

Unspectacular Youth? Evening Leisure Space and Youth Culture in Sheffield, c.1960-c.1989

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Abstract

This thesis is a sustained look at ordinary young people's leisure patterns and changing lifestyles in Sheffield between 1960 and 1989. It argues that the post-war period witnessed dramatic and significant changes in the types of leisure opportunities available to young people and, correspondingly, to their lifestyles and patterns of consumption in the leisure; this is particularly the case for young women. This thesis examines the intricacies of young people's engagement with youth culture, where they socialised, and how they socialised, with a level of detail not afforded by national studies of youth culture. It argues that understanding the development and impact of regulatory practices with regards to evening leisure space is essential to understanding the leisure choices of young people. By charting and examining the impact of Sheffield's licensing magistrates and other local authorities, this thesis demonstrates how heavily young people's access to evening leisure space was mediated and controlled by authoritative bodies, and how it was influenced by wider societal concerns about young people's drinking, sexuality, and morality. Ultimately, it argues that the development of evening leisure space forms a central, and often overlooked, part of young people's engagement with youth culture.

Centring on young people's use of evening leisure space, this thesis argues that there were many ways of engaging with youth culture, influenced by factors including access to disposable income, social groupings, and parental tolerance. It posits that personal cultural interests such as music and fashion tastes, while an important part of identity curation and presentation of the self, were only one set of a wider series of factors shaping how young people engaged with consumption in the leisure sphere. As such, this thesis argues that a close-focus study such as this offers important insights into the lived experience of ordinary young people in post-war Britain.

This thesis is 79,571 words.

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List of Abbreviations

AWP	Amusement With Prize
CCCS	Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
DEED	Department for Employment and Economic Development
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
PTE	Public Transport Executive
SCR	Sheffield Community Radio
SYLTE	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
UB40	Unemployment Benefit Form 40
YOP	Youth Opportunities Programme
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

Chapter I: Introduction

This thesis is a study of evening leisure space, youth culture, and identity in post-war Britain. It is based on the premise that the lives of young people changed in meaningful, significant, and dramatic ways between 1960 and 1989. Understanding how these changes arose, what drove them, and how they impacted on the lives and experiences of young people provides a fuller understanding of youth culture in post-war Britain.

The focus of this thesis, as the title suggests, is not on spectacular youth. This is a study of ordinary young people, of their experiences, and of their relationship with youth culture. A significant majority of historical and sociological writing on the lives of young people has focused on the spectacular, be it the juvenile delinquent, the student protestor, the teenage gang member, or the teenage punk, goth, or skinhead. Far less attention has been paid to those young people who did not grab newspaper headlines or outrage authorities and society alike. However, despite not being spectacular in the traditional sense of the word, these young people grew up in a period of swift and dramatic change. These changes constituted part of a significant transition that saw the lifestyles and experiences of adolescents become increasingly separated from wider society, and that saw their economic and cultural power drive substantial cultural and societal change.

This study will challenge the lack of focus on the ordinary and unspectacular, suggesting that the emphasis placed on the traditionally spectacular has distracted from the varied and meaningful ways that young people engaged with youth culture in post-war Britain. Focusing on the lives and experiences of young people in Sheffield between the years

1960 and 1989, this thesis will chart the development of youth culture over the post-war period through the emergence of dedicated evening leisure space for young people in the city, as well as by re-evaluating the relationship between young people and youth culture through an exploration of their lifestyles, behaviours, and use of these emerging spaces. It charts the dramatic changes to young people's lifestyles over a short space of time, and examines the role of these spaces in changing traditional ideas about social identities, particularly gender and sexuality. It explores the increasing separation of youth leisure from other forms of leisure, and the impact that this had on young people's behaviours and lifestyles.

The development of youth culture, but particularly the meteoric rise in the popularity of drinking and clubbing, challenged previous ideals of 'rational' leisure.¹ The pursuit of hedonistic pleasure through drinking and dancing clashed with the experience and expectations of older generations, and with authority-led ideas of leisure as regulated and respectable. Evening leisure spaces became increasingly 'removed from the normative gaze of adults', in effect making them 'alien territory'.² The development of spaces dedicated to the pursuits of hedonistic pleasure of youth created a spatial dimension to youth culture, providing an environment in which age was the defining and uniting feature. The development of these spaces are central to the youth cultural experiences of teenagers and young adults in post-war Britain.

The regulation of these spaces is an important part of the story. Influencing the type of spaces operating, their hours of operation, and the way these spaces were used, local

¹ For an introduction to the concept of rational leisure see Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885* (London, 1978); Catriona M. Parratt, 'Making Leisure Work: Women's Rational Recreation in Late Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Sport History* 26.3 (1999), pp. 471-487; Kate Bradley, 'Rational Recreation in the Age of Affluence: The Café and Working-Class Youth in London, c.1939-1965' in Erika Rappaport, Sandra Trudgen Dawson and Mark J. Crowley (eds), *Consuming Behaviours: Identity, Politics and Pleasure in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2015), pp. 71-86.

² Louise Jackson, 'The Coffee Club Menace', *Cultural and Social History* 5.3 (2015), p. 290.

authorities played an important part in shaping the cultural output of a city. This thesis examines how one licensing committee responded to these changes. It details how the swift pace of change left the authorities conflicted about how best to regulate these spaces offering new and unfamiliar forms of leisure. It details how, by the 1980s, the licensing magistrates' stance was being attacked as 'wholly arbitrary, unreasonable and capricious' by companies who accused the authorities of being out of touch.³ This study examines the impact that these organisations could have on shaping nightlife, and in the varied ways they chose to approach the changing cultural landscape. It offers an insight into the thoughts of older generations when faced with an increasingly visible and influential youth.

This thesis is also the story of a northern city in the post-war period. It charts Sheffield's journey from boom to bust, and from production to consumption, which was mirrored in other places across the country. It is the story of how the physical landscape of the city changed, how it adapted to the precarious post-industrial economic climate, and how the city dealt with large-scale job losses. It details how the night-time economy began to dominate large swathes of the city centre, creating a spatial and temporal dimension to the city in which youth was dominant. This thesis is Sheffield's story, but it is one that was repeated across the country.

This thesis is a study of the ordinary and the extraordinary, of ordinary young people living through a period of extraordinary change. It is not primarily interested in questions of cultural authenticity, and does not seek to draw boundaries around youth cultural experience. It is in this way that this thesis questions the sustained focus on spectacular youth, arguing that there are important historical changes to be documented in the lives and experiences of seemingly unspectacular young people.

³ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 18/01/1982-04/01/1983, p. 4.

Thesis overview

By focusing on young people's use of evening leisure space this thesis offers a new way of understanding youth culture in post-war Britain. Further, this thesis is an intervention in studies of culture and identity that seek to maintain a dichotomy between popular and alternative cultures. The aims and focus of this thesis are fivefold:

Firstly, this thesis uses evening leisure space as the central nexus around which questions of lifestyle and identity can be explored. Charting the development of evening leisure spaces, primarily youth-oriented evening leisure spaces such as pubs, bars, and nightclubs, provides a model to explore how, and in what ways, the lifestyles of young people changed over the course of the post-war period, as well as allowing for a better understanding of how these spaces were utilised by young people. The focus on evening leisure space is twofold; firstly, by exploring the development and regulation of these spaces we gain an insight into the influence of local government in shaping and directing the types of leisure that young people had access to; secondly, an exploration of the public sites of youth leisure can offer an understanding of how young people's lifestyles changed, and the role that these newly-developed spaces played in forming young people's cultural landscape.

Secondly, by centring this thesis on youth cultural developments in Sheffield over the course of the post-war period it has been possible to explore the intricacies of developments to young people's lifestyles. Doing so allows for a fuller understanding of the lifestyles of ordinary young people, and in exploring the experiences of these young people this thesis will add to a growing scholarship on the 'everyday' experience. Further, this approach has allowed me to explore changing behaviours, gender experiences, and sexuality, which can reveal important details about wider societal change when studied in a localised and more empirical context.

Thirdly, by employing a chronological approach that assesses change over time, rather than by focusing on a particular youth cultural event, youth cultural group or set of groups, this thesis places the experiences and lifestyles of young people at the foreground. Rather than using particular movements as a lens through which to explore wider cultural, societal, and political change this thesis positions the changing lifestyles of youth at the centre of this research. By approaching youth culture in this way this study offers the opportunity for comparison between different generations of young people, as well as a better understanding of how and why the lifestyles of young people changed so dramatically over the course of thirty years. This methodology, when combined with the focus on evening leisure space in one city, provides a unique approach that highlights wider trends and changes in young people's engagement with youth culture.

Fourthly, the historical and sociological scholarship that dominates studies of young people has positioned subculture and popular culture as binary opposites, often preferring to focus on the spectacle of subcultural movements. This thesis suggests that there was a myriad of ways that young people engaged with youth culture in post-war Britain that makes the binary paradigm between alternative and the mainstream untenable. By shedding light on the experiences of ordinary, or 'unspectacular' youth this thesis bridges the gap in the existing literature between popular culture and subculture by placing the experiences and consumption practices of young people, rather than the cultural outputs and products of youth culture, at the centre of this research. By removing the dichotomy between popular forms of culture and alternative forms of culture, it has been possible to better understand the interplay between the two. In so doing this thesis gives equal focus to the youth cultural experiences of teenage girls and young women. With many studies of youth focusing on the visible subcultural male, or the male juvenile delinquent, work on adolescent girls has tended to focus on the 'bedroom space', or instead has analysed their role as consumers of the popular

culture industry.

Finally, this thesis will challenge the extent to which scholars of youth culture have focused on the issue of cultural authenticity. There is a need to reassess the relationship between alternative cultures, popular culture, and commerce, and to better understand the ways in which ordinary young people interacted with different forms of youth cultures. Despite criticisms levied at subcultural scholars for their narrow focus and overly theoretical approach, the issue of authenticity remains at the heart of many studies of youth culture. In challenging both the concept of cultural authenticity and its centrality to studies of youth culture, this thesis will present a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between youth culture and identity that enables a wider body of experiences to be heard.

This thesis argues that evening leisure space formed a central part of the lifestyles of young people, providing a space for them to socialise away from adult supervision. As the period progressed these spaces were increasingly caught between the commercial need to respond to the changing desires of young people and the regulations placed by an increasingly out of touch licensing body. Further, by understanding how young people moved between these spaces we can see that the upheld binary between alternative and mainstream does not map onto everyday experience. Young people navigated these spaces, and the wider cultural landscape, in a myriad of ways.

This thesis is structured in two parts. After the introduction, chapters two, three, and four chart the development and regulation of evening leisure space in Sheffield, while chapters five and six explore the different ways in which young people engaged with youth culture, and the impact that these spaces had on young people's lifestyles, behaviours, and cultural choices.

Chapter two focuses on the initial emergence of evening leisure space in Sheffield. Charting the move from hired venues in church halls, to the opening of dedicated beat clubs,

to the eventual opening of the city's first licensed nightclub in 1966 this chapter demonstrates the pace at which spaces were being developed in this period. It also shows how existing spaces such as the pub, were undergoing a period of renegotiation as young people carved out spaces for themselves in the city. This was a period in which licensing bodies were forced to develop a new approach to the emergence of evening leisure aimed at a young audience, and this chapter details the response of the local authorities and licensing magistrates to these changes. It argues that the policy of consolidation that was pursued by the licensing magistrates in direct response to the emergence of teen beat clubs had a significant and lasting impact on the landscape of Sheffield's evening leisure spaces.

