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**Negotiating Marginality:**  
Young men's post-industrial transitions in the  
context of a sports-based intervention project

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**Thomas Alexander May**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Applied Social Sciences  
Durham University  
2015

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I declare that this is my own work and has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree anywhere else.

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## Abstract

This thesis is about two socio-culturally and economically distinct urban locales undergoing an ongoing evolution into post-industrial neighbourhoods, and how the young men who inhabit them are exploring and constructing new identities in attempts to transcend the exclusionary logic of post-industrial living. In expanding this argument, this thesis has also comparatively considered the ways in which sports-based interventions (SBIs) approach the popular manifestations of local-global transformations (i.e., unemployment, criminal behaviour, and social exclusion) and seeks to alleviate them, and has detailed how my participants experience SBIs and whether they offer a sufficient form of intervention to address the aforementioned symptoms of post-industrial change. Ultimately, this thesis has explained the ‘lived experiences’ of young men residing in the post-industrial inner city and their inevitable attempts at adapting to changes in the socio-cultural economy via their use of an SBI.

The young men described in this thesis are therefore considered cultural products of the changes occurring in the post-industrial metropolis, adapting and responding to macro-sociological changes. Hence, this thesis has uncovered that contemporary, post-industrial youth identities are varied, diverse, and heterogeneous across populations, shaped and fashioned by global social, political, and economic transformations, and the embedded *habitus* that operate in two distinct post-industrial locales. Youthful experiences of unemployment are therefore not singular or homogeneous across the UK, and neither is there a standardised or consistent youthful subjectivity *within* these post-industrial neighbourhoods and communities.

In detailing the transformations and evolving practices of young working-class men, this thesis does three things. First, this thesis demonstrates that there is no ‘standardised’ progression through SBIs and beyond. This is because the divergent groups of young men that ‘make use’ of SBIs and the differing cultural contexts, labour markets, and habitus of the de-industrialised urban areas in which they reside results in deviating and opposing post-SBI pathways. Second, the identification of four contrasting ‘types’ of young men means that diverse modalities of SBI work are likely to be more effective for different young men at different stages in their unemployment ‘careers’. Hence, a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to SBI policy is hopelessly idealistic and destined to fail in making a considerable impact on structural unemployment. Finally, I conclude that to address the issue of contemporary urban marginality and worklessness, a radical overhaul of SBI work is required. Instead of functioning as a conventional educational arena in which young men are socialised and recalibrated into a preordained social world without consultation, SBIs need to become a transformative context in which its participants recognise and respond to structural impediments and become empowered citizens, ready to challenge and transform society.

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## **Introduction: A Comparative, Sociological Analysis of Advanced Marginality**

Neighbourhoods A and B are two contrasting urban locales, situated in the cities of Sunderland and London, respectively. Approximately 25,000 people live in the conflated cluster of ‘wards’ that make up Neighbourhood A (Sunderland City Council, 2013), whilst Neighbourhood B, the focal point of my fieldwork in East London, is composed of a number of neighbourhoods where approximately 11,000 people reside (Hackney Borough Council, 2013). Both neighbourhoods can be considered de-industrialised (Winlow, 2001; Hobbs, 2013) and are typified by economic destitution, poverty, and a negative public perception. Yet their social composition, ethnic diversity, degree of poverty, and historically embedded habitus<sup>1</sup> are neither the same nor manifest on the same level. Ultimately, this thesis is about the young men that reside in these two areas and their efforts to traverse the distinct post-industrial terrains that they now inhabit.

In detailing the lives of the young men living in post-industrial locales, this thesis sets out to answer the question of how young men in an era of ‘advanced marginality’<sup>2</sup> (Wacquant, 2008) are forging new identities, experiencing diverse post-school transitions, and adopting unique consumer-orientated forms of lawbreaking in attempts to transcend the exclusionary logic of post-industrial living. In expanding this argument, this thesis seeks to explore how sports-based interventions (SBIs) function

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<sup>1</sup> In line with Bourdieu, I understand ‘habitus’ as being ‘the conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, predisposed to act as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively regulated and ‘regular’ without being in any way the product of obedience to rules’ (Bourdieu, 1990:53).

<sup>2</sup> The prefix ‘advanced’ informs us that this new form of marginality is not a feature of past epochal changes that is being gradually infused into everyday living in the form of continual neoliberal governance of social life but instead is a form of urban exclusion and marginality that stands before us (Wacquant, 1996). Hence, to stop the spread and rise of advanced marginality and the associated social problems of criminality, political marginality, and social desertification, new mechanisms of political and social intervention are required to direct the structural forces that have spawned the novel forms of marginality in the contemporary epoch.

as a component of broader neoliberal<sup>3</sup> governmental strategies that produce the conditions they claim to resolve. In essence, I am exploring the ways in which associated contradictions are negotiated by staff and the young men of Neighbourhoods A and B who ‘make use’ of the SBI.

In researching these contemporary post-industrial issues, the work of Loic Wacquant (1996; 2008) offers a fruitful theoretical lens through which to explore young men’s identities, transitions, lawbreaking, and the responses of interventions to young men under conditions of ‘advanced marginality’ (Wacquant, 1996; 2008; 2009); that is, a new form of post-industrial social exclusion spawned out of the deleterious effects of post-industrial restructuring, neoliberal capitalism, and globalisation in advanced Western societies and economies. These transformations have come to bear heaviest on those located on society’s margins, namely, the lower fractions of the working class and those located in the post-industrial inner city (Wacquant, 1996, 2008; Standing, 2011), the consequences; an increasingly fragmented labour market, the casualisation of wage labour, and the ‘churning’ between unstable jobs amongst a youthful population making increasingly precarious school-work transitions (Standing, 2011; Shildrick et al., 2012).

### Advanced Marginality in the 21st Century Inner City: The Cases of Neighbourhoods A and B

Before detailing in more depth the aims, objectives, and theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, I will begin by introducing readers to Neighbourhoods A and B<sup>4</sup> and

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<sup>3</sup> To quote David Harvey, neoliberalism is: ‘a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, and education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these targets, the state should not venture’ (Harvey, 2005:2).

<sup>4</sup> East London and the city of Sunderland are the focal points of this thesis, and although I view contemporary youth cultures as cultural constructed phenomenon, I am keen to situate them within the context of the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society and the severe economic and political changes that have impacted upon the two fieldwork sites (or

highlight the structural similarities and functional differences that exist between them. This comparative analysis lays out the context in which the young men of these neighbourhoods, described in later chapters, are located and will allow us to consider the salient dimensions of everyday life that exist in these two neighbourhoods amongst some young men—that is, cultural identities, delinquency, and ‘road’ lives. This point-by-point comparison will provide readers with a sense of place and signify the sociological factors that have significantly shaped these neighbourhoods and the cultural and socially defined identities of the people that reside within them. This will allow, in ensuing chapters, to recast the question of contemporary youth cultures, social exclusion, and the role of SBIs within this context.

#### Neighbourhood A: An Overview of a De-industrialised Locale

Neighbourhood A is situated within the city of Sunderland, positioned close to the port that exists within the area, and where approximately 25,000 people live. It is the focal point of my research conducted in the North East of England,<sup>5</sup> being where my participants were drawn from and where the SBI was situated. The broader area in which Neighbourhood A is located is currently de-industrialised, having been destabilised by the radical social, economic, and political upheavals that have transformed much of the North East over the last thirty years<sup>6</sup> (Winlow, 2001). The

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‘neighbourhoods’) that are situated within these two cities. I refer to these fieldwork locations as Neighbourhoods A and B to preserve anonymity, although given the information I will provide on these localities and the identities that populate them, many readers could quite easily predict the exact locality of these neighbourhoods if they so wanted to. Although I realise this represents one such ‘ethical dilemma’, I believe that providing sufficient detail on these urban locales is in line with the epistemological aims of this research, and ‘frames’ the research findings accordingly. For this, I make no apologies. I feel this is epistemologically necessary and imperative to understanding the contemporary cultural identities that populate urban locales (Hobbs, 2013); anything else would fail to align itself with the epistemological aims of this research, as detailed in chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> Most of the research presented as part of the ‘North East’ component of this thesis’s fieldwork has its foundations in Neighbourhood A. By this I mean that the SBI ‘studied’ as part of this thesis was situated in this urban area. Most of my participants were born and resided in this neighbourhood although their activities, lives, and general daily ‘actions’ were far from restricted to these areas, and the nature of the SBI, which had projects located across the North East, meant I also was not restricted to these areas. As such, a large part of this fieldwork took me to all major locales in the North East of England: Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Stockton, and Durham. Nevertheless, the majority of my time was spent at a project site in Neighbourhood A, with participants drawn from its immediate urban environment.

<sup>6</sup> Readers wishing to engage with further literature surrounding the deindustrialisation of the North East and the impact it has had on local communities may wish to look to the exhaustive accounts of the region’s industrial past and subsequent industrial decline (e.g., Martin and Rowthorn, 1986). Winlow (2001:25–31) gives an excellent description of the decline of traditional industries and its effect on ‘North East masculinities’. Beynon, Hudson, and Sadler (1994) also provide an in-depth account of the decline of chemical industries on nearby Teesside.

major industries located in the immediate surrounding area once provided stable employment to many young men who lived in Neighbourhood A.

Like most the North East of England, Sunderland—and Neighbourhood A—were once renowned for their industrial heritage, most notably in relation to shipbuilding, coal mining, and heavy engineering.<sup>7</sup> Physically, economically, and socially, however, it is shipbuilding that has defined Sunderland and Neighbourhood A. At its peak in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, work in the thriving shipbuilding industry was the staple of male labour. As Winlow (2001) suggests, shipbuilding determined and regulated patterns of life and greatly influenced the self-identity of many of Sunderland's residents. Here was a 'working-class town' of 'industrial masculinities', a network of 'hardy', 'skilled' young men who 'express[ed] a desire to *prove* their masculinity through physical labour' (Winlow, 2001:35–37).

It is important not to underestimate the importance of shipbuilding to many of the working-class men that once resided in Neighbourhood A, and I quote the following passage from Winlow (2001) at length to detail the significance of these industries in shaping forms of 'North East industrial masculinity' that were once found in Neighbourhood A (see also Nayak, 2006):

'In the heavy industries that dominated the North East, simply working was not an end to itself as regards to this particular working-class masculinity; a complex system of negotiation and confirmation operated within the workplace, which ultimately formed significant structures on which this masculinity came to rely. The workplace represented an environment where masculinity could be re-examined, reinterpreted and reaffirmed. These workplaces were almost completely male environments where the basic elements of masculinity were accentuated, and where behaviour was tested and categorised and took on both specific and

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<sup>7</sup> Glass cutting, limestone, cement and brick work were also significant industries and forms of employment, although by the mid 1800's these industries were dormant, or already in significant decline (Winlow, 2001:28).

changing meanings. For example ... hard labour in factories and mines literally used up workers' bodies, and that undergoing this destruction, as proof of the toughness of the work and the worker, can be a method of demonstrating masculinity.' (Winlow, 2001:35)

For most of the 1900s, then, the industries associated with the region provided economic security and stability for many of the men who populated Neighbourhood A. These industries also culturally and socially 'defined' Neighbourhood A's male population—as they did for many other local working-class communities organised around traditional industrial labour—and provided them with a distinctive cultural *habitus*, simply for 'existing' in Neighbourhood A's working-class social and cultural environment. Neighbourhood A was once a place where young men attempted to prove and express their masculinity via 'hard' 'physical' labour—its men 'socialized to believe that hard physical labour was a manly pursuit, not only by Victorian and Calvinist ideals, but also accordingly to their peers and family' (Winlow, 2001:36). As such, the industries associated with Neighbourhood A—shipbuilding, coal mining, and dock work—created a form of 'industrial masculinity' amongst its working men. Most notably, however, these industries also contributed to the production of 'one of the oldest and most organised working-classes in the world' (Byrne, 1989:40).

Yet this period of stable, secure employment proved to be somewhat of an all-too-brief moment in recent history, and the economic prosperity once associated with the North East (and Neighbourhood A) is now almost unrecognisable from what has been described here. Shipbuilding, upon which Neighbourhood A was built around, is all but gone. The shipyards that once dominated social, political, and cultural forms of life in the region have made a hasty retreat in the context of the globalisation of their industries.

Between 1971 and 1989 more than half of Neighbourhood A's industrial jobs were lost as shipbuilding and related industries moved elsewhere (Winlow, 2001). This coincided with a significant depopulation of the region: 22% of the population out-migrated between 1978 and 1991 (Nayak, 2003). Consequently, the industries that once shaped and characterised the North East, its habitus, and its communities evaporated. Neighbourhood A, along with numerous other localities worldwide, became de-industrialised.

The erosion of once stable industrial forms of labour and shifting socioeconomic currents means the broader city of Sunderland is now in a state of flux. This is exemplified architecturally by a number of recent developments. Gone are the docks, shipyards, and sites of heavy industry. In their place, one can now find a mixture of residential, commercial, and leisure facilities, including a new university campus and accommodation, a multi-story car park, a luxury riverside housing development, a casino, a football stadium, a retail park, and a new Olympic-sized swimming pool and aquatic centre. A new shopping centre was also built and extended and contains many of the chain stores one can find in any other post-industrial town.

A thriving post-industrial economy now exists here—immediately south of the city is a 125 acre 'international business park', home to corporate headquarters and financial and customer services, its out-of-town location strategically exploiting open land and a major road artery that runs the length of the country. A 'specialist training facility' is also located on the site, offering employer-led training in customer service, call handling and management, and technical skills associated with IT and communication technologies. It is these industries that serve many of the residents in Neighbourhood A.



However, despite a burgeoning post-industrial economy, the situation in Neighbourhood A is relatively bleak. Neighbourhood A is composed of a cluster of neighbourhoods located in an area of the city where ‘39 sub-wards are in the most deprived 20% of such sub-wards in England, with 8 in the most deprived 10%’ and is defined by the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation as being within the 10% ‘most deprived’ areas in England (Sunderland City Council, 2013). Recent data from the Office of National Statistics (2013) gives us further insight into the present situation of Neighbourhood A:

- Neighbourhood A and its surrounding area have a ‘high’ unemployment rate, with 9.3% of its population unemployed compared with 7.8% nationally.
- The ward in which Neighbourhood A is located has a high proportion of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants: 6.3% compared with 3.2% in Sunderland and 1.9% nationally. In Neighbourhood A, 86% of JSA claimants are male.
- In terms of employee jobs by industry, manufacturing represents 15.3% of all jobs, construction 4.9%, and ‘services’ (such as retail, IT and business, and jobs within the public sector) make up 77.8% of the total jobs in the local authority in which Neighbourhood A is located. (NOMIS, 2011)

A report produced by the city council (Sunderland City Council, 2013) reported that 28.5% of children living in the ward in which Neighbourhood A is located are classified as living in poverty. This is greater than the overall figure for the whole of the city (25.9%) and the highest of all five localities in the city. Within one ward in Neighbourhood A, 46.6% of children live in poverty (Sunderland City Council, 2013:1)

### Neighbourhood B: An Alternative Post-industrial Locale

Neighbourhood B was the focal point of my fieldwork in London. The area is composed of a number of neighbourhoods that are located within the same geographical location, borough, and postal area. The majority of the SBI's participants for this particular region were drawn from here. My fieldwork was mainly restricted to these neighbourhoods and the site of the SBI<sup>8</sup>.

Neighbourhood B would be considered an 'inner city', i.e., located in one of the 12 London boroughs that form the interior section of Greater London as defined by the London Government Act 1963. It is, or once was, an 'ideal type', traditional, 'working-class' territory composed of several 'wards' made up of Victorian-style terraces and large social housing estates and home to diverse forms of manual skilled labour, which the majority of local residents found employment in. Hence, like Neighbourhood A, pockets of traditional, manual working-class labour once existed in the area, and Neighbourhood B has similarly been 'shaped' by the economic and industrial forces that once characterised the area. As such, the features of the area that strictly defined a sense of strong working-class territoriality and intense local patriotism based on neighbourhood identity are found within its industrial past.

Traditionally, an enduring aspect of London is the extent to which many of its areas have been defined by the local economy and industrial culture. The economic and industrial base of London during the early to mid-20th century was large, diverse, and widely dispersed. As such, 'the capital's proletariat evolved as a complex and highly individualistic amalgam of multiple, albeit class-specific, identities, gleaned from

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<sup>8</sup> It is necessary to point out here that the SBI site for participants drawn from Neighbourhood B was located in an adjacent, nearby Central London borough; a neutral venue was required because of a recent spate of incidents involving young men from conflicting estates in Neighbourhood B's borough. Nevertheless, my participants were all drawn from nearby Neighbourhood B in East London, and most of my ethnographic fieldwork was conducted there.

localities sharing little in common with their neighbours other than socio-economic deprivation' (Hobbs, 2013:83). The localism of urban neighbourhoods within London during this period was often forged around working and industrial cultures, contributing to the long-established social order and civic identity of specific urban neighbourhoods (Hobbs, 2013).<sup>9</sup>

Neighbourhood B was initially a small hamlet situated to the east of a small lane, which now constitutes the major high road through the area. In the 18th century, the high road developed significantly as a number of inns and taverns were constructed along it. It wasn't until the early 19th century that large-scale development of residential areas in the district began. The north side of the area was largely home to the professional classes and merchants, whilst the poorer classes resided in the small side streets that came to characterise the area. In 1849, Neighbourhood B was described as 'a recently increased suburban village, with some handsome old houses' (Baker, 1995).

A continual urban development of the rural area was constant up the 1900s, a time when 'most of the streets ... contained a mixture of people who were well-to-do or fairly comfortable' (Baker, 1995). The outward migration of the more prosperous class, as had been occurring elsewhere in London around this time, appears to have been partly limited in and around Neighbourhood B, after some returned upon finding working-class residents in outer suburban areas (Baker, 1995). Nevertheless, as Charles Booth (1902) noted, there remained pockets of deprivation and poverty in the

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<sup>9</sup> Many of the traditional crime 'firms' that existed in these areas prior to the 1970s were formed along dimensions of localised culture and employment (see Hobbs, 1988; 2013).

area, particularly in the south of the district. The area was overcrowded, with few houses occupied by single families.

The industries that came to be associated with Neighbourhood B were reflective of the wider economy that existed in East London during the post-war period. Here were to be found a plethora of small workshops and industries producing the key trades of the district—furniture and cabinets; chairs and upholstery (of which were a product of the declining silk trade that once flourished in the area); and small-scale industries in locks, hinges, and glass.<sup>10</sup> Hence, unlike Neighbourhood A, Neighbourhood B was not a ‘one-industry town’, but rather a local economy composed of multiple employment opportunities in varied industries.<sup>11</sup> The economic features of East London were vividly described by Young and Wilmott (1957) in their study of Bethnal Green, a close-by district that shares a number of common economic, social, and cultural characteristics with Neighbourhood B:

‘You only have to take a bus down the main street, to notice that this is a place of many industries. You pass tailors’ workshops, furniture makers, Kearley & Tonge’s food warehouse, and near to Allen & Hanbury’s big factory. The borough has by itself a more diversified economy than some countries...At its heart is the largest port in world...and supports on every side a web of connected industries – ship repairers and ship-suppliers, docks and litherage, stores and depots, railways and motor transport, and the thousands of manufacturers, warehousemen, and merchants who process and pass tea and coffee, palm oil and wool, spices and hides, meat and wheat, from half the world on into the metropolis and the interior’ (Young and Wilmott, 1957:7)

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<sup>10</sup> Dock work was also found nearby and served as forms of employment for many East End residents. Neighbourhood B, however, is not a dockside community, and its main industries were to be found in those stated here.

<sup>11</sup> These industries shared one common characteristic: manual labour. Hence, the whole of East London and Neighbourhood B could be considered ‘working-class’—its working population employed as manual workers in the various local craft workshops that once existed in and around Neighbourhood B.

The diversity of the traditional economy of Neighbourhood B meant that much of the local community lived and worked in the immediate surrounding area; ‘there was no need for them to go outside in search for jobs’ (Cohen, 1972:12). Many of the same family were recruited into existing family trades or industries, and even if the youth did not follow their parents into similar forms of employment—and this was often the case, according to Young and Wilmott’s (1957) analysis—the economic variety of East London meant they could be absorbed into one of the many other craft or service trades in the area. Hence, as Cohen (1972:913) suggested at the time, ‘the fierce pride of being an East ender was often linked to the equally fierce pride of craftsmanship and skilled labour’. This was also the case in Neighbourhood B. A strong sense of community and a cultural habitus characterised by intense localism and territoriality was built around the forms of highly localised and familial, homogeneous manual forms of labour.

In short, Neighbourhood B was once an area that offered an abundance of manual, unionised working-class employment, which helped maintain familial stability, where young people had relatively stable ‘transitions’ into existing family trades and accepted their proletariat position (despite their liminal engagement in transgressive behaviour<sup>12</sup>) and where ‘the situation of the workplace ... remained tied to the situation outside work’ (Cohen, 1972:13)—all of which contributed to an unparalleled steadiness, stability, and assurance amongst the close-knit localised community of Neighbourhood B.

A close-knit community ‘feel’ was deeply entrenched in the area, established in the context of stable industrial employment. Extended kinship networks helped produce

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<sup>12</sup> see Downes (1966)

cultural continuity and stability. The economy was stable and diverse, offering all forms of trades, which meant people ‘lived and worked in the East End’ (Cohen, 1972:9) and the ecology of the Neighbourhood functioned as a ‘communal space’ for neighbours to converse and socialise in and relate to one another. The working-class ‘street’ once found in Neighbourhood B—that kind of place so vividly described by Cohen in the classic article *Subcultural Conflict and Working-class Community* (1972), where ‘close-packed back to backs, facing each other across alley ways or narrow streets, corner shops and local pubs’ functioned and shaped ‘the close textures of working-class life’ and served as an informal system of social control; ‘for the street is played in, talked in, sat out in, constantly spectated as a source of neighborly interest ... nothing much can happen—however trivial (a child falling, a woman struggling with heavy parcels, etc.) with it becoming a focus of interest and intervention’ (Cohen, 1972:9). The ecology of the working-class neighbourhood of Neighbourhood B facilitated social interaction, a natural setting for socialising. In turn, all these features contributed to the stable close-knit society that once existed here.

The social and economic structure of Neighbourhood B slowly began eroding in the 1950s and has continued to disintegrate up to the present day.<sup>13</sup> An area once characterised by its ‘single-class manual communality’ (Hobbs, 2013:116) where consumerism was irrelevant and the diverse forms of craftsmanship and skilled labour offered stable employment are but a distant memory. This fragmentation of the community has coincided with the de-industrialisation of the local area (and in London

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<sup>13</sup> London has undergone massive deindustrialisation in the last thirty years, particularly in the East End and Docklands areas and in the boroughs located eastwards towards Essex that housed industrial factories geared towards the automotive industry and once provided a large population of the area with stable, secure forms of employment. For example, The Dagenham Ford plant in nearby Barking peaked at around 40,000 workers in 1953 and, globally, was once a major production site for diesel engines. To date, it has produced around 1,050,000 engines. Since the 1970s, production at the site decreased, as new Ford models were produced at subsidiary plants in mainland Europe. Job losses increased as output decreased, and in October 2012, it was announced that the stamping plant in Dagenham would close, amounting to the loss of 1,000 jobs. Currently, around 4,000 workers are employed at the traditional site (BBC, 2012).

in general) and the shift from urban-based production to the post-industrial economy of call centres, IT, and finance (Hobbs, 2013:116).

The first stages of the dramatic redevelopment of the social and economic structures of the East End, which occurred during the 1950s and the 1970s, are detailed in Cohen's (1972) article, and I will briefly relay them here to demonstrate how the de-industrialisation of the area has continued and gathered momentum up to the present day and to show how the situation facing many young men in Neighbourhood B is not necessarily a new one.

In the late 1950s, the British economy gradually recovered from the deleterious effects of the Second World War and applied many of the technological advancements developed during this era to manufacturing industries with the aim of increasing production outputs. Many of the craft workshops and small-scale production industries associated with the East End and Neighbourhood B—traditional industries based on hand skill and simple divisions of labour—were hit the hardest. Gradually, industries relying upon automated techniques replaced many of the workshops in the area, and new service sector industries were introduced, i.e., 'the routine, dead end, low paid' jobs (Cohen, 1972:245). The local economy of the East End became less diverse and contracted, and gradually, the close-knit community of the East End was eroded, as more and more people had to commute out of the local area to work.

Occurring alongside the changes in the economic structure of the East End, a basic change in the communities' demographic was taking place. The development of a number of new towns and large estates on the outskirts of London meant a large number of working-class families were rehoused. Gradually, many communities, like Neighbourhood B, underwent a steady depopulation, as the indigenous white working

class moved out to the ‘utopian’ new towns and estates on the outskirts of London, where new jobs, semi-detached houses, and gardens awaited. Alongside this out-migration, however, was the rapid *repopulation* of many of these depopulated East End areas, as many West Indian, Turkish, and South Asian migrants who refused social housing and on low incomes naturally gravitated to these areas, bringing with them their own trades and services. In turn, this only further accelerated the movement of the traditional indigenous population outwards (Cohen, 1972:15).

As the broader effects of the new towns and the migration of foreign nationals took hold on many of the traditional white working-class communities, a further transformation of the area took place, one which was to shape the social and physical makeup of the area for years to come. From the late 1950s, the Conservative government redirected the building of social housing back to the inner city. Down came the traditional socially facilitative environment of the working-class street, and up went the tower blocks and housing estates based on brutalist 1960s architecture that now dominates the landscape of much of Neighbourhood B. The argument here was that the development of large high-rise buildings would help repopulate the area and rehouse the local community close to local employment and leisure opportunities. However, instead of countering the social disorganisation that existed in the area during the 1950s and 1960s, the production of large-scale high-rise social housing estates only exacerbated and accelerated the erosion of the traditional social structures that once existed (Cohen, 1972).

I realise it is important not to sentimentalise this transition. One cannot deny that the redevelopment of the area resulted in an improvement in living conditions for those that previously resided in traditional slum areas. However, as Cohen clearly pointed out, the development of large social housing estates ‘did nothing to improve the real



economic situation of many families, and those with low incomes, despite rebate schemes [were] worse off ... redevelopment meant the destruction of the neighbourhood, the breakdown of the extended kinship network, which ... exert a powerful force for social cohesion in the community' (Cohen, 1972:16). It could also be concluded that the rebuilt areas of East London and Neighbourhood B resemble many of the other 1960s social housing estates across London. Neighbourhood B's numerous tower blocks and council estates, for example, are not dissimilar from those of the Andover Estate in Holloway or the South Kilburn Estate in Brent. As such, the target of civic and collective contentment has resulted in a diminution of local identity—the life of Neighbourhood B and the communal spirit that once existed here has gone from within.

Fast forward to the 1980s and 1990s and one can see the contemporary effects of these transformations and the impact of de-industrialisation and social change on the area. For much of this period the area was characterised by severe unemployment, poverty, and economic destitution (Hobbs, 1988). These economic and social changes led to the creation of post-industrial proletariat composed of a hybrid mix of the remaining indigenous white working class and a mixture of first, second, and third generation ethnic minorities from the Caribbean, Turkey, and Eastern Europe. The traditional skilled industries that working-class youth assimilated into evaporated, replaced by a post-industrial economy of low-paid service work in hotels, catering, and retail (Hobbs, 2013).

In recent years, however, as middle-class bohemians with a taste for an 'edgy' inner city vibe became priced out of surrounding areas, they soon discovered this once previous urban badlands and have attempted to make it their own. The social situation in Neighbourhood B has thus become increasingly divided. The progressively

vulnerable service workers made up of the traditional white working class and ethnic minority groups<sup>14</sup> that have populated the area since the 1960s and 1970s now share their space with middle-class newcomers, employed in many of the new media and digital economies located close by. Evidence of the dramatic changes brought about by neoliberal restructuring and global change is felt most strongly on the busy, lively strip that runs close by to Neighbourhood B. Here, one can find Lebanese cafes, Caribbean hair salons, and Turkish grocery stores alongside Chi-Chi coffee places serving babyccinnos and soybean lattes and organic bakeries selling artisan bread. In the backstreets surrounding the strip, the small disused workshops that once housed manufacturing and production units for skilled manual workers have been reconstituted and converted into spaces that cater to this new breed of resident. Here, there are now pop-up art galleries and studios in place of furniture workshops or locksmiths. Social housing now nestles next to luxury private accommodation and gated communities.

Accordingly, the area has become one of economic opportunity as a result of the increased focus on East London as an area for development and gentrification, with the post-industrial economy reflecting the influx of qualified middle-class residents. According to a recent borough report (Hackney Borough Council, 2012), 48% of the borough's businesses specialise in 'scientific, technical, information and communication services', followed by 'retail and hospitality' (14%), 'information and communications' (13%), and 'arts, entertainments, recreation and other services'

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<sup>14</sup> The area is culturally diverse. Historically, the area has been one that has welcomed inward migration. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the area was populated by a large concentration of Irish migrants, before Jews fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe flocked to the area. In the 1950s and 1960s, the area was repopulated by migrants from the Caribbean, Cyprus, Turkey, and South Asia, filling the void left by the out-migrating and indigenous white working class (Hobbs, 1989). In recent years, they have been joined by migrants from Eastern Europe and Poland. Presently, just over a third of respondents in the 2011 census described themselves as white British (36%). Black African (11.4%), Black Caribbean (7.8%), and Turks and Kurds (5.6%) are other well-represented ethnic groups. Other significant communities include Chinese, Vietnamese, and Eastern Europeans (Hackney Borough Council, 2011).

(10.4%) (Hackney Borough Council, 2012:4). Only 5.6% of the jobs in the borough are in manufacturing (ONS, 2013), the traditional form of employment associated with the area for much of the 19th and early to mid-20th century (Hobbs, 2013).

Yet despite the benefits of gentrification impacting upon the area—the stabilisation of declining areas, an increased social ‘mix’, increased consumer purchasing and consumption at local businesses, a rejuvenation of housing and local amenities and reduced vacancy rates (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005)—this growth sits alongside significant pockets of deprivation. Recent statistics from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation<sup>15</sup> are a reminder of the deleterious effects of de-industrialisation on Neighbourhood B.

The borough in which Neighbourhood B sits is the second most deprived local authority in England (Hackney Borough Council, 2011). In 2010, 57 of its 137 smaller lower super output areas (LSOAs) were in the top 10% most deprived in the country. This equates to 42% of the boroughs LSOAs in the top 10% most deprived nationally. Neighbourhood B is one of these.

Other findings from the Office of National Statistics (2013) gives a clear understanding of Neighbourhood B and the area in which it is situated:

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<sup>15</sup> The Indices of Deprivation 2010 (ID 2010) is the term given for a collection of 10 indices that all measure different aspects of deprivation. The most widely used of these is the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is a mixture of a number of the other indices to give an overall score for the relative level of multiple deprivation experienced in neighbourhoods in England. The Indices of Deprivation is based on small geographical areas called lower level super output areas (LSOAs). The advantage of using LSOAs is that they are consistent in population size (unlike wards) and are therefore easier to compare. Their smaller geographical sizes also allow for a more comprehensive understanding of deprivation.

- Compared with the national average of 70.9%,<sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> 63.6% of the population are in employment.
- Of the borough's residents, 10.8% are unemployed. The national average is 7.8%.
- The borough also has a higher than average JSA: 4.9%, whilst the national average is 3.3%.

A borough profile emphasises that 'a tenth of ... adults experience depression, and 1.2% of residents have severe conditions like schizophrenia. There is a particularly high prevalence of severe conditions in the Black population' (Hackney Borough Council, 2013:19). The report also suggests the borough has 'one of the highest crime rates in London', with 'violence against the person, motor vehicle crime and burglary' the most common offences in 2011–12 (Hackney Borough Council, 2013:34). Accordingly, the ward in which Neighbourhood B is located had the 'highest crime rates in 2011–12' (Hackney Borough Council, 2013:34).

It is within this urban post-industrial environment in which part of this thesis is rooted.

In understanding the transitions of youth in a rapidly changing society, it is worth considering the implications of the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society and the social consequences of these global alterations. The theoretical debates

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<sup>16</sup> As of June 2013, 59% of the borough's residents were employed in 'managerial, professional, and associate professional and technical occupations', followed by 37% in 'creative, technology, financial and business services', 30% in public administration, and 18% in retail and high street businesses (Hackney Borough Council, 2013:5).

<sup>17</sup> Employment has risen significantly since 2005, when the area experienced an employment rate of under 55%. This rise, however, can be accredited to the increased in the borough's working age population, who are 'better educated and more skilled' (Hackney Borough Council, 2013:24).

associated with de-industrialisation are central to the theoretical foundations of this study, and it is here that these themes are briefly detailed.

The de-industrialisation of industrial cities has had profound social consequences for many working-class young men forging identities and transitions in the post-industrial city. 'Post-industrialism' refers to a transformation in the nature of employment, 'industrial' signifying the manufacturing of goods and services by means of waged factory labour (Byrne, 2001). The prefix 'post', indicating 'after', implies that labour is no longer structured as such.

Literature associated with de-industrialisation—e.g., Linkon and Russo's (2003:7) study of Youngstown, Ohio (the 'poster child' of de-industrialisation), William Jules Wilson's (1989) analysis of the disappearance of work on the social and cultural life of communities in inner city Chicago in *When Work Disappears*, and, finally, closer to home, Beynon's studies of de-industrialisation in *Working for Ford* (1973)—illustrate the social and economic consequences of de-industrialisation on locality. These works detail how de-industrialised areas subsequently experience rising levels of unemployment, elevated crime rates, intergenerational unemployment, and the 'destruction of the social fabric of the local community' (Linkon and Russo, 2003:196). Indeed, as communities seek to adjust to a new 'post-industrial world', they became destabilised, displaced, and fragmented (Linkon and Russo, 2003). The loss of the local industries not only affects those that were employed at the time but also severely disrupts the identities and transitions of young men who once forged their identities through traditional masculine industrial employment but now have to navigate their way through a post-industrial economy populated by 'table waiting jobs, public administration, bar work, call centres and humdrum service sector employment' (Nayak, 2006:816).

Hence, for many young men residing in post-industrial inner cities in the UK, the loss of stable industrial employment has caused a destabilisation of traditional routes from education to employment (Nayak, 2006; Shildrick et al., 2012), and many young men experiencing these ‘fragmented transitions’ are becoming increasingly vulnerable to unemployment and its negative social consequences as they attempt to adjust to the new post-industrial era. As has been suggested by contemporary UK scholars (e.g., MacDonald, 2011), the loss of industry has had the greatest impact on young working-class men and their identities, personalities, and futures. Beynon goes some way in describing the impact of de-industrialisation on the working-class man in the North East of England:

Millions of men in the advanced economies lost their jobs and economic authority in the succession of recessions throughout the 1980s and early 1990s ... for the ordinary working man in areas of heavy industry (like the North East of England and South Wales) ... the traditional male career was attacked at all levels. The shift from ... industrialisation to electronic technology was immediately damaging for working-class men ... what emerged was a hierarchy of masculinities based on appearance and which abolished more traditional masculinities. (Beynon, 1973:107–108)

Both Neighbourhoods A and B represent two locales that provide an example of the way in which regions undergo the transformation from an industrial to a post-industrial area and how the socioeconomic context of the region has influenced the identities and characters of its working-class community. This thesis provides readers with a sense of these changes and the implications they have had for young working-class men. These cultural, social, and economic changes have resulted in post-industrial inner city areas, like the ones investigated in this research, to become places where high youth unemployment levels, high crime rates, and high levels of stigmatisation exist.

Although one can cite a magnitude of British studies seeking to explore working-class culture during the previous industrial era (e.g., Wilmott and Young, 1957; Beynon, 1973; Willis, 1977; Robins and Cohen, 1978), contemporary research into inner city working-class post-industrial youth remains limited, particularly in terms of firsthand ethnographic accounts. Furthermore, the magnitude of industrial change over the last 50 years renders any industrial-era study of working-class youth cultures redundant in the present era: the impact of globalisation, economic restructuring and ‘modernisation’ has significantly altered the identities and characters of working-class communities across the UK and beyond (Harvey, 2005; Wacquant, 2008; Bauman, 2011).

#### A Movement towards Advanced Marginality

The work of Loic Wacquant is sociologically akin to this thesis in terms of epistemological outlook, methodology, and object of analysis. His book *Urban Outcasts* (2008), although *dissimilar* from this thesis in terms of geographical area, documents how, under conditions of ‘advanced marginality’, inner city areas are experiencing a movement from the communal ghetto into ‘hyperghettos’; that is, ‘inner city areas characterised by substantial transformations in territorial and organisational structures wrought by increased class (and racial) segregation, and the *double* withdrawal of labour market opportunities and social welfare support’ (Wacquant, 2008:3). Yet rather than conforming to popular opinion that these inner city areas are experiencing comparable routes and structural descents into homogeneous inner city ‘neighbourhoods of relegation’ (Wacquant, 2008:5), Wacquant draws out the distinct socio-spatial formations, causal dynamics, and contrasting population and demographic structures that have led to distinct

heterogeneous experiences and manifestations of urban marginality produced by and perpetuated by distinct sociological processes; hence, not everywhere is the same, and the patterns with which poor neighbourhoods are experiencing urban marginality do not align.

In dissecting the post-war transformations and economic upheavals that have destabilised countless urban locales over the past 30 years, Wacquant (2008) provides a theoretical and methodological tool kit through which to comprehend the contemporary logic of de-industrialised inner city living and the micro-structural determinants that govern the practices of residents. Hence, Wacquant (2008) documents how macro-structural impediments interact with everyday micro-level interactions and occurrences, thus bypassing the Marxist tendency of economic determinism. Here, his theory of ‘advanced marginality’ is particularly illuminating in uncovering and rearticulating a contemporary sociology of urban exclusion. For Wacquant (2008), advanced marginality refers to an era in which six distinct features have converged to unhinge urban locales in the post-war de-industrialised era. These are the desocialisation of wage labour, the marginalisation of urban neighbourhoods from macro-economic trends, a uniform process of territorial stigmatisation of said neighbourhoods, an increased exclusion of urban space and place, a symbolic destruction of ‘excluded’ populations, and the loss of a viable hinterland (Wacquant, 1996; 2008). These features manifest in the common sights of 21st-century urban marginality, including persistent joblessness, mounting inequality, deprivation and urban blight, and an increasingly fractious youthful population commonly expressing their unrest via collective outbreaks of public disorder, unrest, and criminality (Wacquant, 2008).



Themes of urban marginalisation represent a rich vein of thought within much of contemporary urban sociology, and as the core of many cities become increasingly dualised by gentrification, wealth, and exclusion (Wacquant, 2008), these developments represent an epochal shift in the convergence of ‘patterns of urban marginality’ (Wacquant, 1996:39). Yet rather than adopting a standardised, uniform pattern of descent into ‘hyperghettoization’, Wacquant (1996; 2008) adopts a position that views ‘emerging territories of exclusion’ as heterogeneous rather than homogeneous locales that are not, despite first impressions, undergoing uniform processes of ‘ghettoization’. Rather, they are experiencing culturally specific responses to macro-structural changes. Unique ecologies, structural compositions and locations, and organisational characteristics suggest, as Wacquant (2008) neatly presents in his analysis of Chicago’s Southside and the Northern *Banlieues* of Paris, that all forms of urban poverty are not analogous with the American concept of the urban ghetto. They are, instead, unique socio-spatial urban zones composed of distinct manifestations of urban marginality (Wacquant, 2008) produced by *different* modes of segregation and exclusion, diverging urban legacies and cultural inheritances, and they are located within sharply contrasting urban zones composed of heterogeneous populations (both in terms of race and class), market frameworks, and levels of welfare provision (Wacquant, 2008). In essence, these diverging characteristics result in departing levels of urban blight and segregation, marginality and poverty.

In providing a more nuanced understanding of the concept of advanced marginality, it is worth considering the distinctive properties of advanced marginality in more detail. First, Wacquant (2008) identifies wage labour as being a key contributor to advanced marginality, rather than an identifiable solution to it. The growth of part-time, low-paid insecure ‘flexible’ positions have grown markedly in the post-Fordist era, and the

erosion of stable industrial employment, the proliferation of neoliberal forms of governance, and the globalisation of key industries have all contributed to ‘the rampant desocialisation of wage labour’ (Wacquant, 1996:124). Second, the disconnect of urban neighbourhoods from macro-economic trends has led to a situation whereby although fluctuations in the economy will appear, their effect on employment, deprivation, and social conditions in the inner city remains minimal (Wacquant, 1996; 2008). Hence, any policy that claims to have any significant impact on reabsorbing marginal populations back into the labour market will be insignificant because of the hierarchical relationships that exist within policy making and the fact that public policies conducted in a top-down manner will always benefit privileged groupings before reaching those existing on the fringes of society (Wacquant, 2008). Third, the process by which inner city areas have undergone territorial stigmatisation is a direct consequence of the changes accorded by post-Fordist restructuring. Indeed, literature associated with the restructuring of industrial bases have highlighted the deleterious effects of economic change (Beynon, 1973; Wilson, 1989; Linkon and Russo, 2003), namely, the idea that the destruction of traditional industrial bases has a devastating effect on post-industrial living. Indeed, research into de-industrialisation suggests that in neighbourhoods undergoing the movement from industrial to post-industrial living, residents experience significant unemployment, a loss of social networks, and find themselves in increasingly vulnerable marginalised positions within society. One can cite the work of Wilson to validate this relationship, who, in his study of de-industrialised inner city Chicago, found the correlation between de-industrialisation and social problems to hold firm:

Many of today’s problems in the inner city ghetto neighbourhoods—crime, family dissolution, welfare, low levels of

social organisation and so on—are fundamentally a consequence of the disappearance of work. (Wilson, 1989:73)

### Towards a Sociological Analysis of Neighbourhoods A and B and SBIs

Wacquant's (2008) concept of advanced marginality applies neatly to the de-industrialised locales researched in this thesis. Both locales represent two post-industrial neighbourhoods that are experiencing the deleterious effects of the changes associated with the process. Over the last ten years, the image of these two areas as urban 'wastelands' where a growing 'underclass' reside, detached from the mainstream, a threat to social cohesion and accountable for the 'social ills' affecting contemporary society, has grown. As such, the young men residing in these two post-industrial locales are a prime focus of public attention in the form of stereotypes—'the welfare scrounger', 'the single mother', the 'lowlife'—an easy focus of hostility. Recent outbreaks of collective violence in these neighbourhoods illustrate the extent to which these locales have been subjected to dominant media interpretations of urban disorder caused chiefly by the youths of these populations, who are caught in a spiral of decline fuelled by immoral fecklessness.

For example, in August 2011 in Tottenham, North London, approximately 200 protestors gathered outside a police station demanding answers over the death of Mark Duggan, a local resident who was shot dead by police two days earlier. With apparently limited communication offered by the police, tensions gradually escalated, culminating in major disorder and a full-scale riot, with youths rampaging through the local area, pelting police with bottles and stones, setting two police cars, a double decker bus, and a number of shops on fire, and looting stores across the North London area. The confrontation spread to a number of other London boroughs over two successive nights, from the leafy suburbs of Enfield and Ealing to the inner city

boroughs of Hackney, Lewisham, and Lambeth. Similar large-scale incidents broke out during the same week in Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, and Nottingham.

As Brown (2005:58) argues, rather than representing a ‘generalised panic’ around youth crime, the last few years have been characterised by a ‘total panic’ regarding young people in general, with a particular focus on the marginalised young people who reside in Britain’s ‘throw away places’ (Campbell, 1993). The buildup amongst certain pockets of the media—the highly emotive language regarding the behaviour of youth, the belief that inner city urban areas are undergoing a process of ‘ghettoization’ (Wacquant, 2008) that is growing increasingly akin to US-style inner city areas composed of urban street gangs situated in decaying neighbourhoods, increasingly segregated and characterised by its unemployment, criminality, and violence—has contributed to the swelling of the panic amongst the population. Whether founded or not, the moral panic surrounding the behaviour of youth is linked to concerns surrounding an ‘emerging British underclass’ (Murray, 1990) of socially excluded marginalised working-class youth—in Young’s (2007:201) words, a ‘social residuum’ devoid of ‘our’ values and responsible for the social ills plaguing society.

Indeed, the typical response of media outlets to the outbreaks of collective violence represents the idea amongst popular opinion that the riots of 2011 were a symptom of the pathologies and moral behaviours amongst those residing in post-industrial locales—a sign of impending societal breakdown occurring in these inner city locales. Yet Wacquant’s (2008) insights carefully pieces together the macro-sociological changes that have led to the relegation of once proud proletariat heartlands into post-industrial wastelands composed of increasingly marginalised populations. His sociologically nuanced analysis of the conditions of advanced marginality considers

how outbreaks of collective violence and public disorder are sociological responses to economic and sociopolitical agendas that have rendered many working-class communities to economic and social marginality. (Wacquant, 2008:24).

### Responses to Advanced Marginality

These social changes, I argue, have legitimised new alternative forms of intervention to 'deal' with youth redefined by the conditions of a post-industrial economic base and an increasingly socially insecure population (Wacquant, 2008; Young, 2009). This has led to the creation of a number of alternative programmes, integrating voluntary organisations and community groups alongside statutory organisations as part of an expanding crime culture to responsabilise 'disorderly' youth, whilst the state 'govern at a distance' (Garland, 2001). Within this, SBIs are increasingly used to contribute to the 'regulation' of inner city youth, thus forming a significant component 'of the neoliberal policy repertoire ... aimed at generating social order in disadvantaged inner city neighbourhoods' (Spaaij, 2009:247).

The questions facing the UK during an age of 'advanced marginality' is whether the current set of policies and rise of diversionary and intervention programmes that attempt to provide 'routes out' of criminality via employment, education, and training (EET) (HM Government, 2011) have the capacity to address the marginality and exclusion spawned out of de-industrialisation and the fragmentation of wage labour. It is necessary, then, for academic research to uncover emerging forms of urban marginality and criminality that exist in the inner city since the initiation of post-industrialism as well as analyse the new forms of intervention that are considered sufficient remedies for tackling the popular manifestations of social marginality (Wacquant, 2008).

This is what this thesis sets out to achieve. Indeed, there has been a call within youth studies for a greater understanding of youth cultures, identities, and styles, and their implications on youth transitions and pathways into EET (MacDonald, 2011). Much of the recent studies on the ‘lived experiences’ of youth tends to view young men as one homogeneous cultural formation, thereby missing out on the array of youth cultures and identities that exist in the UK today (see Hollands, 2002 and MacDonald, 2011 for further discussion). Furthermore, research focusing solely on singular groups of young men, most commonly working-class youth residing in disadvantaged areas, has a tendency to present an overly deterministic view of their identities and lived experiences. Young men are routinely seen as passive victims of their cultural and social identities and contexts, and little exploration is given into how young men actively construct different lives and identities in present-day inner city areas. This is not to downplay the role of social and cultural contexts in shaping the identities of youth—indeed, the two urban environments explored in this thesis were found to construct two very different forms of cultural identity—but rather that youth are capable of making their own choices and shaping their own identities, experiences, and futures.

In expanding this argument, this thesis also comparatively considers the ways in which SBIs approach the popular manifestations of local-global transformations, (i.e., unemployment, criminal behaviour, and social exclusion) and seek to alleviate them and how my participants experience SBIs and whether they offer a sufficient form of intervention to address the aforementioned symptoms of post-industrial change and neoliberal governance.

Ultimately, this thesis attempts to explain the ‘lived experiences’ of young *men* residing in the post-industrial inner city and their inevitable attempts at adapting to

changes in the sociocultural economy via their use of an SBI. Although acknowledging that such a focus overlooks the experiences of unemployed females, this approach was necessary due to this thesis being a product of a sponsorship award from the SBI under investigation. Due to the conditions of this funding, this research is therefore restricted to the voices of those that have been involved in the SBI.

Although the SBI was not gender exclusive, the majority of participants who attended 'open' football sessions and progressed through the SBIs 'academy' programme were male. This is reflected in this thesis, where all but one participant providing 'data', were male. The reasons for this are multifaceted and complex: academic research recognises SBIs as '*gendered spaces*' (Spandler and McKeown, 2012:388), and the appeal of sport, and in particular football, to men is clear. Football, as the UK's 'national sport', is viewed and played by many young men across the nation every day. Men's football also receives considerably more funding and media coverage than woman's (Messner, 2007). As such, SBIs are well situated to engage young men in health and social interventions (both physical and mental) that promote well-being, inclusion, and potential employment (Kelly, 2011). Furthermore, SBIs operate as sites that can provide an important 'hook' for attracting disinclined or unwilling males into key support services which they would previously dismiss.

Hence, this overarching perception of sport, and in particular, football, as a significant tool for 'engaging men' is widespread, and numerous football-base initiatives aiming to promote health and social issues amongst men now exist. For example, the 'Everyman Appeal' gained the support of the England football team in their promotional material to raise awareness of testicular cancer, accompanied by the memorable slogan 'keep your eye on the ball'. Further public health campaigns have

used football as both a tool and metaphor to promote social progressive aims<sup>18</sup>, and engage marginalised and stigmatised men in social programmes in which they are underrepresented (e.g. mental health programs<sup>19</sup>) (Carless and Douglas, 2008). Men's health issues also continue to gain considerable support from within the game<sup>20</sup>.

Football is deeply entrenched in social structures of gender, race and class, and, as the above research attests, social-cultural connotations of masculinity (Messner, 2007). An engagement - both as a spectator and as a player - has specific meaning in presenting one in line with the dominant visions of 'being' a man. For example, the 'hyper-masculine nature of 'football hooliganism'' is a largely 'gendered field'<sup>21</sup> (Poulton, 2012) in which 'Hooligan[s]...celebrate a hard masculine identity based on physical prowess' (Spaaij, 2008:377). Further, 'playing' football actively creates an environment in which hegemonic masculinities can be reproduced; the gender segregation of professional football denies mixed participation, and is often reflected at grassroots level where 'hegemonic masculinity...[is] constructed through the exclusion of female participation' (Renold, 1997:9). The SBI 'researched' in this thesis is no exception. SBIs are highly gendered spaces which are both shaped by and shape dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Male participants reinforced this notion and discouraged girls' participation 'to maintain naturalised masculine connections to the sport' (Clark and Paechter, 2007:264).

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<sup>18</sup> The men's health charity 'Premier League Health' incorporates tactical aspects of football (for example, defending and attacking) to tackle issues related to depression, substance abuse and obesity.

<sup>19</sup> The FA has recently given its support to the mental health charity, 'Time to Change'

<sup>20</sup> After being diagnosed with testicular cancer in 2001, the Millwall striker Neil Harris set up 'The Neil Harris Everyman Appeal' in conjunction with the Institute of Cancer Research to raise awareness of the issue. After the Newcastle United midfielder Jonas Gutierrez was diagnosed with testicular cancer in 2014, Newcastle supporters united to hold a minute's applause during the 17<sup>th</sup> minute of every Newcastle United game in a show of support. A similar event currently occurs at Aston Villa, where fans applaud in the 19<sup>th</sup> minute in a show of support for ex-captain Stiliyan Petrov, who was diagnosed with leukaemia in 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Not just for female football fans, but in Poulton's (2012) case, female academics.



For some, football is a site for males to reinforce masculinity, and in an urban area where having ‘respect’ is an important - and necessary - feature of everyday living (Gunter and Watt, 2009), SBIs afford a potential arena in which young males can reassert their masculinity (Spandler and McKeown, 2012) and achieve a ‘respected masculine status’ (Messner, 1990:106).

However, some SBIs<sup>22</sup> are at risk of reproducing prevailing visions of hegemonic masculinity. This has a number of practical implications for SBI deliverers, and empirical consequences for this thesis, which I will outline here. First, the idea that males have an intrinsic relationship with football functions to actively both *include* and *exclude*. Whilst some SBIs operate to serve the needs of many disadvantaged young men, the gendered nature of these SBIs contributes to excluding female involvement. SBIs - and indeed research on SBIs - can therefore inadvertently contribute to dominant visions of masculinity and sport, reproducing the social structures that serve to exclude females from services in the first instance (Kelly, 2011; Spandler and McKeown, 2012). At a practical level, the continuation of SBIs following such an approach can serve to further exclude females not just from sporting participation, but from access to health and social services. As the austerity measures of the Conservative/Liberal (2010-2015) and Conservative (2015-present) governments continue to cut into welfare for the disadvantaged, the role of charities and third sector organisations will become increasingly important in providing social support services (Fox and Albertson, 2011). The relative growth of SBIs over recent years means they now make up a significant component of delivery services, and it is anticipated that more young men will rely on their support given the anticipated cuts

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<sup>22</sup> Some SBIs, however, are now using football to address gender inequalities. For example ‘GoGirlGo!’ offers education and curriculum support for girls via supporting programs and organisations

in welfare (The Guardian, 2015). Here, it is important to offer services that at least attempt to recognise the dominant visions they continue to reproduce.

Secondly, this thesis can also be construed as contributing to a view of sport as privileging a dominant vision of hegemonic masculinity. This is contestable, and a collective view of males sharing one homogenous ‘type’ of masculinity fails to recognise that ‘not all men will feel comfortable in spaces that privilege hegemonic masculinity, and many men, as well as women, may feel excluded by such talk’ (Spandler and McKeown, 2012:393-394). The use of sporting metaphors, language, and ‘banter’ inherent within sporting culture may be appealing for some, but less so for others prioritising distinct forms of masculinity.

Thus, although I concede that the findings from this thesis can be construed as providing an overarching view of young, unemployed men as privileging a dominant vision of hegemonic masculinity, I hope that by highlighting these issues here, I can encourage future research in the area to explore these issues, and for SBIs to consider these issues in the future programming of SBIs.

## **Chapter 2: Understanding Youth in a Post-industrial Society**

Chapter 1 of this thesis has detailed how we are now approaching an age of ‘advanced marginality’, where young men are making ever-destabilised post-school transitions in the wake of the globalisation of the economies that once populated their neighbourhoods. Chapter 2 seeks to advance this argument through an analysis of sociological informed studies that have sought to conceptualise the identities, experiences, and cultures of young men in rapidly changing social contexts.

Structurally, chapter 2 begins with an overview of the different approaches to cultural analysis, and the different conceptualisations of the relationship between power and cultural differentiation. I identify two schools of thought that have sought to conceptualise the relationship between cultural differentiation, social stratification, and power. These are the Marxist-orientated work associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham, led by Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall; and the ‘post-subcultural’ studies associated with Steve Redhead (1990), Andy Bennett (1999), and David Muggleton (2000), which draw upon theories of ‘postmodernity’ to comprehend the apparent fluid membership, identity, and styles of contemporary youth cultures. Chapter 2 then offers a subsequent summary of the different analyses of the relationship between socioeconomic transformations and meanings of class and place before defining how recent global changes in production and the rapid diversifications of social experience conveyed by globalised communications, the rise of the consumer society, and the erosion of universal welfare have affected contemporary cultural forms that were previously kept stable by structural continuities.

In reading this chapter, readers will be provided with the context to the empirical chapters of this thesis, which will provide an overview of how young men’s identities and experiences of intervention and transition in de-industrialised ‘advanced marginal’ (Wacquant, 2008) locales.

### **Cultural Differentiation and Power: An Overview**

This chapter is underpinned by a general appreciation that different approaches to cultural analysis emerge in various manifestations within rapidly changing social contexts. Hence, although acknowledging a longer history of debate surrounding

youth in many countries (Muncie, 2006) owing to the theoretical and methodological focus of this research, I concentrate primarily on post-war conceptions of youth associated with the different schools of thought introduced in this chapter. This reinforces the methodological and analytical foundation of this study that a contemporary approach to cultural analyses now requires a method that understands the dynamic relationship between the cultural agency of social agents and structural experiences of post-Fordism, new forms of global governance, and unrestrained consumerism (see MacDonald, 2011). These are issues that I will explore throughout this thesis.

To begin with, I will introduce the theoretical underpinnings of cultural studies from which British theories of subculture emerged. However, rather than framing subcultures as the central issue of this chapter, this chapter situates the object of analysis as the objects of study—i.e., the historical and social contexts in which cultural differentiation emerges from. Hence, the concern here is with change, unrest, and the consequences for young men in terms of identification but also—as in chapter 3—official responses. I argue that these responses to youth can only be properly understood in the context of broader anxieties about youth and social order. Hence, I will begin by highlighting the historical development of the subcultural approach to locate the different theoretical and methodological techniques utilised before expanding this section to consider various schools of thought that have selectively built upon one another to conceptualise youth under changing social contexts and conditions.

### Cultural Studies: Theoretical Underpinnings

Cultural studies have been permeated by a number of influential theoretical and methodological paradigms, viz. Marxist and Neo-Marxist approaches associated with Althusser, Gramsci and the early Frankfurt School, structuralism, post-structuralism, and feminism. Contemporary British cultural studies have their traditional roots within the establishment of the CCCS at the University of Birmingham in 1964. The work of the CCCS offered a Neo-Marxist perspective on how working-class ‘subordinate’ groups construct and reconstruct collective identities in the face of contradictory structural circumstances.

The cultural Marxists at the CCCS situated their study of the working class in the context of historical circumstances and post-war transformations in an attempt to articulate new configurations of resistance in an advanced capitalist society. Their work represented a ‘cultural turn’ away from the traditional Marxist theory of the base and superstructure that viewed culture as a product of the economic base. Instead, they provided a theoretical framework through which to examine popular culture as a counter-hegemonic form of resistance amongst the working class. The developments within the CCCS, seeking a critical dialogue between structuralism and culturalism (see Hall, 1980), were developed through the work of Neo-Marxists Antonio Gramsci and Luis Althusser, which I detail below.

Althusser’s structuralist-Marxist approach views the social formation as a structure of interrelated yet ‘relatively autonomous’ superstructures (cultural, social, and political) of which the economic base is only a ‘determinant in the last instance’ (1971:136). As stated above, for the cultural Marxists, this signified a break from the ‘vulgar materialism and economic determinism’ (Hall, 1980:60) associated with the

traditional Marxist base and superstructure foundation of culture. For Althusser, the interplay between the base and superstructure is not fixed and rigid; rather, a social formation is the outcome of a fluid, dynamic interplay between varieties of different determinations, none of which are privileged and all of which determine the superstructure. Hence, Althusser diverged from Marx's original claim that cultural forms are predetermined by the economic base and, instead, viewed culture as this 'relatively autonomous' product of determinations from different instances of politics, economics, and ideology. For Stuart Hall (1972), Althusser's work was a 'seminal advancement', as it allowed the social researcher a framework through which to analyse social phenomenon as a distinct, detached representative system with its own set of determinations. The legacy of Althusserian thinking around 'relatively autonomous' social formations is apparent within the CCCS's work (see Hall and Jefferson, 1976) and underpins Hall's suggestion that:

We must 'think' a society or social formation as ever and always constituted by a set of complex practices; each with its own specificity, its own modes of articulation; standing in an 'uneven development' to other related practices. (Hall, 1977:237)

Although heavily influential in the CCCS's move away from economic determinism, Althusser's work was eventually viewed as flawed by Hall and others at the CCCS for its structuralist notions of over-determinism. Indeed, his idea of the economic base determining 'in the last instance' risks returning to the economic determinism it attempts to evade. Furthermore, his prioritisation of structures that underplay human agency and the possibility of class struggle and political intervention within the field of ideology renders individuals as passive components within his framework (Hall,

1980). Therefore, the potential for 'resistance' amongst social agents remains underdeveloped in his work.

Although the work of Gramsci predates that of Althusser, its influence on cultural studies was in response to the shortcomings of Althusser's theory and therefore integrated into the CCCS's work as a way of navigating the culturalism and structuralism divide (see Hall, 1980). Rather than offering a synthesis of the two, Hall draws on Gramsci's conceptualisation of 'hegemony' to demonstrate the dialectic between the dominant culture and the subordinate working-class culture (Clarke et al., 1976). 'Hegemony' illustrates how power is utilised within society by the dominant culture to establish and maintain control. For Gramsci, power is a fluid means of control over subordinate classes, located within a hegemonic bloc that forms the foundation of a social order that continually produces and reproduces the hegemony of the dominant class. Clarke et al., (1976) in *Resistance through Rituals* provides a succinct definition of Gramsci's concept:

A hegemonic cultural order tries to frame all competing definitions of the world within its range. It provides the horizon of thought and action within which conflicts are fought through, appropriated (i.e. experienced), obscured (i.e. concealed as a 'national interest' which should unite all conflicting parties) or contained (i.e. settled to the profit of the ruling class). A hegemonic order prescribes, not the specific content of ideas, but the limits within which ideas and conflicts move and are resolved...Hegemony thus provides the base line and base-structures of legitimation for ruling class power. (Clarke et al., 1976:39)

Gramsci's concept of hegemony is a central feature of much of the CCCS's writings. Through this, they locate youth 'subcultures' in their analysis of a dialectic relationship between a 'hegemonic' dominant culture and the subordinate working-class culture, in which youth subcultures belong. The approach is therefore an

advancement of Althusser's work (Hall, 1980) by focusing on how a dominant social order's ideology is secured; how subordinate classes are reproduced in their subordinate form; and, significantly, how these subordinate classes utilise a number of counter-hegemonic strategies in the ideological field:

The subordinate class brings to this 'theatre of struggle' a repertoire of strategies and responses—ways of coping as well of resisting. Each strategy in the repertoire mobilises certain real material and social elements: it constructs these into the supports for the different ways the class lives and resists its continuing subordination. (Clarke et al., 1976:44–45)

The emphasis here on struggle is reflective of Gramsci's theoretical influence, which underpins much of the influential work found in *Resistance through Rituals* (Hall and Jefferson, 1976) and *Policing the Crisis* (Hall, Crichton, Jefferson & Roberts, 1979). The first publication is a collection of essays based on ethnographic studies of youth subcultures. The second publication is an exhaustive study of the 'moral panic' surrounding mugging in the 1970s and the ensuing 'folk devilling' of black inner city youth.

The collection of essays in *Resistance through Rituals* sheds light on forms of working-class resistance. For the CCCS, resistance does not manifest itself in open displays of revolutionary force and conflict, what Gramsci would call a 'war of manoeuvre' but, instead, through continuous hidden conflict, what Gramsci refers to as a 'war of position'. This technique refers to the counter-hegemonic movements seeking to undermine the legitimacy of hegemonic power through culture rather than direct force to seize state power. Cox (1983) concisely articulates this 'war of position' as a strategy that 'slowly builds up the strength of the social foundations of a new state' through the creation of 'alternative institutions and alternative intellectual



resources within existing society' (Cox, 1983:165). The counter-hegemonic programme for radical social change, as described by Gramsci, thus involves the development and mobilisation of a counter-hegemonic culture capable of forming the required institutions for hegemonic resistance.

It is through these forms of cultural resistance that a collective group consciousness and identity is formed. The CCCS drew directly from Gramsci's theory of hegemony to detail the strategies of conflict and resistance amongst working-class 'subcultures' to forms of subordination. The foremost difference between the functionalist American perspectives of subculture and Neo-Marxist British theories of subculture appears here. Whilst the former provides an over-deterministic view of youth formations as intrinsic delinquent reactions to structural inequalities, the latter locate their theory in the context of class and power and takes, as its axiom, that subcultures arise as solutions for working-class youth. Subcultural affiliation was no longer understood as deviant, but rather as a symbolic form of resistance to hegemonic power (Cohen, 1972:23). Through the CCCS's reading of Althusser, although economic structures are 'determining in the last instance', the 'relative autonomy' of class within the limits of hegemonic rule allows subcultures to invert and reconstruct the behavioural and cultural norms of the working-class parent group and dominant bourgeoisie culture. For Cohen, subcultures are understood as a form of resistance that reflects a broader class struggle, of which 'the latent function ... is to express and resolve, albeit 'magically' the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture' (Cohen, 1972:23). Hence, rather than interpreting subcultures through the context of strain perspectives, the CCCS located subcultures as formations of resistance to cultural hegemony—the struggle between the proletariat working class and the bourgeoisie ruling class for cultural and social control.

Subcultural youth formed these ‘imaginary’ counter-hegemonic solutions through various youth ‘formations’ with distinct ‘styles’ and leisure pursuits. Mods (Hebdige, 1976), punks (Hebdige, 1979), and skinheads (Clarke, 1976) are examples, amongst others, studied by the CCCS. Yet whilst these subcultures and their adoption and adaptation of leisure pursuits and urban spaces offered sites of collective identity and solidarity, they were no more than an ‘imaginary solution’ to the hegemonic bloc. Ultimately, working-class youth were always to return to their ‘dead end jobs’ (Willis, 1981) or ‘doing nothing’ (Corrigan, 1976), which formed their cultural and social existence.

The distinct forms of subcultural style, however, represented their closest forms of resistance to hegemony. Following Althusser, forms of style were utilised as an ‘imaginary relation’ to real conditions of existence. The CCCS’s semiotic approach, most notably expressed in the work of Dick Hebdige (1979), deconstructs the taken-for-granted assumptions assigned to styles, practices, and lifestyles of subcultural identity. The significance of cultural and social styles and practices to the CCCS is adopted from Gramsci’s view of culture as a site of ideological contestation where hegemony needs to constantly be renegotiated. Within this conflict, youth subcultures expropriate and invert the dominant culture’s social meaning of culture in an attempt to relocate and redefine the commodity as a symbolic marker of the working-class subculture (Hebdige, 1979). This is what Hebdige (1979) refers to as *Bricolage*, a term taken from the social anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss to describe how societies respond to and reorganise the social world around them. For Hebdige, subcultural youth represent a *bricoleur* through their challenging of conventional norms and codes regarding cultural commodities. Hence, Hebdige alludes to the motor scooter and how

its adoption by the mod subculture transformed it culturally from an ‘ultra-respectable means of transport’ to a ‘menacing symbol of group solidarity’ (Hebdige, 1979:104).

It is through the adoption and reworking of cultural commodities that a collective group identity is formed. However, these commodities are eventually assimilated into the hegemonic bloc via a method of ‘diffusion’ and ‘defusion’. The former represents a movement of youth styles and commodities from the subculture to the mass ‘mainstream’ consumer market, whilst the latter represents a dislocation of the commodities’ radical context and group from which it originated to make it more marketable (Clarke et al., 1976).

For the early CCCS then, subcultures are understood as the outcome of young people’s attempts to ‘magically’ reclaim a sense of collective working-class identity prevalent in bygone eras. Phil Cohen’s (1972) analysis of one working-class community in post-war East London reinforced the relationship between transformations of working-class life and structural and economic forces. His study documented the destructive social changes that transpired in the immediate post-war period—for example, the depopulation of communities for rehousing in post-war new estates and towns located on the outskirts of London; the replacement of native manufacturing industries with larger businesses located further afield; and the arrival of immigrant labour, which further exacerbated the decline of the local workforce. The cohesion, solidarity, and practices of traditional working-class life were subsequently eroded as the lower-working-class were left alone to sustain their traditional neighbourhoods (Cohen, 1972). Cohen does not arrive at a conclusion that these forces were eroding the working class as a social stratum, but rather roots his analysis in an understanding of social mobility *qua*, an account of how different sectors of society are driven into different transitional experiences by determining socioeconomic structures. Here,

communities became fragmented and socially polarised into two polarised sectors of society—either upwards towards a new ‘suburban working-class elite’ or downwards into the ‘lumpen underclass’. When viewed in such a light, subcultures are considered as a counter-hegemony strategy that attempts to ‘resolve’ the fragmentation of community and preserve a sense of working-class parent identity, albeit symbolically, dominant in the past:

Mods, parkers, skinheads, crombies, all represent in their different ways, an attempt to retrieve some of the socially cohesive elements destroyed in the parent culture, and to combine these with elements selected from other class fractions, symbolising one or other of the options confronting it. (Cohen, 1972:23)

The attention paid to subculture, class, and resistance is reflective of the studies found in the CCCS’s magnum opus, *Resistance through Rituals* (1976). The Marxist-inspired essays employ a range of analytical and theoretical techniques to decode the cultural significance of youth styles, commodities, and forms of leisure. The majority of their studies are framed from a similar perspective to that of the Chicago School<sup>23</sup>, principally, ethnographic methods, press reports, and historical and secondary sources. Hebdige (1979) deployed a semiotic analysis of subcultural style in his analysis of

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<sup>23</sup> Beginning in the 1920s, sociologists at the University of Chicago were innovative in early subcultural investigation. The Chicago School’s methodological approach was predominantly ethnographic, led by Robert Park. His earlier career as a journalist directed his approach in attempting to focus on and understand the everyday subjective experiences of people’s lives. Park was a student of Georg Simmel, whose studies of sociability sought to understand the interaction and formation of social groups. Reflecting this, the Chicago School produced a specific ‘brand’ of urban micro-sociology that focused on interactions, conflict, and social exchanges through ethnographies of the city and the dynamics of its urban social groups. The Chicago School employed the methodological technique of ethnography to chart ethnographic maps of the territories of diverse cultural and social groups of the cities’ expanding population, not only to develop an insight into the lived experiences of the population within the conditions of daily urban social life but also to illuminate the *social* and *cultural* context of deviance. William Foote Whyte’s (1943) study of the social structure of an Italian American slum in Boston in *Street Corner Society* did exactly this, unveiling ‘not the mysterious dangerous and depressing area’ (1943:xv) it was labelled as but a ‘highly organized and integrated social system’ (xvi) formed through its inter-ethnic, immigrant population. The Chicago School’s theory of subculture has huge value and was highly influential in the ethnographic work of the CCCS. Methodologically, their long-term, intensive ethnographic work is valuable in understanding the social context of human behaviour, as is their theorising of groups or gangs as collective responses to social pressures and constraints (See Thrasher, 1927; Whyte, 1943). As they note, forms of delinquency are not consistent with psychological theories of criminal behaviour that focus on individual defects or traits. Delinquency itself and subcultural groups are instead social phenomena, seen as immediate responses to the social world.

punk and mod subcultures, Paul Willis's study of drug use amongst the hippy subculture is firmly rooted in the interactionist and ethnographic traditions of the Chicago School and scholars with an interest in the sociology of deviance (e.g., Becker, 1963; Young, 1972), and McRobbie (1982) provided a feminist critique of the early work of the CCCS and subsequently produced an ethnographic account of femininity within teenage girls' youth cultures.

