ricœur calls a 'space of experience' (Ricœur 1984, p. 208)." In this space, the future, like the past, is experienced through the body and through the fabric of the physical world (Ricœur 1984, pp. 230–231; Merleau-Ponty 1989). However, in order to fully appreciate how futures are situated in 'great time' (Bakhtin 1986), they also need to be understood beyond the phenomenologist's subject-centred body. As numerous authors have commentated, vernacular sounds, dances and words – including those of the sound system and pirate radio – carry with them transcendental pasts and the futures (Du Bois 2007; Eshun 1998; 2003; Fanon 1991; Gilroy 2010; Moten 2003). These alternative futures are not conditioned by their conformity to, or exclusion from, neoliberal horizons. Rather, they are an undercurrent below the radar of dominant culture.[2]

In all these cases the many futures explored below cannot be separated from their many pasts. Consequently, this chapter cannot be read apart from Chapter 1, or those that have come in between. In hermeneutic terms, if the horizon stretches in front of you, when you turn around it also extends behind you.

Aspirational horizons

> Young people's aspirations matter too. The great failure is not the child who doesn't reach the stars, but the child who has no stars to reach for.
>
> (Gordon Brown 2007)

Chapter 3 has already explored how forms of decentralisation and third-sector entrepreneurship, characteristic of the roll-out of the

welfare state, affected the territorial governance of urban space. Post-2000, another defining feature of New Labour was a shift from welfarist models of state support to a politics of aspiration. The latter marked a transition from earlier post-war conceptualisations of the future, defined through a politics of expectation – that deprived populations would expect future state support in difficult times (Raco 2009, p. 437). Post-2000 the politics of expectation were replaced with the language of personal responsibility. Continuing earlier Conservative themes on the underclass – concerned with condemning deprived populations' wilful, state-dependent and feckless immorality (Murray 1990; 1994),[3] – New Labour argued that it was precisely the politics of future expectation that had generated ingrained modes of dependency (Archer and Francis 2007; Brown 2011; McDonald et al. 2011; Raco 2009; Sinclair et al. 2010). Young people were asked not to rely on the state and instead to take control of their own destinies. This was particularly evident in education, and latterly in third-sector provision, including youth services.

The 2005 white paper, 'Higher standards, better schools for all' (HM Government 2005a), was described as 'more than anything . . . a White Paper about aspiration' (Kelly 2005). So high aspiration as a cognitive state (Strand and Winston 2008, p. 3) – 'the goals they set for the future, their inspiration and their motivation to work towards these goals' (Social Exclusion Task Force 2008, p. 5) – became central to educational performance and future attainment. It was even posited as an innate moral good, present in any worthwhile citizen (Dale et al. 2002). As the former Secretary of State for Business, John Hutton, stated, 'aspiration and ambition are natural human emotions' (cited in Raco 2009, p. 439). From 2004 onwards, aspiration in education was pushed through the Aimhigher programme (HEFCE 2012). The perceived successes of this programme for delivering, envisioning and managing young people's futures led to its introduction, in 2007, to youth services through 'Aiming high for young people: A ten year strategy for positive activities' (HM Treasury and DCSF 2007). Through these initiatives, New Labour installed an ideal figure on young people's horizons. This was a white, middle-class, educated, individual consumer and citizen (Raco 2009, p. 439).

On the constitutive outside of this ideal figure was the young person with a 'poverty of aspiration' (Sinclair et al. 2010, p. 3).[4] As with aspiration's presence, its lack was positioned as a natural failure, and this natural failure provided New Labour with a catch-all explanation for any number of structural problems (Limmer 2008). However, discourses on the poverty of aspiration were not evenly applied. Those deemed to have a 'poverty of aspiration' were overwhelmingly working

class (Archer and Francis 2007, p. 118; Harris 2004, p. 25), and, following familiar post-war discourses, this category was subdivided into ethnic and pseudoethnic categories. Particular attention was paid to educationally 'failing' young black and Muslim men, and the 'underachieving' 'white working class' (Haylett 2001; Preston 2009; Reay et al. 2007; Sveinsson 2009). So while New Labour expanded middle-class consumerist and educational values to a wider (predominantly middle-class) market (Henderson 2007, p. 38), it did so in ways that represented a continuation of earlier forms of racialised and classed marginalisation (Reay 2009).

In Newham, these discourses were particularly pointed. High levels of deprivation and poverty, previously understood as structural, became equated with poverties of aspiration.

> In areas like Newham they always say the young people aren't going to achieve, they're not going to accede [attain] – the media and everyone else [say it and] quite often the parents. We're about creating high aspiration.
>
> (Newham service provider)

> In Newham there is a poverty of aspiration as to what [young people] want to succeed to. It's a mixture of real poverty where you are short of cash and access to opportunities. It can affect what they do with their social time, [their] education . . . So there is that side of poverty and there is also this poverty of aspiration.
>
> (Newham service provider)

Young people I worked with navigated and participated in these discourses. At school, in the youth club, at home and with each other, young people were confronted with the language of aspiration, and it became the script through which they performed their futurity.

Besa, Eva and Alma, all 13, were born and brought up in Newham. I worked with then at the Albanian Youth Group. Their families were not particularly wealthy. Their fathers worked in trades and their mothers worked in family roles, small businesses and as coordinators for the group. Through their involvement in the group, and under the influence of their parents, the young women had been brought up in an aspirational environment. The Albanian Youth Group, run by their mothers, embraced the aspirational third-sector agenda. It ran the Aiming high programme, and, through a range of youth and community activities, Besa, Eva and Alma took part, met with role models and were

encouraged to take up mentors. Their free time was filled with curricular and extracurricular activities. In all of these a positive approach to personal future success was impressed upon them, often defined against the localised risk of falling into crime, street life or underachievement.

The Albanian Youth Group the three young women belonged to largely comprised migrants from the north of Albania, who had moved to the south of the country to escape poverty, and then came to the UK via other European countries.[5] Their parents maintained traditional Albanian gender roles in London. The women, as the 'carriers' of culture and education (Phoenix and Woollett 1991; Yuval-Davis et al. 1989), ran the Albanian Youth Group (King et al. 2006, p. 419; Kostovicova and Prestreshi 2010), and their daughters learned these functions while also being prepared for a successful future in neoliberal Britain. Along these lines the young women were protected and policed in ways that the young men weren't (King et al. 2003, p. 58). Eva, for example, was picked up from school but also encouraged to attend the best school in the borough and to seek entrance to the country's best universities.

The young women navigated this intersection. They aspired to do well in education and to get well-paid jobs, and they spent considerable time talking about the kind of fashion objects they should consume to project this trajectory. They were proud to be at the borough's best schools, presented themselves as committed students and had their sights set on going to Oxford or Cambridge University, and on eventually becoming doctors. Of the three, Besa was less sure of her future in these specific terms, but nonetheless the three young women shared an aspirational horizon. While they might have been considered lower middle-class in social and economic terms, like other migrant groups before them (Connor et al. 2004; Dale et al. 2002; Drinkwater and Leslie 1998; Middleton et al. 2005; Modood 1997; Wakeling 2009), they had very middle-class aspirations, fomented in their families and in the Albanian Youth Group. They were versions of the 'can-do girl' (Harris 2004, pp. 16–25) – young women with independent futures who verified their citizenship and entitlement through education and wage-earning capacities (McRobbie 2009, p. 2).

The young women's version of aspiration was negotiated against their understanding of low aspiration. This distinction started to be revealed through their analyses of a photography project they had taken part in. The project, My View of London, had involved them travelling to Kensington and Stratford (West and East London, respectively) to photograph images of poverty and wealth. The director of the Albanian Youth Group (Eva's mother) explained how the project had impacted profoundly on the young women, forcing them to think about the

disparities between poverty and wealth in a global city. In a series of peer-to-peer photo elicitation interviews they analysed the photos they had taken; why they had taken them; how they felt about them; and, what they had learnt from the process (Figures 7.1 and 7.2).

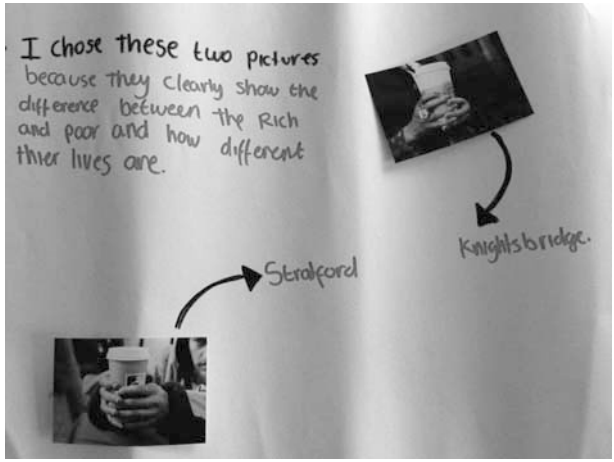

Figure 7.1 Photos analysed by Besa, Eva and Alma

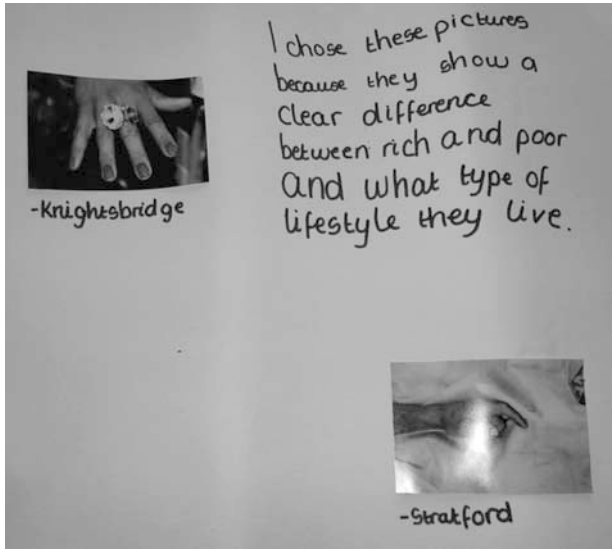

Figure 7.2 Photos analysed by Besa, Eva and Alma

The interview transcripts and photo boards demonstrated, as the director had suggested, how contrasts of poverty and wealth in Kensington and Stratford had impacted on them. However, in addition to demonstrating a concern for social inequality, the photos had invited a more personal analysis through which the young women projected their own utopias and dystopias. This is a transcript from one of the peer-to-peer interviews:

Alma: Describe each photo in as much detail as you can.
Eva: In the first picture we saw a woman who had brought coffee from a shop. She had really expensive rings on. She had got her nails done and her hands were really clean and smooth. In the second picture we saw a homeless person who had probably been given this cup by someone.
Alma: Why did you decide to take these photos?
Eva: I decided to take these photos because they clearly show the difference between rich and poor and how different they are in the same area.
Alma: How do you feel when you were taking the photos?
Eva: When we were taking the photos of the homeless person, we felt quite sad for him because we have got homes and we have never experienced what it felt like to be homeless. It felt a bit sad. When we took the one of the rich person I felt 'I want to be like that when I grow up'. I don't want to be homeless.
Alma: What did you learn from taking the pictures that you didn't know before?
Eva: I learn how different lives can be depending on the ways you choose it. If you carry on with your education you can be really rich and wealthy and have a good job in life but if you skip school and lessons you will end up homeless and you are going to be begging for your food.