Chapter three details the different ways that youth cultural venues diversified between the late 1960s and late 1970s. It demonstrates the extent to which young people's lifestyles had changed in a relatively short space of time, with a number of late-night licensed venues providing the space for adolescents and young adults to socialise until the early hours. This chapter argues that the diversification of these spaces marks an important trend in the wider development of youth culture in Britain, highlighting evening leisure space and late-night socialising as a primary activity of a significant majority of young people. It is also this period which sees the rise of alcohol consumption as an increasingly important part of young people's leisure choices; the development of bars such as the Stone House provided an alternative to traditional public houses, creating spaces that were designed specifically to appeal to young people. Where traditional public houses had been hostile to groups of female drinkers, these new bars provided a space for young women to drink and dance, marking a significant and important shift in the leisure opportunities available to women. Finally, this chapter explores the changing nature of Sheffield's nightclubs; an increasing number of venues opened in this period, appealing to a varied range of cultural tastes, and demonstrated the commercial power of young consumers on the city's cultural landscape. Sheffield's

licensing magistrates and police were continuing to develop new strategies to tackle these swift changes, becoming increasingly critical of venues that were challenging their understandings of what a licensed venue should look like.

The swift development of evening leisure space in a very short period, and the corresponding changes to young people's lifestyles, came to a head in the 1980s. Chapter four explores the way that local authorities dealt with nightlife in Sheffield in two different ways; Sheffield City Council adopted a ground-breaking policy of cultural regeneration, offering significant financial support to the Leadmill community centre and nightclub while, at the same time, the licensing magistrates were developing and pursuing a policy of need that saw them actively restricting the number of licensed venues in the city. At the same time as Sheffield's licensing magistrates announced their policy of need they became embroiled in a court case with Mecca Leisure Ltd. over plans to redevelop their Tiffany's nightclub. By the 1980s the licensing magistrates were having a significant impact on the types of venues operating in the city. This chapter explores the role of local authority in shaping and influencing the youth culture that young people had access to, arguing, ultimately, that this relationship was complex but was not necessarily one of opposition.

Chapter five examines the impact that these developments to evening leisure space in the city had on young people's lifestyles and behaviours. It explores the reaction of wider society to the emergence of a more visible youth culture in the early 1960s, and the problems faced by early teen beat club the King Mojo. The chapter then moves on to assess the impact that these newly developed spaces had on young people's lifestyles, arguing that by the 1970s and 1980s the 'weekend lifestyle', i.e. socialising in pubs, bars, and nightclubs on a Friday and Saturday night, was an established part of many young people's lives, and that the development of evening leisure spaces was central to this. The emergence of evening leisure space provided an increasingly anonymised form of socialising, free from the supervisory

adult gaze, where new behaviours could be performed. The emergence of these spaces had a particularly marked impact on young women, with bars and nightclubs increasingly targeting female consumers, significantly widening the leisure choices available to them. Further, this chapter argues that these developments were symbolic of a wider shift which saw a move away from production to consumption, and where city centres became sites of commerce and hedonistic pleasure.

Chapter six explores the myriad of ways that young people engaged with youth culture. It argues that while certain venues were understood as mainstream or alternative, these labels had only a minimal bearing on how young people identified with youth culture on a personal and individual level. It highlights the importance of friendship groups, clothing choices, and access to disposable income, indicating that the music played in bars and nightclubs was only one of a number of factors influencing where young people chose to socialise. Using oral testimony this chapter focuses on the ‘othering’ of the mainstream, suggesting that while young people adopted wider cultural frameworks in their personal negotiations with youth culture, they rarely fitted into tight subcultural groupings, and further that their sense of difference was articulated as being in opposition to a loosely defined other.

This thesis provides a snapshot of sweeping and significant change. The types of leisure opportunities available to young people expanded significantly in the post-war period, and had an unprecedented impact on their lifestyles and social behaviours. While this study focuses on one city, it provides an insight into changes that were occurring across Britain.

Finally, it will be useful here to briefly outline the chronological scope of the thesis, and what is meant by the term ‘youth’. Youth is a socially constructed category and as such the definitions and meanings attributed to the term vary.⁴ In this thesis youth is taken to mean

⁴ For an overview on approaches to youth culture see Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford, 1998);

the period between a person beginning to socialise regularly away from the home and the point at which they ‘settle down’, i.e. purchasing a house or getting married. The difference between adolescence and youth is important; while adolescence is a life stage or period of transition, youth is a status, imbued with specific ideals and characteristics. As such, it is impossible to place a specific age range on the term, and the ages at which young people reach these milestones changes depending on the period. However, a number of indicators can be used to enable youth to be used as a useful analytical category in the history of post-war Britain.

The age at which a young person leaves compulsory education marks an important point of progression; rising from 15, as set in the Butler Education Act 1944, to 16 in 1972 this age marked the point at which a young person found full-time work or entered further training. Education grants gave young people entering Higher or Further Education access to a level of disposable income, while those who entered the workplace were able to spend their wage on a range of new commodities aimed at the youth market. It is the period after leaving school, but before marriage and children when young people have access to larger amounts of disposable income, making this period as the point at which they engage most heavily with youth culture. Further, with rising affluence and an increased standard of living for the working classes, many young people were often free to spend their disposable income as they wished, rather than using their wages to supplement the family income.⁵

Over the course of the twentieth century the age of first marriage and first child rose significantly, elongating the amount of time that young people were free from significant financial restrictions. The average age of marriage dropped significantly after the Second World War, reaching 23 for men and 21 for women in 1969, before rising to 26 and 24

David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970* (Basingstoke, 2008).

⁵ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London, 2005), p. 347.

respectively by 1990.⁶ The rising age of marriage, increasing numbers of people cohabiting before marriage, and increasing numbers of people staying in higher education or further education contributed to the lengthening of youth in post-war Britain. Further, oral testimony gathered over the course of this research pointed to a continuing engagement with youth cultural activities into the twenties and thirties by the end of the 1980s. With these factors taken into account the term youth can be taken to mean the ages between 15 and the early twenties, raising to the mid-twenties towards the end of the period.

This thesis charts the development of evening leisure space in Sheffield between 1960 and 1989. While a more visible form of youth culture emerged in the post-war years, it was not until the 1960s, in Sheffield at least, that dedicated evening leisure space aimed at a young audience emerged and as such the first dedicated evening leisure space for young people in Sheffield was the teenage beat club Club 60, which opened in Sheffield in 1960. The opening of Club 60 marks a sensible point at which to begin an analysis of the development of evening leisure spaces in the city.

This thesis ends in 1989 for several reasons. Firstly, it was felt that youth culture changed in important ways in the 1990s and into the 2000s. Following the rise of acid house in the late 1980s the relationship between youth culture and space shifted in important ways, with events being taken out of the licensed city centre venues and into abandoned warehouses and fields, and unlicensed and unregulated gatherings becoming a common occurrence. The cultural legacy of acid house was significant; it changed the style of music being played in many nightclubs, with a focus on dance music and dance remixes dominating the club scene. The rise of superclubs such as Ministry of Sound and Gatecrasher further provided a different

⁶ 'Age and previous marital status at marriage', Office for National Statistics (2014). Data archived at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160903202644/http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/ageandpreviousmaritalstatusatmarriage> [last accessed 22/06/2017].

clubbing experience. The wider cultural landscape changed in significant ways after the 1980s. Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands have highlighted the growth of large-scale nightlife developments in the 1990s and 2000s, arguing that urban nightscapes were made and then remade in the 1990s and 2000s with the rise of Urban Entertainment Destinations (UEDs).⁷ The 2003 Licensing Act changed the cultural landscape further, introducing late-night bars to city centres. This is a study of pre-internet youth; the rise of the internet in the 1990s had a significant impact on the way young people spent their leisure time, how they communicated with each other, and how they built their social groups. Considering these factors, it was felt that 1989 marked a sensible cut-off point for this research.

Youth in Post-War Britain

This thesis is a study of the lives and cultural experiences of young people in post-war Sheffield. Sheffield, a northern industrial city, underwent swift and significant change in the latter part of the twentieth century, which shaped both the landscape of the city and the lives of the young people who moved through it. Declining industry, rising unemployment, and a shift towards the service industry were some of the key changes experienced by the city in the post-war years.⁸ These changes, however, were not unique to Sheffield and could be seen in industrial areas across England, Wales, and parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland.⁹ While the experience of Sheffield was more rooted in the decline of industry than many other towns and cities of the period, this thesis examines broader changes to the lives and experiences of

⁷ Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands, *Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces and Corporate Power* (London, 2003), p. 3.

⁸ David Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (2nd edn, Lancaster, 2005), p. 280.

⁹ Nicholas Crafts, 'The British Economy' in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (2nd edn, Harlow, 2007), p. 10.

young people that can be found at a national, as well as a local, level. This thesis is, then, both a study of Sheffield and a study of broader changes that affected the lives of young people in post-war Britain.

The lives of young people changed in important ways in this period: ideas about class, identity, age, and consumption were changing how young people viewed themselves, while the rise of cheap mass-produced clothing, the proliferation of popular music, and an increasing number of leisure options were changing how young people spent their leisure time. Arthur Marwick, in his survey of British society in the post-war years, argued that ‘the very pace of technological change, the very multiplicity of new inputs, meant the opening of a gulf between the proponents of the new culture and the older generation.’¹⁰ The post-war period was a period in which the cultures and lifestyles of young people were becoming increasingly distinct from older generations. This is not to suggest that young people and youth culture existed in a vacuum; wider changes to working and living conditions, increased access to disposable income and technological developments meant that post-war society was increasingly concerned with leisure and popular culture, and the lifestyles and cultures of younger generations were developing alongside these wider cultural and societal changes.

Recognising consumption as playing a key role in post-war society, Douglas Kellner suggested that this has reoriented how people perceive themselves in the postmodern world. While the ‘locus of modern identity revolved around one’s occupation, one’s function in the public sphere (or family)’, he argued that postmodern identity ‘revolves around leisure, [and is] centred on looks, images, and consumption’.¹¹ Consumption became one of the most important ways through which young people could curate their identity; by purchasing

¹⁰ Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (4th edn, London, 2003), p. 98.

¹¹ Douglas Kellner, ‘Popular Culture and the Construction of Postmodern Identities’, in Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (eds), *Modernity and Identity* (Oxford, 1992), p. 153.

clothes, music, technology, magazines, and leisure opportunities, young people's identity became far more visible, and their image came, in many ways, to act as a marker for their interests and their lifestyle. Andy Bennett has further pointed to the importance of consumption, arguing that the rise of post-war consumerism offered young people the chance to adopt new and self-constructed identities.¹² Jon Savage argued that, by 1944, 'for the first time, youth had become its own target market... it had become a discrete age group with its own rituals, rights, and demands.'¹³ This market is what came to dominate post-war understandings of youth, and is the primary focus of this thesis. Exploring how leisure opportunities available to young people changed and developed, how young people utilised these spaces, and how their consumption practices shaped and informed their lifestyles, this thesis argues that the lives of post-war youth were increasingly defined by social experiences outside of the household, and that understanding the development and regulation of these evening leisure spaces so central to social experiences can offer important insight into the cultural practices of ordinary young men and women.