A key ethnographic study, which deserves discussion for its methodological approach and effort to integrate structural and cultural processes in the analysis of young men, is Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977). Willis's work aims to answer the broad question of how 'working-class kids get working-class jobs'. He addresses this question through an ethnographic study of a working-class school in the West Midlands and its many 'counter cultures' of working-class boys. For Willis, the school represents an environment through which class relations are reproduced. Stuart Hall (1974) had previously alluded to the local school as a mediated class institution where varying strategies and 'solutions' are developed and adopted in relation to it. Through this, Willis is able to describe the various cultures within the school. The 'lads' adopted an oppositional and resistant stance towards academia and authority in contrast to the 'ear'oles', a group of conformist, intellectually-orientated youth. The antagonism amongst the 'lads' towards schooling resonates with the masculine ethos of post-school work this group was heading for—industrial labour, an environment in which their culture and habitus are mutually understood and recognised. Thus, upon arriving at the workplace, 'he is also welcomed and accepted by his new superiors in such a way that seems to allow for the expression of his own personality, where the school had precisely been trying to block it' (Willis, 1977:110).

The CCCS's position demonstrates a number of positive aspects. The situating of youth subcultures as a dialectic tension between a hegemonic ruling class and a subordinate working-class culture bestows a greater hermeneutic approach to the study of the phenomenon, notably in relation to its interpretation of youth subcultures as acting out symbolic forms of counter-hegemonic resistance via cultural and stylistic forms of collective group expression. Accordingly, youth subcultures are not viewed as acting out a predestined, structurally determined form of subordinate class. Rather, through Althusser, youth subcultures are rendered a degree of 'relative autonomy' through which to create a symbolic form of resistance to a hegemonic cultural order.

The broad contextualisation of subcultures, presented by Cohen (1972), within a historical, structural and cultural framework, confers a deeper form of analysis of the consequences of wider socio-economic change on different forms of working-class strata. This broadens an analysis into the social, familial and cultural consequences of post-war change (e.g. rehousing, the redevelopment of working-class estates and the abandonment of communities by the upper-working-class) and economic restructuring (e.g. increased influx of immigrant labour, relocation of native, traditional forms of employment). Cohen advances his argument to highlight the manner in which these structural forces have polarised different working-class strata, who are propelled into diverging social trajectories. For the sociologist, Cohen's analysis still provides a powerful hermeneutic device for the interpretation of youth today: the de-scaling of traditional forms of industrial working-class employment and the move towards a post-industrial, service-based economy has undoubtedly affected the identities of working-class youth (see, for example Nayak, 2003; 2006; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; MacDonald 2011).

Finally, Willis (1977) assimilates structural processes with cultural formations in an attempt to break from structuralist notions of economic determinism. Accordingly, young men are seen as fashioning responses to socio-economic forces and forging new pathways, transitional experiences and identities in the face of structural constraints, rather than performing preordained class roles. Again, this approach has applicability to present day studies of youth when we consider the rapid decline in industrial labour and the implications this has had on post-school transitions of many young men in working-class, de-industrialised locales (see Nayak, 2003; 2006). Indeed, an approach that integrates structural and cultural processes has been called upon by a number of researchers within youth studies to understand the relation between ‘masculinities, schooling and labour transitions in de-industrial times’ (Nayak, 2003:147).

However, there are a number of criticisms which weaken the CCCS’ reading of contemporary youth identities.

First, the CCCS’ account of subculture has a propensity to fall into the trap of economic determinism, despite the supposed break from structuralist notions. This is engendered by the Marxist and neo-Marxist led approach whereby the economic base is predicated as primary in the explanation of subcultural solutions. Young people are therefore seen as agents of social change, their actions considered ‘rituals of resistance’. This, however, produces a somewhat reductionist framework through which to view social phenomena associated with subcultures. Nayak (2003) reinforces this view when critiquing Pearson’s (1976) observations of ‘paki-bashing’, the justification of which is accredited to ‘a primitive form of political and economic struggle’ (Pearson 1976:69). Nayak (2003) responds with the suggestion that:

‘There is also more to some of these antagonistic practices...as the perspectives of ‘paki-bashing’ victims...could no doubt inform. As

such, the focus on class at the expense of other 'subordinated' identities can lead to an unabashed celebration of white masculinity'(Nayak, 2003:235)

As such, individual agency within the CCCS' reading of subculture is absent, viewing class position as the primary driver in influencing and generating formations of spontaneous expressions of collective action amongst young people to resist authority. The issue of why some youth do not identify with specific subcultures and others do is never fully considered, and can lead to the assumption that all young people within a specific class category are part of the corresponding subculture, and vice versa.

Secondly, although the CCCS broadened the study of youth to include various and distinct youth cultures, their analysis is weakened through the absence of distinct racial and cultural identities in their account of subcultural formations. Aside from Hebdige's (1977) study on black youth, a paucity of subcultural research has focused on issues of ethnicity, nationality and the localised or regional variations of youth identities (Blackman, 1995, Muggleton, 1997). Indeed, in relation to the study of present day youth cultures, urban, 'delinquent' gangs – itself a modern day subculture - are marked by their heterogeneous, multi – ethnic and national membership (Grund and Densley, 2012). In light of broader social and economic transformations and the move towards a 'postmodern' society, subcultures are viewed as transcending boundaries of class, age and race (Redhead, 1995; Muggleton 1997) which restrictive, class-based subcultural theory fails to consider (Hall and Jefferson, 2006).

Accordingly, the CCCS portray subcultures as monolithic, homogeneous groupings. Research within youth studies has identified the morphology and fluidity of present day subcultures (Redhead, 1995; Muggleton, 1997; Bennett, 1999). For those associated with these 'postmodern' approaches, the weakness of the CCCS' approach



lies in their belief that young people are personifications of the subcultures they correspond to, revealed only through the subjective imagery of the researcher. Here, there is a propensity to label young people based on ‘sociological types’ which may function to reinforce social stereotypes by interpreting young people only through this restrictive subcultural technique. Indeed, the CCCS’ tendency to label subcultures based on typologies has led the ‘post-subculturalists’ to suggest that subcultures were ‘produced by the sub-cultural theorists, not the other way round’ (Redhead, 1990:25).

As I will go on to detail, the idea of subcultures as fixed, monolithic typologies is now rejected by theorists associated with ‘post-subcultural’ studies of youth cultures. For Redhead (1993), widespread shifts in social and economic change and the increasing amount of free time available to young people has led to a move away from the localised, Marxist, class-based subcultures portrayed in *Resistance through Rituals* (1976), towards an understanding of the hybridity of contemporary youth identities. It is these ‘post-subcultural’ studies that I will now turn to in the following section.

### The ‘Postmodern’ Youth: From Modernist Grand Narratives to the Fragmentation of Postmodernity

In the previous section I have outlined some of the underlying principles of the Marxist and neo-Marxist orientated CCCS and their thinking on youth ‘subcultures’ and identity. Whereas this narrative focused, in short, on the *production* side of collective youth identities, in the late 1970’s, post-Gramscian perspectives, supported by emerging theories of post-structuralism and postmodernity<sup>24</sup>, have focused on the *consumption* side of collective youth identities. Theories of postmodernity, assisted by the thought of European poststructuralists, have largely contributed to this debate

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<sup>24</sup> I will provide a full explanation of the term ‘postmodernity’ in pages 62-66 of this chapter.

through various theorising of the significance of a new society in which contemporary Western society now inhabits (Bauman, 2002; Harvey, 2005).

The analytical advantages of postmodern, 'post-subcultural' perspectives for the contemporary sociologist lie in their promotion of human agency within collective youth cultural identities, and the capacity of individuals to mediate and translate commodities for further consumption amongst collective 'groupings'. Indeed, Andy Bennett's (1999:600) assertion that modern day youth cultures should now be theorised as 'a series of temporal gatherings characterised by fluid boundaries and floating memberships' is in line with the post-subcultural idea that hermeneutically sealed, class-based subcultures no longer represent the 'pluralistic and shifting sensibilities of style' (Bennett, 1999:599) evident in contemporary youth cultures. In the context of a move into 'postmodernity', attempts have been made to describe these fluid, amorphous youth formations, most notably; Andy Bennett (1999), who draws on the work of Michael Maffesoli to introduce the term 'neo-tribes' to capture the 'unstable and shifting cultural affiliations which characterise late modern consumer-based identities (Bennett, 1999:605); Steve Miles reworks Max Weber's concept of 'lifestyles' to examine the consumption patterns of youth, suggesting that the onset of postmodernism has engendered 'a transition from pragmatic and unified subcultural identities into a shifting mosaic and juxtaposition of styles' (Miles, 1995:36); and Steve Redhead and associated researchers at Manchester Metropolitan University called for a new postmodern theorisation of youth, suggesting that the CCCS's Marxist orientated approach is outdated in the contemporary context of a new neoliberal order and individualist political environment, that has engendered a cultural movement away from 'subcultures to club cultures' (Redhead, 1997). Hence, the result of these developments was an attempt to understand the hybridity of postmodern youth

groupings and provide a new conceptual tool to replace the outdated, modernist approach of the CCCS.

The theoretical impetus for the post-subculturalists comes from Max Weber, Michael Maffesoli, and theories of postmodernity associated with Baudrillard, Jameson, and Lyotard (Muggleton, 1997; Redhead, 1997; 2000). Indeed, in recent years a significant debate within the Social Sciences has centred on the cultural, aesthetic, economic and social changes that have taken place over preceding decades. One argument is that we are entering a new epoch of 'postmodernity' (e.g. Baudrillard, 1981; Jameson, 1984; Lyotard, 1984) although critiques of the approach tend to use alternative prefixes, favouring terms such as 'high' or 'late' modernity to discuss the social and economic transformations that characterise this epoch (e.g., Beck 1992; Giddens, 1984; 1990). Post-subculturalists have drawn on these theories to illuminate a post-industrial social order characterised by structural and cultural transformations that emerged as a result of post-war de-industrialisation, and the social consequences of these transformations on cultural identities.

In the UK, the most productive academics in this field are Steve Redhead and associated researchers at Manchester Metropolitan University (1995; 1997; 2000) and David Muggleton (1997; 2000). Redhead's work draws upon Baudrillard and his notion of simulation that has engendered a 'hyperreal' society, that is; '...the generation by models of a real without origin or reality... (Baudrillard, 1983:2). For Baudrillard, society is based upon the hyperreal, where the distinction between reality and the simulation of reality is increasingly blurred, with simulations being experienced as reality itself. As representations and simulations of the real become dominant, hyperreality represents a society of surface images and real yet distorted, simulated experiences; common features of the postmodern vision (see, Bauman,

2002). On this basis, the post-subculturalists view subcultures as inhabiting Baudrillard's vision of hyperreality. They are what Baudrillard refers to as *simulacra*, that is; 'reproductions of objects or events' (Kellner, 1989:78). For the post-subculturalists then, subcultures now 'simulate the simulation of the media, becoming mere models themselves' (Muggleton, 1997:179). The superficial methods of self-identification amongst postmodern youth has led post-subculturalists to proclaim there are no longer 'authentic' subcultures (Redhead, 2000:47), but instead 'subcultural simulacra' as young people increasingly consume 'hyperreal' commodities that are simulations of reality (Baudrillard, 1983). Post-subcultural styles are no longer structured around 'relations of class, gender and ethnicity' (Muggleton, 2000:48) but rather, fluid, 'free-floating' cultures detached from social structures (Redhead, 1993:17), which stylistically, leads to:

'a glut of revivals, hybrids and transformation, and the co-existence of myriad styles at any one point in time and individual subculturalists moving quickly and freely from one style to another as they wish' (Muggleton, 1997:180).

At the centre of the post-subculturalists argument, then, is that modernist understandings of youth are out-dated in the postmodern epoch. In contrast to the modern identities associated with the work of the CCCS that harbour homologous forms of identity to connote collective identity, post-subculturalists maintain that postmodern youth cultures are characterised by a hybridity of styles and identities. Redhead and Muggleton have regularly emphasised the fragmented, heterogeneous and individualistic cross-over of 'styles' found in postmodernity: for example, Redhead (1993) noted the breakdown of homogenous youth cultures in his studies of 'club cultures'. These 'styles' display autonomy from external, deterministic modes of structuration as new features of postmodern style, in which individualism outstrips

collective forms of identity, are the means through which cultural identities are constructed. Similarly, Muggleton (1997; 2000) has noted how as postmodernity dissolves modern boundaries, subcultures are ‘constituted through consumption’ which engenders ‘an individualistic rather than a subcultural identity’ (Muggleton, 1997:181). Similarly, the theory of ‘lifestyle’ proposed by Steve Miles is comparable to that of Bennett (1999; 2000) and Muggleton (1997; 2000) in that he argues consumer culture produces new, hybrid forms of individual identity for young people. Based on a critique of the CCCS’s theorisation of subculture, Miles locates his conceptualisation in the context of postmodernity, arguing that ‘lifestyles are, in effect, lived cultures in which individuals actively express their identities, but in direct relation to their position as regards the dominant culture’ (Miles, 2000:16). This appears a reconfiguration of the CCCS’s Neo-Gramscian approach that views youth cultures as a symbolic, ‘imaginary’ form of resistance to the hegemonic bloc. Miles, however, encourages an individualistic reading of youth cultures that proffers individual agency, yet views collective forms of identity as transient in the context of postmodernity.

Elsewhere, Andy Bennett (1999) endorses a similar view that consumerism functions as an intended method through which identity is self-constructed. For Bennett: ‘a fully developed mass society liberates rather than oppresses individuals by offering avenues for individual expression through a range of commodities and resources which can be worked into particular lifestyle sites and strategies’ (Bennett, 1999:607). In postmodernity, identities are a ‘freely chosen game’, in which commodities act as ‘modes of personal expression’ (Bennett, 1999:607)

Bennett draws on the work of Michel Maffesoli to derive a reading of *tribus* (tribes) as a theoretical framework through which to describe ‘groupings’ of youth in postmodernity. Underpinning Maffesoli’s concept of tribes is the notion of new forms of collective unity and sociality arising in the context of a postmodern, consumer orientated society. According to Maffesoli, the tribe is viewed ‘without the rigidity of the forms of organization with which we are familiar, it refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and is preferably to be expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and form’ (Maffesoli, 1996:98). Thus, as Featherstone (1995:120), in discussing Maffesoli suggests, neo-tribes represent the ‘movement from individualism to collectivism, from rationality to emotionality’, that is increasingly evident in postmodernity. In this sense, postmodernity has ‘produced’ a new collective ‘tribalism’ who ‘provide a strong sense of localism and emotional identification through the tactile embodied sense of being together’, therefore, ‘they are regarded as *neo-tribes* because they exist in an urban world where relationships are transitory, hence their identifications are temporary as people will necessarily move on and through the endless flow of sociality to make new attachments’ (Featherstone, 1995::120). Forms of tribal identity, then, illuminate the instability and temporary nature of group identity in a postmodern, consumer orientated society as individuals continually move between collective sites of expression that are characterised by ‘fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal’ (Maffesoli, 1996:76).

One definitive difference between the work of the CCCS and post-subcultural approaches arises here. Whereas the former associates subcultures with fixity and rigidity through a structural Marxist reading of subordinate classes, the latter recognises the instability and temporal nature of contemporary youth affiliations in postmodern society. Indeed, Maffesoli associates the development of ‘neo-tribes’ with

postmodernity, a period in which consumption functions as an ever-increasing marker of identity (Bauman, 1992:49). For post-subculturalists then, Maffesoli's approach enables the social researcher to understand contemporary youth cultures which have 'become more reflexive, fluid and fragmented due to an increasing flow of cultural commodities, images and texts through which more individualised identity projects and notions of self could be fashioned' (Bennett, 2011:493). In reconsidering forms of collective expression and identity within a postmodern framework then, the concept of 'neo-tribes' offers a hermeneutic device through which to understand the 'lifestyles' of individual identities, that is, how patterns of consumption and the use of certain commodities as cultural resources produce patterns of personal and collective expression (Bennett, 1999).

The post-subculturalists postmodern reading of youth cultural identities provides some significant components for the analysis of contemporary youth cultures. The broader contextualisation of youth within postmodern, consumer orientated 'New Times' attributes the trajectory of cultural identities to consumption and the ability of young people to freely assert their own distinctive characters. Thus, postmodern, post-subculturalist readings of cultural identity prioritise individual agency over deterministic, structural processes. Accordingly, young people are not regarded as 'cultural dupes' acting out structurally determined collective identities; rather, youth styles represent expressive forms of individual and cultural identity. Here, Maffesoli's 'neo-tribal' form of identity reflects the fluid and transitory nature of postmodern identities. The introduction of 'fluid' over 'static' forms of youth cultural identity is also a useful analytical tool, given the interchangeable nature of cultural identities that inhabit today's social landscape and the ability of youth to freely move between forms of collective and self-identity. Enveloping these cultural changes is postmodernity, a

concept that accurately describes the structural and cultural transformations occurring in the post-war era. The post-subculturalists, then, validly attribute their theorisation of youth to an overarching postmodern epistemology that considers structural and cultural changes and their implications for cultural identities and categories.

The re-evaluation of youth in postmodernity therefore requires, it would seem, a postmodern approach that does not bind itself to a restrictive, deterministic realist epistemology, the outcome of which is the imposition of an *a priori* reading on the social phenomenon under investigation (Muggleton, 1997). Here, post-subcultural, postmodern theories of youth expand on the ideas associated with postmodern social theory to offer a framework to view youth operating freely in creating cultural identities. Whereas the CCCS reduced its explanation of youth cultural identities to a class-based teleology which was viewed as ‘creating’ subcultures as part of an emancipatory project (Redhead, 1995), Steve Redhead and David Muggleton have made a commitment to studying the fluidity of youth in the context of postmodernity and the ability of youth to construct forms of collective cultural identity via consumption practices. In postmodernity youth cultures transcend social factors of ethnicity, age and class and can therefore no longer be accounted for through Marxist, class-based analysis. However, there are a number of criticisms that significantly weaken the post-subculturalists reading of contemporary youth cultures.

First, the argument that individualism, fluidity and formlessness characterise the cultural styles of contemporary youth groupings is difficult to sustain. Whilst these features may form the collective identities of some youth cultural practices, notably the dance and rave scenes that populate the studies of the post-subculturalists, Hodkinson (2002) has argued that the postmodern reading of consumer-orientated,



aesthetic, transitory youth cultures is not relevant to all contemporary youth formations. Hodkinson alludes to the example of 'Goth' culture to underline his argument, but one could equally add the example of other forms of contemporary youth cultural identities. For example, some contemporary urban youth gangs exhibit qualities that follow more closely conventional, modernistic subcultural perspectives; some are homogeneously formed along borders of nationality and ethnicity; most are defined by particularly strict territorial boundaries and drawn for similar geographical locations; and a number display their allegiances via symbolic gang 'colours' and clothing (Densley, 2012a; 2012b; Hobbs, 2013). Additionally, Giulianotti (2004), alluding to his studies of football hooligan groups, argues a balance between modern and postmodern theories of cultural identities is required in explaining this particular social phenomena.

Empirically, the focus on 'spectacular', music and dance scenes (e.g. Redhead, 1997; Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003) comes at the expense of the analysis of the cultural identities of 'ordinary' youth (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006). Arguably, the stylistic and music dance cultures that form the basis of the post-subculturalists theorisation of youth cultural identities are predominantly 'minority' youth cultures, particularly in the contemporary era, and as such are by no means reflective of the wider youth cultural landscape. Indeed, this has led Shildrick and MacDonald to conclude that post-subcultural studies are 'in danger of producing a distorted and incomplete portrayal of contemporary youth culture' (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006:128).

Their position is also weakened by the absence of cultural differences in their explanation of cultural groups. Little attention is paid to issues of ethnicity, class, nationality, or the influence of locality. Indeed, the analysis of post-subcultural studies are conducted by those who had previously participated in these particular 'scenes'

(Muggleton 1997; Bennett 2000). These 'insider' perspectives may be accountable for the coverage of predominantly 'middle-class', white, youth cultural identities analysed in post-subcultural studies and the detached view towards ethnic, working-class youth cultural identities.

Further, the post-subculturalists move towards postmodern individualistic understandings of youth where identity is determined, above all, by choice, signifies a move away from a modernist, Marxist approach of collective 'subcultures' as a form of resistance to the hegemonic bloc. This significantly vitiates the political understanding of young people in postmodernity, leaving them with a hyperbolic sense of individuality that is disconnected from structural forms of exploitation. This therefore strays into an over-romanticised view of individual forms of adaptation and self-expression, where emancipation is conveyed through forms of self-identity as individuals engage with commodities to support their personalized cultural practice, as Bennett (1999) would suggest in his reworking of Maffesoli's 'Neo-tribes'. Accordingly, the individualized take on youth cultural identities overlooks the emancipatory forms of collective, cultural responses of youth to structural inequalities (Blackman, 2005): the collective response of young people at anti-capitalist demonstrations, student protests and climate change marches over recent years is testament to this.

Limiting the analytical value further is the argument amongst post-subculturalists that class is redundant in postmodernity. The postmodern theory of the fluid, transitory 'Neo-tribe' for example, is closely tied to the transition from modernity to postmodernity, whereby consumerism, individualism and autonomy have engendered a more individualistic society via the deconstruction of class hierarchies and static forms of collective cultural identity. Hence, the construction of individual and unique

identities via consumerism's array of commodities led Muggleton to conclude that 'youths from different social backgrounds can hold similar values that find their expression in shared membership of a particular subculture' (Muggleton, 2000:31). The post-subculturalists heuristic for reading new, postmodern forms of cultural identities, however, seriously misreads the fact that consumption is not experienced by all young people in the same capacity (Nayak, 2003; Blackman, 2005; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Martin, 2009). Many working-class youth remain marginal to cultural commodities and forms of leisure (Nayak, 2003; 2006; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2005) and are unable to embrace a so-called 'slice of the postmodern experience' (Redhead, 1997:95). Access to these cultural commodities and leisure practices remain deeply bound by structural inequalities, economic marginality, class and neighbourhood characteristics (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2005; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006). As such, post-subcultural theory fails to comprehend the extent to which structural inequalities 'delimit' access to cultural commodities and leisure pursuits, and the way in which these commodities and practices formulate various *class*-based youth cultural identities. For some youth cultural writers, class remains a dominant feature of youth cultural identities; Shildrick and Macdonald (2006) suggest it is insufficient to conclude that 'youth culture has now somehow become classless when the life phases that precede and follow youth continue to be highly socially stratified' (Shildrick and Macdonald, 2006:129).

### Social Change and Youth Identities

This thesis is concerned with social change and the consequences for young people in terms of identification but also - as will be detailed in Chapter 3 - official responses, which in turn can only be properly understood in the context of broader anxieties about

social order. As such, the following section considers the different analyses of the relationship between cultural and socio-economic transformations, especially how changes to employment and production affect, shape and produce meanings of class and place for young people. I relate this back to the two different approaches to cultural analysis detailed earlier in this chapter.

### The CCCS: Post-war Consumerism and Working-class Continuity

For the CCCS, the lack of transference of American theories of subculture in the context of broader post-war social transformations required a distinct theoretical framework through which to analyse embryonic youth subcultures. Indeed, the post-war period heralded new social and cultural features within Britain which were responsible for these new forms of youth culture. These post-war changes are documented in the first chapter of *Resistance through Rituals* (1976) and I will briefly relay them here to situate the CCCS' theory within a social context.

First, the immediate aftermath of the Second World War heralded a number of social transformations, 'hinged around 'affluence', the increased importance of the market and consumption, and the growth of the 'Youth-orientated' leisure industries' (Clarke et al., 1976:11). The outcome of this new 'consumer-orientated' society was the teenage consumer: cultural products became readily accessible to many young people for the first time and consequently, collective consumption practices provided the foundation for unique, self-produced youth cultures. Secondly, youth were subjected to new forms of cultural processes, spawned by 'the spread in mass consumption, plus the 'political enfranchisement' of the masses, and (above all) the growth in mass communications' (Clarke et al., 1976:11). Mass communication in the form of radio, television and publishing led to greater 'imitation' and 'manipulation' of styles and

fashions by teenagers, encouraged by seductive marketing campaigns. Youth cultures became marked and characterised by their consumption practices and styles; Vespas, Parkas and Italian fashion became symbolic of the mod subculture. All of this, of course, could not have existed without a consumer market geared towards youth, and a willing and economically prosperous youth consumer (Clarke et al., 1976:42). Thirdly, the immediate post-war period witnessed the emergence of new forms of delinquency. For the CCCS, the disruptive period following the second World War, characterised by 'absent fathers, evacuation and other breaks in normal family life, as well as the constant violence' (Clarke et al., 1972:12) laid the foundations for a new form of delinquent youth culture in contrast to pre-war generations. Fourth, developments in education policy, most notably the 1944 Education Act which introduced free schooling for all, increased the number of young people in education compared with the pre-war period. Higher levels of literacy, trained personnel and subsequent social mobility followed, thus creating the conditions for an 'adolescent society' (Clarke et al., 1976:13). Finally, increased economic prosperity and subsequent consumption produced a new range of symbolic styles, fashions and leisure. The increased accessibility of these consumable goods and leisure practices became the raw materials through which the subcultural identities of youth could be constructed. Hence, via the adoption and adaption of specific styles, collective identities were formed.

For some, this period was considered one of prosperity. Youth were at the forefront of these post-war changes; 'direct beneficiaries of the welfare state and new educational opportunities; least constrained by older patterns of, or attitudes to, spending and consumption; [and] most involved in a guilt-free commitment to pleasure and immediate satisfactions' (Clarke et al., 1976:14). Class was seen as gradually eroding

as society's marker of social stratification, replaced by consumption orientated attainments, educational achievement and forms of employment. The working-class then, were slowly gravitating towards more 'middle-class' patterns of life.

However, in spite of the cultural and social changes that occurred in post-war period, the CCCS strongly refuted the view that the working-class was disappearing (Clarke et al., 1976). In contrast, the CCCS suggested that these changes had been greatly exaggerated; the post-war era was instead a time where greater inequalities of wealth occurred, unemployment began to rise, and new forms of working-class 'resistance' emerged as a response to social inequalities. Stuart Hall (1978) had previously suggested that the cultural transformations taking place in the immediate post-war period and the increased accessibility of commodities provided only a *sense* that the working-class were assimilating towards middle-class aspirations and values. In this sense, classlessness was merely an ideological effect of the emerging consumer culture:

'The purpose of a great deal of advertising, for example, is to condition the worker to the new possibilities for consumption, to break down the class resistances to consumer purchase which became part of the working-class consciousness at an earlier period. This is known in the world of advertising as 'sales resistance'. ('When *you* buy your second car, make sure it's a Morris'). (Hall, 1958:29)

Hall and his colleagues at the CCCS signify a major departure from the view of the working-class as passive receivers of the post-war ideological categories of affluence, consensus, and embourgeoisement, components that are required for the 'spontaneous consent' (Clarke et al., 1976:30) of subordinate classes and the ending of traditional working-class values. From Gramsci, they develop an understanding of power as a

social resource located within the hegemonic bloc that regulates and reproduces the patterns of life of subordinate classes. Hegemony is a site of continuous class struggle that has to be fought for, containing ‘relations of forces favourable or unfavourable to this or that tendency’ (Clarke et al., 1976:30). For the CCCS, class struggle was reflective of the post-war era:

‘...the 1950’s seem to us a period of true ‘hegemonic domination’, it being precisely the role of ‘affluence’ as an ideology, to dismantle working-class resistance and deliver the ‘spontaneous consent’ of the class to the authority of the dominant class. Increasingly, in the 1960’s, and more openly in the 1970’s, this ‘leadership’ has again been undermined. The society has polarised, conflict has reappeared on many levels. The dominant classes retain power, but their ‘repertoire’ of control is progressively challenged, weakened, exhausted’ (Clarke et al., 1976:30)

The CCCS saw this period as representing a shift from consent to coercion (e.g. the use of force to maintain hegemonic power and contain emerging forms of resistance). Resistance became increasingly prevalent amongst the working-class through forms of continuous struggle and rituals, rather than direct, open conflict. The subordinate-working-class then, was viewed as one that will not disappear; indeed, for Clarke et al., (1976:31), ‘English working-class culture is a peculiarly strong, densely-impacted, cohesive and defensive structure of this corporate kind’ with ‘its own corporate culture, its own forms of social relationship, its characteristic institutions, values, [and] modes of life’. For the CCCS, class conflict will always exist between the subordinate working-class and dominant hegemonic ruling class until, as Marx suggested, the owners of production that produce and sustain the subordinate social and cultural formations in the existing subordinate form disappear. As Gramscian hegemony suggests that these hegemonic forces are non-permanent, forms of counter-hegemonic resistance exist in the hegemonic struggle.

### Postmodern Times and Cultural Fluidity

Much of the work within the postmodernist paradigm has directed attention to the analysis of a new epoch of 'postmodernity' in which many of the certainties associated with the modern era have disintegrated. Thus, the advent of postmodernity represents a qualitative break from modernity; the features of the modern society have been exhausted and declined in importance and meaning. If characteristics of modernism related to 'universality, homogeneity, monotony and clarity' (Bauman 1992:188), postmodernism represents a new epoch in which these previous 'modern' features have been replaced by 'pluralism, variety, contingency and ambivalence' (Bauman, 1992:187), all of which have infiltrated the social experiences of the population. Society, once stable and established, is now interlaced with individualism, fluidity and insecurity (see Young, 2007). Consequently, a new social order has arisen that gives prominence to new social relationships and identities structured around consumption over production. The concept of postmodernity is used here to sensitize the social scientist to the significant transformations and cultural shifts that are occurring in contemporary society.

A key component of postmodern thinking, and indeed one way of interpreting the approach, is its rejection of metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984). If 'modern' knowledge associated with grand narratives reflects the structure of the society that produces it (hence, the legitimacy of 'truth' in modernity is legitimized via 'modern' universal customs and belief systems), then for Lyotard (1984), postmodern thinking discards the idea of any universal truth. The grand narratives that once established and legitimised themselves on logical and empirical grounds are rendered untenable in postmodern society as the transition to post-industrialism brings in new advancements in science, communication and technology. Thus, knowledge is no longer considered



a collective 'truth' as science can no longer 'represent the totality of knowledge' (Lyotard, 1984). Instead, in postmodernity there is a difference and diversity of beliefs and systems of knowledge. Therefore, knowledge is seen as culturally relative and structured around a plurality of 'language games' that make no claims about an absolute truth. A multitude of discourses and theoretical frameworks therefore exist within postmodern theory, 'all of which are determined locally, not legitimated externally' (Cilliers, 1998:114).

A second way of interpreting postmodernism is to understand it periodically as a break with many of the certainties associated with modernism. This approach has significance to the research undertaken here in terms of a move towards 'disorganised capitalism' (Lash and Urry, 1994) and shifting identities (Bauman, 1992; Maffesoli, 1996). In contrast to Lyotard's (1984) rejection of the metanarrative, the neo-Marxists Frederic Jameson and David Harvey relate the social transformations associated with postmodernity to changes in organised capitalism. For Jameson (1989), postmodernism is identified as 'the cultural logic of late capitalism', a 'late' phase characterised by an economic system producing new forms of cultural identity to insure its longevity. Similarly, Harvey (1989) in the *Condition of Postmodernity* grounds his account of societal change in an analysis of the transition from 'Fordist' to 'post-Fordist' modes of production. The restructuring of production methods to new 'post-Fordist method of 'flexible accumulation', is understood here as being:

'Marked by a direct confrontation with the rigidities of Fordism. It rests on flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour market, products, and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets and above all, greatly

intensified rates of commercial, technological and organizational innovation'. (Harvey, 1989:147)

Post-Fordist production and flexible accumulation, then, is typified by a need to react to the demand of fluid, 'niche' market place. Traditional, vertically integrated manufacturing units are replaced by flexible, smaller production units. New technologies are introduced to increase the acceleration of production, whilst the previous Fordist employment patterns are replaced by a smaller, short term, de-unionised workforce. Inevitably, these changes have had the most profound effects on former industrial and manufacturing heartlands; the 'Rustbelt' states of the Midwestern and North Eastern United States, and the North East of England are two examples here where the movement from Fordist to post-Fordist economies has destabilised the traditional aspects of collective cultural identities (Linkon and Russo, 2003; Nayak, 2006). Although Harvey (1989) sees the transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist epoch as central to postmodernism, he suggests that a continuity exists between the two eras. His major contribution is therefore, that although 'there has certainly been a sea-change in the surface appearance of capitalism since 1973...the underlying logic of capitalist accumulation and its crisis remains the same' (Harvey, 1989:189). Thus, although the economic structure remains unchanged, a new cultural logic has materialised in the postmodern world. In connecting these cultural transformations to the capitalist system, Jameson suggests that we are witnessing a move into 'late capitalism' where there is 'a prodigious expansion of capital into hitherto uncommodified areas' (Jameson, 1984:78). The Marxist framework is thus considered necessary to understanding these cultural changes associated with a new era of capitalism characterised by modern, multinational enterprise. As others have observed (e.g. Featherstone, 1989; Ritzer, 2008), this appears an updated version of

Marx's base-superstructure argument, although Jameson (1984) goes some way to describing the relationship between the economy and the cultural in greater complexity by arguing that we have progressed from 'monopoly' and 'market' epochs of capitalism to a 'multinational' era associated with postmodernity, in which culture:

'Has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function to aesthetic innovation and experimentation'. (Jameson, 1984:11)

The Neo-Marxist take on postmodernism, appropriately, connects economy to culture, whereby capitalism maintains itself through spawning a new cultural logic. The 'inner logic' (Harvey, 1989:345) of capitalism therefore produces a society which is characterised by consumption. Conflict that was once restricted to production is now very much a part of cultural life (Harvey, 1989; Bauman, 1992) as consumption becomes the 'hub around which the life-world rotates' (Bauman, 1992:49), as Harvey goes on to suggest:

'The struggles that were once exclusively waged in the arena of production have, as a consequence, now spilled outwards to make of cultural production an arena of fierce social conflict. Such a shift entails a definite change in consumer habits and attitudes as well as a new role aesthetic definitions and interventions. While some would argue that the counter-culture movements of the 1960's created an environment of unfulfilled needs and repressed desires that postmodernist popular cultural production has merely set out to satisfy as best it can in commodity form, others would suggest that capitalism, in order to sustain its markets, has been forced to produce desire and so titillate individual sensibilities as to create a new aesthetic over and against traditional forms of high culture'. (Harvey, 1989:63)

## Cultural Criminology and Consumer Culture: Understanding Youth in Contemporary Post-industrial Society

The following sections intends to provide an overview of recent takes on the sociology of youth, notably, how the globalisation of production (i.e. post-industrialisation) and the rapid diversification of social experience brought by globalised communications, the rise of the consumer society, and the erosion of universal welfare, has ‘unmade’ cultural forms that had previously been kept stable by structural continuities and the socially reproductive character of the welfare state. In expanding on this argument, this section also considers how in the context of increasingly de-standardised trajectories, consumption-facilitated cultural differentiation serves to reproduce existing social divisions. Indeed, as this section will explore, the most economically disadvantaged, having been denied participation in the consumer economy and the promised opportunities for identity construction, must either accommodate ‘spoiled’ identities, transcend significant structural boundaries or find alternative strategies. Hence, any understanding of contemporary youth and governmental responses, as will be explored in the ensuing chapter, requires an engagement with social change.

In this section I therefore detail two more accounts offering insight into the relationship between post-industrial production and its social consequences, market-driven consumer culture, young people’s cultural practices and crime/transgression. To begin with, I discuss the work associated with cultural criminologists, before discussing the work of contemporary sociologists working in the field of youth studies.

Cultural criminologists working in the latest incarnation of this tradition selectively build upon the research and principles of the CCCS, although conclude that contemporary society ‘is a good deal more intense and indeterminate than the one that confronted the members of the Birmingham school in the 1970s, not least because the

desire to consume is so universal and pervasive, confronting us at every turn, bombarding us with an unprecedented array of aspirational messages' (Hayward, 2004:8, cited in Martin, 2009:125). Theoretically, the main influences come from a hybridisation of phenomenology, interactionism, radical criminology and the aforementioned Neo-Marxist and postmodern perspectives associated with the Birmingham School and post-subculturalists respectively.

Indeed, cultural criminologists have regularly emphasised the epochal shift from modernism to postmodernism (e.g. Baudrillard, 1981; Lyotard, 1984; Jameson, 1991) and the subsequent move from 'industrial to consumer culture' that has 'affected the practical life-world, moral codes and the *habitus*' of a traditional industrial working-class' (Winlow, Hall and Ancrum, 2008:21). Hence, new, neoliberal modes of governance, the post-industrial terrain characterised by new 'flexible', short-term forms of employment in place of once stable, traditional working-class forms of employment, unregulated consumerism, now a 'kaleidoscope of choice and presumed preference' (Ferrell et al., 2008:58), and the heightened importance of self-identity and individualism have all come to engender new forms of social disruption, 'ontological insecurity' (Young, 1999) and individual precariousness that now permeate the sphere of contemporary social life:

'On one level...late modern dislocations create great human potential...At another level, these late modern uncertainties spawn great human misery, forcing into the foreground feelings of profound insecurity, social vertigo, even existential emptiness. From within this predicament, the choices are twofold: to chance, reinvent and resist, or to choose to deny choice itself, retreat to essentialist and fundamentalist notions of oneself and others'. (Ferrell et al., 2008:60)

These transformations underpin the cultural criminologists focus on a number of theoretical approaches that encapsulate the key features of cultural criminology. *Phenomenologically*<sup>25</sup>, cultural criminologists seek to uncover the ‘phenomenology of crime’ to help elucidate the cultural responses of those caught in post-industrial circumstances. Cultural criminologists therefore reject orthodox criminology’s positivistic and rational choice approach (Ferrell et al., 2008), and instead draw on the work of Jack Katz (1988) in an attempt to elucidate the ‘pleasure of crime’ and existential motives for transgressive behaviour. Katz, in his book *Seductions of Crime* (1988), favours the subjective, lived experience of the individual, viewing forms of deviance as a ‘thrill of transgression’ or ‘a way of overcoming the predictability and mundane realities typically associated with the banal routines of everyday ‘regular life’ (Hayward, 2004:149). Thus, for cultural criminologists, transgression is an attempt at regaining a degree of self-awareness and an illusion of control in a contradictory social environment:

‘Teenage criminal practices such as vandalism, theft, and destruction of cars, fire starting, mugging, hoax emergency call-outs, car ‘cruising’, peer group violence and other forms of street delinquency all have much to do with youth expression and exerting control in neighbourhoods where, more often than not, traditional avenues for youthful stimulation and endeavour have long since evaporated’. (Hayward, 2004:149-150)

Marginalised by social and economic positions and subject to feelings of disillusionment, ontological insecurity and precariousness (Young, 1999), transgressive behaviour enables one to ‘seize control of one’s destiny’ (Hayward,

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<sup>25</sup> As a philosophical ‘movement’, the origins of phenomenology can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, evolving out of the work of its founder, the philosopher and mathematician, Edmund Husserl. In its broadest sense, phenomenology can be described as the study of ‘structures of consciousness’ obtained via first-person ‘experiences’ or ‘points of view’ (Husserl, 1999). The philosophical approach is therefore concerned with the study of the conscious experiences and reflexive accounts of the individual’s social world, and existence. How individuals experience their lives, and attribute subjective, first-hand ‘meaning’ to these specific social experiences, characterises the methodology of phenomenology.

2004:152). Katz alludes to the examples of shoplifting, armed robbery and murder, but one can also apply other forms of 'transgressive' behaviour that characterise some contemporary youth cultures; gang affiliation, drug taking, hooliganism, graffiti, and so forth. These moments neatly capture the spontaneous, pleasurable and creative forms of self-actualisation that are often impeded in a highly predictable, mundane world. The value of the work associated with cultural criminologists, then, is their view that transgressive behaviour functions as a way of exerting control, a route out of the 'hyper-banalisation' (Hayward, 2004:152) of everyday life and the internal contradictions of a consumer society; the tedious, repetitive experiences that become more vivid for the 'subject' affected by acute changes in the social structure that promises self-actualisation, choice and freedom, yet are overcome by the mundanity of regulated leisure time and designated 'play' areas (Hayward, 2004).

Of equal significance to the cultural criminologists is the impact of unregulated consumerism on the cultural, creative and transgressive identities of working-class youth. For the cultural criminologists, 'consumption and consumerism are now accepted as key contexts for the constructions of youth identities in de-industrialized Britain' in response to 'the pressures and anxieties created by enforced adaptation to consumer capitalism' (Winlow and Hall, 2009:91). Here, cultural criminologists offer a 'diluted version of subculture' (Martin, 2009:125) whereby new, contemporary identities are characterised by their free-floating, transient nature (Ferrell et al., 2008; Hall et al., 2008; Hall and Winlow, 2009). The cultural criminologist's commitment to diversity and expression via cultural commodities thus adheres to the post-subculturalists theorisation of fluid and transitory cultural identities existing in postmodernity. Yet, in an attempt to evade 'failing to recognise the wider social and structural contexts within which crime, indeed all individual experience, takes place'

(Hayward, 2004:151), the cultural criminologists remain bounded to the significance of structural and social contexts in which identities and criminality arise. Their approach therefore does not creep back into a blind post-subcultural overview where structural factors are marginalised from social agency.

Accordingly, criminologists working in the latest incarnation of cultural criminology (e.g. Hayward, 2004; 2012; Hall et al., 2008; Winlow and Hall, 2008; 2012; Treadwell et al., 2013) align their argument with those of postmodern theorists to illustrate the damaging effects of unregulated consumerism on the cultural and criminal identities of those located on the socioeconomic margins of postmodern, consumer capitalism. Hence, the cultural criminologists view society as one characterised by individualism, fragmentation and severe social competition that exacerbates the social divisions triggered by neoliberal economic restructuring (Harvey, 2011; Zizek, 2011); a society in which economic crisis looms as the features of modernity give way to the flux and uncertainty of postmodernity (Harvey, 1989; Bauman, 2002); and a society in which those unable to successfully navigate and partake in the consumer culture that now defines youth populations find themselves increasingly marginalized (Bauman, 2002; 2011). The contradictory processes of consumer culture in postmodernity has therefore resulted in a distinct polarization between those engaged fully in the consumer market, and those who are marginal from it. To illustrate, in their analysis of the 2011 summer riots that occurred in several English cities following the police shooting of an alleged criminal, Mark Duggan, Treadwell et al., (2013:8) conclude that the riots involved youths who were predominantly ‘discarded and left to rot on marginalized housing estates, [through being] unable legitimately to acquire the lifestyle symbolism validated by consumer culture’. Hence, subjected daily to the symbolic violence of ‘the magical success of consumer capitalism’s winners’ and



without any collective political unity through which they could articulate their disaffection, Treadwell et al., (2013) frankly conclude:

‘when these young people struggle against consumer-constructed images of each other in a political vacuum, they realize that they will always fall far short of the spending power required to live the lifestyle that they are constantly told they want and feel they must have; this generates permanent, corrosive and objectless dissatisfaction. The real lesson for these young people...is that, lacking cultural and symbolic capital as they struggle to find a place in advanced capitalism’s competitive socio-economic relations, the majority of them are very likely to be losers and remain so for the rest of their lives’. (Treadwell et al., 2013:15)

This reading is strongly related to Bauman’s concept of ‘flawed consumers’, a term coined to describe those marginal to the consumer market in postmodern society. The following passage neatly summarises the term:

‘As in all other kinds of society, the poor of a consumer society are people with no access to a normal life, let alone a happy one. In a consumer society...having no access to a happy or merely a normal life means to be consumer’s *manquées*, or flawed consumers. And so the poor of a consumer society are socially defined, and self-defined...as blemished, defective, faulty and deficient – in other words inadequate consumers...Overcoming that consumer inadequacy is likely to be seen as the only remedy – the sole exit from a humiliating plight’. (Bauman 2002:38)

The cultural criminologists work therefore offers a far more sustained and critical view of consumerism than their Marxist and post-subcultural contemporaries. For example, the CCCS’ theorisation of consumption was based on ‘symbolic aspects of subcultural consumption at the expense of the actual *meanings* that young consumers have for the goods they consume’ (Miles, 1995:8, emphasis in original). Commodities were thus seen as a method to resist structural contradictions, and hence, the CCCS never fully considered the extent to which increased economic resources and consumer choice

became available to young people in the post-war era (Bennett, 1999). On the other hand, the post-subculturalists appear to over-emphasise the economic resources of young people and the degree to which they can readily access cultural commodities. In contrast to these positions, the cultural criminologists' approach documents the feelings of bleak disillusionment and precariousness that many marginalized, resource-poor youth populations experience in postmodernity (Hall and Winlow, 2005; Hall et al., 2008; Winlow and Hall, 2008). They also focus on the plight of those unable to partake in the consumer economy, the 'underclass'; 'a marginalised, depoliticised and redundant rump permanently at the bottom of Britain's supposedly fluid social hierarchy' (Hall et al., 2008:27) who are 'left behind, disinherited or degraded, shut off or excluded from the social feast to which others have gained entry' (Bauman, 2002:38). The work of the cultural criminologists also contextualises their argument in an understanding of the often effective solutions employed by those excluded from the consumer market *not* to appear flawed and disqualified (Hall et al., 2008; Winlow and Hall, 2012; Treadwell et al., 2013). Indeed, for young, working-class men residing in locales of structural unemployment, permanent recession and increasing crime rates, where displaying the symbolic goods ensures cultural and social acceptance (see Hall et al., 2008, Winlow and Hall, 2008), to remain fully embedded in the consumer culture often means sourcing economic resources through any possible means. This view, associated with much of the work of cultural criminologists, sees crime as an instrumental resource for achieving positions of social merit; techniques of 'social mobility' for many young people in economic and socially marginalised communities (Hall et al., 2008; Treadwell et al., 2013). According to the cultural criminologists then, young people searching for a sense of identity in the

postmodern world are resorting to extreme methods of gaining a foothold in the social hierarchy of the consumer market place.

The approach of the cultural criminologists has a number of positive features. Firstly, they contextualise their argument against the backdrop of neoliberal forms of governance, unregulated consumer-driven capitalism, post-industrialisation, and individual ontological insecurity and precariousness. The cultural criminologists combine this with the phenomenological approach of Jack Katz to understand the subjective, lived experience of 'transgressive' behaviour within this context. Appropriately, the cultural criminologists also recognise the deleterious effects of consumerism in postmodernity; the increasing polarization between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', the relentless means through which people will go to consume, and the consequences of unbridled advertising on those marginal, underprivileged members of society (see Hall et al., 2008; Winlow and Hall, 2012; Treadwell et al., 2013). Importantly, their critical view towards consumerism connects these forces to various forms of criminality, identity and the many forms of 'transgression' that occur as a means of 'seizing control' in a postmodern world beset by uncertainty (Hayward, 2004). Thus, merging Katz idea of 'thrill of transgression' with the ideas associated with unregulated consumerism, post-industrialism and neoliberal forms of governance helps explicate the many changing identities and emotional responses engendered by consumerism (Ferrell et al., 2004; Martin, 2009; Winlow and Hall, 2009), and the new forms of 'thrill seeking' activities and practices that characterise collective youth identities (Ferrell et al., 2009; Martin, 2009; see also Hobbs, 2013). Hence, for Martin (2009:135), the subcultural 'solutions' that enable young people to affirm a degree of control over their lives within a post-industrial terrain can be found in 'acts of

transgression (possibly crime-related), the practice of more mundane activities (e.g. hanging out in street corner ‘gangs’) as well as expression in dress and ‘style’.

### Advanced Marginality

There is no doubt that urban inequalities, relative deprivation and the issue of social exclusion which have given rise to crime and the anxieties surrounding it have gained in intensity over recent years (Young, 1999). In a neo liberal, globalised world, individuals are experiencing acute economic and social changes that preceding generations did not encounter (Byrne, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Young, 2007). Occurring, is a shift into what Wacquant (2008) refers to as ‘advanced marginality’, whereby new forms of *physical* and *social* exclusion fashioned and produced out of new modes of neoliberal governance. In effect, the deleterious manifestations of neoliberal governance relate the repositioning of the working-classes at the foot of a new neoliberal social hierarchy, relegated to concentrated areas of urban deprivation that bear the brunt of stigmatisation and perceived as ‘spaces of relegation’ (Wacquant, 2008:232) ‘where residents...and their children have little chance of knowing a future other than the poverty and exclusion to which they are consigned at present’ (Wacquant, 2008:29). The prefix advanced refers to the process through which marginality is advancing; spawned out of the continual global spread and roll out of neo liberal governance (Harvey, 2005). Hence, for the sociologist, it is necessary to identify the macro sociological structures that maintain the hegemonic order, which can subsequently be countered by counter-hegemonic strategies (Freire, 1979; Wacquant, 2008:233).

For Wacquant, these structural processes (referred to as ‘violence from above’) have resulted in a polarization of the social structure and ‘produced a *dualization of the*

*social and physical structure of the metropolis* that has consigned large sections of the unskilled labour force to economic redundancy and social marginality' (Wacquant, 2008:285). This structural 'violence' is formed of three main components. Firstly, *mass unemployment* during the 1980's and 1990's brought with it material deprivation, hardship and ontological insecurity and anxiety for a number of working-class communities. Secondly, the *Relegation to decaying neighbourhoods* through the reduction in public and private resources and increase in immigration has deepened competition for admission to limited public services. Finally, intensified *stigmatization* of working-class communities by wider society is connected to the former processes and the powerful stigma attached to those residing in these 'no go areas', and has led to the exclusion of working-class communities both in terms of the labour market and civil society. Thus, as White and Cuneen (2006:19-20) argue, 'Many young people in 'modern' and 'advanced' industrial societies are not simply marginal to the labour markets, they are literally excluded from it – by virtue of family history, structural restrictions on education and job choices, geographical location, racial and ethnic segregation, stigmatised individual and community reputation'

A sociological approach therefore represents, it would seem, the most 'reality-authentic' approach to the study of contemporary youth cultures in post-industrial, post-Fordist, consumer-driven society. In Britain, writers associated with recent incarnations of youth cultural studies have espoused such a method. Here, the most productive writers towards this end are Robert MacDonald and associates at the University of Teesside (2001; 2005; 2007; 2011) and their studies of youth transitions in neighbourhoods of urban and socio-economic decay, and Anoop Nayak (2003; 2006). Nayak's work is primarily based upon participant observation of young, working-class 'lads' in Newcastle with emphasis accorded to their 'displaced'

identities and changing transitions within the context of a move to post-industrial forms of employment (Nayak, 2003; 2006). These studies remain loyal to the original CCCS approach by focusing on young people drawn from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, yet have the ‘sociological nous’ to locate their analysis within the deleterious conditions of neoliberalism and post-industrialism. Hence for these scholars, the ‘choices’ and identities of young people can only be understood through an analysis of the dynamic between individual lifestyles and social-structural inequalities:

‘The movement from school to the labour market, albeit now through more circuitous pathways, has been the stock in trade of transitions studies but these cannot be understood in isolation from the wider domains of young people’s lives, including how youth cultural identities shape and are shaped by the transitions people make’. (MacDonald, 2011:438)

Nayak’s work offers a rich ethnography of working-class adolescents that provides an insightful exploration of one group of ‘lads’ changing experiences of identity, employment and forms of leisure *vis-à-vis* new forms of post-industrial employment. Again, his work contains a more critical reading of the structural inequalities shaping these communities and identities of young men, concluding that different youth cultural identities can only be explained through first understanding their cultural identities, before mapping these back to the socio-economic terrain of post-industrial, North East England. His work also alludes to the significance of place, locality, regional identities and notably, social class in fashioning young groups and identities; for Nayak, class ‘is stitched into codes of respect, accent, dress, music, bodily adornment and comportment’ (Nayak, 2006:828). He therefore differs from the work of post-subculturalists who argue for the erosion of social class in the postmodern

epoch due to the identities that can be readily shaped via modes of consumption. Instead, Nayak (2006) looks at the various *intra*-class responses of those to postmodern transformations: while some working-class men were found to embrace consumer culture, those on the economic margins remained alienated by it and gravitated towards those ‘mundane’ activities that cultural criminologists have referred to (Ferrell et al., 2008). This included ‘street corner society’ (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006) and the eventual pursuit of more ‘exciting’, ‘transgressive’ leisure pursuits linked to drug taking and the attending of illegal raves (Nayak, 2006).

Elsewhere, the Teesside studies of youth transitions in neighbourhoods of deprivation in the North East of England echo Nayak’s (2003; 2006) claim regarding the importance of understanding structural and economic issues in shaping youth cultural identities and practices (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005, Shildrick et al., 2013). Similarly, they are also critical of the supposed decline of class associated with postmodernity. For Shildrick and MacDonald (2006), issues of class that are redundant in the post-subculturalists’ account remain a dominant feature of contemporary youth cultural identity. Their work therefore questions the relevance and applicability of the post-subculturalists’ focus on classless, ‘spectacular’ and transitory youth cultures, and instead espouses an approach that focuses on ‘ordinary and less advantaged young people’ whose ‘leisure lives and consumption practices remain imbued with the facts of material and social circumstances’ (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007:136). Indeed, for working-class youth cultures associated with criminal and drug markets, ‘street corner society...remains a central element of working – class *subcultural* identity’ (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007:132, emphasis in original).

From their ethnography and understanding of youth transitions in post-industrial, post-Fordist settings, MacDonald and Marsh (2005) also stress the ‘class cultural inheritance’ evident within their sample. Hence, although the post-industrial, economic base has been significantly reformed from one once associated with industrial labour to one now populated by service and self-employed sectors, young people in these neighbourhoods, like the previous generation of their parents (who, at least, had traditional forms of industrial labour to find employment in) remain economically marginal, unemployed or excluded from the labour market (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005).

Their ethnographic focus on youth cultures as regional, class-based responses to structural and economic inequality (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007) is reminiscent of the work of the Marxist inspired Birmingham School. It also reflects the recent calls of Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts to understand and ‘attempt to connect the phenomena of youth subcultures to a general social and cultural historical analysis of the social formation’ (Jefferson and Hall, 2006:viii). In this sense, their work continues the established, rich ethnographic approaches within British social sciences, and also forms part of a resurgence within youth cultural studies linked to the subcultural responses of young people to social inequality (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007). For these sociologists, ‘mundane’ activities such as hanging around on street corners and the associated ‘exciting’ activities that break the ‘hyper-banality’ (Hayward, 2004) of everyday life constitute solutions to ‘subcultural problems’ (Hayward and Young, 2004; Martin, 2009). As such, youth cultural identities *today* are interpreted as a ‘reaction to analogous transformations in working-class identity, community and culture, now taking place in the context of consumer capitalism’ (Martin, 2009:138).



Hence, their commitments to structural, 'background' factors avoids the post-subculturalists' thesis on the decline of the significance of class in postmodernity. For these recent writers, class is still a useful, analytical category through which to view youth identities, as are other structural factors related to ethnicity, gender and place (Nayak, 2003; 2006). The ethnographic methods employed by recent scholars in the field of youth cultural identities and cultural criminology provides critical insight into the everyday lives of those working-class young adults bearing the brunt of post-industrial transformations, ontological insecurity (Young, 1999) unemployment (MacDonald et al., 2005), and the search for a degree of self-identity in conditions of unregulated consumerism, which for many young people, is beyond their control.

#### Conclusion: Towards a New Reading of Contemporary Young Men

The cultural, postmodern and ethnographic approaches reviewed in this chapter all attempt to analyse young people's cultural identities under changing social conditions. Methodologically, all of the explanations of youth cultural identities locate their analysis within rich ethnographic approaches, continuing the ethnographic tradition prevalent within British studies of youth cultures. They also provide insights and commentaries on the construction of youth identities, albeit from contrasting epistemological positions; the CCCS and their Marxist, class-based account of 'rituals of resistance'; the post-subculturalists 'classless', transitory, fragmented youth cultural identities; and the theoretical hybridization and ethnographic approach of cultural criminologists and contemporary writers on youth studies. Apart from the post-subculturalists, each school of thought identifies a broader socio-economic structure in the construction of young identities. Nevertheless, the post-subcultural commitment to defining youth under conditions of postmodernity does provide the

sociologist with a framework through which to understand the autonomous, individualistic expressions of cultural identity. From this perspective, youth cultural groups are seen as a result of individual lifestyle choices; consumption is the ‘chimera of choice in constructing subcultural identities’ (Blackman, 2005:12), and is thus detached from any explanation of the trajectories of young people engendered by social and cultural structures of society. The earlier work of the CCCS however, locates subcultures within a Marxist framework, viewing subcultural practices of working-class youth as a response to uncontrolled post-war economic restructuring and increasing social inequality. The cultural criminologists draw selectively from a plethora of theoretical perspectives including interactionism, critical criminology and the Marxist inspired work of the CCCS. This is underpinned by theories of postmodernity and the hybrid identities that are constructed and reconstructed via the broad connections of consumerism, subcultures and crime. The cultural criminologists elaborate this reading by identifying the ‘thrill’ of transgressive behaviour in response to the mundane, ‘hyper-banal’, postmodern, consumer society. The work of writers associated with recent analyses of youth cultures, although not strictly related to cultural criminology or the CCCS, shares a number of commonalities with both approaches, notably; their contextualisation of youth cultures and behaviour within broader socio and structural contexts; a concern with ‘ordinary’, working-class cultures; a focus on ‘mundane’ practices such as ‘street corner society’ in response to economic and consumer marginality (Nayak, 2006; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006); and the significance of social class in shaping youth cultural identities (Nayak, 2003; 2006, Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006).

As I have noted earlier, the weaknesses of the arguments expounded by each school of thought generally relates to issues of structure and agency. The over deterministic

Marxist teleology of the CCCS, and the post-subculturalists failure to deal with issues of class and socio-economic structures, as well as their uncritical view of consumer culture, are the respective flaws of these two positions. The more recent work by cultural criminologists and youth researchers have correctly identified these weaknesses and have attempted to transcend this dichotomy with an analysis of contemporary cultural identities of youth against a backdrop of post-Fordism and 'advanced marginality' (Wacquant, 2008). The application of this method derives from their in depth, qualitative ethnographic engagement.

What is clear, however, is that the political economy that once defined youth subcultures - in line with the traditional Birmingham School approach – has now disintegrated, gradually fragmenting the traditional youth cultures that were once defined by the ecology of the working-class street or neighbourhood (Winlow and Hall, 2004; Hobbs, 2013). The gentrification of once working-class neighbourhoods has also led to an erosion of working-class cultures and forms of leisure entrenched in working-class parochialism. Stripped of the traditional industrial determinants that once fashioned the subcultural identities that dominated working-class community and street life, and where forms of delinquency and criminal behaviour were reliant upon this particular industrial, urban milieu, the subcultural thesis is somewhat outdated in the contemporary era. Neighbourhoods that have undergone de-industrialisation and subsequent regeneration have enabled the dissolution of once traditional forms of youth culture and behaviour, and removed the material foundation upon which traditional youth subcultures were established (Hobbs, 1988; 2006; 2013). The identities, cultures, and youthful collaborations that were created within the context of an industrial period have now changed, and the realities of contemporary post-industrial life mean that the territorial based youthful cultures that once 'accepted their

proletarian occupational futures and looked forward to traditional forms of leisure’ (Hobbs, 2013:115) no longer exist in the contemporary, ‘advanced marginal’ era.

Indeed, we have already seen how Neighbourhoods A and B are now fragmented urban outposts of high unemployment, low income, and also immersed in traditional established markets of criminality (see Hobbs, 1988; Winlow, 2001). In the void created by post-industrialism, young people are now seeking alternative ways to construct identity and forge transitions into employment, and in the process adapting to the shifting economic terrain by seeking and carving out new niches in which to make a post-industrial ‘living’ (see also Hobbs, 2001; 2013).

In this post-industrial context, where youth are making increasingly fragmented transitions into employment, forms of youth leisure and delinquent ‘road culture’<sup>26</sup> are becoming increasingly ‘commodified’ (Winlow, 2004; Hobbs, 2013) within both neighbourhoods, as youth seek alternatives to the mundane reality of post-industrial, ‘McJobs’ (Hobbs, 2013). Drug dealing, theft, and street robbery are now ‘normalised’ activities for some of the participants who ‘make use’ of the SBI; a quick way to make a living in an urban context where traditional forms of employment and community have dissolved. Such activities also enable one to construct distinct identities that, in an era of intense personal competition and unregulated consumerism, enables one to gain respect, engender excitement and fun (Ferrell et al., 2008), and in the process, gain a foothold in the consumer market place by ‘getting paid’ (Hobbs, 2013:122).

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<sup>26</sup> ‘Road’ culture or ‘Road life’ as it has been referred to elsewhere (Gunter, 2008) refers to the street activities of a collective of young males explored in this thesis. I have used the term ‘Road’ in line with the terms application amongst London youth. Hence, ‘Road’ life can be used interchangeably with ‘Street’ life, as it would be referred to in other urban locales in the UK. I follow Gunter’s (2008) definition of ‘Road life’, understood here as being: ‘not about rebellion or hedonism, rather it is centred upon meeting up with friends, ‘hanging on Road’, attending the youth club, raving, looking ‘links’ and ‘catching joke’. In essence, Road life is about friendships, routine and the familiar or doing nothing (Corrigan, 1979)’

Hence, from recent studies associated with the connection between socio-economic processes and the production of ‘marginal’ groups (Wacquant, 2008; Shildrick et al., 2013), I identify two central themes relevant to this thesis, notably: the ethnographic methods as a means of representing the lives of young people within microstructural settings; and the situating of social agency *vis-à-vis* youth cultural practices and behaviour within the context of advanced marginal societies.

The ethnographic methods favoured by Wacquant (2004; 2008) provides an important methodological tool for the study of contemporary youth cultures. The approach enables one to capture the lived social experiences of social actors and decode the symbolic importance of social, cultural and regional factors in *their* terms (Nayak, 2003; 2006; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007). Ethnographic examples focusing on the social experiences of young people within a British context include Parker’s (1974) study of young men from inner city Liverpool; Robins’ and Cohen’s (1978) research on a North London community in *Knuckle Sandwich*; and Corrigan’s (1979) analysis of youth in Sunderland in *Smash Street Kids*.

Secondly, in an attempt to transcend the cultural studies’ and post-subcultural studies’ respective weaknesses of economic determinism and exaggerated cultural freedom of social agents, I seek to contextualise the ‘lived’ experiences of young people within an age of ‘advanced marginality’ (Wacquant, 2008). I argue that Wacquant’s concept of advanced marginality applies neatly to the de-industrialised locales researched in this thesis. Both locales represent two post-industrial neighbourhoods which are experiencing the deleterious effects of the changes associated with the process.

Hence, I draw on ideas associated with advanced marginality to understand cultural practices and identities in the context of post-industrialism, unregulated consumerism

and new modes of neoliberal governance. I will go on to argue that the North East of England and London represent two fascinating case studies through which to explore the contemporary identities and transitions of young, working-class men in the context of a post-industrial, advanced marginal landscape. For this new epoch presents a number of social and cultural consequences for young, working-class men's identities and transitional experiences. In understanding these experiences, I attempt to reveal how the contemporary identities of social actors relate to these post-industrial changes.

### **Chapter 3: SBIs and the Regulation of Post-industrial Youth**

In the opening chapter I have examined various academic explanations for youth cultural identities, highlighting how these cultural descriptions have been shaped and fashioned by the broader social and political transformations associated with the transition from an industrial to post-industrial epoch. We have already seen how, against a backdrop of irretrievable economic decline that has impacted considerably on youth, the theoretical underpinnings upon which previous scholars have framed their work are no longer reliable. Present day young people now populate an increasingly fragmented post-industrial social terrain in which working-class transitions to adulthood are no longer linear or stable, the result of which is the arrival of distinct forms of youthful collaborations, cultures and ‘deviant’ behaviours (Hobbs, 2013). As such, I have concluded with a ‘fresh’ approach intending to capture these youthful collaborations within the present context of a post-industrial, ‘advance marginal’ urban environment. By following a similar line of enquiry, this chapter charts the evolving forms of youth governance that have advanced in England over recent years in the context of social, political and cultural transformations. I follow these developments to the present day, juxtaposing forms of youth governance with significant social developments which have contributed to the changing political and social preferences toward the governance of young people.

The matters addressed underpin an examination of the role played by SBIs within broader, neoliberal strategies of youth governance. Within this chapter, I therefore contribute to the field of SBI analysis by locating how the services influencing and determining forms of SBI delivery – criminal justice, sport policy and youth work – have been characterised by neoliberal forms of governance that populate the era of ‘advanced marginality’ (Wacquant, 2008). These changes, I argue, have legitimised new, alternative forms of intervention to ‘deal’ with youth cultures redefined by the conditions of a post-industrial economic base and an increasingly socially insecure population (Young, 2009; Wacquant, 2009). Within this, SBIs are increasingly used to contribute to the ‘regulation’ of inner city youth, thus forming a significant component ‘of the neoliberal policy repertoire...aimed at generating social order in disadvantaged inner city neighbourhoods’ (Spaaij, 2009:247).

## Neoliberal Governance and Welfare Retrenchment

The late 1970's witnessed a transformation in political and economic practices, as the newly elected Thatcher government exerted their neoliberal agenda in a diversity of policy areas (Harvey, 2005:22). Strongly influenced by a theoretical framework opposed to Keynesian state interventionist theories, Thatcher's political agenda was 'a revolution in fiscal and social policies', representing a 'fierce determination to have done with the institutions and political ways of the social democratic state that has been consolidated in Britain after 1945' (Harvey, 2005:22-23). Based on an ideology of free market principles that endorsed private property, individual autonomy and entrepreneurial freedoms, the Conservative government of the 1980's sought to reform the British economy via:

'confronting trade union power, attacking all forms of social solidarity that hindered competitive flexibility (such as those expressed through municipal governance, and including the power of many professionals and their associations), dismantling or rollback the commitments of the welfare state, the privatization of public enterprises (including social housing), reducing taxes, encouraging entrepreneurial initiative, and creating a favourable business climate to induce a strong inflow of foreign investment' (Harvey, 2005:23)

The social changes that instigated a shift in these policies and a retreat from welfare orientated ideologies are neatly detailed in Garland's (2001) *The Culture of Control*. For Garland (2001), criminal justice transformations were a significant consequence of these historical social shifts: social categories and classes that existed in modernity and provided support for welfare and state intervention had increasingly unstable attitudes toward the issue, instigated by altering demographic terrains, stratification and political loyalty that led influential sections of the working and middle class 'to change their attitudes towards many of these policies – to see them as being at odds



with their actuarial interests and as benefiting groups that were underserving and increasingly dangerous' (Garland, 2001:76). In this new 'advanced liberal' political context (see Rose, 2000), welfare policies intended for the most deprived were progressively viewed as 'expensive luxuries that hard-working tax-payers could no longer afford' (Garland, 2001:76). Through challenging the effectiveness of established welfare institutions, the politics of post-welfarism fashioned 'new group relations and social attitudes – attitudes that were most sharply defined in relation to the problems of crime, welfare, and social order' (Garland, 2001:76). These were 'often experienced and expressed as highly charged emotions of fear, resentment and hostility' and 'formed the social terrain upon which crime control policies were built in the 1980s and 1990s' (Garland, 2001:76).

The progression into a post-Fordist era of production then, directly influenced the terrain of political and social organisation. The political project of Thatcher instilled a framework based on the contradictory influences of neoliberalism and neo-conservatism; on the one hand emphasising individual freedoms and unregulated economic markets, whilst on the other emphasising moral discipline (Garland, 2001:98). Politically, this involved a 'rolling back of the state', whilst concurrently strengthening state institutions in an effort to become more authoritarian and regulatory than the previous Keynesian social framework. Establishing neoliberal influenced free markets would reverse the deleterious effects of the interventionist state, which was seen as the 'catch all' factor behind all of society's problems:

'It's faulty economic assumptions and permissive styles of thought lay at the root of all the new social and economic ills – low productivity, high taxes and inflation, the culture of dependency, declining respect for authority, the crisis of the family. The achievement of the welfare state were systematically discredited or

forgotten, and instead its limitations and failures came to stand centre-stage' (Garland, 2001:98).

Throughout the 1980's then, Thatcher's reversal of the cohesive elements of the welfare state, with its focus on equality and social justice, was characterised by neoliberal politics concerned with unregulated markets and 'an unquestioning faith in the value of competition, enterprise, and incentives, as well as in the salutary effects of inequality and exposure to risk' (Garland, 2001:99). Consequently, the political terrain of the 1980's was marked by the dismantling of trade unions, unregulated financial markets, the privatization of the public sector, a reduction of welfare benefits, and a decrease in labour cost (Garland, 2001, Harvey, 2005). Together with tax cuts for the most well off and a new wave of entrepreneurial elites accumulating fortunes, the upshot was a widening of social divisions and inequality as a 'skewed structure... encouraged the rich to work by making them richer and compelled the poor to work by making them poorer' (Harvey, 2005:99).

This period was also characterised by new ways of thinking about 'the underclass', clearly articulated in 'neo-conservative' theories of crime and delinquency associated with the work of US academics Charles Murray and James Q Wilson, and British counterparts Roger Scruton and Norman Dennis. Their brand of neo-conservative thinking was opposed to the left wing and liberal thought of the 1960s, which were seen as producing the social problems of succeeding years (Garland, 2001). Subsequently, the conservatives launched a moral campaign against forms of deviance, and political themes emphasising individual responsibility, self-regulated social actors and deterrence were firmly established in attempts to fashion a 'a more orderly, disciplined, more tightly controlled society' (Garland, 2001:99).

Conservative proposals for such tighter regulation and control of the population were contradictory with their neoliberal economic policies of laissez faire markets, which were simultaneously releasing the entrepreneurial freedoms of individuals and businesses from political and social regulation. Yet during this period social problems were considered heavily class-based, and hence social control became focused and targeted on specific social groups, namely, the working-class (Wacquant, 2009). Therefore, as the rich enjoyed increased freedom and individualism conveyed through post-Fordist, neoliberal economic markets, the poor were to become more disciplined and subjected to an upsurge of punitive policies that characterised the majority of post-war, neoliberal societies (Wacquant, 2008; 2009). Thus, neo-conservatism communicated a moral stance espousing a reappearance of family values, self-control and educational achievement, but in reality its approach was located in the regulation and control of the behaviour of the so-called 'underclass': the unemployed, welfare recipients, immigrants, and criminals (Garland, 2001; Wacquant, 2008; 2009).