In addition to addressing issues of social injustice, Eva read the images in relation to her own future and the risks she associated with low aspiration. She equated the beauty and material wealth of the 'rich' women with an ideal to-come and believed that attaining this was a matter of individual choice. The rich women's jewellery and skin were an image she desired. This was a version of femininity in which conformity to patriarchal codes of beauty was symbolic of success (McRobbie 2009, p. 5). While Eva, Besa and Alma did not have the money to dress as the 'rich' women did, their clothes were carefully chosen, discussed and

validated between them. They emulated, to the extent that it was financially possible, the image of upper middle-class chic. Scarves, jackets, hairstyles and leggings were all carefully coordinated.

The young women also projected their aspirations through parodies of Albanian-ness. These were forms of disidentification (Skeggs 1997) – ways in which the young women distanced themselves from lower-class and less-white social positions they were painfully close to. Locally, Albanians were stereotyped for being rough, criminal and living on crowded estates. Anti-Albanian racism functioned along these lines (King et al. 2003, p. 52). Aware of this, Besa, Eva and Alma sought to distance themselves from these positions. Besa's residence on one of Barking's 'Albanian estates' did not exclude her from this conversation. This negotiation of a whitened Albanian subjectivity allowed them to conform to the white ideal of aspiration discussed in the introduction to this chapter; it allowed them to imagine their entrance to the bastions of the white upper middle-class establishment – Oxford or Cambridge University – where 'ethnic hierarchies' have been consistently noted (Modood 2002, p. 202; see also Modood 1993; 1998). This was not a disavowal of being Albanian. They were involved in the Albanian Youth Group (with the working-class Albanians they disidentified themselves from),[6] they spoke Albanian together and participated in a range of Albanian folk activities – dances, plays and Kosovo Independence Day. Rather, it was a racialised and classed distinction they made between themselves as can-do girls and other, less white, less upwardly mobile Albanians.

These disidentifications were further highlighted by a day's videoing that we undertook in Redbridge. I had borrowed two camcorders, and as part of a film project we decided to spend a few hours practising our filming and acting. The title for the project was Where I Live, What I Want, and it was meant to critically document the sights, sounds and smells of the local area. Besian, an 18-year-old young man the young women had grown up with, also participated. Filling the slow streets of Redbridge with muggings, 'hood rats' and 'chavs' over an afternoon, the four of them acted out, and filmed, parodies of the multiethnic urban working-class, including Albanians.

Before going out onto the streets, Besian broke off a pre-film discussion to eat his BLT sandwich. Playing to the camera, Besian said: 'bacon, lettuce, tomato', imitating how their fathers or other less English (less white) Albanians might mispronounce the word 'bacon'. The three young women broke into hysterical laughter, recognising their fathers' accents, and then proceeded to say other words their fathers mispronounced. Joking about bad Albanian English, they affirmed

themselves as higher status in both class and cultural terms. From here the young people moved out onto the street and what follows is a transcript put together from the video footage they recorded.

The young people start walking down a quiet suburban road, lined with cars and small blocks of 1970s terraced housing.

'Move out the way you street rat,' Besa says to Alma as she tries to line up the first shot of Besian eating his BLT sandwich. 'People eating on the road like normal; throwing litter on the ground; very, very busy roads,' she continues. 'In Dagenham it's quite clean though. There's just a few exceptions, like the young people.'

'Chavs,' Besian corrects.

Alma carries on: 'This is the neighbourhood in Goodmayes. It's quite quiet. It's very clean. There's usually gangs around. They don't cause much trouble for the people living here though . . . as they said to us.' As she narrates this she turns to shoot the four of us walking towards the camera, insinuating that we are the gang. 'There's usually old couples around walking their dogs', she adds. Besian becomes an old person stooping forward, and Alma confuses him with a 'chav'. 'The hood rats', she says correcting herself. Besian puts his hood up and the girls laugh.

'Yeah, I'm a chav, I live in Goodmayes. There's an example of another chav.' Besian points at Alma. 'My yard bruv.' he says. Imitating what he thinks is chav talk, he points to the house over the road. 'Although I ain't got the keys. You get me?' He looks at the car next to us and the camera follows him. 'That's my ride there. Vauxhall KE . . . Kosovo Injection. Cut, cut, cut.'

I briefly take control of the camera with instructions from Alma. 'It's very safe to cross the road,' I say. On cue, Besian runs across the road after Alma with his hood up. He is playing the chav-mugger. He grabs Alma and drags her down the pathway beside a house.

Besa, standing behind me, shouts: 'Mug her, mug her!' and laughs. 'Sexual harassment!', briefly slipping out of the parody and acknowledging what the play is also making acceptable – bringing bodies into contact. Returning to the skit, she says: 'I'd love it if the police come. Oh my days!'

Continuing the shoot we move down into a quieter residential cul-de-sac of red brick, three-bedroom, semidetached houses. Besian

> takes control of the camera: 'Yeah Dagenham, chavs walking about, like these three.' Alma, Besa and Eva are further down the street. Alma runs across the road melodramatically screaming. He continues, 'Look at this one there. She's mad.'
>
> Putting on her version of a chav voice and demeanour, Alma starts shouting and waving her arms up and down: 'You got a problem?' she demands of Besa. 'Talk to me then, hey!' At this she runs at Besa and the two start play-fighting on the ground. 'I hate you!' Alma shouts.
>
> Besian continues, 'Yeah Dagenham,' before asking me to hold the camera. 'I'm going in,' he says, seeing an opportunity to interact with the girls. He helps Besa up off the floor and returning to his role of 'hood rat robber' demands: 'What you got for me?'
>
> Besa laughs and also taking on Besian's character, she mocks, 'You got p [money] for me blood? You got p for me blood?' Laughing, she explains 'That's what everyone says at school to me, "you got p for me blood?" '
>
> Alma echoes the word 'blood' and everyone laughs.

Alma, Besa, Eva and Besian used the parody of the working-class to define who they want to be vis-à-vis who they are not. The parody centred on the marauding presence of ill-mannered chavs and their father's inability to speak English as they did. Conglomerations of multiethnic working-class street culture ('chavs' and 'hood rats') and vernacular ('bruv' and 'blood') provided an allegory for their fathers' working-class status and Albanian-English accents. The forms of pollution, evident in littering and the hood rat's anthropomorphisation, played into the Kosovo injection car. The young people used exaggeration, vulgarity, immorality and debased humanity to vilify through humour (Irvine 1993; Leach 2000; Legman 1975; Neu 2007). In this way they disidentified themselves from racialised and working-class forms of identity they were uncomfortably close to.

The figures they created in this sketch had real-life corollaries. Jeton, a less regular participant at the Albanian Youth Group (who had also been involved in the project My View of London), was one such young person. Rather than photograph the rich and poor in Kensington and Stratford, he had decided to take photos of, among other things, what life was like in his corner of Newham. Jeton explained to me that his photo showed 'the conditions we're living in in Newham.' 'It's like a ghetto. It's corrupt [in] some places', he said (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 Photo analysed by Jeton

For Jeton, everyday life was about the 'struggle', but for the young women this kind of attitude was evidence of low aspiration. So too was Jeton's demeanour and dress. He acted tough and uninterested; he wore dark loose jeans, trainers, a dark jumper and a black Puffa body warmer, sometimes augmented by a grey beanie[7] (see chapters 3 and 4 for a more detailed discussion of masculine performance). Jeton's style was similar to that of many of the young people I worked with. However, it was quite distinct from that of the young women. They said he was 'chavy'. His dress, and his attitude to life, was symbolic of being in the wrong crowd; that he was a troublemaker rather than an achiever.

To maintain this distinction, and thereby maintain their own future trajectories, the young women manœuvred their bodies to keep Jeton outside their social circle. They were reluctant to sit next to him, or work with him on projects. In addition, when he attempted to interact, through flirting, trying to make them laugh or initiating conversation, they showed no interest. While they were not rude, Jeton certainly knew his advances were not reciprocated. He was thereby put in the position of being older, feeling he should be looked up to, and be sexually attractive – positions that reflected dominant forms of heteronormative masculinity. However, at the same time he remained on the outside of the younger women's circle – a circle that sought to maintain their horizons. For the young women, Jeton was the wrong kind of Albanian. His perceived class location and his being not-white-enough was how they made their own middle-class and white aspirations a reality.