While Jon Savage notes that the term 'teenager' began to be used by journalists and advertisers in the 1940s, the term 'youth culture', which arguably denotes a lifestyle as much as an age category, emerged most prominently in the 1960s. Bryan Wilson, a sociologist at the University of Oxford, began writing about youth culture in the early 1960s. However, historian of youth culture David Fowler argued that Wilson's definition of youth culture was 'so broad... and imprecise' that it included almost anything relating to young people.¹⁴ Fowler's focus on youth culture in the interwar years aimed to illuminate how far it 'represents new ways of living pursued by different categories of youth.'¹⁵ Youth culture is

¹² Andy Bennett, *Cultures of Popular Music* (London, 2001), p. 21.

¹³ Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth 1875-1945* (London, 2007), p. xiii.

¹⁴ David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

inextricably linked with the concept of adolescence, and more specifically the idea that being an adolescent is a life stage, rather than something to be opted in or out of. Coleman et al. have argued that adolescence can be understood as a distinct period of one's life: 'it makes sense to consider adolescence as a transition, while at the same time acknowledging that within this stage there are many turning points'.¹⁶ These turning points, such as starting puberty, leaving school, starting work, beginning romantic relationships, and forming friendship groups, are, for the most part, first experienced during, or specific to, this life stage. At the heart of many theories and research about youth culture is the belief that it is something distinct to this age group. Thus, youth culture can be understood to encompass many different lifestyle choices and behaviours that differentiate young people from the rest of society.

The notion that youth experience is different to adulthood is not exclusive to post-war youth. David Fowler's approach to youth culture argues against the traditional view that youth culture emerged in the 1950s and was predominantly a working-class phenomenon. Fowler suggests that youth culture emerged amongst university students in the 1920s and 1930s. He goes as far as to argue that 'youth culture was an important cultural phenomenon that reshaped communities, institutions and values in the period between about 1920 and the late 1960s', thereby suggesting that the biggest influence of youth culture came far before the traditionally articulated date of the 1950s.¹⁷ While the existence of a form of youth culture can be found before the 1950s, widespread affluence and the emergence of a dedicated teenage market in the post-war period signalled the emergence of a truly popular youth culture, engaged in by a significant majority of young people, in the 1950s and 1960s.

This rise of a visible youth culture has drawn extended focus from political and social

¹⁶ John C. Coleman and Leo B. Hendry, *The Nature of Adolescence* (3rd edn, London, 1999), p. 11.

¹⁷ Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain*, p. xv.

commentators, politicians, and academics alike. The abundance of academic writing on youth culture in post-war Britain is testament to the significant change this period saw. However, where historical writing is concerned, many historians of post-war Britain have focused on youth as only one category of change to be analysed in the post-war years. It was argued in 2012 that ‘though it would be over-stating matters to suggest that young people have been written out of the British past, they have rarely formed the primary focus of historical study.’¹⁸ Where historians have focused on the lives of young people, writing on youth culture has tended to favour the spectacular. Bill Osgerby highlighted the extent to which historians of youth culture have focused on distinct groups of young people in his sweeping overview of British post-war youth culture, *Youth in Britain Since 1945*. Osgerby argued, with an ode to Churchill's famous speech, that ‘never, in the field of social history, has so much been written by so many about so few. In contrast, most young people have been comparatively “normal” and “ordinary” in their cultural orientations and stylistic preferences.’¹⁹ Osgerby's assertion is noteworthy for two key reasons: firstly, it highlights the extent to which ‘ordinary’ and ‘normal’ young people have been absent from the pages of social history; secondly, it demonstrates that spectacular youth subcultures have tended to dominate academic research on youth culture.

Osgerby's argument also highlights an issue central to the focus of this thesis: what is ‘ordinary’ youth, and how does one define it? Andy Bennett argued that the notion of ‘everyday life’ is a ‘culturally constructed and highly contested terrain’.²⁰ As with ‘everyday life’, the concept of ‘ordinary’ is the product of wider cultural constructs. Debates about ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, and a focus on ‘authentic’ experience has resulted in a view of

¹⁸ Jon Garland, Keith Gildart, Anna Gough-Yates, Paul Hodkinson, Bill Osgerby, Lucy Robinson, John Street, Pete Webb and Matthew Worley, ‘Youth Culture, Popular Music and the End of “Consensus” in Post-War Britain’, *Contemporary British History* 26.3 (2012), p. 265.

¹⁹ Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 1998), p.74.

²⁰ Andy Bennett, *Culture and Everyday Life* (London, 2005), p. 4.

culture which often dismisses popular culture as crass, commercialised, and of little cultural value. The focus on certain forms of youth culture by historians and sociologists has arguably been driven by attempts to categorise and identify these youth groups. Certain post-war youth cultures encompassed distinct forms of dress, musical tastes, and more often than not specific media and popular cultural reactions. It is for this reason that those ‘ordinary’ and ‘normal’ young people, as less easily definable and less spectacular, have gone unnoticed. This thesis begins to rectify this imbalance. By limiting the geographical scope of this research to Sheffield it has been possible to focus more closely on the way young people engage with youth culture. By focusing primarily on young people’s use of evening leisure space this thesis has been able to better access the cultural experiences of a wide range of Sheffield’s youth between the 1960s and the 1980s, thus making it possible to better understand what it means to be ‘ordinary’ and ‘normal’, and provide an approach that encourages a more comprehensive history of young people. It is for this reason that there is little discussion of drug use in this thesis. Moreover, it is argued here that the lines drawn between ‘alternative’ and ‘mainstream’ often do not correspond with the realities of how many young people engaged with elements of youth culture.

‘Authentic’ experiences: understanding the division between alternative and popular culture

The focus on spectacular youth cultures that has come to dominate much writing on youth is, in many ways, a legacy of subcultural theory. Subcultural theory has dominated the field of youth cultural research and has had an important legacy, shaping many later

approaches to youth culture. Subcultural research created a dichotomy whereby the subculture was positioned as separate, and in opposition to, wider forms of popular culture, and this dichotomy has continued in approaches to histories of youth culture. First emerging in the 1910s and 1920s under the Chicago school of cultural theory, the notion of subcultural groupings emerged as a way of understanding ‘social and cultural deviance.’²¹ In the British context, subcultural research first emerged in the 1960s at the University of Birmingham’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). The subcultural research of the 1960s and 1970s was the first sustained academic reaction to the increasing visibility and influence of youth culture in British society and continues to dominate the approach of many academics of youth culture and subculture.

Central to CCCS theories of youth subcultures was the school’s approach to the relationship between culture, in a broader sense, and subculture, and it is in the specific definitions of culture regarding youth that have important implications for the scope and outline of this thesis. John Clarke et al. defined culture as:

the way, the forms, in which groups ‘handle’ the raw material of their social and material existence... the ‘culture’ of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive ‘way of life’ of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of belief, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life.²²

Most significant in this definition is the understanding of culture as a ‘way of life’ and this view has come to dominate interpretations of subculture, and has had important implications for the study of youth culture more broadly. The CCCS argued that subcultures continued to ‘exist within, and coexist with, the more inclusive culture of the class from which they

²¹ Shane Blackman, ‘Youth Subcultural Theory: A Critical Engagement with the Concept, its Origins and Politics, from the Chicago School to Postmodernism’, *Journal of Youth Studies* 8.1 (2005), p. 3.

²² John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, ‘Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A Theoretical Overview’, in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds), *Resistance through Rituals* (London, 1993) p. 10.

spring.²³ While the CCCS recognised that youth cultures existed alongside other cultural influences, it was their positioning of subcultures as resistance and their focus on class that have attracted the greatest criticisms.

The CCCS understood subcultures as very specific reactions to the position of youth within a class culture. In this way, the study of subcultures came to be closely associated with a level of class consciousness and understood as a sustained reaction against this class reality. According to the Birmingham school ‘subculture was, no less, a political battleground between the classes’.²⁴ In *Resistance Through Rituals* Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson presented youth subculture as the result of teenagers resisting the ‘parent’ working class culture through an appropriation of cultural symbols, or bricolage.²⁵ The culture of the family, and of the neighbourhood, was part of the lived reality of British teenagers in the post-war period, but they navigated adolescence and young adulthood in new ways that were increasingly separate from family and neighbourhood connections.

The class-based approach of CCCS has since been challenged as simplistic by many historians who work within subcultural studies. Sean Albiez has argued that ‘it is untenable to draw an undeviating relationship between a head of household’s (usually father’s) occupation or employment status, and specific musical tastes and lifestyles.’²⁶ Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris have similarly argued that the CCCS focus on class is problematic, given ‘its unqualified equation of post-war patterns of youth consumerism with notions of working-class resistance.’²⁷ Bennett and Kahn-Harris continue, arguing that it is ‘difficult to accept the

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁴ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (3rd edn, Oxford, 1987), p. iv.

²⁵ John Clarke, ‘Style’, in *Resistance Through Rituals*, p. 178.

²⁶ Sean Albiez, ‘Know History!: John Lydon, Cultural Capital and the Prog/Punk Dialectic’, *Popular Music* 22.3 (2003), p. 366.

²⁷ Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris (eds), *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Hampshire, 2004), p. 7.

CCCS's argument that consumer goods were used uniformly in strategies of resistance.'²⁸

Michael Brake, while arguing that 'membership of a subculture necessarily involves membership of a class culture', posited that youth subcultures 'may be rebellious; they may celebrate and dramatise specific styles and values, but their rebellion seldom reaches an articulated opposition.'²⁹

Theories of culture and identity may offer a more appropriate framework for exploring the nature of youth culture in post-war Britain. In writing about class, Patrick Joyce noted that the changes in post-war Britain 'cannot be without considerable effect on people's sense of collective and personal identity'.³⁰ The rethinking of class concepts emerged in the context of post-war material affluence in the Western world when traditional approaches to class as linked to modes of production and industry were becoming somewhat outdated. The rise of non-essential consumption as a viable pursuit for many people in society, and of consumption as a way of bypassing traditional class associations, encouraged theorists to revise the concept of the individual in society. Joyce argued that the restructuring of Western economies away from the manual and industrial sectors has resulted in the 'dwindling' of the old manual 'working class', and the coming of 'post-industrial society'.³¹

The economic and cultural upheaval of British society in the twentieth century reignited interest in the concept of class as a way of explaining the relationship between, and stratification of, the population. Gareth Stedman-Jones notes that 'in England more than any other country, the word "class" has acted as a congested point of intersection between many competing, overlapping or simply differing forms of discourse'.³² In this way, he argues, the

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁹ Michael Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada* (London, 1985), pp. 6-7.