Debates surrounding the 'behaviour' of the underclass became an illustrative justification for social, economic and political interventions that effectively exacerbated the plight of the poor, and legitimised the instalment of a disciplinary, punitive state (Wacquant, 2009). Crime was seen as a problem of indiscipline and unregulated social and self-control, 'a matter of wicked individuals who need to be deterred and who deserved to be punished' (Garland, 2001:102). Hence, instead of highlighting the social factors behind crime, anti-social behaviour came to be seen as a response to negligent and lenient criminal justice policies, and thus individual, rational criminal tendencies were able to prosper. In this social context, it was no surprise that social problems such as street crime, drug abuse, and violence amplified: under the Thatcher, the crime rate doubled in a decade (Garland, 2001:101).

During this time, the management of offenders was an issue of installing and improving crime control methods alongside the punitive management of the ‘most dangerous’ sectors of society. Hence:

‘Instead of idealism and humanity, penal policy discussions increasingly evoked cynicism about rehabilitative treatment, a distrust of penological experts, and a new righteousness about the importance and efficacy of punishment’. (Garland, 2001:102)

This tough stance on law and order was reflected in the Criminal Justice Act of 1982 and 1988, which introduced punitive measures relating to youth custody and parental fines, as well as the revitalisation of youth detention centres. However, alongside an increasingly punitive sentencing structure was the development of ‘administrative criminology’ ideals which superseded post-war liberal positivism (Garland, 2001). The position, which focused on the prevention rather than the causes of criminality, argued for more manageable and situational crime control techniques. Such an approach situated crime as a social phenomenon that can be ‘managed’, reflecting the Conservatives’ criminological ‘governmental project’ which emphasised their commitment to cutting public spending and the idea of the community functioning as a crime control strategy (Jefferson and Shapland, 1994). As such, the neoliberal political agenda of the conservatives spawned a ‘new culture of crime control’ (Garland, 2001:167-192) which sought to minimise criminal opportunities, enhance situational crime controls and prevent interactions with criminogenic conditions. This incorporated not only the efforts of criminal justice institutions, but also the development of ‘a new apparatus of prevention and security’ (Garland, 2001:170). This involved crime control agencies ‘beyond the state’, including the mobilisation of civil society, public and private partnerships, third sector agencies, and local

authorities whose activities focused on issues of crime and control whilst the state 'governed from a distance' (Garland, 2001:167). As Muncie (1999:345) suggests 'it was this ideological shift which opened the door to strategies of prevention, and to the incorporation of a whole number of central government departments, local authorities and voluntary agencies into the business of crime control'. This subsequently led to the resurgence of sport within governmental social policies.

Indeed, the 1981 inner city riots in Liverpool's Toxteth and South London's Brixton prompted a response from the government which positioned sport within a number of community crime prevention agencies to tackle social unrest and unemployment. The Scarman Report (1981), published in the immediate aftermath of the riots, referred to the public's mistrust and resentment of the police, noting how policing methods during these times 'can make the tensions which deprivation engenders worse' (Scarman, 1981:157). Consequently, sport featured in many police backed youth initiatives established to improve community relations (see Robins, 1990), based on the recommendations of the report which focused on not only community policing, housing, education provision and employment prospects for youth, but also on the 'need to educate children in the use of leisure' (Scarman, 1981:205). Similarly, high levels of unemployment in urban areas in the 1980s resulted in the government's approval of co-operative working between the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and the newly installed Sports Council to establish the Action Sport campaign. As Houlihan and White (2002) note, at the time the MSC was financially supporting a number of youth schemes attempting to tackle inner city youth unemployment, including the Community Programme which went on to finance a number of initiatives to support Action Sport interventions. At this time, the Sport Council's focus on inner city welfare was minimal. Yet the adoption of Action Sport ideals by the Sports

Council, however, was a response to growing concerns within the institution that bidding for grants on the basis of existing programmes was failing to attract treasury funding. Innovation was therefore needed, and the willingness of the Thatcher government to use sport as a tool for social and urban welfare provided the opportunity to attract further funding that would previously have been missed (Houlihan and White, 2002).

The Action Sport programme, generally considered ‘the forerunner of many subsequent sports development projects’ (Coalter, 2007:11), supplied local authorities in a number of inner city areas with funding of £1 million a year between 1982 and 1985. The objective of 15 Action Sport interventions operating in Birmingham and London was, in partnership with other social agencies, the development of sustainable sporting programmes for low-participant groups, such as the unemployed and ethnic minorities (Collins and Kay, 2003).

At the time of the inner city disturbances in 1981, the Sports Council was already pioneering a programme of smaller sports programme run in conjunction with local authorities and the MSC. Targeting areas of high unemployment with significant ethnic minority populations (Houlihan and White, 2002), schemes were established in the inner city districts of Leicester and Birmingham with the intention of reducing boredom and developing community leaders; an approach designed to produce ‘street leadership’ in view of inner city social problems, which could be merged with a sports related activity schemes (Robins, 1990:26). Similarly, welfare orientated ideals are found in the aims of the Action Sport programmes installed after the riots of 1981. Here, the aims included the development of positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity amongst ethnic minority, inner city youth along with the development

of a multi-agency sport leadership programme, of which the effects on the social behaviour and attitudes of target groups could be monitored (Rigg, 1986:9-10). Such was the success of programmes, by 1987 there were up to 300 community sports leaders employed by local authorities (Houlihan and White, 2002).

The introduction of Action Sport was significant for its promotion of sports development as a 'legitimate local authority activity' (Houlihan and White, 2002:38). The development of specific sport interventions within this agenda also signifies the origin of sports development activities within welfare policy. Indeed, a number of present-day SBIs, including the Home Office funded 'Positive Futures', have their organisational heritages within the Action Sport era (Coalter, 2007). During the 1980's a number of football clubs also created community sport schemes that still persist today: the Arsenal Community programme was created in the immediate aftermath of the 1981 riots and was supported by the Action Sport programme to provide an innovative programme to encourage sport participation amongst inner city youth and rejuvenate the urban environment. The idea within a number of Action Sport programmes that sports interventions can deliver opportunities for the creation of improved police and community relations has also continued: the Kickz programme continues to offer sporting projects run in conjunction with the police and community schemes associated with football clubs.

Criticisms levelled at the Action Sport campaign also reflect a number of contemporary concerns when assessing current sport based interventions (Crabbe et al., 2006). Coalter's (1988:6) assertion that Action Sport Interventions were not sufficient in increasing participation amongst low participation groups is a common concern amongst contemporary sport policy commentators (Crabbe, 2008). Moreover,

resembling current studies of the effectiveness of sports based employability programmes (Kelly, 2011; 2012; Spaaij et al., 2012), Rigg (1988:6) concluded that the programme was ineffective at providing an alternative to paid employment.

The replacement of Margaret Thatcher as Conservative Leader by John Major in 1990 and the installation of the Labour government in 1997 brought with it a number of changes that impacted upon youth justice, sport policy, and ultimately, the application of SBIs. Indeed, the early 1990s signified a major transformation in juvenile justice – subsequently altered to ‘youth justice’ – as both the Conservatives and the Labour party foregrounded tough, punitive stances relating to ‘law and order’ over the diversionary and situational measures evident in the preceding decade (Pitts, 2001).

#### New Labour, Youth Justice Reform, and a New Role for SBIs

As Muncie (2006:770-771) notes, during the 1990s the pace of youth justice reform in England and Wales was ‘unprecedented’. This era was characterised by its ‘tough’ stance on crime and a ‘relentless stream of ‘crackdowns’, initiatives, targets, policy proposals, pilot schemes and legislative enactments’ aimed at responsabilising ‘children, their families, and working-class communities’ (Muncie, 2006:771). The catalyst for this re-focus of policy can be accredited to the ‘moral panics’ around youth and crime that arose in the early 1990s in response to a number of highly publicised events. The murder of two year old James Bulger in Bootle, Liverpool in 1993 was ‘the catalyst for the consolidation of an authoritarian shift in youth justice...a shift which, in legal and policy initiatives, was replicated throughout all institutional responses to children and young people’ (Scraton, 1997:170). At the same time, highly emotive media reports regarding the ‘feral behaviour’ of young people and the



reference to them in derogatory animalistic tones <sup>27</sup> evoked a general ‘moral panic’ and the ‘folk devilling’ of young people amongst the populace regarding their perceived threat to society (Cohen, 1974).

Legislation during the 1990’s, beginning with the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, witnessed a reversal of the philosophy underpinning the 1991 Criminal Justice Act, instead espousing a punitive approach toward law and order, and in the process appeasing policy makers who believed the criminal justice system to be too soft on criminals (Tierney, 2010). New Labour’s motif of ‘tough on crime, tough on the causes on crime’ can be traced back to this era (Muncie, 2006). Although issues of law and order diverged significantly between the Conservative and Labour parties during the 1980s, these became less pronounced during the 1990’s as New Labour developed their ‘third way’ ideology. As such, the old language of Labour – socialism, working-class, inclusion, equality – was gradually replaced by ideals attuned to the post-industrial era. Within this context, New Labour created a political agenda that would appeal to the electorate on a range on political issues, notably crime, which was equated with a tough stance on youth and criminals in the context of the emerging, aforementioned ‘moral panics’ surrounding youth crime. As such, New Labour positioned itself as *the* party of law and order, establishing a political hegemony through the creation of political capital by appealing to populist concerns (Pitts, 2003; Goldson and Muncie, 2006). In doing so, New Labour portrayed the treatment of crime based on the neoliberal ethos of individual responsabilisation, risk management, early intervention, and actuarial justice (Rose, 2000).

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<sup>27</sup> ‘Ratboy’ was the moniker coined by the media to describe a 14 year old ‘persistent criminal’ who lived rough in the ventilation shafts of the Byker Wall housing estate in Newcastle during the early 1990’s.

New Labour's flagship legislation – The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – was based on these ideals and attempted to tackle the 'failings' of the previous Conservative government's approach to juvenile justice. The act reflected the 'zero tolerance' approach to crime espoused by Tony Blair in the lead up to the 1997 election, and an approach in favour of early intervention to tackle 'risk factors' and hold young offenders and their parents responsible for their behaviour. A new range of penalties aimed at young offenders, such as the anti-social behaviour order (ASBOs) and parenting orders were therefore introduced in order to achieve the central tenant of the newly formed youth justice system; that is, the prevention of offending by children and young people.

Within this new punitive context, SBIs performed as both a 'prevention' method for youth offending and an early intervention technique targeting 'at risk' youth (Kelly, 2011). For New Labour, however, 'disaffected' youth was a 'cross-cutting' issue which incorporated a range of social problems, including, educational underachievement, family breakdown, drug use, and social exclusion, and thus could not be tackled via a single government department. As Coalter (2007) articulates, during this time New Labour's rhetoric of the third way and the idea of a cross cutting agenda to tackle wider social and economic problems meant sport now featured as a significant vehicle in achieving social policy goals, and in particular, the notion of 'social inclusion'.

The adoption of social inclusion within New Labour policy reflected their movement away from traditional notions of 'equality' towards the vague concept of 'social inclusion' (Levitas, 2005). This repackaging of traditional Labour values was a joint response to the inequality of Thatcher's neoliberal economic regime and an

increasingly globalised society (Levitas, 2005). At the heart of New Labour's discourse was the creation of opportunities for the 'socially excluded' to gain access to mainstream society. Here, it is useful to consider Levitas (2005) model of three competing 'discourses' of social exclusion operating with New Labour policy:

First, a 'traditional' redistributionist discourse (RED) related to left-leaning ideological thinking that views social exclusion as a multidimensional process spawned by a number of social factors. In contrast, a Moral Underclass Discourse (MUD) alters a focus from the structural factors behind poverty to one which equates exclusion with the moral behaviour and behavioural inadequacies of the excluded. Here, the excluded are culturally and behaviourally distinct from mainstream society and their values, and hence inclusion will only arise via behavioural modification. This was very much the dominant position of thinking during the Thatcher years, influenced by right wing US commentators, notably Charles Murray (1984). Finally, a Social Integrationist Theory (SID) relates exclusion to a detachment from the labour market and paid employment. Inclusion therefore results from integration into the existing social order. This discourse thus foregrounds the economic over the social (Lister, 2005). For Levitas (2005:28), the social politics of New Labour relocated from a traditional Leftist RED discourse to a combination of MUD and SID. Hence, at the heart of New Labour's discourse on social inclusion was to signify the importance of economic activity to erode the age old concerns of working-class worklessness and welfare dependency. The Social Exclusion Unit, established by New Labour after their installation in office in 1997, signified the importance of labour market participation amongst the socially excluded over attempts to rectify existing socio-economic inequalities (Byrne, 2001; Levitas, 2005). As Houlihan and White (2002:216) noted at the time 'this priority is incorporated into many of the contemporary sports-related

programmes delivered by SDOs designed, in one way or another, to make young people in particular more employable’.

The Active Communities scheme was launched by the English Sports Council in 1998, adopting the recommendations of the PAT 10 Report (discussed below) through ‘addressing social issues such as community safety, crime, drug abuse, truancy, multicultural development and community health’ (Houlihan and White, 2002:93). The Active communities programmes subsequently merged with what is now known as the ‘Positive Futures’ programme in 1999, the aims of which related to the reduction of anti-social behaviour, drug misuse, and crime amongst 10-16 year olds via a targeted approach between Sport England, the UK Anti-Drugs Co-ordination Unit, and the Youth Justice Board (Houlihan and White, 2002). Local Authorities also contributed, providing existing activity programmes that could pass as appropriate Positive Futures programmes alongside the establishment of new projects in selected neighbourhoods. Targeting those ‘at risk of disengagement’, sporting programmes were delivered in an attempt to provide an alternative to crime and drug misuse via the establishment of educational programmes related to sporting activity and healthier lifestyles. As Houlihan and White (2002:215) suggested ‘Sports-specific objectives are clearly subordinated to youth welfare objectives.’ Initially funded by the government, English Sports Council and Youth Justice Board, the government’s support for the intervention was confirmed through an allocation of £5 million extra funding in 2001 (Houlihan and White, 2002).

The Positive Futures programme represented a clearer illumination for the role of sport within government policy. Similarly, the publication of three significant documents – The Policy Action Team (PAT) 10 Report (1999) and the DCMS policy document’s

*A Sporting Future for All* (2000) and *Game Plan* (2002), provided further clarification regarding the role of sport in contribution toward social welfare objectives. Indeed, PAT 10 was established on behalf of New Labour's Social Exclusion Unit in an attempt to illustrate the potential of sport towards social inclusion. The potential of sport was measured with regard to four key indicators – health, crime, employment and education – and how it could contribute to these cross cutting aspects with regard to 'disaffected young people and people from ethnic minorities' (DCMS, 1999:5). As such, programmes targeting disaffected youth involved partnerships between Sport England, the Youth Justice Board, the UK Anti-Drugs Coordination Unit and Local Authorities in attempts to provide alternatives to crime, drug misuse lifestyles and educational underachievement (Houlihan and White, 2002).

The significance of tackling 'social exclusion' and the related 'cross-cutting' themes of crime, drug abuse and educational underachievement can be understood in terms of New Labour's conception of a 'social investment state', whereby young people are depicted as 'citizen workers of the future' (Lister, 2005, cited in Kelly, 2011:4). A future orientated view of young people and their potential as future workers, then, is closely aligned with economic investment within New Labour policy, 'where young people are valued for their status as future adults and portrayed as an investment' (Kelly, 2011:4). Underpinning these social investment strategies was the view that sport could act as a suitable vehicle to promote the 'self responsabilising active citizen' through methods to direct the individual 'into steps to realise well-being, a healthy lifestyle and educational benefits in particular' (Green, 2006:225). This approach to policy was emphasised by a focus on 'sport for good', with New Labour demanding an array of aforementioned 'cross-cutting' social benefits arising from social

programmes, such as community cohesion, tackling social exclusion and encouraging social and economic regeneration (Collins, 2010).

The DCMS document *Game Plan's* (2002) focus on providing social exclusion and lifelong opportunity for young people epitomized New Labour's stance towards social investment strategies and the broader social welfare agenda, with sport providing a 'unique contribution to tackling social exclusion in our society' (Coalter, 2007:39). *Game Plan* was a landmark document in that it was the first sport policy document to be produced by two government departments – the Social Exclusion Unit and the DCMS – reflecting the 'joined up thinking' and cross cutting agenda of the New Labour government to tackle the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion. *Game Plan* (2002) was thus seen as a more strategic approach to policy, with an emphasis on the use of sport to achieve non sporting objectives based on the recommendations in the PAT 10 (Bergsgard, et al., 2007).

New Labour's stance towards the social benefits of sport was further reinforced with the recent publication of a series of policy documents entitled *Sport Playing its Part*, in which sport was considered a key vehicle in achieving social outcomes related to reduced substance abuse and crime, community development and educational attainment (Sport England, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d). In November 2008, this view was again articulated in *Shaping Places through Sport* (Sport England, 2008). These series of reports communicated the potential of sporting organisations and local initiatives and programmes in contributing to community cohesion (Sport England, 2008a), reducing anti-social behaviour and crime (Sport England, 2008b), and developing personal skills and employability of disaffected youth (Sport England,

2008c), to produce New Labour's 'responsibilised', 'self-regulated' citizen (Lister, 2005).

New Labour's logic of preventing the onset of criminal behaviour and establishing interventions, such as the sporting programmes detailed above, to produce 'responsibilised' 'work ready' citizens willing to contribute to the neoliberal capitalist economy is derived from 'advanced liberal' modes of governance that have emerged over the last two decades (Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001). For Rose (2000), this neoliberal project has fashioned a number of actuarial controls designed to 'govern at a distance' the conduct of 'the excluded':

'[They are] subject to strategies of control. On the one hand, there are those strategies that seek to reaffiliate the excluded, through a principle of activity, and to reattach them to the circuits of civility: active labour market policies emphasizing the retraining of the unemployed, interventions to regenerate and empower disadvantaged communities and individuals, programmes to 're-familiarize' life in the inner cities. On the other hand, there are the strategies which deem affiliation impossible for certain individuals and sectors, and seek to manage these anti-citizens and marginal spaces through measures which seek to neutralize the dangers they pose'. (Rose, 2000:330)

Within this context, an expanding 'culture of control' (Garland, 2001), composed of not only 'state agencies of police, courts, prisons, probation and social work', but also 'non-state agencies and organisations and the forces of civil society' (Muncie, 2006:773) function to expand the operations of state control in an attempt to fashion behaviour capable of navigating a neoliberal, post-welfare social order, that is, self-governing, regulated 'prudential subjects' (O'Malley, 2006).

The neoliberal ethos of responsibilisation of individuals, then, is evident within the New Labour government's youth justice priorities, of which SBIs featured in a 'joined

up', multi-agency approach to tackle the 'cross cutting' themes of social exclusion and crime. Indeed, the expanding 'culture of control' has resulted in an amplification of community based surveillance programmes aimed at young people 'at risk' of offending. The emphasis on 'risk management' and actuarial justice within New Labour policy has subsequently enlarged the number of diversionary and rehabilitative community programmes, accomplished through the formation of a number of partnerships between criminal justice agencies, third sector and charity organisations, and social enterprises. Indeed, the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act witnessed the establishment of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), subsequently expanding the responsibility of intervention beyond probation services and social workers (Chamberlain, 2013). The establishment of YOTs consisted of representatives from social services, probation, police and educational authorities 'pulling together' (Muncie, 2006:774) to manage provision and deliver a number of interventions aimed at young people (Goldson and Muncie, 2006). In turn, this led to the creation of a number of alternative programmes, integrating voluntary organisations and community groups alongside statutory organisations as part of an expanding crime culture to responsabilise 'disorderly' youth, whilst the state 'govern at a distance' (Rose and Miller, 1992; Garland, 2001). The expansion of SBIs in the 1990s to tackle social objectives such as social inclusion and crime can be considered a natural consequence of these changes (Kelly, 2012). Such an interpretation is evident in the work of Ramon Spaaij (2009), who argues that SBIs now represent a component of 'the neo liberal policy repertoire' aimed at 'regulating' youth within disadvantaged, urban areas (Spaaij, 2009:263). Continuation and similarities with this theme can be seen in the current Conservative and Liberal Democratic coalition government, although, as I will argue, in the context of evolving policies and techniques of control.



## The Coalition Government: Big Society and Payment by Results

The installation of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition government in May 2010 signalled a further shift in the governance of young people. The Coalition Agreement (HM Government, 2010:23) clearly stated the need for an overhaul of the previous system of rehabilitation which had resulted in ‘record spending on incarceration and the doubling of the prison population since 1993’ (Mythen, Walklate and Kemshall, 2012:3). Coined the ‘rehabilitation revolution’, the campaign signalled an emphasis on restorative justice to ‘tackle anti-social behaviour and low-level crime’ (HM Government, 2010:24) and confront repeat offending, a problem that, according to the Ministry of Justice (2010:2), sees almost half of offenders who are released from prison reoffend within a year, with up to three quarters reconvicted of an offence within a decade. The subsequent publication of the Green Paper, *Breaking the Cycle* in December 2010 (Ministry of Justice, 2010) emphasised a commitment to tackling crime via specific components of the ‘rehabilitation revolution’ agenda: reforming the ‘outdated, criminal justice system, introducing restorative justice based on ‘punishment and payback’ whereby law breakers ‘face the robust and demanding punishments which the public expects’, and the installation of a new ‘payment by results’ (Hereafter, PbR) system ‘to pay providers to reduce reoffending, paid for by the savings this will generate for the criminal justice system’ (Ministry of Justice, 2010:38).

The effective functioning of the proposed PbR system is related to a set of newly installed processes within the criminal justice system, notably: the increased involvement of voluntary agencies and private sector companies in the rehabilitation of criminals; a reworking of sentencing guidelines; more tougher community services; the removal of welfare benefits for offenders who fail to comply with probation and

supervision orders; compulsory drug intervention and rehabilitation programmes; restorative justice services based on a ‘victims fund’ which offenders pay into via work undertaken in custodial sentences; and a decentralisation of probation services (see Ministry of Justice, 2010; The Conservative Party, 2010; Mythen et al., 2012).

These criminal justice changes have surfaced within a broader context of changing modes of governance installed by the Coalition government following their election in May 2010. It is necessary here to highlight these developments to position these contemporary criminal justice developments within a broader political context.

The government’s flagship campaign, the ‘Big Society’, represents an increased role and responsibility for private companies and voluntary organisations in delivering public services. The decentralization of services reflects the Conservatives’ manifesto commitment to collective community action through ‘redistributing power from the state to society; from the centre to local’ (Conservative Party 2010). The Big Society then, is about empowering communities by passing decision-making powers to local groups; opening up public services to give charities, social enterprises and private companies the opportunity to offer high-quality services; and promoting social action by encouraging individuals to be proactive in local communities (Cabinet Office, 2011). Alongside local communities and individuals, government sees the voluntary sector as essential to producing the Big Society, recognising the potential of voluntary organizations to ‘mobilize and support people’ and ‘play an even more influential role in shaping a stronger sense of society and improving peoples’ lives’ (Cabinet Office 2011:3).

Whilst for some, the ideological elements of Big Society rhetoric may sound appealing, the reality appears problematic. Indeed, alongside this idealism is the reality

of continual austerity measures. For those operating within the context of the economic downturn, concerns appear whether third sector organisations, social enterprises and charities will have the capacity to deliver quality services and maintain sufficient standards on behalf of the state. Sir Stephen Bubb, Head of Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organizations, adopts such as position:

‘If you want to build a bigger society you have got to have the foundation there and that’s the charities, the social enterprises, the community groups and they are the very ones that are being hit. They are making redundancies, they are cutting the work they do in communities’. (Bubb, 2011:1, cited in Mythen et al., 2012:3)

Whilst The Conservative Party has been quick to champion ‘Big Society’ ideals, they appear to represent a continuation of the traditional Conservative governance of a smaller interventionist state and the ‘entrepreneurial freedom’ of individuals and communities, typified within Thatcher’s neoliberal state in the 1980s. Similarly, although New Labour have questioned the reality of achieving the ideals associated with the Big Society, the campaign is not dissimilar from their ‘social investment state’ and the decentralisation of responsibilities for tackling social and welfare problems as part of the ‘joined-up’ approach to social exclusion in the 2000s (Lewis, 2005). The development of The Compact, a strategic document that sought to develop a closer working partnership between the government and voluntary sector, elevated the third sector onto the UK policy agenda during New Labour’s reign, resulting in a more ‘purposive stance towards the third sector in service delivery and policy implementation’ (Kendall, 2003:2)

Within the current context, the process of decentralization as part of the ideological pillars of the Big Society has manifested itself in the encouragement of public/private partnerships and the ‘mainstreaming’ of voluntary services to bring about social

change (Cabinet Office 2011:3). The use of local and community based interventions and programmes to deliver state policies signifies the Coalition government's 'desire to manage resources in a less hierarchical way and to draw in a broader range of stakeholders on the delivery of key services to the public' (Mythen et al., 2012:4). As such, a number of voluntary and third sector organisations, alongside private sector organisations and social enterprises, are expected to play their part in supporting and delivering services on behalf of the criminal justice system, most notably in relation to the aforementioned 'rehabilitative revolution' (Fox and Alberton, 2011; Mythen et al., 2012).

The 'rehabilitation revolution' is based upon a series of measures and principles 'that decentralize provision for offender management and encourage solutions to reoffending that are connected to market principles of competition between providers' (Mythen et al., 2010:4). Orientated towards outcomes, the Coalition government proposes that the decentralization of rehabilitation services will provide a cost effective, more efficient method of reducing reoffending (Ministry of Justice, 2010).

The approach therefore seeks to develop a more integrated method to the management of offenders via reinforced partnerships between the prison and probation service (Morgan, 2012) and the launch of more effective interventions to reduce the rate of re-offending (Ministry of Justice, 2010). The new framework proposes a system whereby individualised, tailored programmes replace a 'one size fits all' approach to tackling re-offending, hence 'responsibility for the delivery of rehabilitative interventions will be transferred to a private company, working with both trained probation officers and third sector partners to encourage innovative practice' (Maguire, 2012:489). Within this framework, voluntary organisations are expected to 'situate and brand themselves

and jostle for optimum position' (Mythen et al., 2012:5) in a developing sector of rehabilitative provision.

Significant here, is the economic approach underpinning the 'rehabilitative revolution', that is, Payments by Results (PbR). Fox and Albertson provide a succinct definition, along with the supposed merits of the approach:

'PbR allows the government to pay a provider of services on the basis of the outcomes their service achieves than the inputs or outputs the provider delivers. It is suggested, by focusing reward on outcomes and providing minimal prescription as to how these outcomes should be achieved, payment by results models will drive greater efficiency, innovation and impact in tackling major social problems'. (Fox and Albertson, 2011:397)

The use of a PbR schemes within the criminal justice system is not entirely new. The first pilot scheme for offender management occurred under the New Labour government in 2010 within Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Peterborough, where the Social Impact Bond was trialled to fund 'intensive services and mentoring delivered by the voluntary and community sector' (Ministry of Justice, 2010:41) for prisoners on short term sentences. The scheme was based on a PbR model, whereby voluntary services were paid depending on their ability to achieve 'outcomes' relating to the offending behaviour of prisoners. Since the launching of the scheme, PbR schemes represent 'the dominant financial mechanism for delivering the coalition's criminal justice reform package' (Clinks, 2010: 2, cited in Mythen et al., 2012:6).

A further example of PbR services are found in the proposals of the Work Programme as set out by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The innovative programme is labelled 'the centrepiece of the Government's plans to reform welfare - to - work provision in the UK' (Department for Work and Pensions, 2010:2). The

Work Programme encompasses a range of interventions designed to move the unemployed into sustainable employment, delivered by private sector organisations across the UK. Contracts are built on a PbR scheme based on the achievement of three employability ‘targets’: an initial fee for the successful engagement of a participant; an outcome fee for the successful employment of a participant, and a sustainability fee; achieved when participants remain in work for a sustained period (Department of Work and Pensions, 2010).

### Worklessness, Criminal Justice, and the Management of Risk

The PbR system reflects an established tradition within neoliberal, advanced industrial nations whereby new forms of governance related to social, political and economic affairs have emerged (Rose, 1996; Garland, 2001; Wacquant, 2009). With regard to worklessness and criminal justice, recent years have witnessed an erosion of penal-welfare policies for the ‘correction’ of social problems, to one in which a new ‘culture’ of strategies have appeared underpinned by risk assessment and behavioural management techniques (Garland, 2001; Muncie and Goldson, 2006; Gray, 2009). Governmentality theorists (see for example, Rose and Miller, 1992; Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001), influenced by Foucault’s analysis of the micro-physics of power<sup>28</sup> have provided insights into the governance of young people in contemporary neoliberal, global society.

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<sup>28</sup> For Foucault, the application of political power is distributed via a collection of non-state sites and agencies, rather than through a centralized sovereign state. Governmentality, then, refers to an ‘ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power’ (Foucault, 1975:20). He was interested in how these agencies and sites ‘regulate’ and ‘contain’ individuals and the populace to construct these strategies of Governmentality. Post-Foucauldian approaches have built upon these ideas to analyse the techniques of neoliberal governance (see for example; Rose and Miller, 1992, 2008; Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001).

Nikolas Rose, for example, rejects any notion of the existence of centralized political authority, and instead argues that there are multiple microsites of governance or 'centres of calculation and action' networked across time and space in chains of alliance which allow individuals, groups and communities to be governed 'at a distance'. In this process a 'complex set of actors, powers, institutions and bodies of knowledge that comprise expertise have come to play a crucial role' (Rose and Miller, 1992:188) in translating or implementing political rationalities and governmental technologies into day-to-day practice in a diversity of locations.

Within the post-Fordist, flexible labour market era then, the combination of low wages, insecure employment, and locales of structural unemployment has led to the creation of a workforce 'required for and required to do the poor work that flexible labour markets create' (Shildrick et al., 2012:200). This has similarities with Byrne's (2005) Marxist inspired idea of a 'reserve army of labour', a social group 'intrinsic' to the functioning of the capitalist economy (Byrne, 1995:95). Indeed, from Byrne's perspective, social exclusion and job insecurity is 'a necessary and inherent characteristic of unequal post-industrial capitalism' (Byrne, 1999:173). Hence, rather than being a discarded 'underclass', 'reserve army' workers are required for the effective functioning of post-Fordist, capitalist nations in a competitive, globalised, neoliberal world (Byrne, 1999:9).

If neoliberal societies require a reserve army of labourers to operate within post-Fordist flexible labour markets, then the creation of social policies are required that will encourage the development of economic markets that characterise post-Fordist capitalism (Byrne, 1999; Shildrick et al., 2012). Hence, the formation of a number of 'welfare to work' schemes under New Labour to create self-regulated, post-Fordist

workers capable of navigating the post-industrial economic landscape are evidence of Byrne's idea that:

‘...Welfare to work is supply side. The interpretation is that workers are defective, not morally or even rationally as was the understanding in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century...but in terms of personal deficits. The obligation on them is to redress these personal deficits, as a condition of benefit, in order to make themselves fit for labour. There is no specification of the conditions of that labour as having to represent ‘good work’. The logic of the employment form of much of post-industrial capitalism is that the work will not be good work. However, people have to do it...Welfare to Work is a constitutive process for this’. (Byrne, 1999:99)

In *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (2009), Wacquant notes the homogenisation of welfare and criminal justice policies under advanced neoliberal forms of governance. The convergence of themes underpinning these two strands of government – a philosophy of moral behaviourism based on deterrence, individual responsibility, stigma and risk management – is viewed as a direct response to ‘social insecurity wrought by the fragmentation of wage labour’ (Wacquant, 2009: 198). The ‘penalization of poverty’, then, as Wacquant (2009) suggests, sees a marrying together of supervisory workfare and penal justice partnerships and policies to create a ‘single operational mesh flung at the same clientele mired in the fissures and ditches of the dualizing metropolis’ (Wacquant, 2009:199). Wacquant argues this is a common feature in the politics of social insecurity, evident within advanced, western governments. The convergence of welfare and justice policies work together to contain the social problems associated with inner city neighbourhoods – unemployment, welfare dependency, gang crime – and discipline ‘the precarious fractions of post-industrial working-class’ spawned by a post-Fordist, capitalist economy (Wacquant, 2009:198). Here, Wacquant (2008;



2009) shares similarities with David Byrne's understanding of welfare to work programmes acting as a means to move the 'precarious' into secondary, low pay labour markets in efforts to sustain an unequal, capitalist economy. The below passage neatly clarifies Wacquant's position:

'disciplinary 'workfare' and castigatory 'prison fare' supervise the same dispossessed and dishonoured populations destabilized by the dissolution of the Fordist-Keynesian compact and concentrated in the disparaged districts of the polarizing city...putting the marginalized fractions of the post-industrial working-class under stern tutelage guided by moral behaviourism offers a prime theatrical stage onto which governing elites can project the authority of the state and shore up the deficit of legitimacy they suffer whenever they forsake its established missions of social and economic protection'. (Wacquant, 2011:2)

The convergence of welfare and justice policies designed to discipline the precarious fractions of the working-class (Wacquant, 2009) is underpinned by a 'language of risk' based on actuarial understandings and 'styles of reasoning' (Gray, 2006:447). Discourses of 'risk', evident within New Labour's adherence to early intervention programmes that sought to provide scientific approaches to the governance of youth, equate social exclusion and criminality with the 'moral inadequacies' and 'personal shortcomings' of individuals. Detached from any external social influences, the criminal 'actor' is depicted as a 'rational agent who chooses crime in the light of a calculus of potential benefits and costs' (Rose, 2000:322). Subsequently 'schemes for the retraining of offenders portray the prisoner as one who lacks the entrepreneurial skills to actualize himself in a competitive society' (Rose, 2000:322). Within this context, there has been emergence and increased legitimation of 'strategies of responsabilisation', designed to 'transform and reconstruct the 'young offender' into prudential self-governing 'young citizens' ready to manage their risks and take responsibility for them in ways that bring their motivations and actions fully into line

with the neoliberal project of governing' (Phoenix and Kelly, 2013:421). The underlying design of government sponsored Education, Training, Employment (ETE) and the presence of multi-agency Youth Offending Teams within them under the previous New Labour government was based on this type of thinking, equating the problems of worklessness and anti-social behaviour with the personal shortcomings of individuals with regard to attitudes to work and employability 'skills' (Gray, 2006:447).

The proliferation of forms of intervention, including SBIs, can be considered a response to these concerns, often operating as part of broader 'community safety' strategies attempting to maintain social order (Spaaij, 2009; Kelly, 2011; 2012).

### The Current Context

It can be argued that a continuation of these ideological preferences are evident within the current Coalition's discourse and policy on worklessness and criminal justice, notably via the persistence of neoliberal modes of governance that emphasize economic rationality in welfare (see Wiggan, 2012). The supposed 'greater efficacy' and 'value for money' through the decentralising of public services and the implementation of a PbR scheme are depicted as 'an economic and moral imperative' (Wiggan, 2012:3) for the reversal of the economic downturn, a reduction in the budget deficit, and the mending of 'broken Britain' (Conservative Party, 2010:13). The Coalition's approach to crime, poverty, and unemployment therefore can be seen as emphasising economic rationality and building on New Labour's punitive welfare system, and in the process 'renew[s] the validity of behavioural explanations for social problems and tie[s] this to the supposed failure of 'statist' intervention under New Labour' (Wiggan, 2012:3).

A continuation of ‘actuarial’, ‘risk-based’ rationalities can also be found in political discourse and policy. In 2010, the Independent Commission for Youth Crime published a major report *Time for a Fresh Start* (Independent Commission, 2010), which subjected the youth justice system in England and Wales to critical inspection. The commission’s report emphasised an overhaul of New Labour’s approach to youth justice, calling for a set of proposals to influence subsequent policy. The commission detailed the ‘continuing and deep rooted failings’ (Independent Commission, 2010:17) of the contemporary system, highlighting the ‘incongruous juxtaposition of stable, if not diminishing, patterns of youth crime alongside hyperbolic rhetoric and crude political posturing’ (Goldson, 2011:5). However, despite its criticism of the previous New Labour approach, the report proposed a set of reforms based on a continuation of discourses of prevention and risk prevention that continue to pervade the contemporary criminal justice landscape:

‘Although there is reason to be wary of over-simplistic interpretations or applications of the evidence, we believe an understanding of ‘risk’ and ‘protective’ (or ‘promotive’) factors provides a valuable basis for planning and implementing prevention strategies’. (Independent Commission, 2010:39)

Similarly, the Commission states a commitment to the neoliberal logic of responsabilisation that informs programmes of early intervention in the youth justice system:

‘We recommend an approach that will encourage young offenders to face up the consequences of their actions and accept responsibility’. (Independent Commission, 2010:5)

The Commission’s report appears to be influential in the set of changes installed by the Coalition Government after their election victory in May 2010 (Goldson, 2011). The Green Paper *Breaking the Cycle* (2010) delineates a range of proposals that

continue to pursue an early intervention, actuarial agenda toward the rehabilitation of offenders (Ministry of Justice, 2010:7). Within the paper's 'youth justice' chapter, proposals for the prevention of crime are bedded within a conceptual tone stressing the importance of early intervention:

'Preventing crime by young people is one of the most cost effective ways to provide long term benefit for communities. A high proportion of the most prolific adult offenders commit their first crimes at a very early age. Intervening early in the lives of children at risk and their families, before behaviour becomes entrenched, can present our best chance to break the cycle of crime'. (Ministry of Justice, 2010:67-68)

Inevitably, the paper embraces the notion of 'risk' – which has achieved 'a near hegemonic status in contemporary youth justice discourse' (Goldson, 2011:12) - articulating a need to provide interventions and programmes based on the elimination of said factors. A particular focus is on interventions geared towards gang crime; a recent, prominent concern within youth justice discourse:

'When children are involved in low-level crime or anti-social behaviour our aim is to intervene effectively to turn them away from crime. We are committed to engaging with those at risk – for example young people connected with gangs – and creating the opportunities for a life away from crime'. (Ministry of Justice, 2010:68)

Similar themes are expressed in the 2011 publication *Ending Gang and Youth Violence* (HM Government, 2011a), published following the disorder in a number of cities across England in August 2011, an occurrence the government attributed in part to the presence of gangs. The report details a number of programmes aimed at tackling gang violence, again espousing an approach reliant on the eradication of risk factors as a basis for the success of intervention programmes. Indeed, the report details a number

of ‘usual suspects’ all too common within contemporary youth justice discourse (Goldson, 2011) - dysfunctional families, truancy, parental substance abuse, exclusion from school, repeat offending (HM Government, 2010:17) - which interventions are required to tackle. As such, ‘risk assessment’ tools are required to identify the specific requirements of each individual that need to be addressed:

‘At every stage of the young person’s life story, the public sector agencies with which they have most contact – from health visitors, to GPs, to teachers, to A&E departments and Jobcentre Plus staff – need to be alert to the risk factors that may predict future violence and know what to do about them. That means simple risk assessment tools – like the ones already widely in use for domestic violence: clear arrangements for sharing information about risk with other agencies; agreed referral arrangements to ensure young people get the targeted support they need; and, case management arrangements which bring agencies together to share accountability for outcomes and track progress’. (HM Government, 2011a:49-50)

Both paper’s fundamental aims are the reduction of reoffending, with an emphasis on two core principles: first, the use of restorative justice and, secondly: the need for ‘multi-agency partnerships’ (HM Government, 2010: 49) to tackle and ‘address the multiple disadvantages that many young offenders have’ (Ministry of Justice, 2010:68). The Green paper also details proposals to simplify out-of-court disposals in an attempt to ‘divert [young people] from entering into a life of crime’ and reduce the need for custody (Ministry of Justice, 2010:12). The emphasis is clearly on economic efficiency, the criminal justice system seen as ‘an expensive way of giving the public a break from offenders, before they return to commit more crimes’ (Ministry of Justice, 2010:1). As such, the use of out-of-court disposals relate to a cost effective method of greater discretion provided to the police and local authorities to address offending, diverting offenders away from the criminal justice system and toward the

decentralised services and ‘professionals working with the young people on the ground’ (Ministry of Justice, 2010:69). This development is underpinned by a PbR ‘path finding’ approach in an attempt to reduce the use of youth custody. Led by the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice, the approach enables a consortia of local authorities, voluntary services, and a mixture of public and private services to function as ‘pathfinders’ to design and determine community based approaches to rehabilitation. The initiative allocates central funds via the Ministry of Justice towards local authorities who will be paid based on their ability to meet agreed targets, such as a reduction in reoffending. The approach therefore gives ‘local authorities freedom and flexibility to develop and implement locally tailored interventions, to respond to local needs and demands’ (Youth Justice Board, 2010). In one London borough, this approach has been used by Local Authority Children’s services, Local Authority Early Intervention teams, and SBIs to design programmes to intercept and intervene in young people susceptible to gang activity and membership: indeed, the SBI under investigation was part of a broader approach encompassing these partnerships that aimed to progress young people into a positive destination, reduce the distance these young people were from the labour market, and to impress upon them opportunities available beyond gangs

The welfare system is also underpinned by a similar PbR system in attempts to address poverty, unemployment and welfare dependency. Both the Green Paper *21<sup>st</sup> Century Welfare* (DWP, 2010) and the White paper *Universal Credit: Welfare the Works* (DWP, 2011), reiterate a position that locates the causes of poverty and unemployment as a result of individual actions and behaviour driven by a dependency on welfare (Wiggan, 2012:6). The forward from *21<sup>st</sup> Century Welfare* is embedded in a discourse that reinforces welfare benefits as morally and socially destructive:

‘The benefits system has shaped the poorest in a way that has trapped generation after generation in a spiral of dependency and poverty. This has cost the country billions of pounds in cash payments and billions more in meeting the social costs of failure’.  
(DWP, 2010:1)

The installation of multi-partnership work to welfare schemes to tackle the Conservative’s long term commitment to reducing the cost of the welfare system and reducing welfare dependency and poverty is symbolic of neoliberal preferences toward the withdrawal of state from areas of social provision (Harvey, 2005:3). Indeed, the Department for Work and Pensions’ flagship Work Programme, launched in 2011, contracts a number of private, voluntary and public sector organisations to help both benefits claimants and those ‘at risk of falling into this group...the skills, training and experience they need to get a job’ (DWP, 2012:2). These ‘providers’ are funded primarily for ‘outcomes’ based on sustainable employment (DWP, 2012) in contrast to upfront payments in an attempt to provide ‘better value for the taxpayer’ (DWP, 2012:2): After receiving an initial payment for an engagement with a participant, providers are paid a Job Outcome Payment after helping the participant into 6 months of employment (or 3 months with ‘harder-to-reach’ groups), followed by a ‘sustainability’ payment for every 4 weeks the participant is engaged after that (DWP, 2012). The approach also adheres to neoliberal ideals of entrepreneurial freedom within an institutional framework characterised by competitive markets:

‘We believe competition between providers delivering the Work Programme will help produce better results...if one provider is performing significantly better than the others in the area, and certain other conditions are fulfilled, instead of sending equal numbers of jobseekers to each main provider, we have the power to refer more participants to the better-performing provider in the area and to refer more participants to those providers delivering better

results. This means that not only will providers who aren't helping people into work not get paid as they aren't producing results, they will also find that they receive fewer participants. This means that, over time, the best performing providers get the most participants to work with'. (DWP, 2012:4)

A similar, less well-publicised scheme known as the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) was launched in April 2011 to replace the abolished discretionary funds programmes such as the Deprived Areas Fund, the Adviser Discretion Fund, and the Travel to Interview Scheme. The FSF is aimed at helping benefit claimants progress into employment, education or training and provides Jobcentre Plus areas greater freedom and discretion in how to support individuals into work. This is based on an assessment of individual support needs and the condition of the local labour market, thus resulting in geographical variation in how the fund is deployed. Area managers are responsible for the distribution of funds within their area, and for the criteria delineating local priorities and success factors. Working within these parameters, Jobcentre plus Advisers have the option to individually assess jobseekers based on their needs and requirements to progress into employment. This includes the awarding of funding to local partnerships, activities and services to address worklessness and underlying barriers to employment. These 'partnerships' include a range of public, private and voluntary services, which are awarded by a PbR system linked to their ability to engage jobcentre referrals and progress them into areas of employment, education or training. Voluntary services involved in these schemes include a number of schemes associated with the development of 'employability' skills for 'NEETs' (not in employment, education or training). These involve a number of SBIs that aim to use sport as an initial 'hook' before providing employability support based on the demands



of the Jobcentre plus. This includes the SBI under investigation in the present piece of research.

The rhetoric within the Coalition's proposals for the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice, 2010; HM Government, 2011a) and tackling welfare (DWP, 2011) both espouse a discourse characterised by 'actuarialism', 'individual responsibility' and 'intervention'. Early intervention programmes, evident within the Green Paper *Breaking the Cycle* (2010) and *Ending Gang and Youth Violence* (HM Government, 2011), are underpinned by an aetiological understanding that emphasises the association between 'risk factors' and criminality (Farrington, 1996). Indeed, the paper stresses the need for interventions to reduce risk factors and the onset of future offending by focusing on those considered 'at risk' (see HM Government, 2011:49-50). Similarly, the government's 'welfare to work' scheme and the newly installed FSF are supported by a comparable 'risk assessment' logic that aims to 'remove claimants' barriers to work' (DWP, 2011:2) via specific programmes or interventions.

#### Sport Based Interventions: A New Form of Social Control

The similarities in political discourse linked to recent reforms in the welfare and the criminal justice systems under the present Coalition government, I argue, reflect Wacquant's (2009) vision of a convergence of penal and welfare ideals occurring in most post-industrial countries over the last 30 years which has created 'a single apparatus for the cultural capture and behavioural control of marginal populations' Wacquant (2009:xix). For Wacquant, the programmatic convergence and practical interlock of welfare and penal policies are a response to rising social insecurity developing out of an epoch characterised by post-Fordist, insecure wage labour and increased inequality (Wacquant, 2009:xv). This social insecurity has developed within

an evolving social and economic context that increasingly links criminal behaviour and deviant behaviour to the discourse of personal irresponsibility and immorality (Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001). The post-industrial working-class are therefore now subjected to the rolling out of a 'culture of control' (Garland, 2001), and the 'double regulation' of social and penal policies (Wacquant, 2009:xviii). This is reminiscent of Rose's suggestion that neoliberal project has fashioned a number of actuarial controls designed to 'govern at a distance' the conduct of 'the excluded':

'On the one hand, there are those strategies that seek to reaffiliate the excluded, through a principle of activity, and to reattach them to the circuits of civility: active labour market policies emphasizing the retraining of the unemployed, interventions to regenerate and empower disadvantaged communities and individuals, programmes to 're-familiarize' life in the inner cities. On the other hand, there are the strategies which deem affiliation impossible for certain individuals and sectors, and seek to manage these anti-citizens and marginal spaces through measures which seek to neutralize the dangers they pose'. (Rose, 2000:330)

Within this context, there has been an increased legitimisation of programmes and interventions linked to the control of stigmatized populations (Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001). It can be argued that SBIs now function within strategies of advanced liberal 'responsibilisation' (Spaaij, 2009; Kelly, 2012), expanding the state's apparatus via the regulation of 'at risk' youth in attempts to 'construct' them into 'self-regulated', responsibilised citizens capable of contributing to a post-Fordist economy and navigating a post-welfare state.

Evidently, most SBIs are voluntary programmes, working with young people not primarily involved with the criminal justice system (Kelly, 2012). However, SBIs, as Spaaij (2009) suggests, are increasingly shaped by government rationales and now represent a significant component of the 'neoliberal policy repertoire...aimed at

generating social order in disadvantaged inner city neighbourhoods' (Spaaij, 2009:247, cited in Kelly, 2012). Indeed, in this expanding neoliberal 'culture of control' (Garland, 2001) there are 'new modes of exercising power by which the state seeks to 'govern at a distance' by forming alliances and activating the governmental powers of non-state agencies' (Garland, 2001:173).

In the context of the ideological ideals associated with the Big Society then, we are witnessing a number of private and voluntary organisations expected to deliver services on behalf of the state, most notably in relation to the aforementioned criminal justice system's 'rehabilitation revolution' and the interventions that cover the DWP's work programme (Fox and Albertson, 2011). A number of SBIs can be seen as operating within this context. The 'Positive Futures' programme targets 10-19 year olds in attempts to 'avoid them becoming drawn into crime, drug and alcohol misuse and help them move forward with their lives' (Catch 22, no date). Before its dismantling in March 2013, the Positive Futures programme was funded by the Home Office and managed by the charity 'Catch 22'. Recently, the programme received £10 million in funding for its 'prevention and diversionary' activities that targeted '10-19 year olds on the cusp of offending...to engage them and build positive relationships whereby they can be supported to develop the skills needed...to become active and responsible citizens' (HM Government, 2011a). The funding was on behalf of the Communities against Guns, Gangs and Knives programme launched in 2011, which earmarked £4million to 200 voluntary organisations who are working to tackle gun and knife crime linked to gang membership. Further, SBIs were also awarded funding based on their commitment to tackling these objectives: The Arsenal Foundation received £10,000.00 for its work in Hackney, whilst Bangladeshi Football (UK) was also awarded £10,000.00 for their work with Bangladeshi youth in nearby Tower

Hamlets. Aside from football based interventions, the Cricket Foundation was awarded £9,882.00 for its work across multiple London boroughs. In November 2012, the Home Office made an additional 500k available to organisations already delivering on behalf of the Communities against Guns, Gangs and Knives Programme. Since then, a total of 53 organizations were presented with extra funding to prolong the delivery of existing projects. A number of these included the SBIs referred to above (HM Government 2011b).

Aside from diversionary and intervention programmes, a contemporary role for SBIs is found in providing ‘routes out’ of criminality via employment, education and training (HM Government, 2011a). The government continue to espouse the rhetoric that ‘Meaningful work or training is essential in order to break the cycle of violence’ (HM Government, 2011a:41) despite failing to recognise or address the socio-structural causes of unemployment and exclusion (Kelly, 2011). Recently the European Social Fund (ESF) has provided the DWP with £200 million worth of funding to deliver skills training to 16-24 year olds in an attempt to raise their prospective employability (HM Government, 2011a). Here, the neoliberal ideology of active citizenship (Harvey, 2005) is emphasised, the government seeking to tackle worklessness and provide integration into mainstream society via education, employment or training (Levitas, 2005). As such, the government propose to tackle worklessness, which is equated with future criminal behaviour and gang membership (HM Government, 2011a) via partnership working that attempts to ‘break down’ barriers to work. This involves a partnership between private, public and voluntary, community based organisations:

‘The private sector has a key role to play in providing the opportunities that young men and women growing up in deprived

neighbourhoods need to follow a positive path in life. This includes exposure of young people to different roles and careers, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, support for young people wanting to set up their own enterprises and investment in voluntary and community organisations with a proven track record of turning round the lives of disadvantaged young people. Tackling gang and youth violence will require a co-ordinated effort by all sectors – public, private and voluntary’. (HM Government, 2011a:42)

Increasingly, SBIs are used as part of the aforementioned ‘voluntary and community organisations’ assisting in helping young people ‘with multiple problems overcome barriers to work and move closer to the labour market’ (HM Government, 2011a:42). The SBI under investigation accesses a funding stream linked to Jobcentre Plus’s FSF fund based on a PbR system. The SBI is funded based on its ability to engage and deliver services on behalf of the Jobcentre, and subsequently paid a standard fee for every 6 weeks a participant is sustained in employment.

### Conclusion

In the context of this thesis, I argue that SBIs now constitute a key component within an expanding ‘culture of control’ made up of partnerships between public, private and community groups working together to tackle the ‘problems’ of crime and security in advanced liberal societies (Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001). Within the contemporary policy context, particularly in relation to the concern regarding the supposed ‘criminality’ of young people and their links to urban street gangs in the wake of the August 2011 riots, responses to youth are increasingly characterised by ‘intervention’ and ‘responsibilisation’ as a means of recalibrating young people and turning them into citizens capable of contributing to a post-Fordist economy and navigating a post-welfare terrain. This concern has legitimated a number of community based

intervention programmes (see HM Government, 2011a; 2011b) operating under the Coalition's Big Society agenda to deliver services on behalf of the state (Mythen et al., 2011). These programmes remain embedded within a behaviourist philosophy attempting to 'correct' the individual 'shortcomings' of those left behind by the deleterious effects of post-industrial capitalism and 'connect' them to the circuits of citizenship such as employment (Young, 2007; Wacquant, 2009) in an attempt to diffuse social insecurity instigated by the decline in wage labour and post-industrial capitalism (Wacquant, 2009). As Spaaij (2009) goes on to suggest, SBIs now feature within this new 'culture of control' to regulate and educate those deemed 'at risk', notably, stigmatized, inner city youth:

'It could well be argued that within this context of major political concern about social cohesion, immigration and crime, serving disadvantaged (ethnic) youth is not the ultimate goal of sport-based programs...rather, they are a means through which governmental organisations and their partners seek to 'civilize' and regulate these youth and their neighbourhoods. This strategy reflects the (locally adapted) neoliberal agenda that has emerged ...around 'social' issues like crime immigration, urban order and community regeneration'. (Spaaij, 2009:252)

The potential of SBIs to contribute to these governmental priorities, however, must be viewed with caution. Both Kelly (2011; 2012) and Chamberlain (2013) note that SBIs often screen broader social inequalities and exclusionary processes through their individualization of criminal behaviour and worklessness. In part, this is achieved through a 'pathways to work' discourse, which offers educational programmes alongside sporting activity in attempts to alter or modify criminal or anti-social behaviour (Kelly, 2011). For Kelly, such an approach only succeeds in decontextualizing structural inequalities found in neoliberal, post-industrial societies that programmes are seeking to address in the first instance. A reductive analysis of

exclusionary factors therefore harks back to neoliberal discourse, in which ‘individual deficits and ‘self-exclusion’ are highlighted and structural inequalities de-emphasised’ (Kelly, 2011:20). Such an approach can thus lead to further stigmatisation and exclusion for those that fail to ‘succeed’ in programmes.

In forming a key component of the new neoliberal policy ‘repertoire’ (Spaaij, 2009:252), SBIs must also now market and strategically ‘brand’ themselves to gain a strategic foothold within a competitive market of provision (Mythen et al., 2011:5). The PbR system offers a way of driving up competition based on the most efficient delivery of targets relating to a reduction of offending or the movement of young people into employment, education or training (DWP, 2012:4). Although on paper this proposal sounds appealing, the competitive market instilled by such an approach can lead to increased ‘operational insecurity’ amongst service providers (Kelly, 2012). This may lead to an over emphasis on the ‘riskiness’ of participants, with deliverers often exaggerating participants’ precariousness whilst highlighting the ‘success stories’ in attempt to appeal to funding bodies (Kelly, 2012).

The transfer of funding streams for a number of voluntary sector organisations, such as the one researched as part of this thesis, also has further implications for outcome driven, preventative programmes in which it is difficult to define outcomes. Not only can this exacerbate the aforementioned concern, but can also lead to an occurrence whereby participants are ‘cherry picked’ based on their ability to achieve a prospective outcome (Mythen et al., 2011; Kelly, 2012) whilst those ‘harder to reach’ are cast aside to face further stigmatization and exclusion. Further, the PbR system can affect service quality, ‘moving’ participants into non-sustainable outcomes, such as low paid jobs, in order to adhere to funding requirements, with little after care or support provided

thereafter. These themes are ones which will be explored in the empirical chapters of this thesis.



## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

Chapter 4 introduces readers to the fieldwork methods used to inform the empirical chapters of this thesis. This includes a discussion of the epistemological underpinnings of the research, and its connection with the research aims and chosen research methods. This chapter also documents my time spent ‘in the field’, and the methodological issues and ethical dilemmas that arose during my time conducting fieldwork for this thesis.

I begin chapter 4 by stating and justifying my epistemological and ontological ‘stance’, and its connection to the chosen research methods. This chapter then provides an overview of the qualitative research methods used to elicit ‘data’ from my participants, namely: semi-structured interviews and ethnography. Following this, I then discuss the ‘story’ of my fieldwork, including issues of access, objectivity, and the many difficulties I encountered when conducting ethnographic research. I conclude this chapter by considering the ethical issues associated with conducting research with young people deemed ‘at risk’.

### **Epistemological and Ontological Underpinnings**

Epistemologically, this thesis is underpinned by a critical realist approach to acquiring ‘knowledge’. I therefore begin this chapter by explaining and interpreting the key components of critical realism, and its applicability to this piece of research.

Critical realism is a relatively new research philosophy paradigm that recognises both the events and discourses of the natural and social worlds. Primarily associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar (2008), critical realism argues that an understanding of reality exists independently of social phenomena, and should therefore be the focus of inquiry (Jupp, 2006). However, critical realists maintain that events and discourses occurring in the social world cannot be measured directly, but only through a mixture of empirical investigation and theory construction (McEvoy and Richards, 2006). Critical realism is therefore underpinned by an approach which seeks to go beyond the

superficial level of observation, to identify the structures that influence the occurring social phenomena (Mingers, 2000; McEvoy and Richards, 2006).

Consequently, research framed from this perspective should not focus primarily on the observable, but rather, should seek to understand those deeper structures which shape reality and the context of human behaviour. In this sense, critical theorists argue that a distinction exists between the social and natural world, and that social structures are maintained and reproduced by the activities of agents, whilst the activities of agents are shaped by pre-existing social structures (Bhaskar, 2008).

Reality then, is conceptualised as a multi layered notion that is structured into three domains. These include: the empirical (aspects of reality that can be observed directly or indirectly); the actual (aspects of reality that occur but which may or may not necessarily be evident); and finally, the 'real' structures that produce social phenomena. These mechanisms can only be uncovered through a combination of both empirical investigation and theory construction. Critical realism thus conceptualises a stratified view of reality, which permits the researcher to uncover findings at empirical and real level, and construct theories to clarify findings.

Critical theorists reject positivist methodologies for their focus solely on observable events and their failure to relate how these observations are influenced by prior causal mechanisms and external influences (Collier, 1994). Moreover, although critical realists acknowledge the potential of interpretivist approaches in the understanding of groups through causal mechanisms related to human behaviour, critical theorists are disapproving of theorists who fail to take into account the extent to which social phenomena is influenced by social structures. Critical theorists thus seek to explain social phenomena through underlying causal mechanisms than through empirical

generalisations that can occur through positivist methodologies (Bryman, 2012). The relationships between human action and the social structures that determine behaviour are therefore of significance to researchers guided by a critical realist methodological framework, as it is argued that individuals are formed through social structures, and therefore social structures are perceived as having the potential to exert power over actors and instigate change (Bhaskar, 1989). Critical theorist methodologies therefore direct the research to uncover the causal influence of power and social structures on social phenomena.

In synch with critical realist thinking, the ‘data’ documented within the empirical chapters of this thesis are obtained from the subjective, reflexive views of my participants, i.e., their *own* views and accounts of growing up and ‘transiting’, of unemployment, of their experiences of participating in the activities of SBIs. As a critical realist, this ‘data’ is merged with an understanding of the underlying factors that influence social phenomena. I therefore contextualise these empirical arguments in my participants own ascribed meanings, social experiences, and understandings of the social world in which they are enveloped. Such an approach fits with the critical underpinnings of this research, which attempts to understand the social structures and ongoing social, political, and economic changes that have affected the youthful populations of Neighbourhood A and B. In doing so, I align myself with a key principle of critical realist thinking, that is; the objective critique of social structures to instigate social change, the end product being the promotion of human emancipation and freedom (Bhaskar, 2008). Hence, the *critical* aspect of critical realism relates to ‘the identification of generative mechanisms [that offer] the prospect of introducing changes that can transform the status quo’ (Bryman, 2012:29).

As this thesis is rooted in the reflexive interpretations, experiences and perspectives of my participants, my ontological approach is therefore one that stresses ‘the active role of individuals in the social construction of social reality’ (Bryman, 2004:34). Ontologically, this thesis is therefore a product of social constructionism, an approach adopted by other distinguished ethnographic researchers, notably Becker in his study of marijuana users (1963) and the work of Winlow (2001) and Hobbs (Hobbs, 2013), who chart the evolving ‘social constructions’ of working-class (criminal) cultures and existences, situated in the context of on-going social, political and economic changes in the social order (Hobbs, 2013:2).

Like these ethnographers, this thesis provides sociological accounts and descriptions of social reality, grounded in the first hand experiences of my participants, rather than through my own, subjective interpretations. In this sense, social reality and phenomena - such as culture - is seen as indefinite, unfixed and in an on-going reconstruction between social actors. Becker neatly illustrates how culture is therefore in ‘an emergent state of reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction’ (Bryman, 2012:34):

‘people create culture continuously...no set of understandings...provides a perfectly applicable solution to any problem people have to solve in the course of their day, and they therefore must remake those solutions, adapt their understandings to the new situation in light of what is different about it’. (Becker, 1982:521)

It is necessary to note, however, that Becker (1982) does not overemphasise the constructionist position. His view is aware that culture ‘persists and antecedes the participation of particular people’, yet culture remains a reality that is not external or

determining: rather, it is a ‘point of reference...always in the process of being formed’ (Bryman, 2012:34).

To produce empirical research, arguments and findings as part of this thesis, informed by the conscious, views of my participants on social reality, two qualitative research methods were adopted: first, I conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with participants who lived in both the North East of England and London, and frequented SBI project sites; and secondly, through ethnographic investigation, in which I observed and ‘intermingled’ with my participants in the context of the SBI and the social spaces in which they inhabited, e.g. bars, cafes, ‘the street’. This chapter justifies the use of these approaches, alongside their respective methodological strengths and weaknesses. Before this, however, it is first necessary to introduce readers to the research site where these methods were deployed.

### The SBI

The SBI is a third-sector organisation that uses football as a ‘tool’ to progress participants into forms of EET, and works with young people between the ages of 16-25. It runs multiple football sessions and academy programmes within six major cities in the UK. This thesis considers two ‘centres’ from the same SBI, one located in Sunderland, and one located in East London (there are, however, multiple ‘centres’ located in each of these cities) I will briefly relay the structure of the SBI here to position it within its operational context.

The SBI is composed of two components which allows it to achieve the specific outcomes of progressing young people into EET. Firstly, it offers ‘open’ football sessions once a week at various locations within its operational city. These football

sessions operate as the 'hook' to prospective participants. Sessions last for two hours, and are composed of a warm up, basic football drills, and small sided games. From my experience of attending approximately 60+ open football sessions, participant numbers range from 6 to 30. However, attendance at sessions was often intermittent, and fluctuated over the two and a half years which I spent conducting ethnographic fieldwork.

'Open' sessions are supported by an 8-week 'academy' programme, which runs four times a year. Participants attending the open football sessions are encouraged to sign up for the academy programme, although attendance is limited to 20 participants. Hence, participants considered the 'most ready' to benefit from the academy (i.e. more likely to achieve progress into EET) are given priority over those who are deemed 'harder' to work with.

The 8-week academy programme consists of educational and employment-based support. Participants are encouraged to produce CVs and cover letters, and complete a basic college qualifications (Open College Network (OCN) award) delivered by SBI staff. Staff also attempt to provide employment or volunteering opportunities with a network of external employers linked to the SBI. Local further education colleges are also targeted, and participants are encouraged to attend open days with a view to enrol on entry level BTEC courses.

Upon 'graduating' from the academy programme, participants are expected to have already found EET opportunities. The SBI's website suggests that 74% of participants have found EET opportunities within three months of finishing the academy; from April 2012 to March 2013, 864 young people enrolled on the academy, and 703 moved into employment (391), education (211), or training (SBI website, 2015). As this thesis

will show, however, these outcomes are not always progressive, sustainable, or life affirming.

Little support is provided post-SBI, and during my time spent with the SBI there was no formal strategy in place to support those participants who had not already found EET. Participants were encouraged to continue attending ‘open’ SBI sessions in the hope that support could continue to be provided (thereby raising their awareness of potential job opportunities), although if participants had not found employment within two to three months of graduating, they were no longer allowed to continue attending sessions.

The SBI can be considered an exemplar *plus sport* (Coalter, 2007) model, in which sport, or in this case, football, is the ‘fly paper’ to attract potential young men onto EET. Such an approach is widespread, particularly amongst SBIs operating in the UK in the fields of desistance, substance abuse, and unemployment, which give primacy to health and social outcomes over sporting ‘outcomes’(Coalter, 2007). A significant amount of academic literature has been applied to these types of programmes on a *global* scale (e.g. Spaaij, 2009; Darnell, 2010; Hartmann and Kwak, 2011) which, drawing on critical theory, argue that the *dominant* vision of sport for development essentially reproduces existing structures of hierarchy and does little to alter the structural conditions that produce and maintain social inequalities (Hartman and Kwak, 2011; Chamberlain, 2013). In the UK, Kelly (2011; 2012; 2013) and Chamberlain (2013) have argued from similar critical perspectives, whilst Nichols (2007) and Nichols and Crow (2004) and Coalter (2007; 2010) have provided insight into SBIs in the UK context, the former arguing that SBIs risk ‘confusing potential micro-level individual outcomes with community and broader macro-level impacts;

[and] ignoring wider socio-political contexts within which sport-for development organizations have to operate' (2010: 265)

### Qualitative Interviews

As specified at the onset of this chapter, semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted with 30 participants who frequented the SBI 'researched' as part of this thesis, in an attempt to elicit their reflective views, accounts and experiences of their social reality, e.g. their social lives, experiences of unemployment, and encounters with the specific SBI project.

Interviews were 'flexible but controlled' (Burgess, 1984:107), 'conversational' in style, and led by an open ended structure based on questions and 'themes' generated by myself. This approach produced discussion that 'flowed', in part due to its open rather than rigid structure, which can often regulate, subdue and structure the responses of participants (Bryman, 2012). Hence, I followed an approach that was 'guided' by myself around several 'themes' which allowed my participants to express views representative of their subjective accounts of social reality. As such, interviews were based on the organic, unforced responses of participants, guided by theme-focused questions, as posed by myself.

In the earlier stages of research, I found that the themes interviews were loosely 'structured' around – growing up, the influence of the neighbourhood in which they resided, 'crime', football – were topics my participants could talk in depth about, often with zeal and enthusiasm. Consequently, a number of earlier interviews evolved into somewhat unfocused – although nevertheless insightful and interesting – discussions, deviating from the initial research themes I intended to research. Following these initial interviews, I realised I needed an overhaul in my interview 'technique', that



would not allow my participants to diverge from the original research theme, topic or question. Instead, I required an approach that would elicit ‘data’ that reflected the epistemological aims of this research. Hence, after this methodological re-evaluation, I ensured that responses were pertinent to the research theme in question, often ‘guiding’ discussion back to the original theme. Yet I also ensured – and even encouraged – that my participants were given sufficient freedom to expand on and express their opinions, as they originally had done so. I felt that this ‘freedom’ provided greater rapport between myself and my participant, and in turn, provoked more ‘real’, ‘truthful’ and qualitatively ‘rich’ discussion. Hence, I often allowed my participants – within the bounds of good sense – to verbally ‘let loose’ when being interviewed (not they that needed much further encouragement to do so, however).

Hence, I adopted a ‘naturalistic’ approach to interviewing, in line the following passage:

“Naturalism’...has led many ethnographers to favour non-directive interviewing, in which the interviewee is allowed to talk at length in his or own terms, as opposed to more directive questioning. The aim here is to minimize, as far as possible, the influence of the researcher on what is said, and this thus to facilitate open expression of the informant’s perspective on the world’. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:243)

The relative strengths of the qualitative interview, as detailed by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), and Bryman (2012) are multiple, and adhere to the critical underpinning of this thesis. First, elicited ‘data’ is conceptual and theoretical, and is based on the lived experiences and occurrences of my participants. As a consequence and in line with critical realist thinking, interview ‘data’ is grounded in the subjective meanings of my participant’s social reality, rather than my own understandings of what social reality may, or may not, be. Thus, one advantage is in the methods ability

to provide a more insightful account of the interviewee's subjective social experience(s). Second, the 'natural' technique used in my interviews allowed unexpected, often 'unusual' data to emerge that may not have appeared through more structured, quantitative techniques. Third, my participants were able to answer and respond in their own time, and as they pleased. Often, my participants were keen to talk reflexively, and openly, about their social experiences, and so interviewees enabled me to 'delve deeply into social and personal matters' (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006:314) and provide an account of the 'social worlds' of my participants, 'through their own eyes' (Bryman, 2001:277).

On completion of the interview 'phase' of my research, I had elicited 'data' from my participants which represented their social and cultural 'realities'. Descriptive, empirical data was 'grounded' akin to the approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Thus, following the analysis of interview transcripts<sup>29</sup> I was able to present informed arguments based on 'concrete empirical experiences of real human beings' (Bauman, 1997:83); which reflected young people's contemporary cultural identities within post-industrial, 21<sup>st</sup> century urban landscapes, and the role of SBIs as a means to alleviate social 'problems' for these young people.

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<sup>29</sup> Interviews were transcribed by an external transcribing company. Preceding this, all research material gathered, including interview transcripts and reflective notes, were collated and analysed through open and axial coding techniques, in the context of a 'grounded theory' approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Hence, this thesis was conducted without prior hypothesis, and instead relied on the inductive emergence of theory from empirical data. In this sense, theory is generated from the 'bottom up'. Data was therefore analysed and theory redefined in the context of data collection and analysis, as noted by Cresswell (1998). Validity of findings are therefore maximised, as research focus and themes are subsequently 'fixed' and 'strengthened' to match the emerging themes in data (Charmaz and Bryant, 2010). Following the guidelines of Bryman (2012) the transcribed text was coded. Initially, I used an open coded approach and categorised the transcripts manually into components that were of potential significance and salience to the research objective. Following this, I interpreted the transcripts a second time through axial coding which rearranged data into further categories and established additionally links between them. I used a detailed selective coding approach to further substantiate the relationships between categories by establishing the causes and main concepts within each core category, that is, the central issue to which all other categories are integrated (Bryman, 2008). Coding is an established process in qualitative research and grounded theory (Bryman, 2008) and its use is required in maximising the validity in qualitative research (Silverman, 2004), hence its deployment in this thesis. However, I am aware that coding analysis can fragment data so that the narrative flow of dialogue is lost (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996), meaning that if a participant articulates an extensive narrative of their experiences this may be misplaced if it is incorrectly positioned within different codes. Moreover, open coding can initially lead to a proliferation of codes that may seem perplexing to the researcher (Bryman, 2008). However, a systematic and rigorous approach to axial coding can combine diminish the preceding quantity of codes, as has been done in this thesis.