These forms of racialised and class distinction, and their relation to aspirational futures, were not only understood through Jeton but also

through their association with the built environment and with the recent, and at the time ongoing, development of Stratford Town. The forms of aspiration that were evident in education, youth service provision and the young women's self-policing were also evident in the redevelopment of Stratford's industrial heritage.

At the time the research was conducted, the Olympic Park was under construction and cranes were dropping the final pieces of the Westfield Shopping Centre into place. As Miles has noted, 'the city of consumption is an aspirational city' (Miles 2010, p. 5), and Westfield (one of Europe's largest shopping centres) and the Olympic Development (2012's global consumption epicentre) optimised this discourse. These highly securitised developments had been designed as inward-looking temples for consumerism. Bringing chemical highs to post-industrial deprivation, they were built for the aspirational classes bussed in from out of town. At Westfield Shopping Centre this was verified by the prices of the items on sale and the overzealous security guards turning away local sports-clothed teens at the door (see chapters 3 and 4 for a more detailed discussion of exclusion). However, for the young women, these aspirational structures and ideals of public life were part of the whitened post-feminist future that structured their horizons. These spaces of consumption had in some senses been built for them.

We visited Stratford just before Christmas 2009 as part of the project Where I Live, What I Want. It was the last stop for the day's filming. Having previously conducted some interviews at Queen Street Market, Newham, we decided to wrap up with a few concluding remarks outside the train station's recently remodelled entrance. I suggested that Eva, Besa and Alma shoot some footage of the skyline and make some final comments. They agreed. Having filmed the cranes, the artist's image of the completed Westfield Shopping Centre, and the new train station entrance, their conclusion was that the development of Stratford was a good thing and that the area was changing for the better. In their minds, not much else needed to be done. This sentiment was echoed when Besian cut the film together for a final edit. In between shots of the skyline he added a caption that read: 'Now here is a governmental plan of the future in progress', 'Our area is already improving' (Figure 7.4).

Confirmation of their relation to the aspirational city was again provided by a counterpoint – a figure of low aspiration encountered outside the old Stratford Shopping Centre. With Christmas approaching, a man wearing a Santa costume was collecting money at the door for charity. The young women decided to interview him. Initiating the interview, Eva asked what he liked about the area. He was drunk and said that he

Figure 7.4 Artist's image of the completed Olympic development, with Stratford visible in the top left of the picture (Constructing Excellence 2010)

used to like the area but he didn't anymore, not since his friend died. For me, his story resonated with the memories of loss explored in Chapter 2, but the young women didn't reference this and pressed on, asking what he *didn't* like about the area. He got the question the wrong way round and said the new shops were good, he supposed. He didn't really seem to believe it. Maybe he was saying what he thought they wanted to hear. Eva reciprocated by indicating that she *did* think the development of the area was a positive thing. As we walked away from Santa, Eva and her friends, embarrassed, laughed. He was drunk, they were confused, but more than that the dissonance between them reflected the different times in which they were living. He embodied the post-industrial pain forgotten in the soaring architecture of the new Stratford Town, they the aspirations of upwardly mobile young women.

Marginalised futures and poverties of aspiration

On the constitutive outside of 'aspiration' were 'poverties of aspiration'. 'Poverty of aspiration' was a well-used phrase at Leyham Youth Club. And while it had evidently been imported from New Labour mantra, it was not contained by it. At the club, 'poverty of aspiration' was used to address the individual shortcomings of young people and families seemingly unable or unwilling to project an aspirational future. The chair of the organisation that managed Leyham Youth Club introduced the term

to me in 2008. Subsequently, while working there, I heard the phrase, or variations of it, on numerous occasions and often when youth workers were trying to work out why young people acted with apparent disregard for a successful future. Why don't they go to school? Why don't they aspire to jobs outside the local area? Why do they remain unemployed or only work for low pay? Youth workers explained how they had made efforts to train young people in youth work, or had helped them apply for jobs, only to watch them drop out or not turn up.

While phrases such as 'poverty of aspiration' suggested adherence to dominant neoliberal narratives, youth workers provided complementary analyses of young people's futures through other phrases, such as 'cannon fodder' and 'they don't see no future'.

The term 'cannon fodder' was originally coined to describe the expendability of working-class life in the First World War. In contemporary Newham it was applied to address its disposability under neoliberal capitalism. Speaking as a working-class mother with three grown children, Tessa, one of the youth workers, employed the term to explain how working-class young people were failed at school, and then pushed into anti-social behaviour or poverty through the pressures of middle-class consumption. In terms of education, she related the story of her own son who had been stigmatised. He was intelligent, she said, but ended up conforming to the stereotypes the teachers had of him. When he was wrongly accused of hitting a boy and suspended, his retaliation was to find the boy and fulfil the accusation in front of the staff. He was expelled, ended up in jail and now worked as a bouncer. Working with his fists was the only thing he had ever been really good at, Tessa said. Excluded from middle-class horizons, Tessa was suggesting that in the end working-class young men were destined to use their fists to compete in a middle-class society (Reay 2009, p. 27).

This analysis of 'cannon fodder' extended to her analysis of consumerism. She explained how working-class children were left alone at home while parents worked double shifts to afford the latest mobile phones and tracksuits. She talked about the spiralling debts of families striving to pay for fashionable package holidays. Her conclusion was that a society structured through middle-class consumption was foreclosing working-class horizons. For Tessa, aspiration and consumerism were discourses of success open to those with money and social capital and predicated on the suffering of the working classes.

This related to the analysis provided by youth workers under the rubric 'they don't see no future'. Like 'cannon fodder', 'they don't see no future' drew attention to the foreclosure of young people's horizons.

It focused on how poor education, a lack of jobs and post-industrial decline curtailed potential. Lynn, one of the youth workers at Leyham, explained:

> They've got to have some sort of future and at the moment they don't see no future. What would you see? You wouldn't see nothing would you? Where am I going to live? Where am I going to work?

In terms of employment, youth workers recognised there was good reason for young people to be pessimistic. The local job market had never really recovered from deindustrialisation. Small businesses were still closing down, and big employers such as supermarkets were dubious about employing local young people. The Olympic 2012 site and Westfield Shopping Centre were under construction but, despite promises, apprenticeships had not been forthcoming. This fed into a history of lost opportunities. For three generations the futures of young people had been taken away and nothing had replaced them. 'There was a trade mentality in this area,' Neil told me. 'It's a working-class area with the docks and things like that. So there would be trade aspiration [here],' he continued. 'You won't find many people going to university. You know, not out of our little crew.'

Young people did not discuss their future in terms of 'aspiration' and 'poverty of aspiration', but this did not mean that they didn't self-police through these discourses. Indeed, they were often required to account for themselves in this way and occasionally it was my middle-class presence that made this necessary. One evening, Josie and I were chatting in the back room and I used the word 'diss'. I was trying to explain the content of the YouTube posting by Bashy called 'Fuck Wiley' in which Bashy 'disses' Wiley. Josie laughed. 'You're so funny, Malcolm,' she said. My language was apparently archaic. She told me she hadn't heard the word 'diss' for a long time. I asked what it should be, and she said 'cussed', 'hotted' or 'murked'.

Later that evening we continued chatting. It was a rambling conversation in the back room. As stories played out, young people and staff made jokes and wound each other up. Feeling part of the moment, I chipped in. My wind-up was aimed at Josie and continued our earlier banter. The conversation had moved on to talk of getting a job. When she said there weren't many opportunities in the local area, I said that she was stating the obvious. I said it sarcastically. Although it doesn't sound funny now, I expected her to laugh, retort and continue the game. But it fell flat and she responded seriously by telling me I was 'thick'.

Not wanting to give up, and failing to recognise what I had just done, I retorted that being thick was what they taught you at university. She didn't find that funny either.

She didn't find it funny because I had asserted my class privilege. I had mocked her unwillingness to look for a job outside the area. And in this way I had flexed my labour market mobility, not to mention my age privilege, onto what she was finding a very limited horizon of opportunity. My second joke about 'university making you more stupid' was intended as a wry observation on 'the more you learn the less you know'. However, she took it as sarcasm and thought I was asserting my educational superiority over her, which was also a statement of her failure. Of course, the joke was highly elitist. It was predicated on having access, or being able to project access, to the higher education experience. She, and the vast majority of her friends, were not considering A-levels let alone higher education. She was all too familiar with the box I was unintentionally putting her in. She often told me she was thick, not because she was but because her contact with the education system had led her to believe it. Along with her friends who were similarly positioned, she narrated herself as the young person in the corridor when she should have been in class, not only as an act of resistance but also as an acceptance of abjection. All in all, this confused exchange demonstrated how I inescapably existed as a middle-class and aspirational figure in the youth club. It also showed how this coincided with Josie's policing of her own horizon.

Young men and women also came to understand themselves as existing on the constitutive outside of dominant versions of success through specific practices and experiences. Mickey, a young woman aged 14, had been expelled for alleged ABH (actual bodily harm) against a girl two years older than her. She was readmitted six months later. In the intervening period she told me with an uncertain pride (not sure how I would respond) how she had spent her free time drinking, sleeping and smoking. Another young woman had been excluded for assaulting her teacher. These young women had difficult family lives and violent homes, and they lived in poverty. Both had learning difficulties that were not being adequately addressed. Other young people left school early because they needed to support their families financially by starting to work, instead of going to university. Others couldn't contemplate getting into the kinds of debt that an undergraduate degree entails. These factors led to 'challenging behaviours' (forms of resistance and performances of abjection) that did not fit with the educational ethos. As explained to me by Ryan, one of the youth workers, 'the teachers

are only interested in those who want to learn. Those who don't are left to it.'