³⁰ Patrick Joyce, 'Introduction' in Patrick Joyce (ed.), *Class* (Oxford, 1995), p. 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³² Gareth Stedman-Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 2.

framework of class has formed ‘an inescapable component of any discussion of the course of English politics and society since the 1830s’.³³ In traditional class theories, notably the works of Marx and Weber, classes are understood in relation to modes of production, and by their role in historical processes.³⁴ However, as the twentieth century progressed it became more difficult to explain class along these lines; it is in this context that class once again came to influence analysis of post-war Britain. In his influential *The Uses of Literacy*, Richard Hoggart noted that ‘one cannot firmly distinguish workers from others by the amount of money earned... most steel-workers, for instance, are plainly working class though some earn more than many teachers who are not.’³⁵ When income and career were no longer enough to distinguish between classes, it became necessary to redefine and reimagine the role of class in British society.

This concept was adopted by post-modern scholars of subcultural studies. The strict structural approach of the CCCS was followed by the emergence of post-subcultural theory, best exemplified by the work of Andy Bennett, Steve Redhead, Sarah Thornton, Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn Harris, and David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl.³⁶ This scholarship is perhaps best defined by its focus on the individual: reacting to the structural focus of the CCCS, much of this scholarship was individualistic in its approach, arguing that young people’s lifestyles are ‘more fleeting and organised around individual lifestyle and consumption choices’ than the CCCS model allowed for.³⁷ Patrick Joyce noted that theories

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁴ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (London, 1998), p. 248.

³⁵ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* (6th edn, London, 2009), p. 9.

³⁶ Andy Bennett, *Culture and Everyday Life* (London, 2005); Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, (eds), *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (New York, 2004); David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl (eds), *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (Oxford, 2003); Steve Redhead, Derek Wynne and Justin O’Connor (eds), *The Clubcultures Reader: Readings in Popular Cultural Studies* (Oxford, 1998); Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge, 1995).

³⁷ Tracy Shildrick and Robert MacDonald, ‘In Defence of Subculture: Young People, Leisure and Social Divisions’, *Journal of Youth Studies* 9.2 (2006), p. 127.

of identity as mobile and conflictual have developed alongside the idea that ‘this is how identity actually is in the contemporary world’.³⁸

However, criticism has been levelled at post-subcultural scholars for misinterpreting the work of the CCCS. Sarah Thornton, for example, called the approach of the CCCS ‘empirically unworkable’, while Simon Frith argued that ‘for every youth “stylist” committed to a cult as a full-time creative task, there are hundreds of working-class kids who grow up in a loose membership of several groups and run with a variety of gangs.’³⁹ However, the CCCS were arguably aware of the limitations of their approach. John Clarke et al. recognised in *Resistance through Rituals* that ‘the great majority of working-class youth never enters into a tight or coherent sub-culture at all... their relation to the existing sub-cultures may be fleeting or permanent, marginal or central.’⁴⁰ Most importantly, they recognised that involvement in these subcultural groups ‘may be less significant than what young people do most of the time.’⁴¹ While the CCCS were aware of the limitations of their approach, their focus on the spectacular, and the experiences of a significant minority of youth, has had a lasting impact on youth research. Where post-subcultural work tried to move away from the class-based approach of the Birmingham school, much of this scholarship equally failed to focus on the experiences of the majority. Shildrick and MacDonald concluded that ‘the sorts of free cultural *choice* described by more postmodern, post-subcultural perspectives tend to be reserved for the more privileged sections of dominant cultural groups.’⁴²

One of the lasting legacies of early subcultural studies is the line of demarcation that has been drawn between subculture and popular culture. This separation continues to impact

³⁸ Joyce, ‘Introduction’ in *Class*, p. 4.

³⁹ Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 8; Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock'n'roll* (London, 1983), p. 220.

⁴⁰ Clarke et al., ‘Subcultures, Cultures and Class’, in *Resistance Through Rituals*, p. 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴² Shildrick and MacDonald, ‘In Defence of Subculture’, p. 133.

on the ways in which historians and sociologists approach youth culture and the ways in which youth culture is constructed and presented. The Birmingham school's interest lay only in subcultures that could be tightly defined, and where 'a response to their situation took a distinctive subcultural form', which immediately limited the scope of such research.⁴³ Where post-subcultural research claimed to move beyond the structured approach of earlier subcultural studies, the interest of scholars was still focused primarily on youths that were stylistically or behaviourally distinctive from the majority of teenagers and young adults.

The separation between subcultural studies and popular music studies has influenced the way scholars of youth culture present youth culture and identity. By continuing to frame subculture as a separate type of youth culture to popular or 'mainstream' youth culture a dichotomy has been created within academic research on youth wherein any crossover between the two is made difficult. Subculture has often been presented as 'the other', both in terms of subcultural participants as acting against popular culture, and by academics who deal with subculture as separate to wider popular culture. Sarah Thornton has argued that one of the biggest issues with existing academic work is a lack of critical analysis regarding authenticity. She argued that academics have tended to rely on 'binary oppositions typically generated by *us-versus-them* social maps' as well as combining academic work with 'a loaded colloquialism like the "mainstream"... ultimately depicting mainstream youth culture as an outpost of either "mass" or "dominant" culture.'⁴⁴ Dick Hebdige's seminal work *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* argued that subcultural participants used cultural commodities to subvert and challenge the status quo and resist 'mainstream' youth culture.⁴⁵ In the 1950s David Reissmann defined mainstream as involving audiences who 'passively accept commercially provided styles and meanings' and subcultures as involving audiences

⁴³ Clarke et al., 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', in *Resistance Through Rituals*, p. 16.

⁴⁴ Thornton, *Club Cultures*, p. 92.

⁴⁵ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, 1979), p. 102.

who ‘actively sought a minority style and interpreted it in accordance with subversive values. Thus the audience... manipulates the product to symbolise their values’.⁴⁶ This interpretation has remained, for the most part, unchallenged. Inherent in much research on post-war youth culture is the belief that the ‘mainstream’ is not a valuable form of culture, and that people’s relationship and engagement with the mainstream is defined by passivity and inauthenticity.

Thornton wished to problematise the notion of authenticity by suggesting that media and business, the driving forces behind cultural commerce, were ‘integral to the authentication of cultural practices’.⁴⁷ In *Club Cultures* Thornton demonstrated the different ways that scholars have mapped youth culture; throughout, she argued that regardless of theoretical differences, be it working-class or middle-class culture, subculture or postmodern youth culture, every academic has maintained the binary which places certain forms of youth culture against one another.⁴⁸ While academics have tried to problematise it, Thornton argued that nobody has challenged it. The continued separation of culture into distinct camps has tended to overlook and underplay the plurality and fluidity of culture. By limiting the geographical scope of this research, this thesis is a sustained attempt to explore the realities of young people’s engagement with youth culture, unrestricted by existing frameworks that place ‘alternative’ and ‘mainstream’ cultures as necessarily distinct and oppositional.

The defining marker of subcultural style has always been authenticity. A somewhat vague, but ideologically loaded term, authentic experience has long been the foundation upon which many studies of youth culture have been built. Hebdige argued that mainstream and subcultural styles were incompatible:

Each subculture moves through a cycle of resistance and diffusion... Subcultural deviance is simultaneously rendered ‘explicable’ and meaningless in the classrooms,

⁴⁶ David Reisman, ‘Listening to Popular Music’, *American Quarterly* 2.4 (1950), pp. 359-71.

⁴⁷ Thornton, *Club Cultures* p. 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

courts and media at the same time as the ‘secret’ objects of subcultural style are put on display in every high street record shop and chain-store boutique. Stripped of its unwholesome connotations, the style becomes fit for public consumption.⁴⁹

The central focus on authentic experience in studies of youth culture is due, in many ways, to the complicated relationship between notions of ‘authentic’ culture and experiences, and the consumption practices that are so central to young people’s engagement with youth culture. The supposed corruption of subcultural style by the youth market, and the impact of commercialisation on youth culture, is seen to diffuse and dilute the social and political meaning imbued in such styles. This dominating narrative of consumption with regards to youth subculture research continues to be influenced by the Birmingham school’s approach to the topic. Hebdige argued that style became ‘manipulated from above instead of being spontaneously created from below’ as a subculture became popularised.⁵⁰ John Clarke argued that subcultural style became diffused:

A particular style is dislocated from the context and group which generated it, and taken up with a stress on those elements which make it a ‘commercial proposition’, especially their novelty. From the standpoint of the subculture which generated it, the style exists as a *total lifestyle*; via the commercial nexus, it is transformed into a *novel consumption style*.⁵¹

However, Steve Redhead argued that ‘authentic’ subcultures ‘were produced by subcultural theorists, not the other way around. In fact, popular music and “deviant” youth styles never fitted together as harmoniously as some subcultural theory proclaimed.’⁵²

Andreas Wirsching has charted the changes in approaches to consumption by cultural theorists from the 1950s onwards. Between the 1950s and 1970s, Wirsching argues, cultural critics ‘saw both labour and consumption as alienated modes of living that left no room for

⁴⁹ Hebdige, *Subculture*, pp. 129-130.

⁵⁰ Dick Hebdige, ‘The Meaning of Mod’, in *Resistance Through Rituals*, p. 94.

⁵¹ Clarke, ‘Style’, in *Resistance Through Rituals*, p. 188.

⁵² ‘Rupert Weinzierl and David Muggleton ‘What is ‘Post-subcultural Studies’ Anyway?’ in Steve Redhead and Rupert Weinzierl (eds), *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (Oxford, 2003), p. 25.

genuine individuality'.⁵³ It is this discourse that has encouraged, and sustained, views of the commercialisation of subcultural goods as destroying the 'ethos' of each movement. This discourse was not limited to the immediate post-war era, however. In 2003, writer Shawn Levy was still describing later incarnations of Mod culture as 'parasitic'.⁵⁴ Consumption has long been regarded as one of the key parts of identity creation, and enabled young people to use their clothing, music, and lifestyle choices, to construct their own identity. By suggesting that consumption practices in the 'mainstream' are necessarily related to a passive relationship with youth culture gives a skewed version of youth culture and limits our understanding of young people's cultural experiences

Inherent in discussions about cultural authenticity is the issue of who defines what is authentic. It is these attempts to define certain forms of youth culture as 'authentic' or 'inauthentic' that has contributed to the separation of subculture and popular culture in youth culture research. In the introduction to a 2017 special issue about authenticity in *Rethinking History*, Patrick Finney argued that authenticity is 'not an inherent quality but rather the product of orchestration, performance and inter-subjective negotiation'.⁵⁵ Sarah Thornton began to problematise this focus on authenticity by suggesting that discourses of youth cultures are not 'innocent accounts of the way things really are, but... ideologies which fulfil specific cultural agendas of their beholders'.⁵⁶ Thornton's approach recognised that authenticity is a construction that serves to validate the choices of the young person, and exclude others who do not fit this mould. Many current understandings of subculture work within the paradigm set out by members of the subculture itself and are concerned with questions of 'how far' certain groups and behaviours can be understood to be 'authentic'.

⁵³ Andreas Wirsching, 'From Work to Consumption. Transatlantic Vision of Individuality in Modern Mass Society', *Contemporary European History* 20.1 (2011), p. 2.

⁵⁴ Shawn Levy, *Ready, Steady, Go!: Swinging London and the Invention of Cool* (London, 2003), p. 131.