Qualitative Interviews were conducted between April 2011 and August 2012. Although primarily conducted at SBI project sites, for my participant's ease and comfort, alternative interview sites were also used, including: cafes, pubs, park benches, football pitches, a car park, and one time, the inside of a bus shelter. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours, and were recorded with a handheld Dictaphone after receiving verbal consent from my participants. Participants were also briefed regarding the nature of the research, and provided with an information sheet and consent form to sign, which affirmed full anonymity, and details of confidentiality. For some participants, interviews provided an opportunity to voice their opinions meaningfully, away from the ears of project staff and peer groups. As such, interviews appeared somewhat cathartic for participants, as they expressed their views, opinions and experiences in a sociologically 'open' and 'natural' research environment away from the influences (and pressures) of others.

Prior to interviews, it was of course necessary to recruit a collective of potential interviewees. Upon attending each individual SBI 'session', I would introduce myself to participants, explain my attendance, outline details of the research, and the need for potential interviewees to 'come forward'. All interviews, however, were conducted toward the end of, or on completion of, the SBI's 8 week 'academy programme' that participants underwent. The reasoning behind this was threefold. Firstly, this allowed me to spend time with participants, building rapport, trust, and familiarity with the group: subsequently, when interviews were conducted, participants felt at ease with me in light of the relationship developed between us over the preceding 6 or 7 weeks. As such, I believe participants were open and honest in their discussion, safe in the knowledge interviews were anonymous and confidential. Second, I was able to explain and detail the research in more depth to participants. Often participants were keen to

uncover my role within the SBI, and as such the extended period spent with them afforded me the opportunity to outline my constant attendance at football matches and educational classes. Thirdly, conducting interviews ‘post-SBI’ meant that participants were able to answer reflectively, detailing their experiences of the SBI and the sociological ‘impact’ it had. It also provided me with opportunities to explore a key theme emerging from the data: the sustainability of SBI programmes, and explore my participants ‘next steps’ which I ‘researched’ ethnographically. I will detail this methodological experience later in this chapter.

Following these procedures, I was able to recruit participants based on ‘snowballing’ interest amongst each group: Interest was facilitated by project staff ‘reminding’ participants of my role, and the promise of a free can of coke or packet of crisps<sup>30</sup>. Hence, within the first week of my attendance at each project site, I had a significant ‘pool’ of interviewees.

Interviews and ethnographic observation were conducted with thirty SBI participants. Fifteen of these were located in the Neighbourhood A, and fifteen in Neighbourhood B. The average age of participants in Neighbourhood A was 19.1, whilst in Neighbourhood B, the average age was 18.4. The ethnicity of participants in the North East was predominantly white British (100%), whilst in Neighbourhood B eight participants were of Black Caribbean descent (one mixed white Caribbean), five Black African, three white, and one South Asian. For clarity, a table of the sample and their characteristics is provided below. Within this table I have alluded to the cultural ‘type’

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<sup>30</sup> Although initially I considered using incentives, either monetary or in the form of SBI paraphernalia, it was quickly established that there would be no such need. Participants were forthcoming and responsive to my calls, and as such, no such enticement was required other than the draw of free confectionary, carbonated drinks, or alcoholic beverages

these participants have also been categorised into. Although this has not been referred to thus far, readers may wish to return to the table after reading Chapter 7.

Table 1. Age and Ethnicity of Sample

Neighbourhood	Age	Ethnicity			
		White	Black Caribbean	Mixed Black Caribbean/White	Black African
A	20.8	15 (100%)			
B	19.1	1 (6.6%)	8 (53.3%)	1 (6.6%)	5 (33.3%)
<b>Cultural 'Type'</b>					
Outcasts	21.1	7 (100%)			
Conformists	20.5	8 (100%)			
Aspirationists	20.1	1 (12.5%)	4 (50%)		3 (37.5%)
Road Boys	18.2		4 (71.4%)	1 (14.2%)	2 (28.6%)

Once the research had elapsed, I also had participants contacting me to be interviewed; they wanted to be 'part of that research thing you're doing'. Seemingly, participants were keen to be interviewed and talk about their experiences, and their present social situation. Some participants who I had initially interviewed contacted me up to 10 months after my initial period spent with them had passed. Hence, this significantly aided the research process, as I was afforded multiple interviews with participants over a prolonged period. My research experience thus confirmed how eager some individuals are to talk about themselves, especially when discussing the themes researched as part of this thesis. Some were keen to espouse a form of 'street bravado' in subsequent interviews, detailing and exaggerating their latest crimogenic or delinquent conquest. Hence, during interviews I had the task of 'decoding' responses: were their accounts tinged with this exaggerated, imaginary 'street bravado', or was it in fact my participants 'social reality'?

The qualitative approach underpinning this research provided a way through this methodological predicament. As previously alluded to, my time ‘in the field’ proved to me that ‘social reality’ can never be inherently interpreted as real by myself, but only by the perspective of participants whose social reality is under investigation. My participant’s experiences and perceptions of ‘road life’, and their social and cultural habitus, are only ‘real’ to them. In this sense ‘...*everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world*’ (Luckman and Berger, 1967:33). Thus, the research process was informed by an understanding of reality based on the inter-subjective interpretations and constructions of individual agency, whilst simultaneously interpreting them with a critical view point that understands human action and social phenomena as influenced by enveloping social structures (Bhaskar, 2008).

The inductive, open-ended approach adopted by this thesis acknowledged the subjective, individual understandings of my participant’s social world: understandings of ‘road life’, SBIs and unemployment are all relative, experienced differently amongst my participants. These social experiences are best understood from a critical realist perspective, an epistemological approach that allows one to consider the relative social and cultural ‘mechanisms’ behind human behaviour and social reality (Bhaskar, 2008). This approach also allowed me to consider individual ‘subcultural’ responses, mediated in the context of a globalised, post-industrial era (Hobbs, 2013), to SBIs and their relationship to broader, contemporary, urban life and culture. These themes, which I will explore in the context of this thesis, could not have been uncovered via quantitative, positivistic approaches. I therefore adopted a qualitative approach that has similarities with work on contemporary working-class life

(Charlesworth, 2000), youth cultures (Hobbs, 2013), and the impact of SBIs (Kelly, 2012).

### Ethnography

Alongside the qualitative interviews I conducted, I methodologically ‘fleshed out’ and supported my research via ethnography. I will note here that, due to my methodological commitment to understanding the subjective opinions and interpretations of my participants, ethnographic research was a secondary element within my methodological framework, functioning as a research tool to substantiate my detailed, qualitative interviews. Nevertheless, in spite of its secondary application, ethnographic research represented a key component of my methodology, and I will now justify its use, its connection with the epistemological ‘underpinning’ of this research, and its relative advantages.

As I have suggested, epistemologically, this thesis is a derivative of the critical realist tradition: hence, my methodological and epistemological underpinnings meant that my research was to understand the unobservable generative mechanisms and social structures ‘that promote or impede the operation of the causal mechanism’ (Bryman, 2012:29). It was clear that to escape the literature and research on SBIs and young people dominated by approaches without knowledge, understanding, or consideration of the context and reality of post-industrial, urban landscapes, I required a methodology that reported the behaviours of contemporary, urban working-class youth in their ‘natural habitat’ that uncovers the unobservable ‘mechanisms’ that structure human action. In short, I deemed it epistemologically ‘impossible’ to ‘do’ research on my participants without gaining first-hand knowledge of their social contexts and habitus’, and becoming part of their social world; anything else would

produce work that suffers from an ‘ecological fallacy’ (see Robinson, 1950). Hence, I intended to grasp an understanding of young people and SBIs ‘through its least known and least spectacular side’ (Wacquant, 2004:6) the minute and mundane activities of everyday life in the inner city: the realities of unemployment and criminal behaviour; the monotonous routine of employment training programmes and SBIs; the endless ‘kickabouts’ and experiences of urban ‘leisure life’. Via an ethnographic approach, I was therefore able to participate in the activities of the SBI, which provided a ‘platform for observation’ (Wacquant, 2012) into the realities of ‘road life’, and the social world of post-industrial, working-class youth<sup>31</sup>

Hence, this study adopted an ethnographic approach that several other researchers have implemented successfully in researching the lived experiences of youth, namely: Ilan’s (2010) study of an inner city youth club in Dublin; Nayak’s (2006) work on masculinities and working-class culture in Newcastle; Hobbs’s (Hobbs, 2013) research on criminal cultures in de-industrialised, inner city London; and Densley’s (2012) ethnography of London street gangs. In a similar tradition to the work of Winlow (2001), Nayak (2006) and Hobbs (2013) then, this study implements a methodology that attempts to understand the cultural and context specific lives of its participants. In line with their work, and my critical realist position, I therefore intend

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<sup>31</sup> Admittedly, this thesis began as an ethnographic investigation into the social impact and sustainability of SBIs, with little consideration of the wider social context or lives of its participants. However, very quickly it became evident that the SBI functioned as a wonderful window into the daily life of the young men that made use of it, and the social realities of the immediate neighbourhood in which it was located. Loic Wacquant’s (2004) ethnographic study of a boxing gym in a black neighbourhood in Chicago’s South Side is strongly influential here, and I heeded the advice Pierre Bourdieu offered him that ‘you will learn more about the ghetto in this gym than you can from all the surveys in the world’ (Wacquant, 2011:86). Hence, as fieldwork progressed I soon discovered the research ‘themes’ of the daily work and functioning of the SBI, the sociology of youth cultural identities, and the post-industrial transformation of locales in which SBIs were situated ‘were elaborated together and at the same time, they are all woven together (Wacquant, 2011:87). Hence, like gang membership or street crime – two possible trajectories which SBIs offer a potential ‘route’ out of – the true functioning of SBIs can only be uncovered, sociologically, with regard to the social context in which it is situated: the market changes instigated by a post-industrial economy, the shrinking of welfare provision, and the youthful street cultures and collaborations that make up the predatory organisation of contemporary ‘road life’. They are all ‘connected’. Hence, I follow Wacquant’s work on the ‘sociology of the gym’, and his suggestion that ‘one cannot understand the relatively closed world of boxing outside of the human and ecological context in which it is anchored and the social possibilities of which this context is the bearer. Indeed it is in its *double relation of symbiosis and opposition* to the Neighbourhood and to the grim realities of the ghetto that the gym defines itself’ (Wacquant, 2004:17).



to present ethnographic ‘data’ that explains ‘the foundations and dynamics of a social and cultural life world which exists in the post-traditional, post-industrial...urban milieu’ (Winlow, 2001:11).

Accordingly, a recently published source which shares similarities with this research in terms of its methodological approach, geographical location of research, and ‘sample’ of participants is James Densley’s *How Gangs Work: Ethnography of Youth Violence* (2012). His work is an ethnographic account of contemporary urban youth cultures (notably youth ‘gangs’ in London) and the ‘evolution’ of ‘gang’ membership, the desistance process, and impact of gang prevention and intervention techniques. Due to the similarities in our methodologies<sup>32</sup>, it is necessary to briefly consider Densley’s work here, to demonstrate how I seek to advance the study of urban youth via my own *critical realist* approach.

Densley’s work, like mine, attempts to provide an account of ‘contemporary urban life’ via an ethnographic approach. He addresses this research aim via research in six London boroughs to demonstrate how contemporary youthful ‘collaborations’ (Hobbs, 2013:110–136) are ‘to a large extent rational agents who operate under the constraints of their harsh life conditions’ (Densley, 2012:3). Thus, Densley conducted ethnographic research and a series of interviews with ‘gang’ members in an attempt to produce an account of urban social life ‘in the spirit of suspending what you think about others and seeing the world through their eyes’ (Densley, 2012:6).

Here, I would like to highlight that I consider Densley’s (2012) work into youth ‘gangs’ in London to be pioneering in the context of limited academic debate in this area, and I applaud his methodological commitment to understanding this particular

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<sup>32</sup> Like me, Densley states a methodological commitment to ethnography within ‘communities and neighbourhoods’, and an effort to ‘to take into account their (his participants) perspective and to understand... [their] view of the world’ (Densley, 2012:6)

social phenomena within its natural habitat, rather than based on the secondary accounts of youth workers, police, and third sector agencies (e.g. Pitts, 2008).

Yet despite my admiration for his work, I believe Densley's (2012) work fails to fully comprehend *critically* the realities of contemporary urban life, and he is unsuccessful in illustrating the influence of cultural, social, political and geographical 'variables' that ethnographers and critical realists must be sensitive to (Bhaskar, 2008; Hobbs, 2013). Instead, his insights into contemporary urban youth rely on 'data' that simply documents urban life in a deterministic, non-sociological, and generic way. This inhibits him from providing a 'valid' or 'reliable' 'ethnography of youth', rooted in the conscious experience of individuals (his participants) within the specific situational and cultural context studied. I therefore challenge his work, based on three main methodological criticisms. I will highlight these here to demonstrate how I seek to advance the study of youth via my own methodological approach, which is based on an epistemological and ontological commitment to obtaining reflexive, 'first-hand' critical accounts of my participants, grounded and contextualised in their 'social worlds' (Bryman, 2008:277).

Firstly, Densley's (2012) ethnographic work highlights the difficulties (or ineffectiveness) of making inferences about the nature of post-industrial, urban life deduced from cross-sectional data<sup>33</sup>. Although he analyses some common characteristics that can be observed among many contemporary urban youth 'gangs' (notably the organisational 'structure' of gangs, and their use of media and technology), he presents urban youth, and 'gangs', as one homogenous group, when in fact, as I will argue in the context of this thesis, a number of different 'forms' of

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<sup>33</sup> See Robinson (1950) on the 'ecological fallacy'

post-industrial, urban youth exist today. Densley fails to consider that each borough is composed of unique social, cultural and ethnic characteristics. Therefore, the youthful ‘cultures’ he describes cannot be gauged accurately from the triangulation of interview responses from all six boroughs he studied. To counter this, I have therefore made a methodological commitment to studying youth cultures within their own specific, microstructural setting (hence the comparative element to this research), taking into account regional, ethnic and structural variations. I have also attempted to explain how experiences in youthful ‘collaborations’ are more fluid and dynamic than Densley suggests, by highlighting the significance of the cultural setting (i.e. the local area, estate, borough), whilst recognising the prevalence of different, indeed oppositional, youth cultures (or ‘gangs’) within a shared social context who may diverge in terms of organisational structures, ethnicities, memberships and crimes committed<sup>34</sup>.

Similarly, Densley views youth ‘gangs’ – a contemporary, urban, cultural ‘collaboration’ (see Hobbs, 2013:110-136) – as homogenous collectives. In the context of this study, I can confirm that there are huge variations in terms of their existences, and they should not be considered as one homogenous group: Notably, my approach to fieldwork uncovered the distinctions that exists amongst ‘gangs’ in terms of: i) how long they have existed ii) what ‘activities’ they are involved in (although there is room for further contest here as many crimes perpetrated by gang members are not committed collectively) iii) how ‘established’ and embedded they are within the local community, and IV) their ethnic and racial composition. Hence, Densley makes the methodological mistake of applying the findings of his research to the whole

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<sup>34</sup> I demonstrate this in the context of ‘gangs’, highlighting how some are more ‘entrepreneurial’ than others, in the sense they are more ‘business’ orientated as opposed to loose-knit street collectives based around sporadic violence or street robbery.

of London, and makes assumptions and conclusions as if there is a singular ‘type’ of ‘youth gang’ operating within this urban context.

My final criticism of Densley’s methodological approach is his failure to recognise the impact of broader structural factors, notably the impact of de-industrialisation, unregulated consumerism, and the specific characteristics of the political and economic environment, all of which have impacted considerably on working-class locales and the youthful cultures, collaborations and identities that populate contemporary urban milieus (Hall et al., 2008; Hobbs, 2013). If one is to provide a sociological reliable, critical account of youth - as I intend to do so - it is a necessity to present arguments grounded in my participant’s relative *habitus* and conscious experience. In this sense, it is my methodological intention to uncover how individuals make sense of the world around them (Bryman, 2012), in the context of a post-industrial-era, urban landscape. Anything else ignores the realities of contemporary working-class, urban life (Hobbs, 2013)<sup>35</sup>.

Hence, in utilising an ethnographic approach, I have elicited ‘data’ and produced grounded ‘knowledge’ that I consider being more ‘valid’ and ‘truthful’ than has previously been presented. In doing so, I adhere to my epistemological framework that views social reality (e.g. culture) as something that can only be uncovered from the views of those rooted in the social reality being ‘researched’. Hence, I researched this thesis ethnographically, and critically, through the eyes of my participants, yet interpreted in light of the social structures in which they are enveloped.

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<sup>35</sup> As an aside, Densley’s work is also peppered with inaccurate references to gangs obtained from discredited sources, including misinformation from Daily Mail articles. For example, the ‘Younger 28s’ (Y28s) gang from Brixton did not change their name to the Peel Dem Crew (PDC) as Densley writes (2013:47). PDC was a completely different gang, and a well-known, highly publicised founding member of PDC was befriended by members of the real Y28s, who were formed in 1993. However, the PDC did not begin until 1995/96. Founding members of PDC confirmed this in the semi-biographical book *Street Boys* (2007), written for them by Tim Pritchard.

Undertaking ethnographic research meant I regularly attended SBI sessions alongside participants, spending between 2-5 times a week over a two and a half year period on either the football pitch or in the classroom, training and participating in all phases of the SBI programme. I gradually became taken in by the programme, to the point where I would often be participating in up to two, two-hour football sessions a day at different research sites. I would accompany and participate in matches, tournaments and also partake in various classroom and education activities offered by the SBI, often travelling to and from sessions with participants and staff, which allowed for continuous and limitless access to my participants.

Due to the comparative nature of the research, the first 'phase' of research was conducted in the North East of England between November 2010 and April 2012, and the second 'phase' in London between March 2012 and October 2012. However, the open-ended nature of the research meant contact with participants was maintained after October 2012, even though I no longer attended SBI sessions as frequently as I had once done. I 'researched' three main research sites and locations during my time in the North East, and two in London. Different participants existed at each research sites, although it was not uncommon to see some participants 'turn up' at open access football sessions in different locations. As such, my contact with participants was not restricted to the confines of one SBI location, but rather, contact was made at a variety of SBI locations across the two research areas.

The trust and social capital generated over months of research with SBI 'regulars' meant that I was fortunate enough to not only observe and interact with participants in the surroundings of the SBI programme, but also accompany them on their daily rounds outside of it. I would escort participants to the local jobcentre, go shopping with them in the local Tesco, catch up over a pint in the local pub, or simply 'hang

about' at their usual haunts; the flat, the shops or the street<sup>36</sup>. I was fortunate enough to gain access to the social contexts of participants first hand, an experience that served well in eliciting authentic, honest and reliable data regarding the lived experiences of participants, in line with my epistemological position.

Hence, I found my ethnographic experience to be informative, somewhat enjoyable, and practical to the epistemological 'leaning' of the research (Bryman, 2012). Via ethnography, I was able to 'capture' the changing social and cultural formations of contemporary urban life for unemployed, young adults: a 'clear, first hand picture' of the 'life of ordinary people, on their grounds and on their terms' (Liebow, 1967).

Retreating to the 'ethnographers lavatory' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:143) as Styles (1979:151) done so to write his field notes, wasn't required in this particular ethnography: instead, frequent breaks in SBI educational programmes and football sessions provided an opportunity for me to jot down scribbled notes in my field diary, before converting them into lengthier documents upon arriving home. This subsequent transcription provided more in depth analysis to the day's events, recording details of those present and the context in which events occurred. This process of writing field notes was in synchrony with the recommendations of Hammersley and Atkinson:

'It is... important that records of speech and action should be located in relation to who was present, where, at what time, and under what circumstances. When it comes to the analysis stage, when one will be gathering together, categorizing, comparing and constraining instances, it may be crucial that 'context' (participants, audience, setting, etc.) can be identified'. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:146-147)

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<sup>36</sup> I am aware that ethnographic research conducted in this manner brings with it a number of ethical and moral issues and challenges (see Giulianotti, 1995; Yates, 2004; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Bryman, 2008). The protocols set out to ensure and maintain the ethical integrity of this research are subsequently set out at the end of this chapter.

Following the guidelines of Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), field notes were ‘analysed’ via open and axial coding techniques, where ‘themes’ or ‘concepts’ were developed based on grounded theorizing (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). During this process, there is a constant interplay between ‘data’ and theory; first, open coding techniques identify emergent ‘themes’ or ‘concepts’ within data; second, axial coding techniques connect these ‘themes’ to construct a net of interactive conceptual factors; finally, selective coding techniques ensure there is a constant revision and rethinking of ‘themes’, or ‘theory’, in line with the emerging grounded ‘data’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

It is these field notes, along with the interview transcriptions, which provide the material for this thesis.

#### Acceptance, Rapport and Ethnographic Difficulties

Issues of initial access are crucial to effective ethnographic research; for Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:41), the ‘problem of obtaining access to the data looms large in ethnography’. In this section, I will address the processes through which I have achieved entrée to my research group.

Before detailing these experiences ‘in the field’ however, it is worth noting that during my time as a PhD student I was in the fortunate position of having my research sponsored by the SBI agency partner. Consequently, prior to beginning ‘fieldwork’ I had already met a large number of both local and national stakeholders who highlighted suitable SBI projects that could function as research sites. I was granted access to their basic quantitative data, facilities, and a network of potential research participants. In return, I would keep the team up to date with the research, presenting

at weekly meetings any ‘updates’ or significant findings I had come across. I was fortunate to have the help and support of the SBI; the research appealed to them and they took a keen interest in how I was progressing. Consequently, I was able to bypass many of the ‘messy realities’ (Maguire, 2000; Hobbs, 2001) experienced when seeking entrée to proposed research groups. Nor did I face the ‘numerous physical risks and professional dilemmas’ (Giulianotti, 1995:8) experienced during these initial stages of ethnographic research. Hence, this thesis is *not* a derivative of ‘pure’, grassroots ethnography in the manner of Hobbs (2013), Winlow, (2001) or Ilan (2012), where access and subsequent acceptance within the research group is awkward, complex, and in a constant state of uncertainty (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I did not experience the difficulties these ethnographers faced, and I cannot overstate my ethnographic problems here in light of their experiences. Rather, my ethnography is better characterised by anxieties existing between ‘top-down’ support and ‘bottom-up’ relationship building with participants, i.e. I was conscious of giving ‘something back’ to the organisation who were facilitating my research, yet mindful of my ‘official role’ jeopardising my position as ‘one of the lads’ which was, as I will discuss, indispensable to eliciting truthful, valid data from my participants. Moreover, although I did not face the aforementioned ‘access’ issues experienced by contemporary ethnographers (e.g. Giulianotti, 1995; Hobbs, 2001; Wacquant, 2001), I still experienced tensions with regard to my ‘acceptance’ within the research group: it is the processes by which I overcame these ethnographic ‘difficulties’, which will be detailed in this section.

I was first introduced to project staff in October 2010. During this initial meeting project workers identified SBI project sites that I could potentially ‘use’ for research purposes. The comparative element of this research meant I required research sites in



two distinct cultural and social environments, hence the focus on both the North East of England and East London. Within these two regions, I attended project sites where there were sufficient numbers of participants to make the research possible; indeed, some project sites were characterised by low numbers and the frequent cancelling of sessions, making any potential research at these sites untenable. Hence, three locations were used in the North East of England, and two in London.

At the outset of research it was my intention to become ‘fully embedded’ within each project location to ensure I elicited grounded, ‘situated’ findings. I could not be, as had previously been intended, an ‘official’ member of staff; such a position would prevent any meaningful data from arising. Instead, I had to be ‘one of them’ becoming ‘both known and popular’ yet remaining ‘an unobtrusive part of the scene’ (Armstrong, 1993); someone who could be trusted, who would not ‘grass’ back to the project their disclosed experiences, admissions and confessions. Yet I realised I could not become a full ‘member’ of my research group, like Armstrong (1993), or Winlow (2001); for one, I wasn’t ‘unemployed, out of education, or training’, as my participants were; and two, I still needed to be recognised as a researcher; I was not acting ‘covertly’, and my research was sponsored by the SBI I was conducting research ‘on’.

Due to the support and access to data the SBI offered me at the outset of the research, I was confident I would find the research straightforward enough, gathering data and going about my business with relative ease. However, I quickly became aware of the many ‘stresses and strains’ associated with fieldwork<sup>37</sup> (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:89). I was struck by how unstructured, uncomfortable and at times

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<sup>37</sup> For a further discussion of the stresses associated with fieldwork, see Wintrob (1969).

socially awkward (and embarrassing) the process of ethnography can be, perhaps exacerbated by my unfamiliarity with the research, but no doubt due to the nature of ethnographic research that inevitably impinges on the lives of those being ‘researched’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

My initial efforts to bond with my participants were met with resistance and hostility, and attempts to engage in informal conversation and ‘banter’ only resulted in me becoming the subject of mockery myself. Explaining my research and the process of conducting my PhD was met with blank faces, and so I eventually adopted Giulianotti’s (1995:7) explanation of his research that my interest in them was simply ‘for a book’. I was mistaken for a journalist, youth worker, counsellor and fellow participant on a number of occasions, and was reminded of Armstrong’s (1993) ethnography of Sheffield United’s ‘firm’ where he was similarly mistaken as one of either a ‘psychoanalyst’, ‘social worker’ or ‘author’.

Participants were often wary of my motives, suspicious of my presence and mindful of why I was so interested in spending time with them. I found it difficult to justify to my participants the need to ‘sample the mundane, the routine, or perhaps the boring aspects of everyday life’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:52). These issues were exacerbated by the high turnover of participants on the programmes: attendance at sessions was intermittent; one or two new participants would turn up one week, only to later drop out and turn up two months later<sup>38</sup>. Others would simply show up whenever they wanted; the open nature of football sessions meant participants were free to attend whenever they wanted.

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<sup>38</sup> It was not uncommon for participants to be absent for several months before returning. Often, this was due to either (i) personal circumstance, e.g. new employment, family commitments such as new-born children, return to education, or physical injury from football sessions, or (ii) ‘deviant’ circumstances, e.g. imprisonment, substance abuse relapses, mental health issues and the intervention of other agencies, or physical injury due to violent behaviour.

Hence, I found myself constantly re-introducing and reminding participants of my role, only to be asked again and again what exactly I was doing at sessions. A number of participants simply refused to talk to me despite my guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity (which I will discuss these later in the chapter) and I soon found myself on the wrong end of a number of ‘receivers’ during football matches. Some participants were unwilling to talk to me and clearly hostile to my presence, accusing me of being an ‘insider’ or ‘spy’ for the SBI or youth justice service, who would go back and inform on their behaviour, as recorded in one of my field notes:

‘Why are you always here...you’re just a spy for them (the SBI). I bet you go back and tell them everything we’ve been up to!’

Mark, Neighbourhood A, January 2011

I became aware that should I ever gain any form of acceptance within the group, the legitimacy of my presence would always be questioned (Lee, 1993). The following quotation from Giulianotti (1995:9) thus sums up my initial access experience:

‘The researcher is continuously locked into a form of renegotiation with his subjects, no matter how ritualized or repetitious this may be in content. New faces are accidentally bumped into before introductions; others may retain symbolic autonomy from the influential by ignoring or rejecting the stated acceptability of the researcher’. (Giulianotti, 1995:9)

My ethnographic ‘greenness’ made for an uncomfortable first two months of fieldwork. Over time, however, suspicions and tensions eased (Whyte, 1994), and I gradually earned the acceptance of my participants. I found that simply turning up early at sessions and ‘hanging around’ and ‘watching the action’ (Pearson, 1994) gave me a chance to converse informally with participants. Engaging in ‘banter’ surrounding typically ‘masculine’ pursuits such as football, women and beer (Nayak, 2006) and joining in with a game of ‘headers and volleys’ against the sports club doors

(much to the annoyance of the staff working there) helped detach myself from the ‘worker’ tag I had been accredited with. My acceptance within one ‘group’ of research participants was sealed one day when travelling to a session with them. On arriving at the metro station, I was faced with the moral dilemma of either paying for a metro ticket or conforming to the cultural norm of the group of ‘dodging’ the £3 fare. To pay the fare would surely be a sign that I was positioning myself as morally superior to them, and as a result intensify the social distance between us. I was thus compelled to ‘dodge’ the fare in an attempt to ‘prove’ myself to the group<sup>39</sup>.

Travelling to and from sessions with participants gave me the first opportunity to gain an insight into their lives. I would meet with them, play football with them, drink with them and generally ‘hang out’ with them in various social contexts. I eventually found that some of the most pertinent material presented in this thesis was elicited through the informal discussions I had with participants on the bus, in the street or down the pub, rather than in the controlled and unnatural environment of the structured interview.

At this point, it is useful to highlight the main factors that have enabled me to overcome these initial difficulties, and gain a grounded, objective view of my participant’s lives. As Hobbs (2013:9) suggests, it is necessary that ‘all ethnographers bring their biographies to the research table’.

As discussed, my intention to uncover the lives of young men from ‘the ground up’ via the observation of everyday activities and ‘mundane occurrences’ (see Wacquant, 2004) meant I required an approach that reported the behaviours of contemporary, urban working-class youth in their ‘natural habitat’. As a white, University educated,

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<sup>39</sup> We were later caught at Newcastle’s Central Station and charged £20; however I believe this a small price to pay for sealing my acceptance within the group.

PhD student however, my intellectual and social experiences made me somewhat of a stranger to this milieu, and deepened my feelings to acquire some familiarity with the research setting. The comparative element of my fieldwork exacerbated this methodological dilemma; in the North East, I had the disadvantage of being a ‘southerner’ from the Home Counties, whilst my participants were brought up in the working-class inner cities of Sunderland and East London. In London, I had the disadvantage of being a ‘white southerner’ (see Spiegel, 1969) from the Home Counties, my participants predominantly drawn from the working-class, multi-ethnic housing estates of Hackney. My social class, exposed through my dialect and University educated background, and my racial and ethnic distinctions from the majority of SBI participants in London, could have constituted a significant obstacle to my integration and ability to understand and comprehend the social reality of my participants.

Preceding literature on ethnography however, informed me that these methodological dilemmas could potentially be defied: Wacquant (2004) successfully overcame racial differences in his ethnography of a predominantly black, urban boxing gym in Chicago via the ‘egalitarian ethos and pronounced colour-blindness of pugilistic culture’ which ‘everyone is fully accepted into it so long as he submits to the common discipline and ‘pays his dues’’ (2004:10). Liebow (1967) and Bourgois (2003) also overcame similar racial and social distinctions; the former successfully ‘dulling’ his ‘professional background’ in his attempt to become ‘more acceptable to others, and certainly more acceptable to myself’ (Liebow, 1967:255). Nevertheless, although I was aware of the cultural norms, customs and habits displayed by young, working-class men, I did not belong to a similar cultural *habitus*.

The social distinctions between myself, and my participants, can be considered a methodological weakness for two reasons: first, in terms of access, both Armstrong's (1993) and Hobbs's (1988; 2013) 'native' links were conducive in accessing Sheffield United's 'firm' and the sub-criminal world in London's East End in their respective ethnographies; and second, often rapport and 'banter' exists that only a 'local' can understand and be part of. Armstrong (1993:27) details the pitfalls of research conducted by 'non-natives' in his ethnography of hooliganism in Sheffield:

'How anyone outside of Sheffield, considerably older than myself or speaking with would have been considered, a posh accent, would have managed I do not know. I think the research would have been impossible or, at best, superficial. While a few Blades might well have agreed to give interviews, these would not even have scratched the surface of events'. (Armstrong, 1993:27)

Ethnographically, I would admit at times this statement rung true; local slang, argot and places of reference were often alien to me. I was often mocked for my accent, described as a 'cockney' whilst in the North East and 'posh' during my time in London.

One must remember, however, that to conduct ethnographic research 'neutrally' and without bias, a degree of objective distance must be maintained (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Hence, although the elicited 'data' is derived from my participants reflexive views, this 'data' still requires an analysis that is impartial, and objective in nature (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Although I acknowledge the work of ethnographers who have used their knowledge and familiarity of the culture studied to good effect (e.g. Polsky, 1971; Parker, 1974; Hobbs, 1988; 1995; 2013; Winlow, 2004), I believe that being a product of a different cultural habitus has allowed me to retain a critical, neutral perspective in the research; ultimately, it has allowed me to

produce an ‘unbiased’ piece of research, untainted by my own subjective views. I viewed ‘the action’ as an ‘outsider’ and was therefore not ‘insensitive’ to the happenings going on around me, a weakness later acknowledged by Armstrong (1993). I was familiar with the social milieu under investigation, yet distant enough to observe the people and events I was researching objectively. I was able to remove myself ‘from the field’ by travelling back to Durham or the outskirts of North London each day, where I would write up my fieldworks, reflect on the day’s events and retain a sense of objectivity. Hence, my work is distinct from that of those who have shared similarities with the culture they have ‘researched’ (e.g. Polsky, 1971; Parker, 1974; Hobbs, 1988, 1995, 2013; Winlow, 2004), and more aligned with ethnographers who have completed successful ethnographies of culturally and socially distinct sections of society (e.g. Bourgois, 2004; 2009; Wacquant, 2004; Densley, 2013).

Paradoxically, I would even argue that being a southerner in the North East (which is usually equated with being a cockney) - which could have constituted a serious obstacle to conducting the research in itself – was somewhat advantageous to me methodologically. I am again reminded of Wacquant’s study of a black urban boxing gym in inner city Chicago, where his French, Caucasian heritage offered him a form of ‘statutory exteriority’ amongst the group: similarly, I took comfort in Paul Corrigan’s (1979) explanation in *Schooling the Smash Street Kids*, of how he utilised his London connections in gaining access to a group of working-class kids in Sunderland:

‘In most south of England schools my south London working-class would have O.K’d me with the boys; but, given a well-founded northern distrust of anyone south of Teesside as incipient ‘southern cream-puffs’, this would not work here. Over time though, my London-ness assisted me in getting through to the kids, since they were interested in such places as West Ham, Millwall and the Kings Road’. (Corrigan, 1979:13)

Methodologically, this approach also worked for me. Participants were interested in places ‘Down South’ and in London, its football teams, music, and places they had visited. Similarly, those in London were interested in my life in Durham, what it was like being at University and most commonly, what it offered in terms of ‘gettin’ zooted’, and somewhat predictably, ‘gyals’. Although by no means an expert in these fields, the interest shown by my participants in my own cultural and social habitus allowed me, as Corrigan (1979) states, to ‘get through’ to the group.

It was also the case that my own personal characteristics aided my research, and the rapport that I subsequently established with my participants. I was fortunate enough to have conducted this research in my mid-twenties, a time when my age or appearance was not distinct from my participants<sup>40</sup>. I had a keen interest in both playing and watching football, and was conversant with the cultural norms exhibited by my participants. Similar to Parker (1974:11), I was also - to an extent - ‘suitably dressed and ungroomed, playing football well enough to survive and badly enough to be funny’. Engaging in ‘banter’ with the group became second nature; in a sense, I knew ‘how to drink (or in my case, play football), when and what to talk about, when to say the appropriate thing, and more importantly, when to say nothing’ (Armstrong, 1993: 63).

I was also in the fortunate position of having accumulated a degree of ‘sporting capital’ (Wacquant, 2004:9) during my formative years to help ease my access into research group: at my time of entry, I was thus able to engage in football sessions, tournaments and matches, which subsequently earned me the esteem of my participants, and the

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<sup>40</sup> I had been mistaken as a participant on a number of occasions, including once by a local journalist at a session who attempted to interview and take a photo of me because I apparently ‘looked like one of them’.



recognition that I was 'one of them'. I took part as a member of the SBI's North East team in the regional 'Homeless FA Cup', somehow scoring the winning goal in the final which contributed to my legitimacy amongst one group of participants. I was 'scouted' by another group of participants as a potential recruit for their local team outside of the SBI, and trained with them for a short while only for me to drop out due to PhD commitments. My enthusiasm for football established my status with the group, as I was able to participate and engage with them via this. Just as Becker's (1963) ethnography on jazz music was facilitated by him being a musician, the same could be said of my work being aided by my (albeit distinctly average) football skills and knowledge of the game. I built rapport and relationships of trust which I believe I would not have been able to develop had we not shared this familiarity with the game; indeed, 'banter' regarding the frequently poor results of the London team I support was one of the first points of contact I had with participants

Overtime the group appeared less suspicious of me, rarely questioned my motives, and acted and behaved naturally in my company. The fact that I was 'doing' what they did - to the point that I was travelling to and from sessions with participants, joining in matches and showing up at regular regional tournaments - greatly contributed to establishing my status amongst groups of participants, and sealed my legitimacy as a fellow participant. Playing football and spending time with participants, I would often have to remind myself that I wasn't there to enjoy myself, but to conduct research as part of my PhD. The group became interested in my work and were willing to come forward and openly talk to me. The rapport and trust that I eventually built up with the group proved crucial in seeking to elicit truthful and honest data from my participants. The participants seemed to enjoy talking about their lives, showing me around the areas they grew up in, and pointing out particular areas of interest to the research.

Spending time and engaging in banter and rapport with them enabled data to emerge that was authentic and accurate, reflecting the lived experiences of the young men who participated in this research. The experience was one I enjoyed thoroughly, even if it meant becoming easy prey for loose change, my phone, and rounds at the pub.

### Ethical Issues and Challenges.

Research utilising ethnography and participant observation methods brings with it a series of ethical issues and challenges. (Giulianotti, 1995; Yates, 2004; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Bryman, 2012). When formulating the ethical procedures for the study, I was aware of the issues associated with ethnographic research and, depending on which ethical position I took, the implications it may have had on data collection. Hence, it is now necessary to detail the ethicality of my methodology, and of this thesis.

I deem this piece of research to be ethical, and in alignment with the Economic and Social Research Council's guidelines for ethical research (ESRC, 2010). Prior to conducting fieldwork, I prepared a suitable ethical framework based on the aforementioned ESRC guidelines, to which I adhered to at all times.

My 'ethical position', is based on the following ethical procedures, which are as follows:

Firstly, in ensuring 'integrity, quality and transparency' (ESRC, 2010:3) in my research, and minimising any 'risk' to participants, my role as an ethnographer was one which would be referred to as 'overt'. This is characterised by a 'participant as observer' (Bryman, 2008) role, whereby I was fully involved in the SBI activities and situations but resumed back to a position of researcher once the session or situation

had concluded. Obviously, this immersion often led to a blurring of roles whereby new participants were unaware of my position. However, I countered this by introducing myself to participants, outlining my role and providing a brief outline of the project.

Second, all participants who took part in this research have remained ‘anonymous’, and were aged 18 years or over. This was outlined in the informed consent form I provided to participants, which set out how far they were afforded anonymity and confidentiality. Again, this position was guided by the principles set out in the ESRC ethics framework (2010), ensuring full confidentiality and anonymity, except in the case where a participant, or indeed any other person, is perceived to be in ‘*significant or immediate danger*’ (ESRC, 2010:24). Should this have ever occurred, I was required to contact the participant’s key worker and inform them of the risk. This conforms to ESRC guidelines for researchers who work with ‘vulnerable’ populations, as this research was considered to do so.

Of course, there are those who argue that the use of providing informed consent to participants risks jeopardising and limiting the efficacy of qualitative research, as participants may be unwilling to disclose relevant information knowing that they are being ‘researched’ (Walters, 2003; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Nevertheless, on a personal level I was more comfortable with being ‘transparent’ and allowing participants to understand the nature of the study and their involvement as fully as possible, thereby following the ESRC guidelines of ethical good practice of ‘providing sufficient information about the research and ensuring that there is no explicit or implicit coercion’ (ESRC, 2010:28). Moreover, whilst it is correct to assume that this may have affected the quality of data elicited, I had, as stated earlier, followed the advice as advocated by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:210) of building rapport and trust with participants to ensure they were comfortable with me during fieldwork.

The third area of ethical concern that I had to consider before fieldwork was my position on participants disclosing an involvement in a criminal activity. Although this thesis is not primarily concerned with such activity, the nature of participants who make use of the SBI I ‘researched’ meant that I didn’t have to search far for unethical confessions or details of criminal activity; during my time ‘in the field’, I witnessed and observed ‘ethically’ challenging behaviour ranging from open drug use and dealing, violence, racism, and the ‘fleecing’ of stolen goods, and listened to the criminal confessions of some participants during interviews.

Although such behaviour is by no means remarkable, but indeed a normalised, rational response amongst working-class youth to the contemporary social conditions of post-industrialism, poverty and ethnic and economic marginality (see Hobbs, 2013:110-136), in considering whether I had a duty to report statements of law breaking I became aware that by doing so would break an ‘unwritten rule’ amongst the young men I encountered, that you do not ‘grass’ to authorities regarding criminal activities (Yates, 2006; Morris, 2010). Obviously, this could have potentially put me in a position where I had ‘dirty hands’ (Klockers, 1979:269); holding valuable information of interest to legal authorities and where not reporting the criminal transgressions of participants could lead to allegations that I was not following moral and ethical responsibilities (Yates, 2004).

In the end, I decided to omit a great deal of information regarding more ‘serious’, ‘criminal behaviour’ elicited in interviews, or observed during ethnographic research. Where I have disclosed any information on these activities, however, it is because any exclusion of said details would jeopardise the quality of reflexive ‘data’ presented in this piece of work. Where I have detailed any accounts or information on ‘unethical’ behaviour, I have presented them as descriptive, simplistic and unelaborated accounts.

Here, readers should be aware that these accounts are well known to SBI staff and I assume, the police (participants are required to list any criminal convictions when registering with the SBI), and so any discussions of ‘criminal’ behaviour described in this thesis are common knowledge. I am therefore not describing any forms of behaviour that are not ‘already known’ by others, nor am I placing anyone in a position where they may face subsequent lawful action. Being considered a ‘grass’ would no doubt have also broken the trust that I had built with participants, making the research unachievable as participants would be discouraged from engaging in the research

My position on this ethical dilemma was further confirmed by the fact that I was also wary of jeopardising the role of the SBI who sponsored part of this research. I believe that future participants may have been deterred from attending SBI sessions if they suspected the environment to be one which is distrustful. Disclosing ‘deviant’ information participants shared with me may have also reflected negatively on the staff who had granted me access to the research sites. I thus followed the advice of Yates (2004), that any disclosure of information would breach ethical guidelines as stated in the British Society of Criminology (BSC) code of ethics, whereby researchers are required to ‘be sympathetic to the constraints on organisations participating in research and not inhibit their functioning by imposing any unnecessary burdens on them’ (BSC, 2006:3). Hence, ‘informing’ on participants would have seriously impeded the functioning of the SBI through destabilising relationships of trust between the project worker and participants.

My position within the organisation, i.e. a funded research student, required that I completed a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check prior to commencing fieldwork. I was also provided with general organisational guidelines for working with people deemed ‘at risk’, and how to manage or deal with any participant protection issues,

should they have ever arose. Both organisational staff, who I worked with and conversed with on a daily basis, and my University supervisory team, also offered their support in any case of encountering occurrences with which I was unsure to deal with. Having committed to offering full ‘transparency’ with my fieldwork (ESRC, 2010:3), I feel obliged to share one occasion when it was necessary for me to approach both organisational and University staff to ensure my safety and prevent any ‘risk’ to participants (ESRC, 2010:3). This reflective, awakening research experience occurred after a participant accused me of alternative motives in my fieldwork episode, and took concern with my attendance at SBI sessions in light of his misinterpreted notions of my sexual orientation. His subsequent complaint to SBI staff left me feeling a form of vain personal unease at having been misidentified in both a personal and professional sense; at this time I considered myself to be ‘at least minimally streetwise’ (Bourgois, 2003:44) and fully established - and respected - amongst participants in terms of my research and personal credentials<sup>41</sup>. Although the organisation were unconcerned with the substance of the complaint and satisfied with my attendance and research motives, both my ethical position that required me to minimise any harm or ‘risk’ to participants and my personal discomfort at the situation obligated me to inform my University supervisory team of the incident. A subsequent series of meetings between myself, supervisory team, head of ethics committee, and organisational staff provided an opportunity to ensure a shared understanding of ethical procedures, which included considering the safety of myself and participants, existed. Despite my heightened sense of personal self-consciousness that arose from the incident<sup>42</sup> I continued conducting research, albeit in line with the requirements set

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<sup>41</sup> Following this incident, the participant who lodged this complaint was subsequently ‘referred out’ due to ‘mental health issues’ (which of course raises interesting questions about the meaning of ‘hard to reach’, as will be discussed in the context of this thesis).

<sup>42</sup> I witnessed and listened to countless homophobic comments and jokes by definition of being and spending time in the ‘homophobic context of the street’ (Bourgois, 2003:44). SBIs can be considered a natural extension of this social context, and as

out in the aforementioned meetings. This included an updated CRB check, the appointing of a main ‘point of contact’ within the organisation who I could discuss ethical parameters with, and the revision of participant consent and information forms to remove my contact telephone number. Although the latter may have jeopardised the contact I had with participants, I was still able to maintain comparable levels of interaction via my continued attendance at sessions.

### Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 has introduced readers to the epistemological, methodological, and ethical underpinnings of this thesis. It has highlighted the processes through which I ‘elicited’ the reflexive, subjective views of my research participants, namely: qualitative interviews and ethnographic observation, and signified that this thesis is a derivative of the critical realist tradition. Given the complexity, diversity and evolving manner of working-class youth formations as highlighted in Chapter 2, this chapter has signified that the epistemological and methodological approach that I have adopted is necessary to bypass the weaknesses of other academic research into SBIs and young men. This work is therefore strongly influenced and informed by critical realist and ethnographic research into working-class life (Charlesworth, 2000; Hobbs, 2013), the sociology of urban life (Wacquant, 2004; 2011) and qualitative research into SBIs (Kelly, 2012).

Chapter four has also provided readers with a sense of how this research unfolded, and the numerous issues of access I faced when attempting to establish relationships with my research participants. Within this, I have been instructive in pointing out the main

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such represent a similar, hyper masculine cultural context in which it was not uncommon to hear similar forms of homophobic ‘banter’ that functioned to create a form of solidarity amongst groups of participants.

factors that facilitated this research, and how I was able to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with my participants, given the distinct disparities in social and cultural habitus' that define myself, and my research group: Here, I have reasoned that my 'alien' position has allowed me to maintain objectivity in the research process, and that my distinct social and cultural position in relation to my participants did not constitute a serious obstacle to obtaining grounded data. Primarily, this was due to my 'personal' characteristics: my ability to converse in and play football, or 'my total 'surrender' to the exigencies of the field' (Wacquant, 2004:11), which enabled me to establish my status with groups of research participants, and seal my legitimacy as 'one of them'. Methodologically, I conclude that I would not have been able to obtain grounded, accurate data, if I did not share similar personal interests, or if I did not have a sufficient degree of 'sporting capital' at my disposal. Although I believe that having 'native' links to research groups is advantageous for a number of reasons (see Armstrong, 1993; Hobbs, 1991, 2013), given that I was able to obtain such 'rich' data, and the success of similar ethnographic work conducted by 'outsiders' (Bourgois, 2003; Wacquant, 2004), I believe that future ethnographic research should recognise this potential, and not necessarily be 'put off' by any distinctions in habitus, race, or social background.

The 'ethicality' of this research has also been considered in this chapter, and I have detailed the framework established to ensure this thesis remains ethical at all times. I have signified my adherence to the ESRC guidelines on research ethics, and described my position in terms of confidentiality, anonymity, and the disclosure of 'sensitive' information. I have also highlighted a range of 'ethical dilemmas', and how I dealt with them. Notably, I have argued for a position that has omitted accounts of serious criminal activity, in order to honour the confidentiality and anonymity of my



participants, and protect the integrity of my research sponsor. I have also detailed one such experience where I felt it necessary to inform my supervisory team of potential 'risk' I was causing to participants, which resulted in the alteration of existing ethical protocols. I have also detailed when issues of confidentiality or anonymity would have had to of been broken; that is, if any participant was found to be in '*significant or immediate danger*' (ESRC, 2010:24). I can conclude, however, that no such occurrences ever transpired during my two and a half years 'in the field'

## **Chapter 5: Post-industrial Youth Identities: Young Men in Neighbourhood A and B**

Chapter 5 presents the empirical findings concerned with the cultural identities of the contemporary youth cultures ‘researched’ comparatively as part of this thesis. Although the differences between the regional youth identities explored in this thesis seem categorical, there are also a number of differences that exist between and within the two regional youth cultures explored in this research. Within this chapter, I therefore situate these two distinct youth categories within their own social and regional *milieux*, to interpret their behaviours, identities, and lifestyles. By doing so, chapter 5 also illustrates how these youth cultures have been ‘defined’ by definition of their cultural habitus and social ecology. Here, I therefore intend to highlight how these youth cultures have been conditioned by the social habitus’ that defines forms of living and existence in Neighbourhoods A and B, and highlight the structural properties and features which ‘explain’ forms of leisure and behaviour. This chapter will thus provide the context as to ‘why’ these participants are engaging with new forms of social control, that is, the SBI under investigation in this thesis.

The opening section of this chapter explores the youth cultures found to exist within Neighbourhood A, and their specific activities, behaviours, and leisure lives. The second subsection provides a comparative element to this chapter, by exploring the same features within the context of Neighbourhood B, in East London. This will lead on to an exploration in further chapters to how young men are ‘perceived’ by SBI practitioners, and ‘make use’ of SBI programmes.

By way of introduction, I revisit some points made in the earlier chapters of this thesis regarding the analysis of contemporary youth cultures. I refer in particular to the various ‘frameworks’ of youth cultures which have evolved alongside the social, political and economic changes that have arisen over the past thirty years.

### **Youth Identities in an Era of Advanced Marginality**

The political economy that once defined youth subcultures - as proposed by the traditional Birmingham School approach – has now disintegrated, gradually fragmenting the traditional youth cultures that were once defined by the ecology of the working-class street or neighbourhood (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Winlow and Hall, 2004; Hobbs, 2013). The movement to post-Fordist methods of production has led to the erosion of working-class cultures and forms of leisure entrenched in

working-class parochialism (Winlow, 2004; Hobbs, 2013). Stripped of the traditional industrial determinants that once fashioned the subcultural identities that dominated working-class community and street life, and where forms of delinquency and criminal behaviour were reliant upon this particular industrial, urban milieu, the subcultural thesis is somewhat outdated in the contemporary era. As we have seen in previous chapters, neighbourhoods that have undergone de-industrialisation and subsequent regeneration have enabled the dissolution of once traditional forms of youth culture and behaviour, and removed the material foundation upon which working-class identities were established (Hobbs, 1988; 2013; Byrne, 2001; Winlow, 2004). The youthful identities and cultures that were created within the context of an industrial period have now changed, and the realities of contemporary post-industrial life mean that the territorial based youthful cultures that once 'accepted their proletarian occupational futures and looked forward to traditional forms of leisure' (Hobbs, 2013:115) no longer exist in the post-industrial era.

The new age of advanced marginality (Wacquant, 2008), in which we now reside, is perhaps better suited to understanding the more fluid, amorphous, post-industrial youth groupings that now congregate within the urban, de-industrialised locales of Neighbourhoods A and B (Redhead, 1990; Bennett, 1999; Muggleton, 2000; Ferrell et al., 2008). We have seen how Neighbourhoods A and B are now urban areas of high unemployment, low income, and immersed in traditional markets of criminality (see Hobbs, 1988; Winlow, 2004). In the void created by post-industrialism, young men are now seeking alternative ways to construct identity and forge transitions into employment, and in the process adapting to the shifting economic terrain by seeking and carving out new niches 'in which to perform' (Hobbs 2013:128).

In the introductory chapter I have introduced readers to the cultural and social contexts of Neighbourhoods A and B. In expansion, this chapter seeks to illustrate how this changing post-industrial terrain has destabilized what was a once fairly organised context for young males to make stable transitions into adulthood, rooted in a world of ‘single-class manual communality’ where consumerism was irrelevant (Hobbs, 2013:113); and where identities were fashioned by the stable structures of industrial society (Winlow, 2004). The transplantation of this once stable era with the arrangements of a post-industrial society, whereby the financial, information technology and service sectors have replaced traditional forms of industrial labour (Ferrell et al., 2008; Wacquant, 2008) poses a number of questions which have relevance to an up-to-date analysis of contemporary youth cultures. Answering them requires an analysis which takes into account the backdrop of recent global economic, political and social changes, and its relationship with social exclusion, and ‘road culture’, which are emerging in many urban communities across the UK in the post-industrial era (Hobbs, 2013). Here, I address these questions, in relation to Neighbourhoods A and B.

#### Neighbourhood A: Retaining a Sense of the Old

Despite the destruction of its traditional industrial base, Neighbourhood A’s cultural habitus is one defined by a static, stable population based upon the traditional, working-class conceptions of family and neighbourhood life. The youth cultures I will describe in this section reflect this traditional working-class profile, remaining stable yet adapting to the new post-industrial market in attempts to gain a position in the void created by post-industrialism. Unlike the post-industrial youth of Neighbourhood B, contemporary youth in Neighbourhood A have not been subjected to the displacement

exacerbated by intense gentrification, and the traditional working-class communities and territories remain relatively intact and untouched by the influx of migrant workers or large post-war municipal housing projects. Instead, housing policy has contributed to retaining a sense of traditional working-class-neighbourhood tradition: the majority of the properties in the area are owner occupied, snapped up during the ‘right to buy’ scheme, and traditional working-class families have continued to exist in this area for generations. There is no ‘churning’ of the population, as has occurred in Neighbourhood B: gentrification has occurred primarily in the city centre of Sunderland, and also in the dock areas where labour once existed, leaving the terraced houses that populate Neighbourhood A reasonably intact with stable, settled populations (Sunderland City Council, 2013).

As Hobbs (2013:116) has previously stated, ‘In post-industrial society, youth cultures are increasingly market orientated’, and the situation in Neighbourhood A is no different. In his study of changing identities in Sunderland, Winlow (2001:40) alluded to the ‘thriving entrepreneurial ethic’ that has existed within the city of Sunderland during the modern age. Yet in the post-industrial city, de-industrialisation has derailed this transition, and the ‘entrepreneurial ethic’ of the neighbourhood’s population is seeking alternative forms of enterprise in light of the declining traditional industries. As such, the de-industrialisation of the area has produced a vacuum in which some young men are adopting practices of consumerism and leisure to construct identity (Hayward, 2008), and engaging in forms of entrepreneurial transgressive behaviour to ‘get paid’ in the process (Hobbs, 2013).

### Street Life in Neighbourhood A: Transgressive Leisure and Economic Endeavours

In the void created by post-industrialism, transgressive behaviour provides an alternative to the new, forms of leisure that some youth have been excluded from, and provides an alternative means of acquiring capital and consumables in an era in which social status, and hierarchy, is defined by consumption, rather than production (Redhead, 1990; Bennett, 2000). For some, this post-industrial trajectory provides stability in a context de-stabilised and ravaged by economic restructuring, offering leisure and economic opportunities for some young men seeking alternatives to following trajectories into the post-industrial market place.

Seeking alternatives to the formal economy, some young men within Neighbourhood A have taken to the streets. A large proportion of their 'free' time is spent 'doing nothing' (Corrigan, 1979); playing football, hanging around the local parade of shops, street drinking, and dabbling, usually in marijuana but also in cocaine, and sometimes harder substances <sup>43</sup>. The involvement of a number of participants in these leisure 'pursuits' is reinforced by the exclusionary logic of neoliberal capitalism; an era in which many of these young men are excluded, socially and economically, from the post-industrial night time economy that operates close by to Neighbourhood A (see Nayak, 2006).

Here, a space has been created in which criminality for economic gain thrives. The following field note extract provides an account of the way in a subsection of Neighbourhood A youth make use of the immediate social space as a source of leisure, and subsequent economic gain. In a way, it is a perfect example of Hobbs' (2013:125)

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<sup>43</sup> MDMA was used by a number of participants in Neighbourhood A, an alternative to alcohol which was deemed 'too expensive'. During my time in the field, I also came into contact with three local ex-Heroin users, their addiction to the drug thwarted by a combination of services of which the SBI was one part.

assertion that youth are now ‘attempting to sidestep the exclusionary logic of capitalism by commodifying their leisure and establishing dominance over territory that will otherwise dominate and demean them’. At the same time, these forms of ‘commodified leisure’ function as a means of excitement; a thrill or ‘buzz’ or ‘edgework’ (Lyng, 2005) that the post-industrial era has devoid them of (Ferrell et al., 2008:72). The reality of this new form crime in Neighbourhood A, must therefore be understood as attempts at economic opportunity, and ‘attempts to achieve a semblance of control within ontologically insecure life worlds’ (Hayward, 2004:165). The following fieldwork extract was recorded during the early stages of fieldwork, in February 2011:

We are on the Metro travelling to Newcastle for a football match with seven other participants who reside in or around Neighbourhood A. We have all ‘bunked’ the train, taking advantage of the lax security at Park Lane Station next to the University of Sunderland, and aware that ticket inspectors rarely operate at Longbenton during work hours. We sit face to face in adjacent seats that line the windows of the carriage. Sitting opposite me are Danny and Richie, two participants who are rarely seen without one another. Both are unemployed, and have told me they have little motivation to work; their primary source of capital coming from small jobs ‘on the fiddle’ and the small sale distribution of low grade cannabis resin, obtained second hand from an older friend and dealt to friends and acquaintances who also reside in Neighbourhood A. Danny and Richie have already discussed bringing some along to Newcastle with them to sell on the train, but decide against: the low grade quality of the resin is unlikely to make them much money within Neighbourhood A, let alone in an alien territory of the region of Newcastle where their faces are not known and their accents mark them out as a much despised ‘Mackem’. Nevertheless, the trip provides an opportunity to engage in fun at the ‘Geordie Scums’ expense, and make some money in the process. Richie has already succeeded in the theft of a box of confectionary from the goods area of a newsagents (to be sold ‘back home’) before deciding that the suburban nature of this area of Newcastle and the array of reasonably priced cars would provide rich pickings for a couple of self-proclaimed young ‘hoods like Danny and Richie: ‘We’ll do a few on the way back, don’t wanna get caught at the footy with anything before like’...

...Danny and Richie slip off following the football game, brazenly lighting up a marijuana spliff once outside the sports complex before

setting off for the Audi situated a few streets away, hidden by a large bush and away from any immediate sight lines.

Fieldnotes, Neighbourhood A, February 2011

The fieldwork extract presented above represents a small component of the lives of two participants who I came across in my fieldwork. The forms of transgression noted here, namely; the evasion of train fares, drug dealing and taking, and petty theft, are relatively normalised and unspectacular activities amongst many youth of Neighbourhood A seeking to eke profit from the chaotic and fluctuating criminal market. The excitement generated by these acts also functions as an alternative to the hedonistic pleasure of the post-industrial night time economy of which they are excluded (see Nayak, 2006):

‘I tend to just stay in at weekends, not really that interested in going down to the bars on [X Street], just full of student wankers! I’ll hang out round me mam’s, get stoned, maybe go out and do some robbing; just have a laugh hanging around all night with me mates really! Its good fun, a proper laugh like’

Richie, Neighbourhood A, February 2012

Hence, for a large proportion of their time, a small proportion of Neighbourhood A youth who make use of the SBI are ‘doing nothing’ (Corrigan, 1979): the majority of their time is spent in the street, or in the house playing Xbox. Friday or Saturday nights are spent ‘getting stoned’ or ‘on the drink’, an alternative means of excitement to the night time economy that has excluded many of the young residents of Neighbourhood A due to economic reasons (e.g. the price of drink) or social reasons (e.g. the marketing of bars towards students, the barring of clientele, or the imposed rules of ‘no sportswear or football shirts’, *de rigour* for many of Neighbourhood A’s youthful population).



The sporadic, petty acts of delinquency that characterise a segment of this young population functions as a form of leisure that draws upon the ‘entrepreneurial ethic’ of the area that has flourished in the post-industrial era (see Winlow, 2001<sup>44</sup>). Young men like Danny and Richie, although involved in the small scale distribution of low-grade marijuana, see themselves as businessman, eking out profit from the destabilised, post-industrial market place in which they now inhabit; it also represents a chance to gain status and respect amongst peers in the face of economic and social marginalisation:

‘Me and Richie, we deal some draw, 20 quid a block if you’re ever interested! We got a good little business going, dealing to mates and that. Richie looks after the cash, I normally work with the selling.

We treat it like a proper business almost! We’ve got a list of who we sell to, their numbers and all that. They give us a ring when they need stuff, I’ll cycle round and drop it off and pick up the money.... We’re getting pretty well known in [Neighbourhood A] now! ‘

Danny, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

In the past, the young men of Neighbourhood A followed their fathers into traditional industrial employment. Today, this is rarely seen, and now a range of ‘street enterprises’ flourish in Neighbourhood A, from the distribution of low grade cannabis, the fleecing of stolen goods, vehicle theft, and prostitution, which a small section of young men in this community now exploit.

Street level drug dealing is intermittent and primarily involves the distribution of low grade cannabis and marijuana resin, rather than harder opiates which were cited as being located within local houses. The drug trade in Neighbourhood A is generally low level, however, and the reality of its intensity, sophistication and volume pales in comparison to the general public anxiety that often accompanies discussions of the

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<sup>44</sup> See also Hobbs (1988) on East End criminal entrepreneurship

area. The open drug markets described in Bourgois (2003) and observed close by to Neighbourhood B are not seen, and dealers are primarily unemployed young men whose primary motivation is the fast income generated from profits to cover daily consumables. As one local cannabis dealer stated:

‘I started a couple of years ago, when I moved out after school. Just a little bit, ended up buying a few ounces and selling it, 20 quid or something like that for an 8<sup>th</sup>...its OK money I suppose, you could get more from selling crack or heroin but I’m not getting involved in that, too dodgy, I’ll stick to this stuff me. It’s not enough to cover the basics really, helps now the bairn (baby) is on its way too, not as much risk involved’

Andy, Neighbourhood A, March 2011

Primarily, dealing marijuana and cannabis resin was one method of obtaining money alongside other ‘deviant fiddles’ (notably theft, benefit scamming, or fleecing stolen goods). The rewards from drug dealing are minimal compared to larger scale distribution associated with ecstasy pills and opiates, with the incomes generated usually spent on everyday items, child care, or vehicle maintenance. None of the low level dealers I came into contact with saw themselves as ‘career criminals’, nor are they ‘gang members’; rather, distribution was a fleeting transgressive moment through which to make fast money. Richie had alluded to the transitory nature of dealing, stating how he ‘began when I was around 13/14’ before giving up, only to return back at the age of 18 when ‘he needed money for footie tickets’.

Alongside street dealing, Richie, who has been unemployed since leaving school, made money for himself and his mum doing small cash in hand jobs ‘on the fiddle’. His involvement in a benefit scam, in which his mother asks him to refrain from legal employment to ensure she can continue claiming benefits for him, means he finds money for ‘food, booze, and going out with me mates!’. Other participants made use

of the SBI to qualify for benefits, as the course functions as part of the ‘job search’ criteria required to claim benefits (this issue will be explored in full in chapter 7). Nevertheless, deviant ‘fiddles’ have featured as a ‘basic form of entrepreneurial activity’ in Sunderland (Winlow, 2001:43) and for some, the practice continues to this day; Tony worked ‘on call’ for his uncle’s furniture removal businesses, an unstable form of employment which ‘paid well’ when opportunities arose: nevertheless, the infrequent nature of these opportunities meant finances had to be supplemented with additional work, and drug dealing – as we have seen – offers a low paid alternative to make ends meet.

The fieldwork extract presented at the onset of this chapter, depicting an SBI excursion to the city of Newcastle, is just one example of a ‘street activity’ which, for some sections of Neighbourhood A’s youthful population, provides a break from the mundanity of everyday life (Ferrell et al., 2004). This is because the majority of this theft is opportunistic, spontaneous and petty; small everyday items are pilfered, the main purpose not much income but rather more to do with the transgressive thrill and ‘buzz’ created through minor acts of delinquency (Ferrell et al., 2004). The small proceeds eked from the theft of small goods – confectionary, canned drinks and small items of clothing<sup>45</sup> – rarely generates sufficient income and are instead either used by the young person themselves or sold to cover minor daily expenses (e.g. cigarettes, cannabis, and alcohol). This activity was relatively normalised, unspectacular and widespread amongst a section of Neighbourhood A’s youth population that I came into contact with. Newsagents and supermarkets were prone targets where small scale theft occurred, the thrill of pinching a small item – where the rewards, and

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<sup>45</sup> On one occasion a vending machine was broken into and stripped of its contents at one SBI project site.

repercussions if caught, were minimal – has more to do with ‘having a laugh’ than entering upon a criminal career (Wacquant, 2008). As such, the practice was common, and not seen as anything particularly ‘serious’ amongst many of the young men I had contact with.

Although this form of petty delinquency is indeed common and ‘normalised’ for some members of Neighbourhood A’s youthful population, it is true that a small proportion of participants who I came in to contact with engaged in more extreme cases, and street robbery was a common activity through which some youth embraced the ‘predatory ethos of entrepreneurial urban culture’ (Hobbs, 2013:166). The theft of mobile phones, I-pods, and bicycles either from the street or person was one practice that has become more common in Neighbourhood A recently, although compared to the first form of delinquent thievery it was minimal, occurring usually between local youths and rarely involving the use of ‘tools’: the removal of the particular item from the target more down to verbal threats than any violent physical act. Although for some young men this activity no doubt provided them with a ‘buzz’, it also demonstrated their commitment to illegal entrepreneurial activities in which larger profits are eked from street activities in attempts to ‘sidestep the exclusionary logic of capitalism’ (Hobbs, 2013:125). The majority of this crime was committed by the long term unemployed that I came into contact with, who had no willingness or enthusiasm to work and whose main motivation for such activity was to generate income to cover larger daily expenses (e.g. rent, new family members, large quantities of marijuana that could be sold on for a profit, alcohol):

Bill: ‘I’ve done a couple of street robberies me, a few more serious things. Usually just sticking someone up in the street, taking a phone, wallet, handbag, whatever. It’s been at times when I’ve been at a bit of a loose end, when I’ve had no money and needed something, so I’d sell

on like a phone or I-pod or something to get some money to buy draw or some clothes or something.

TM: How did it feel – is it exciting?

Bill: Yeah definitely, definitely. I got a proper buzz, like when you have it and you're running off, you're proper buzzing. It is exciting like, yeah'

Billy, Neighbourhood A, December 2011

The profits from small personal items, however, are relatively small – around £20 for an 'unlocked' I-phone – and so provide minimal income for those wishing to engage in such activity. Bicycles, on the other hand, can range from between £20 - £100 depending on the make, model, and general wear; a full bike can also be stripped down and its components sold on to second hand bike shops<sup>46</sup>.

Theft demonstrates one method through which some young men are commodifying forms of street leisure to generate some level of excitement in an increasingly mundane urban environment, but at the same time 'making money' in attempts to circumvent the social marginalisation brought about by the erosion of the traditional industrial labour market. It is true that in this era, theft, and other forms of illegal entrepreneurial activity, have flourished, and in Neighbourhood A there is an adherence to the 'emerging entrepreneurial criminal ethic' (Winlow, 2004:166) in light of the erosion of the traditional labour force, which has resulted in 'large armies of unemployed, especially among young males' (Lash and Urry, 1994:133) who are now reshaping their identities in the post-industrial era in light of the serious decline in traditional opportunities (Winlow, 2004; Nayak, 2006). Hence, although the traditional community remains intact and has yet to be de-stabilised by massive gentrification

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<sup>46</sup> A rear wheel was the favourite target for bike thieves, as the removal of this also brought with it the 'cog' mechanism that can be removed and sold on for further profit.

and successive waves of immigration as witnessed in Neighbourhood B, the lack of traditional jobs for the working-class man of Neighbourhood A has led to a situation where youth are looking for more entrepreneurial 'street' activities as their transitions from school to employment become more fractured. This is similar to Winlow's assertion that:

'Research indicates that the development and entrenchment of a continually disadvantaged underclass have slowly eroded the desire of some actively to seek employment and have promoted favourable attitudes to delinquency, especially as a means of getting money – the desire which has not diminished, despite such people's disadvantaged position. We thus begin to see the slow advent of criminality, not just as a means of obtaining status (although this function has endured with various modifications), or of injecting excitement into an otherwise dull social situation, but as an entrepreneurial concern: a means of getting money'. (Winlow, 2001:66)

#### Delinquency and Violence: Territoriality and Regional Specific Activities

Within post-industrial Neighbourhood A, there is a core group of young men forged around the immediate environment of the neighbourhood. They are fiercely territorial, having grown up together and attending the same school.

The favourite delinquent activities committed by this group of young men include petty vandalism, such as 'tagging' walls of buildings, hanging around 'doing nothing', low-scale drug dealing and taking, and damage to or theft from motor vehicles. The theft of personal items such as Walkmans and mobile phones remains popular, as does the act of 'twocking' - the theft of a motor vehicle without owner's consent,- but is limited and rarely involves the use of weapons or causes injury to member of the public:

'We don't do anything major, like serious like you would get in big cities, like in London or something. We don't really have that mentality up here. It's just a group of lads, we get together, watch the footie, mebbe go out and have a bit of a ruck with lads from [Neighbourhood X], but nothing serious.

Some of the younger lads go round and do a bit of graffiti, put stuff up on the walls and fences, some of 'em go out robbin', but just stuff that most of them are likely to grow out of

Craig, Neighbourhood A, November 2011

The territorial based youth groups that exist within Neighbourhood A then, engage in primarily petty, sporadic acts of violence and delinquency against neighbouring factions. The sense of local territory manifests itself in schools, neighbourhoods and parks in the area, where local patriotism and loyalty exist, and graffiti is dubbed. Hence, whilst some have been quick to note the demise of subcultural affiliations and the move towards more fluid youth grouping not strictly defined by territory (Redhead, 1990; Bennett, 2000; Hobbs, 2013), the youth groups of Neighbourhood A remain bounded by a sense of traditional intense localism and affiliation. Kintrea et al., (2008) and Pickering et al., (2011) have provided similar evidence of territorial formed youth groups in Sunderland, the powerful localism 'perpetuated by older family members' who 'never leave their territories' (Pickering et al., 2011:951), and the situation in Neighbourhood A is no different. This is not an area that has undergone rapid regeneration and gentrification, nor has it been populated by a new urban class of middle class 'hipsters', as in Neighbourhood B. Instead, this is an area where 60% of property is owner occupied and is home to 'strong and localised families' who 'have lived in their local areas for long periods of time to promote strong networks' (Sunderland City Council, 2011:3). The traditional community is still intact, and has remained long enough to instil a sense of deeply entrenched local patriotism which has spread to the local youth that now populate the area, impacting upon their collective criminal responses:

'Me family lived here all me life...my dad worked in the shipyards, before that I think me grandfather did, and before that all the generations in me

family did. It was what we done. I think everyone around that time, like, knew each other, like a really strong sense of community, and I grew up around families that my parents have known for like ages, we all close by and grew up with each other, went to the same school. We were all [Neighbourhood A] boys, and we always went out looking for fights and scraps and stuff with lads Neighbourhood C...it's just deep rooted, my family always did, and it's sort of just carried over'

Craig, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

As such, territorial disputes are not uncommon, although rarely involve the use of arms. Instead, they are customary and ritualised events formed by historical territorial rivalries based upon geographical location and schools, as stated by Craig:

'There are certain areas where you live within Neighbourhood A that are different because you've got like top Neighbourhood A, bottom Neighbourhood A, and the middle, if you're in the top you like...hate Neighbourhood C (a close by Neighbourhood) and stuff like that. And the rivalry between them two is just ridiculous...you'd be in school and if like Neighbourhood C was off while us were in school they'd come down and climb over the school fences and fight with everyone...and they'd even organise fights for against us outside of school...it's ridiculous.'