Of those young people who were post-16, only Samantha was thinking about university. As supported by other research on young people not in full-time or part-time education (Middleton et al. 2005, p. 23), most wanted paid employment but only a minority had obtained it. One young man worked in a supermarket, and one was training to be a fireman. Without GCSEs, Kylie had failed to get a job in McDonald's and after three years of unemployment had finally got work with the local council in recycling. Dave, who made use of family networks to find work as a builder's labourer, said that he would really like to do something in sport, such as coaching or physiotherapy. He said that he had started a course but it paid just £20 a week. He could get £100 a week for labouring. Over a few months the novelty wore off and he reminisced with his friends about the fun they had had at school getting into trouble in the design technology class. I asked whether he might like to go back to sports science. He said he doubted it: he hated sitting in a classroom. 'I get agitated,' he said. The remainder of the young people bounced between unemployment and various, often unrelated, college courses.[8] In between they hung out at home, waiting to meet up with their friends in the evening. They did the courses because there were no jobs.

That is to say, through multiple forms of structural disadvantage that related to familial, mental health, educational, economic and social factors, young people around Leyham Youth Club were positioned, and positioned themselves, in negative relation to the dominant versions of success.

None of this was to say the young people did not have future plans. Indeed, in the neoliberal context being addressed, they were encouraged to think about their future in terms of nice houses, cars, good and well paid jobs, and moving to more aspirational areas. Kylie wanted to move to Harlow 'where there are green fields,' she said. She wanted to retake her GCSEs and become a social worker, but at the same time she recognised the deck had been stacked against her. Some had consumerist ambitions. Dave said he wanted to get some money together from his labouring and buy car. Some wanted to move 'up town' and be closer to the nightlife they enjoyed. However, although to some extent they shared these horizons and consumption habits with the upwardly mobile young women, they also had a very different relation to them. The aspirational young women understood their futures through the ability to achieve these things. Many of the young people around

Leyham Youth Club understood their future through their inability to achieve more modest goals.

Just as the aspirational Albanian young women set up classed and racialised foils to provide themselves with mobility, the working-class young people in Leyham also explained their experiences of labour market marginality through racialised and classed distinctions that gave them a way of rationalising their social positions based on the scripts available to them. Autochthony (explored in Chapter 2) became a means of explaining how they were disenfranchised. While a class analysis might have provided an insight into their educational and economic disenfranchisement, similar to the experience of many recent migrants to the area, they instead equated their precariousness with immigration and the illegitimate gains of newcomers. Dave, a few months into his labouring job, was now acquainted with the tiring, physical reality of building work. He explained:

Me: What jobs did your grandparents do? Do you remember?
Dave: My dad's dad did what my dad does, did do before he had his accident – building and that, any job, labouring and that. I think my other granddad was in the army and my nan used to do cleaning and that.
Me: Do you think there is a lot of migration around here, a lot of migration in the area?
Dave: Yeah
Me: Is that more or less since you were little? Or the same?
Dave: It's got worse. People from different countries and that.
Me: Yeah?
Dave: It's got worse.
Me: In what way?
Dave: A lot of the Polish and Lithuanians have come over and like own most of the shops on the Barking Road now and there is always trouble. They always come out fighting. A man come out of the pub, didn't do no wrong and they beat him and they broke his legs and jaw and put him in a bad way. It's all different people in their different groups and people see them as threats really.
Me: So what are the new main groups? You said Lithuanians, Poles. Are they the main ones?
Dave: You get Somalians, you get some Chinese ones. You get all different. The more I think the Russian, Polish . . . They come over.
Me: Do you think it's good, it's bad, or you don't care?

Dave: I don't think it's really good that they come over and they get everything given to them and people here are struggling and that, and they can't get fuck all off anyone. And they come over and get everything. Down that road there's Ukrainians who's lived here for six years now. They own shops, big X5 Jeeps and I think it's all given to them really. Some do work hard for their money but some, they are into dirty business.
Me: And if they work hard for the money that's good?
Dave: If they are working hard for the money [that's fair enough].
Me: Is it that a lot of people have a hard life around here so when they see people driving these big Jeeps …
Dave: Not so much. People are not struggling like. They have to work hard for their money, every day working hard, to earn the money. They [immigrants] come over here, get everything paid for and that. It annoys people and winds them up.

In this way, he understood his marginalisation from neoliberal futurity through the same discourses through which the upwardly mobile women understood their success. In the scenario where success was coded as being white and middle-class he explained the lack of possibilities open to him not in terms of his positioning in an unjust social structure but in terms of the wrongs done by those who had lesser claims to the earth than him.

Alternative futures

Having explored the aspirational and marginalised future of young people in Newham, this final section addresses alternative horizons to those mapped out by Westfield Shopping Centre and its shadow. Building on discussions in Chapter 2, it addresses how Newham's alternative futures traced over those that had come before. Returning to chapters 3 and 4, it explores the implications of urban creativity, heterogeneity and sociability for alternative utopias. Reneging with Chapter 5, it considers the relationship of these to digital cultural technologies, and returning to Chapter 6 it assesses how performances through these technologies might correspond to different futural imaginaries.

This analysis returns to the dialogic model of time outlined in Chapter 2. There it was noted that a phenomenological understanding of time – that time is projected from the standpoint of the liberal individual – is compromised and inadequate for understanding how time is layered, traced and reflexive, and indeed how it exists below the liberal

framework of domination/abjection. To make this argument, Chapter 2 drew on the metaphor of Benjamin's fan of history (how time is laid down in folds) and on Bakhtin's methodology of 'great time' (the idea that past meaning never dies and can always be renewed in contemporary context). Correspondingly, as memories in outer East London were traced from the fan of history, so too were futures. Alternative futures – those projected by Kamal Chunchie, the Coloured Man's Institute and Newham Monitoring Project, the inevitable convivialities of Draftboard Alley, the sound system and pirate radio – have always existed beneath the radar of white capitalist nationalism.

Chapter 3 told the story of Abs. It highlighted how a young man's existence between racial and territorial categories for social order necessitated the presence of police cars, vans and a helicopter. This story showed how the fact of ethnic diversity, population movements and the complexity of social relationships – that is to say, social heterogeneity – was made intelligible to the racial, gendered and classed systems used by the police to manage it. Similarly, Tessa and Lynn's efforts to order Leyham Youth Club through national symbolism and respect for the St George Cross were radically undermined by the alternative futurities generated by the table of multiethnic young people engaged in the gluing-together of red and white flowers. The heterogeneity of the table, the plurality of pasts and multiplicity of futures, could not be contained in a practice designed to inscribe a national future conditioned by past racial loss. The 'fact of hybridity' (Back 2002, p. 450) continued to provide spaces for alternative horizons not conditioned by national and racial categories.

Radical futurities were also found in the practices of sociability. As discussed in Chapter 6, sociability persisted beneath the dominant social logic of social categorisation, privatisation and commoditisation. This chapter has noted how neoliberal capitalist futurity was oriented through social categories of individual-consumer success and how marginalised young people's to-comes were conditioned in negative relation to this. In contrast with these positions, the simple persistence of sociability offered versions of self and collective that was not contained by race or capitalist individualism. To support these arguments, we can return to the analysis of the video 'Kill all a dem' in Chapter 4. Here it is possible to see how the sociability and sharing inherent in the performance were at odds with the dominant narratives of racial order, privatisation and commoditisation that the lyrics and imagery communicated. The multiethnic collective of young people,

their collaborations, the practices of sharing of material through instrumentals, lyrics and visuals demonstrated how sociability persisted below the gaze of a post-colonial capitalist society. In Chapter 6, Kristen asking me to do up her hood was equally indicative of the human feeling that endured underneath the privatised, marginalised and commoditised figure of the neoliberal street robber. Through the simple act of asking me to do up her zip, she radically undermined the robber's scripting, providing space for alternative to-comes.

These undercurrents related to demands for different forms of economy, justice and social relations. Chapter 6 noted how the struggles of marginalised young people communicated through YouTube bore traces of the politics of the sound system and the ruptures it created in dominant order. Engaging with the work of Upcoming Movement, it addressed how economies of sharing were promoted through the group's artistic practices and through its analysis and rejection of capitalism. In tandem with Kristen's street robber, the work forwarded forms of social struggle – robbing and selling weed – as forms of redistribution that radically challenged the ways in which these practices were made necessary and then criminalised. It further noted how these demands were made alongside imaginaries of transcendence from oppression. The sky, the underground and the darkness continued to provide space for horizons outside neoliberal space-time.

Finally, the book has sought to address how these alternative futurities might relate to digital technology. It has looked to balance out some of the more pessimistic arguments about the decline of radical utopias. While noting the undeniable fragmentation of human and social relations through digital reproduction, it has also drawn attention to the persistence and transformation of intimacies. The intimacies of YouTube while distinct from the bodily in-timeness of the dancehall or the fervour of the pirate radio were nonetheless related to them. The real-time immediacy, uncertainty, deferral, multiplication, repetition and mobility of digital media implied the fracturing of the dancehall in-time, bodily relations, and the exacerbation of pirate radio fragmentation. But these same conditions created the context for potentially powerful diasporic demands beyond the scope of the bass bin. They gave rise to the possibility of assemblages of utopian imaginary, connected through shared experiences of struggle, sociability and creativity. The dialogues sustained through digital media were evidence of these linkages across different fringes. The book has further noted that these digital futures were not separate from embodied, physical and analogue horizons.