⁵⁵ Patrick Finney, 'Introduction', *Rethinking History* 21.2 (2017), p. 134.

⁵⁶ Thornton, *Club Cultures*, p. 10.

Understanding youth culture in this way provides a limited spectrum of analysis and restricts the historian of youth culture to an approach which leaves very little room for manoeuvre between different forms of culture. Existing notions of authenticity in many subcultural studies have failed to take into account people's experiences and negotiations with their own identity, and fails to recognise the possibility of an active relationship with more popular forms of culture. Joanna Davis noted that much of CCCS's early work has been 'critiqued for assuming an inherent authenticity and static character easily distinguishable as oppositional to "mainstream" culture'.⁵⁷ Discussing the folk revival of the 1960s, Michael Brocken argued that 'there are indefinite ways of discussing music', and by extension music consumption by young adults, 'and not all of them fall within the canonical nature of "authenticity" and "value"'.⁵⁸

Authenticity is the basis upon which many subcultural participants engage with the scene and this preoccupation with authentic behaviours and lifestyles has continued to attract the attention of scholars of subcultural movements. Stanley Cohen, author of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, noted that subcultures, in the ways in which they are lived and experienced by their members, 'do not always coincide with what they are supposed to stand for'.⁵⁹ A wider understanding of youth culture is needed in order to get past the preoccupation with authenticity. In doing this it will be possible to renegotiate the boundaries that have been created between supposedly different and oppositional forms of youth culture. Thornton, taking inspiration from Bourdieu, suggests that subcultural capital can be 'objectified or embodied' in the same way as more traditional types of culture such as books and paintings. Thornton suggests that 'subcultural capital is embodied in the form of "being in the know"'.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Joanna R. Davis, 'Growing up Punk: Negotiating Aging Identity in a Local Music Scene', *Symbolic Interaction* 29.1 (2006), p. 64.

⁵⁸ Michael Brocken, *The British Folk Revival: 1944-2002* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 91.

⁵⁹ Cohen, *Folk Devils*, p. xviii.

⁶⁰ Thornton, *Club Cultures*, p. 11.

Thornton's utilisation of traditional markers of high culture as a point of comparison is an important one; the importance placed on 'authenticity' and engaging with youth culture in an 'authentic' way carries the same value judgements as traditional and often elitist divisions drawn between high and low forms of culture. Authenticity is a powerful tool used by young people to distinguish themselves as culturally superior, and Thornton argues that youth researchers have been 'inadvertently ensnared' by this.⁶¹ Indeed, one letter appeared, somewhat ironically, in *Melody Maker* in 1980 demonstrating this internalisation of hierarchies of authenticity and positioning of authentic youth culture against 'the industry':

In 1976 a few thousand punks set on fire the safe, flabby, insipid youth culture. Rock once again belonged to the kids, who were too naive to see how their new child-punk- would be jumped on by the industry at the first opportunity, and again used for what they could squeeze out of it... In a dead Britain of the Eighties, youth's only way is to look further afield, divert its energy away from the industry. Join.⁶²

A wider issue with much scholarship on youth is that it serves as a 'celebration' of subculture, which builds on the narrative of a passive mainstream and encourages a focus that is restricted to spectacular forms of youth culture, and tends to prioritise the stories and experiences of young people producing, rather than consuming, youth culture. Much of this body of work carries with it an implicit valuing of subcultural forms, and of people who reject the mainstream culture. Furthermore, much of this work perpetuates the view that most young people were 'ordinary' and that their cultural preferences were therefore of little cultural significance. Historian of geek culture, Benjamin Woo, has criticised the work of much subcultural research as being too narrow in focus, suggesting that a 'nuanced view of subcultural activity and its political potential is only possible if subculture research decisively transcends the debilitating focus on the fetish of subcultural style.'⁶³ Woo argued that the

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶² *Melody Maker*, January 5 1980, p. 12.

⁶³ Benjamin Woo, 'Subculture Theory and the Fetishisation of Style', *Stream* 2.1 (2009), p. 30.

outlook of the CCCS in particular, was ‘marked by a romanticised orientation towards the objects of its study. This certainly contributed to its over sanguine reading of subcultural activity and its obsession with the “original” moment of subcultural resistance.’⁶⁴ Shildrick and MacDonald similarly noted that one issue with much research on youth cultures has been the familiarity of many researchers with the object of their research. Such ‘insider approaches’, they argued, ‘may be partly responsible for the limited coverage provided by recent post-subcultural studies (and in youth culture research more generally).’⁶⁵ This focus on content creators and visible events is a problem inherent in youth cultural studies more generally, and by employing an analysis which looks beyond the creativity and originality of content creators it will be possible to unearth the cultural experiences of a wider range of young people.

The influence of subcultural theorists on wider understandings of youth culture is tangible. The mainstream has rarely been approached without being framed as the antithetical other, and therefore has not been defined in its own right. One of the biggest myths of post-war youth culture is the idea that culture became democratised, and freed from traditional class associations. However, with regards to understandings of alternative and popular culture, the categorisation of high and low culture has not disappeared; it has simply been re-appropriated to encompass the somewhat abstract and subjective notion of taste. Culture, particularly youth culture, is subject to distinctions where certain cultural forms are viewed as more valuable and significant than others.

However, in recent years academics have focused on trying to find a clearer understanding of the mainstream, and approaching it as a topic worthy of study in its own right. In *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music* the authors argued that ‘in popular music

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30

⁶⁵ Shildrick and MacDonald, ‘In Defence of Subculture’, p. 238.

studies we find countless references to the mainstream: however the term itself remains poorly defined and haphazardly applied.’⁶⁶ Baker et al. argued that ‘the mainstream appears to have had little cultural value: it has been primarily reproduced in antithetical relation to the more “authentic” music of subcultural producers and participants’.⁶⁷ In a recent review article, Eric Weisbard argued that:

In different conjunctures, the mainstream has been more or less monolithic, served as symbol or target for emergent groups, connected to not only shifts in consumerism but aesthetic innovations. It is more productive to think not of a mainstream but of mainstreams that can exist side by side, competing and blending with each other.⁶⁸

In *Redefining Mainstream*, the authors argue for a better understanding of what the mainstream constitutes, and for it to be understood in its own right. Alison Huber argues that understandings of the mainstream are often ‘achieved in the negative, defined by what it isn’t rather than what it is’.⁶⁹ In approaching the mainstream the authors wished to acknowledge and challenge perceptions of the mainstream that see it as passive and inauthentic. They included essays on teenybop and authenticity, and The Archies and perceptions of cultural production. The main themes that emerged from this study were that of authenticity, conceptions of the mainstream as an artificial construction, and the gendered dichotomy of the passive ‘feminine’ mainstream and the hip ‘masculine’ subculture.

Sarah Baker tackled the mainstream through her work on teenybop, a form of pop music associated with pre-teen and teenage girls best personified by bands such as the Bay City Rollers and The Osmonds. Baker’s work on teenybop and teenage girls’ consumption habits suggests that attitudes toward female participation in culture is trivialised more than

⁶⁶ Sarah Baker, Andy Bennett & Jodie Taylor (eds), *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music* (New York, 2013), p. iii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

⁶⁸ Eric Weisbard, ‘How Do You Solve a Problem Like a Mainstream?: Charting the Musical Middle’, *American Quarterly* 67.1 (2015), p. 264.

⁶⁹ Alison Huber, ‘Mainstream as Metaphor: Imagining Dominant Culture’ in *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music*, p. 7.

their male counterparts. The gendered element of arguments about the mainstream is a key feature of Baker's study, and she argues that girls have historically been cast as 'passive consumers who have been duped into buying the lightweight and worthless commodities of Theodor Adorno's "culture industry"'.⁷⁰ Teenybop is understood as the pinnacle of 'mainstream': mass-produced, commercially driven and inauthentic, and aimed at a young female audience with no taste. The narrative of teenybop is surrounded by 'inauthentic behaviour, which copies already inauthentic pop music', and this 'contributes in general terms to teenybop's perceived lack of authenticity, meaning that music and those involved with it – producers and consumers alike- get brushed aside as inconsequential'.⁷¹

Two key themes emerge from Baker's work; one is the gendered approach to culture, and the second is the significance of authenticity in both production and consumption of culture. Baker argues that the trivialisation of teenybop is a consequence of 'long standing assumptions regarding young girls' engagement with popular music'.⁷² These long standing assumptions associate young girls' behaviour and tastes as inauthentic, and Baker focuses on this issue of authenticity by demonstrating how young girls use pop music in their identity creation practices. Baker argues that it is only possible to understand the mainstream in its own context by working 'outside the forced logic of the subculture- mainstream divide'.⁷³ Baker's work examined young girls' cultural practices, how they used their music in forming their own identity and as part of their relationship with others. In studying the mainstream in this way Baker was able to explore the ways in which young girls authenticated their relationship with mainstream music and used it to negotiate their place in the world.

⁷⁰ Sarah Baker 'Teenybop and the Extraordinary Practices of Mainstream Music' in *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music*, p. 15.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Baker's work similarly tackled the issues surrounding a gendered approach to music cultures and the impacts of this on the mainstream. In the book's preface the authors noted that for a long time, most held the implicit belief in ideological distinctions drawn between mainstream and alternative cultures, with the mainstream seen as feminine.⁷⁴ Baker highlights an argument by Roy Shuker, who noted that the term teenybopper emerged in the 1950s to distinguish a female pop audience from a masculine rock audience and thus quickly 'acquired strongly derogatory connotations'.⁷⁵ This gendered approach to the mainstream has influenced wider conceptions of cultural practice and authenticity, and Baker's work on teenybop was an important intervention into this gendered narrative.

A significant consequence of the focus placed on spectacular youth has been the marginalisation of young women and girls from histories of youth culture. Feminist scholars Jenny Garber and Angela McRobbie stated in *Resistance Through Rituals* that 'very little seems to have been written about the role of girls in youth cultural groupings. They are absent from the classic subcultural ethnographic studies, the pop histories, the personal accounts and the journalistic surveys of the field.'⁷⁶ Writing in 2014, Lucy Robinson suggested that, with regards to punk at least, not much had changed: 'despite the work of some brilliant female participant observer academics like Helen Reddington, you would be forgiven [for thinking] that there were really only about four or five women involved with punk and they spent most of their time wearing fetish wear and fishnet tights'.⁷⁷ Writing in 2007, Mazzarella and Pecora argued that 'for most of the twentieth century, the need for specialised academic and clinical studies of girls and women was devalued, trivialised, and/or

⁷⁴ Baker et al., *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music*, p. ix.

⁷⁵ Baker, 'Teenybop', in *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music*, p. 16.

⁷⁶ Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures' in Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture* (2nd edn, London, 2000), p. 12.