Craig, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

Yet despite the intense patriotism of youth in Neighbourhood A, acts of violence, delinquency and aggression are limited to petty, minimal endeavours. For example, accounts of the school fights were not uncommon, as were descriptions of violence amongst local youth with historically embedded rivals on nights out in the post-industrial, night-time economy situated in Sunderland's city centre. As such, violence is a normalised, unspectacular activity within North East street culture (Winlow, 2001) and is an everyday feature of many of the lives of the young participants I came into contact with. Violence and threats during SBI sessions were also not uncommon, often continuing and extending over into the following week's football sessions, and manifestations of weekend violence on the faces and knuckles of participants were



often evident on Monday mornings. The appeal, and attraction of routine violence amongst some young men of Neighbourhood A is located in the ‘buzz’, or ‘thrill’ of the activity; the pleasure of participating and the excitement generated by ‘self-transcendence’ that is often foiled in an increasingly mundane, unspectacular urban environment (Katz, 1988; Lyng, 1990; Ferrell et al., 2008). Much of this behaviour is spontaneous, petty, and opportunistic, displaying an expressive dimension where its main function is to generate some form of ‘action’<sup>47</sup>:

Indeed, Steve provides an account of the ‘seduction’ of violence for some young men in Neighbourhood A:

‘I first started gettin’ into rucks and fights at school and that. Just for a laugh really, just smack ‘em in the face if I fancied it like. When I got a bit older I started drinking and that, getting into fights at the pub, at the football...been nicked loads of times for it ...most recent was against Newcastle this season, someone swunged at my girlfriend so I hit ‘em, got nicked and charged with drunk and disorderly, got a fine and stadium ban for three years...It’s just for a laugh though really, fighting, just what I’ve always done, something to do ain’t it... every weekend, in town, at the footy, I love it!’

Steve, Neighbourhood A, January 2011

As the following chapter will testify, in comparison to violence in Neighbourhood B, acts of violence in Neighbourhood A has more to do with ‘having a laugh’ and the transgressive ‘thrill’ it engenders than any form of serious criminal violence that may propel one into a criminal career. In Neighbourhood A, the traditional masculine pursuits of drinking and violence were inextricably linked to the industrial heritage of the town, defined by ‘hard’ ‘industrial masculinities’ Winlow (2001), where violence

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<sup>47</sup>During my fieldwork, only on one occasion did one act of violence escalate to the point where authorities had to be called after ‘reinforcements’ were telephoned to provide support to two young fighters. A 10 man brawl ensued within a ‘caged’ football area, watched by onlookers on the outside. Only after Police arrived did the crowd disperse, with little information or descriptions regarding the identities of the fighters who had made off via a hole in a fence provided by observers. Even for me, the event provided a brief, fleeting moment of excitement that could be watched first-hand.

was seen as ‘crucial signifier of self-image, a reflection upon a culture that favourably judged those who maintained a credible threat of violence’ (Winlow 2001:40). Although the industrial terrain through which men now define themselves in Neighbourhood A has undoubtedly been transformed, ‘the old structural yardsticks of masculinity are still present’ (Winlow, 2001:67) and Neighbourhood A retains a large proportion of families and men who found employment in the traditional working-class industries of the modern era. As such, although forms of entrepreneurial delinquency are found within the Neighbourhood, it has retained a sense of the old working-class pursuits, and violence continues to present a form of transgressive behaviour through which status and identity are constructed: Steve utilised his violent notoriety to earn respect within Neighbourhood A’s male population; Craig engaged with sporadic acts of territorial based violence amongst rival schools; and Danny and Richie engaged in acts of violence to impose themselves in more entrepreneurial forms of criminality, notably street robbery and to gain status in the low level drug distribution market in Neighbourhood A. Robbo has recently been spent 4 months in jail for a fight in a town centre, something he puts down to ‘drinking, which is what I used to do most days cause there was nothing else to do’. Violence then, remains constant in this post-industrial neighbourhood, and an unchanging transgressive pursuit that offers a means of gaining respect, excitement, and provides a ‘consistent mode of response to interlocking, market-related disputes, territorial threats, and personal slights’ (Hobbs, 2013:128). Indeed, some young men from Neighbourhood A are quick to ‘offer out’ anyone who may ‘diss’ them, or anyone who mistimes a tackle on the football pitch (as I often found out). They are also keen to exert their physicality and ‘bodily capital’ (Wacquant, 2004): honed and toned in local gyms and in the context of the SBI, and ready to exert a violent reaction upon anyone, or

anything, that comes into their way in the masculine, urban, working-class environment in which they inhabit. The frequency of such events suggests that ‘saving face’ remains a crucial element in the lives of these young men, and the physical violence remains a regularised activity for many of Neighbourhood A’s youthful population.

As the traditional structures of Neighbourhood A have disappeared, it is clear that some of the criminal practices of the young men that inhabit the area have altered to fit the changing terrain. De-industrialisation and unemployment have created a social situation where forms of criminal activity are becoming more ‘entrepreneurial’ in their practice (Winlow, 2001; Hobbs, 2013), and theft, and drug dealing are but two examples of the way Neighbourhood A’s youth are altering to fit with this new post-industrial era in the form of new ‘criminal entrepreneurs’ (Hobbs, 1998:411). However, although the codes and structures associated with the industrial period have undeniably changed, the relatively static and intact traditional working-class of Neighbourhood A has meant that traditional notions of neighbourhood remain, and working-class leisure pursuits grounded in territoriality and violence endure. As such, the once traditional forms of ‘street leisure’ based around stable territorial groupings remain here, along with the distinct, traditional cultural habitus that has produced them.

#### Neighbourhood B: Youth Identities in the Post-industrial Capital City

As alluded to in the introduction of this thesis, Neighbourhood B has undergone a similar de-industrialisation to Neighbourhood A, as well as an intense social fragmentation of its traditional working-class neighbourhood (Beck, 1992). Once an area associated with small family-based furniture trades, silk weaving, and craft

workshops - all of which employed a large proportion of the local indigenous population - the large-scale regeneration and gentrification of parts of East London over recent years has effected this particular neighbourhood, and eroded the social and neighbourhood context in which the established working-class culture of Neighbourhood B was once grounded.

Recent immigration and the middle class infiltration of Neighbourhood B has undoubtedly impacted upon the youth cultures found in contemporary Neighbourhood B today. The hybrid mix of working-class, ethnic minority youth that now compose a large proportion of Neighbourhood B's youthful population now also reside alongside 'bourgeois colonialists' (Hobbs, 2013) who have populated the area in recent years. Hipsters, artists, business types, and IT and media specialists have made this space their own owing to the availability of warehouse style studio space and the proximity of the area to the financial and IT districts of the capital. As such, Neighbourhood B youth are now exposed to the influences of a middle-class culture, and the area is no longer the single class commune that Downes (1966) and others spoke of (see also Wilmott and Young, 1957). The gentrification of the area has elevated property prices, exploiting the middle-class taste for gritty urban living, alienating the traditional community who now face extortionate rent and house prices. For example, in 2013 the average price for a terraced house in the UK was £202, 972 (BBC, 2013). In Neighbourhood B, the average price of an equivalent property is £641,741 (BBC, 2013). As such, the youthful population of Neighbourhood B are exposed to a social environment in which house prices have escalated rapidly over recent years in line with the intense gentrification of the area. The area is also estimated to grow in population by 30% by 2021, and is now characterised by short term rents;

approximately half of the borough's housing is socially rented and a third is rented from a private landlord, with less than 10 percent of properties owner occupied (Hackney Borough Council, 2013). As such, residents lack any embedded historical connection with the area to establish any form of local parochialism that existed in the industrial era. The Olympic Park looms large in the background of the community, as does the gleaming buildings of Canary Wharf, further exacerbating the property boom of the area. Consequently, the infiltration of the middle class, and the intense gentrification of the area, renders the idea of Neighbourhood B being a stereotypical working-class community *a la* the research sites of Wilmott and Young (1957) or Downes (1966) outdated in its present form. Half a century later, any sign of a homogenous class based community based around single forms of industrial work is also redundant, and Neighbourhood B now represents a multi-ethnic, churning populace, devoid of any connection to its proud industrial working-class past.

In this newly gentrified area then, where gleaming gated communities sit side by side by council housing estates, and where young kids in hooded tops share their space with commuting bankers and middle-class hipsters, how do the young men of Neighbourhood B experience forms of leisure and construct identities in an area which is radically different from the traditional notions of a working-class community 'researched' by previous scholars (Wilmott and Young, 1957; Downes, 1966)? How have the changes in the local economy affected them? How do second and third generation black and ethnic minority immigrants construct identities in a community where their grandparents and parents 'did not enjoy the relative luxury of temporary subcultural membership' (Hobbs, 2013:126-127)? And what about criminal identities – how have the street 'gangs' replaced the once territorial, neighbourhood-based working-class subcultural groups that once existed in the area?

## The Gang: A New Form of Subculture?

Youth gangs in London have received considerable academic attention in recent years (Pitts, 2008; Gunter, 2010; Densley, 2011, 2012a, 2012b 2013; Grund and Densley, 2012; Hobbs, 2013). The current youthful generation of Neighbourhood B are caught in a wave of moral panic surrounding ‘youth gangs’, particularly in the wake of the 2011 summer riots, in which youth gangs were seen responsible for the disorder, leading to David Cameron launching a ‘concerted, all-out war on gangs and gang culture’ (Cameron, 2011). Neighbourhood B has had a long standing reputation for criminality, territorial youth conflict, and street gangs<sup>48</sup>, and is located within a borough which has been identified as having the highest proportion of youth gangs in the capital (BBC, 2007). Consequently, many of the current youth of the area have become the focus of ‘Britain’s gang problem’<sup>49</sup> and rendered as considerable threats to public and community safety<sup>50</sup>.

Indeed, for some young men, the ‘gang’ represents an attempt at opposing the exclusion, economic marginalisation and intense personal competition of the neoliberal era (Ferrell et al., 2008) through exploiting economic opportunities located within the post-industrial city (Hobbs, 2013:125); a means through which urban youth can ‘sidestep the exclusionary logic of capitalism by commodifying their leisure and

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<sup>48</sup> Today, the physical landscape of Neighbourhood B has done a lot to contribute to the spate of gang related media reports on the area. The area has a large concentration and volume of social housing estates, which has contributed to tightly defined boundaries and territorial rivalries. With relatively little ‘open space’ to be contested, the area is often volatile and unstable, with graffiti marking ‘gang’ boundaries. The use of the term ‘postcode war’, latched on to by the media in the mid 2000’s, originated from this particular neighbourhood. In the 1980s, a number of ‘modern’ urban street gangs were established in the immediate area of Neighbourhood B, fostered in an urban environment suffering from terrible decline in the wake of welfare restructuring, and before the area was comprehensively redeveloped and regenerated. This was teamed with the mass unemployment that was occurring throughout the 1980s, and the rise of the ecstasy and rave scenes and succeeding crack cocaine endemic that ravaged many urban areas during this period (Bourgois, 2003; Wacquant, 2008; Hales and Hobbs, 2010; Daly and Sampson, 2012). Indeed, the area has long been regarded as one of the first sites for the production of crack cocaine in the UK (Daly and Sampson, 2012), an epidemic that brought with it a new wave of crime, notably the rise of organised gangs that could control and exploit the lucrative urban drug market. Jamaica has long been a stopover for cocaine exportation for South America, and the arrival of West Indian immigrants in Neighbourhood B from the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s allowed new arrivals with criminal links to exploit links back across the Atlantic.

<sup>49</sup> See BBC (2012) ‘The gang war being waged on Britain’s streets’

<sup>50</sup> See BBC (2010) ‘A man was wounded as two shots were fired in an East London park where hundreds of families were also attending a festival. The victim, who was shot in the stomach, was an ‘innocent bystander’, police said’.

establishing dominance over territory that will otherwise dominate and demean them’ (Hobbs, 2013:125).

In Neighbourhood B, the current situation is one of flux and volatility. There are three known street ‘gangs’ that operate within the area<sup>51</sup>, one of which a number of SBI participants self-affiliated with. These gangs have existed for approximately ten years, and are formed of approximately 40-60 members. Although activities do include those related to the criminal economy, a large proportion of the ‘social life’ of the gang is spent hanging around, ‘doing nothing’ (Corrigan, 1979); it is a form of leisure, hence the inclusion of this aspect of everyday ‘road’ life in this chapter. As Neighbourhood B’s borough is an area in which street gangs and youth groups identify more so with local estates and territories than they do with the specific borough in which they reside in, the situation is often volatile and highly territorialised; gang graffiti marks boundaries and members are known to ‘flag’ colours or bandanas.

In this urban context, generations of previous fiddles, scams, gangs and illegal activity have formed the grounds for street gangs whose territorial rivalries and physical toughness have been conditioned by the enduring aspects of territoriality and cultures of Neighbourhood B. Indeed, as Hobbs (2013:135) has stated: ‘the importance of local conditions to the formation of youth collaborations cannot be overemphasized, and...there is often an overlapping of historically linked, territoriality based family affiliations and branded local gangs where youthful acquisitive crime is a long-standing cultural expectation spanning eras’. Coupled with some of the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the country, and without the safety of industrial

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<sup>51</sup> A number of the original gangs from Neighbourhood B and the surrounding borough were spawned from the original Yardie gangs, with members in the 1990s formed of youths British born of West Indian descent. Lately, the ‘glocal’ nature of organised crime (Hobbs, 1998) and the growth of Turkish and Kurdish organised crime in the capital connected to heroin importation has brought with it fresh economic opportunities for young men within Neighbourhood B in the post-industrial era.

era employment to fall back on, contemporary youth gangs function as a means to counter economic and social marginalisation through ‘mutate[ing] into a local entrepreneurial institution, merging markets with territories’ as ‘young men continued to use violence as a tool with which to create their own masculinity; but now they insisted on getting paid’ (Hobbs, 2013:122).

### Entrepreneurial Activities: A Post-industrial Alternative?

‘It’s a laugh really, I don’t think I’ll be doing it forever...but look, right, I’m 17, I could be working in some shitty job or in footlocker or whatever, or I could be earning a couple of hundred quid a week from selling white and brown...there are risks, yeah, but I don’t think I’ll be doing it forever. How else can I get all this stuff and not work?’

Peter, Neighbourhood B, April 2012

For some young men, drug dealing is an established, normalised activity within Neighbourhood B. Amongst this group, it is unspectacular, and youth gangs are now seeking to eke a profit from this highly lucrative and instable market (Hales and Hobbs, 2011). Peter is a member of a drugs gang who operate in Neighbourhood B. He estimates to be able to make £500 a day from dealing ‘white’ and ‘brown’ (cocaine and heroin) on a lively strip not far from the estate where his gang is based. Unlike the closed drug market found in Neighbourhood A, the situation in Neighbourhood B is somewhat different, and an ‘open’ market akin to the one described in Bourgois’ (2003) analysis of a street level dealers in East Harlem can be found here. Peter started selling ‘product’ around aged 13; he was supported in this endeavour by the help of his brother, who was a founding member of the gang that operates on the estate in which Peter and his family grew up on. He first started off as a gang ‘younger’, that is, traditionally a ‘second – and third – generation gang member’ aged between 10 – 16 (Densley, 2012:54) who are recruited by ‘elders’, who have some accountability



for their new recruit. Peter was recruited by his elder brother, who bestowed his unique street name or ‘tag’ to his younger brother<sup>52</sup>.

As a younger, Peter began working as ‘lookout’ for other youngers openly dealing cocaine and heroin on the major strip close by to Neighbourhood B. Eventually, Peter progressed into dealing. Here, Peter gives an account of what this involved:

‘Bash (Peter’s brother) and other elders would like buy from some people over in Islington... I don’t really know who they were, just like older people, more organised, like proper serious. Like you’ve got Turkish mafia and some other like proper old school gangsters... that sort of thing... anyway, Bash and others would bring it to us, put it in like a backpack or a lunchbox or something and get one of us to go and stash it somewhere, like we had this place in playground... this other place was around the back of some bins in [Neighbourhood B]. Once it was there we’d get a message or something, and then youngers would be working the street and getting other youngers to go back to the stash to pick up if we, like, made a deal... you can wrap it in Clingfilm too you know... we’d hide like 8, 9, 10 wraps right at the back of my throat, like right at the back, behind my teeth. Just spit it out when someone wants it... we used to do that as well’.

Peter, Neighbourhood B, July 2012

The majority of youngers in this particular gang are employed by elders to work in frontline drug distribution, and for the past two years have been involved in a thriving operation openly selling crack cocaine on the major road artery through the borough and outside a major train station close by to Neighbourhood B<sup>53</sup>. Youngers will openly ‘tout’ product on the street, before signalling back to a lookout who will either retrieve product from a stash of product in a plastic bag, or the consumer will be ordered to

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<sup>52</sup> This is a common feature for many youngers who will adopt street names or tags from their elders with the moniker ‘little’ before their name. For example, Peter’s elder brother was known as ‘Bashy’, and hence Peter became known as ‘Little Bashy’. Obviously, this creates a grade of accountability for elders recruiting youngers, as they become intimately tied to their street name or tag (Densley, 2012:54).

<sup>53</sup> Open drug markets are not always the norm for London based drug crews. Comparative fieldwork conducted in a Neighbourhood Based in North West London found a group of 4 or 5 young men, unconnected to any local gang or in any way affiliated to a branded crew, operated a flourishing crack cocaine operation out of a rented terraced house in a well to do neighbourhood in an outer London borough. Their operation was unopposed by any other local youth gang or other operation. The success of the operation was down to their entrepreneurial ability to seek out an ‘open’ market with little competition or conflict with other branded youth gangs, where there is sufficient local demand, and where their reputations are unknown to police.

approach a second dealer who is watching over the stash to collect their product after they have handed cash over to the first dealer. The reasoning behind such a method is that on occasions when they are approached by police, no dealer will be found to be in possession of any product, and ‘stashed’ goods can be left safe in the knowledge that they will be unlikely to be detected; stashes routinely change throughout the day, and from my Neighbourhood B experience have included wheel arches, drain pipes, toilet cisterns and on any level where product can be thrown onto an adjacent structure and retrieved later if police do approach.

Elders will often check by on the ‘count’ or money made for that day, but rarely handle the product in which is being dealt (see also Densley, 2012:17). In this particular operation, elders purchase drugs from medium level dealers in the north of the borough who are one step away from importation and connected to more organised forms of crime located in North London. Older youths will then pre pack the product into ‘wraps’ ready to be dealt before passing them on to Youngers to drop in predetermined stash points. Youngers will ‘shot’ in ‘higher risk public networks’ (Densely, 2012:18), involving sales in streets, back alleys, parks, and hallways. The ability to maintain an effective entrepreneurial ‘open’ drug operation in a highly territorial borough where neighbourhoods and estates are bordered by competing drug crews thus depends a great deal on the ability of the particular gang or crew to maintain a reputation and physical and violent resources to sustain the particular enterprise, as Justin, one of Peter’s friends, maintains:

‘Not anyone can just be out shottin on [X street]...we been out there like two years, and no one come round or tell us to get off road...if they did we have back up, we have muscle or someone ready to step up if anyone trying to move in...this has always been a [gang name] area, no one dare come in ‘coz of the rep, it’s quiet, we stick to this ends, man over there stick

to their ends...it's no problem, but people know that this is our ends and not come round here no more'

Justin, Neighbourhood B, June 2012

Dealing is thus a normalised activity for many of the young men residing within Neighbourhood B who I came into contact with. It is no surprise that the majority of gangs evolved into the 'enterprise stage' (Densley, 2012:14) in Neighbourhood B during the early 1990s, an era when crack cocaine became readily available. However, many participants affiliated to this particular gang had previously engaged in post-industrial forms of labour – office clerks, temping, call centre work – although these remained short lived positions and more often than the young men I interviewed returned back to the lure of the informal economy of Neighbourhood B. It should be noted however, that many young men cited frustration at not being able to find stable employment, as stated by Justin:

Justin: 'I really want a job...I've tried too but it's hard to find one here, trust...

TM: you worked before though, didn't you?

Justin: Yeah I've had like 6 or 7 jobs, in office, shops, Burger King...but each time I left. It's like proper slavery working in those places man, proper slavery. Earning like nothing and doing the shittiest jobs you can imagine...proper slavery...so each time I left...I really want to work but I'm 21, I don't want to be working in Burger King all my life, getting shit off customers, getting shit off some dickhead manager. You can make what I made in like a week at BK in like one day shotting on road. I'm not saying I'll do it all my life, that's why I'm here learning things and that, but just when I'm not working and young...'

Justin, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

Some of Neighbourhood B's young residents would find themselves in a 'cultural confrontation' (Bourgois, 2003:115) with the ideals of post-industrial, service sector

work. Although repeatedly venting their frustration at not being able to locate steady legal employment in the midst of a national recession<sup>54</sup>, the street offers one arena in which young men can carve out a living when the local economy fails them and they cannot justify several years' employment hiatus to prospective employers. As such, despite holding several GCSEs and considerable work experience, Justin and Peter have found refuge in the underground economy of Neighbourhood B, 'shotting' drugs on the lively strip nearby and outside the station that serves the area. The problem here is thus structural, rather than at an individual level; both Justin and Peter state a willingness and desire to work, yet in an area where there are fewer than 500 employment vacancies for more than 8,000 benefit claimants (Office for National Statistics, 2013), in a borough which sports the second highest deprivation rates in the UK and the second highest reduction in government spending cuts across all London boroughs (TUC, 2011), the only realistic means of attaining the 'spending power required to live the lifestyle that they are constantly told they want and feel they must have' (Treadwell et al., 2013:15) is finding a suitable entrepreneurial niche within the street economy, and at the moment drug dealing is the current crime *de jour* for disenfranchised, disillusioned, alienated kids seeking to avoid the exclusionary logic of consumer capitalism and negotiate their identities in the post-industrial wasteland that is Neighbourhood B (see also Hobbs, 2013:125).

In Neighbourhood B, some young men are commodifying more and more forms of leisure in attempts to delay the inevitable tedium of post-industrial service sector. As such, they are entrepreneurially suited to the predatory nature of the illegal economy. For example, Justin and fellow 'Youngers' frequently 'go country'; that is, according

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<sup>54</sup> I witnessed many SBI participants from Neighbourhood B actively seeking jobs. One participant, who had previous experience of retail work and temping positions, recounted how he had applied for up to fifty entry level positions in the last three months, only to hear back from six positions which subsequently declined his application.

to Justin ‘anywhere out of Neighbourhood B’. These can be new drugs markets in towns and areas located on the London border and easily reachable by the vast commuter rail system, where their identities are not known by police and they are unopposed by other local collaborations, to inner city areas that have yet to be dominated by other local collaborations and where new night-time economies provide fresh entrepreneurial opportunity. Operations here are usually ‘closed’ and transitory; a house or disused location is found before setting up a flourishing business lasting no longer than a week, or when the stash has been exhausted. If the operation is focused on exploiting the local night-time economy, Justin would travel down in the evening and ‘shot’ class A drugs with fellow dealers who will guard a stash or deal direct from mouth. The ability to move about and seek new markets demonstrates how particular gangs are not as territorial as they once were in the era of Downes (1966); strictly defined, espousing a strong patriotism and limited to the immediate area. In the post-industrial era however, Justin and his fellow Youngers are fluid and transitory, seeking out new markets to exploit in order to make a fast buck in the hyper consumerist society we now inhabit. ‘Going country’ is one particular method that has been used by a number of UK based gangs for years and is nothing new <sup>55</sup> (Daly and Sampson, 2012), and Justin and his crew of youngers regularly use commuter services to ‘set up shop’ for a few days:

TM: what do you mean by going country?

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<sup>55</sup> Daly and Sampson (2012) refer to the ‘Wolverhampton run’ that has existed since the 1990s when drug gangs from Wolverhampton targeted the port city of Aberdeen, where, unopposed by local drug gangs, set up a lucrative industry selling batches of heroin and crack cocaine worth up to £6,000 a day. Other mobile gangs have followed suit, and regularly dispatch Youngers to leafier areas - where their identities are not known, where there is little competition, and where police enforcement is perceived to be less punitive - to set up enterprises and drive trade. See also The Guardian (2014) ‘London Gangs using children as drug mules as they seek to expand markets Couriers as young as 11 sent into countryside, police warn, as analysts blame social housing policy for spreading problem’.

Justin: I mean...anywhere out of [Neighbourhood B], like a few months back we went up to [commuter town] and stayed at Jessie's cousin house...we took at up a big stash, sat up there for like a week, his cousin has these contacts and people heard we were there, we sold for like a week straight. Made like 5 grand in a week.

TM: How often does this happen?

Justin: Just whenever really, if someone has a contact, or if someone is staying in a place out of town we can head up there, Bashy sorts us with the stuff and we set up: It's easy, just take an X box, sit about, wait for man to come...'

The substantial gentrification of the local area and the new burgeoning night time economy that attracts revellers from across London most nights has also provided new markets for Justin and his crew. Most nights several young men from Neighbourhood B are posted at positions in the night time centre with several bags of cocaine, exploiting the vibrant night-time economy and drinkers with a taste for something different. The influx of white, middle class 'art types', in Justin's words, also provides a market which is easily exploited:

'When their pissed you can just charge extra...most of them don't know the price for a rock or a pill or whatever, just charge 'em whatever...ripped bare man off still, ha! It's easy, man! Hahaha!'

Justin, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

Although Justin and his crew are involved in violent conflict with a rival crew located north of Neighbourhood B in an adjacent housing estate, their ability to seek out markets ranging from two miles to twenty miles away from Neighbourhood B shows a great deal of entrepreneurial nous. The success of these enterprises depends firstly on seeking out markets that are unopposed by conflicting rivals, secondly on a willing client base with a disposable income, and thirdly on finding an area where their reputations are unrelated or irrelevant to prospective buyers (see Hobbs, 2013:124).

Undoubtedly then, the intense gentrification of the area has facilitated the ease through which youthful collaborations can successfully achieve successful drug enterprises. This is an area which, over the last ten to fifteen years, has witnessed an influx of middle class 'hipsters' and art types, with 'good', stable jobs and a taste for edgier forms of leisure at the weekend, and Justin predicts this demographic to be the largest buyers of product from Neighbourhood B dealers. Moreover, the nearby night time economy, recently redeveloped and rebranded to accommodate Neighbourhood B's new clientele, has provided a ready market and trading base which can be exploited by the young men of Neighbourhood B during evenings and weekends. The reason that dealers from Neighbourhood B operating in this area, located 3 to 4 miles immediately south of Neighbourhood B, can run such a flourishing business unopposed is because this is 21<sup>st</sup> century post-industrial East London and the territorially defined area(s) that existed in the industrial period build upon local patriotism and a sense of community are redundant in the post-industrial era; the area is a gleaming new night time centre which has attempted to distance itself from its industrial history, a place with no history or connection to any remaining residents. Consequently, for Justin and his crew, this represented a territory which could be colonized and inhabited, a place where their reputations are irrelevant and a fresh market of middle class customers await.

#### Lickin' and Jackin': Entrepreneurial Orientated Theft

Drug dealing however, is not the only economic activity of some of the young men from Neighbourhood B who I came into contact with, and theft represents a similar means to eke out a profit from the shifting social, cultural and economic terrain that has destabilised the traditional working-class culture of Neighbourhood B. Like the drugs market that operates across East London and the evolving fluid and flexible

nature of youth gangs adapting to the changing social, cultural and economic terrain, new markets and areas have been opened that traditional youth gangs are compelled to explore in order to adapt to the economic changes that will otherwise marginalise them (Ferrell et al., 2008; Hobbs, 2013; Treadwell et al., 2013). The new post-industrial landscape of Neighbourhood B is entrepreneurially orientated (Hobbs, 2001) and as such 'constitute(s) an ideal environment for a range of both legal and illegal opportunities' (Hobbs, 2001:550). The aforementioned night time economy, located close by to Neighbourhood B attracts revellers from across the capital most weeknights, flushed with cash, mobile phones and other 'flash' expensive items. As such, the particular street gang explored as part of their research is reflective of the social, economic and cultural changes occurring in the area, and are mutating to fit in with this new terrain to exploit the new opportunities that this new landscape throws up: on nights away from selling class A's in the night time hub located a few miles south of Neighbourhood B, Justin occasionally heads to a nearby street filled with bars and late night cafes which attracts a young, middle class 'arty' scene. Come closing time the area is flooded with inebriated party goers making their way home, and a nearby park with little light and clear escape routes into the confines of Neighbourhood B provides the perfect opportunity for Justin and his crew to deprive any unfortunate young person of their possessions should they take this particular short cut home:

Justin: 'We'd mob up in [park x] at night, wait for man to come through when it quiet and lick' whatever they got, phones, watches, wallet, whatever...

TM: Who do you usually rob?

Justin: 'just the people that hang out round [street x]...just like rich kids, trendy kids innit...you know the ones with like skinny jeans and trainers and shit...most of 'em have got good phones though innit...I phone, blackberry, I pods, lots of money. It's a good spot 'coz we can



just peg it back to [Neighbourhood B] from there...been doin' it for like two or three years...

[Justin sees me looking slightly apprehensive]

Justin: 'don't need to be tooled or nothin' don't worry!!!'

Further economic opportunities have been thrown up by the regeneration of the area alongside the London 2012 Olympics, and a nearby open space that now hosts music events provides a further economic opening for the young men of Neighbourhood B to take advantage of; come the end of the night the area is filled with up to 10,000 young people, who, equipped with phones, cameras, and cash and with little knowledge of the topographical terrain of the area, are often soft prey for some young men from Neighbourhood B. Bikes are another soft target for some of the young men of Neighbourhood B, and the influx of cyclists within the immediate vicinity, and indeed London as a whole, has resulted in a new market to be exploited for those seeking a fast buck by selling on stolen goods, again to a nearby market which is renowned for taking in and selling on stolen bikes.

The rewards from street robbery and preying on the influx of middle class residents in and around Neighbourhood B, however, only offers limited rewards, and brings with it a great deal of risk. Justin reports that 'three or four' members of his crew have been 'put away' after a police crackdown on mobile phone theft in the area. As such, theft is merely a fleeting act of transgression for anyone seeking to make a fast buck, a moment of excitement in an otherwise mundane urban environment (Katz, 1988), and a further 'transitional possibilities featuring markets offering something more interesting than 'Mc Jobs'' (Hobbs, 2013:134). Other forms of theft, therefore, are making their way into the confines of Neighbourhood B, and although the links with

organised crime gangs was never fully explored as part of this research<sup>56</sup>, according to one source many affiliates from local youth gangs operating in the area often graduate to organised criminal factions in search of more financially rewarding crimes such as burglaries, smash and grabs and car theft rings:

Jimmy: ‘Some of the lads, they used to hang about [Neighbourhood B] and deal and do the usual stuff but some do move on, work with more organised, do like more serious stuff for proper gangsters and stuff...like smash and grabs, hold up shops in the West End, stuff like that. There was a few round here yeah, done some jobs robberies and that. A lot of the big ones come from Islington, Camden, round that way though...all the shit in the news about raids in the West End and that, that’s mainly lads from round that way I think, white Irish boys mainly’

Jimmy, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

Portraying every criminal progression in this way, however is a futile<sup>57</sup>, as the transitory nature of youth gangs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means that only a small number evolve into more organised, serious factions. The gang of Neighbourhood B, for instance, is relatively ‘new’ on the urban scene, having evolved out of a gang of ‘elders’ who were imprisoned for a number of high profile murders in the early 2000s.

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<sup>56</sup> The focus of many media reports detailing the graduation of street gang member to organised criminal appears to be on the youth gangs of Camden and the Southern end of Islington, where there has been traditional links between white working-class youth gangs and more organised, familial forms of crime. This is perhaps due to the traditional white, working-class and Irish populations (see Robins and Cohen, 1972:89) found here, and their historical connections with older, organised crime groups who are seeking to recruit British born men with significant criminal experience. There are numerous examples of boys originally from Islington and Camden street gangs who have been jailed for more financially rewarding smash and grab raids, jewellery heists and burglary car rings under the direction of organised crime factions from North London. For example, see: The Guardian, (2013). ‘Two brothers jailed for Selfridges raid’.

<sup>57</sup> The links between the youth groups of this area and more organised factions in Neighbourhood B is not clear cut. Partially, this is due to the multi-ethnic makeup of the region when compared to the largely white, British born council estates found in Islington and across the border in Camden, where older criminal groups composed of members from British and Irish backgrounds seek similar British born younger members with familial links and the networks to graduate into a fully-fledged criminal career. In Neighbourhood B, however, since the mid 1990’s the majority of organised crime is controlled by organised groups composed of members of Turkish and Kurdish extraction (see Hobbs, 2013:205 – 208) who are able to exploit their links back to Turkey, the major base for heroin importation into the UK. Although it is naïve to suggest that heroin importation is the domain of purely Turkish and Kurdish organised groups when in fact there is a ‘distinctly cosmopolitan flavour to many of these networks’ (Hobbs, 2013:206), the trade relies heavily on familial networks and a small minority of the self-contained Turkish and Kurdish community existing in North and East London (Hobbs, 2013:207) who ‘pervade(s) the social structure and straddle(s) the boundary between legality and illegality’ (Hall, 2012:18). As such, there is limited opportunity for the young men of Neighbourhood B, who, devoid of any familial or territorial link to precircumscribed organised crime groups, remain at the lower, more volatile end of the criminal ladder for a shorter lived career or, in the case of a number of gangs in the area, may evolve into larger operations occupying a middle market position and hoping to gain a foothold in the drugs market. For example, the Pembury Boys gang based in Hackney evolved out of a larger Borough wide gang, before evolving into an established entrepreneurial drugs gang one step away from importation and responsible for the majority of class A importation alongside organised Turkish gangs in Hackney. For example, see EastLondonLines (2011) ‘Twenty-three arrested in dawn raids as police tackle drug dealing and firearms crime in Hackney’.

As such, they lack a historical, reputable crimogenic ‘base’ on the East London scene, and links with organised crime groups are limited due to the Neighbourhood B’s young, fluctuating and constantly evolving population when compared with nearby estates in the area, which has contributed to the distancing of the neighbourhood from any familial or transmissible link with organised crime groups. As such, their activities are largely restricted to smaller scale dealing in and around Neighbourhood B and in the open, free for all night time market located nearby, as well as low scale theft of bicycles and electronic goods that the changing, evolving population has flooded Neighbourhood B with. Justin explains the current situation in and around Neighbourhood B:

Justin: ‘We are small...we are small. Bigger things are nearby, bigger groups with man that have been about for years, [estate A], [estate b], [estate c], they are the big players, they are the ones you see in the news, like, the ones that have done murders and shit and are in control of the drugs round here. Most of our stuff comes from them...

TM. Where do they get there stuff from?

Justin: I dunno, we aren’t involved that high up, but probably like some Turks or something, more serious gangsters. We can’t compete with them so we just sling around our ends innit...sometimes over at [park]. But we haven’t got anyone to step up to them...they have tools, plenty of man...we can’t compete...we don’t have any links with other groups, we are too young, too new and don’t know any other man’

### Territoriality and Violence

As we have seen, the local population of Neighbourhood B is one that is transient, evolving and constantly churning (Hobbs, 2001; 2006; 2013); de-industrialisation and the outward migration of the traditional white, working-class population has erased the cultural foundations and organisation of the ‘traditional’ working-class urban arena, and with it the basis on which traditional neighbourhood youth groups were established. Accordingly, the terrain upon which neighbourhood groups were founded

is now redundant, and local youth groups must now reconfigure their territorial dominance in an urban arena devoid of any enduring local parochialism. The urban landscape, having undergone intense gentrification, outward migration, and the erosion of its traditional labour market, means that the neighbourhood groups that were once dependent on the features of an industrial period has made it difficult for any criminal group ‘to establish the kind of parochial dominance they once enjoyed in the 1950s and 1960s’ (Hobbs, 2001:550). The new landscape of which Neighbourhood B constitutes is now a patchwork of territorial boundaries that exist beyond the confines of the traditional neighbourhood terrain, and the new post-industrial, gentrified terrain, that in a sense constitutes a territorial vacuum, has brought with it a range of entrepreneurial opportunities ready for new settlement.

Consequently, the influx of new inhabitants means this is an area where identities are not always known and past territorial reputations are redundant, making it easier for newcomers to ‘set-up shop’<sup>58</sup>. For example, an elder man with links to South London has recently moved in to the Neighbourhood, and has brought with him a low scale cannabis distribution network which he operates from his flat and sells to a number of ‘Youngers’ from the area. Pearson, has lived in Neighbourhood B for all his life and is an SBI participant:

‘The place got redeveloped when I was like 5 or 6, can’t really remember what it was like before that but you can see pictures of it and stuff, like proper grimy and had bad people and stuff, drugs and shootings and that. It looks better now, people moved in from different places, you got posh people buying stuff as well. But some bits are like still bad, some older people come in from different areas and deal and stuff. No one really does nothing ‘bout it cause we don’t know who they are, who their fam is, where

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<sup>58</sup>In an area of North West London where fieldwork was also conducted, a local estate that now has a reputation for territorial youth violence has incorporated inhabitants from a nearby estate which was undergoing redevelopment in the 1990s. This has long been cited as the reason for the increase of violence in this once respectable neighbourhood, and has also resulted in a close relationship between the criminal factions of the two areas due to familial links and enduring social relations that now exist between the two. See BBC (2011) ‘London shooting: Postcode wars blight Mozart Estate’.

they from or whatever. Best just to leave it and let them do it. We do our stuff, man does his’.

Pearson, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

The pre-circumscribed territories that once existed here (see Hobbs, 2013) no longer have weight in this post-industrial environment, and has resulted in entrepreneurial youth groups branching out from their traditional strongholds, spreading and expanding their reach upon a highly contested terrain fraught with competing factions. A nearby train station, located close to a major high street and situated between Neighbourhood B and an estate with a small volatile mix of young males, has been a Neighbourhood B distribution point for the past two years, even though it is located in a territory deemed to be ‘no man’s land’ unconnected to any territorial group: the area has been a recurring site of conflict between the groups during the fieldwork period: A number of stabbings to the upper legs and buttocks occurred – a favorite of urban youths seeking maximum pain, minimum risk of serious injury, and ultimate humiliation – after which the Neighbourhood B boys were able to defend this thriving market which has been engendered by a post-industrial local economy and has been entrepreneurially sourced by those seeking to eke profit from this lucrative market.

### Chapter Summary

The everyday lives of some young men in Neighbourhood A reveals a multifaceted and complex picture that is often not seen in descriptions of social exclusion and crime. Social and cultural features unique to the North East of England and city of Sunderland provide us with the underlying socio-cultural and structural features of contemporary youth identities; class, ethnicity, economic opportunities and gentrification all have parts of play in the trajectory of working-class (street) leisure and forms of criminality over the last thirty years. Individually, family tragedy, social displacement and mental

health issues bring to the table an understanding of the complex biographical concerns of some young men within Neighbourhood A. Combined, the analysis of structural and agentic factors can be interpreted broadly as factors that impel many young men into a forms of ‘street’ culture, similar to the observations of Winlow (2001) and Hobbs (2013). Forms of delinquent behaviour function as a means of gaining respect, status, ‘fun’ and ‘excitement’ (Katz, 1988) in an increasingly mundane social milieu , and the activities of petty shoplifting, street theft (both with minimal financial gain) and drug taking attest to this. Moreover, the de-industrialisation that has occurred in and around Neighbourhood A has resulted in more ‘entrepreneurial’ (Hobbs, 2013) forms of street leisure, most notably in the form of drug dealing – the current crime *de jour* – to make ends meet for many unemployed, under skilled young men making increasingly fragmented youth transitions (Nayak, 2006; MacDonald, 2011; Shildrick et al., 2013).

The lifestyle adopted by some young men in Neighbourhood A adheres to a cultural habitus structured around the traditional working-class, industrial forms of labour that have existed in and around Neighbourhood A for generations (Winlow, 2001). This is because despite the destruction of the traditional industrial base in Neighbourhood A, it has managed to retain its traditional population, and has been relatively untouched by immigration and gentrification. In this sense, territorial and localised families have remained, and ‘subcultural’ responses and youth groupings continue to exist, formed around the relatively static population that exists within Neighbourhood A. Violence remains a common feature here, a means of dispute resolution and asserting dominance over nearby locales, buttressed by traditional, deep-rooted forms of territorial rivalry.

In contrast to Neighbourhood A, Neighbourhood B is characterised by a post-industrial landscape destabilised by the outward migration of the traditional white, working-class community, intense gentrification, and a churning, heterogeneous influx of new populations (Dench et al., 2006; Hobbs, 2013). This environment has thrown up a range of economic opportunities, consumption practices (Bauman, 2002) and ‘fresh modes of locality and identity’ (Hobbs, 2001:554) that have succeeded in transforming the territorial based youth gang composed of a fleeting, brief membership (Downes, 1966) to one conforming to the backdrop of economic, social and cultural changes in the area. Drugs, theft and links to organised crime factions are now normalised, unexceptional and everyday activities embedded in the structure of Neighbourhood B, and the lifestyles of young men engaged in these activities must be understood as a response to the logics of the times; theft and drug dealing as a means of income attainment but also leisure pursuits which stimulate some form of excitement, fun and adventure in an otherwise mundane, dull and tedious urban environment (Katz, 1988; Ferrell et al., 2008; Hobbs, 2013).

In Neighbourhood B, the intense social and cultural changes occurring over recent years has spread the once territorial youth gang beyond the confines of its traditional neighbourhood. The gentrification of the surrounding area has erased the once pre-circumscribed territorial boundaries, and these ‘non-places’, devoid of any enduring historical territorial ownership, now represent urban playgrounds ripe for re-colonization by entrepreneurial youth groups seeking an appropriate market in which to ‘set up’ business. The pace of change around Neighbourhood B, most notably in terms of the inward migration and settlement of a new, middle class, young and educated population, has also laid the foundations for new forms of entrepreneurial crime, and provided the youth gang of Neighbourhood B with a ready-made target,

rich for exploitation through lucrative drug markets and opportunistic theft. As a consequence, the new youth gangs of Neighbourhood B and the surrounding area have been spread across an 'open' terrain, with traditional territorial boundaries erased and new markets and territories emerging in line with the economic changes of the area. The youth gang is now highly entrepreneurial; less territorially inclined and more fluid, flexible and adaptive to the surrounding location and habitus that now offers multiple illegal opportunities. The success of these operations is dependent on the ability of youth groups to seek out markets across the urban landscape unpossessed by other local collaborations and where there is a ready customer base. Hence, the operational networks of youth gangs have spread across a broad and extensive urban and suburban topographical terrain, which has created a disputed space between rival factions seeking to colonize these post-industrial places and spaces where violence acts a means of establishing any sort of territorial dominance beyond traditional established strongholds. Understanding this social context illuminates the range of entrepreneurial street activities available to the young men and women of Neighbourhood B, and provides an understanding to the backdrop of an area in which young men are making increasingly fragmented and non-linear post school transitions; certainly these opportunities provide something more interesting and financially rewarding than the post-industrial jobs that have come to populate the surrounding area.

Yet despite the intense regeneration and gentrification of the area and the subsequent fragmentation of the traditional neighbourhood, disregarding any form of continuing territorial rivalry in this particular neighbourhood is perhaps somewhat hasty, particularly as the area has an enduring legacy of youth groups with territorial hostilities and a longstanding continuity of 'generations of informal networks of



fiddlers, dealers, scammers, and planners' (Hobbs, 2013:124), of whom the local youth of Neighbourhood B have inherited some sense of established territorial rivalry. In Neighbourhood B, violence is thus situated around both entrepreneurship and market dominance *as well* as maintaining the reputation of one's 'endz' and establishing 'respect' in the face of embedded conflict and rivalries. As such, *territorial* based violence has become entrenched within the fabric of many young men in Neighbourhood B, and anyone caught 'slipping' over symbolic boundaries can set in motion the vicious cycle of vengeful violence which has come to characterize this particular neighbourhood.

## **Chapter 6: Sport Based Interventions: A Comparative Sociological Analysis of Operations**

Having mapped out the social, economic and cultural terrains of Neighbourhood's A and B, alongside the respective youth cultures that populate them, this chapter will examine the organisational practices of the SBI researched as part of this thesis. To continue the overriding sociological themes illuminated in chapter 5, this chapter will present a comparative analysis of two SBI centres located *within* Neighbourhood A and B's specific social milieux and their identifiable social, economic, and cultural frameworks. I will highlight how SBIs have been permeated by neoliberal thought, and how this work interacts with the identities of the post-industrial youth in an era of advanced marginality.

Structurally, this section is segregated into four main parts. I will begin by identifying how Neighbourhood A and B have been subjected to processes of 'territorial stigmatization' by SBI staff, which has legitimised increased intervention of the youthful populations of these respective neighbourhoods. This will be followed by a discussion of how SBI work interacts with the identities of post-industrial youth, and how intervention is often at odds with the needs of youth seeking to navigate the post-industrial terrain in which they inhabit.

To expand on this, I will then detail how neoliberal forms of governance have structured the operations of the SBI, and the deleterious effects this often has on participants. This will include situating each SBI within their specific social, economic and cultural ecologies, and uncovering the commonalities and differences existing between the two regional SBI centres in terms of funding streams, which were found to 'structure' how each SBI functions. Finally, I will discuss the forms of employment, education or training participants were 'progressed' into by the SBI, which will allow for a full discussion of post-SBI transitions in the chapter 8.

Ultimately, this chapter will argue that in making up a significant component of the 'neoliberal repertoire' (Spaaij, 2009), contemporary SBI's approach to intervention fails to comprehend trends of economic and demographic structures and the realities of urban marginality in profoundly different de-industrialised locales in the UK. Often, this results in harmful social consequences for the participants who make use of SBI programmes.

### **Introduction**

By way of introduction I will briefly revisit the social, cultural and economic backdrops of Neighbourhood A and B. In doing so, readers will be reminded of the context in which each SBI centre functions, which will enable a subsequent full

analysis of the implications of these structures on the organisational behaviour of the SBI.

The Neighbourhoods of A and B are distinct urban locales characterised by deep-rooted structural, economic and cultural differences. Although both neighbourhoods can be considered de-industrialised, urban areas (Winlow, 2004; Hobbs, 2006) typified by economic destitution, poverty, and a negative public perception, their morphological composition, ethnic diversity, degree of poverty, and historically embedded cultures at neighbourhood level are neither the same, nor manifest at the same level. Hence, the functioning of the SBI within these two structurally, economically and culturally diverse locales must recognise that the level of each SBI's engagement with participants, their sustainability, 'outcomes', and financing, are all affected by the established frameworks of specific social environments (Crabbe, 2008). Thus, to provide any sociologically nuanced analysis beyond positivistic evaluations of SBIs requires situating an analysis of each SBI within their specific social milieu, at local and regional levels, taking into account relative needs and social ecologies, and notions of regionality and identity as discussed in chapter 5 (see also Crabbe, 2008).

#### Operations: Targeting

'We have projects set up in areas of London, really deprived, gangs, lots of crime, that sort of thing...we usually look at areas and think about the ones that need help, the ones that are in need of some sort of support...like, there is a massive gang and youth crime problem in Neighbourhood B, and by going in we are trying to make a difference, we get money for that, to set up new projects that are working towards the needs of the area'

SBI official, London, March 2012

As I have detailed at the onset of this chapter, the social ecology of the surrounding area is instructive in informing the operations of the SBI, and the targeting of specific areas by the SBI was often found to be a response to public and populist concerns surrounding youth crime, unemployment, and urban street ‘gangs’. As this section will detail, often this was asserted without empirical or statistical support. The ‘territorial stigmatization’<sup>59</sup> (Wacquant, 2008:237-238) of particular urban areas and the expansion of SBIs and other crime reduction services into these areas has been investigated elsewhere (see Kelly, 2012), and in exploring the way in which SBIs target particular neighbourhoods, the current thesis adds a contribution to these debates.

As we have seen, both Neighbourhood A and B are areas subjected to significant stigmatisation, and known and recognised in public, political and media accounts as urban badlands where violence, drugs and urban squalor are common fixtures. I have previously stated how both Neighbourhood A and B do suffer from similar features spawned out of the de-industrialisation and fragmentation of the local economy and destabilisation of the traditional working-class community. Yet the intensity, frequency and level of poverty, delinquency, and crime differs markedly between the two locales, and the public, political and media representations of the areas - that they are tough, unaccommodating hellholes rife with violence, crime and drugs, - bears but only a tenuous relation to the actual realities of the areas, particularly in Neighbourhood A. Yet this does not matter: the territorial infamy of these areas, long

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<sup>59</sup> Territorial stigmatization, coined by Wacquant (2008:237-238) refers to how urban areas experiencing ‘advanced marginality’ are often ‘perceived by outsiders and insiders as social purgatories, leprous badlands at the heart of the post-industrial metropolis where only the refuse of society would agree to dwell. As such, the prejudicial perceptions of these urban places become diffused and spread amongst society, both ‘from below’, in the ordinary interactions of daily life, as well as ‘from above’, in the journalistic, political and bureaucratic (and even scientific) fields’.

embedded within the psyche of the public and media and political officials, means that:

‘Whether or not these areas are in fact dilapidated and dangerous, and their population composed essentially of poor people, minorities and foreigners, matters little in the end: when it becomes widely shared and diffused, the prejudicial belief that they are suffices to set socially noxious consequences’ (Wacquant, 2008:239)

As this chapter will attest, the official rationales behind the ‘targeting’ of specific neighbourhoods can be viewed as one response to the social insecurity spawned by popular social, media, and political representations. For example, despite the striking differences outlined above, the SBI adopts a similar homogenous, populist representation of these urban areas that fails to consider social, economic and historical contexts, justifying its ‘targeting’ of these areas without any support of empirical enquiry or statistical support. This is because ‘the unanimity of journalists, politicians and administrative officials who summon the word of every occasion suffices to establish the reality of this ‘harsh segregation’’ (Wacquant, 2008:145). The following discussion with an SBI official neatly illustrates Wacquant’s (2008) point:

TM: ‘How come you decided to set up a session here?’

Brian (SBI coach): ‘It’s exactly the sort of area we should be working in, it’s rough, quite deprived, lots of kids and young people hanging about round the station, lots of people we could potentially work with. It’s exactly what we should be doing, looking at areas where there is a need for this sort of thing and where we can find more participants. We are doing this all over the country, looking at what areas need to be targeted, and setting up in the most run down, deprived parts of the country with our unique programme ... what we are doing is looking at the most deprived urban areas around here, to identify and expand to run down areas that could do with help’.

Brian, SBI Official, North East, January 2011

Similar territorial stigmatization occurred in London, and the defamation of Neighbourhood B and its equivalents across the city has led to a prevalence of SBI centres operating in these neighbourhoods, accentuating the negative image of these estates and stimulating the spiral of ‘territorial stigmatisation’ that ‘sap[s] social cohesion and aggravate[s] internal dissension’ (Wacquant:2008:217). Indeed, Neighbourhood B was often referred to as a ‘ghetto’ and ‘deprived area’ by SBI officials, and the view that it housed a number of conflicting gangs meant that the project was moved to a venue in a ‘neutral area’ within a bordering borough, where territorial rivalries could be put aside <sup>60</sup>. Subsequently, this justified increased SBI work in and around Neighbourhood B:

‘We have been working in the job centres, working with probation, trying to get kids off the street. When the riots happened it was almost like a blessing in disguise as it provided us with more opportunities to set up: And with all the gang stuff that goes on round here, it’s easy to justify the work we do to potential funders and set up new projects in areas which are considered ‘gang’ areas’

SBI official, London, June 2012

I am suggesting here that the unintended consequences of territorial stigmatisation, by definition of targeting particular ‘hot spots’ that draws upon populist media and social concerns without any empirical or statistical evidence, justifies intervention in these stigmatized areas. Indeed, as the two discussions above show, once a place was publically labelled as a dangerous area rife with youth crime, the process of setting up projects in these areas could be easily legitimized to potential funders, including local authorities, higher education institutions, and central government officials. Thus, in the wake of the London 2011 riots and a number of sensationalist media reports on

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<sup>60</sup> In effect however, this moved participants from Neighbourhood B into unfamiliar territory, where their identities were not known, and violence with local youths opposing their incursion was not uncommon. In January 2010, a participant was shot in the lower back by a local youth after travelling from South East London to a centre in North West London. See London Evening Standard (2012) ‘Thugs of Stonebridge’ jailed for attempted murder of footballer’.

increased youth crime and gang activity, a special SBI centre targeting youths from a deprived area in South London where widespread disorder occurred was set up; thereby essentially labeling young people from this particular area as potential ‘threats’:

‘We set this session up here because the kids round here are wild...you saw during the riots what happened here, they need help, support, something to keep them from getting in to trouble. I don’t know what it is but for some reason the kids here have a different mentality, they are just hyper. Like at the graduation ceremony we had last week, compared to the other sessions they are so difficult to engage, just real hyper, gobbing off, not listening. They are a liability, something seriously needs to be done because this area has a bad, bad reputation...the kids, the gangs they have here, it doesn’t help the reputation of the area you know’

SBI Official, London, April 2012

Such a process – although far from the intention of SBI – can lead to further marginalization and stigmatisation; a vicious cycle that submits participants from the area to dictates of ‘risk management’ (Goldson and Muncie, 2006) that succumbs them to the low pay labor market without any consideration of underlying economic and social factors, renders them as public threats, and results in further relegation should they not comply with project aims:

‘The aim is to move them into a job, anything, it doesn’t matter, any job is better than them hanging about on the street. Cleaning toilets, I’d be happy to see them doing that if it means they aren’t out on the street stabbing each other. But they are hard work; we kicked off a few for messing around, not turning up on time, not doing work. They just end up back doing what they were doing before without any help from anyone and getting in to more trouble. I spoke with Cameron the other day, he told me that Tyler, the guy we kicked off, got nicked for carrying a blade. It’s just like a spiral, they don’t help themselves, so we have to get rid of them, and then they just end up getting into more trouble and into serious trouble with the police and going deeper into the criminal justice system’

Dan, SBI coach, London, March 2012

I now develop this chapter by suggesting the targeting of specific areas based on populist media and social concerns manifests itself within SBI views of participants, in the form of individualised, neoliberal perceptions of young people. To clarify, I begin with a short extract from field notes.

### Operations and Individualism: An Ethnographic Insight

I arrive at the project a little after 11am, just as participants begin to stumble in from the main road that runs past the entrance to the centre. Chris smell of drink, and the half empty bottle of Coke that I saw him drinking round the corner from the entrance was evidently laced with something stronger than just its usual contents. Ben, the SBI official in charge of this particular group, noticing the conspicuous odour, raises his eyebrows suspiciously and tells Chris to see him after. This is the third time this week Chris has arrived under the influence, and Ben's patience is wearing thin. He has 'already sent him home a couple of weeks back for turning up pissed'.

I sit down with Nick, a fellow SBI official whilst waiting for the remaining participants to arrive. Out of a group of 12, which had begun as 18, only 5 are currently present. After waiting a further 20 minutes for more participants to turn up, we begin. Today is a motivational job search day, an activity that, in Steve's words, 'will get them thinking about what they want to do, to overcome some of the things that are stopping them going out there and getting a job'. Sitting at our desks in front of us are a number of computers, and the class log in with the passwords provided to them by the owners of the centre. After ten minutes of confusion and accusations of incorrect passwords, we are finally logged on, ready to complete the activity.

The task is an *adult directions* computerized questionnaire, an assignment intending to 'identify the job that is right for you, based on your personal traits and responses'. The class respond to a number of multiple choice questions relating to preferences of learning; whether they prefer manual or physical work, and their choice of working hours. After twenty minutes, the results are in. Dion's 'career options' are a landscape gardener or horticulturalist; Fiona a physiotherapist or masseur; Craig, a psychotherapist or hypnotist. 'What a waste of fuckin' time, how am I *ever* going to be a hypnotist?' Do they think I'm fuckin' David Blaine or something!' asserts Craig. 'What do they want me to do, go back and re-do like every year at school for the next 10 years! HA! I only lasted about three weeks in secondary school. What a fuckin' joke'.

After completing the task, each person is told to present their intended career to the group, along with the objectives they need to achieve to



reach this destination. I ask if they feel these careers are realistic, and also if they are careers they aspire to. The majority mutter that, in reality, they have no intention of becoming a hypnotist, horticulturalist, or fishmonger. Instead, they are looking to ‘get into fitness, a sports coach or something’, for others it’s ‘just anything, something to do before I get back into doing what I want to do’.

Following a discussion of post-SBI career paths, Steve sets up the projector screen so that we can watch a number of motivational videos following a short presentation: ‘You live in a Western country, not Africa. So go out there, you can achieve anything you want to. If something is your dream job, go for it’. Fiona, sitting beside me, mutters ‘it’s not quite as easy as that’.

The group next watches a set of motivational videos provided by Steve. One is a video with the actor Will Smith telling his ‘story of success’. The video is filled with neoliberal rhetoric espousing individual responsibility, self –actualization, and the idea that ‘human well-being can best be achieved by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms’ (Harvey, 2005: 2): ‘Greatness exists in all of us’; ‘you really can make what you want’; ‘You have to believe’; ‘nothing is unrealistic’ (‘what’s the point in being realistic?’); and ‘protect your dream’ (don’t ever let anyone tell you can’t achieve something’) are but a few of the motivational pointers stated in the video <sup>61</sup>. The group appear fairly uninterested in watching the clip, sniggering at a few of the more pretentious mantras. After, Steve exclaims to the group ‘yeah, it’s a bit cheesy, but I want to get that mentality into your head, that you can achieve it if you put your mind to it – what are you going to do next week when you finish? If there’s a job in Castletown cleaning toilets, go for it. You’ve all got a clear picture what you wanna do long term, but short term, you all need to have a good think’.

Fieldnotes, Neighbourhood A February 2012

The above description appraises a random hour at the SBI centre in Neighbourhood A, and the neoliberal rhetoric that underpins SBI operations, tasks, and functioning. Indeed, as chapter 3 has demonstrated, in most industrial, Western nations, the restructuring of economic bases supported by neoliberal modes of governance have gradually permeated criminal and youth justice policies (Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001; Wacquant, 2009), and SBIs utilising sport as a tool for positive social development are also recognized for their compatibility with hegemonic notions of neoliberalism

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<sup>61</sup> See ‘Will Smith – Ultimate Motivational Speeches’. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5nVqeVhgQE> (Accessed 25/6/2012).

(see Spaaij, 2009; Chamberlain, 2013) favoring individualism, self-regulated responsibility, success and economic prosperity (Harvey, 2005). Spaaij (2009) argues that SBI's now represent a component of 'the neo liberal policy repertoire' aimed at 'regulating' youth within disadvantaged, urban areas (Spaaij, 2009:263), an understanding drawing upon contemporary theorists associated with the neoliberal saturation of the criminal justice system (e.g. Garland, 2001; Rose, 2000; Wacquant, 2004). Here, SBIs are now seen as part of a 'culture of control' (Garland, 2001); a web of interconnected crime prevention agencies composed of 'public-private partnerships, community policing arrangements, and multi-agency working practices that link together the different authorities whose activities bear upon the problems of crime and security' (Garland, 2001:170). Instead of pursuing and prosecuting individual offenders, this new sector is designed to 'govern at a distance' the conduct of 'the excluded', targeting the aforementioned 'hot spots' with situational controls to alter criminogenic situations. Its ultimate intention is thus; to organise a web of exerting control that succeeds in transforming the capacities of individuals into rational, self-governed actors (Garland, 2001:171). Darnell (2010), in employing a Gramscian framework to his analysis of international sport for development programmes, states that SBI officials are therefore active agents in producing and maintaining the hegemony of neoliberal thinking that underpins SBI programmes. Here, I contribute to this debate through empirical research, uncovering the ways in which neoliberal structural processes interact with the post-industrial identities of Neighbourhood A and B youth (see also Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009).

Narratives of individual responsibility, consistent with neoliberal rhetoric, was found to be a common theme within SBI projects and amongst SBI staff; videos, presentations and motivational speakers espousing individual responsibility, self-

actualization and ‘success at all costs’ were common features of the 8 week academy programme that participants underwent. Such strategies, whilst intending to motivate participants and instil aspirations of individual success and achievement, are attempts at aligning young people with neoliberal visions of living. As such, the underlying principles of these programmes assume that the main barriers to employment reside in the ‘individual shortcomings’, attitudes, and skills of young participants, with little understanding, or appreciation, of the structural conditions in which they operate (Wacquant, 2008). Of course, within both Neighbourhood A and B, employment prospects for young men are limited, and so if (and when) a young participant fails to progress into employment, they are immediately rendered ‘lazy’, ‘workshy’ or a ‘no hoper’:

‘Tristan, he dropped out last week. To be honest he wasn’t that interested, just used to come along, enjoy a kick about and go home. He’s into street stuff, he’s a bit of a waster really, not bothered about finding a job as he’s making money dealing or doing whatever. Fair enough if that’s what he wants to be doing, but I’m not in to helping people that don’t want to be helped’

Ben, SBI coach, North East, March 2012

In this sense, neoliberal underpinnings of SBIs individualise the issue of unemployment, concealing and de-emphasising broader structural inequalities that contribute to a young person’s position of unemployment or poverty, or apparent commitment to law-breaking (Kelly, 2011). Such an underpinning is in several respects, fraudulent, even dangerous: not only does this process mask the structural deficits engendered by neoliberalism and the implications of structures of power and historical context experienced by my participants, but as will be shown in chapter 7, can lead participants to misrecognize inequality as the natural order of things and to blame themselves for their position in society’s hierarchy; if participants are

continually told that their behavioural and attitudinal deficiencies are responsible for their own behaviour and lifestyles, inequalities are unacknowledged and appear commonsensical. Hence, SBIs can continue existing power relations, and reproduce ontological categories within society (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009). Tristan, for example, took full responsibility for his criminal record, with little understanding of the structural forces that may have exacerbated his situation:

‘It’s my own fault, I was stupid. I didn’t have to do it, or get a record. I just need to sort myself out, get myself clean and try and find a job. I’m just being lazy, drinking all the time and bumming about...I’m not sure if the course is for me because I don’t think I can be helped really, not until I sort myself out first, anyway’.

Tristan, Neighbourhood A, November 2011

Neighbourhood A is an area which has one of the highest unemployment to job vacancy ratios in the UK (The Guardian, 2012), and despite his failure to find stable, long-term employment in the area, Tristan blamed his own personal characteristics for his unemployment and location in society’s hierarchy. This is because the neoliberal agenda that underpins SBIs misrecognises the ways in which every day structural power relations generate social inequality (Gray, 2006; Wacquant, 2008; 2009); and staff, (as well as my participants) came to consider poverty, drug use, and criminal behaviour to be caused by character defects or immoral behaviour. In an attempt to deconstruct this generalised misrecognition, I will relay Tristan’s personal history - which reads as a checklist for the harmful effects of neoliberal inequality - at length here to underline the effects of political, economic, and historically embedded forces that legitimise inequality and have constructed Tristan’s habitus:

Tristan: ‘I’m born and bred in Neighbourhood A. Neighbourhood A’s like an estate in Sunderland, probably the roughest estate in the whole of Sunderland’

‘You get a lot of crime and in Neighbourhood A, it’s full of crime. Bad area, you know, since I’ve been out of prison I’ve known of 11 stabbings and I’ve only been out three months. I’ve lost five people through drugs, two close mates, it’s just constantly something bad happening all the time, you know, just never seems to be good. The whole of Neighbourhood A, there’s unemployment, drugs everywhere you go. I mean, you might not have seen it but if you take a walk through an estate and you’ve got a telephone line with a pair of trainers that marks a drug spot. That’s for people... that’s for your dealing. If you walk into the estate and see a pair of trainers hanging over the line, you might walk 100 metres and you’ll see another pair. In between them two pairs of shoes, that’s where you get your drug supply. It was just when we were younger, you know, just to keep the place in order rather than meeting in back alleys and everything. If you stay between them two pairs of shoes...’

TM: ‘What did the police do?’

T ‘The police didn’t really pick up on it until about 2002/2003.’ And then there was a thing on the news about it. Now they know. So, it’s changed a little bit now. You just phone them and... well, I used to phone them and they’d say we’ll go to so-and-so and I’d go to so-and-so’.

[...] ‘Anyway...when I was a kid it was that bad we robbed train out there. That was in about 1996.’

TM ‘Robbed the train?’

T ‘We used to have an old freight liner that used to run at the back of the estate and we played football one day and a couple of lads just jumped on the track. We didn’t know what was in the cabins or anything. We robbed the cabins and there were thousands and thousands of bottles of Newcastle Brown Ale! I think that’s where my crime really started’

TM [...] ‘OK, and how about your family?’

T ‘I’ve got a... Well, my mum had seven brothers and eight sisters. So, she’s got a huge family as well. I mean, I’m not close to my family like my brothers and that are. I mean, I was estranged from mum when I was like 14/15...and they always targeted me, so I didn’t want... when I was younger

I’ve got three children.... I had four. I lost a little girl four years ago. I was there, so she was four at the time. She had meningitis....’

[...] My first sentence was... I was an 18-year old. I was going through a bad time with my family. At 18 I tried to commit suicide and... My flat and my clothes, photographs, set them all on fire and I was just waiting for the flat to burn and... While I was there and my cousin kicked the door in, dragged me outside. I didn’t want to get out. He dragged me out, you know, that kind of thing. From then on it’s just

been... It's just been a struggle all the way from then up until now. It's been a huge struggle.'

'I was 19 because I'd just done a sentence for the arson in the first when I set fire to my flat, even though it was a suicide attempt. Because it was Council property, the Council had me charged, so I was done for arson in the first. Arson, set fire to the flat and because I fought with the police because I didn't want to be arrested.'

'I was also... I took part in a robbery. Well, I didn't actually... I was with a lad who instigated a robbery and because he was older than me, bigger than me. Two years. And all I did was took £100 off... out of someone's hand. That was my only part in the robbery... It was outside of a house, so it wasn't really classed as a street robbery. It was just robbery. I got 15 months for it.'

TM 'So, what other things in the past have you been in trouble for?'

T 'Just fighting. I've done three other sentences and that's all been for fighting. One was... Actually, one was for not fighting. I got caught with some heroin while I was involved in the fight. Section 20, Section 47 and ABH. So, it's just all fighting, basically, sticking up for my friends and that, you know.'

TM The employment that you do get in this sort of area, what sort of stuff do people do working-wise?

T 'It's more labour-wise. I mean, there's not really any prospects, really. You know, like most of our prospects, it's not like... If you want a proper job, you've got to go out the town a bit. You know what I mean? It's all about cheap labour that's coming in. You know, we've got the Polish people. You get a lot of foreigners, like Polish people and the ethnic people, you know, and they're all doing cheap labour'

'There is some production line work you've got a [unclear] factory. You've got your crisp factory in [Neighbourhood X] which is hard to get in there because they don't take a lot of people on. The other one, just like the only real opportunity you get is Christmas time, you know, when they take shifts on. You maybe get anywhere between 100 quid a day'

'I think it's just the lack of employment. They turn to crime, well they turn to drugs and they turn to crime to feed their own habit. I know mates that have attacked mates for money just to feed a habit, you know what I mean?'

TM 'You did mention that you were dabbling in drugs as well, was that for a long time?'

T 'I was on drugs, I was on heroin for ten years, so yes, before I cleaned myself up: I used to sell it to feed my own habit. It's just as bad, you know, still committing crime so I used to just sell, I thought it'd be easier to just sell it that way I don't have to commit crime. But

I'm committing a crime by selling it, you know what I mean, but I wasn't going out robbing people for the money'

TM 'So how did you, you know, come about getting onto drugs; is it just hanging around and that sort of people?'

T 'Actually it was more about when I was a kid and getting away from the family and I left home at 14. Me mum and dad didn't want anything to do with us, they stopped me from seeing my brothers and sisters. I started drinking at first and then one day somebody asked me if I wanted to try the heroin so I did. I just kept on trying it and before I knew it I had a habit so then I had to feed the habit, so had to find some way to feed my habit, so I started to sell it and that's what I did for ten years so I could feed my own.'

Despite being subjected to numerous personal setbacks exacerbated by a destabilised social, political and economic context, Tristan took full responsibility for his criminality, drug use and unemployment, with no recognition of the political or economic context or growing up in a household destabilised by poverty, violence and instability which propelled him into a career of drug taking and criminality. As such, for Tristan, the process of transforming himself from a 'risky' individual into a 'self-regulated citizen' rested firmly within his individual self. In line with Gray (2006), interventions risk introducing technologies of the self that are brought in line with dominant political rationalities that propose individual well-being, self-actualisation, and responsabilisation (Garland, 2001; Harvey, 2005; Smith, 2006). Tristan had thus internalised this neoliberal rhetoric:

'As I say, I've totally flipped the coin on myself now; there's only one way and it's a positive way now for me...No that was in me. I decided enough was enough. When I finished my last sentence which was 2005 I said then that I'm not going back to prison and it was only because I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Prison had been a lot harder than I was and thought piss off. But I said, no I'm going to do it myself. So I was in a position where I just had to go with it.'