Summary

This chapter has explored how young people negotiated and self-policed their horizons through dominant discourses of 'aspiration' and 'poverty of aspiration', and how they produced alternative futures beyond this binary. It has argued that New Labour's politics of aspiration created a system in which young people were made personally responsible for their own successes and failures. Aspiration was deemed a natural emotion, and therefore people determined to have low aspirations were deemed unnatural. These ascriptions were racialised and classed. They were developed through a eurocentric history of progress – as white and middle-class futurity. This was simultaneously constituted through defining futureless futures. At the level of the everyday, young people, marginalised from aspirational futures, self-policed through dominant discourses of their own failure. These forms of self-policing related to their experience of marginalisation from the white middle-class educational–professional–consumer trajectory, but also to a history of loss in the local area. Running through these marginalised and aspirational futures were specific negotiations of race and gender. The aspirational young women worked out a version of post-feminine femininity at the same time as they negotiated Albanian gender roles. Through this process they forged a whitened middle-class version of femininity by disidentifying themselves from working-class British and Albanian positionalities. The context for this was securing access to education and future consumption. The young men and women marginalised from these discourses also asserted their whiteness to rationalise their own precarious futures but did so by disidentifying themselves from immigrants. However, at the same time as young people negotiated aspirational and foreclosed horizons, they also performed alternative futures. The persistence of heterogeneity, sharing and sociability in urban multiculture provided the basis for utopias that persisted beneath the horizons mapped out by dominant order. These established the grounding for alternative imaginaries of social relations, economy and justice that were post-racial and post-capitalist in potential. Fragmented through digital technology, the in-time demands of the past were fractured and privatised, but at the same time through these cultural technologies, radical versions of social and economic life were sustained while remaining connected to the physical and embodied realities of the street.

In the concluding chapter, I bring together the themes of multiculture, marginalisation and politics addressed in this book. Following a summary of the main arguments, the conclusion identifies the political imperative of continuing to engage with the themes, and restates its commitment to ethnography as a method that can identify and address social injustices.

8
Conclusions and Political Endnotes

For a time after I left the youth clubs, it was difficult see beyond the emotions of the final days. My understanding of social life in outer East London was temporarily coloured by the difficulties of doing youth work in 'the cuts', and all that that entailed. It was only after going back over three years' ethnographic material – field notes, interviews and videos – and thinking more broadly about Leyham and the other youth clubs that so many more voices re-emerged. It was here, by allowing the ethnography to speak, that my immediate emotions were contextualised and the many other positionalities that comprised the ethnography resurfaced. These slowly emerging positions were grouped into the chapters of this book.

This chapter summarises the other chapters and brings together key debates. It ends by making some wider political points regarding the importance of ethnographic work to challenge marginalisation and racism.

Following the introduction, Chapter 2 about whiteness, loss and diaspora mnemonics explored how young people and youth workers practised the past. It discussed how these practices traced over other pasts, and outlined what was at stake in the 'great time' of memory practice. Engaging with a theoretical framing that brought together collective, diasporic and dialogic approaches to memory, it showed how memory practices in contemporary Newham, far from permanent or only based on a projection of the present, were part of a long history of tracing, renewing and silencing. Through a discussion of the migratory and cultural history of Newham, it explored how the memory practices of the area can be based on the myths of a white homeland and on wider diasporic and nostalgic formations. It addressed how

scholarship and popular culture fed into local memories of whiteness and racialised loss.

Engaging with 'autochthony' – the concept of belonging to the earth – as a more malleable framing for practices of permanence in outer East London, it turned to the memory practices of youth workers and young people to address how nostalgias made sense of loss, uncertainty and marginalisation. It discussed how through these memory practices immigrants were blamed for decline. Moving deeper into these myths, it explored how these discourses of white autochthonous belonging were not attached to white bodies but were accessed through processes of 'becoming white'. It noted how whiteness was accessed by black, Asian, Irish, Romany and Canadian people I worked with. This did not imply that the memory practices of black and Asian youth workers were the same as those of their white counterparts, but it did show that while contemporary racism still ensured differentiation on the basis of skin colour, belonging and xenophobia were also open to appropriation and reuse across supposed racial boundaries.

The chapter ended with a discussion of how memories of phantom white homes silenced or forgot diasporic pasts. In keeping with the conceptualisation of diaspora used throughout the book, diaspora mnemonics were explored in terms of human and cultural circulation. The chapter demonstrated how diaspora mnemonics was a constituent feature of the borough. Other national nostalgias existed alongside those associated with white British pasts. Moving beyond nation and ethnic framings for memory, the chapter further explored how young people lived and shared other people's memories in ways that confused national hierarchies. Through solidarities with refugees and migrants to everyday dislocations, national hierarchies were disinvested at the same time as they were recreated. In this way, memory practices could be shared, playful and open, just as they could be categorical and hierarchical.

Chapter 3 developed the discussion of loss and whiteness through an analysis of territoriality in and around Leyham Youth Club. Addressing marginalised young people's exclusion from urban space, it drew attention to the ways in which racial, classed and gendered exclusions operated across different spatial scales. It demonstrated how policing, youth club and young people's territorial practices were intertwined. Through these means the chapter argued that despite assertions that young people's identification with territory is on the wane, territory remained an important framing for everyday life, providing insight into the racial, classed and gendered recomposition of urban space.

Developing work on the relation between territory, race, class and gender, the chapter showed how exclusions and inclusions along these axes were played out in a neoliberal context.

Chapter 3 continued to explore how policing practices maintained white public masculinity through the exclusion of black, brown, not-white-enough and working-class bodies. It addressed how these racial, gendered and classed exclusions corresponded with youth club practices and with those of young people establishing defensive post-code territories. Locating these practices in a neoliberal context, it showed how youth work and policing had become intimately intertwined through New Labour's partnership working and community policing models, and how through 'the cuts', policing rationales for spatial order became dominant.

Building on the discussion of New Labour's roll-out of the welfare state, the chapter explored how the youth club came to define itself in neocommunitarian terms. It addressed how this was informed by racialised, gendered and classed ideas of threat pieced together from fragments of the past and future, and how these discursive formations of order and disorder were engrained through specific security and surveillance practices. Narrated in terms of neoliberal entrepreneurship, as the real and metaphorical fences went up, Leyham adopted the mentality of a fenced community constructing itself through its fears. These exclusionary practices were noted not to end at the fence but to extend into the territorial practices of the youth club. Opening up the micro as a scale of analysis revealed how the defining and remaking of friendship groups, abject bodies and racialised inclusions and exclusion corresponded to local and national sociospatial orders.

The chapter also focused on how young people resisted these practices. It discussed how young people confronted the police, confused social and territorial order, and showed solidarity against systems of criminalisation. While some of these forms of resistance merely confirmed the power of the police, others confused the biopolitics and territorial order the police utilised to manage the local terrain. The story of Abs was demonstrative of the radical challenge presented by everyday heterogeneity to racialised and classed systems of territorial management.

Finally, Chapter 3 addressed how young people's post-code practices should not be detached from the social context and history to which they pertain. The racialised exclusion, belonging and public masculinity practised by young people through the post-code corresponded to the practices of policing and youth work. In addition, their narratives

of belonging and agency were reflected in the neocommunitarian discourses of the youth club. What made them different was their exclusion from dominant white, bourgeoisie and masculine practices of policing and youth work. Formed in negative relation to these practices, they resisted them by establishing belonging in the face of exclusion. At the same time, by conforming to racialised, patriarchal and classed scripts, they nonetheless reinscribed their oppression.

Building on this analysis, Chapter 4 explored dance and music performances to address the transformation of urban multiculture in outer East London. Developing scholarly work in this area, it asked how these performances drew attention to shifting formations of race, class and gender, to changes in global cultural flows, and to the effects of neoliberalism in outer East London. With regard to global and diasporic cultural flows, it showed how US hip hop and British versions of grime had overlaid earlier Jamaican influences. Similarly it noted how the post-code discussed in Chapter 3, was performed by overlaying a local history of neighbourhood rivalries with the racialised, patriarchal and classed language of the hip hop 'hood. Through theses process, substantial cultural revisions took place. The scripts of anti-capitalist, anti-racist and anti-patriarchal emancipation contained in some moments of black diasporic culture were performed in the service of dominant capitalist, racist and patriarchal orders, just as the dominant capitalist, racist and patriarchal orders of US culture were translated to make sense of those same axes of power in the UK. These citations signalled the subordination of radical struggle to capitalist society. However, the chapter also explored how these same scripts were used to narrate and make sense of ongoing struggles young people were engaged in.

The chapter further addressed how older borders of authenticity were broken at the same time as new ones were established. It showed how former assessments of authenticity and faking it were confounded by Newham's social dynamics. Based on the continual migration of people and culture to and from Newham, the persistence of heterogeneity in urban space, on the practices of sociability across the supposed boundaries of race and nation, and through the process of citation of racial, gendered and classed signifiers from other national scripts, borders and belonging had shifted. While these performances rendered older notions of authenticity obsolete, they established new versions of sanctity and profanity. These discourses were specific to particular locations. Around Leyham Youth Club, the transformation of urban multiculture permitted whiteness to be performed from black diasporic scripts without the accusation of 'faking it', and for white territoriality to

be performed by black and Asian young people. Nonetheless, the social prohibition of black feminine sexuality corresponded to the acceptance of commercialised black diasporic culture and the simultaneous rejections of less popular, more dangerous, forms in that location.

Exploring the ways in which these dance and music performances were mediated, Chapter 5 addressed the rapid increase in YouTube use by young people in outer East London. In this way it explored the changing relationship between cultural technology and urban multiculture. Discussing the different (and interrelated) social and cultural moments associated with sound systems, pirate radio and YouTube music videos, the chapter sought to evaluate shifting relationships between culture and technology in outer East London. Addressing the sound system, pirate radio and YouTube music videos in turn, the chapter described the media ecologies of each cultural technology, how they were constituted in social relations and how they were constitutive of social relations. In each case it addressed how the cultural technologies were performed, and what these performances revealed about the particular politics, intimacies and utopias associated with their moments.

The chapter showed how the sound system, pirate radio and grime YouTube music videos were socially connected. It noted how the fragmentation of social relations through social media – from the in-time and embodied intimacies of the dancefloor, to the discordancy of pirate radio and the fragmentation of YouTube music videos – corresponded to increasing mobilities and privatisation of late modern living. At the same time it noted how cultural technologies continued to be used by young people in ways that did not fully conform to the logics of digital reproduction. While the intimacies of dialogues had shifted, intimacies still remained. Just as the in-time relationalities of the dancehall had shifted to the fervour of the pirate radio, the YouTube music video contained its own intimacies that corresponded to the real-time networked immediacy of digital communication. Again, in critical dialogue with those scholarly works that overdetermine the ideologies of digital reproduction, it noted that these intimacies continued to be connected to physical and analogue relations though their wider media ecologies.