⁷⁷ Lucy Robinson, 'Dunstan Bruce, and why is history so up for anarcho-punk?', 28 April 2014 <http://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/observingthe80s/2014/04/28/dunstan-bruce-and-why-history-is-so-up-for-anarcho-punk/> [last accessed 15/05/2014]

marginalised.⁷⁸ One inherent reason for the invisibility of women in youth cultural studies has been that, as the focus remained on subcultural groupings, research has tended to focus on the spectacular, as well as the predominantly male cultural creators. Indeed, McRobbie and Garber asserted that:

One direct consequence of the fact that it is always the violent aspects of a phenomenon which qualify as newsworthy is that these are precisely the areas of subcultural activity from which women have tended to be excluded. The objective and popular image of a subculture is likely to be one which emphasises male membership, male focal concerns and masculine values.⁷⁹

Mike Brake further argued that ‘if subcultures are solutions to collectively experienced problems, then youth culture is highly concerned with the problems of masculinity.’⁸⁰ Brake suggested that traditional markers of masculinity include the wage packet, and in the context of a slowing economy of the 1970s in which female work participations levels were rising, but female unemployment was also rising, he argued that ‘the cult of femininity (that is of non-work dominated identity)’ was increasingly important for girls.⁸¹

Over the course of the post-war period, young women’s lifestyles, and the opportunities available to them, have grown significantly. From changing attitudes towards drinking and pub-going, to the increasingly casual and non-linear modes of dating, young women’s lifestyles have undergone significant transformation, and the focus of this thesis will place the experiences of young women directly alongside those of young men.

Recognising this important post-war cultural and societal shift, Angela McRobbie stated in a 1991 reappraisal of her oft-cited work on *Jackie* and teenage girls’ magazines, that ‘the nature of answers [in the problem pages of these magazines] reflects not just a changed

⁷⁸ Sharon R. Mazzarella and Norma Pecora, ‘Revisiting Girls’ Studies’, *Journal of Children and Media* 1.2 (2007), p. 106.

⁷⁹ McRobbie and Garber, ‘Girls and Subcultures’, p. 15.

⁸⁰ Mike Brake, *The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subcultures: Sex and drugs and rock’n’roll?* (London, 1980), p. 137.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

sexual climate... it also suggests that a wide range of feminist ideas has entered the realms of popular common sense.’⁸²

While this thesis does not focus exclusively on the experience of young women in Sheffield, it is essential to recognise that while significant shifts did take place in the lives of young women in the post-war period, the ways in which young women and young men experienced and navigated these leisure spaces were different, and influenced by a variety of factors including perceived societal and gender norms, economic freedom, and shifting boundaries around sex and dating. The ways in which young women negotiate their world are significantly informed by gender constructs and societal norms. The work of early feminist scholars of youth culture such as McRobbie and Garber shed vital light on the importance of recognising the different ways young women navigate their cultural landscape. However, in reaction to the focus on delinquency and street life that dominated many studies of male subcultures and youth studies from the early to mid-twentieth century, this new work tended to explore young women’s cultural lives within the confines of the bedroom. This consumption-focused ‘bedroom culture’ has come to dominate studies of teenage girls’ cultural lives and, while an important interjection into male-dominated studies of youth, has caused young women’s experiences in the public sphere to be overlooked in many respects. Indeed, Mary Kearney argued that ‘consumerism functions as *the* foundation for most girl-oriented media and cultural studies, even when scholars are not directly addressing bedroom culture.’⁸³

Recent work on girlhood has highlighted the importance of female cultural production, as well as cultural consumption, with an increasing focus on the role played by

⁸² McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture*, p. 159.

⁸³ Mary Celeste Kearney, ‘Productive Spaces: Girls’ Bedrooms as Sites of Cultural Production’, *Journal of Children and Media* 1.2 (2007), p. 131.

the internet. In a recent review article, Mazzarella and Pecora note that ‘more recent studies continue to document the active role girls play as creators of online content.’⁸⁴ The advent of late-modernity, and with it the rise of the internet, has raised new questions about identity creation and curation, and has blurred the boundaries between public and private space. Mary Kearney sought to problematise ‘the conventional framing of girls’ bedrooms as non-productive cultural spaces’ by focusing on the rising number of Western girls using technology to engage in cultural production.⁸⁵ Siân Lincoln’s influential work on bedroom zones highlighted that young women experienced youth culture in both the public and private sphere.⁸⁶ While these new studies seek to problematise approaches to girlhood and interactions with youth culture, they still focus on teenage girls’ engagement in the bedroom.

However, the focus on girlhood consumption should not be disregarded as insignificant. As will be argued throughout this thesis, young people’s interactions with popular culture form a significant part of their identity. Kehily and Nayak discuss young women’s interactions with youth culture, arguing that the young women in their study ‘use local peer-group cultures of femininity to assert a ‘moral order’ over what is acceptable and unacceptable in the making of new femininities...it is apparent that they are in part performing their femininities through active identification and dis-identification with Madonna and other global celebrities.’⁸⁷ Interacting with women in the public eye in this way forms part of an active relationship with popular culture; by engaging with the changing models of, in this case, Madonna’s femininity, the young girls in Kehily and Nayak’s study were, in part, using this to form their own ideas about femininity and sexuality. To suggest

⁸⁴ Mazzarella and Pecora, ‘Revisiting Girls’ Studies’, p. 114.

⁸⁵ Kearney, ‘Productive Spaces’, p. 126.

⁸⁶ Siân Lincoln, ‘Teenage Girls’ “Bedroom Culture”: Codes versus Zones’ in Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris (eds), *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Hampshire, 2004), p. 105.

⁸⁷ Mary Jane Kehily and Anoop Nayak, ‘Global femininities: consumption, culture, and the significance of place’, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 29.3 (2008), p. 336.

that female engagement with popular culture entails a passive consumption disregards the important personal connection that young women make with the global media they consume, and by extension how this plays out in their local environments through the places they choose to socialise in, and the groups they move within.

By moving the primary focus away from subcultural, and therefore spectacular, activity, and towards the use of cultural space by young people, this thesis will place the experiences of young women directly alongside those of young men. Garber and McRobbie argued that ‘the important question may not be the absence or presence of girls in the male subcultures, but the complementary ways in which girls interact among themselves and with each other to form a distinctive culture of their own.’⁸⁸ This thesis suggests that another way to access the cultural experiences of young women and teenage girls is to look outside of the boundaries of subcultural experience altogether. By reassessing the way we interact with cultural consumption and, by examining engagement with evening leisure spaces, this thesis will challenge the way young women’s cultural choices are currently portrayed and perceived. It will demonstrate how the cultural lives of young women developed outside of the home by exploring their lifestyle choices, and how young people were increasingly developing a lifestyle defined more by age than by traditional gender roles. Chapter five explores the specific changes faced by young women in post-war Sheffield, and how changing attitudes to youth lifestyles afforded different opportunities to many young women in the city.

This thesis does not seek to argue that the focus of subcultural studies is irrelevant or unimportant to broader histories of youth culture; the work of scholars in this field has done much to illuminate the production and consumption of culturally significant movements.

⁸⁸ McRobbie and Garber, ‘Girls and Subcultures’, p. 219.

However, research on alternative cultures that does not seek to understand the role of ‘mainstream’ or popular youth culture can go only part of the way to broadening our understanding of changes to young people’s cultures and lifestyles over the course of the twentieth century. This thesis will argue for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between different cultural forms, and of the relationship between subcultural identity and the wider world. To frame subculture as the superior other to popular or mainstream culture does not take into account the many ways in which people negotiate their cultural landscape, and that a subcultural identity does not necessarily exclude negotiations with, or involvement in, other forms of culture. The relationship between youth culture and subculture is complex, and my analysis works on the understanding that youth cultural forms are fluid, non-exclusive, and interact with one another. Most young people did not draw the line between subculture and mainstream as distinctly as it has been presented, and they interacted with many different aspects of youth culture to build their own identity and lifestyle.

For these reasons this thesis will only use the term subculture in reference to existing work. Where my own analysis of youth culture is concerned, I will use the term alternative to denote people or places that can be considered to be outside of, or different to, more popular forms of culture. Similarly, the use of the term mainstream is used to denote popular forms of culture and should not be read as denoting an ‘other’.

Space and Place

This thesis argues that by focusing on the development and regulation of evening leisure space, and more specifically the space of pubs and nightclubs, we can better access

the changing lifestyles of young people in post-war Britain. Whilst this research does not utilise any one theoretical approach to space and place, writing on space has informed my methodological approach and it is therefore necessary to define how space is used and conceptualised in the following pages.

Historical approaches to space have traditionally focused on the public and the private spheres and are imbued with gendered ideas, with the public and private seen as male and female respectively. When mapped onto youth culture research this separation of the masculine public and the feminine private is represented in studies of subcultures and bedroom space. In *Gender, Space, and Identity* the authors argue that space and place are inherently gendered. Liz Bondt argued that ‘the idea of separate spheres also reverberates through moral judgements made about the behaviour of women and men in “public” spaces’, concluding that ‘materially important associations remain between masculinity, public space and the city on the one hand, and between femininity, private space and suburbs on the other.’⁸⁹

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the vast majority of work encompassing space, leisure, music, and young people has been undertaken by urban or cultural geographers. Doreen Massey notes that the concepts of both space and place ‘are incredibly mobile and I have no wish to take issue with that in principle.’⁹⁰ Indeed, regarding the use of the term place, Thomas Gieryn has argued that:

Places have finitude, but they nest logically because the boundaries are... elastic. A place could be your favourite armchair, a room, building, neighbourhood, district, village, city, country, metropolitan area, region, state, province, nation, continent, plant- or a forest glade, the seaside, a mountaintop.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Liz Bondi, ‘Gender, Class and Urban Space: Public and Private Space in Contemporary Urban Landscape’ in Cara Aitchison and Fiona Jordan (eds), *Gender Space and Identity: Leisure, Culture and Commerce* (Brighton, 1998), p. 5.

⁹⁰ Doreen Massey, *Space Place and Gender* (Oxford, 1994), p. 1.

⁹¹ Thomas Gieryn, ‘A Space for Place in Sociology’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 26.1 (2000), p. 464.

Place, when not defined clearly, has the potential to be a problematic concept. Further, understandings of space and place will differ by each scholar, depending on the context and subject of their study. Rather than try to define space and place using geographical boundaries many theorists have instead focused on how space and place relate to wider cultural and societal behaviours. Lefebvre argued for an understanding of ‘social’ space and ‘abstract’ space, suggesting that ‘the concepts of *production* and of the *act of producing* do have a certain abstract universality.’⁹² Lefebvre argued that what was needed was an understanding of the concepts of production and ‘of their relations, on the one hand with the extreme formal abstraction of logico-mathematical space, and on the other hand with the practico-sensory realm of social space.’⁹³ Indeed, Doreen Massey’s central premise is that the spatial is inherently linked to social relations. ‘The spatial then’, Massey argues, ‘can be seen as constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales, from the global reach of finance and telecommunications, through the geography of the tentacles of national political power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household, and the workplace.’⁹⁴ Critically, Massey argues that by understanding space in this way, it is possible to challenge previous conceptualisations of place. Place, Massey argues, has been subject to ‘exclusivist claims... all of them have been attempts to fix the meaning of particular spaces, to enclose them, endow them with fixed identities and claim them for one’s own.’⁹⁵ This understanding of place as ‘singular, fixed, and unproblematic in its identity’ is challenged by Massey’s focus on social relations.⁹⁶

Building on Lefebvre’s work, Mark Gottdiener argued that ‘space is an important concept because the built environment, including both production and consumption spaces, is

⁹² Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, 1991), p. 15.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹⁴ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 4.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

critical to the transformation of everyday life.’⁹⁷ Labelling it the ‘physicalist fallacy’, Gottdiener rejected the modernist idea that architectural practice could significantly influence working and living practice. Instead, Gottdiener’s concept of the ‘social production of space’ argued that space ‘possesses the dual characteristics of being both a product of social relations and a producer of social relations.’⁹⁸ Focusing exclusively on the American model, Gottdiener argued that the model of the city has become increasingly outdated since the 1970s when more Americans have begun living ‘in polynucleated metropolitan areas outside the central city’.⁹⁹ While Gottdiener’s theory is based on the study of rapid development of previously unoccupied, often agricultural space, his approach offers a way of understanding the relationship between lifestyle and the development of space as a symbiotic process.