'I was a menace to society, I was nothing but trouble. You know, I mean I used to be walking down the street and if you looked at me the wrong way I'd be like, here, you know, now...You wouldn't believe the change in the last 12 months. If you'd known me 12 months ago

you'd say that's not the same person. My whole attitude to life has changed; I didn't give a damn once. I just didn't care less. Did what I had to do to survive. Now, because I've got something I budget my money; I go out and do my shopping. I even get up in the morning and I clean the house!

Tristan, Neighbourhood A, November 2011

Tristan's story was far from unique amongst SBI participants; Mark was another example of a Neighbourhood A resident who has been subjected to a number of deleterious social circumstances that have rendered him to a position of instability, the result of problematic and chaotic personal circumstances that unfortunately, SBI professionals fail to recognise when addressing the 'shortcomings' of participants. Mark's social situation was precarious. Since school he had moved around various English cities finding work. This included mainly low paid retail work to support rent and daily living expenses. When I first met Mark during the early stages of my fieldwork he was unemployed, and, somewhat unusually, was living in a 'luxury riverside flat with views over the city, 'kitted out with a widescreen TV, X box and everything!' Of course, this seemed peculiar for someone who was out of work and attending an intervention seeking to address social issues related to unemployment, crime, and substance abuse. Over the course of a year or so, I would often meet with Mark at SBI sessions, and occasionally travel back into the centre of town where we would catch the metro to our respective stops. During this time Mark kept up the story of living in a luxury riverside flat, with expensive furnishings and electronic gadgets. On one occasion when I questioned how he could afford such luxuries when being unemployed, Mark told me he held down a 'job on the side', of which he wouldn't disclose any further details in case he was 'thrown off [the SBI]<sup>62</sup>'. After keeping this

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<sup>62</sup>Halfway through my fieldwork a number of participants who were attending open football sessions were asked to leave after admitting they were in employment, education or training, and had been for a number of months, yet had not told staff due to the fact that they still wanted to play weekly football matches.



up for a number of months, and describing accounts of an increasingly lavish lifestyle and nights out in the cities more classier establishments, Mark finally came clean one day on a bus: He didn't live in a luxury riverside flat, but instead resided in a bedroom with a sink in a high rise hostel close to the river. Despite my willingness to listen to his exuberant stories, I occasionally went along with them as I had no knowledge to suggest he lived elsewhere despite being somewhat perplexed by the disconnect between his apparent social and housing situation. According to Mark, it was the 'shame' associated with living in a hostel and his current social situation that had compelled him to tell these stories; he wanted to appear to be living 'in a reasonable way of life'.

One day Mark told me his story, which contributed to the social situation he found himself in. Leaving home at 17, Mark settled in London where he worked 'in a Sainsbury's for a while, before I sacked it in'. He moved north again after getting in a situation where he owed a substantial amount of money to someone over a loan payment accrued during a spell of unemployment.

In an effort to establish a 'social base' in and around Neighbourhood A, Mark enrolled in a local college to undertake a yearlong catering course, which rather than being a starting point for a future career in the industry, was more an attempt to 'meet people – perhaps get a bird'. Nevertheless, after a few weeks of enrolling Mark dropped out, and found his way into the SBI via an external referral agency.

The isolation and social exclusion that Mark feels in the North East has manifested itself in a depression that has lasted 'a couple of years'; without no immediate next of kin or social contacts Mark has found himself in a serious state of mental health which

has affected his ability to find work or go about daily life in a normative manner, as well as his use of the SBI under investigation.

The recent diffusion of neoliberal rhetoric within youth justice policies and SBI organisational strategies (Spaaij, 2009; Kelly, 2011; Chamberlain, 2013) meant that participants like Tristan and Mark misrecognised and misunderstood the structurally imposed suffering that manifests within everyday practices, and permeates every one of their relationships, including their connections and exchanges with individuals, family members, labour markets, institutions, and ultimately, themselves. The young men of Neighbourhood A and Neighbourhood B did not analyse their personal problems in terms of structural inequality, but instead the general consensus amongst my participants was that their own ‘ethical reconstruction’ lied firmly within themselves (Phoenix and Kelly, 2013). Overcoming unemployment or poverty was seen as caused by participant’s own moral deficiencies, and thus the SBI taught participants to take responsibility for their lifestyles and position within society.

At this point, it is worth noting the unintended consequences of the SBI in reducing the problem of unemployment to one of individual character deficits.

Firstly, SBI officials conscientiously educated and assisted participants with CV writing skills, interview skills and positive body language techniques. Yet participants could do little with this neoliberal based knowledge growing up in environments derailed by poverty, drugs, and unemployment. Indeed, in informing participants about individual success and achievement, self-regulation, and behavioural change, this message inadvertently created a dynamic of unproductive self-blame amongst my participants and contributed to the misrecognition of the relationship between structural power and social inequalities (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009). No resources

were provided to participants other than neoliberal based rhetoric regarding self-actualization and how to change their 'risky' behaviour and lifestyle choices. This reflects the neoliberal permeation of SBIs; rather than investing in approaches that can alleviate and allow participants to recognise structural constraints, SBIs frame unemployment, poverty, and criminal behaviour as individual choices, and attempt to relieve this through individuals choosing a lifestyle that avoids risk (Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001).

Secondly, my participant's did not analyse their personal problems in terms of neoliberal restructuring and the misrecognition of structural constraints. Instead, they appreciated the respectful treatment they received from the SBI. Even though there was relatively little they could do to change their behaviour because they were subjected to a range of deleterious effects associated with street life, they often felt that they had 'done something worthwhile and meaningful', in the words of one participant, by attending the course. In this sense, the SBI engendered a false sense of confidence in participants. Three months later however, when participants were still unemployed and falling back into old habits, many participants found unemployment, drug use, and violent careers associated with gang membership to be a normalised activity within their neighbourhoods. Hence, in composing a significant part of the 'neoliberal policy repertoire' (Spaaij, 2009), the examples of Mark and Tristan demonstrate the unintended consequences of this shift and how they can backfire. Well-meaning staff taught participants to take individual responsibility for their unemployment. This interaction, however, reaffirmed a 'road culture' subjectivity amongst some young men in Neighbourhood's A and B, where being directly disobedient and oppositional to advice felt like an empowering alternative to conceiving of oneself as a failure who lacks self-control.

For example, Steveo, had failed to get ‘the help I need’ from the programme, and constantly being told that he needed to take control of his life reaffirmed his ‘do-it-myself-road-culture’ subjectivity, leading to a continuation of self-destructive drug taking and reckless behaviour:

‘How is going on this course thing going to help? FUCK [SBI]. I ain’t got no qualifications or nothing, no CV, no chance of a job ‘cause I’ve got no experience. I’m fucked...might as well just go out, get fucked up, get some good weed, chill with fam...maybe start dealing again or something. Ain’t no point in trying to get a job? I’m not cut out for that shit. I can be making money like what a person makes in a week, what they earn, I could make in a day!’

Steveo, Neighbourhood B, March 2012

SBI officials meticulously educated their participants about individual success and achievement, self-regulation and employability skills, yet participants could do little with that knowledge growing up in environments derailed by poverty, drugs and unemployment. No resources were provided to alleviate substance abuse, educational difficulties, or mental disabilities. Instead they received information on body language and confidence without material support, which have little impact on young men growing up in socially destabilised locales. Participants prepared CVs where the education and unemployment sections were often empty. It was no surprise then, that after handing them out to local businesses and shops on completion of the course, my participants were still unemployed two months later. SBIs can therefore inadvertently create a process of self-blame amongst participants, which has contributed to a misrecognition of the relationship between structural inequality and individual self-control amongst participants. Within the neoliberal policy repertoire (Garland, 2001; Spaaij, 2009), this reflects the neoliberal agenda that has permeated criminal justice and youth policies (Wacquant, 2009) as well as SBIs (Spaaij, 2009). Hence, rather

than investing in interventions to tackle structural exclusion, poverty and unemployment, SBIs expect that it is a participants moral responsibility to ‘choose’ a lifestyle in line with the key components of neoliberalism, as put forward by a SBI member of staff in London.

‘We want our participants to be integrated into the mainstream, to follow traditional paths into employment, education, or training. Whether that be University, college, or some form of employment, it’s important that these participants take responsibility for themselves and attempt, at least, to get some form of work or training that can move them forward in life’

Isabel, SBI staff, London, March 2012

In progressing this chapter further, I will now explore a further component of the SBI’s operations. I will go on to suggest that the funding streams linked to the SBI researched in this thesis ‘structure’ many of the operational decisions I have identified above. I will also suggest that these funding methods are tied to the ‘type’ of participant ‘targeted’ by the SBI.

#### Funding, Audit Culture and Success Rates

As has been alluded to in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the PbR system reflects an established tradition within neoliberal, advanced industrial nations; related to the new forms of neoliberal governance of social, political and economic affairs which have emerged (Rose, 2000; Garland, 2001; Wacquant, 2009). With regard to worklessness and criminal justice, recent years have witnessed an erosion of penal-welfare policies for the ‘correction’ of social problems, to one in which a new ‘culture’ of strategies have appeared underpinned by risk assessments, behavioural management practices, and monitoring and evaluation techniques (Garland, 2001; Muncie and Goldson, 2006; Gray, 2009).

In forming a key component of the new neoliberal policy 'repertoire' (Spaaij, 2009:252), SBIs must also now market and strategically 'brand' themselves to gain a strategic foothold within a competitive market of provision (Mythen et al., 2011:5). Although on paper this proposal sounds appealing, the competitive market instilled by such an approach can lead to increased 'operational insecurity' amongst service providers (Kelly, 2012).

Indeed, the brief period of intervention for some participants in the North East was cut short by the economic downturn that occurred prior to and during the fieldwork for this research, culminating in a drastic effect on the functioning of the SBI, its staff, and ultimately, its participants. The Coalition Government's austerity programme and sustained reductions in public spending intended to reduce the budget deficit incurred in preceding years. In response, private companies and voluntary organisations were given an increased role and responsibility in delivering public services, representing 'greater efficacy' and 'value for money'; 'an economic and moral imperative' (Wiggan, 2012:3) for the mending of 'broken Britain' (Conservative Party, 2010:13).

In the second year of fieldwork, however, the UK voluntary sector was subject to cuts totalling more than £110m (BBC, 2010), whilst in the third year of fieldwork this figure was elevated to 'between £1billion to £5.5billion' (BBC, 2012). These measures 'hit deprived areas hardest' (Hastings et al., 2013); the north east was subjected to some of the harshest funding cuts, with two thirds of all charities in the area having central government funding slashed in the wake of the coalition's on-going austerity measures (BBC, 2014). The sector was thus subject to the double challenge of increased demand on service, and reduced funding revenue.

In the wake of these measures, the competition for funding from the public sector intensified, and voluntary organisations were now competing with one another for increasingly diminutive funding streams. The shift from grant funding to contract, outcome based funding that occurred in the second year of fieldwork meant that the SBI was now dependent on the success of finding bids to colleges, corporate companies and local authorities. However, the competition for funding in the North East meant that contract bids were not always successful:

‘Some of the funding bids, we could have done a lot, lot better. They were poor. We had a desperate, dry run with funding. Everything dried up. Most of our funding came from the colleges, and if we had a dry run with participants it meant we didn’t get the funding. It was desperate’

SBI Official, North East, October 2012

Hence, unfortunately, in the wake of unsuccessful funding bids and a lack of participants who fitted the new 16-25 year age criteria, a number of SBI sessions in the North East were closed down. The PbR funding system that required moving participants into employment, education or training meant that sessions composed of participants who were not ‘progressing’ were shut. Indeed, a successful open football sessions that attracted between 20-30 regular participants each week, located close to Neighbourhood A was subsequently closed for failing to attract the ‘right’ participant:

‘The thing with it, we were getting so many participants on it, but no one was progressing. They were all either old participants, too old, or just weren’t willing to go on it [8 week academy]. A lot were over 25 who we had to kick them off. It makes sense to target those who want to go on the academy’.

SBI Official, North East, March 2012

A number of participants who had attended these sessions on a weekly basis were not informed of the closure of this particular sessions, and continued to turn up each week

in the hope that the session had restarted. Joe, an academy graduate and volunteer coach at the session was not informed of the closure, and was subsequently left without any post-intervention support: ‘I remember we turned up for a session on Wednesday and no one was here. All I got was a text from Andy saying it’s stopped because of funding’.

Sessions located in and around Neighbourhood B, however, were largely unaffected by funding cuts, and continued unchanged. This is because funding cuts to the voluntary sector hit Sunderland City Council by £10,000,000, Northumberland Council by £1,145,181.45, Cleveland and Redcar by £1,145,057.77, and Durham by £821,160 (The Guardian, 2011). Hence, although public sector funding for the voluntary sector across the capital peaked at a reduction of £19,041,521.56 (The Guardian, 2011), the availability of funding streams in the capital and the higher density of corporate sponsors providing unregulated income meant that the SBI in Neighbourhood B was not subject to the same financial burden experienced in Neighbourhood A. Indeed, the majority of funding in London came primarily from large foundations located in the capital and a number of educational organisations providing commission based funding. The accessibility of key corporate partners meant that a number of high profile events in the capital, including visits to Downing Street and Wembley Stadium, also increased the profile of the programme in London and facilitated links with corporate backers and educational organisations offering support. In 2012, the London SBI programme accumulated £283,518 in unrestricted funds and £546,757 in restricted funds from commissioned contracts to spend on programmes. In the North East, however, the desertification of larger corporations and educational institutions, and implications of broader austerity measures meant that in



the financial year ending 2012 only £52, 609 was accumulated in unrestricted funds, and £83, 823 in restricted funds from commissioned income (Annual Report, 2012).

In an area with some of the highest youth unemployment statistics in the UK, the dereliction of other public services has serious implications for those growing up in post-industrial Neighbourhood A. These cutbacks resulted in a number of employees being laid off in the North East, and the closure of several open football sessions across the region in the years between 2010 and 2012. Due to the grievous shortages in regional budgets, staff, sessions, and the relative dereliction of other third sector interventions, structural variations can be used to explain the key differences in operational functioning, engagement, and implementation. Predictably, these factors also have serious implications for some of the youth growing up in Neighbourhood A, as chapter 8 of this thesis will explore.

Within the context, it was found that the ‘operational insecurity’ exacerbated by competitive funding often lead to a purposeful overemphasis of the ‘riskiness’ of participants by SBI staff, exaggerating participants’ precariousness whilst highlighting ‘success stories’ in attempts to appeal to funding bodies (Kelly, 2012). For example, well-meaning SBI officials were asked to provide case studies of successful participants at the end of each 8 week academy. Often these were filled with emotive language, highlighting (and often exaggerating) participant hardship and difficulty, and the subsequent ‘life changing impact’ of the SBI. As such, the punitive audit culture had the unintentional consequence of fuelling stigmatisation and the labelling of ‘risky’ inner city youth, whereby the SBI ‘defined’ the ‘type’ of participant they worked with:

‘We need to fill out case studies at the end of the academy, to send off to newspapers and put on the website and stuff. To be honest I’m really

struggling from the last academy...I can't really think of anyone that has, like, really achieved anything. But they want us to do at least two of them...often it's just a case of picking someone who had a bit of a rough time before coming here, and the talking about the impact we have had. It's a bit shit really as I often think we don't really do much, but they like us to have like really emotional case studies of participants, how they had a difficult time before here and how we've helped them'

Rob, SBI Official, London, August 2012

Although nothing should be taken away from the work of SBI staff, such an approach fails to consider the limited 'impact' the SBI had on participants: in 2011/2012, the 'success rate'<sup>63</sup> for all engaged participants stood at 27%, whilst in 2010/2011 this figure was 13% (Annual Report, 2013). As chapter 8 will highlight, even when participants do 'progress' into forms of employment, education, or training, the sustainability of these outcomes was questionable. Hence, although such an approach is conducive to potential funders by highlighting the potential of SBIs to alleviate issues associated with gang membership, substance abuse and exclusion, it masks the reality – and sustainability - of participant outcomes.

The transfer of funding streams has further implications for outcome driven, preventative programmes in which it is difficult to define outcomes. The PbR system means that SBI programmes are subject to a punitive audit culture whereby funding is justified by the aforementioned success rates. Not only can this exacerbate the said concern, but can also lead to an occurrence whereby participants are 'cherry picked' based on their ability to achieve a prospective outcome (Mythen et al., 2011, Kelly, 2012). Meanwhile, 'harder to reach' participants are cast aside to face further stigmatization and exclusion. For example, screening procedures were put in place during the second year of fieldwork to regulate the number of participants on

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<sup>63</sup> Defined as moving a participant in education, employment, or training.

programmes. During this period, the number of ex-offenders and drug and alcohol abusers reduced from a respective 27% and 13% in 2010/11 to 19% and 1% in 2012/13 (Annual Report, 2013). Academy programmes were also restricted to 20 ‘recruits’ for each quarterly programme, and SBI officials were told to focus on those who were deemed ‘ready’ to progress into employment, education or training:

*In SBI office, London discussing upcoming academy*

TM: ‘What about Rashid?’

Isabel: ‘Yeah he seems OK, don’t really know much about him. He’s got a record though so he could be quite difficult. We don’t want too many with records because it can be quite difficult to progress with and deal with them’

Rob: [Talking to me] ‘We are screening down referrals from YOTs and Probation as we find they are harder to work with and progress. Obviously we still refer them on to another organisations who are more specialised and better suited to deal with their needs’

Field notes, Neighbourhood B, September 2012

This screening procedure provided competition for places, purposefully prioritising less ‘risky’ participants without excess social and criminogenic ‘baggage’ that could potentially disrupt a successful ‘outcome’, which funding was based upon. One common strategy was to ‘screen’ participants in the weeks prior to the academy, monitoring their attendance, work rate, and commitment at street football sessions. The funding logic behind this, however, is not explained to participants, and those with more complex issues such as substance abuse, mental illness, and criminal behaviour were ‘referred out’ of the programme if their attendance waned or behaviour deteriorated. Although they would often be told that they could return to open ended street football sessions, the majority of participants, often aggravated that they had been asked to leave, would not be seen again. Often more complex problems would

provide justification for the expulsion of more ‘risky’ participants, who could be ‘referred on’ to other organisations:

Rob: ‘Like once we had this guy on the academy and he’d always turn up late, or we’d not see him for a few days then he’d suddenly re-appear. One time we’d gone out for a day trip and it wasn’t necessarily evident at the time but we found out he was an alcoholic. And he was pissed on this day and went into a local shop and nicked a load of stuff and got caught. So we were all there and he gets arrested right in front of the whole shop!

TM: ‘What did you with him after that’?

Rob: ‘We refer him on to another organisation who can deal with his needs. We’re not equipped to do that, so we find someone we can pass him on to’.

The bureaucratic rules imposed by funding imperatives, including age restrictions (programmes could only focus on 16-25 year olds) and the need to find ‘work ready’ and willing participants to enrol on the course provided a further point of conflict between participants and operational staff. Because the logic behind excluding those who exceed age ranges or do not fit screening criteria is never fully explained to participants, ‘excluded’ participants would often exclaim their resentment for staff when turned them away from sessions or denied opportunities to partake in the 8 week academy. I often heard participants claim that the intervention was partial to ‘teacher’s pets’ – those ready to work and with the best attendance records. No one recognised that the problem was the precarious funding measures based upon a PbR system.

For example, upon ‘failing’ to make a summer academy programme in 2011 for not matching specific criteria and regarded as operational staff as having ‘complex’ needs, Wes resorted to a cycle of self-blame and hatred towards the organisation. Subsequently, his mental illness and behaviour at sessions deteriorated, and, unable to find employment or suitable social interventions, left the area and rehoused himself in

a homeless shelter in a nearby northern city close to Sunderland, still unemployed, vulnerable, and using increasingly harder illegal substances. Upon bumping into Wes six months after he left the area, I found he had adopted the ‘do-it-myself-road-culture-subjectivity’, criticising the intervention for his expulsion and, in his own words, now having a ‘fuck-it-all-attitude towards life in general’. Ben’s situation is an example of how the PbR method can backfire; for some, a wilfully and self-destructive attitude felt like an empowering substitute to considering oneself as a failure who lacks the control and skills to be selected for an SBI programme.

I will now provide an account of the type of work SBI staff ‘progressed’ participants into.

#### Any Old Job

After spending the previous 6 weeks failing to find any form of stable employment in the local area, Ben spent the previous evening job hunting for participants, and found 12 jobs in 40 minutes in North Bay, a tourist area close to Neighbourhood A. One of them is in a fish and chip shop. Steve explains this to the group, and is met with a mixed reply. ‘Work in a chip shop?!’ Exclaims Rick, ‘I ain’t doing that, no way. I’ll stink of grease and never get a bird!’ The majority of the group reject Ben’s offers of low paid retail work in shops, cafes and restaurants in the area. Later, I ask Ben why he thinks this is. ‘Some of them don’t have the fear of not having a job. A few years back I got that and ended up working on a building site. Hated it. Then I came here, after working in a café as well. I used to have to start at 6am and then finish and come straight here. It was hard. I used to stink when I turned up to coach. You were there’.

Field notes, March 2012, Neighbourhood A

This situation demonstrates the tendency of SBI programmes to encourage participants to ‘take any old job’ that came their way. Despite participants facing multiple needs and unique barriers to employment, the ‘one-size-fits-all’ (Crabbe, 2008) approach to SBI work reflects a broader shift in political-economic trends and socio-cultural

factors in recent years. As has been discussed in chapter 3, the neoliberal welfare reforms and the de-industrialisation of once proud industrial areas across the UK in the 1970s and 1980s means that those ‘left behind’ by the fast moving pace of the post-Fordist, capitalist economy are now caught in a virtuous circle of poor work, low pay, and insecure, flexible forms of unemployment (Byrne, 1999; Shildrick et al., 2012). Within the post-Fordist, flexible labour market era then, the combination of low wages, insecure employment, and locales of structural unemployment has led to the creation of a workforce catering specifically to the lower rungs of the employment ladder (Shildrick et al., 2012:200). The formation of a number of ‘welfare to work’ schemes under New Labour to create self-regulated, post-Fordist workers capable of navigating the post-industrial economic landscape is thus evidence of Byrne’s idea that ‘The logic of the employment form of much of post-industrial capitalism is that the work will not be good work. However, people have to do it...Welfare to Work is a constitutive process for this’ (Byrne, 1999:99).

The SBI often drove clients into low paid work, quite literally<sup>64</sup>. The SBI also had a number of links with organisations and companies who would take on ‘apprentices’ on completion of the 8 week SBI course. Yet these links only provided short term, low paid employment, and more often than not the PbR funding method meant that organisational staff taught participants to churn out CVs and take any jobs they could. However, in the North East, the ‘feminine’, low paid service sector jobs were in direct contrast to the masculine, industrial habitus formed in the dockside area of Neighbourhood A (See Winlow, 2001), which, like the job in the fish and chip shop, did not appeal to participants:

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<sup>64</sup> On one occasion in March 2012, I spent two consecutive days accompanying participants around Sunderland and Newcastle city centre, who under the advice of operational staff, were told to go and hand out CVs in cafes, retail shops and small cafes and restaurants.

‘Um...well obviously I signed off, I’d only been signing on I think 2 months, I got a job at McDonald’s uh...I ended up like leaving um...because...I thought...I had an interview for this placed called Savers so I left McDonald’s for that and I left, I left there the first week of Savers because...not that it bothered us but I was the only man like working there. It was a proper shit like.

I would say...I mean...fast food jobs I would say are the most...they’re always going to be in business because everyone needs food and everyone is going to be eating. So I think the likes of Burger King, McDonald’s, KFC I reckon...if you go on the online application form for these places there is always positions open in the northeast. And...so... ..but no one wants to do it you know what I mean?

Keith, Academy Participant, Neighbourhood A

Although many young men struggle to find stable employment in most circumstances, finding employment during an economic recession in two de-industrialised locales makes such efforts even harder (Shildrick et al., 2012). The failure of participants to find stable, long term employment should therefore have reflected the deleterious economic conditions they are exposed to, most notably in the form of short term contract, low paid work. Yet because the SBI did not take into account structural barriers to employment, the failure of participants to find long term jobs merely reinforced popular stereotypes of young men being immoral and lazy, as is found in Tristan’s discussion at the onset of this chapter.

In this sense, by offering no means of acclimatisation into post-industrial labour markets that exist in and around Neighbourhoods A and B, or the resources to provide further educational qualifications beyond an entry level college course, the SBI attempted to move participants into relatively low paid, transient service sector employment (Shildrick et al., 2012). Such an approach, which critical scholars have argued effectively ends welfare dependency rather than underlying, structural poverty (Wacquant, 2009), exaggerates young men’s experiences of ‘churning’ (MacDonald, 2011, Shildrick et al., 2013) as found in Keith’s case stated above, whereby young

men fluctuate between low paid, service sector jobs, that they have no desire to work in now, or for the rest of their lives. By moving participants into low paid positions, the funding conditions of SBI inadvertently reproduce unstable, flexible low paid labour markets that rely on the creation of a work workforce ‘required for and required to do the poor work that flexible labour markets create’ (Shildrick et al., 2012:200), thereby maintaining the effective functioning of post-Fordist, capitalist nations in a competitive, globalised, neoliberal world (Byrne, 1999:9).

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the operational processes of the SBI ‘researched’ as part of this thesis. I situated each SBI *logocentrically* within their own specific social and cultural ecologies, to provide a microscopic analysis of commonalities and differences existing between the SBI located in Neighbourhood A and in Neighbourhood B. Here, I have highlight how the distinct social, cultural and economic features of the two contrasting areas essentially ‘structure’ how each SBI functions.

The social ecology of the surrounding area was found to be instructive in informing the operations of the SBI. Targeting specific areas is often dependent on local needs, or more often than not, responding to public and populist concerns surrounding youth crime, unemployment, and ‘gangs’. The ‘territorial stigmatization’ of areas was found to be one factor behind the ‘setting up’ of sessions in particular neighbourhoods. Indeed, it was found that once a place was publically labelled as a dangerous area by the SBI, the process of setting up projects in these areas was simplified and could be easily legitimized to potential funders. Such a process – although far from the intention of SBI – can lead to further marginalization and stigmatization, a vicious cycle that submits participants from the area to dictates of ‘risk management’ that succumbs



them to the low pay labour market, renders them as public threats, and results in further stigmatization should they not comply with project aims.

I have also sensitised readers to the organisation's views of its participants. It was found that neoliberal rhetoric was a common theme within SBI projects and amongst SBI staff, and videos, presentations and motivational speakers espousing individual responsibility, self-actualization and success at all costs made up significant parts of the SBI's educational framework. Neoliberal underpinnings of programmes can thus individualize the issue of unemployment, whilst concealing and de-emphasising broader structural inequalities that have placed a young person in a position of unemployment, poverty or crime in the first instance (Kelly, 2011). Not only does this process fail to consider the lived social experiences of young men and the structural deficits engendered by neoliberalism they face on a daily basis, most notably exclusion, poverty, de-industrialisation, and stigmatisation, but also, from the perspective of the participant, may also result in them failing to recognise these structural inequalities themselves.

I have also alluded to the PbR system which requires that SBI programmes are subject to a punitive audit culture whereby they must justify their funding by success rates. Not only can this exacerbate the aforementioned concern, but can also lead to an occurrence whereby participants are 'cherry picked' based on their ability to achieve a prospective outcome (Mythen et al., 2011, Kelly, 2012) whilst those 'harder to reach' are cast aside to face further stigmatization and exclusion.

Finally, I have explored the regional variations in economic structures, which I argue have facilitated the overall functioning of the SBI. In the North East, severe budget cuts have resulted in the closure and downsizing of the SBI, which, combined with the

desertification of broader educational, corporate and social interventions, has led to a situation of marginality for the young men of Neighbourhood A attempting to transist into the surrounding post-industrial labour market. In contrast, the high density of corporate organisations and educational institutions in and around Neighbourhood B have increased the accessibility of the organisation to access diverse funding streams. This is reflected in the income of funding for the respective regional centres (Annual Report, 2013). Ultimately, these structural differences have had a severe impact on the functioning of the SBI and has had a predictable impact on participants in both areas. These argument represents the main source of discussion in the ensuing chapters.

## **Chapter 7: SBI Interaction with Post-industrial Identities**

The two preceding empirical chapters have documented the social and ecological context from which two respective youth cultures have emerged out of, and outlined the operational activities of the SBI centres that function in these two urban locales. I have continued the overriding sociological theme of this thesis by situating each SBI centre within its specific social milieu, and their respective identifiable social, economic and cultural backdrops.

In expansion, Chapter 7 looks at how neoliberal self-help discourse interacts with the cultural ecologies and distinct social habitus' that operate within Neighbourhood A and B. Here, I identify four typologies of post-industrial youth who 'make use' of the SBI under investigation in different ways, and absorb the rhetoric of neoliberal thought that structures SBI work. I will thus provide readers with an account of how 'learnt' discourse and rhetoric, despite its good intentions, is often irrelevant for many young men whose choices are constrained by broader structural, political-economic forces that contradict the logic and discourse of such language.

### **Introduction**

All my participants, in both neighbourhoods, were not in employment, education or training. Yet rather than perceiving these young men as one static, homogenous unemployed group, this chapter explores the distinct youth groupings that exist in these two locales and 'make use' of the SBI. Here, I have identified four typologies of SBI participant; their outlooks, attitudes, and stances toward employment, criminal behaviour and consumption diverge and contrast, and they exist in locales that embrace dissimilar existential ideals and habitus'. Their convergence within their neighbourhoods and at the SBI is the only similarity that they share. These are, located within Neighbourhood A, the *Outcasts* and *Conformists*, and in Neighbourhood B, the *Aspirationists* and *Road Boys*.

Chapter 7 progresses this thesis's findings to discuss the distinct ways in which these typologies experience, interact, and internalise the neoliberal underpinnings and rhetoric of SBI work. I introduce readers to the everyday reality of SBI life for these participants, and how they make use of the intervention in different ways depending on the socio-economic landscape of the surrounding area, the cultural habitus' of neighbourhoods A and B, and their internalisation of neoliberal rhetoric. This point by point comparison will allow us, in chapter 8, to investigate the post-SBI transitions of these four typologies of SBI participant.

The section begins by introducing readers to one 'type' of Neighbourhood A participant: the Outcasts, and their use of the SBI.

#### The Outcasts' use of the SBI

In Neighbourhood A, 7 of my participants could be categorised as belonging to an *Outcast* cultural grouping. I have termed them Outcasts for their outright rejection of post-industrial work<sup>65</sup>, their intention of remaining on state provided benefits, and their apparent unwillingness to find legal employment<sup>66</sup>. All of these participants joined the SBI having been unemployed for the majority of their young lives, and post-SBI, continued along this pathway.

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<sup>65</sup> A number of Outcasts did however, for a short period of time, engage in informal, cash-in-hand work, 'on the fiddle'. Usually this involved working in manual work, including furniture removal and construction, on tip offs from close friends or relatives. Two Outcasts also worked 'with gypsies' doing small manual tasks such as paving driveways and painting and decorating. Philip had recently returned from Norway: 'I've been unemployed for a couple of years...I've been doing odd, fiddly jobs...and painting, decorating, paving, like I went up to Norway to do that. With gypsies. I've got the experience, what they teach you, but I won't bother again. They just treat you like, frankly they just don't treat you fairly, you know? I was out there for about three, four months... we were meant to go to Sweden, but like, that was because my dad, he's over there, and also I wanted to see him. I missed him, so I thought it was the only opportunity I was going to get to go and see him, but in the end, I stayed in Norway instead of going to Sweden'

<sup>66</sup> It is worth stating here that I am not reducing the problem of unemployment to one of immoral fecklessness or irresponsibility, or categorising these participants as a form of lumpen, dismissed by Marx and Engles as 'this scum of depraved elements from all classes' (Marx [1870] 2002:xii); rather, these 'outcomes' are merely a *response* to the organisational structure of the SBI, and the deleterious effects of structural change occurring in and around Neighbourhood A over the last 30 years.

Since its inception in 2006, the SBI has provided ‘open’ football sessions to participants experiencing a range of social problems related to homelessness, unemployment, and criminality. These sessions functioned as a ‘filter’ into the eight week academy programme, where participants can be assessed for their ‘readiness’ and willingness to take part. Although these sessions are intended as a ‘hook’ to attract prospective participants, *ethnographically* I discovered that an unintended consequence of these sessions is that they are often used by the Outcasts as a form of leisure, composed of participants with no desire to take part in the 8 week academy programme, or progress into employment. This proved to be a point of contention for SBI staff, who were keen to evict participants unwilling to advance beyond these sessions. For the Outcasts, however, the open football session provided a leisure activity which they could look forward to on a weekly basis:

‘I’m not going on it [the course]. It’s just another hassle. I’ve already got too many things on my mind. They [the SBI] only want me on it so they get their figures. I’m not really interested in the other stuff, I just want to play football and get fit. They provide you with all sorts of stuff, kit and t-shirts, and try to get you involved. It’s blackmail! I’m just interested in the football, really; they’ll kick you off the programme after 6 months anyway so I have to leave soon... [Thinking hard] it’s not really for me, I just want to play football. At least I’m being honest!’

James, Neighbourhood A, March 2011

James, like many other Outcasts who experienced weekly pleasure, excitement, and enjoyment from these sessions in an otherwise mundane, routine unemployed life (Ferrell et al., 2008) was subsequently evicted from the session in the summer of 2011 after a crackdown on ‘non-progressing’ participants. The implications of this, however, was further social marginalisation and stigmatisation; Outcasts were often labelled as ‘lazy’ or ‘workshy’ by SBI staff for refusing to participate in the academy

programme, and, as chapter 8 will go on to demonstrate, left in an amplified state of exclusion upon their SBI expulsion.

Many of the Outcasts also exploited the neoliberal culture that pervades modes of governance away from welfare social service provision toward the punitive treatment of young men deemed ‘at risk’ (Garland, 2001). In the neoliberal era, the welfare state is seen as ‘not the solution, but the problem’ (Young, 2007:69) and benefit claimants must now actively seek work to meet the eligibility criteria for claiming state sponsored benefits. This includes attending particular courses or registering with specific employment agencies, of which the SBI was one. Mark was particularly adroit at manipulating this system for his own profit. For a six month period he attended SBI ‘open’ sessions, each week playing football for two hours and having his job centre form signed by an SBI official as proof of his attendance at an ‘employability course’. Mark would then return to the job centre, show his form and state he was currently on a course looking for employment. One afternoon after receiving his weekly £56.80, Mark proudly displayed his signed form and told me outside the job centre:

‘I’m only going for me benefits! Get them signed off each week. Looks like I’m looking for a job but really just having a kick about each week! Cheeky I know innit, but it’s their fault! Shouldn’t be so stupid to think that people would actually look! [For jobs].’

Through this exploitation of the unintended consequences of a punitive stance toward social services, Mark and other Outcasts continued to use the session as a means through which to obtain state benefits. During this period Micky, a fellow Neighbourhood A resident, also used the session to continue to claim state benefits. SBI staff were aware of this behaviour, and often realised that there was nothing they could do to counter it other than to ‘refer out’ Outcasts:

‘Micky was about for a while as well. I really, really, liked Micky. Remember he wanted to join the army? He didn’t go, do you know the reasons why? Because his mum still wanted to claim for him and get benefits from him. He still came about for a while, and I could see he wasn’t really doing much, not looking for work. So I sat down with him once and just said look, what going on? And he was just honest with me. Told me he didn’t really want a job, hadn’t been looking. And I was pleased that he told me because I knew that something was going on. He was involved in some illegal activity. He wouldn’t tell me what, but I can think what, I had an idea. And it sounds like he was making a fair bit of money from it and was happy. So I just said, look, that’s fine, but let’s cut all our ties, let’s go our separate way. There was nothing I could do for him....he just used the sessions so that he could claim’

Ben, SBI Coach, Neighbourhood A

The Outcasts’ commitment to ‘scamming the system’ meant employed Neighbourhood A residents were irritated by the Outcasts’ commitment to obtaining welfare and their rejection of employment. They are a cultural group that is available and ‘ready’ to work, although they have no intention of doing so. They are representative of the underserving ‘underclass’, vilified within the community, and embody the dole dependent ‘other’, widely ridiculed and stigmatised by society; as Jock Young reminds us:

‘The underclass, although in reality a group heterogeneous in composition and ill-defined in their nature, is a ready target for resentment. Re-constituted, rendered clear cut and homogenous by the mass media, they become a prime focus of public attention in the form of stereotypes: ‘the underserving poor’, the ‘single mother’, ‘the welfare scrounger’ etc., and an easy focus of hostility. Such stereotypes derive their constitution from the process of essentialising, so widespread because of the prevalent crisis of identity...the very opposite of the ‘virtues’ of the included’. (Young 2007:37)

Yet one must understand that the Outcasts are, in a sense, one of the wisest of cultural groupings explored in this thesis. Their refusal to join the ‘low-pay, no-pay’ cycle of ‘precarious work’ (Shildrick et al., 2012) is a particularly shrewd manoeuvre, and they have the sociological *nous* to realise that welfare to work programmes, like the SBI,

will merely result in 'poor work' (Byrne, 1999:69). Excluded and left behind by the post-industrial labour market, James knew the SBI was going to do nothing to reduce the structurally imposed suffering he experienced, and used it simply as a chance to experience excitement, fun, and enjoyment in an otherwise unexciting urban environment (Ferrell et al., 2008). For the Outcasts, unemployment represents a voluntary choice; the best option in the low paid, unstable labour market of Neighbourhood A. The Outcasts actively dismiss the help of the SBI and any employment opportunities that are offered to them, aware that the system is geared toward pathways into low pay, low-skilled and precarious employment, which often 'keeps people in poverty, undermines the purpose of welfare as temporary respite, and denies prosperity' (Shildrick et al., 2012:38). For them, being unemployed is a rational decision when considering the opportunities available to them in the surrounding post-industrial labour market:

'Scam is probably a bit of an extreme word but it [the SBI] is a bit 'scamy' in that it leads everyone to think that they might get a chance of work...I think that people telling you that being unemployed makes you feel bad, and I think if you say 'no, piss off actually, I've got more spare time...I've got lots of things I like doing'...I think it's getting a healthy balance...I was living off savings, just bare essentials, just my food, and I found that I didn't need to work.

To tell you the truth if I'm with a group of guys... say there are 10 of us, 2 blokes have got a lot of money and the rest of us haven't got much, something is going to rankle with me, some spirit or energy is going to say fuck 'em, I don't like 'em, I don't want 'em round me! I would rather they went somewhere else...I would rather they had nothing and be poor and everyone around me was in the same boat than have even a little bit extra, and they're the typical people who've got a lot more so I think the country would be better off without...I don't think we should be looking to attract all these mega billionaires and all that. We would be better off without 'em... You've got this huge division in this country between people at the top and people at the bottom and it's the people at the bottom who are striving to get to the top...we don't need that.

Embrace poverty you know? It means you're going to get healthier if there's no money...and you have to cut back, it will be better for you. We've got an overweight society, unfit society, it's an opportunity, but stop



thinking of finding a job, finding a job, more thinking what...what will help...If everyone was poor...like a mate of mine went to Cuba, my manager, the guy I was telling you about that used to run the shop. He said oh Sonny, you wouldn't believe it he said, their poverty mate; he said they've got nothing – flippin' nothing! It's terrible! I said so they're really unhappy? He said oh no mate you've never seen such a happy bunch of people! Everyone is smiling, I said so...there is something not tallying up here'.

Sonny, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

The Outcasts are therefore exploiting a welfare to work system, such as the SBI, for its ineptitude to find suitable, sufficiently paid, stable employment for a group of young men who recognise the structural deficiencies they face. They therefore do *not* constitute, in Marxist terminology, a 'reserve army of labour' that the owners of capital can draw upon to continue to undermine low wages; for they are too marginal to even make up this form of lumpen proletariat. The Outcasts have no productive or economic *raison d'être*, and exhibit a general unwilling to engage in waged labour. The issue here is that this is not due to downright, laziness, fecklessness, or lethargy; the Outcasts are aware of what the low-pay, unstable employment the post-industrial world can offer them, and want no part of it whatsoever. I am therefore not dismissing the Outcasts as a dismissive, lumpen class, but rather, a class of young men with the sociological awareness to recognise the enforced structures of inequality upon them.

### The Neoliberal Conformists

Occupying a divergent post-SBI trajectory are the neoliberal Conformists. They represent a cultural grouping 'attuned' to the neoliberal logic of individual success, responsibility, and hard work. Despite their unemployment, they are committed, dedicated, and eager to position themselves within the labour market in and around Neighbourhood A. As such, their *modus operandi* is to use the SBI as a facilitative pathway into the post-industrial labour market, acquiring the relevant skills,

knowledge and information which they perceive as a requisite for transiting into the local ‘knowledge economy’. They are the perfect neoliberal subjects: ‘docile bodies’, subjected to, in Foucauldian terms, the capillary manifestations of power, exercised as ‘numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations’ (Foucault, 1998:140). Although the Conformists have adopted the neoliberal rhetoric of self-improvement regulation, as I will argue within the context of chapter 8, there are numerous ‘unintended consequences’ of the ways in which this process miscarries, and is at times wholly unproductive.

Like the Outcasts, the Conformist’s utilisation of the SBI is marked by a distinct pattern. They are eager, attentive, and ready to learn. In a sense, they are modern day ‘ear’oles’: described in Willis’ classic *Learning to Labour* (1977). The majority of Conformists heard about the SBI through the Job Centre, and their ‘use’ displays a strong instrumental dimension: its main purpose is to generate not so much ‘leisure’, but rather to relieve joblessness and equip them with the necessary skills to transcend the post-industrial economy. Even though the Conformists are reliant on welfare, their main objective is to find stable, established employment, and they have a perception of welfare as being a characteristic of the ‘lazy’, ‘work-shy’ Outcasts. As such, they feel shame, embarrassment, and a distinct awkwardness for their joblessness and continued reliance on state support:

I was walking down the street there, and there were two young lads and a young lass. They were sitting on the floor, rolling fags out of Drum baccy. Just rolling fags. I was thinking to myself, ‘The rest of the world can’t be like that, it can’t just be something like that.’ It’s terrible, it really is.

I don’t like to think people are shivering in their houses, living off benefits, with [nothing today]. I can’t stand it really, to be honest with you. I hate living on benefits. I’ve been looking for a job for ages now... It’s terrible.

Ollie, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

The Conformists made a sharp differentiation between themselves and the Outcasts who they vilified and ‘othered’, and whose ‘ilk’ they wished to be no part of. The Conformists levelled angry, often heated, tirades at the Outcasts, distinguishing themselves from them through adopting stigmatising, popular representations of non-contributors:

‘... I won’t mention any names or anything, but I know there is a bloke who’s married a woman. He’s married his wife, she had about seven or eight bairns before he married her and he’s had twins with her. So, nine children, living in the house with them. Him and his wife had nine. I think one of them has moved out now actually. Anyway, still he hasn’t worked a day in his life. She doesn’t either!

I’m trying to work out how much they’d have. I can’t remember how much it is now with child benefit but he would be getting at least £500 a week I think, off all the bairns he’s got. I think he’d be getting that. On top of his other little earner he’s got going, like he’d be selling a bit of dope and stuff like that, as they do. He’d be getting quite a bit of money a week in, when I’m thinking back. I think he’s been doing that for as long as I’ve known him and he’s about 35 or 36 years old... I don’t think he’s ever worked, to be honest with you. If you knew him, to look at him you’d know what he was before he even... I don’t like to stereotype but to look at him you’d know what he was. He’s horrible, he stinks, he’s scruffy. He really is. You couldn’t misplace him. He looks homeless, it’s that bad.

...I just think people fall into it. It’s a safety net. Some people genuinely do want to work and maybe business is a little bit slow and they can’t get any work. They fall back into that and just get stuck in it. They get used to having it. They’ll say, ‘I want to work’ but when it comes to the crunch they don’t really want to go to work, they’re happy where they are, sitting watching Jeremy Kyle and Loose Women all day’

Ollie, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

In their attempts to differentiate themselves from the Outcasts, the Conformists are attentive, eager, and focussed during SBI classroom sessions. They complete the work asked of them, and actively seek employment. They take on board the advice given to them, and see their SBI experience as something that will be beneficial, in the long run, for their assimilation into the post-industrial labour market. When speaking to,

and interviewing the Conformists, I was struck by how many of their quotes were peppered with neoliberal rhetoric of how the SBI had ‘changed my life’, or ‘saved them’. Often it felt as if the Conformists were merely regurgitating the language of the SBI, believing that by simply attending the SBI they had done something reasonable and practical that could help them navigate the post-industrial world:

TM: So how, you know, since you’ve been on the course here how has your behaviour changed?

Mike: ‘Totally changed, changed everything about me. Changed my whole thought process whatsoever, you know what I mean. I think about me and what I want, you know what I mean, instead of worrying about their problems, you know, when I’ve got my own problems. I still have problems, I mean, like I need a new flat...but I’ve changed from how I used to be...

...during the week, you know, it’s mainly, I may just have four cans in the house and be in bed for ten o’clock because I know I’ve got to be up in the morning for my class. That’s what I mean, it’s changed me, it’s give me a structure in my life.

I can’t really say there’s been any negatives in there. The only one thing that I would say is it’s too short! I’ve loved it, every minute of it....’

Mike, Neighbourhood A, October 2011

The Conformists of Neighbourhood A are thus adhering to the SBI’s neoliberal model of self-improvement, believing that, in opposition to the Outcasts outlook of life, that they can, in one participants words, ‘achieve anything I want if I put my mind to it!’. Hence, the Conformists suppose that ‘human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade’ (Harvey, 2005:2). As such, the Conformists see it as an individual’s moral responsibility to ‘choose’ and follow self-help rhetoric along an authorised path (Rose, 2000; Darnell, 2010).

In aligning with the goals, objectivities and philosophies of the SBI then, one can observe three distinct ways in which the Conformists' lifestyles diverge from the Outcasts. Firstly, by definition of their adherence and commitment to attaining a foothold in the post-industrial labour market, they are well behaved, well mannered, and keen to learn at SBI sessions. As such, they constitute a cultural grouping 'favoured' by the SBI; 'cherry picked' (Kelly, 2012) due to the perceived 'readiness' and 'willingness' to work and be 'fashioned' into neoliberal subjects capable of transcending the post-industrial economy. The majority of Conformists are educated to GCSE level - and often beyond - and their criminal records, unlike the Outcasts, are clean<sup>67</sup>. They arrive early, complete work on time, and unlike the Outcasts, have consumed the rhetoric of the SBI to take individual responsibility for their unemployment. They are ashamed of their joblessness, reliance on welfare, and current social position.

Secondly, unlike the Outcasts, the Conformists have acclimatised to the post-industrial environment, and post-SBI, seek to find employment in the array of post-industrial employment opportunities found in and around Neighbourhood B. *Ethnographically*, it was clear that the Conformists had been conditioned by hegemonic notions of respectable employment and lifestyles; they adhere to popular fashions, musical tastes, and consumption practices. Accordingly, despite their working-class backgrounds, and having been 'born-and-bred' Neighbourhood 'A'ers', they are adapting to a form of identity that rejects the 'traditional' notions of working-class masculinity and identity found in Neighbourhood A. In doing so, the Conformists were fully

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<sup>67</sup> Ethnographically it was uncovered that, cannabis use, although intermittent, existed amongst the Conformists. The Conformists, however, are quick to make a distinction between low grade cannabis resin, which they perceive to be 'cheap' and used 'by charver scum', and 'weed', a potent, less adulterated alternative containing higher concentrations of Tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive constituent of the cannabis plant. Drug use however is largely intermittent, and pales in intensity and usage compared to the Outcasts

assimilated into the surrounding post-industrial environment and social order. They ‘conformed’ with popular notions of fashion – as evidenced by their ‘trendy’ clothing from popular high street fashion retailers such as *Topman* and *H & M*; their haircuts – neatly cut, frequently groomed, and styled with male grooming products - were not unlike many of the professional footballers they idealised. They also aspired to an ‘acceptance’ in the night time economy of the North East; they wished to be seen in the popular nightclubs, and their fashion, lifestyles, and attitudes facilitated their assimilation into this environment. Stylistically, personally, and attitudinally, they can thus be seen as a changing, metamorphosing cultural grouping within Neighbourhood A.

Finally, to follow on from the above, the Conformists desire forms of post-industrial employment that deviate from the traditional forms of labour found in Neighbourhood A. They seek and ‘want’ employment that reflects their post-industrial metamorphosis; they reject traditional ‘hard’ labour that has characterised the surrounding area for preceding years, and wish to find employment in one of the numerous office, knowledge based jobs located in and around the outskirts of the city of Sunderland. In this sense, they wish to ‘surrender’ their industrial employment image, and adapt to the new post-industrial economy, where, in terms of labour, the growth of the knowledge based economy prioritises ‘feminised’ attributes such as keyboard skills and communication proficiency over the robust ‘masculine’ qualities associated with the culture of manual work (Nayak, 2003:9):

‘I’d like to find a job in an office or something like that. You know, one of those smart places where you have to wear a suit and that. I think I’ll like that, like, having a decent job, looking good...I’d prefer that to say working down the mines everyday like me old man used to!’

Ollie, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

In deploying a Gramscian framework here, one could understand the Conformists as active in (re)producing the neoliberal philosophy that underlies SBI programmes. Post-industrial assimilation is, for the Conformists, commonsensical. Because behaviour is viewed as being reinscribed through social experiences and relations, the prevailing ideas and logics behind SBI programmes can be viewed as renewing dominant, hegemonic notions of individual upward mobility achieved via individual responsibility and self-regulation (Rose, 2000). Through the diffusion of hegemonic ideals, the Conformists have experienced an ideological subordination of their subjectivities; they are the recipients of hegemonic thinking, and have been manipulated and aligned with society's dominant social order to '*frame* all competing definitions of the world within *its* range' (Clarke et al., 1976:39).

### Neighbourhood B

In post-industrial Neighbourhood B, two identifiable groups can be found. Reproduced by this distinct social and economic backdrop, they have 'made use' of the SBI, and are now making attempts to navigate the complex, ever changing terrain of Neighbourhood B. Within my sample, the Aspirationists are attempting to assimilate into this ever-changing locale, to find employment in the various business, media, and knowledge-based employment opportunities now located here. They face a struggle, however, in that they now compete space with an educated, white, middle-class, who, by definition of Neighbourhood B's locality and 'edgy' urban reputation, have now made the area 'their own'. This means it is increasingly difficult for the Aspirationists to find employment. They therefore, quite often, find themselves casually employed, working sporadically, and filling the manual, working-class jobs that the traditional, white working-class population filled during the industrial era

(Wilmott and Young, 1957). In contrast, a group affiliated to a local youth gang have taken advantage of the clear cultural impacts of the changes in social and economic conditions of Neighbourhood B, and with great entrepreneurial nous, feed off the ample consumer based criminal opportunities that now exist here. I refer to this group as the Road Boys; a collective of young males who are affiliated with a well-established and respected youth street gang in Neighbourhood B. They are unemployed by choice, and have decided to 'survive' from the entrepreneurial criminal activities that have been thrown up in this ever mutating urban locale.

I will now detail these two youth groups and their use of the SBI, beginning with the Aspirationists.

#### The Aspirationists

The Aspirationists are comparable to the Conformists of Neighbourhood A. They are hardworking, meticulous, and use the SBI to improve their employability skills. In this sense, they are - like the Conformists - an 'ideal type' of SBI participant; 'cherry picked' (Kelly, 2012) and fast tracked onto the education programme due to their 'readiness' and 'commitment' to work. Their aspirational outlook, in part, stems from the surrounding area. Neighbourhood B is an area of rich diversity, history, and potential. They have grown up under the lights of Canary Wharf, the financial centre of the UK, and a couple of miles eastwards, one can view the Olympic Park, a symbolic figure of the large scale regeneration of East London.

8 of my participants could be categorised as belonging to an *aspirational* cultural grouping. They are all of black or ethnic minority origin, reflecting the cultural diversity of the area. All of these participants joined the SBI having been referred from the job centre, and were unemployed for periods of between six and twelve months.



During their engagement with the SBI, all Aspirationists stated their intention of finding employment on completion of the SBI. Thus, I have termed them the Aspirationists, for their commitment and dedication to learning and education, and finding *well-paid, respected* employment in and around Neighbourhood B. Accordingly, the Aspirationists were committed, and completed classroom based work on time at the SBI. The majority of them were educated to at least GCSE level, and were active in job searching and seeking in and around Neighbourhood B<sup>68</sup>.

Like the Conformists of Neighbourhood A, the Aspirationists were not proud of their unemployment, or reliance on support:

‘It’s annoying. It’s annoying signing on and all that. I hate signing on. It’s the most humiliating thing I’ve ever done. I hate signing on. The way they sit there and they look at you as if you’re just another face, and really you’re just someone who wants a job’

Dylan, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

The ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ of Londoners has been noted elsewhere (see Hobbs, 1988), and ‘getting by’ via means of a variety of money making activities, both formally and informally, has a well-established heritage in this part of East London. As Gunter and

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<sup>68</sup> However, due to their aspirational outlook, they often rejected employment which they saw as unsuitable and unmatched to their skilled and educated self. The conditions of obtaining JSA state that recipients must accept employment that is offered to them and thus, many of the Aspirationists had benefit claims suspended. This often resulted in tension and pressure with job search agencies:

Dylan: I hate the Job Centre.

TM: Everyone says that they hate the Job Centre.

Dylan: They depress me. They depress everyone.

TM: What goes on there, why are they...?

Dylan: [interrupting] Right, this is what happened. They wanted me to go to this interview to apply for this job in Tesco. Which was through them, so I could have got interviewed straight away. They wanted me to put my availability as Monday to Sunday, 7 in the morning to 11 at night, but I can't do that because I'm doing this course. So I said to them I can't do that because I'm doing this course, and they were saying to me, well you have to do it. I'm saying to them, 'Hold on a minute, you've put me on this course and now you are telling me that if I get the job I need to stop doing the course to work in Tesco. Why would I work in Tesco?' I've been an assistant manager in a betting shop and you want me to degrade myself and basically find something lower. I'm not trying to say that the job isn't a good job that I wouldn't do, I wouldn't mind working in Tesco part-time, but I'm not going to cancel my plans for your needs basically. This is my life, you can't tell me where to work.' 'Well, your jobseekers agreement says that because your availability is 24 hours then...' 'That was then, you've put me on the course so why would you then want to take me off the course. That then renders the course pointless. They were just like, 'Well, if you're not going to do it, we are going to have to suspend your claim.' I was like, 'Suspend it then. They just want to put people in work and get their tallies up for their areas, because I think they get all these...They have competitions and stuff, like what borough or area gets the most people into work, 16 to 24, and stuff like that. I think they just care about that, they don't really care about... and that's not fair because this is my life. You can't tell me where to work.

Watt (2009) have correctly noted, in the present context this practice remains applicable to the contemporary, working-class youth of the area. To add to this, an aspirational culture has always existed in and around Neighbourhood B, reinforced by the success of black and ethnic groups in sporting, media, and musical endeavours. Yet the distinct locally specific social conditions characteristic of the ecology they exist within was also seen as being a hindrance in many young men achieving:

‘There's so much talent in Hackney in terms of singers, dancers, actors, footballers, stuff like that. In my school...that's in the heart of Hackney. I think Neighbourhood B is proper Hackney, some people don't classify it as, but it is.

Labrinth went to my school, you know Labrinth? He went to my school. I know loads of backup singers that are back-up for Wretch 32 and Jessie J and stuff like that. They go to my school. Someone else went to my school as well... A lot of famous people come from there. Yeah, but it's hard.

There was one boy, he was so sick at football. His name was William. He played a game against Arsenal - he was with one team and he played against Arsenal, they lost 10-1. I think he scored the only goal, but I think he must have performed good, and he had a trial with them, but I think the day before his trial he went to jail.

So he couldn't have his trial no more. So, you can't mix the two. So because he grew up in Hackney you get caught up in things, peer pressure, and stuff like that. So imagine if you didn't do that stuff...’

Shawn, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

The entrepreneurial ethic and established aspirational culture that exists in this particular part of East London meant that post-SBI, many of the Aspirationists wished to follow paths into ‘respectable’, ‘highly paid’ jobs. They were quick to make a distinction between, what Gunter and Watt (2009) have previously identified as ‘dirty work’ and ‘clean work’; that is, ‘traditional, manual male jobs’ (Gunter and Watt:521) which were perceived by my participants as ‘low paid, poor man’s work’; and employment in the post-industrial economy, which required qualifications, led to ‘better pay’ and required one to wear ‘a shirt and tie and look smart’. Accordingly, the

Aspirationists sought employment in the various well paid, post-industrial employment opportunities located in and around Neighbourhood B, and adapted their customs to 'fit' in this new environment:

'Right now, I'm looking for an assistant manager job or car sales executive jobs. Like big jobs, you know what I'm saying? '

I want to change my vocabulary as well. I want to stop saying, 'Do you know what I'm saying?' 'You get me?' and I want to... I don't mind speaking like this, but when I'm speaking to someone from work or something, I want to be able to express my point properly without using slang. From the last year or two, I've been reading the dictionary, trying to raise my vocabulary. I looked at it this morning actually. 'Decorum', came into my head, what does it actually mean? So I just looked it up. The best thing I ever done was buy a dictionary because there are loads of words I think of. In school, I hated English, but now I wish I'd paid more attention because now I love words. So I started reading it, reading it, reading it and I got wiser, I got wiser, I got wiser'

Dylan, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

Similarly, two respondents were actively seeking employment in the music industry, reflecting the aforementioned rich ability in creative industries in and around Neighbourhood B<sup>69</sup>, and the ability of the Aspirationists to draw upon the various post-industrial artistic and musical scenes and various studio spaces opening up and operating in the area:

'What I like doing is, first of all, singing with my brothers. That goes on the top of the list because ever since we were little, my mum forced us to sing in front of our, I would say, our congregation at Church. But we liked it because we wanted to be - I don't know - the next Jackson 5!...I'm hoping to have me and my brothers make it; make it in singing. We wouldn't go on X Factor or any other - we wouldn't go on those shows. We would try to make it, literally, by grouping people. So we might have this guy who knows musicians. We might have this guy who does the studio work.

...Reaching stardom? The only prevention, I would say, is not knowing how to make it'

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<sup>69</sup> East London has long been well respected epicentre of the UK urban music scene. The 'grime' subgenre, incorporating elements of UK garage, drum n' bass, hip hop, and dancehall emerged from nearby Bow in Tower Hamlets. The movement was led and pioneered by young, black and ethnic minority East Londoners, including Bow residents Wiley, Scratchy, Flow Dan and other members of the Roll Deep collective.

The reason the Aspirationists are quick to make a distinction between hard, manual work and the ‘clean’, post-industrial work is in part due to the historically established ethnic profiles of those associated with ‘manual’ work in East London. Neighbourhood B is an area marked by significant immigration, and the majority of my participants in Neighbourhood B were the children of first and second generation migrants from the Caribbean, West Africa, and South Asia. As such, the grandparents and parents of my participants missed the period of stable, manual employment found over East London dominated by a white working-class, and instead penetrated the local area with their own trades and service industries (see Cohen, 1972:15). Consequently, the constantly churning, multi-ethnic population in Neighbourhood B is disconnected from any cross generational neighbourhood patriotism and employment; and ‘particularly in East London, black youths were largely excluded both from subcultures and from the world of work into which members of subcultures segued’ (Hobbs, 2013:127). The fragmentation of post-industrial life and the successive waves of immigration that have found their place within the multi-ethnic scene of Neighbourhood B then, means that any connection between contemporary youth and their parent culture no longer exists (Hobbs, 2013), and in this post-industrial vacuum, youth are now required to forge new and original identities, and consider post-industrial employment trajectories. Indeed, as Gunter and Watt (2009:526) have noted, white dominated ‘grafting employment networks’ have long been seen by black youth and ethnic as ‘poorly paid ‘dirty work’’ (Gunter and Watt, 2009:523). Consequently, any young black male who chooses a manual, ‘hard’ form of labour as a career deviates from the ‘stereotypical perception of what a young black

male should be like' (Gunter and Watt, 2009:522). These findings extend to ethnographic evidence observed in this thesis.

Like the Conformists of Neighbourhood A, the Aspirationists have absorbed the neoliberal rhetoric of the SBI, and see employment as a voluntary choice; a moral responsibility to *choose* a lifestyle which avoids risk, and conforms to the hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005). As such, the Aspirationists consider unemployment to be caused by personal character 'deficiencies' or *immoral* behaviour. However, by accepting the neoliberal logic of SBI thought, the Aspirationists misrecognize relations of power that legitimise social inequality, and *believe* that they can achieve anything 'by putting their mind to it'. An unintended consequence of SBI programmes underpinned by neoliberal logic however, is that they can perpetuate a dynamic cycle of self-blame among the Aspirationists if they fail to find employment:

Jamie: 'Just now, I'm in a predicament where [SBI] has given me a foundation. I'm learning about myself. I'm learning that I would have to look back on myself and say, 'If I don't achieve this certain thing, then it's my fault'

Also, [SBI] has put me on a stepping stone to, I would say, making it; being a star'

TM: Is there anything that might prevent you from achieving those goals?

Jamie: The prevention is, as I say, the advice that I was told in [SBI]; it will be my fault. That's the only reason; that's the only way that we would not make it'

Absorbing the neoliberal rhetoric of the SBI has significant consequences for the Aspirationists' post-SBI transitions, which will be explored in chapter 8.

## The Road Boys

‘...When you get into a gang, you see a lot of money and drugs and stuff like that, you might see that there’s not much point in getting a job. On top of that, if you’re getting minimum wage – compared to I don’t know how much money from whatever you’re doing – It makes sense. Yeah, there’s just some people that don’t really care anymore, just want to be on the streets’.

Leon, Neighbourhood B, August 2013

The Road Boys represent a collective of young males who are participants of the SBI, or who are peers of these participants and thus situated on the periphery of my fieldwork network in Neighbourhood B. They actively reject post-industrial employment in favour of entrepreneurial based criminal activity, spawned out of the clear cultural impacts of gentrification, post-industrial labour restructuring, and the influx of middle-class residents in Neighbourhood B. Within my fieldwork networks, 9 of my participants self-identified as those conforming to a ‘road’ lifestyle (i.e. affiliated with a local youth street gangs, and eking profit from a range of criminal activities including drug dealing to armed robbery). The majority of these participants were drawn from one particular street gang, known to police and well established within the criminal fraternity of Neighbourhood B<sup>70</sup>.

In this section I intend to specify how the Road Boys ‘make use’ of the SBI, detailing how their road culture subjectivities are in direct opposition to the neoliberal rhetoric underpinning SBI programmes. Here, I intend to describe the strategies, tactics and approaches utilised by the Road Boys to subvert the work of the SBI, and render it unproductive in the lives of young men residing in post-industrial areas characterised by enduring and established criminal entrepreneurial networks which, via a cultural

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<sup>70</sup> The structure, membership, and hierarchy, along with their associated legal and illegal activities, have been described in Chapter 5, and I would encourage readers to return to this chapter, should they need require a recap of this particular youth cultural grouping.

inheritance of 'physical toughness and sharp business acumen', have 'laid the foundations for the teenage drug dealers who represent a sphere of *continuity* in the life of the area' (Hobbs, 2013:124)

Unlike the Aspirationists, the Road Boys have rejected the logic of neoliberal rhetoric found in the SBI programme. However, to dismiss this as a formal dismissal of neoliberal subjectivities is perhaps somewhat premature, and I propose that unlike the Outcasts of Neighbourhood A - an akin cultural grouping who, shaped by the distinct ecological culture of Neighbourhood A, actively reject employment and conforming to neoliberal modes of 'being' - the Road Boys have inverted this neoliberal logic to reaffirm their own 'road' subjectivities. For many young men growing up in the mundane reality of the post-industrial inner-city (Young, 2007; Hobbs, 2013) being intentionally oppositional and disobedient to hegemonic ideals of 'being' is an empowering alternative at micro level to following the rhetoric of self-help along authorised paths. In this sense, the Road Boys have responded to the continuing cultural inheritance of generations of illegal networks and territorial based criminal groups in this area (Hobbs, 2013), and have subverted the logic of neoliberalism, and, with impressive business acumen, commodified their criminal activities and aligned them with the local political and social economy: a post-industrial urban milieu which provides a fertile and lush ecological environment in which various consumer based criminal opportunities and enterprise thrive. Hence, I concur with Hobbs that:

'What is clear is that in post-industrial society, youth collaborations are increasingly market orientated... [And] the drugs trade offers an accessible alternative sphere of enterprise to declining opportunities in traditional male employment'

Hobbs (2013:116)

By aligning themselves with market orientated forms of criminal enterprise, the Road Boys represent a cultural grouping who, fragmented and disconnected from the financial, corporate and service sectors that now populate Neighbourhood B, represent an increasingly fractious working-class group exploring the ‘downward’ option of post-SBI trajectory. The irony here of course, is that via criminal based enterprise cultures, road culture represents a pathway that is financially more attractive and offers a quicker route and acceptance into the consumer market place than the post-industrial labour market that the Aspirationists desire. As such, criminal enterprise culture is a seductive, well paid route for the entrepreneurially informed youth of Neighbourhood B than the low paid, insecure work that is offered by the SBI. I discussed the profits made from cannabis dealing with Leon:

TM: ‘How much money were you making per day’?

Leon: ‘Per day? I reckon I could make probably what a decent person earns at a job in that day, as in what a person earns in a week, I could make in a day, of a decent job’.

By definition of their rejection (and subversion) of traditional, hegemonic notions of neoliberal self-actualization and personal responsibility, the Road Boys are wilfully oppositional to the help members of SBI staff dispense during education sessions. This is not to say they are a wholly uneducated, disruptive, and resistant cultural grouping akin to ‘the lads’ found in *Learning to Labour* (Willis, 1979); rather, the majority of them are educated to at least GCSE level, engaged and somewhat vocal in class and on the football pitch, and have shown a degree of entrepreneurial intellect to re-appropriate the logic of neoliberal entrepreneurship and self-actualisation ‘on road’. Yet, their affiliation with a local street gang and, (often public) displays of association mark them out as self-identified offenders with criminal, often violent, pasts, marked



by personal tragedy and violence. Leon's story is symbolic of the backgrounds of many participants affiliated with the Road Boys, and I will quote it at length to provide readers with a sense of the Road Boys' lifestyle:

Leon: Yeah, my road is called [Neighbourhood B] Road. Yeah, it was very quiet, very calm and easy going area, like everyone was friendly and stuff. Yeah, that was it.

TM: So you're saying it was a nice area?

Leon: Well, yeah I just think the bad side of things was like, because there's such a big Somalian community, which is my nationality, getting into trouble was quite easy because all my friends were Somalians and in the area Somalians were sort of causing the police problems— then we would chill together and we segregated ourselves from other people.

TM: What sort of stuff have you been in trouble for?

Leon: I've done a couple of street robberies, obviously I didn't do them [smiling], but I've been arrested for them, selling drugs, that's probably about it.

TM: What were you dealing?

Leon: Just cannabis, but it's because it was in a drugs hotspot. You know the actual area in [Neighbourhood B], where the station is and that, it's a drugs hotspot and everyone knows.

...It didn't start off that way [the Road Boys], it started off as just friends, but then we just went around beating people up for fun. We'd go to the – do you know the park [local park]? Yeah we used to go there on a Friday night and we'd just kick the shit out of people and rob them. Am I allowed to say this?! This is basically like a confession, so if the police...!

But yeah, it was and it wasn't [a gang]. It didn't start off that way, it was just a group of friends, but most of the acquisitions that came to the gang was like people's older brothers, who they had their own gang, it was their younger brothers and stuff. But they didn't chill with us, they just did their own thing but then we'd bring them in, do you know what I mean? We'd say, 'Yeah, come chill with us,' then they'd end up chilling with us and then we ended up having quite a lot of people. But it was really a school thing; it started off in our school. A group of mates from school to a group of mates from all over the borough. Even then, we started expanding and people from other boroughs were getting involved to chill. It was mostly Somalians then it was like maybe a couple of Eritreans, Ethiopians and then there was like one Turkish boy, one black boy.

... Yeah mostly it starts from areas, I think, it's more of an areas thing. It starts from areas and schools and then it just builds up. Once the gang gets a bit more, what's the word? Respect, then people start to fear them and then people think, 'I want to join this gang,' or, 'I want to fight this gang,' do you get it? So it's either one of two, 'I want to join you,' or, 'I want to fight you because you lot are getting a bit of a reputation now.' That's how it got with us. We actually made – the people we had a real tension with, which was the group that lived basically round the corner from – we all lived in the same area, we had the most tension with them. The worst thing is, we started it with them. They didn't want to fight us, but we knew about them and started on them. Yeah, from the area, it was because they had a name for themselves, but it was more like a music thing. But they all chilled with each other and there was loads of them and they all did music, but for some reason we started on them and then they were like, 'It's not us, we don't fight, we do music, but if you want to make it into a fighting thing between us then we'll do this,' then eventually it became that.

That's how a lot of people do it, that's how I did it. I went out, robbed a couple of people, just came up to them, Boom. But the thing is I was one of those people, I didn't ever rob other kids for some reason. I robbed men and stuff, because I felt like they could easily – like I robbed their laptop, they'd go and buy one tomorrow, whereas kids it was like I felt a bit harsh, because robbing people that are my age and stuff like that, I felt a bit sorry for them. But then there were some guys that were young and they'd have a flashy phone because their mum's bought it for them and you'd want to rob that but then I felt bad sometimes robbing kids. So that's why I only used to rob men and stuff. A lot of the men were paranoid because of the fact that they're thinking, 'I don't know what this kid's got,' you know what I mean? I always used to act like I was holding something. Most of the time I wasn't, until I got to about 15, 16, then I started holding a blade, but before that when I was like 14, starting off, I didn't use to hold a blade, I just used to act like I did and they'd be scared because they'd think I'm going to pull something out, but I'm not. It's all an act, but they don't know'.

The Road Boys affiliation with a youthful street gang in and around Neighbourhood B meant that their engagement with the SBI was limited by the territorial based rivalries that penetrate this particular area of London. Indeed, East London has a long established and deeply engrained history of territorial based conflict (Hobbs, 2013), and the situation of SBI sites across the borough meant that participants risked trespassing on rival terrain where their identities, reputations and affiliations are known and their intrusion on an adjacent postcode will not go unopposed. Kieron and

Andre state the intricacy, density and concentration of youth groups in this particular area, and the complexity this bring for many Road Boys when engaging with and choosing an SBI project site:

Kieron: 'listen, you go to Hackney, Hackney's the worst I reckon. I reckon Hackney is worse than South London. South London there's just as many gangs, but I think Hackney is just a whole lot worse because all the gangs are so close, it's like road here, and 'We hate the road there.' It's like you go in the corner shop and you're bound to see one of them. It's mad, man.'