Building on the engagements with struggle and marginalisation voiced in previous chapters, Chapter 6 provided an in-depth analysis of the politics of young people in outer East London. Through an exploration of online music videos and one girl's story, it engaged with, and questioned, prevailing academic discourses on the decline of youth politics under neoliberalism. Acknowledging the contributions

that black studies and Marxian scholarship have made to understanding the diminution of radical politics in late modern capitalism, the chapter contended that young people's everyday performances also drew attention to meaningful ongoing struggles, and in some cases to radical alternatives. It discussed how young people's political performances did indeed conform to the neoliberal matrix, and that privatisation, consumerism, masculine violence and racism had permeated urban life. However, beyond this it explored how young people struggled against these dimensions of neoliberal marginalisation. It explored how young people used the lexicons of privatisation, consumerism, masculine violence and racism to convey struggles. The chapter argued that these struggles – referred to 'negative politics' on account of their anger, rage and abject positioning – most characterised youth politics in outer East London. However, beyond this, the paper also explored the persistence of radical politics in these same locations. It addressed how the politics of marginalised young people was not subsumed in a liberal dominant/abject framing. Rather, sociabilities, sharing and alternative horizons persisted, and were traced from the past. Overall the chapter argued that beyond narratives of post-political decline, young people's politics in outer East London should be understood as simultaneously conformist, agonist and possibly radical.

Whereas Chapter 2 looked to the past, Chapter 7 engaged with the future. It explored how young people have been central to dominant constructions of utopian and dystopian horizons. However, it noted that aside from risk and longitudinal analyses, young people's perspectives and cultural productions were absent from sociological discussions of the future. To respond to this, the chapter proposed combined hermeneutic, dialogic and Afro-futurist conceptualisations of the future to address immanent and transcendental aspects of the 'to-come'.

Continuing the discussions of marginalisation, it showed how New Labour's politics of aspiration mapped out successful lives for young people on the educated–professional–consumer trajectory. It discussed how these utopian discourses were middle-class and white, and how they were set against discourses of working-class and not-white-enough underachievement. Following a discussion of how these discourses were compounded in Newham because of the proximity to deprivation, the chapter explored how young people understood their future through visions of aspiration. Through a discussion of these dominant and foreclosed horizons, it showed how young people self-policed. Returning to address debates on the complexity of whiteness in Newham, the chapter specifically considered how a group of Albanian-speaking young

women oriented themselves to a vision of middle-class white success by disidentifying with futures they saw as not white or middle-class enough.

The chapter also discussed how young people self-policed through 'poverties of aspiration'. Their life narratives were made sense of in negative relation to the education–employment–consumer trajectory. Through interactions with the horizons of middle-class people and institutions, young people came to believe they were educationally inept, unemployable or suitable only for low-paid employment. These discourses were compounded by their experiences of marginalisation in multiple areas of economic and social life. Rationalising their exclusion from the white middle-class dream, some blamed recent immigrants and in this way established their own system of disidentification based on the discourses and practices of whiteness and entitlement that propelled upwardly mobile young people forward.

As with other chapters, the argument ended by moving away from the binary positions of the dominant and dominated to consider the alternative horizons produced by young people I worked with. Collecting moments of analysis from across the book, the chapter argued that alternative futures continued to be present in outer East London. Returning to the story of Abs, it noted how the persistence of heterogeneity in urban life continued to undermine the racial and classed categories of futural success enforced by the police. It noted how these provided space for projections of social life not conditioned in this way. Revisiting the various discussions of sociability and sharing, it noted how these practices were maintained beneath neoliberal society's radar of privatisation, individualisation and racial categorisation, again demonstrating the continued presence of alternative social and economic imaginaries. Building on the discussion in Chapter 6, it noted how struggles against marginalisation conveyed alternative visions of justice and distribution at the same time as they called into question the criminality of a system that criminalises the weak.

All these stories were particular to the ethnographic context in which they were produced. Where the research was undertaken, who was involved and when provided its unique characteristics. The young people I worked with grew up in a place with a particular history. Deindustrialisation, urban regeneration, economic stagnation and national romance coloured their lives in distinct ways, as did the consequences of cheap housing, 150 years of migration and the borough's fringe location. The noxious industries, the docks; the shifts from 'slums' to tower blocks to reclaimed marshland housing; the Olympics, the Excel Centre; Westfield Shopping Centre and new Stratford Town, were all part of

their lives. These infrastructural and population changes instilled the normality of population churn in their lives. But these movements also existed in dialogic tension with the reconfiguration of belonging, territory, race and nationalism and their tension with diaspora. Hip hop's sold-out genres were taken, reconfigured and played back to make sense of loss, marginalisation, anti-sociability, racism and consumerism, at the same time as they reproduced ethics of sharing, friendship and creativity at global and local scales. These cultural dialogues and social relations were fragmented through digital media. Forms of sociability and collaboration were sped up and multiplied at the same time as the quality of these interactions was thinned and fractured. Digital uncertainties, ambiguity and networked imaginaries affected, and were affected by, embodied and physical relations. The young people I worked with experienced, performed and navigated this contested landscape without slipping into existential angst, without falling off any social precipice and without conforming to simplistic narratives of chaos or order, alienation or conviviality. This was a place where exclusion lived together with collaboration and where insecurity existed alongside sociability.

The stories contained in this book were also produced at a specific ethnographic time: 2007–2012 (from the first interviews with service providers to the last upload of Upcoming Movement) was an era of public spending cuts and limited employment opportunities. This affected the services available to young people and their ability to find work. It was also a time of increasing criminalisation and the replacement of youth service provision with policing. These increased hardships related to and were compounded by a series of moral panics around urban youth, including the 'Summer of Knife Crime' in 2008 and the 2011 UK 'Riots'. All of these were part of the wider neoliberal context. None of the discussions contained in this book can be understood aside from the projects of privatisation, individualisation and consumerism that characterised society at this time. Young people's understanding of their pasts, their marginalisation, their territorial practices, their social relations, their engagements with cultural technology and their future all corresponded to this conjuncture. Likewise, they could not be understood aside from the rocketing proliferation of mobile technology and online media. Over the period of fieldwork, the shift between Microsoft Messenger and Blackberry messaging, to 3G mobile phones and YouTube, altered social and cultural relations.

These stories could also not have been produced without the young people I worked with. Many accounts in this book are based on the lives of young people at Leyham Youth Club, most of whom could trace histories outside England within two generations, at the same time as many

could lay claims to whiteness and autochthony. In addition to this, there have been substantial engagements among Asian, black, mixed, Latin American and Eastern European young people and youth workers from similar locations. There are prominent engagements with the voices of young people from the Albanian Youth Club; with Eastern and Southern European young women; and Congolese, Kenyan, Guyanese, Ugandan and black British younger and older men at the After School Club. These different voices provide insights into some of the ethnic complexities of multiculture of Newham. However, these young people are far from defined by their ethnic or migratory histories. In addition to the ways in which they are racialised, their classed and gendered positions have been developed. Most of the young people in this book are working-class. Although some are middle-class most were living in families with relatively low incomes. This related to multiple forms of marginalisation developed at length. In terms of gender, young people's racial and classed positions intersected with their masculinities and femininities and relatedly to the construction of their public and private lives.

An attempt to keep close to the everyday lives of young people in outer East London, and to understand them in the context of multiculture and diaspora, required different ethnographic moves. While the book is grounded in an exploration of the experience, interpretation and performance of young people in Newham, it has moved across time and space and through different vehicles of analysis to respond to the research context. Chapters 2 and 7, in different ways, have moved away from the *now* to consider the great time, temporal folds and horizons (both past and futural) of outer East End life. Chapter 3's shift between geographical scales has facilitated an understanding of the politics of territory in and around Leyham Youth Club. Chapters 4 and 6 engaged with performativity to open up urban culture to processes of citation, while Chapter 4 developed a cultural technology framing to ascertain the significance of YouTube music videos in outer East London life. Underpinned by a commitment to dialogue and performance as the basis for understanding the complexities of everyday life, it is hoped that this range of methodological approaches has permitted the book to respond to the collected temporal, spatial, technological and political dimensions of youth culture.

Political endnotes

This book would not be complete without restating some political positions. At a conference in Birmingham, a few months before I

submitted, a room of activists and academics asked me for 'the point' of my research. Concerned about the depoliticisation of sociology and ethnography as disciplines, they were asking after its normative merit. Although the interrogation was straightforward enough, I gave a less than convincing response. The encounter provided me with a timely reminder of the need to clarify the work in this regard. So while I maintain that this book is irreducible to a general argument about young people, it is important nonetheless to suggest how the analysis contained in these pages engages politically with the themes of youth, multiculture, marginalisation and politics.

As developed in the Introduction, the analysis of urban multiculture is not new. Nonetheless, over recent years it has received less ethnographic attention than it should have, at the same time as the composition of society has changed. Looking back to previous ethnographic studies (Back 1994; Harris 2006; Jones 1988; Nayak 2003), today, in many places, urban Britain is now more ethnically diverse and more youthful than it was. Youth culture has become a global industry, neoliberalism has defined new forms of marginalisation, and digital and virtual technologies are cheap and ubiquitous. In addition to this, labour has been reconfigured and, with it, class fractions. Middle-class norms have spread, as has service-sector employment. Older forms of post-colonial racism have been traced over by xenophobia and nationalism, and mobilised differentially between, and across, ethnic groups. As a consequence, the relationship between youth, culture, race and class has changed. This moment requires new conceptual tools and contingently a reinvigorated deconstruction of oppressions across these axes of power.