Massey’s approach to place, and her linking of the local with the global, provides a lens through which to view the evening leisure spaces explored in this thesis. Crucially, for this research, Massey argues that:

The identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple. And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counter-position to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections *to* that ‘beyond’. Places viewed this way are open and porous.¹⁰⁰

In the context of evening leisure space, each venue, or place, is imbued with its own meaning and significance by each individual who encounters it. In turn, these meanings and significance are influenced by wider social relations, such as class, gender, race, and social groupings, as well as the individual’s relationship with global cultural media.

Indeed, Kehily and Nayak have noted that the spaces inhabited by youth are inseparable from global youth culture. They argue that ‘in particular modern diasporas,

⁹⁷ Mark Gottdiener, *The Social Production of Urban Space* (2nd edn, Texas, 1997), p. xv.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 5.

migrations and media cultural “flows” permeate everyday spaces and pull apart the idea of place as a securely bounded entity.’¹⁰¹ They note that ‘as high consumers young women regularly interact with a global bricolage of media signs, commodities, music, film and magazines. These global products have a bearing on who they are and how they wish to present in school and neighbourhood cultures.’¹⁰²

It has been argued by Hollands and Chatterton that ‘much youth cultural analysis has been implicitly aspatial in its orientation.’¹⁰³ Recognising the importance of production and regulation in the development of youth cultural space, Hollands and Chatterton position space at the centre of their study into urban nightscapes. However, where Hollands and Chatterton’s work focuses much more on the influence of corporate power, this thesis utilises the local as a way of exploring how young people moved through evening leisure space, focusing much more on individual leisure places. The time period upon which their research is based centres on the period of urban regeneration of the late 1980s and 1990s, encompassing the growth of Urban Entertainment Destinations (UEDs). While an important contribution to urban geographies of youth, Hollands and Chatterton’s research continues, at times, to play into the binary paradigm of an ‘inauthentic’ mainstream and ‘authentic’ oppositional culture. While their focus on the monolithic influence of global corporations on nightlife is an important one, such an approach fails to account for young people’s personal negotiations with these spaces. However, Robert Hollands has recognised the importance of the local, noting that ‘while it might be argued that club-culture has become a truly global phenomenon, due to the role of the media and the increased mobility of young people, nightlife experiences for many remain largely rooted in specific localities.’¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Kehily and Nayak, ‘Global femininities’, p. 327.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹⁰³ Chatterton and Hollands, *Urban Nightscapes*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Hollands, ‘Divisions in the Dark: Youth Cultures, Transitions and Segmented Consumption in the Night-time Economy’, *Journal of Youth Studies* 5.2 (2002), p. 156.

Using music as a way of understanding space, Connell and Gibson have argued that:

Music is one way through which ordinary acts of consumption and movement throughout daily life could constitute ‘tactics’ of subtle opposition that emerge from within the cultural spaces governed and controlled by others, occurring as they often do in the private spaces of home, in the corners of the night-time economy, beyond the panoptic gaze of the state.¹⁰⁵

Understanding the ways music use is shaped by space and region allowed Connell and Gibson to explore how the local and the global connect: music, they argued, ‘cannot be contained within a single explanatory theory- it is dynamic and unpredictable, involving movements of sound and people, expressing mobility in certain periods, stability in others.’¹⁰⁶

In reading music in this way Connell and Gibson provide a way of understanding the individual relationship with a place through music. They also recognise the role that music, and its connections with a particular place, plays in constructing notions of authenticity. They argue that ‘regions of dynamism and creativity, perceived to be the origins of novel sounds, become credible as sites of innovation, and subsequently become authentic, as they are increasingly depicted in media and imaginations in relation to music.’¹⁰⁷

By focusing on the individual relationship young people had with evening leisure space, with particular places, and how they chose to move in and through these places, it is possible to reach an understanding of youth cultural space that is understood in terms of more than just its positional role as ‘authentic’ or ‘mainstream’. Whiteley, Bennett, and Hawkins have argued that:

As well as providing the socio-cultural backdrop for distinctive musical practices and innovations, urban and rural spaces also provide the rich experimental settings in which music is consumed. In each case, music becomes a key resource for different cultural groups in terms of the ways in which they make sense of and negotiate the ‘everyday’.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ John Connell and Chris Gibson, *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity, and Place* (Oxford, 2003), p. 16.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ Sheila Whiteley, Andy Bennett and Stan Hawkins (eds), *Music, Space and Place: Popular Music and Cultural Identity* (Farnham, 2004), p. 2.

As can also be seen in Kehily and Nayak's research on girlhood, a personal relationship with music offers a way to understand popular, or perceived 'mainstream' venues as places of significant cultural value.¹⁰⁹ These places played a significant role in the cultural experiences of the vast majority of young people, and by recognising the important role played by music it is possible to better understand how and why young people chose to socialise in these places.

Such a sustained focus on the cultural producers of youth culture, as opposed to the individual's relationship with the products of youth culture, narrows the questions historians are asking about youth culture. Due to the contested and differing relationships between places and the individual, Doreen Massey's work has been 'suspicious of those in the left who romanticise or seek to construct authentic accounts of place.'¹¹⁰ It is not in the remit of this thesis to answer questions about authenticity, but instead to understand how space and place can be used to bypass traditional frameworks that impose ideals of authenticity on youth experience. It is important to understand that these meanings are not the same for everyone; relationships to particular places are influenced by a variety of factors and as such the relationship between place and wider societal frameworks is fluid and complex.

Understanding that the terms 'space' and 'place' are complex, not interchangeable, and can have important theoretical implications, the following pages will use the terms 'space' and 'place' to mean the following: 'space' will be used to denote the cultural landscape of the evening leisure environment, referring to the entirety of evening leisure options available to young people, while 'place' will be used to refer to a geographically bounded venue. Space, then, can also be understood to relate to the perceived cultural 'norms', expectations, and

¹⁰⁹ Kehily and Nayak, 'Global femininities', p. 327.

¹¹⁰ David Featherstone and Joe Painter, 'Introduction: "There is no point of departure": The Many Trajectories of Doreen Massey', in David Featherstone and Joe Painter (eds), *Spatial Politics: Essays for Doreen Massey* (Oxford, 2013), p. 11.

behaviours that are linked with the act of 'going out'. While the physical location of place is understood as set and unmoving, the meanings and cultural negotiations tied up with that place are necessarily fluid, complex, and undergoing constant change. In this way the relationship between space and place is symbiotic. Place can have different meanings to different people at the same time, and indeed can have different meanings to the same person at different times. Understanding place in this way enables the specific cultural venue to become more than part of a particular cultural scene, and allows for important questions to be asked about an individual's relationship with youth culture.

Sheffield

This study is focused on Sheffield in the belief that a detailed empirical survey of shifting uses of urban space is vital to understanding the changing lifestyles of young people in the post-war period. There are significant benefits to positioning this research in one locality. Firstly, the close nature of a study of this kind has enabled me to chart the changes to specific places, and understand the way these changes impacted on the lifestyles of young people. Secondly, a study of this nature allows for a more longitudinal approach: by limiting the geographical focus of the research, it has been possible to extend the chronological scope of this thesis. This was a particularly important aspect of the project as studies of youth are so often limited to one movement or time period, or otherwise generalised across a whole country, making it difficult to access the everyday experiences of young people, and the ways in which young people navigated the changing cultural landscape. By employing an empirical approach, by undertaking a close-study of one city, it has been possible to better understand the everyday impact of more abstract concepts such as culture and consumption.

Sheffield, a predominantly working-class city in the North of England, was built on an industry dominated by steel and cutlery, with a number of miners living on the outskirts of the city. The city grew quickly during the first part of the 1800s, with the population rising from 60,000 inhabitants in 1801 to 161,000 in 1851, with the population reaching 557,050 by 1951.¹¹¹ The city was a major industrial centre, providing armaments manufacturing during both WWI and WWII. As such, the city was a strategic target for bombing raids and significant areas of the city were damaged during these raids. Cutlery was one of the city's largest employers; in 1957 650 of the 700 cutlery firms in the United Kingdom were located in Sheffield. Although the industry declined significantly over the course of the post-war period, Sheffield-owned tool firms were still responsible for two-thirds of the national output of cutlery in 1990.¹¹² Sheffield's steel industry contracted rapidly during the post-war years, causing high levels of unemployment in the city from the 1970s onwards. The number of people employed in the South Yorkshire steel industry fell from 60,000 in 1971, to 43,000 in 1979 and dropped significantly to only 16,000 in 1987.¹¹³ The post-war period in Sheffield was one of rapid change. By the 1980s the civil service and service industries were the biggest employers in the city; in 1984 17% of city residents were directly employed by Sheffield City Council.¹¹⁴ Further, of the 60% of working-age women at work in the city, 80% of those worked in service and distribution.¹¹⁵ The physical face of the city was changing too. Following WWII, the council embarked on large-scale housing projects to clear both the bomb damage and slums that had survived the first wave of housing projects in the interwar period. Developments such as Park Hill, famed for its 'streets in the sky' modernist design, rehoused working-class families away from the city centre. Between 1951 and 1973

¹¹¹ Astrid Winkler, 'Sheffield City Report' CASE 45, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/5133/1/CASEREport45.pdf> [last accessed 21/02/2017].

¹¹² Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, p. 280; *Ibid.*, p. 285.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

¹¹⁴ Dave Child and Mick Paddon, 'Sheffield: Steelyard Blues', *Marxism Today* (July, 1984), p. 19.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

the number of local authority managed houses in Sheffield rose from 40,000 to 75,000.¹¹⁶

Large swathes of the city centre were pedestrianised as the city centre became the home of retail, commerce, and leisure.



Figure 1.1: Park Hill flats, 1961.