TM: 'How come you decided to come to this SBI rather than one nearer your local area?'

Andre: 'Because, obviously, in [Neighbourhood Y] - when I was younger, I used to be a little asshole. I thought I was the big I am and everything like that. Neighbourhood Y was one of the places we used to try and run when I was young. So a lot of them would recognise me because I haven't really changed...'

Consequently, many Road Boys either chose to attend SBI sessions in adjacent boroughs where their identities and reputations as Neighbourhood B gang members were not known, and their intrusion would go unchallenged. By definition of their membership, a number of gang members situated on the periphery of my fieldwork network and not part of the SBI suggested that they would not attend *any* London sessions due to the potential for violence and conflict with unknown gang members who display a similar penchant for territorial based violence. Indeed, as previously alluded to, a recent incursion by one SBI group from South East London to North West London – two areas separated by a major river and significant geographical distance, and with no long standing territorial rivalries - for an SBI football match, resulted in the shooting of a participant in the back with a shotgun whilst he passed through defined 'gang' territory on the way back to the tube station<sup>71</sup>. As such, engaging gang

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<sup>71</sup> See Kilburn Times (2012). 'Footballer blasted in the back for straying on to the Stonebridge Estate'.

affiliated members in Neighbourhood B was an issue, a significant barrier being the pan-London location of various sessions which requires members of the Road Boys to transcend boundaries into hostile territory.

Those ‘Road Boys’ that do ‘make use’ of the SBI are disobediently oppositional to advice and guidance afforded by SBI staff. Instead, their primary motivations are to use the SBI as a chance to play football on a regular basis, honing their skills and engaging in an activity that has been a regular and established pastime for many youth growing up in and around Neighbourhood B. Indeed, the area is characterised by a distinct and well established street football scene renowned for its talent, creativity, and harbouring of potential talent, and many of the Road Boys were keen to state their previous experiences with the youth teams of well-known London teams. The Road Boys were respected by the Aspirationists for their football skills, but at an observational level it clear that their interest was due to the football aspect of the programme – particularly as they had no intention of seeking employment due to their engagement in market based criminal activity:

TM: ‘Okay and what was it that made you get involved with SBI?’

Leon: ‘Because my friend did it and he said he just played football every day. Football is something that I enjoy...

...Most people who come here, especially me, my friend who did it before, the thrill of it was the football, coming here and playing football every day. It’s like he’d say to me – I was like, ‘What, no paperwork when you’re doing this course?’ He was like, ‘Yeah, piss easy mate!’

Leon, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

The Road Boys rejection of SBI help and advice, and frequent disappearance and sporadic attendance at sessions, was instilled by a belief that they knew the SBI would *have no impact at all on their lives*. They were aware of the social inequalities and structural deficits they faced when growing up in Neighbourhood B, and in attempts

to ‘sidestep the exclusionary logic of capitalism’ (Hobbs, 2013:125) inverted the logic of neoliberal self-actualization to exploit the number of criminal opportunities thrown up by the fluctuating socio-economic transformations occurring in Neighbourhood B. In this sense, they can be considered street-savvy criminal entrepreneurs, establishing successful criminal enterprises and exploiting and seeking out markets through a range of commodified illegal activities (Hobbs, 2013). The sheer range and diversity of criminal opportunities brought about by gentrification, post-industrialism, and an influx of middle-class, resource-rich residents provide an alternative post-SBI trajectory that is a somewhat more tantalising prospect than the low-paid, insecure work SBIs channel participants into. Hence, prior to starting the SBI course, the Road Boys were already aware that the SBI could not transform their lifestyles; that to remain unemployed and engaged in criminal activity was *their choice*, and not something the SBI could influence:

Kieron: ‘I think the person you’re trying to get to has got to want to change. I don’t think you can just come to gangs and be like, ‘We’ve got this new course going on,’ because I reckon most of them will just come to play football. That’s about it; they wouldn’t take nothing else seriously. Most of them probably wouldn’t even come because they’re thinking, ‘Out of the time I’m being here, I could be going making two or three hundred pounds while I’m here. What’s the point of being here and not making anything when I could make a lot of money elsewhere?’

Yea, it’s got to be a person that wants to change their lives, because if you don’t want to change your life and you want to be in a gang and make all this unlegit money and you’re enjoying making this unlegit money, and especially if you’ve never been caught doing it previously, you’d always want to carry on until the day you do get caught and then you think, ‘That’s my first strike.’ Most people won’t go to jail on their first strike. It depends how serious their case can be, but most people don’t go to jail on their first strike, so that first thing is for them to say, ‘You know what, I’ve had a chance now, now do I really want to carry on, or do I want to try and change, because now that I’ve been caught, now they’re going to be onto me. They’re going to try and get me again so they can put me away.

So you’ve got to think smartly about things, but then I think a lot of people if they haven’t been convicted of nothing, they’ll keep going until they do get convicted and have to spend some time in jail.

They might use SBI. But it all depends if they think it's worthwhile to them. Because most of the gangs, they do love football and everything like that. But they love their money more. That's their main thing, is the money'

Kieron, Neighbourhood B, April 2012

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has captured four typologies of working-class youth who make use of the SBI. In Neighbourhood A, these include the Outcasts and the Conformists, two typologies who contrast and diverge in terms of their post-industrial identities, ambitions, and subsequent post-SBI trajectories. In expanding this chapter, I have also uncovered two typologies located within Neighbourhood B who similarly make use of the SBI; these are the Aspirationists, who seek to assimilate into London's burgeoning post-industrial economy, and the Road Boys, who actively reject the work of the SBI and wish to continue eking profit from a number of illicit activities, rather than 'degrade' themselves in low paid, post-industrial service work.

This chapter has shown how post-industrial youth identities are varied, diverse, and heterogeneous across populations, shaped and fashioned by the distinct and embedded habitus' that operate in Neighbourhood A and Neighbourhood B. Youthful experiences of unemployment are not homogenous across the UK; and nor is there a standard youthful subjectivity *within* these post-industrial neighbourhoods and communities.

The following chapter will expand on the debates put forth in chapter 7, by considering how these four contrasting typologies experience post-industrial life, *post-SBI*.

## **Chapter 8: Post-SBI Transitions: A Comparative Sociological Analysis**

Chapter 8 advances this thesis' empirical chapters by considering how my participants experience 'post-SBI' life; that is, how they internalise the rhetoric of neoliberal self-help espoused by the SBI along authorised paths; and how this neoliberal rhetoric interacts, shapes, and impacts upon everyday social phenomena and individual action at micro level. Hence, in this chapter, I illuminate how neoliberal self-help discourse and intervention structures, in *praxis*, various patterns of post-SBI trajectory.

Structurally, this chapter is separated into three main parts. First, I briefly repeat the setting and political-economic backdrops of neighbourhoods A and B. Thus, I reacquaint readers with the post-industrial labour markets which my participants are 'expected' to assimilate into, upon 'graduating' from the SBI. Second, I identify, at microscopic level, the distinct pathways followed by two, identifiable social groups within the social-cultural context of Neighbourhood A. Similarly, I expand this analysis to include the two diverging pathways of two distinct youth groups in Neighbourhood B. In doing so, I illustrate how the participants within SBIs are composed of heterogeneous cultural groupings, exploring distinct SBI trajectories. I will thus provide readers with an account of how 'learnt' discourse and rhetoric, despite its good intentions, is often irrelevant for many young men whose choices are constrained by broader structural, political-economic forces that contradict the logic and discourse of such language. Thirdly, I consider how these responses apply to the functioning of the SBI, particularly as its main function is to provide a route for young men into employment, education or training, and the implications of these findings. The findings can thus be extended to the work evaluating the impact of SBIs within 'the neoliberal repertoire' (Spaaij, 2009).

### **Post-SBI Trajectories**

Perhaps one of the most striking findings of this research is the documentation of post-SBI trajectories of participants. These pathways were shaped as much by historically embedded cultural values (i.e. in that my participants are 'cultural products' of their environs; 'industrial masculinities' in Neighbourhood A vs. 'road culture' in Neighbourhood B) as they were by the neighbourhood specific economic forces in place in these two distinct urban locales. Hence, this section will expand upon the

findings thus far to explore the diverging courses of participants upon ‘graduating’ from the SBI *logocentrically*, that is, within the social, cultural and economic frameworks of Neighbourhoods A and B.

To begin, I will briefly reiterate the distinct, converging labour markets that exist in these two contrasting neighbourhoods. I begin with Neighbourhood A, to illuminate the economic context in which the *Outcasts* and *Conformists* are expected to assimilate into.

### The Labour Market Situations of Neighbourhood A

Neighbourhood A was once defined by its industrial, ship building heritage. At its peak in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, work in the thriving shipbuilding industry was the staple of male labour, and the docks close to Neighbourhood A employed over 12,000 men, approximately one third of the cities adult population. The large number of local workers employed in the trade was required to deal with the large production outputs taking place during this the Second World War: between 1939 and 1945 shipyards on the Wear launched some 245 merchant ships (Sunderland City Council, 2013).

We have already seen how the industries that had formerly employed the grandfathers and fathers of the young men that now populate Neighbourhood A disappeared before many of them were born. Yet this structural transformation and subsequent experiences of ‘recurrent poverty’ (Shildrick et al., 2012) essentially transformed Neighbourhood A into a de-industrialised zone, ripe for producing lumpenised social populations (Byrne, 2001; Winlow, 2001). The parents and grandparents of Neighbourhood A youth, who had previously worked in the shipyards, glass cutting



factories, and heavy industry warehouses, effectively became a generation of obsolete, low-paid labourers. For example, Steve's grandfather, father, and extended family found employment in the shipyards and mines in the 1970s and 80s before de-industrialisation took hold, forcing his father to work as a low-paid plasterer for the rest of his life:

‘Originally, my granddad on my dad’s side was a miner. He has worked in mines all over the place. He’s been to the shipyards, he’s been in loads. My dad on my mum’s side worked in the shipyards, and thinking back actually my granddad’s brother on my dad’s side worked there as well. My granddad’s brothers worked on the shipyards.

That was the job for somebody. If you were from Sunderland, you worked in the shipyards, you worked in the mines. The same as if you were in Wales, you worked in the mines. You’re not going to work in the mines if you live in Hampstead Heath, because you haven’t got any! It’s just the way it is. Now with the mines closed down, my dad’s a plasterer, earning...next to nothing’

Steve, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

Although Neighbourhood A youth were too young to have access to the past industrial labour market, they have had to adapt to the economic metamorphosis of the 1980s. Here, it is important to consider the inherited identities (Winlow, 2001) of my participants, and the impact this has had on their post-SBI transitions. Many of my participants talked about how they had ‘learnt’ their work ethic from their family members and social networks, and sought to continue this in the post-industrial context. Neighbourhood A is a working-class locale moulded and fashioned by its ‘hard’, manual, workforce; a place where its men were socialized into physically exerting forms of employment, in accordance with their peers and family (Winlow, 2001:36). As such, assimilating into the new post-industrial labour market is not a straightforward process. I often heard participants denounce available employment in

call centres, retail or hospitality as ‘jobs for birds’, ‘sissy stuff’, and claim that post-industrial jobs were partial to ‘benders’:

‘A call centre? No I haven’t. For birds and benders innit! I don’t think I’ve got the voice for it! I heard before actually that they prefer the north east accent but it’s a diluted version. It’s like what Cheryl Cole does! She speaks very plainly but you can hear the accent and that sort of thing. That’s why there are a lot of call centres up here. I think if I had vocal coaching or something then I think I could do it: but I don’t think I could do it, to be honest!’

Steve, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

The North East of England sports one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the UK. It is no surprise then, that the majority of jobs in the city of Sunderland are in ‘feminised’, ‘sissy’ ‘service’ work: 77.8% of the total jobs in the Local Authority in which Neighbourhood A is located are now in retail, IT, call centres, and in the public sector. Manufacturing represents 15.3% of all jobs, whilst construction and manual work, once the domain of the ‘hard’, ‘industrial’ masculinities found here (Winlow, 2001) is only 4.9%.

Gone are the previous industrial forms of manufacturing once associated with the North East: the shipyards, steel plants and coal fields, and in their place are post-industrial forms of low-pay service, financial and corporate sector employment associated with the North East’s emerging post-industrial economy; the call centres, the retail shops, and the ‘white collar’ IT based office jobs. Consequently:

- Neighbourhood A and the surrounding area has a ‘high’ unemployment rate: 9.3% of the Local Authority in which Neighbourhood A is located are unemployed, compared to 7.8% nationally.
- Neighbourhood A has a high proportion of JSA claimants: 6.3% compared to 1.9% nationally (NOMIS, 2011)

The intended function of the SBI is assimilate participants into forms of EET within the post- industrial economic landscape identified above. Indeed, in making up a significant component of the ‘neoliberal repertoire’ (Spaaij, 2009), contemporary SBIs now ‘serve as a form of social control and regulation’ that act as ‘gate-keeping mechanisms that regulate access to desirable positions’ (Spaaij, 2009:15).

Having briefly reiterated the context in which the SBI of Neighbourhood A is situated, I will now expand this chapter to illuminate how, after interacting with the SBI, the two typologies of youth found in Neighbourhood A experience post-SBI transitions. I begin with the Outcasts.

#### Post SBI Trajectories: North East

Mark is waiting for me outside the metro station, where he has just scored an eighth of low grade cannabis resin from a local dealer known as Frimmy who operates from the block of flats that overlooks the main bus terminal adjacent to the station. He shakes my hand enthusiastically, it’s been six months since I last saw him, and he declares loudly how Frimmy had been generous in his ‘measure’ this week. Mark bounces onto the bus that will take us down to ‘the cages’, a renowned local footballing establishment that previously housed an ‘open’ SBI session a year earlier.

After finding a seat at the back of the bus, Mark immediately produces a pack of King Size Rizzla, a lighter and the foil wrapped ‘eighth’ he has just picked up, and begins burning the dark brown clump of resin to produce it into a more softer form. Ignoring my protests to stop, Mark asks me to lean over him to open the window; the distinctive sweet, cloying smell of cheap, low grade resin is quickly filling the back of the bus. I ask why he continues to smoke resin, given its reputation as a low-quality product adulterated with binding and bulking agents: ‘it’s cheap’ replies Mark... ‘No money for anything else...I don’t mind it to be honest’. The rock is now in a more malleable form, and Mark picks at it, crumbling small specs of resin into the paper that lies in his lap.

The bus comes to an abrupt stop, and some of the small specs, along with tobacco sourced from a cigarette, fall from the paper onto the floor. ‘Shit!’ exclaims Mark, ‘help me pick them up’. Mark scrambles under the seat in front, scouring the floor with his bare hands to find any remaining bits. The floor is filthy, wet, and well-trodden by muddied shoes from the wet landscape of Neighbourhood A. Mark’s hands are filthy with dust and mud, and he is angry. ‘Fucking bus driver, should learn to fucking drive’. He gets up, hands and knees dirtied, and continues to roll his joint. Once completed,

he seals the end and holds it up to be admired. 'I'll save that for later, once I've put a few past you in goal today pal!'

We pull up outside the cages, and alight the bus. Mark races across the busy main road, whilst I hesitantly judge the oncoming cars, before darting over to reach the other side. I can already see 7 or 8 young men, hoods up against the light drizzle, milling around outside the cage. Smoke lingers in the air, and the ground is littered with empty water bottles and discarded sports drink cans as we take the path over an overgrown green space that leads up to the cage. Moving closer, I recognise some of the faces buried beneath their hoods, pulled tight over their faces. It's Max, Kevin, Tommy and Flack; all ex-SBI participants who all took part in an academy programme a year earlier. They are as surprised to see me as much as I am them; I have been away in London for the last six months, and contact has been minimal. 'Tom, you back mate!' shouts Kevin enthusiastically, flicking his cigarette against the metal cage that lines the perimeter of the football pitch. Max stops smashing the football hard against the wall of the changing room, and charges over. We shake hands and playfully shove each other, jovially ridiculing one another regarding appearance, football results, and my whereabouts for the last six months.

The session attracts up to 30 participants. This is not a formal SBI 'open' session, however; neither has it anything to do with the SBI. Instead, for the past six months, previously excluded participants - ex-participants unable to find jobs, or those left behind after the SBI closed several months early - are here. It has been organised by themselves; the Outcasts' own football session. It provides them with the fun, excitement, and weekly exhilaration they desire, without the neoliberal rhetoric, motivational speak, or pressure to pursue employment. It is unashamedly macho and misogynistic; a bastion of testosterone fuelled, unregulated bravado and swagger. It is no surprise that there are no women here, and it is purely populated by ex SBI residents who once made up this session; the unemployed, drug addicts from a nearby dry house, older participants shunned by the SBI (one participant is at least 60), and those that generally declined the ideals associated with the SBI. It is pure, unadulterated, football; an organic, grassroots movement constructed by 'failed' participants who have rejected post-industrial work: the 'Outcasts'. They are all here.

Sonny, an ex-participant, enters the fray, shaking my hand and walks with me into the cage. When I ask if he felt disappointment when the previous SBI sessions stopped, he laughs:

'No. It was two opposite things, like you've always got to look for the silver lining you know, whatever is happening, and so my first thought was is there anything positive that can come out of this? And I thought straight away, I'll do it my flippin' self! And I just thought yeah! Then it can be even better, so the actual sessions feel better to tell you the truth. It's just burgeoning, we've got 40 now, 40 people turning up, we're talking about having all the pitches going at one stage because it's just ballooning. We have a tournament every week now, we have 2 pitches going, we're looking at having 3 to 4 pitches now and everyone...and there's no break you just

switch around. The losers move around to play the losers and the winners play the winners – a round robin.

It's brilliant, the players love it more than they liked SBI. There is more freedom now and it's more fun, there's more participation, the players come and they feel like they're contributing to the running of it. There's less hierarchy, that focus isn't there, and, I'd like to reintroduce that maybe in a less controlled fashion though you know? I think people indoctrination and more...more...accessibility to information'

Arriving early gives me a chance to catch up briefly with some of the old participants. Upon graduating from the academy programme last summer, Nick, a lively, jovial character, went on to complete a level 1 BTEC diploma at college. However, since completing this a few months earlier, he has failed to find, or even attempt to look for, any employment, education or training activities: He is wearing old ragged clothes; his boots have holes in and the knees on his tracksuit bottoms are ripped, and he is mocked openly by other participants regarding the odour coming off him. Sam, a small, timid ex participant, hasn't been working since volunteering for the SBI prior to its shut down. Since then, however, he has been 'doing nothing; back on the dole'. Wes, who dropped out of the same academy programme last year due to a 'psychotic episode' has spent the previous year 'caring for wor lass, she needs help' as well as receiving treatment for his 'anger management issues and me psychotic episodes'.

A series of small 5 a side games are played enthusiastically for two hours, with the teams alternating on and off the pitch depending on the score line. Without an 'official' coach or regulator, the games are brutal and full on, with no one holding back. The open nature of the session means anyone can drop in, and two serious, quiet, hardened young men arrive. No one knows who they are, but they mean business. In the last minute of the final game Mark catches one of them, a man of approximately 22, 6'2 and with a tattoo on his neck, with a late, mistimed tackle. The man immediately springs up, grabbing Mark by the throat and shoving him into the side of the cage. The crowd stand outside the cage, watching the spectacle. His friend, an even bigger man, heavy set with a shaved head, charges over, and lands a couple of punches on Mark, who, to his credit, struggles back against the two, and lands a few punches of his own. The fight escalates and Sonny, along with a fellow older, more mature participant, attempt to break them off. Mark struggles away, and walks toward the gate to exit the cage. He walks along the side of the cage to reach it, and we can see his nose is bloodied, and mouth cut. Rather than making his way to the safety of the changing rooms, however, Mark picks up his bag and retrieves a phone. He makes a call, and approximately two minutes later, amid attempts to calm him and the other two men down, who are now eying each other through the meshing of the cage, a man arrives on a moped, 6'5, shaven headed, and at least 16 stone. The two unknown men have now made their way out of the cage, and face Mark and his sidekick. The large man swings his moped helmet, missing the smaller of the two men, whilst Mark and the other man jostle each other, fists raised, like two boxers in the ring. They circle, during a time when, perhaps due to the size of the men, no one seeks to intervene. There are up

to 20 people watching, surrounding the men in a make-shift gladiatorial style arena. Following many missed punches, minor scuffles, and the swinging of a metal bike lock that Mark was lucky to escape, a police car screeches into the car park, and the four men inside the cage scramble away; one group towards the main road and bus stop, the other group in the opposite direction, through thick bush and trees and onto a school field. We remain, and the police ask questions. No one divulges any information, nor admits to knowing the men. After a couple of minutes of deafening silence, the police call for back up and begin searching along the bush for Mark and his accomplice, who's moped still sits next to us. No one has said it's his though.

#### Fieldnotes, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

The above moment represents several ethnographic 'snapshots' during a four hour period travelling to, participating in, and travelling back from one football session run by a number of 'excluded' Outcasts. All of the above occurred in a period approximately 16 months after participants had 'graduated' from an SBI academy programme. As such, this period, made up of several attendances at this informal, organic gathering, represent an opportunity through which to explore the post-SBI transitions of a number of Outcasts<sup>72</sup>.

From October 2012 – December 2012 I attended these sessions weekly. These sessions grew out of the closure of an open SBI session<sup>73</sup> that a number of my participants had attended a year earlier. The closure occurred primarily for the session's inability to progress participants into stable employment, education, or training. The previous session was composed of self-identified 'Outcasts' and was therefore seen by SBI staff as stagnating, attracting only those that wanted to use the session for leisure, or as a means through which to meet JSA criteria. It was formed by a group of Outcasts, who, rejecting the neoliberal rhetoric of success, employment, and the maximisation of

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<sup>72</sup> Regular contact was also maintained between the period of graduation and my first attendance at the informal session, either in person, phone or social media.

<sup>73</sup> See chapter 6

individual assets, set up the session aimed at those who didn't 'fit' with the SBI neoliberal model. The session attracted a 'hardened' client base, and was composed of ex participants who would have previously been 'referred out' of the SBI session due to their perceived 'dangerousness'. The session represents the key tenets of the Outcasts' outlook toward work, and their outright rejection of assimilating into a post-industrial economy:

'This is what it used to be, before all the money came in and they tried to tell everyone what they should be doing... all the guys are still coming to this one you know. And they've moved for me into a better space where they're not looking [for employment]...what I'm looking to avoid is the job mentality...it's away from the indoctrination, school isn't education its indoctrination, and the indoctrination process is constantly keeping plugging into your brain that you need a job. And my kids...I didn't want them to go to school at all because what I didn't want to happen has happened. They come and they say this is the job I'm going to have, and I say it's a job, don't get a job, work for yourself!'

Sonny, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

The participants who attended this session were aware of their position in the social structure, and having rejected the help of the SBI and the chance to assimilate into the post-industrial economy, explored a diverging post-SBI trajectory *downwards*; they remained unemployed, claiming state benefits, and increasingly marginalised and stigmatised by society. For example, on one occasion I arrived early at 'the cages', and went inside the small reception area to wait for participants to arrive. Upon striking up a conversation with the receptionist, I tried to outline, diplomatically, that I was a PhD student 'researching' the post-SBI careers of participants, and explain the social goals of my research. Her reply was somewhat frank, and to the point:

'I don't get why we should help, they're the people who are mugging, using drugs and the like...you should see the state of the place once they finish here...it's not our problem, they are the ones that chose to be like that, I can't see them changing, despite what you do, like, the work you are doing to try and help them, and the help they

get...benefits and that. I think it's a disgrace. We're too soft in this country'

Facility Staff, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

Despite the collective stigmatisation and vilification, however, the Outcasts were happy to continue unemployed, and recognised the structural impediments and inequality that exists in and around Neighbourhood A. They were aware that the SBI's primary function was to move a participant into employment; however, the quality of this employment was dubious, and the quantity of jobs available was restricted by the de-industrialisation of the surrounding area. As such, they showed a great deal of sociological *nous* to realise that a completion of the SBI course would not be enough to alleviate their marginalised social status. Sonny was aware of the structural forces that limited his access to stable, well paid employment, and used a broken leg as a metaphor for how SBIs work at *individual* level, but fail to address underlying structural deficits in the north east.

'What was I looking at? I don't watch television much but um...I caught a programme Sunday, a political programme... [Thinking hard] Andrew Marr! And they were talking about cuts, and it was the northeast, Newcastle and Sunderland that had been cut. And the guy said...he said 'I know you're going to say it's not that but it is always the northeast that gets picked first!' ... it's always the northeast the gets dumped first!

These schemes [the SBI], it's like...if you've got a patient who has got cuts and they've got a big broken leg ...you [the SBI] attend the cuts while you're waiting for the broken leg to get fixed. That [the broken leg. Read: the economy] is the major one but you can't do anything about that at the moment. So as the structure is as it is, then you need more of these schemes, but ideally you'd look to be addressing the broken leg first: the whole approach'

Sonny, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

The Outcasts' apparent happiness, and contentment with remaining unemployed, despite collective vilification and stigmatisation from society as a whole, does come



at price. Aesthetically, they conform to a 'chav' stereotype of tracksuit bottoms, baseball caps, and hooded tops. They are labelled as such by other, employment-seeking members of the SBI, branded as 'charver scum', whose unemployment was a matter of choice, and a result of personality 'deficits'. Will, an SBI participant seeking employment and identified here as a *Conformist*, described the Outcasts as such:

'I think a chav, or as we would say a charver...if you're talking about dress wise you would say the caps and the trackies and the socks, that sort of thing, the Nike Airmax's. If you're talking about personality wise you're saying knocking about on street corners, drinking cider.

I think a chavs more than just a social tag, you can't just say, 'Years 16 to 25, you're a charver. If you're older than that, you're something else.' It's not as easy as that. It's like a way of life. You don't choose to be a chav maybe, you just are one.

Most people that have been through SBI and you're trying to find them jobs, a lot of them don't want to be helped. Even the ones who do want to be helped, can't be helped because they just haven't got the personality for it!

Some people [charvers], you talk to them and you think to yourself, 'You haven't got much of a chance in a job or in life or whatever.' Just because of the type of people they are. It might not always be their fault, they've been brought up that way but some people can help themselves'

Will, Neighbourhood A, March 2012

In conforming to the subcultural style of the chav: i.e. 'clothing (branded or designer 'casual wear' and 'sportswear'), jewellery ('chunky' gold rings and chains), cosmetics ('excessive' make-up, sunbed tans), accessories (mobile phones), drinks ('binge' drinking, especially 'premium lagers' such as Stella Artois), and music (R&B, hip-hop)' (Hayward and Yar, 2006:14), the Outcasts provide an easily identifiable, readymade target for collective social vilification and 'othering' (Nayak, 2006; Martin, 2009). I discovered Neck tattoos were *de rigour* for any self-identifiable outcast. Often the Outcasts clothing was dirtied, unwashed, and foul smelling: Nick was once provided with free clothing from the SBI due to his habit of turning up in malodourous attire, but this habit appeared to continue. Subsequently, the employment

seeking participants of the SBI made a point of differentiating themselves from the slovenliness of the Outcasts, often shouting and ridiculing Nick if he came too close or became too tactile:

‘Nick, he stinks of piss...fuckin’ hell! I hate it when he comes over and puts his hand round me...fuckin’ dirty charver! Have you got any spare [SBI] t-shirts for him? Oi Nick! [Nick looking over] get some new clothes you fucking pikey, you stink of piss!!’

Nathan, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

The Outcasts’ aesthetic, habits, and lifestyles are a constant source of vilification, even if - for them - they are commonsensical customs attuned to their outcast lifestyle. These habits however, result in further marginalisation, post-SBI. Their anti-work ethos, obviously, excludes them from the post-industrial labour market (see also Nayak, 2006). Subsequently, they are also excluded from forms of post-industrial, leisure life (Nayak, 2006); their lack of cultural and financial capital prohibits them from engaging in post-industrial consumer culture; the ‘hub around which the life-world rotates’ (Bauman, 1992:49), compounding their distinct ‘otherness’, and ensuring that they are ‘left behind, disinherited or degraded, shut off or excluded from the social feast to which others have gained entry’ (Bauman, 2002:38). This exclusion confirms their ‘outcast’ lifestyle and ensures that they constitute a contemporary social underclass in Neighbourhood A ‘discarded and left to rot on marginalized housing estates, [through being] unable legitimately to acquire the lifestyle symbolism validated by consumer culture’ (Treadwell et al., 2013:8). Similar to Nayak (2006:820) I found that the Outcasts were ‘priced out of many of the new drinking venues where bright lights, glitz and silver chrome predominated’ and that their ‘particular style of clothing, which included tracksuits, trainers and baseball caps were banned from these establishments’. Their use of illegal substances was also guided by

their self-exclusion from the labour market, and their lack of monetary capital meant that, for some like Mark, they were restricted to purchasing and smoking low-grade, cheap, cannabis resin, often adulterated and bulked with agents to bind and colour the product during production. In contrast, other, employment-seeking participants made a sharp differentiation between ‘hash’, which they saw as symbolic of a ‘chav’ or ‘outcast’ lifestyle due to its cheap, poor quality, and higher-quality ‘skunk’ or weed, considered a more ‘upmarket’, recreational intoxicant which had connotations with the ‘glamour’ and ‘bling’ of hip-hop lifestyles (Winlow, 2001). Hash smoking, then, was a marginal leisure activity, which attracted those associated with the outcast lifestyle who are excluded from the post-industrial labour market and leisure sections; its main function is to generate a ‘high’ for as little money as possible<sup>74</sup>.

Through their self-exclusion from the post-industrial labour market, and collective social exclusion from the night-time economy, the Outcasts have attained a lifestyle that attempts to transcend the monotony and tedium of unemployed life in Neighbourhood A. Mundane activities, such as smoking hash, hanging around on street corners, and, at best, attending the ‘outcast’ football session (Nayak, 2006; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006) offer more affordable, accessible leisure pursuits. Attempts at ‘seizing control’ (Hayward, 2004) in an excluded post-industrial locale however, often results in the creation of more exciting, transgressive acts, and, as we have seen in Chapter 5, petty theft, vandalism, violence and using increasingly harder, cheaper substances are some of the most common forms of visible delinquency amongst the Outcasts in Neighbourhood A. Much of this delinquency is opportunistic, exhibiting a strong sense of spontaneity and having an expressive dimension. Its main

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<sup>74</sup> The same could be said for cheap, strong lager, such as Oranjeboom, a strong percentage, Dutch brew that is synonymous with the unemployed, substance abusers, and marginal members of society.

purpose, then, is not so much planned, or to generate monetary capital; but rather ‘action’: ‘attempts to achieve a semblance of control within ontologically insecure life worlds’ (Hayward, 2004:165):

This exclusion is manifested in the open spaces of Neighbourhood A. Many of the Outcasts would congregate outside a Metro station, hanging around in the forecourt under the cover of a roof, and occasionally kicking a football against the wall of an adjacent newsagents. A nearby bookmakers provided a warm, welcoming environment for some participants, an accommodating environment where they could spend their JSA without being collectively ridiculed, pillared or excluded for their lifestyles. I once spent two hours in a bookmakers with Mark whilst he squandered £90 – a relatively large amount for an unemployed young person to be wasted in the matter of hours – on a roulette machine, continually gambling his winnings before they were exhausted and he built up a deficit. Nevertheless, the environment provided an inclusive arena in which the transgressive excitement of the bookmakers functions as a means of pushing one to the ‘edge’ (Lyng, 2005), a ‘performance zone...in which displays of risk, excitement, and masculinity abound...that offer both rich excitement and an illicit means of traversing, even momentarily escaping, the socially degraded neighbourhood’ (Ferrell et al., 2008:74)

‘I love it down here me...spend hours, get me cup of tea, get me sausage roll from Greggs. Spot on. I’ll spend hours on the roulette, sometimes just sitting, watching which one is paying out...it’s a skill. Do the ACCA at the weekends for the football; I get a proper buzz just waiting for the results to come in! It’s just somewhere nice to go you know, can’t be bothered with no fancy bars or nothing. Just happy to come down here’.

Mark, Neighbourhood A, January 2012

Similarly, violence provided a pathway through which the Outcasts explored, and the small fieldwork exert provided at the onset of this chapter was one example of the instrumentality of violence to transcend boredom and gain status, respect, and esteem amongst a collective group devoid of, and excluded from, the traditional consumption and consumerism practices that are ‘key contexts for the constructions of youth identities in de-industrialized Britain’ (Winlow and Hall, 2009:91). Tristan, for example, had ‘three other sentences and that’s all been for fighting’ and regularly turned up on Monday mornings with swollen knuckles and blackened eyes. For him, fighting and violence was a normalised activity, a means of asserting his masculinity and augmenting the status of himself, his peer-group, and fellow family members in de-industrialised Neighbourhood A:

‘Most of my life I’ve been like creating trouble kind of thing. Well, not creating trouble but in and out of trouble, fighting most of all, you know what I mean? A lot of my mates have all gone to prison, that’s how we were brought up; we were brought up... My old feller, if I went out and I got beat, get back out there and fight again and don’t come back until you do beat him. I might have to fight him ten times. A lot of the lads are hard lads, that’s the way we were brought up, you know what I mean. We weren’t brought, we were dragged up, and you know what I mean. Just couldn’t go home unless you won a fight’

Tristan, Neighbourhood A, December 2011

Well-meaning staff attempted to instil the neoliberal rhetoric of self-treatment and personal responsibility, relying on the individual willpower and self-motivation of participants. SBI staff educated and implanted the Neighbourhood A Outcasts with help and information, yet the Outcasts had the judgement to realise that they could do little with that knowledge and information. Most of the participants I came into contact with in Neighbourhood A were Outcasts, and most had completed the course merely to, in the words of one participant ‘get me out of bed in the morning, and come along and play footie for two hours a day’.

Following a brief period of positivity in the immediate aftermath of graduation, many of the Outcasts returned to their previous lifestyles, as has been described here. The absence of post-SBI services and the neoliberal underpinnings of the SBI meant that, with their new found acquired skills, participants were expected to go out and find employment. Fortunately, for the Outcasts, their ability to spot the inequality they faced meant that they were content in prolonging their outsider subjectivities. Once again idle, with little structure to the day, JSA pay checks burned a hole in Nick's pocket, and he went on a three day drink and hash binge and was soon back to being a full time outsider. Six months after graduation I ran into Dan on a bus in the town centre, and his prognosis was not much better: he had spent the previous months helping his Dad out 'on the fiddle', but was back 'doing nothin', just keepin' me head down, on the drink, on the dole'.

Two months after he had graduated I visited Mark's rented hostel accommodation. He resided in a bedroom with a sink in a high rise hostel close to the river. Mark had no family or social contacts in the immediate vicinity of Neighbourhood A. His Mum 'died when he was young', and he 'doesn't know where his dad is – I don't really have any family, no brothers or sisters'. Alone in the North East of England, isolated and lacking any firm or 'real' social contacts, the only other young men he comes in to contact with are those who live in his hostel: 'junkies, meth heads, not nice people' – Mark became aware of his position in the social structure, and believed he couldn't be helped. Yet he showed apparent contentment in continuing along this post-SBI path, and came to accept this as his established being, post-SBI. This is the reality of the outsider's existence.

Now that have detailed the Outcasts' post-SBI trajectory, I will consider the second cultural grouping – the Conformists – and their respective SBI pathway.

### The Neoliberal Conformists

Graduation day finally arrives after 8 weeks of classroom activities, CV writing, job applying, and of course, football. The venue is an old sports hall, with chairs placed either side of an aisle for up to 30 visitors to sit. I take a seat amongst the participants; 16 of them who have completed the course, out of a starting total of 20. The participants are required to deliver a short presentation detailing their experiences of the project and their 'next steps'. Most are extremely nervous, and we have spent the last week practicing and perfecting the content, timing, and delivery of the speech. Ryan, an SBI participant who I sit beside, appears to be the most nervous. He turns to me and tells me he can't read his own writing; it is an illegible scrawl, and I quickly respond to his request to re-write it for him, in a slightly more eligible form.

The hall quickly fills up with spectators; parents, siblings, girlfriends, key workers from various social interventions, and other members of SBI staff. They are welcomed by Brian, the SBI coach, who has put together a video which is screened to the room, containing images and clips of participants, amusing moments, and short interview clips with participants explaining what they enjoyed about the course. After this, it is time for the participants, and they are called up, one by one, to deliver their speech. Wearing suits and ties, many of the graduates appeared nervous at first, but eased into the presentation after the first thirty seconds, reliving humorous moments, anecdotes, and their next steps, 'post-SBI'. Ryan thanked the SBI staff for helping him, and to the audiences delight, delivered a well presented, coherent speech. At the end of his speech, he gleamed, smiling; 'I did it!'

The group are aspirational in their next steps. Mitchell is interested in going to uni, 'to become a therapist', similarly Catherine hopes to 'to go to uni and become a midwife'. 5 out of the 10 graduates are going to a local Higher Education College to complete BTEC and HND programmes. No doubt the course has improved their confidence, and all participants talk about how it has improved their employability, personal skills and confidence. At the end of the talks, Brian talks about 'how far the participants have come', and how they are going on to 'college, volunteering and work'. Most of the Conformists believed that the SBI could change their lives, and they left the room filled with hope about their education and employment prospects.

Fieldnotes, Neighbourhood A, July 2011

Almost all Conformists had found employment, education or training programmes in the immediate weeks following their completion of the course. Ryan benefited from

the timing of the course, which coincided with the start of the new academic year, and enrolled himself on a BTEC Sports Science course at a local Higher Education college<sup>75</sup>. He had visions of becoming ‘a top sports coach, like, for one of the big footie teams’, and looked forward to full time education.

Practically, the appeal of higher education courses offering Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and BTECs in ‘post-industrial’, knowledge based disciplines such as Sport Science, Business, and Health and Beauty, was their capability of offering relevant technical and communication skills required to assimilate into the post-industrial labour market. In this sense, colleges are a natural extension for the SBI, assisting in the evolution of participants into neoliberal subjects with ‘the entrepreneurial skills to actualize himself in a competitive society’ (Rose, 2000:322). Hence, post-SBI higher education was seen by many young Conformists as a necessity for post-industrial living.

Other than education, many Conformists sought employment in the surrounding post-industrial environment. The Conformists believed such employment, in contrast to the masculine, ‘hard’ labour the area has long been associated with, afforded a sense of prestige and status in an adapting post-industrial labour market defined by knowledge based and service sector employment. For the Conformists, post-industrial employment provided them with a disposable income to sustain post-industrial identities increasingly defined by consumption practices (Bennett, 1999). Their work and identities are thus intrinsically linked; and post-industrial employment is seen as reinforcing their post-industrial lifestyles and identities, and they align their post-

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<sup>75</sup> Local colleges were provided with a steady flow of post-SBI participants. Due to the age of range of participants, college was seen as a natural progression for many hoping to find eventual, stable employment. Hence, many of the Conformists ‘ended up’ at local colleges by definition of their age.



industrial ‘self’ with the hegemonic, post-industrial environment via their shirts and ties and ‘trendy’ clothing, styled hair, and smart, polished shoes. Inevitably, the aesthetic features and the employment choices of the Conformists conflict with the ‘masculine’, ‘industrial’ hegemonic cultural standards and values within Neighbourhood A. Nevertheless, the Conformists see post-industrial employment as an inevitable changing feature within Neighbourhood A, and want to be part of it.

The Conformists described here are the ideal candidates for SBI intervention. In my ethnography I caught a practical glimpse of how they believed that they had ‘done something productive’ by simply participating in the SBI. I was struck by how many of the participants graduation speeches were peppered with the neoliberal rhetoric of individualisation and self-responsibilisation, how their employment ‘was down to them’. They absorbed the moralising techniques of ethical reconstruction, instilled to ‘govern the existence and experience of contemporary human beings, and to act upon human conduct to direct it to certain ends’ (Rose, 2000:322).

However, the long term outcomes of the SBI demonstrate how the neoliberal rhetoric of SBIs can often backfire. The Conformists took responsibility for their unemployment, and as such, misrecognised the common structural indicators for unemployment, exclusion, and poverty. SBIs rely on individual willpower, and by instilling the neoliberal rhetoric of the individual’s moral responsibility to find employment and avoid risk - that they can ‘achieve anything they want to’ – risk imparting a false sense of security amongst participants. Many Conformists had dreams of going on to University, or of becoming successful business entrepreneurs. Will hoped to become ‘a basketball coach in the NBA’, and took on board the helpful support and guidance of well-intentioned SBI staff.

Yet what the SBI and its participants did not realise is that within Neighbourhood A, this guidance and support means little; SBI programmes provided the Conformists with enough information – in line with neoliberal self-help rhetoric – to realise that employment was a moral choice and that self-entrepreneurship should be encouraged, but there was relatively they could do to realise these dreams because quite bluntly, they lived in an area with some of the highest youth unemployment rates in the country, and had relatively little qualifications or experience. The Conformists felt like they had done something productive merely by attending the course. SBI programmes, consequently, can engender a false sense of confidence amongst participants.

For example, I do not know of one Conformist who, over the three years of my fieldwork in the North East, went on to complete - let alone register - for a University course post-SBI. The majority of them went on to complete level one BTEC qualifications at local colleges, only to drop out later. Neither did any of the Conformists obtain any stable, full time employment, despite their commitment to finding employment throughout the course.

Sonny: 'What's his name? I can't remember the guy's name - Baz's mate um...tall slim fellow Dean...not Dean...there is 3 of them, Baz, Dean, and the other...I can't remember his name'.

Me: 'Stuey'?

Sonny: 'Stuey! Yeah. Now Stuey he's a lazy git he just is, he's got great skills but he's...he needs pushing and he got pushed into going to college: and he just dropped out'!

Further Conformists 'let down' staff post-SBI, despite the apparent commitment to finding employment. At times staff were exasperated by the long term outcomes of the Conformists, and saw their failure to hold down long term employment a result of laziness and a lack of personal regulation:

‘Out of the 9 that graduated how many do you think actually progressed into EET? 2! Guess who, you won’t believe it. Ryan, remember Ryan, black hat, quite big, tattoo on his neck. He went on a horticulture course! Stav went into packing SIM cards in a factory. Catherine got pregnant within a day of graduating. Will, he went into working in a call centre, although he’s left now. And the rest, they’ve been doing nothing. I’ve tried speaking with them but it’s just gone on too long now. Remember Kris? Massive let down. Terry rang me saying they had jobs in Costco. So I went and met the boss there and said I’ve got three guys who will be real quality, won’t let down. Kris got given the job. On the Monday he turned up. Tuesday he was late. Wednesday he was late. Thursday he didn’t show up. And on Friday he was gone. I gave him a ring and just set look, I’ve given you this opportunity, and you’ve really let me down. Really let me down. I was so pissed off that I got him this opportunity and he’s gone and made me look stupid’.

‘The other guys, Tommy was a let-down, he’s not doing anything. Kevin. I really liked Kevin, I had a lot of contact with him, spoke to him a lot. But then he was just honest with me once, told me he wasn’t looking for any jobs. Then all of a sudden he was just gone, wasn’t answering any calls or anything. I spoke to one of his mates and he said that he just wasn’t into it anymore. It’s like the more I tried to get in touch with them, the more I pushed them away.’

Brian, SBI Coach, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

Employment, education, and training represented a more complicated challenge than the Conformists anticipated. The one-size-fits all approach to SBIs fails to recognise the complex structural factors that impinge on young men attempting to assimilate into the surrounding post-industrial labour force. The Conformists, despite their willingness and commitment to work, did not recognise the social inequalities that engulfed them, and faced the double bind of living in an area with some of the highest unemployment rates and lowest jobs to person ration in the country, and could not compete with the younger, and more educated workforce for the dwindling number of post-industrial jobs available to young men in their neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the Conformists were ashamed of their unemployment and ‘welfare’ identity, and after failing to find the employment they aspired to, scurried for college places and low-pay employment, encouraged by well-intentioned SBI staff who advocated that employment was the way to ‘actualize himself in a competitive society’ (Rose,

2000:322). The Conformists expressed appreciation for any form of post-industrial employment, as long as it was not personally humiliating or exploitive.

It is impossible to know with any real certainty the extent to which the SBI has ‘changed’ the conformer’s lives. *Ethnographically*, there is no doubt that ‘soft’ skills such as confidence, motivation, and subsequent employability skills were improved. Yet ‘hard’ outcomes, and the drive to achieve them, can have unintended negative consequences, as the last year of my fieldwork revealed.

Kris’s success in finding employment ultimately proved ineffective. After spending the previous eight weeks looking for employment, which included handing out CVs in shops and cafes in Newcastle and Sunderland city centres for two consecutive days, he finally found employment in a Costco, a membership only wholesale retailer. After three days of turning up late, he finally quit at the end of his first week.

Joe, who still lived permanently at home with his mum and brother, began an apprenticeship with the SBI. He assisted with the running of SBI open football sessions, and completed a number of FA accredited coaching courses. Despite showing good promise as a coach and helpfully aiding the running of sessions, the closure of the session on the back of the drastic economic situation meant he was unable to continue his role as volunteer coach:

‘I remember we turned up for a session on a Wednesday and no one was here. All I got was a text from Andy saying it’s stopped because of funding. Since then I’m back on JSA, just been seeing my lass up in Dundee’.

Joe, Neighbourhood A, October 2011

Tommy, like Joe, graduated from the programme and found an apprenticeship with the SBI, assisting with the academy course and open football sessions. However, his

attendance slowly dwindled, and I last bumped into him in Durham City Centre, a year after leaving, selling plastic wristbands for a popular British Army campaign and working ‘now and then on the doors in Yates’.

Flack, Ryan, Kevin and Catherine enrolled on BTEC and HND courses at a nearby higher education college. Ryan dropped out after three weeks, because he ‘realised I didn’t actually want to learn anymore’, and Catherine fell pregnant weeks after graduating, preventing her from enrolling on the course. Flack and Kevin, however, successfully completed a level one course, and had the potential to continue for a further year to achieve a full BTEC Qualification. However, a year later, I arranged to meet with them in Neighbourhood A to check on their progress. Their outcomes were not much better. Flack had dropped out of the course after only a couple of weeks, and Kevin, after completing the course, was back to being unemployed again:

‘I wanted to do the level 2 but no one got back to me. So I’m back on the dole. Been looking for jobs, mainly retail, like, but canny find any, so I stopped looking. Hate doing it, can’t be bothered’.

Kevin, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

SBI staff spent hours looking for employment opportunities, telephoning agencies and often asking in local retail shops for any prospective openings. The drive to achieve ‘outputs’ however, means that once a participant is enrolled on a college course, or has found a form of employment, they are seen as having ‘achieved’ a positive outcome, and left to navigate the post-industrial labour market by themselves. SBIs rely on individual willpower and individuals being ‘self- responsabilised’ to achieve long term, sustainable outcomes. Somewhat predictably however, many young men residing in post-industrial locales frequently ‘churn’ between low-paid employment, welfare, and unemployment before finally finding stable employment (MacDonald,

2011; Shildrick et al., 2013). Without any prolonged, continued support it is difficult for young men to *re-find* employment once the inevitable churn begins. Hence, as is the case with a number of my participants, they often fall back into their familiar ways of unemployment, seeking out old friends and acquaintances, and engaging in previous forms of behaviour in Neighbourhood A, a hotbed of drugs, alcohol, and crime.

Within this environment, the SBI instils the rhetoric of neoliberal self-help in participants, holding them accountable for their unemployment and implanting a neoliberal logic that ‘you can achieve anything you want’. This sets Conformists up for a predictable failure, as the examples above demonstrate. Many Conformists had dreams of entrepreneurship, professional sports coaching, and moving on to University. During my three years of fieldwork, I did not meet one participant who enrolled on a university course, let alone progress into professional sports coaching, or become entrepreneurs. In this sense, SBIs can instil a false sense of capability amongst the Conformists, and obscure deep rooted structural and economic inequalities that exist in and around Neighbourhood A by unwittingly reassigning blame to participants for their individual ‘failures’. Despite their good intentions, SBIs can mystify power vectors that assign inequality amongst participants: it is only once they enter the post-industrial labour market that they truly encounter and come to realise them, and as a consequence of taking on board neoliberal rhetoric, blame themselves for their reversion back to unemployment and welfare support. Max took full responsibility for his failure to find a successful job post-SBI:

‘I guess I just don’t have the qualifications for it, or the skills, knowledge, all that. It’s my fault for being a bum when I first finished school. I don’t know what I’m going to do. It’s depressing Tom, it really is’

Follow up and aftercare support that addresses structural problems are the biggest drawback of SBI services. Because of the inevitability of churning, most participants are left to return to finding a job or supportive network, *on their own*, and having been instilled with the logic of neoliberal self-help, unwittingly reassign blame on themselves for their individual ‘failure’.

### Summary

The two typologies of SBI youth introduced in chapter 7 have been revisited here, in an effort to investigate their unique post-SBI trajectories. There are the Outcasts, a typology that has an outright rejection of work and neoliberal rhetoric espoused by the SBI. Post-SBI, they remained vilified and stigmatised within Neighbourhood A, yet were happy to remain in an unemployed state despite their own exclusion. In contrast, the Conformists wished to assimilate into the post-industrial economy of Neighbourhood A. However, misrecognising the structural impediments they faced meant that the neoliberal rhetoric they took on in the context of the SBI had little impact in post-industrial Neighbourhood A: Well intentioned SBI staff ‘trained’ their participants in employability skills in line with post-industrial ideals of employment. Yet in an area of structural unemployment, there was nothing that the Conformists could do with this knowledge. Indeed, by consuming the logic of neoliberalism, the Conformists, unlike the Outcasts, misrecognised the social inequalities they are contained within, believing ‘they could achieve anything they wanted to’. Unsuspectingly, in reassigning blame on individuals for their joblessness, the Conformists were placed in a precarious position if their post-SBI plans failed to

materialise, setting them up for an unproductive process of individual culpability for their unemployment.

Having detailed the post-SBI trajectories of Neighbourhood A youth, I will expand this section by following a similar line of inquiry for the two youthful typologies found in Neighbourhood B.

### Neighbourhood B

We know that in Neighbourhood B, the social, economic, and industrial trajectory is somewhat different to the one experienced by participants in Neighbourhood A. Its diffused industrial base, composed of a patchwork of manual labour industries, provided the indigenous white working-class with stable employment opportunities throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the same family were recruited into existing family trades or industries, and even if youth did not follow their parents into similar forms of employment (and this was often the case, according to Young and Wilmott's (1957:92) analysis), the economic variety of East London meant they could be absorbed into one of the many other craft or manual trades in the area.

In the 1950s, the social and economic structure of this proud proletariat heartland formed around 'single-class manual communality' (Hobbs, 2013:116) began to dismantle. The first stages of the restructuring of the social and economic backdrops of the East End began eroding as the post-War British economy attempted to revitalize itself with increased production outputs, using technologically advanced manufacturing techniques. The small scale craft and furniture industries, located in and around Neighbourhood B, were hit hardest as automated, specialised production systems replaced the traditional division of labour (see Cohen, 1972:18). Key



industries in the furniture and tailoring industries were brought out and replaced by large scale operations (Hobbs, 1988).

Occurring alongside this de-industrialisation was a basic process of change occurring amongst the demographic structure and pattern of social integration in the east end, which has not affected Neighbourhood A to the same extent. The 1950s witnessed a development of new towns and estates located close to the boundaries of the M25 – Dagenham, Romford in the east, Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage to the north - and East London, including Neighbourhood B, underwent a rapid depopulation as families were rehoused or gravitated outwards and ‘upwards’ to these utopian-esque townships. As this change occurred, the void created by the out-migrating populace was quickly *re-populated* by a large influx of West-Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrants (Dench et al., 2007). The great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents of many of my participants settled in and around Neighbourhood B during the first wave of immigration during the 1950s and 60s, inhabiting the area and penetrating the economy with unique trades and industries (Cohen, 1972).

The churning, mutating population of Neighbourhood B, and the erosion of its once stable industrial base has left behind a hybrid mix of multi-ethnic, working-class residents who have made the area their own over the last twenty years. This population, however, have been de-stabilised by an educated white middle class; ‘bourgeois colonialists’ (Hobbs, 2006:138) who have colonised the area in recent years, drawn by the edgy urban character of Neighbourhood B. Neighbourhood B, despite its gritty urban past, is now an urban zone of stratospheric house prices, where gleaming new-builds sit side-by-side with grimy 1960s social housing estates. The economic base is diffuse, and does not resemble the inward looking east end of the

immediate post-War period. Instead, it has converged with the capital as a whole toward post-industrial service and financial sector work, reliant on a commuting workforce (Dench et al., 2007).

A significant feature of this changing economy is that it is less entrenched within local community, and has a different relationship with the family. Young and Wilmott (1957) noted close ties between kinship networks and economic activity; family based units looked after their own. The first wave of immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s of course, had no ties through which to connect to the economic base, and the first, second and third generation family members (which, includes my participants), have grown up in an environment with no familial connections to the economic life of the area, and have had to adapt to a transformative post-industrial economy, often in direct competition and conflict with indigenous white workers (Dench et al., 2007). Undoubtedly, for the new generation of young men in Neighbourhood B, there are a number of new economic possibilities; many of the young men I came into contact with were ambitious and aspirational, seeking employment in the high tech, knowledge based industries now located in Neighbourhood B, or the financial, business orientated businesses found in the global city.

However, as Dench et al., (2007:134) suggest, the ability of resource poor, socially marginalised second, third and fourth generation ethnic minority youth to progress into post-industrial city occupations ‘looks increasingly like a one-off event, caused by a structural expansion of knowledge-based occupations rather than any long term increase in social mobility’. Indeed, the marked inequality that exists in and around Neighbourhood B, means that many of the young, multi-ethnic working-class population now compete with an educated, white middle class rich in social and

monetary capital, rivalling them for the same graduate level post-industrial jobs despite the skewed structural disadvantage, exclusion, and marginalisation they have faced for most of their lives. The tragedy is, that in the post-industrial economic climate, the distinct inequality that exists in Neighbourhood B means that a large majority of young men will live approximately a mile away from the richest part of the country, yet have the potential to be unemployed or drawn into the lucrative, consumer based criminal cultures that exist here. As such, in line with the previous subcultural work of Cohen (1972), my empirical findings found that for many of the young men in and around Neighbourhood B there are two diverging career trajectories that could be taken: ‘upwards’ into the post-industrial workforce of London, or ‘downwards’ toward unemployment and the exploitation of ample criminal opportunities produced by the distinct cultural changes occurring in Neighbourhood B.

Within this context, two identifiable groups can be found. Reproduced by this distinct social and economic backdrop, they have ‘made use’ of the SBI, and are now making attempts to navigate the complex, ever changing terrain of Neighbourhood B. Within my sample, the Aspirationists are attempting to assimilate into this ever-changing post-industrial locale, to find employment in the various business, media, and knowledge based employment opportunities now located here. In contrast, a group affiliated to a local youth gang have taken advantage of the clear cultural impacts of the changes in social and economic conditions of Neighbourhood B, and with great entrepreneurial nous, feed off the ample consumer based criminal opportunities that now exist here. I refer to this group as the Road Boys; a collective of young males who are affiliated with a well-established and respected youth street gang in Neighbourhood B. They are unemployed by choice, and have decided to survive from

the entrepreneurial criminal activities that have been thrown up in this ever mutating urban locale.

I will now detail these two youth groups and their post-SBI trajectories, beginning with the Aspirationists.

### The Aspirationists

Given the well-defined ethnic markers of employment, and the well-established entrepreneurial and aspirational culture that pervades this area of East London, the Aspirationists wish to gain a foothold in the various financial, IT, and creative industries that now populate the streets in and around Neighbourhood B. However, the transformation of East London into a creative hub of technological industries has also attracted an influx of well-educated, middle class residents who, attracted by the once cheap housing prices, the areas proximity to the city and key technological industries, and the perception of the area as an ‘up and coming’, edgy inner city proletariat heartland, have now made the area their own. The young men of Neighbourhood B then, are competing for post-industrial employment with a well-educated and experienced workforce.

In this sense, post-SBI the Aspirationists are set up for failure. They fail to consider that they now compete with a workforce of University educated, middle-class, white employees, with significant experience and skilled in the creative and high-tech industries that now populate Neighbourhood B. The Aspirationists were caught in a position where they were too young to have access to the industrial work that ceased in the area during their childhood years, and as East London’s financial and web based industries reached full swing in the late 2000’s, many of the Aspirationists were already in their late teens/early twenties; an age where they were too late to adapt to

this economic metamorphosis upon the completion of formal education. Now, unemployed, most of the Aspirationists had minimal qualifications, and a lack of experience in technological, financial, or creative industries. Consequently, as Aspirationists pursued employment in these industries, they were already marginalised from obtaining the high paid, respected employment opportunities they sought. Matthew was one aspirationist, who despite being the only participant I came across during three years of fieldwork who had a degree, struggled to find employment in the local creative media sector:

Matthew: 'I went to Brunel University and I graduated last July. I have a degree in Multimedia Design and Technology. I was working in February, probably till June... I was working for a communications company... multimedia and web design.

I kind of got made redundant. Basically there wasn't enough work and the actual job spec that they brought me in for, like the job was for a system for clients, but it didn't really take off. So they just thought there's no point in keeping me, it's just not taking off'

TM: 'How are you finding being unemployed again?'

'Matthew: 'Quite hard. I've had a few interviews and I just think because I'm an actual graduate – I've applied for actual quite junior to senior roles, so I just think maybe it's because other applicants have had more experience, more years' experience, and maybe generally their portfolios. So I have just been trying to gradually build up by portfolio and trying to do extra work, like volunteer work as well, to build it up. I want a proper job that I enjoy...I've always felt that way, to get a proper job in what I've done, what I enjoy, which is graphic design, I've always felt like that'

Many of the Aspirationists graduated from the SBI course with hope of finding employment in the array of high tech knowledge based employment opportunities located nearby. Throughout their SBI experience, they were prepared with mock interviews, new CVs, and voluntary apprenticeships at large banking and retail firms located close by to Neighbourhood B. Although these practices can instil and develop 'soft' skills such as confidence, interview experience and post-industrial labour

familiarity, they can also inadvertently impart a feeling that participants had done something productive by merely attending, even though they could do little with the detailed information about finding employment in the post-industrial, high-tech employment.

Most of the Aspirationists were ashamed of their unemployment, and were quick to blame themselves for failing to secure stable employment in the local economy. This is one example of how SBI programmes can unwittingly reassign blame on individuals for their failure to find employment in local labour markets. Six months after his graduation, I met with Matthew to discuss his current situation. He had been searching for jobs in the financial sector after receiving advice and guidance from the SBI and an external organisation to pursue this line of employment:

‘I’d say it’s been difficult to find what I wanted to do... Maybe at first it seemed different because I worked full time as well for a bit. But after you just don’t want to sit down and sit around. It was quite miserable and quite depressing because I went for a couple of interviews and it was rejection every time. Then you think in your head that I’m not going to get anything, there’s nothing for me. It demotivates you further down. When there’s a job that you actually like and then you go for it, you prepare for it really well and then you get rejected. That’s happened to me’.

Matthew, Neighbourhood B, August, 2012

By any measure, the Aspirationists could not compete with the more qualified, skilled, and educated work force who had adapted quicker to this economic metamorphosis. Nevertheless, they were ashamed of their unemployment and subordinate worker identity, and in the immediate months following their ‘graduation’, they therefore scrambled for either low public service work, or apprenticeship schemes and low paid assistant roles in the few manual labour jobs available to the young men of Neighbourhood B. Mathew had aspirations of becoming a graphic designer, but found himself working in low pay catering for a hospitality company. Similarly, Dylan’s

ambition of finding ‘an assistant manager job or car sales executive jobs’ was but a brief, transitory ambition, and his subsequent realisation that he lacked the skills and qualifications led him to informal employment working as an apprentice at an industrial plumbing company. Other Aspirationists were also forced to take apprenticeships in skilled, manual work upon finding they lacked the specialised skills in the creative, knowledge based economy: After Niall was unsuccessful in his application for an apprenticeship for a large, international bank, he signed up to start an apprenticeship in carpentry and construction with a furniture and building company.

In this sense, a reversal of ethnic employment roles are taking place in Neighbourhood B: despite their initial reluctance to engage in low-paid service sector, or in the white dominated ‘dirty’ manual labour (Gunter and Watt, 2009), the multi-ethnic Aspirationists were forced to fight amongst themselves for the low pay retail, catering and manual employment opportunities that exist alongside the higher paid knowledge economy. Ethnographically I observed a shift and reversal of employment demographics; whereas the employment base in the immediate post-war period in Neighbourhood B was marked by small, family based production units utilising skilled and manual techniques and employing the families of established white, working-class residents (Gunter and Watt, 2009; Hobbs, 2013), the gradual decline in the timber and furniture industries in the area, amounting to a loss of 26,000 jobs (Hall, 1962:72 cited in Hobbs, 2013), resulted in the emptying out of large sections of East London as the traditional white working-class responded to the decline in manual labour and gravitated to towns and areas situated around the M25 boundary. The subsequent re-population of many of these depopulated East End areas with West Indian, Turkish and South Asian migrants brought with them their own trades and services. Manual,

skilled labour was seen as the preserve of the once indigenous white working-class, and hence its rejection by black and ethnic minority youth populations (Gunter and Watt, 2009). However, in contemporary post-industrial Neighbourhood B, there is a polarization and reversal of roles; the area is now becoming *repopulated* by a socially mobile, educated, white middle class who have adapted to the economic changes occurring here, whilst the working-class ethnic minority population, who, beset by economic and social marginalisation, have failed to keep up with the drastic post-industrial changes recently occurring on the doorstep, are being forced to take on the low-pay, working-class jobs that, in Cohen's era, were filled by the white, working-class population: i.e. 'the routine, dead end, low paid and unskilled jobs associated with the labour intensive sectors, especially the service industries' (Cohen, 1972:18). A quote from Cohen's influential article from 1972 can be reapplied today, to the case of ethnic minority youth living in socially marginalized zones of exclusion, who competing for employment with a competitive, educated white middle class are now forced 'downwards' into low pay employment:

'As might be expected, it was the young people, just out of school, who got the worst of the deal...lacking the qualifications for the new industries, they were relegated to jobs as van boys, office boys, packers, warehousemen, etc., and long spells out of employment' (Cohen, 1972:18)

Because many of the young black ethnic minority men in my sample still perceive manual labour to be low paid 'dirty work' (Gunter and Watt, 2009:523) and tied to historically embedded notions of white, working-class 'grafting', employment in these industries was short lived. Niall, for example, quit his apprenticeship in carpentry and construction because, according to one SBI official 'it wasn't what he thought it was, so he left'. Similarly, Dylan left his role at an industrial plumbing industry, because 'he didn't get on with guy [who was training him]'. After speaking with Dylan two



weeks later, his aspirational outlook was behind his decision to quit: 'I've never worked in a low class job. I've always had quite a decent job so I don't think that holds me back... I know I can get a job easy, but I want to get the right job'

The neoliberal logic behind SBI programmes can unwittingly lead to the perception that, with hard work and effort, one can find successful, stable employment. Ultimately, as this section has proved, this often sets participants up for failure, as they misrecognise the relationship between power, self-regulation and unemployment. The Aspirationists lag behind an educated, socially mobile and skilled middle class who have adapted to these economic transformations. The Aspirationists were consequently forced to find employment in the 'dead end jobs' (Cohen, 1972), which, due to the aspirational outlook and entrenched ethnic stereotypes pertaining to employment, were seen as incompatible with their visions of employment. Often, after being provided with opportunities by the SBI, Aspirationists declined low pay work or frequently quit, as the two examples above attest. The misrecognition of power, masked by the neoliberal rhetoric of entrepreneurship and self-actualisation, therefore leads to a perpetual cycle of self-blame amongst the Aspirationists, who, by no fault of their own, struggle to adapt to the economic metamorphosis occurring on their doorstep.

#### The Road Boys: An Alternative Post-SBI Trajectory

In Chapter 7 I have illustrated the Road Boys' use of the SBI, and I will expand upon this discussion here by detailing their post-SBI trajectories. For the 'Road Boys', I will therefore explain *why* 'the gang' represents an alternative SBI pathway for many young men to the low paid, post-industrial labour that the SBI attempts to channel participants in to, and why the operations of the SBI represent fruitless endeavours in

attempting to ‘transform’ the lifestyles of young men, who by showing significant entrepreneurial nous, profit from the clear cultural impacts of gentrification and labour market restructuring, and the consumer based criminal opportunities that these transformations convey.

Almost all of the recent studies of ‘gangs’ suggest that gang affiliation offers an outlet for young men to experience excitement, status, and respect in urban neighbourhoods beset by economic decline, unemployment, and poverty (Gunter, 2010; Densley, 2013; Hobbs, 2013; Medina et al., 2013), and upon completing the SBI, the lure of the ‘road’ was an enticing draw for many young men seeking ‘control in neighbourhoods where, more often than not, traditional avenues for youthful stimulation and endeavour have long since evaporated’ (Hayward, 2004:149-150). Thus, I discussed the incentive of gang membership with Leon:

TM: Did you get a buzz from doing that? Was there a sort of thrill?

Leon: The buzz was when you’ve taken what they’ve got and you’re off, you’re running and you’re thinking, every turn you take you’ve got to be careful to take that turn because the police could be on that road. That was the fun bit maybe, that was the fun bit for me

TM: And why do you think people join gangs?

Leon: I don’t know, I think they just join it to have a bit of a reputation so people fear your name or hear your name and are like, ‘Oh yes, you don’t want to fuck with him.’ Most people think being in a gang is cool. They think it’s another way to get women as well, you know what I mean, which at one stage it was. ..I remember there were loads of girls that were opening their legs for about 10 or 15 guys. It’s like, ‘What are you doing? Where’s the shame for yourself?’ It’s all because you were in a gang, you were flashing money. It’s mental’

Similarly, gang affiliation provided a sense of protection and solidity amongst young men residing in an area populated by established criminal factions and marked by defined territorial boundaries. Indeed, Neighbourhood B is an area where strictly

defined boundaries are common features of the urban cartography. Roads, parks, and train lines represent common borders which some of the young men from Neighbourhood B's SBI are caught between, resulting in a choice of either joining a local faction or risking physical harm. I discussed this issue with Andre and Peter:

Andre: 'A lot of people do get into them because of that reason, they're thinking, 'I'm not part of this gang, but then I'm not part of that gang, but then two gangs hate each other, I live in the middle of both of them. I've got to pick a side because if I don't pick a side, I'm one day going to get mistaken for being part of that side or that side.' That's what happens to a lot of people. A lot of people get beat up for not being part of none of them and then just get beat up and stuff for not being part of nothing, but yet they're thinking you're part of that side because you're not part of their side'

'The positives are like as long as you're always with at least one of you, you know that you're ready to fight, even if there's like five or six of the other people. There was a lot of times where you'd be on your own and there'd be five or six of them and it's like, 'What am I going to do?'

Peter: 'It's fun in a way because you learn things. It kind of teaches you how to be a man. I'm not saying robbing people can teach you how to be a man, but you go through things'

Like, I'm walking through Wood Green, and ten boys might come up to me and I'm by myself, so how am I going to get myself out of this predicament? Do you know what I'm saying? Without fighting, or if I do fight, what am I going to do, kind of thing'

Andre and Peter, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

Because of these tightly defined boundaries and the physical risks of a *un*-association with local groups, SBIs fail to consider that their work is attempting to reverse the behaviour of young men residing in neighbourhoods where gang membership represents an attempt to transcend the tangible threat of everyday violence. Thus, by attempting to 'change' the behaviour of participants, by definition of their affiliation with a local street collective, SBIs risk perpetuating a cycle of violence which places a number of Road Boys at risk. Indeed, should the SBI successfully steer a Road Boy away from their respective youth group, the lack of post-SBI provision, tuition or follow up services means that they will be released back into Neighbourhood B

without any further support or protection. I met with Mikel several weeks after he had graduated from the SBI and made a subsequent decision to leave the Road Boys behind:

‘Well, when I left, they just gave me a choice, either let us beat you up or go and do a street robbery or burglary and stuff like that. So I choose for them to beat me up because I wasn't getting in trouble again.

So I got beaten up, put in hospital and when I came out that was all good. Because I'd had enough of having knives and guns put up to me and everything like that. My little brother had just come along so I didn't want anything happening to my family.

I think there's more pressure on the front of – you can leave the gang because it's your choice, but there's some gangs where you'd leave them and they don't want nothing to do with you, so if they see you, you can become the enemy now because you're not their friend no more. You know what I mean? They haven't chilled with you in ages; you can become the enemy in most cases’.

Mikel, Neighbourhood B, September 2012

The difficulty of progressing out of established gang structures renders any attempt by the SBI of ‘modifying’ the behaviour of Road Boys in line with hegemonic notions of ‘respectability’ unproductive: the established structures, hierarchies and practices of the gangs of Neighbourhood B are too deeply entrenched in the lives of many young men to reverse over the course of eight weeks. As has been previously alluded to, SBIs rely on individual willpower and the internal reconfiguration of personal goals and characteristics. Predictably, gang affiliated youth require more than an SBI to change their behaviour, and many of my participants continued to engage in gang activity before finally ceasing to participate due to significant ‘turning points’<sup>76</sup>. For example,

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<sup>76</sup> In the field of desistance studies, Sampson and Laub (1993) found that ‘important differences in adult criminal career trajectories that cannot be predicted from childhood’ and that key ‘turning points’ in adulthood were responsible for accounting for differences in criminal career trajectories: ‘although there are multiple pathways to desistance, our [qualitative] data suggest that desistance is facilitated by self-described ‘turning points’ – changes in situational and structural life circumstances like a good marriage or a stable job – in combination with individual actions (that is, personal agency’ (Laub and Sampson, 2003:278). Hence, the argument Sampson and Laub (1993) present is based on individual responses to a certain external ‘turning point’. What is critical is how individuals respond to these turning points; even if the offender does not necessarily see this ‘turning point’ as a significant moment in their criminal careers, it may subsequently have a considerable impact on their offending, the response to which will vary considerably depending on the willingness of individuals to change or interpretation or events (Le Bel *et al*, 2008).

the death of a friend<sup>77</sup> and the consequences of spending time in jail on his family was seen as a significant ‘turning point’ in Mikel’s decision to leave his gang after he had graduated from the SBI:

Mikel: ‘Yes, I just realised, 1. I don’t want to go to jail and 2. If I did go to jail, my mum and them lot would be – there’s no one helping them out. But in my case it was just like, ‘I don’t want to do it no more.’...Plus, my friend got – another reason I wanted to get out of it was my friend died, so I didn’t want to. He died to gang violence basically. So it was like, do I really want to?’