Facilitated by the relative absence of such scholarly and public debates, an array of white supremacist positions have proliferated. In 2011, David Starkey was given the platform to blame the 'Riots' on the presence of multiethnic working-class populations in British cities – something he equated with the corruption of Englishness and bourgeois consumption patterns (Starkey 2011). Others have invested in nostalgic accounts of post-war Britain (Dench et al. 2006) or propounded racialised rationales for the welfare state, to explain the problem of non-white immigration (Goodhart 2004). In dialogue with the racial logics of these schema, academics and policy-makers have developed models for 'integration' (Cantle 2001; Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007; Institute of Community Cohesion 2008; Hewstone 2003); or have sought to ignore the continued effects of structural racism by positing post-racial (white) horizons (Mirza 2010).

This book has responded to these contextual changes and misrepresentations of urban Britain through an ethnographic exploration of urban multiculture in outer East London. It has explored the reconfiguration of race, class and culture by addressing whiteness and autochthony, neoliberal marginalisation, neocommunitarianism, youth politics and cultural performance and dialogue.

With regard to whiteness and autochthony, it has challenged investments in whiteness by calling into question claims to the earth. It has argued that claims to exclusive belonging can be sustained only while a belief in an a priori notion of white permanence remains. This argument has revealed the complexity of whiteness and the ways in which it is sold by fetishising nationalist homes, such as East London. It demands attention to how these nostalgic locations were in fact made through migration and not primordial ownership, and how whiteness is not only attached to white bodies but also a floating signifier that has a particular relation to them. The book has argued that as with other British forms of racism, autochthony is powerful because it is malleable. It can be claimed and practised by young people who, a generation earlier, might not have been white enough. If we are to address the allure of whiteness, it is necessary to engage with the processes of tracing and citation that sustain it. Pursuing anti-racist claims on the basis that the original white working-class are prejudiced implies an a priori moment of fixity which is as problematic as buying into the myths that whites have superior rights because they were there first.

Integral to this discussion of the whitened past is the book's engagement with the future. Held against whitened discourses of aspiration, it has explored how working-class and not-white-enough young people are being consigned to futureless futures. The exclusionary discourses of the futureless are laid out along the education–employment–consumption trajectory and self-policed through a belief in educational ineptitude, unemployability and consumer frustrations. This is compounded by the sharp-elbowed exclusions of young people projecting their own success.

With regard to neoliberal marginalisation, the book has demonstrated how classed and racialised forms of social control and public marginalisation are applied to young people. In the context of neoliberalism, and across the axes of race, class and gender, it has argued that contemporary marginalisation must be understood as part of the history of capitalist governance. Beyond this, it has highlighted specific configurations of marginalisation that require attention in order to counter the unfreedoms and injustices young people experience. In particular,

it has focused attention on the relationships between social and spatial exclusions, reduced welfare provision and expanded surveillance. It has highlighted the increasing orientation of youth provision to the criminal justice agenda, partnership working and the joined-up accountancy systems of the Integrated Youth Support Service. It has argued that this curtails young people's public freedom and mainstreams criminalisation in ways not previously possible.

This relates to the rise of neocommunitarianism. While the book is not suggesting that all forms of neocommunitarianism are the same, or all of them problematic, it has explored the exclusions that occur when protective forms of community feed on racialised notions of order and chaos to make sense of uncertainty and under-resourcing. Relating back to neoliberalism, the cuts and dominant discourses on whiteness, the book has argued that these neocommunitarian formations entrench ideas of community that rely on whiteness and loss. This, then, exacerbates discourses of race and underclass as it seeks to create moral insiders and outsiders. This is the mindset of the fenced community, where rather than address an unequal society, people build racialised and moral fortresses to protect themselves from the threat they are simultaneously constructing. These threats are malleable, comprising complex and overlaid racial codes. In contemporary Newham, these codes of race and underclass do not belong to black or white bodies. And while they receive a specific reading through them, they are applicable to wider marginalised collectives. They are the place where chav and mugger, underclass and nihilist come together with white supremacy's fear of multicultural 'patois'.

Beyond identifying and challenging these forms of marginalisation, the book has paid attention to young people's political actions. It has discussed contests with the police, with the youth club authorities and with the racialised systems of accounting, social control and territorial governance. It has shown how the police were challenged and how categories of urban control were confused through the everyday heterogeneity of multiethnic friendships, movements and solidarities. To this extent it has moved to repoliticise ethnographic work that has become too invested in liberal celebrations of conviviality, ethnic diversity and hybridity. At the same time it has restated the ways in which the everyday ruptures racialised systems of social and territorial control.

These considerations are extended into an engagement with youth politics. The book has asserted that young people's struggles against marginalisation must be taken seriously. In the first instance, it has noted how youth politics are performative and how they trace what

came before into a different social context. Focusing on cultural technologies, the book has argued that YouTube music videos contain vestiges of radicalism formerly expressed through sound systems and pirate radio, at the same time as they conform to the strictures of digital reproduction. In the second instance, it has argued that the politics of marginalised young people are vital for evaluating and challenging injustice, including the criminalisation of public space, the limits placed on their horizons, and the constraints of their own anti-sociability. It has argued that their anger and rage are not only evidence of conformity to alienation but also full of information, energy and political potential. Their politics do not only exist in a subordinate relation to neoliberal domination but are creative, rupturing and possibly radical, even if these contemporary resonances are weak.

Finally, the book has shown how urban multiculture is performative and dialogic. Through various engagements, it has demonstrated how contemporary urban multiculture is constitutive of, and constituted in, a particular social matrix. This matrix attends to what came before at the same time as it exceeds it through moments of struggle and creativity. This complicates racial, classed and gendered categorisation of urban life at the same time as it pays serious attention to how power operates through these vectors. The ethnographic approach adopted by this book explores how these are worked out through microinteractions. Through an appreciation of dialogue, this book has addressed how the lives of young people in one of the most ethnically diverse parts of any city in the world are constructed by the particular constellations of marginalisation and politics made there. In this way, and at different levels, the interrelation between social structures and everyday life can be addressed, marginalisation and racism can be identified and deconstructed, and conjointly youth politics can be listened to and taken seriously.

Overall, this book has explored the transformation of urban multiculture in neoliberal Britain. It has focused on the reconfiguration of race, culture and marginalisation in a city defined by global flows of population and culture. Drawing on a range of ethnographic materials, it has provided an insight into the changing cultural, racial, classed, gendered and political configuration of urban Britain, and argued that we take this seriously.

Notes

1 Introduction

1. Quangos (quasi-autonomous, non-governmental organisations) are now known as non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs).
2. The media output for the summer of knife crime moral panic was a Channel 4 dispatches documentary entitled *Why Kids Kill* (Channel 4 2008b), viral ads on Bebo (Bebo 2009b), a £5,000,000 increment to the Tackling Gangs Action programme to tackle knife and gun crime, the Street Weapons Commission headed by Cherie Booth linked to a second high-impact Channel 4 documentary called *Disarming Britain* (Channel 4 2008a), another Bebo launch and computer game (Bebo 2009a), the *News of the World*'s Save our Streets roadshow and numerous attempts by Gordon Brown (then prime minister) and David Cameron (then leader of the Conservative Party and official opposition) to outdo each other regarding who was going to be tougher on knife crime (BBC 2008a; *Mail on Sunday* 2008).
3. The names of places and people have been changed.
4. Newham is still characterised by cheap housing. In the first quarter of 2010, the median cost of a house in Newham was £219,000 – nearly £60,000 cheaper than the median for London. This kind of difference has been maintained over the last 13 years (DCLG and Land Registry 2010).
5. The Nissen hut was generally made of corrugated iron with a metal frame, a wooden door and oiled-cloth windows instead of glass. It was easy to transport and quick to put up. Invented and built as housing for the troops in the First World War, its semicircular shape helped to deflect shrapnel and bomb blasts, making it a useful wartime shelter (Nissen 2012).
6. Slum clearances started in the 1920s and 1930s before being interrupted by the Second World War (Powell 1973, pp. 5, 49).
7. Depending on the projections used. 'The Greater London Authority [GLA] produces annual population projections for London boroughs, using housing development data to model migration flows' (LBN 2010g). GLA projections put the current population at about 260,000, while Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures show the population is stable.
8. The mixed ethnic population accounted for 3.4 per cent of the total population. The 'Asian' population made up 32.5 per cent and the 'Black or Black British' 21.6 per cent. White ethnic groups include 'British' (33.8 per cent), 'Irish' (1.3 per cent) and 'Other White' (4.3 per cent).
9. In 2004, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia joined the European Union (EU). Many Eastern European migrants to Newham came from the Republic of Lithuania. Between 2005 and 2006, working-age migrants from this country doubled year on year (LBN 2007a), reaching 2,700 in 2006 (LBN 2007a). Unofficial estimates were much higher.

10. Corresponds with population movements related to events as broad as the collapse of the Berlin Wall (Koser and Lutz 1997), the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and the accession of the A8 (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia) and A2 (Bulgaria and Romania) nation states to the EU.
11. In 2007 Poland overtook India as the most common non-British country of citizenship for migrants entering the UK (ONS 2007, cited in CLG 2008, p. 12). However, these patterns of settlement and return have undoubtedly been affected by the economic downturn that hit the UK economy in 2008, resulting in job shortages. In 2007 some 112,000 people entered the UK from the A8 nations and only 25,000 left. In 2008 there were an estimated 89,000 people migrating into the UK from the A8 countries and 68,000 migrating from the UK to the A8 countries (LBN 2010c, p. 143).
12. These patterns of migration were made possible by the freedom of movement for A8 nationals in the EU, and were desirable because of maximising income through seasonal or temporal work.
13. 'Elementary occupations' are described by the ONS as simple and routine tasks which mainly require the use of hand-held tools and often some physical effort.
14. For a discussion, see Alexander (2003), Barker (1981), Gans (2012), Solomos (2003), Solomos and Back (1996) and Willis and Trondman (2002).
15. See, for example, Alexander (2000), Amin (2002), Back (1994), Gilroy (2000), Hall (2000) and Hesse (2000).
16. Dodgeball is a game in which players try to hit members of the opposing team by throwing balls at them while trying to avoid being hit by balls themselves. Players are 'out' when they are hit by the ball. The game was popularised by the film *Dodgeball* (Thurber 2004).
17. 'Hubs' house various community services.