See it was like that until I moved to the area we had the most trouble with, which is New Park, the area is called Kings Court. We had trouble with them and then I moved there and it all became cool because I told them, ‘I’m not involved,’ but then that beef really sort of died down because after my boy got killed, obviously a lot of people wanted to retaliate but then for some reason it just fizzled out because the gang didn’t actually kill him. It was one of the members of the gang got beat up and then he felt like, ‘I’ve been violated.’ This is apparently the story, he went back to his friend and was like, ‘I’ve been beaten up, come help me, let’s go get them.’ They were all like, ‘No we can’t be bothered.’ So he was like, ‘Alright, if no one wants to help me I’m going to bring in someone else that’s not part of the whole scenario.’

So apparently he rung someone else and that person came and let off the gun, but then they weren’t really involved so after that the beef sort of fizzled out. It’s like one of them things that just – there’s a lot of tension between the two groups, do you get it? But like a lot of people from both sides are cool with each other

TM: Would you ever go back to that lifestyle?

Mikel: No.

TM: You wouldn’t go back?

Mikel: A lot of people have said to me, ‘What are you doing? Why don’t you come back and do what you were doing?’ But I said like, ‘It’s my mum isn’t it?’ I always say to these people that go to jail, these

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<sup>77</sup> A death of a friend was considered a turning point for one other Road Boy: Alex: ‘I’ve had friends who’ve been stabbed and shot and killed. Like, there was a guy I knew, his name was Mo. I went away with him once on a holiday with social services and he was the smartest guy you’ll ever meet. The man could answer any question, bang he’d answer, but his temper – he had a temper. But one day a group of boys chased him and his brother in a tower block and they threw him off of the tower block. He tried to – basically, when they chased him, his brother ran down the stairs and the brother went the opposite way. So to get away from these guys he started climbing down the poles of the balcony. It was the people that lived in the estates called ‘Upton’. The people that – it was a bunch of Rastafarians and they all lived in Upton Estate. They chased the guy. They chased Mo and Mo was climbing down the poles that separate the balcony. He was sixty feet high and they were kicking his hands to drop him and when they dropped him he died on impact. So, you know, I mean, after that I just thought, ‘There are no morals.’ That’s the only thing in the area. There are no morals. If you were standing on crutches, they’d take your fucking crutches. I was gutted. I was completely gutted. After that, I just got out’

so called gangsters, I think to myself, 'You've got no love for your mum,' that's how I see it, and I've got so much love for my mum. To go to jail, they think, 'Oh yes, it's nothing, I'm going to jail, I can handle it.' You may be able to handle it, but are you seeing the other people and the effect it has on them? No, you're not caring about them, you're caring about yourself, going, 'I can handle it, I can,' but can your mum handle it? Can your sister, can your brother handle it? Can your dad handle it? There's a lot of other people that you're connected to that it would hurt. That's what a lot of people don't realise.'

Hence, gang desistance is often caused by significant 'turning points' rather than via the external, coercive assistance of SBI or social interventions. Members often find their way out of gangs at times convenient to them, and attempting to change behaviour coercively and *involuntary* is unproductive due to the difficulties of absconding. Most of the spontaneous, windows of change for gang affiliated youth are missed because the PbR funding measures forces SBIs to exclude risky patients if they do not 'succeed' the first time of attending the session. Programmes inevitably set gang affiliated youth up for a predictable end. By failing to coordinate interventions with opportunistic 'turning points' (Sampson and Laub, 1993) and without any substantial post-SBI support other than the occasional phone call, it is difficult for the Road Boys to draw themselves away from the lure of the road. They have to construct new meanings of identity based on their voluntary willingness to change. Released back into their original neighbourhoods, they fall back into the familiar and persuasive ways of the inner city gang member, and they seek out old friends, acquaintances, and habits.

For example, six months after graduating from the programme, Justin volunteered with the SBI for a number of months. He was in good spirits as he was involved regularly with the programme and assisting with youth work in his area. However, residing in his parents' house in an area situated on the border of two postcodes, he

continued frequenting the violent young scene in which five years earlier he had been the victim of a serious stabbing<sup>78</sup>. By definition of his proximity to rival territory, an incursion onto unfamiliar terrain meant he ran afoul of the young men based there, and a rival shot him in the leg at close range with a modified handgun to enforce the tight territorial boundaries that exist here, resulting in a long-stay in hospital. Justin dismissed the event as a consequence of ‘wrong postcode’.

Rashid, a participant from a neighbouring SBI session, once again finding himself out on the street with no stable form of employment after graduating from the SBI, and soon fell back into the persuasive and violent ways of road life. Several months later, after maintaining a level of consistent contact with the SBI throughout this period, he was found on a street in South London in possession of a shotgun and arrested by police. Contact was subsequently lost following this event.

Peter’s outcome was not much better. After gaining access to an SBI session and successfully completing the course, Peter was arrested after a number of anti-social incidents, including foul mouth rants and threats at shop keepers and residents in Neighbourhood B. He was slapped with a civil injunction, a so called ‘gangbo’ that prevented him from entering a postcode for two years and from being in a group of more than five people in a public place anywhere within his specific borough.

Andre was arrested and sentenced during his time with the SBI. It should be noted however, that the criminal act occurred prior to his engagement with the SBI. Andre

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<sup>78</sup> ‘When I was fifteen I got stabbed twice just by being basically in the wrong place at the wrong time, sort of thing. Coming from school it was like a half day. It was, like Comic Relief. Comic Relief? I think, yeah. We had like a half day, non-uniform day at school and then, yeah, just we were going out looking for girls and stuff and then, yeah, wrong place wrong time. There were, like, four times as many guys as we were. I was with about ten or fifteen and it was about yeah, three or four times as much’ ‘They knew who some of them were and, like, I don’t know. I didn’t see - I don’t even remember how it really kicked off, but yeah that is one thing that affected me because I just remember there was a big row, a scuffle, and then yeah, like as it all died down I realised that I was stabbed twice, in my leg and in my side’. Justin, Neighbourhood B, August 2012.

was part of a gang who planned to carry out a looting spree in the wake of the London riots in 2011, who were jailed for a total of 37-and-a-half years for conspiracy to rob. After pleading not guilty in the first trial, Andre was subsequently sentenced to one year and five months for the act, which included the knifepoint carjacking of a van to be used in subsequent looting<sup>79</sup>.

For these participants, their experiences of prison were ones that only exacerbated the problems of violence that is often classified as ‘gang related’, and perpetuates the cycle that SBI programmes are attempting to break. I discussed this with Alex:

‘I’m saying this now: Prison does not teach people anything. People teach themselves things in prison. People teach themselves to be calm in tense situations, to not have a fight, to not go and do drugs. The prison system is just there to put a roof over your head and food in your belly. They don’t help you. They need to really shape up the prison system, because when I was in there and the amount of fights in there – pah! You’d think that was a boxing club.

Then what they’ll do in prison, they’ll take your privileges away, which will make people even more angry and because of the gang problem, you’ve gone and started a gang war. So it’s just going in one massive circle, until eventually unfortunately what happened to me in jail, I see someone get, like, slashed across the face, you know those saveloys at the chip shop when they open them?, that’s what he looked like. His face was open like that and that was by a simple razor blade with a toothbrush.’

Alex, Neighbourhood B, July 2012

Several of the core members of my ‘Road Boy’ fieldwork network disappeared from Neighbourhood B altogether. Many simply wanted nothing to do with the SBI once it was completed and there was no football left. Ricky expressed no interest in the help

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<sup>79</sup>Other participants noted how they had been sentenced for their role in the 2011 riots. For example, Alex once told me of his conviction for robbery ‘Yeah, I was involved in the Mare Street riots. I mean, it was a stupid thing. I’ve never denied that it was a stupid thing. I’ve never bragged about it. I’ve never gone, ‘Ah, yeah, I’m hard.’ I just saw an opportunity to get some free stuff and I took it and I paid the price for it. I got caught in December, just before Christmas. So I was saying to them, like, they asked me straight away and I pled guilty in the station. I pointed myself out in the pictures because they already had a red circle around me! So they went, ‘Is that you?’ I went, ‘Yeah.’ So, you know, I had no other choice but to confess’.



of the SBI to help him attain a job, and confessed that he was happy to remain on and earning profits from his thriving cannabis business. Leon, despite being offered a placement with the SBI, was, in the words of an SBI official, ‘not very responsive to anything other than a football tournament’. Similarly, SBI staff noted how many Road Boys simply vanished from the SBI network due to their commitment to illegal activity:

‘Ricky, he told me he doesn’t want to work because he’s still involved in illegal stuff. Drugs...He said he didn’t want to discuss it but basically said he didn’t want to work because he was still involved in stuff’

SBI Official, Neighbourhood B, March 2012

The inability of SBIs to tackle this behaviour post-SBI stems from the fact that such subjectivities are deeply entrenched within the post-industrial landscape of Neighbourhood B. The road offers a range of entrepreneurial activities that can enable a resource-poor, uneducated gang member to maintain a lifestyle on par with the middle-class, educated residents who many of these participants now compete with for employment in Neighbourhood B. From my ethnographic experience, I concur with Hobbs (2013:116) that such activities represent an ‘alternative sphere of enterprise to declining opportunities in traditional male employment’. Unlike the Aspirationists, the Road Boys have no intention of adapting to the low paid post-industrial economy that now populates Neighbourhood B:

‘Since I finished school, I mean, I was doing a couple – I was mostly doing courier jobs, cash-in-hand, just sort of, delivering parcels and all that. But no I mean, I work in a call centre for two weeks before I was fired for swearing at someone over the phone! So, no it’s just, like, when it comes to office jobs and all that I’m not good at it. But when it comes to jobs where you have to be physical, yes, I was bang on it. I love physical jobs, but office jobs I can’t do it. I can’t do it! (Laughing).

Leon, Neighbourhood B, August 2012

Hence, rather than adapt, or find their way into low-paid labour that has been forced upon them via the cultural impacts of gentrification, post-industrialism, and middle-class migration, the Road Boys have been seduced by the chance to make ‘quick money’ from the range of consumer based criminal opportunities that now exist in and around Neighbourhood B. Indeed, in the neoliberal, post-industrial economy, youth groups have become increasingly market orientated, inverting the logic of neoliberal enterprise, and with a degree of economic rationality, apply it to one arena which offers ample opportunities of capital: the street. Hence, in order to *not* appear ‘flawed consumers’ (Bauman, 2002), a term coined to describe those marginal to the consumer market in a post-industrial society, resource poor and marginal populations often source economic resources through any possible means to remain fully embedded in the social hierarchy of post-industrial, consumer culture. Crime functions as an instrumental and entrepreneurial resource for achieving positions of social merit; techniques of ‘social mobility’ for many young men in economic and socially marginalised communities (Hall et al., 2008; Treadwell et al., 2013), and luckily, the street provides an area in which successful criminal entrepreneurs can seek out thriving new markets spawned by the cultural changes associated with the gentrification of the area, and feed off consumer based criminality. I spoke with Ricky about his successful drug dealing business, how he started this, and the criminal opportunities available in the area:

‘Because obviously young guys start off as obviously selling for the older people. That’s sometimes, but then other times the young people think, ‘I don’t need to start off selling for you, I’m going to be my own boss,’ but then that way they have to go and start doing little things to build their money up and then be able to buy a big bit of drugs and then go, ‘Now I’m ready. I’ve started up my business and I’m ready to roll.’

There were times where you’d go and you’d go to a house party or something, like someone’s got a house party, some posh bloke, then the posh bloke knows another posh bloke who knows a gangster that he gets

drugs off and says, ‘Yeah, I’m going to this party,’ then the gangster laughs obviously...and you’d end up going to this house party and just robbing everyone there. Stuff like that.

It just materialises from early –as soon as your mum starts giving you that bit of freedom, that’s where you start to think, ‘I’ve got that freedom now, I’m going to go and chill with them guys and these guys,’ and they start getting talked to in their ear by the older boys. Older boys start talking to them and start telling them, ‘You can make this much and that much and this and that,’ and the younger people start thinking, ‘Yeah, I can. This is what I want; I want that sort of money, that quick money.’ So that’s what it is, quick money, and it’s what a lot of people are interested in’

Ricky, Neighbourhood B, September 2012

Hence, trying to break the established cycle of consumer criminality via progressing established Road Boys into low paid, post-industrial labour, is an exercise in futility. Ethnographically, my research gives credence to the notion that for working-class young men bearing the brunt of post-industrial transformations; ontological insecurity (Young, 2007) unemployment (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2005); and the search for a degree of self-identity in conditions of unregulated consumerism (which for many young people, is beyond their control), consumer based criminality provides one method in which young men, searching for a sense of identity in the post-industrial world, are responding. When considering the deleterious effects of consumerism and the increasing polarization between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’, it is reasonable to consider why the Road Boys continue down this trajectory, and why SBIs are inadequate in curtailing this pathway.

#### A Note on Race and Ethnicity and its Influence on Post-SBI Transitions

It is important to recognise the significance of ethnicity in influencing the forms of youth cultural position identified in this thesis. Participants in Neighbourhood A were of white backgrounds, whilst in Neighbourhood B - an area of significant ‘racial’ and cultural diversity – the majority of participants were of black African and Caribbean

descent. The influence of ethnicity on post-16 trajectories and adopted cultural identities should not be overlooked; previously, Gunter (2008; 2010) and Gunter and Watt (2009) alluded to the rejection of manual labour amongst black and ethnic minority youth populations. For them, manual labour was viewed as low paid ‘dirty work’ (Gunter and Watt, 2009:523), tied to historically embedded notions of white, working-class ‘grafting’. Similarly, scholars operating within the North East of England have cited the yearning amongst young, white working-class men for past forms of industrial labour (Giatzitzoglu, 2014). For those descending from families of manual and skilled labourers, new forms of post-industrial labour are at odds with those ‘from a stratum of the skilled English working class’ who seek employment in industries that provide an ‘appreciation of skilled physical labour over mental agility’ (Nayak, 2003; 309).

The influence of ethnicity, then, has significance for the forms of youth cultural position identified here, as well as the forms of labour ‘transited’ into. What does it mean to be ‘white working-class’ in a society where the well-defined features of the industrial era have disintegrated? Moreover, what does it mean to be a young black male in an urban milieu which has never provided one form of stable, traditional labour for those other than the white working-class?

In Neighbourhood A, the answer is relatively straight forward. The Outcasts continue to maintain their traditional white working-class cultural identity, and reject the notion of any post-industrial metamorphosis. They are the sons of a stratum of workers who were employed in skilled and semi-skilled, manual trades. Aside from Sonny, each of the Outcasts had fathers who were once employed as either shipbuilders, plumbers, plasterers, or bricklayers. They are comparable to Nayak’s (2003) ‘Real Geordies’; a

group who ‘promoted the values of a muscular puritan work ethic (honesty, loyalty, self-sufficiency, ‘a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay’) in a situation where unskilled manual unemployment was increasingly the norm’ (2003:309). As such, the cultural heritage of their immediate social and familial environment means they continue to enact a form of white working-class masculinity in forms of appearance, argot, and outlook; faced with a choice between post-industrial work or unemployment, the Outcasts chose the latter, and they continue to reproduce a white working-class strata where unemployment is increasingly the norm.

Conversely, their North East counterparts, the neoliberal Conformers, who, similarly deriving from white working-class backgrounds, have negotiated global change in a different way. The globalisation of key industries alongside culture means that the Conformists have adopted a cultural identity in line with neoliberal ideals. Thus, Kevin had aspirations of employment in one of the post-industrial office jobs that now populate an industrial park close to Neighbourhood A:

‘I wanna get a job where I can wear a suit, look smart, get the money, get the girls. HA! That’s like my dream, what, you know, I hope to be able to do one day’.

Kevin, Neighbourhood A, January 2012

The Conformists’ immersion into this new neoliberal culture has had a profound impact on the cultural identities of this cultural grouping; their dress, hairstyles, argot, and mannerisms are somewhat different from the embodied ‘hard’, ‘masculine’ identities of the Outcasts, who read themselves as ‘salt of the earth’ locals who continually reproduce a once dominant white working-class culture etched with the history of industrial labour. The Conformists, on the other hand, construe themselves as the now predominant form of masculinity in the North East, and a ‘cut above’ the

Outcasts on account of their advanced post-industrial credentials. As such, a resistance/adaption typology exists here, either, as was the case in Cohen's (1977) analysis, 'downward' or 'upward' into respective unemployment or employment trajectories. As such, I am showing how these socio-economic and cultural groupings are 'complicit in their own class reproduction' (Dolby, Dimitriadis and Willis, 2004:4) and thus not cultural dupes merely responding to shifts and changes within social and economic structures.

In Neighbourhood B, the case is not quite as clear cut. Indeed, when considering the trajectories of young black males, one must consider the structural and economic inequalities faced by young black men. A look at various indices of social exclusion and discrimination show that young black men top polls for living in poverty, school exclusion, educational under-achievement, and arrest rates. Add to this further root causes of social marginalisation - namely institutionalised racism, collective stigmatisation, caricatured representations of young black males, and belonging to a relatively 'new' parent culture which holds no embedded stake in the traditional labour market (Dench et al., 2007) - and it becomes evident that the situation facing young black and ethnic minority males in Neighbourhood B is somewhat different to the white working-class young men of Neighbourhood A. Yet rather than conforming to populist accounts of young black males, that, whatever the social, economic, or cultural cause, portray young black as one homogenous collective based on the actions of a small 'problem' minority (Gunter, 2008), this study not only considers the influence of ethnicity in shaping *heterogeneous* forms of cultural identity amongst young black men, but also examines the nuanced influence of place, leisure time, and post-school trajectories. In doing so, I attempt to evade any notion of young black men as one homogenous group, and thus sidestep the caricatured depictions of the

dangerous urban black ‘other’ (see also Gunter, 2008; 2010; Gunter and Watt, 2009). My analysis also attempts to show how young males - from the same working-class, post-industrial neighbourhoods- experience different trajectories (see also MacDonald, 2001; Gunter and Watt, 2009). This thesis therefore does not gloss over issues associated with cultural practices and how these interact with different ethnicities – a weakness which MacDonald et al., (2001) has identified in other youth studies research.

It is true, however, that a very small minority of the SBI population engage in what Gunter (2008) refers to as ‘road culture’. The Road Boys can best be understood as pursuing a lifestyle choice in which one ‘flirt[s] with certain aspects of badness’ (Gunter, 2008:349). Hence, ‘road life’ is interspersed with employment programmes (like the SBI), benefit claiming, and occasionally, as was the case with Leon, low-paid manual work. Yet the allure of the road continues to offer the vague promise of a lucrative and pleasurable alternative to the tedium of full time employment.

For the Road Boys, their ‘blackness’ represented a hurdle to achieving ‘respectable’ forms of post-industrial employment<sup>80</sup>, and the white dominated industries, both in manual labour and the office based economy in and around Neighbourhood B, are not viewed as career priorities for a number of reasons. Firstly, the white dominated ‘grafting’ opportunities in manual labour are perceived as ‘dirty’ work, which, for the Road Boys, contradicts the clean, ‘bling’ aesthetic of road life, which is valorised as a

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<sup>80</sup> For those operating within ‘left realist’ traditions (e.g. Lea and Young, 1984), black youth face insurmountable barriers to social, economic and political institutions via institutional racism and deeply entrenched hegemonic norms. Those within more critical cultural traditions allude to the unfair labelling of black youth and the impact of institutionalised racism within the police and media (e.g. Hall et al, 1978). Others have alluded to notions of masculinity, whereby the response of young black males to both economic and social marginalisation is the ‘gang’ or the construction of deviant subcultures in response to their ‘powerlessness’ (see Messerschmidt, 1993); the principle idea here being a form of economic and structural determinism within an institutionally racist global and political economy, which propels its subjects to adopting a form of deviant masculinity. Recent debates within criminology propose that the concept of the ‘gang’ is utilized with reference to the interplay of cultural, social, and structural factors. Hence, in overcoming a Mertonian (1938) view of relative deprivation and structural ‘strains’ that drive the individual into a criminal career, cultural criminologists have highlighted the ‘excitement’ and ‘seduction’ of criminal activity (Ferrell et al 2004), which offer alternatives to paid employment.

key component of this particular lifestyle (Bourgois, 2003; Gunter, 2010). Second, although there is a magnitude of low level manual labour jobs due to the relative buoyancy of construction in the capital, they are largely the preserve of the established, white working-class. Hence, although this career path is far from racially exclusive, the employment base is largely restricted to a niche network of key construction industries that rely heavily upon established social and familial employment networks (Gunter, 2010). Notably, these networks are dominated by established white, working-class males, who rely upon the immediate social environment for future employees – and informal networks are of considerable importance in this industry given the large proportion of self-employed construction workers (Hobbs, 2001). Neighbourhood B is still perceived within the community as a ‘black’ estate, and thus this career route is relatively limited when compared to ‘white’ estates affording a greater deal of social capital located further north in the borough. Hence, for Watt (2003:1785) ‘those who [are] either outside or on the margins of the social networks connected to job information, because of ethnicity or social isolation, [are] in a far weaker labour market position’. Thirdly, many of the Road Boys reject employment in favour of road life, which offers a viable career path in which to earn ‘respect’ amongst marginalised ethnic groups (Anderson, 2001; Bourgois, 2003). Some of the Road Boys did find employment in the manual labour industry, but this was short lived; Leon quit his plumber’s assistant job after two weeks due to not getting on with his boss. Many Road Boys felt that working in subservient white-dominated industries undermined their emphasis on maintaining a ‘masculine’, ‘road’ identity. Leon stated that he worked in an environment where he was ‘bossed around’ and had to put up with every day, casual racism from colleagues. Hence for many of the Road Boys, road life afforded a direct contradiction to employment in and around Neighbourhood B; a



rejection of neoliberal trajectories into employment which enables men of black and ethnic minority to maintain respect *and* a living on their own terms (Anderson, 2001). Hence, many of the Road Boys deepened their involvement in criminal subcultures as a resistance to the social, economic, and political exclusion faced by young black men in urban environments today (Anderson, 2001; Bourgois, 2003; Gunter, 2010).

In contrast to the Road Boys, the Aspirationists represented a group of young, black males aspiring to the ‘clean’ office-based jobs found in the post-industrial economy of Neighbourhood B. For them, like the Road Boys, they perceived manual labour to be ‘dirty’, white-dominated industry at odds with the ‘stereotypical perception of what a young black male should be like’ (Gunter, 2010:522). They therefore aspire to obtain ‘clean’ work in the post-industrial economy in contrast to the ‘downward’ option followed by the Road Boys. For the Aspirationists, full-time office based employment represents an alternative ‘clean’ option which both represents and embraces a middle class image which conforms to aspects of black road culture, notably through consumption (i.e. phones and electronic devices), smart, ‘clean’ style and aesthetics (e.g. suits, jewellery), and ‘respect’ amongst peers, and weighs against aspects of the ‘dirty’ appearance associated with manual labour (Gunter, 2010). The ironic reality, however, is that very few of the young black men who made use of the SBI could realistically obtain service-sector jobs, given their limited educational qualifications; most instead found employment in low-paid, subservient and insecure employment instead.

### Chapter Summary

Chapter 8 has captured the post-SBI transitions of four typologies of working-class youth who make use of the SBI. In Neighbourhood A, the Outcasts were found to be

content to remain in an unemployed state having actively dismissed the neoliberal rhetoric of the SBI, as documented in chapter 7. The *Conformists* however, made a concerted effort to assimilate into the post-industrial economy. Having embraced the neoliberal logic of SBI work, they *believed* they had the potential to integrate in the surrounding post-industrial economy. However, in failing to recognise the structural impediments in which they are enveloped, the Conformists found it difficult to find employment post-SBI, leaving them in a depressed state and blaming themselves for their ‘failures’ to find employment.

Similarly, in Neighbourhood B, an area which shares similar structural settings yet is composed of a demographically and socially distinct youthful population, the Aspirationists sought to integrate themselves in the local economy that has been populated by post-industrial and creative industries. Again, upon absorbing the language of neoliberal rhetoric found within SBIs, they also believed that their goals were realistic targets. Yet in an area identified as having some of the highest deprivation and unemployment rates in the country, their failure to find employment post-SBI meant they resorted to the low paid, ‘dead end’ jobs that they hoped to avoid prior to joining the SBI.

Finally, the *Road Boys*, a collective of young males affiliated to a local street gang, outright rejected the help of the SBI programme in favour of eking profit from the lucrative consumer based criminal opportunities that exist in the area, fashioned out of the rapid post-industrial changes in the area over recent years. As such, upon graduating from the SBI, they resorted to life ‘on road’, in favour of the low paid, service based work their contemporaries were forced to work in.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

By way of conclusion, chapter 9 deepens this thesis's analysis of SBIs and their associated work with contemporary, post-industrial youth. Chapter 9 is arranged into three main parts. First, I briefly reiterate the main findings and arguments presented in this thesis. Second, I detail the implications of my research for SBIs and policy makers, specifying how SBIs and related 'workfare' style programmes are fundamentally flawed in combating the issue of youth unemployment, as demonstrated by the findings of this thesis and the ongoing swell of unemployed young men across the UK today. Third, based on this thesis's findings, I present a number of future recommendations for future SBI and public policy, which I hope will have utility in directing new modes of intervention towards eradicating worklessness, social marginality, and crime in the post-industrial inner city.

### **A Brief Overview of the Thesis's Main Discussions**

This thesis has traced the ways in which young men are experiencing the micro-level effects of de-industrialisation, globalisation, and urban gentrification in two socioculturally and economically distinct urban locales undergoing an ongoing evolution into post-industrial neighbourhoods. This thesis has also comparatively considered the ways in which SBIs approach the popular manifestations of local-global transformations (i.e., unemployment, criminal behaviour, and social exclusion) and seek to alleviate them, and it has detailed how my participants experience SBIs and whether they offer a sufficient form of intervention to address the aforementioned symptoms of post-industrial change and neoliberal governance. Ultimately, this thesis has explained the 'lived experiences' of young men residing in the post-industrial inner city and their inevitable attempts at adapting to changes in the sociocultural economy via their use of the SBI. In doing so, it has illuminated the seminal way in which SBIs function in the lives of four distinct youth cultural groupings and filled a research lacuna in the fields of youth studies, sport studies, and criminology, by recounting *empirically* and *ethnographically* two contrasting post-industrial urban

locales; the young men enveloped within them who are subjected to the deleterious symptoms of ‘advanced marginality’ (Wacquant, 2008:260); and how these participants ‘make use’ of SBIs to respond and adapt to macro-sociological change.

To provide a deeper, conceptual analysis of these issues, this work has drawn upon theories and ideas associated with macro-sociological change, including de-industrialisation, post-industrialism, and globalisation, and connected them to the work of SBIs. Through this theoretical lens, this thesis has documented the evolution of two distinct neighbourhoods from industrial manual labour-based economies into post-industrial globalised markets. Chapter 1 and chapter 5 have shown that in the industrial era, both neighbourhoods were composed of homogeneous, static cultural groupings of skilled proletarian workers: Neighbourhood A was founded upon its shipbuilding industry and once provided stable employment for many of the grandfathers and fathers of my participants. Physically, economically, and socially, shipbuilding defined the city of Sunderland and Neighbourhood A and afforded an industry and habitus in which working-class masculinities could be defined, shaped, and constructed (Winlow, 2001:37). However, the demise of the industry resulted in the de-industrialisation of the city, and Neighbourhood A was particularly hard hit. It became exposed to the damaging effects of de-industrialisation, as endured in countless other single-industry de-industrialised cities (see Linkon and Russo, 2002) and began its evolution into its current post-industrial state.

This thesis has proposed that the advancement of Neighbourhood A into a post-industrial locale has rendered a number of sociological bearings for its youthful population, explored in chapter 5. In spite of the demolition of its traditional industrial base, Neighbourhood A’s contemporary cultural habitus remains defined by a static, stable population based upon the traditional working-class conceptions of family, hard

labour, and neighbourhood life (Hobbs, 1988). This is because unlike post-industrial Neighbourhood B, Neighbourhood A has not been subjected to significant social displacement exacerbated by intense gentrification, nor destabilised by an influx of educated middle-class post-industrial labourers, major immigration, or the development of large-scale post-war municipal social housing. As such, the traditional working-class communities and entrenched territorial boundaries of the industrial era remain relatively intact (Hobbs, 1988).

Because of the stable homogeneous structure of working-class life in Neighbourhood A and the difficulties in dislodging the historically anchored 'industrial masculinities' of previous generations ( Winlow, 2001; Nayak, 2006), the 'feminised' forms of labour that now swamp the North East's post-industrial labour market proffer little for the young men of Neighbourhood A today who continue the traditional 'hard' 'masculine' identities of the industrial era. Hence, in post-industrial Neighbourhood A, the persistence of 'industrial masculinities' and the rejection of feminised labour (alongside the difficulties of single-industry towns reinvigorating themselves) have led to a situation where its young men must make a decision: to relinquish these identities and adapt to the new post-industrial economy or preserve their past and refute any form of post-industrial adaptation. Hence, in contemporary Neighbourhood A, young men are forging new identities and transitions (Nayak, 2006:813), and one can now identify 'multiple masculinities ... contextually contingent and always located in time and place' (Nayak, 2010:148). As explored in chapter 7, there are the *Outcasts*, a cultural grouping who accept their subordinate position and are happy to remain unemployed, dependent on welfare, and engaged in criminal activity; and the *Conformists*, a group of young men who seek to free themselves from the shackles of culturally reproduced de-industrial living and adapt to the post-industrial service-

based economy via a successful engagement with the SBI. The various embodied practices of these young men can be viewed as responses to shifts in socioeconomic trends in Neighbourhood A, and the outcome of and attempts at assimilating into multi-faceted, complex global changes.

I have deepened and extended the discussions of this thesis via a comparative analysis of youth cultures within specific regional and local social milieu, and Neighbourhood B represents an urban area that has undergone parallel industrial decline and adaptation to transformations in the global economy. However, though similarly emptied of its traditional economic base, the two areas differ in terms of their morphological and ecological compositions and their experienced social realities of post-industrial transformation. Its industrial history is evidently different from Neighbourhood A. Neighbourhood B was not a ‘one-industry town’, but rather a local economy composed of multiple employment opportunities in various industries built around numerous forms of highly localised, familial, manual labour (Young and Willmott, 1957). In transforming to its post-industrial, post-modern state, Neighbourhood B has also experienced significant inward migration; a depopulation of its traditional, indigenous population; a large-scale urban gentrification and rebranding; and the influx of educated middle-class residents attracted by the burgeoning creative and technological post-industrial economy here.

I have suggested that the evolution of Neighbourhood B into a global hub of technological, creative, and artistic industries has nurtured significant sociological transformations in the area, dividing—both culturally and socially—its young men from their counterparts in Neighbourhood A. First, the repopulation of the area with a churning multi-ethnic population in place of the once indigenous white population renders any connection its youth have with a proletariat past redundant, and its fluid

multi-ethnic population of young men are now constructing post-industrial place-based identities in a social and cultural vacuum devoid of any historically embedded habitus. Second, the influx and diversity of technological, creative, and artistic industries has transformed the area into an entrepreneurial enterprise zone, attracting a middle-class educated population who now live cheek by jowl with the multi-ethnic working-class population in one of the most deprived areas in the country, with clear cultural impacts: the area now represents a polarised ‘dual city’<sup>81</sup> (Mollenkopf and Castells, 1992; Sassen, 2000) composed of distinct split economies (both formal and informal) and an increasingly segregated social structure (indeed, one only has to walk down a street in Neighbourhood B to witness, firsthand, social housing estates sitting next to gated, new build communities). Third, the economic and social transformation of the area has engendered a number of entrepreneurial criminal-based activities, ripe for exploitation by an increasingly fractious marginalised youth population in a rational attempt to transcend the exclusion engendered by consumer capitalism (Hobbs, 2013).

Emerging out of these post-industrial transformations are two cultural groupings who were found to coexist within the context of Neighbourhood B and its SBI: the *Road Boys*, a collective of young men affiliated to a local street gang, who, with a degree of entrepreneurial nous, exploit and eke out a profit from the array of consumer-based criminal opportunities found in the area; and the *Aspirationists*, an ambitious cultural grouping seeking to adapt to the transforming economic context. In dissecting the

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<sup>81</sup> The ‘dual city’ thesis rests on the idea that radical economic, social, and political restructuring occurring in the post-industrial metropolis has resulted in the polarisation of economic and wealth structures (Sassen, 2001), caused by the expansion of highly paid post-industrial labour and the concurrent influx of low-paid service work that serves the working class. Mollenkopf and Castells (1991) have charted the evolution of New York into a global ‘dual city’ reliant on a post-industrial service-based economy in line with global capitalism, documenting how these transformations have led to an increasingly polarised and segregated city. Similarly, the dual city thesis has been applied to London, which, since the economic restructuring of large portions of East London, has resulted in an increasing fragmentation and widening of wealth and income inequalities (see Hamnett 2003).

identities and pathways of Neighbourhood B youth, I have uncovered their embodied practices and post-industrial subjectivities as a similar resistance/adaptation typology to local-global transformations, as has occurred in Neighbourhood A.

The young men described in this thesis are considered cultural products of the changes occurring in the post-industrial metropolis, adapting and responding to macro-sociological changes within these two neighbourhoods. In this sense, this thesis has considered the ways in which young men are exploring and constructing new identities as a reaction to the consequences of industrial decline and labour market restructuring in their respective neighbourhoods. Hobbs (2013) is correct in his assertion that ‘economic explanations [of youth] isolated from the cultural contexts in which business is carried out are inadequate tools with which to explicate the complexity of motivations’ (Hobbs, 2013:127), and in following this, I have connected these local-global transformations to the changing typologies of young men in Sunderland and East London today, with reference to those who ‘make use’ of an SBI. Indeed, in continuing the key sociological themes of this thesis, chapters 7 and 8 have shown how the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which young men reside also structured my participants’ use of the SBI and their subsequent post-SBI trajectories.

### A Brief Overview of the Main Findings

This thesis has uncovered that contemporary post-industrial youth identities are varied, diverse, and heterogeneous across populations, shaped and fashioned by the distinct and embedded habitus that operate in Neighbourhoods A and B. Youthful experiences of unemployment are therefore not singular or homogeneous across the UK; and neither is there a standardised or consistent youthful subjectivity *within* these post-industrial neighbourhoods and communities.



In chapter 5, I have documented how, in the industrial era, the youth cultures of Neighbourhoods A and B were considered monolithic ‘types’ that ‘accepted their proletarian occupational futures and looked forward to traditional forms of leisure, where transgressive experimentation was largely restricted to liminal episodes dominated by the ecology of the working-class street and the hegemony of a single-class social structure built upon the firm foundations unionized manual labour and the extended family’ (Hobbs, 2013:115). However, as this thesis has shown, in both post-industrial Neighbourhoods A and B, young men are anything but standardised, and there is not one singular ‘dominant’ cultural group that exists in these neighbourhoods today. Rather, the divergent forms of youth explored in this thesis are representative of groupings characterised by ‘fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal’ (Maffesoli, 1996:76). This has sociological significance in that it gives validity to the notion that contemporary youth cultures are not static or homogeneous, but rather evolve in a constant state of flux, adaptive to the social milieu in which they are enveloped (Bennett, 1999). Significantly, I concur with Hobbs (2013:231) in that youth cultures *today* are ‘overwhelmingly shaped by market forces and ... no longer mediated by the clearly defined inequalities and subsequent communality of industrial society’. Thus, this thesis demonstrates that micro-level behaviour has adapted and evolved in response to macro-level capitalist restructuring that has altered the social systems of distinct urban locales in the UK over the last twenty years.<sup>82</sup>

I have argued that a dualistic model of working-class life therefore exists in two urban areas, each with their own distinct patterns of cultural aspirations, unemployment, and

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<sup>82</sup> This is not to say that there is now a ‘macro’ notion of youth culture irrespective of cultural conditions. The youth cultures of Neighbourhoods A and B are still fashioned and contingent on the historically embedded sociocultural conditions of these two cities but are responding to macro-level transformations and appropriating and navigating them within micro level, locally defined structures.

consumption practices. These factors have also structured these young men's 'use' of the SBI, which I will consider shortly. To elucidate these findings, however, I have presented a diagrammatic representation of the four youth cultural groupings described in this thesis.

Table 2: Categories of SBI Client: Neighbourhood A

<b>Outcasts</b>	<b>Conformists</b>
<p><b><u>Cultural Characteristics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term unemployment.</li> <li>• No Qualifications.</li> <li>• Anti-work ethos/some involvement in casual work ‘on the fiddle’.</li> <li>• Reliant on welfare.</li> <li>• Involvement in petty criminality.</li> <li>• Conform to ‘Chav’ stereotype.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Cultural Characteristics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspiring: plans for higher education and post-industrial careers not associated with traditional working-class employment.</li> <li>• Typically GCSEs/A Levels educated.</li> <li>• Reject ‘chav’ appearance/lifestyle.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Use of SBI</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend ‘Street Football’ drop in sessions primarily for social reasons and to conform to JSA requirements</li> <li>• Viewed as ‘problematic’ clients by staff due to behaviour.</li> <li>• High turnover, often excluded from sessions for poor behaviour.</li> <li>• Little interest in progressing through academy programme for multiple reasons, as became apparent in interviews: distrust of staff, issues related to substance abuse/domestic issues, pessimistic view of the help SBI can offer.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Use of SBI</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically Referred from job centre</li> <li>• Smooth progression from street football to academy programme.</li> <li>• Receptive to support and guidance offered by staff.</li> <li>• Client group is favoured and targeted in order to achieve annual organisational targets: an ‘easy progression’ into education, employment or training.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Post-SBI Trajectories</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fail to progress through academy programme</li> <li>• Excluded due to poor behaviour or failure to progress.</li> <li>• Referred on to other agencies/OR revert back to previous lifestyle</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Post-SBI Trajectories</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress into low paid, post-industrial employment, typically retail or call centre work.</li> <li>• Younger sub group re-engage with education at local colleges.</li> <li>• Employment/Education not sustained for longer than one year</li> </ul>

Table 2: Categories of SBI Client: Neighbourhood B

<b>Road Boys</b>	<b>Aspirationists</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Cultural Characteristics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term unemployment.</li> <li>• Gang affiliated</li> <li>• Engaged in consumer based criminal activity</li> <li>• No Qualifications.</li> <li>• Conform to 'Road' stereotype</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Cultural Characteristics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspiring: plans for assimilation into financial, business, or creative industries now located in post-industrial Neighbourhood B</li> <li>• Typically GCSEs/A Levels educated.</li> <li>• Reject 'road' subjectivities</li> <li>• Not affiliated with any local street gang</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Use of SBI</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source of leisure and fitness</li> <li>• Attend with friends</li> <li>• Often attend sessions away from their own neighbourhood in fear of potential for gang related violence</li> <li>• Attend sporadically</li> <li>• Oppositional to staff and education</li> <li>• Do not seek employment</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Use of SBI</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth progression from Street Football to academy programme.</li> <li>• Favoured and targeted by SBI staff in order to achieve annual organisational targets:</li> <li>• Hardworking; complete all work and actively seek employment</li> <li>• View the SBI as a 'necessity' for post-industrial labour assimilation.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Post-SBI Trajectories</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fail to progress through academy programme.</li> <li>• Excluded due to poor behaviour or failure to progress.</li> <li>• Continue to conform to 'road' lifestyles, eking profit from consumer based criminal opportunities (i.e. drug dealing, theft of mobile phones, bikes)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Post-SBI Trajectories</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fail to find ambitious employment they hoped for</li> <li>• Progress into low paid, substandard service sector work.</li> <li>• Disillusioned with post-SBI work due to their ambitions to find high-paid, financial or business sector work.</li> </ul>

The level of importance that each participant typology ‘attached’ to the SBI should also be considered. For the neoliberal Conformers of Neighbourhood A, and the Aspirationists of Neighbourhood B, the SBI was seen as a key vehicle for entry into the post-industrial economy. Both ‘types’ of participant viewed the SBI with great importance, and as has been shown in the empirical data of the thesis, were attentive, punctual, and hard-working in sessions. Much like Willis’ (1977) ‘ear-oles’, in a West Midlands School, they valued forms of education, were enthusiastic about learning, and abided by SBI rules. Yet their commitment to the project, and adherence to the espoused neoliberal messages, values, and standards of the SBI effectively set them up for failure post-SBI; their hard work, dedication and commitment to the project, along with the continual neoliberal messages of self-responsibilization meant that these two typologies believed they could ‘achieve’ in the post-industrial society upon leaving the SBI. However, after graduating and seeking employment in two of the most economically deprived areas of the UK, they scrambled for jobs they were told they could get, yet had to settle for the alternative: low paid employment in the service sector, or worse, a reversion back to their initial social state, pre-SBI (Shildrick et al., 2012).

Conversely, the level of importance the Outcasts and Road Boys gave to the intervention was in direct contrast to the Conformists and Aspirationists. Again, this level of importance can be attributed to the post-SBI trajectories of these typologies. Here, the Outcasts and Road Boys actively *rejected* the help of the SBI; although they attended all classroom sessions, this tactic was essentially both a scheme to continue taking part in open football sessions and a temporary measure to continue receiving benefit payments<sup>83</sup>. The data in this thesis has described how the Outcasts and Road

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<sup>83</sup> The SBI met the ‘job search’ criteria needed for participants to receive unemployment benefits.

Boys operated as the ‘lads’ (Willis, 1977) in this particular educational milieu, subverting assistance, undermining authority, and being intentionally oppositional and disobedient to hegemonic ideals of ‘being’. For them, these methods operated as empowering alternatives to following the neoliberal rhetoric of self-help along authorised paths. A considerable lack of importance is attributed to the SBI amongst these cultural typologies, and their post-SBI trajectories reflect this; a large proportion of Outcasts and Road Boys were ejected from the SBI before completion (and thus returned to their respective street-based criminal activities), or those that did complete the SBI simply disappeared; any potential post-SBI assistance with job searching was not needed or sought; and the Outcasts were resigned to stay in their unemployed state, knowing that their position in society meant that they could not be helped. The outcomes which these two typologies ‘achieved’ thus provides a more nuanced overview of how young men interact with SBIs, and as this conclusion suggests, highlights the inadequacies of SBIs adopting a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to implementation.

These findings have considerable implications: they challenge the assumptions and operational practices of SBIs that youthful experiences of unemployment are singular and homogeneous. I have uncovered empirically that youthful experiences of unemployment and transiting into post-industrial economies are heterogeneous and varied—a finding in line with contemporary work in the field of youth studies, which suggests that young men are ‘displaying very different characteristics, facing very different challenges, risks, and transitions in their lives, and with very different needs for intervention’ (Yates and Payne, 2006:334). To expand on this sociological argument, I suggest that there is not one ‘dominant’ type of participant that uses SBIs, despite the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to dealing with youth unemployment. As these

young men navigate their way out of the SBI, it is therefore no surprise that outcomes vary and diverge and ‘successful’ results are intermittent. The Neighbourhood A Outcasts’ confrontational oppositionality to hegemonic ‘indoctrination’ and Neighbourhood B’s Road Boys’ ‘street’ subjectivity and happiness to remain unemployed are empowering alternatives to perceiving oneself as a ‘moral failure’ (in neoliberal speak) and renders any help from the SBI redundant. In contrast, the ambitious Aspirationists of Neighbourhood B and the motivated and determined Conformists of Neighbourhood A display a willingness to adopt and assimilate into the surrounding post-industrial economy and therefore ‘make use’ of the SBI in their own unique, compliant way.

What has been shown in this thesis is that there is no ‘standardised’ progression through SBIs and beyond. This is because the divergent youth groups that make use of them and the cultural contexts, labour markets, and habitus of Neighbourhoods A and B result in deviating and opposing post-SBI pathways. To draw on a realist evaluation perspective,<sup>84</sup> this thesis has uncovered the variety of ‘cultural, social and economic circumstances’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:64), which influence the effectiveness of interventions as well as the ‘social rules, norms, values and interrelationships gathered in these places which sets limits on the efficacy of programme mechanisms’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997:70). Hence, any discussions regarding the ‘impact’ of SBIs cannot be deemed ‘sociologically valid’ if researched

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<sup>84</sup>Pawson and Tilley (1997) argue that the outcomes of interventions are the result of both *mechanisms* (that is, the specific mechanisms within a programme that contribute to its outcome) and *contexts* (the conditions within which the intervention operates in which affect the subsequent outcome). Outcomes are thus brought about not simply by the interventions; rather, interventions are a heterogeneous experience for individuals and, as such, distinct outcomes occur for individuals based on the differing contexts and mechanisms that they experience. As Pawson and Tilley (1997:70) elucidate ‘programmes are always introduced into pre-existing social contexts...these prevailing social conditions are of crucial importance when it comes to explaining the successes and failures of social importance. Programmes work by introducing new ideas and/or resources into an existing set of social relationships. A crucial task of evaluation is to include investigation of the extent to which these pre-existing structures ‘enable’ or ‘disable’ the intended mechanisms of change’

in isolation. Instead, this thesis has illustrated the need for contemporary SBI researchers and future research to consider (i) the social and ecological context in which the SBIs operate in and (ii) the ‘type’ of participant engaging and interacting with the SBI.

#### Implications for Policy: Pragmatic, Short-Term Responses

As a sociologist studying the contemporary effects of de-industrialisation, globalised neoliberalism, and consumer capitalism, I consider it imperative to link theory to practice. Otherwise, this thesis would have no real-world utility and would simply be considered an academic piece of sociological voyeurism. Hence, to reduce and alleviate the contemporary issues young men experience, it is necessary to apply these findings and engage with immediate policy options that can be implemented in both the short and long term, to address structurally imposed unemployment and marginalisation. Within the context of this next section, then, I will discuss the implications of my findings for SBI policy and argue that a diverse range of SBI work needs to be made available to young men experiencing unemployment in the UK, varying between culturally and ecologically sensitive work that considers local labour market variations—no-strings-attached open-access football sessions without neoliberal rhetoric or coercion into low-paid employment—and a more radical counter-hegemonic vision of SBI work that will allow SBIs to become a critical praxis for young people in recognising structures of inequality and enable them to construct their own futures (Darnell, 2010). To begin, I will document two significant implications, based on the findings of this research, for future SBI policy to consider.



### 1. Culturally specific responses and an appreciation that one-size-does-not-fit-all

This thesis has traced the work of SBIs within two areas, whose *modus operandi*, is to alleviate the popular indicators of ‘advanced marginality’ (Wacquant, 2008), namely, unemployment, social exclusion, and crime. I have detailed how, despite the fluid, heterogeneous mixture of young unemployed people that it works with, the SBI continues to offer indistinguishable services to young people in Neighbourhoods A and B, with no consideration of the cultural and economic variations between the two areas that have been documented in this thesis. Bearing in mind the identification of four contrasting typologies of young people to exist then, I propose that different modalities of SBI work are likely to have more effectiveness for different people at different stages in their unemployment ‘careers’. In this section, I will detail the implications of this fallacy and document why the current ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to SBI policy is culturally insensitive, hopelessly idealistic, and destined to fail in making a considerable impact on structural unemployment.

Lumping the cultural groupings identified in this thesis under the catchall term of ‘unemployed’ or one of its derivatives, such as ‘at risk’, ‘neet’ or the ‘socially excluded’, as many practitioners within the SBI scene tend to do, is neither sociologically uninformed nor particularly illuminating. The ‘combined resurgence of inequality’ (Wacquant, 2008:259) across nations and cities must not mean we lose sight of the differing trajectories of poverty, unemployment, and crime in different neighbourhoods. The established frameworks of these specific social environments are not homogeneous structures, even when they do produce comparable popular manifestations of poverty. The historically anchored structural differences of Neighbourhoods A and B infer that levels of poverty and unemployment and the scale

on which they manifest are always going to diverge. SBIs must therefore beware pursuing the current ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to SBIs, which encourages participants to pursue akin life strategies that are often oppositional to their immediate social and ecological environment as well as their own distinct subjectivities and cultural practices (Wacquant, 2008). By pursuing this agenda, SBIs risk perpetuating dominant and hegemonic power structures that maintain the institutionalisation of poverty and inequality (Kelly, 2011; Chamberlain, 2013).

Adopting culturally specific responses, then, offers one method of transcending this weakness. Ultimately, the success of SBI and welfare to work programmes is dependent on local labour market conditions (Wacquant, 2008; Spaaij, 2012; Spaaij et al., 2012), and local specific readings of job markets that acknowledge the competitive post-industrial nature of the economy should therefore be pursued (Spaaij et al., 2012), especially in areas where labour market demand outstrips the level of labour positions available. Indeed, Neighbourhood A is one area where job demand hinders the ‘success’ of SBIs, culminating in the reassignment of blame on young men for their worklessness (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009). Despite the demise of the local shipbuilding industry and passing of manual labour opportunities, the widespread misrecognition of these power differentials means that its youth are widely stigmatised and labelled. The Outcasts, for example, are viewed as a redundant, work-shy lumpen form of proletariat by employed members of the Neighbourhood A community for their reluctance to find employment and willingness to survive on state-sponsored benefits. And where work is available, it is likely to be substandard and low paid: the Conformists of Neighbourhood A were ashamed of their unemployed identities and scrambled to find low-paid substandard service sector jobs. Like most popular reading

of unemployment, they blamed themselves for their unemployment; and the neoliberal logic of SBIs makes their self-condemnation appear justified and commonsensical, masks the influence of structural forces, and vindicates punitive or retributory policies towards the marginal (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011).

In Neighbourhood B, the main issue is one of a post-industrial evolution into a hub of technological and creative industries and the quality of work available to young unemployed people rather than its availability. It is important to note that despite the aforementioned inadequacies of SBI work, almost half of my fieldwork network in Neighbourhood B entered employment, education, or training, and it is important to consider that many young people *do* respond positively to SBI treatment if attending with a sufficient level of intrinsic motivation and a desire to assimilate into post-industrial labour markets. However, it is insufficient to still think that simply bringing people into contact with the labour market will reduce poverty and social marginality in the city. This should be clear from the findings of this thesis and the persisting bulk of young unemployed people across the UK today.

Indeed, contemporary Neighbourhood B represents a polarised 'dual city' (Sassen, 2000), and the influx of high-tech business, financial, and service sector employment opportunities that characterise contemporary global capitalism (Wacquant, 2008:264) have coincided with the expansion of low-paid flexible service sector work with little benefits and short-term temporary contracts, which 'do not entail a collective mechanism of protection against material deprivation, illness or joblessness' (Wacquant, 2008:267). This is particularly true of Neighbourhood B, where a large proportion of youth have left school without relevant qualifications or experience in the new financial and technological industries in the area and find themselves at the

bottom of the job ladder because of their lack of training, the structurally imposed inequality they are contained within, and their permanent residence in a particularly stigmatised area (Wacquant, 2008). By any measure, the young men of Neighbourhood B could not compete with the better educated, more skilled, and experienced workers for the jobs in their formerly industrial neighbourhood. The SBI, therefore, channelled the ambitious participants—such as the Aspirationists, a cultural grouping willing and actively seeking employment—into these low-paid insecure employment slots. Subsequently, they became a ‘surplus population’, a ‘reserve army’ of workers situated at the bottom of the social structure yet required for the effective functioning of post-industrial capitalist economy (Byrne, 1999:9). Hence, my findings concur with those of Wacquant (2008:267) who suggests that ‘whereas economic growth and the correlative expansion of the wage sector used to provide a universal cure for poverty, today they are part and parcel of the problem for those at the foot of the occupational ladder’.

For those unwilling to become a social group ‘intrinsic’ to the functioning of the capitalist economy (Byrne, 1995:95), the other option is the street, an arena in which the clear cultural impacts of gentrification and middle-class infiltration have thrown up an array of entrepreneurial criminal activities ready for exploitation for the criminally inclined (Hobbs, 2013). In this sense, SBIs are merely reproducing the dominant social order of neoliberalism that continues to generate marginalised communities and social inequalities (Harvey, 2005) and does nothing to substantially alter ‘the institutions, policies, practices, and more fundamental conditions that have helped to produce and maintain the marginality of the oppressed’ (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011:15).

## 2. A reversal of neoliberal logic and target driven agendas

Underpinned by neoliberal logic, SBIs provide the ‘perfect’ context for young men deemed ‘at risk’ to be transformed into ‘upstanding’ self-regulated and productive citizens of the future (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011). They offer an environment in which life skills can be taught, knowledge can be transferred, and labour market qualities can be conveyed in attempts to socialise participants into contemporary post-industrial life. This is believed to be achieved, somewhat organically, via the idealised beliefs associated with the intrinsic qualities and the competitive, disciplined nature of sport and associated education programmes (Darnell, 2010). In this sense, SBIs function as drivers of the cultural hegemony of neoliberalism, recalibrating youth in line with dominant visions of ‘acceptable’ behaviour (Kelly, 2012; Chamberlain, 2013) related to individualism, personal responsibility, and competitive free enterprise (Rose, 1999). In aligning themselves with neoliberal visions in which participants are perceived as lacking in basic human capital and seen as impoverished, disempowered, problematic, and in need of discipline and some degree of social direction, SBIs resemble interventions and social policies governing the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Rose, 2000) of targeted populations and communities. In this ‘new culture of crime control’ (Garland, 2001:167–192), SBIs are considered a realistic tool for the ‘regulation’ of inner city youth and now form a significant component ‘of the neoliberal policy repertoire ... aimed at generating social order in disadvantaged inner city neighbourhoods’ (Spaij, 2009:247).

In chapter 6, I have applied insights from theory to appraise and critique the neoliberal underpinnings of SBI programmes, which attempt to recalibrate youth in line with dominant hegemonic behaviours and dispositions. In line with the neoliberal rhetoric of individual responsabilisation and self-help, the neoliberal underpinnings of

programmes make it appear as if the social ‘issues’ SBI participants face are their own doing rather than the consequence of structurally imposed impediments. Inadvertently, this has the effect of creating a dynamic of perpetual self-blame amongst these young men, who are led to conventionally misrecognise the relationships between structural inequality and unemployment that shape and contradict the post-SBI trajectories of many young men. This was found to result in further disillusionment and depression, as was the case of the Aspirationists and Conformists who failed to find the employment they anticipated post-SBI, or lead to a situation where being wilfully oppositional to forms of SBI help is an alternate pathway to considering oneself as an unemployed dole-dependent ‘loser’ who lacks social responsibility. This was the case with the outcasts and the Road Boys, who explored self-destructive criminal- based post-SBI pathways.

In aligning themselves with neoliberal ideals that seek to shape cultural practices in line with dominant hegemonic notions of respectability, SBIs risk reproducing structures of inequality and preventing youth from experiencing personal and individual empowerment (Darnell, 2010; Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011<sup>85</sup>; Kelly, 2011; Spaaij et al., 2013). SBI participants are channelled into a social world dominated and constructed by visions of dominant class ideals; and they must ‘adapt’ to this social world and attain the behaviours, norms, and dispositions of the hegemonic group to achieve ‘acceptance’ (Garland, 2001). As has been previously alluded to, this only

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<sup>85</sup> The arguments put forth by both Darnell (2010) and Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) are derived from the analysis of global sports-based interventions (primarily, sport *for* development, or *plus* sport programmes) operating in the Caribbean/the African continent and the Pacific Islands respectively. Hence, although I acknowledge that these arguments are directly applicable to the international sport for development field, I also believe that these arguments are equally applicable to *plus* sport programmes – like the SBI investigated in this thesis - operating in the UK. Indeed, Kelly (2011; 2012a; 2012b), Spaaij *et al* (2013) and Chamberlain (2013) have applied similar insights to UK based SBIs, arguing that not only do SBIs now function as broader components of neoliberal governance aimed at conducting the conduct of others, but also actively operate to obscure the broader structures of inequality that necessitate social interventions. Hence, although the ‘transformative’ model proposed by both Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) and Darnell (2010) is intended for global SBIs, I believe it to have utility in a domestic context. Kelly (2011) has previously noted this, using insights from both sport for development and youth justice to expand knowledge of SBIs operating in the UK context to highlight ‘the continued possibility of counter-hegemonic approaches within community organizations and state led services’ (:17).

results in recalibrating youth into ‘models’ of the neoliberal world without the prospect of searching for why their recalibration is occurring.

All typologies of participants described in this thesis would therefore benefit from SBI staff engaging directly with the social ecology of the area and more sociological informed readings of unemployment, worklessness, and structural disadvantage. I encountered many well-intentioned, enthusiastic, and devoted members of staff in both neighbourhoods. However, they had to function and operate within an environment constrained by the logics of neoliberal governance and punitive audit culture. Often, this involved making decisions about who they should work with, cherry-picking (Kelly, 2012) participants who they felt could be progressed into employment, education, or training at the expense of others who were arguably more in need of support. For example, those SBIs that work with similar groupings of gang-affiliated youth such as the Road Boys need to take advantage of the ‘windows of opportunity’ that encourage young men to come forward to seek treatment. The majority of spontaneous disaster-driven ‘turning points’ (Laub and Sampson, 2003) are missed by these SBIs because of the PbR system that encourages SBIs to exclude ‘risky’ participants if they fail to ‘recalibrate’ immediately into upstanding citizens in line with their neoliberal imaginings. When they did target and provide sustained work for those ‘most in need’, these participants were penalised and lamented for their ‘social failures’, and sessions were closed down because of the lack of progressions occurring, as was the case in Neighbourhood A. Hence, SBI staff operate in an environment where economic incentives prevent them from working with the most ‘in need’, who require extended, sustained support. In maintaining a PbR service in which ‘success’ is measured by outcomes, staff will continue to operate as financially and target-driven practitioners, selective of who they work with.

### A Transformative Form of Intervention

In their attempts to tackle contemporary forms of post-industrial marginality, SBIs operating within a *plus sport* model face policy choices that will essentially regulate the conduct of young men attempting to assimilate into the new post-industrial economy. In considering their options, then, the first approach, representing a continuation of the existing dominant vision, is to restructure and reorganise the existing frameworks of SBI programmes aimed at addressing structural unemployment. This can be achieved, for example, by responding to the critiques and implications listed above with short-term, immediate responses. This can include extending networks with training and education programmes, mobilising programmes with other social interventions to address the multi-faceted nature of exclusion and unemployment, and utilising a sophisticated targeting system that works in and with communities who would benefit most from the work of these SBIs.

However, it is clear that these recommendations offer only piecemeal responses to stopping the spread of youth unemployment, and simply tweaking or providing new methods of SBI delivery will only further sustain the institutions, policies, practices, and labour market conditions that have produced and endured the marginality of post-industrial youth (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011).

This thesis has provided empirical evidence that the current dominant vision of SBIs is not sufficient in addressing the issue of contemporary urban marginality and worklessness. Otherwise, the problems wrought by post-industrial living would not be persistent today, their accretion within urban inner city areas would have already been prevented, if not reversed, and there would be no need for this thesis. What is therefore required is a revolution in thinking that goes against the conventional grain of SBI



policy, and based on the findings of the thesis, I will suggest the only viable option is a ‘counter-hegemonic’ approach to development that ‘engage[s] directly with the political economy and the relations of dominance that produce the need for development in the first place’ (Darnell, 2010:71).

This vision draws upon the radical work of Latin American theorists to development, notably Freire (1970), in response to the dominant adverse mode of neoliberal developmental vision that only meets the needs of Western hegemonic powers and institutions (Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997). From this view, some SBI services disregard the culturally specific sociocultural and economic ecologies in which they operate, alongside the individual needs of participants illustrated in this thesis. Hence, SBIs only offer a generalised vision that maintains a reproductive social structure that continues to spawn generations of marginalised unemployed populations (Byrne, 1995, 1999; Wacquant, 2009). From this view, development also perceives participants as a problematic *other*, incapable of traversing the post-industrial landscape without external help and support. To accept the transformative vision of development, then, would mean adopting a radical model which focuses on the empowerment, emancipation, and liberation of subordinate communities through the recognition of structures of power and inequality rather than using SBIs as a conventional educational arena in which young people are socialised and recalibrated into a preordained social world without consultation.

The work of Paulo Freire can illuminate, at micro level, how some SBIs can facilitate his notion of achieving ‘freedom’, that is ‘the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion’ (Freire, 1970:47). In utilising an approach that enables, in Freire’s terms, ‘the oppressed’ to recognise the hegemonic powers that engender and maintain marginality, SBIs can operate as a critical praxis for transforming the social structures

in which young men are enveloped and ‘create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity’ (Freire, 1970:47).

Within this framework, *plus sport* SBIs will no longer function as ‘the oppressors’, who ‘deposit’ and ‘bank’ information into the mind-sets of participants, which Freire would argue ‘dehumanises’ human action and results in and maintains structures of oppression. Instead, SBI education would operate as a critical praxis that allows youth to become aware of their own ‘incompleteness’ and empower them to achieve ‘*conscientização*’, or ‘critical consciousness’: a creative praxis which will enable a critical awareness and capability of transforming structures of oppression (Freire, 1970). In this transformative vision, SBIs will become a transformative context in which its participants recognise and respond to structural impediments and become transposed citizens ready to challenge and transform society.

During the third year of my fieldwork, I attended the Outcasts’ grassroots session for a total of three months. A number of participants, including Sonny, Max, and Kevin, formed the session on the back of the closure of an SBI because of the ‘failure’ of participants to progress into employment, education, or training. For some onlookers, the Outcasts’ session would appear to be a communal context of self-inflicted sociopaths engaging in a weekly football session. However, based on the findings of my research, I will argue that the transformative vision of development detailed above was a key feature of the Outcasts’ sessions. Their sociological ability to spot the structural forces that have enveloped them and rendered them as a residual class meant that they were aware that the SBI could not help them, and participants actively contributed to the development and maintenance of a new programme. Sonny attracted the help of a number of social and drug interventions in and around Neighbourhood A, who flooded the session during the months I attended. The health

benefits of this were clear, particularly for those that suffered from drug abuse, mental health issues, and old age, and the session provided an opportunity for these outcasts to address their own individually specific problems, without coercive intervention or the neoliberal rhetoric of the SBI that they perceived to be ‘scammy’ or ‘coercive’. Participants were able to access a network of treatment, education, and employment prospects at times that were coordinated with external spontaneous ‘turning points’ (Laub and Sampson, 1993) that should be exploited by SBIs seeking to address unemployment amongst the most ‘at risk’.

I uncovered firsthand how the Outcasts’ session enabled young men to understand the broader structures of inequality in which they are confined and participate ‘critically in the transformation of not only their own experiences in society but also of the world itself through a collective resistance against hegemonic structures and relations of inequality that get reproduced through sport’ (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011:10). Indeed, for Sonny, the session offered a chance for individuals to empower themselves and engage in a praxis that offered a collective meaning, representation, and identity for all:

This is what it [the SBI] used to be like before all the money came in ... Its brilliant, the players love it more than they liked SBI. There is more freedom now and it’s more fun, there’s more participation, the players come and they feel like they’re contributing to the running of it. There’s less hierarchy, that focus [to get a job] isn’t there, and, I’d like to reintroduce that maybe in a less controlled fashion though you know? I think people need less indoctrination and more ... more ... accessibility to information.

Sonny, Neighbourhood A, October 2012

The outcasts were therefore, in a developmental sense, active in ‘unveil[ing] the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation ... their

own example in the struggle for their redemption' (Freire, 1970:54). Non-judgemental and non-coercive participants worked with one another and allowed previously excluded participants to attend sessions without any 'pressure' to move into employment, education, or training; and the networks of pooled interventions instigated by Sonny allowed individuals to address multiple medical, psychological, legal, and logistical issues associated with vulnerable and marginalised populations at times convenient to them. Participants were thus empowered to act on their own accord and access context-specific help that could address structural impediments. Participants contributed to the running of the session and were considered as capable citizens rather than 'apparently inanimate things' (Freire, 1970:59) in need of social support. Hence, this radical alternative involves more than simply community involvement in SBI programmes. Instead, it involves the active recognition of structural inequalities that can be established, challenged, and ultimately transformed.

#### Towards a New Approach: The Role of SBIs

If we are to draw upon the key research findings of this thesis, a counter-hegemonic approach would require SBI practitioners to create an environment in which this transformative vision can be implemented. Despite the good intentions of staff, the outcome-orientated environment in which they operated meant their work was guided and constrained by a policy agenda structured by neoliberal perceptions of development that relies on individual willpower and self-actualisation. Unintentionally, this resulted in a conventional misrecognition between structural impediments and unemployment, which contributed to a self-blame and self-destructive culture amongst many participants. Adopting a radical approach to development would mean dismantling hegemonic forms of *plus sport* SBI work and

training and educating staff to encourage an environment in which young marginalised youth can act upon the structures of inequality and fashion their own lives. This returns to my earlier points regarding participants implementing and developing programmes that are culturally specific and attuned to their own cultural values, aspirations, and objectives and viewing them as capable citizens ready to challenge and redefine the world and construct *their own* futures (Darnell, 2010). Hence, training operational staff that represent and exemplify these counter-hegemonic values is a key priority.

Within this inclusive environment, educational programmes that offer a praxis for liberation is a necessity. Here, sport will retain its use as an ever-useful hook. However, it needs to be integrated with an educational programme that enables participants to critically assess issues of structural power, inequality, and social change. To revisit the key findings of this research, many young men were unaware of the structural impediments that have destabilised the labour markets of Neighbourhoods A and B over recent years. They were sociologically ‘blind’ to issues of power and blamed themselves for their unemployment, justifying the dominant vision of unemployed inner city youth as work-shy, lazy, and unproductive. In countering this, a restructuring of education programmes to one that allows participants to ‘regain their humanity’ (Freire, 1970:68) via overcoming their condition of marginality is required. This would involve a restructuring of staff-participant relationships, whereby educational programmes are no longer environments where ‘the coach, community organizer, or development worker subjects his or her gaze over marginalized youth as the expert policing those who are in need of re-education’ (Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011:14) but, instead, is a programme in which a dyadic relationship exists between coach and participant. Staff must come to realise their role as one where ‘those who authentically commit themselves to

people must re-examine themselves constantly' (Freire, 1970:60) for true liberation to occur; and for participants, the educational environment should be an environment in which they can recognise, critically reflect, and act upon the social, economic, and political impediments that they face. This is not simply a case of *plus sport* SBIs becoming more student-centred. Rather, it is a complete overhaul, which will enable marginalised young men to realise one's consciousness and how to take action against the marginality and oppression they face. In this transformative vision, SBIs will represent a collective praxis for social transformation.

Implementing these transformations will not be easy, and I fully appreciate the difficulties *plus sport* SBIs will face in adopting this more radical approach. It may be that policy makers wish to adjust SBI programmes in line with some of the more conventional approaches documented in this thesis. However, based on the findings of this research, I hope policy makers will realise that until there is a refocus away from paid employment being equated with positive 'outcomes', a continuation of their current form will merely result in a prolongation and extension of the social issues documented in this thesis: the Outcasts will continue to maintain their dole-dependent lifestyles, pursuing ever 'riskier' leisure lives, receiving criticism, vilification and stigmatisation from labour-attached members of society. The Conformists will continue to be disillusioned and depressed at their failure to find stable employment in Neighbourhood B and resort to a cycle of self-blame and individual liability. In Neighbourhood B, the Aspirationists will continue the inevitable 'churn' between low-paid insecure jobs that help sustain the new post-industrial capitalist economy of East London and periods of unemployment; and the Road Boys will follow along their self-destructive path of tit-for-tat gang violence, continue to exploit the multiple opportunities for consumer-based criminality (and in the process, cause misery to

many innocent members of the public), and persist in peddling drugs—an entrepreneurial activity that offers a rational alternative to low-paid insecure work—in our streets, parks, and neighbourhoods.

Perhaps the only option, beyond the level of locally and regionally based SBI services, is a radical transformation relating to macro-level social and economic policies. For Wacquant (2008), the only strategy for reducing the deleterious effects of labour market restructuring is the creation of a ‘citizens wage’ or basic income grants accorded to all members of society (Wacquant, 1996), the assurance of widespread and inclusive admittance to ‘housing, health and transportation’, and access to ‘free education and job training’ (Wacquant, 2008:279). Certainly, this is a viable option that would address the issue of social marginality in the post-industrial moment and would reduce the need for SBIs that are not sufficient in making even a sizeable impact upon structural unemployment. These revisions, however, are, as Wacquant (1996:131) accepts, a ‘tall order that requires a thorough revision of our accepted conceptions of work, money, time, utility welfare and justice’, and this utopian vision would require a drastic revolution and overturn of current political ideals.

#### Global Capitalism and the Need for Change

Addressing these issues via the highly dubious assumption that an attachment to the labour market is a panacea for all is clearly inadequate, and SBI policies have a role to play in smoothing out the fragmented transitions that are occurring across post-industrial communities today. Even if SBI policy makers decide that the recommendations of this thesis are unrealistic, impractical, or idealistic, one thing is certain: de-industrialisation, the political-economic model of neoliberalism, and the advent of globalisation have all exacerbated youth unemployment, crime, and social

inequality, and the current job creation schemes, social interventions, and SBIs are clearly insufficient in addressing these issues. Across many post-industrial cities in the world today, young men and women continue to become lumpenised as labour market restructuring destructs embedded employment prospects and flood the labour market with low-paid 'flexible' post-industrial labour. Young men continue to be relegated to the spatially concentrated inner city neighbourhoods and clumps of social housing, recognised as urban badlands where violence, crime, and marginalisation are the social order. They scramble and churn between low-paid insecure employment and periods of prolonged unemployment or take a diverging trajectory and explore the multitude of criminal opportunities spawned in the consumer capitalist era. As inequalities and social misery continue to exist, a profound reform is therefore required in policy that is truly radical and transformative.

This thesis has attempted to project an image of these places and its people as a product of structural transformations and historically embedded habitus. This allows a consideration of young men and their collective experiences of unemployment without falling into the trap of perceiving the unemployed and marginalised as those who lack moral judgments of character, and instead, it has allowed me to consider the structurally imposed forces that manifest at micro level. It is the young men of Neighbourhoods A and B who represent the human cost of these structural transformations.



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