2 The Multicultural Past

1. Headed by Labour peer Maurice Glasman, Blue Labour is an influential tendency within the Labour Party (Blue Labour 2012; Glasman 2011). Other prominent supporters include James Purnell, Jon Cruddas, Chuka Umunna and David Lammy. Blue Labour is an attempt to revive a conservative Labourism historically common to some working-class areas (Orwell 1937).
2. *Our Shared Future* attacked multiculturalism for encouraging difference rather than togetherness, and encouraged local governments to review how they funded ethnically defined community organisations (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007).
3. Fabric rags were used in the manufacture of paper products.
4. Similar opinions are presented in a number of texts about East London (Dench et al. 2006; Willmott 1963; Young and Willmott 1957).
5. '[D]iaspora space as a conceptual category is inhabited not only by those who have migrated and their decedents, but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. In other words, the concept of *diaspora space* (as opposed to that of diaspora) included the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those 'staying put'. The diaspora space is the site where *the native is as much the diasporian as the*

> *diasporian the native*. However, by this I do not suggest an undifferentiated relativism.'
>
> (Brah 1996, p. 209)

6. At the time, I thought he might have included this comment because of someone close to him having had a miscarriage, but I didn't ask.

3 Territory

1. Inherent in all these studies are the geographies of inclusion and exclusion that operate at different intersecting scales. These geographies relate to the mutually reinforcing social and cultural hierarchies of order/disorder which pertain both to the history of patriarchy, white supremacy, bourgeois hegemony and their respective 'others', and to their contingent gendered, racial and classed configuration in the neoliberal context (Sibley 1995, pp. 37–38).
2. Some studies of northern British cities and commuter towns attest to different dynamics – namely, the presence of ethnically defined territories. These studies address how continued white racism gave rise to defensive black and Asian geographies (Taylor et al. 1996; Watt and Stenson 1998).
3. 'The "IC 1-6" identity codes have been used (and are still being used) and recognised by the Metropolitan Police Service for over thirty years. These codes are used by officers to identify people using broad, easily defined and recognisable groups – an essential part of routine police work.' The codes are IC 1: white European; IC 2: dark European; IC 3: Afro-Caribbean; IC 4: Asian; IC 5: Oriental; IC 6: Arab (Metropolitan Police 2010).
4. Foucault notes that management is at the heart of neoliberal governance. Mechanisms, technologies, discourses and practices work to regularise the random element that is human life (Foucault 2003).
5. The policies detailed in *Every Child Matters* (HM Government 2003) and *Youth Matters* (HM Government 2005b) were central to youth service provision at the time. In Newham, the aims and objectives of both publications were translated into the Children and Young People's Plan (LBN 2006). *Youth Matters* has also provided the basis for Newham's Integrated Youth Support Services, a borough-wide strategy for all youth providers set around the triumvirate of information, advice and guidance; targeted youth support; and positive activities for young people (Brailey 2008).
6. The gated community constructs itself against the racialised and classed threat it imagines (Anzaldúa 2007; Blakely and Snyder 1999; Brown 2010; Low 2003; Rose and Miller 2008; Sennett 1993).
7. The aesthetics of the fence were discussed and a metal-bar construction was deemed appropriate by youth workers and the local authority because it would allow visual connection between the youth club and the wider community.
8. See Sandhu (2007) for an expanded discussion of the night.
9. The dozens is a game of verbal exchange attributed to African-American vernacular. One player tries to outdo the other with insults and wit (Labov 1972, pp. 307–321; Smitherman 2007). The game then becomes a site for negotiation as each player tries to gain the upper hand, and higher standing, by

winning through verbal rather than physical assault (Smitherman 2007). Success is verified not by the players but by the audience, who show respect through laughter or other signs of approval.

4 Cultural Performances

1. Brown and T-Pain's dancing is influenced by clowning and krumping (Krump Kings 2008). The streetdance form, known as krumping, whose best-known protagonist is LA breaker Tight Eyez, is a more aggressive and explicitly Africanist progression of clowning. Clowning was started by Tommy the Clown as a form of spiritual outlet following the LA Riots (LaChapelle 2005). Brown and T-Pain have taken these forms of dance to global commercial audiences.
2. Chris Brown has frequently presented his videos and dance as a tribute to Michael Jackson. His video for 'Wall to wall' (Brown 2007) is an imitation of the film *Blade* (Norrington 1998), but also a homage to Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' (Jackson 1982).
3. The move can also be seen in Huey's video for 'Pop, lock and drop it' (Huey 2006).
4. Requirements for black sexuality to appear publicly in this way demonstrate the global commercial success of white supremacy and the absence of emancipation in US popular culture (Gilroy 2010a; Patterson 1999; West 1994).
5. The theme of emancipation is also present in Missy Elliot's video for 'Work it' (Missy Elliot 2002).
6. > The scene separated [from Garage] as it started off a whole next side of things, it was much more street, grimier – that's why they called it grime! It was a lot rougher, a more hostile environment, but the younger kids preferred it because it was about them.
>
> (Dizzee Rascal cited in Bradley 2013, p. 380)

7. Different versions of the track have different spellings.

5 Circuitries of Urban Culture

1. Lacey has argued that listening provides a more suitable framework than dialogue for understanding mediated communications, on the basis that dialogue assumes face-to-face relations (Lacey 2013, pp. 170–174). While I do not disagree with the specificities of Lacey's argument, in this chapter, and in this book, dialogue (which includes listening) is not conditioned by face-to-face contact. Rather, in keeping with Bakhtin's conceptual corpus, it is used to unravel the shifting relations between time, space, the body and technology (Bakhtin 1981; 1984).
2. See Beer (2008, pp. 520–521) and Thornham (2007, p. 114), respectively, for a discussion about the digital and cyborg technology in this regard.
3. In keeping with the bulk of literature on this aspect of urban multiculture, in this section I will be addressing mainly reggae sound systems of the 1970s and 1980s.

4. Dub tracks were instrumental versions of the track on the A-side in which the vocals had been removed and the drum and bass often enhanced.
5. The commercial tracks used by many of the smaller outfits presupposed a similar dynamic, although dub plates made for larger sound systems were pressed specifically for them.
6. Radio station operators would take the equipment up the lift in a towerblock and set up dummy equipment to outwit the regulators and their tracking devices (Hind and Mosco 1985, p. 120).
7. Indeed, this corresponded to the design of the platform. YouTube was founded in a Silicon Valley garage in 2005 (van Dijck 2013, p. 110) by former PayPal employees (Burgess and Green 2009, p. 1). In 2006, Google, one of the world's largest media organisations, acquired it. YouTube was created as an amateur video-sharing site: a cross between home video and broadcasting that allowed young people at the youth clubs to upload, publish and view online streamed videos via an easy-to-use interface (Burgess and Green 2009, p. 1; van Dijck 2013, p. 112).
8. Form 696 is a risk assessment that the police require a venue, a promoter or a licensee to provide in advance of an event. The form contains information that includes the names and addresses of DJs and musicians, the type of music that will be played and the target audience. An earlier version of the form, since revoked, also included information about the ethnicity of the performers.
9. Initially conceived as an individual video repository, hence the logo 'Your Digital Video Repository'. When it was taken over by Google in 2006, the tagline changed to 'Broadcast Yourself' (van Dijck 2013, p. 114).
10. See Lacey for a critique of these dualisms (Lacey 2013).
11. Jamaican vernacular meaning 'ghost' or 'spirit'.
12. This comment was deleted before I could copy it.

6 Negative Politics

1. The Hegelian 'rabble' is overdetermined by racialised and classed notions of spirit. In this formulation, the rioters constituted a social formation characterised by an absence of spirit, downward telos, illegitimate claims and void of political determination because of their own 'negative understanding' of the world (Ruda 2011).
2. As Spivak puts it, a 'rage against the history that has written such an abject script for [them]' (Spivak and Harasym 1990, p. 62).
3. See Gilroy's discussion of 50 Cent's *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* (Gilroy 2010).
4. I did not have strong personal relationships with Upcoming Movement, and as such their political performances are not primarily understood through interpersonal communication but through an ethnographically located analysis of their artistic expression (Back 1994; Gilroy 1987; Hesmondhalgh 2013; Iton 2008).
5. To understand the scale of this, their most popular video had 5,175 views by the same point, and grime artist Wiley's 2012 summer grime anthem 'Heatwave' had 15,000,000 views (Wiley 2013).
6. See Hebdige (1979, p. 56) for discussion.

7 The Multicultural Future

1. Also referred to as the 'Millennium Generation'.
2. These alternative futures are also found in Bakhtin's discussion of the bells on the Morris dancers that mocked and subverted the orders of church time (Bakhtin 1984). They can also be found in Michel de Certeau's concern with the utopias of sociability and heterogeneity, and their existence apart from the alienation and disciplinary functions of modern capitalism and scientific rationalism (de Certeau 1984).
3. See MacDonald and Marsh (2005) for a critique.
4. Not being aspirational became the contemporary equivalent of Hegel's futureless future (Benjamin 1968a, pp. 259–260; Nietzsche 1983, p. 104).
5. This migration largely occurred after the 'pyramid crisis' – the collapse of a private savings scheme – in 1997 (Vullnetari 2007).
6. The young women were not performing Albanian identity as a means by which they attained social capital over 'less cultured' Albanians (see Reay et al. 2007 for the opposite argument).
7. A 'beanie' is a round knitted or woven close-fitting hat.
8. The 2008 borough figure for young people aged 16–18 not in education, employment or training was 7.7 per cent (LBN 2008).

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