The city of Sheffield was chosen as the location for this study for several key reasons: firstly, a significant majority of studies of youth culture are either based in London, or pull the majority of their examples from the London and south-east region. As the capital city and Britain's largest metropolis, London is, more often than not, an exception, rather than representative, of British society. Just as Sheffield cannot be said to represent British society as a whole, neither can London. Studies that draw their examples primarily from London and the surrounding region often neglect this fact. This thesis does not seek to use Sheffield as a

¹¹⁶ Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, p. 279.

representation of British society, but instead uses the city to explore how changes occurring at a national level impact on the lives and lifestyles of ‘ordinary’ young people. Secondly, Sheffield can be argued to be somewhat representative of the experience of many northern towns and cities over the course of the post-war period. Experiencing full employment in the immediate post-war years until the 1960s, the economic downturn and loss of industry meant the city suffered mass unemployment and cuts to local services, meaning that Sheffield underwent significant changes in this period. Finally, as this research project was more focused on the consumption of, rather than the creation of, culture, as well as the development of spaces for young people, it was decided that a city that did not have a well-established nightlife in the 1960s would allow for the best study on the development of evening leisure spaces. For these reasons, Sheffield, named the fourth largest city in the UK in 1981, made a suitable location for this research.

This project does not seek to argue that there was something unique or special about Sheffield, nor does it wish to argue that Sheffield was unremarkable in the post-war period. Without a sustained and detailed comparison it is not possible to assess how far the developments seen in Sheffield were enacted in other cities, nor how the relationship between local authority and evening leisure space influenced the spatial development of cities. This study does recognise that there were elements of Sheffield that were unique to the city. Martina Löw, arguing that cities can differ from each other in important ways, has argued that ‘we know that practices and structures emerge and are reproduced in ways specific to a city.’¹¹⁷ Importantly, Löw suggests that the city produces shared meanings: ‘cities, like quarters and nations, are also quite intrinsically places that make a we/us possible... the experience of a we in a city and as a city does not mean that that city homogenises

¹¹⁷ Martina Löw, ‘The City as Experimental Space: The Production of Shared Meaning’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37.3 (2013), p. 896.

experience.’¹¹⁸ Löw’s research suggests that it is important to recognise that what may have significant differences is not the city itself, but the experience of people living in that city, and that the same places may be experienced in different ways according to class, gender, race, and social groupings, and that these experiences themselves are subject to change with each individual person. Understanding that the experiences of Sheffield citizens were different to those of Manchester, Birmingham, or Hull, for the fact of their status as ‘Sheffielders’, this research foregrounds the city as a way of analysing the changes to the lives of young people of Sheffield, rather than engaging in sustained analysis of the city itself.

While the value of class as a useful way of understanding the lives of young people was contested over the post-war period, the issue of class remained a reality for many of Sheffield’s young people. It will be argued here that while class should not be utilised as the only methodological tool through which to understand the experiences of youth, a study of youth culture in Sheffield certainly sheds light on the continuing influence of class in the lives of young people in post-war Britain. Sheffield, a ‘predominately white and working class’ city is a particularly interesting case study as the socio-economic divisions between the industrial, and increasingly deprived east of the city, and the affluent and middle-class west of the city remain throughout the course of the post-war period.¹¹⁹ A 2009 report into the continuing division between the east and west of the city noted that the topography of Sheffield meant that during the 19th century industrial development was concentrated in the Lower Don Valley area of the city, with housing to accommodate the workforce being built in this area. Factory owners and wealthier citizens of the city settled in the hills to the west of

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 898.

¹¹⁹ Daisy Payling, “‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire’: Grassroots Activism and Left-Wing Solidarity in 1980s Sheffield”, *Twentieth Century British History* 25.4 (2014), p. 604.

the city which were ‘upwind of the pollution in factories.’¹²⁰ This geographic division of the working and middle class continued throughout the twentieth century: council housing predominantly remained situated in the east of the city. Economic inequalities increased in the post-war years, making Sheffield ‘one of the most polarised cities in Britain’.¹²¹ Between 1971 and 1991 poverty in the city was predominantly consolidated in the east and north-east of the city, with the affluent south-west of the city seeing less poverty as the period progressed, despite rising unemployment in this period.

A study of post-war Sheffield provides an interesting setting for the study of class, as the city remained very much divided between east and west, with much of the wealth congregated in the south west of the city. The city of Sheffield acts as the location in which important questions about the changing lifestyles of young people could be asked, and not just as an object of study in itself.

Methodology and Sources

Some of the changes to Sheffield’s evening leisure space could be charted by studying the minutes of Sheffield’s licensing magistrates. However, in order to fully understand the impact of these changes on the lives of Sheffield’s young people, and the significance of these changes to the history of youth culture, it was necessary to use an approach that enabled the voices of Sheffield’s young people to be placed in the foreground of the research. Further, to understand more fully how the lives of young people were changing in Sheffield it was

¹²⁰ Bethan Thomas, John Pritchard, Dimitris Ballas, Dan Vickers and Danny Dorling, *A Tale of Two Cities: The Sheffield Report* (Sheffield, 2009), p. 18.

http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/research/sheffield/a_tale_of_2_cities_sheffield_project_final_report.pdf [last accessed 11/04/17]

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

important to assess these changes within the specific socio-economic context of the city. As such, the sources and approach used in this thesis were chosen to enable me to best understand how the cultural experiences available to young people in Sheffield developed over the course of the post-war period, and how these changes impacted on ordinary young people's lifestyles.

One of the main objectives of this research was to access the experiences of 'ordinary' young people. By ordinary, I simply mean those people who do not gain national or international fame or notoriety, whose experiences can be said to be roughly representative of their peers. This is a purposefully broad definition, allowing me to explore a myriad of experiences. Throughout this thesis it will be shown that 'ordinary' experiences hold historical significance, enabling a fuller understanding of societal and cultural change. However, these 'ordinary' experiences can be hard to find and appear less often in the archives. Histories of young people have tended to favour the juvenile delinquent, the 'spectacular' groups that caught the attention of the media and commentators alike, and cultural innovators who resisted the status quo. This focus on spectacular youth is reflected in the archival and documentary material left behind. In contrast, most of us will leave little, if any, trace of ourselves in the archives. While historians have been able to chart broad social, economic, political, and cultural change, accessing the impact of these changes on the lives of everyday citizens proves a more difficult task with such scant archival records. Fiona Cosson has stated that 'the archival record does not just happen'; the archival record represents, in many ways, the values of the society within which it is created.¹²² Indeed, Paul Thompson has argued that 'the more personal, local, and unofficial a document, the less likely it was to survive. The very power structure worked as great recording machine shaping the past in its

¹²² Fiona Cosson, 'The small politics of everyday life: local history society archives and the production of public histories', *Archives and Records* 38.1 (2017), p. 45.

own image... This has remained true even after the establishment of record offices.¹²³

Arguing that the value placed on administrative and legal documentation has continued, he noted:

Registers of births and marriages, minutes of councils and the administration of poor relief and welfare, national and local newspapers, schoolteachers' log books- legal records of all kinds are kept in quantity... But of the innumerable postcards, letters, diaries, and ephemera of working-class men and women, or the papers of small businesses like corner shops or hill farmers, for example, very little has been preserved anywhere.

In order to overcome the limited material on ordinary young people in the archives, and to access the experiences and voices of young people in post-war Britain, I conducted a number of research interviews. While these testimonials formed only part of the primary source base for this research, the construction of these interviews was central to my overall methodological approach. The decision to use oral history as a research tool was an important one: it shaped my approach to the topic, and significantly influenced the scope and focus of my research. In this section I will outline my oral history methodology, detailing the process of recruiting participants, and the techniques used during the interview process. Focusing on constructions of culture and identity, Chapter six features longer extracts of oral testimony to uncover the myriad of ways young people engaged with youth culture and how they chose to identify themselves.

There is an important body of work on oral history methodology, popular memory, and narrative. Much work has been done on the validity of oral testimony as a way of gathering information; the work of Kate Fisher, Simon Szreter, Corinna Peniston-Bird and Penny Summerfield has been particularly useful in understanding how best to utilise the oral history process.¹²⁴ Writing on the power of both national and cultural discourses in both

¹²³ Paul Thompson, 'The Voice of the Past: Oral History' in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomas (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1997), p. 22.

¹²⁴ Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, 'Women in the Firing Line: the Home Guard and the Defence of Gender Boundaries in Britain in the Second World War', *Women's History Review* 9.2 (2000), pp.

directing and influencing oral testimony has been influential in directing the methodological approach of this research, both in the recruitment process and construction of the interview process.

There are two key issues to be aware of when working with oral testimony: one, that people frequently reimagine their own past in light of later interpretations, and two, that they often fit their own narrative into wider discourses. Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird's research on women in the Home Guard details how various interviewees slipped their stories and experiences of the Home Guard into wider conversations on home life, relationships, pets, and neighbours, 'about whom their recall was acute'.¹²⁵ They argued that 'it is difficult to quote from a narrative which is never quite composed: the expected substance is elusive and the interviewee is drawn towards alternative matter, which offers more satisfaction to the teller because it belongs within a more accessible framework.'¹²⁶ Another female participant reinterpreted her own experience in the Home Guard following her introduction to popular feminist thought in the 1970s. Thus, the way she perceived her own experience was reinterpreted after later experiences. For this participant then, 'the availability to her of language and concepts expressing the ways in which gender relations worked against women in wartime enabled her to constitute herself as a narrative subject in a Home Guard story.'¹²⁷

Important in Summerfield's and Peniston-Bird's conclusions was the tacit acknowledgement of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee; in finding other ways to narrate their experiences, the participants of the study were aware of both their

231-255; Kate Fisher, "'She Was Quite Satisfied with the Arrangements I Made": Gender and Birth Control in Britain 1920-1950', *Past & Present* 169 (2000), pp. 161-193; Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918-1963* (Cambridge, 2010); Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester, 1998).

¹²⁵ Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, 'Women in the Firing Line', p. 246.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

audience, and the perceived benefits of constructing a coherent testimony. However, the purpose of oral history should not be to uncover the past ‘as it really was’. Subjective memory, popular narrative and the interview process can all play an important role in how a person constructs their personal narrative. Katherine Borland has noted that ‘as performance contexts change, as we discover new audiences, and as we negotiate our sense of self, our narratives will also change.’¹²⁸

However, challenging Summerfield’s assertions that popular narrative shapes how women are able to articulate their experiences, Helena Mills has argued that ‘many women readily critique and reject the popular memory of 1960s youth culture where it does not fit their lived experiences.’¹²⁹ Mills notes that the personal memories of her own research participants are ‘not raw or unmediated versions of the experiences of youth. They are the recollections of youthful experience seen through a lens of popular discourse and subsequent life events. Personal and popular memories are therefore not distinct but inextricably linked: each informs and shapes the other.’¹³⁰ In this way Mills nuances Summerfield’s argument that popular discourse limits how women frame their narrative, arguing that the two cannot be separated.

The relationship between popular memory, narrative, and oral history is an important one. In *Feminism and Autobiography*, Tess Coslett, Celia Lury and Penny Summerfield argue that:

Memory... is intersubjective and dialogical, a function of personal identifications and social commitments. While it may be uniquely ours it is also objectified, a matter of public convention and shared rituals. The recovery of the past through personal testimony can have a political dimension depending on what is remembered and what

¹²⁸ Katherine Borland, ‘“That’s not what I said”: interpretive conflict in oral narrative research’, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1997), p. 320.

¹²⁹ Helena Mills, ‘Using the personal to critique the popular: women’s memories of 1960s youth’, *Contemporary British History* 30.4 (2016), p. 465.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

is forgotten.¹³¹

Their assertion that memory is ‘a matter of public convention and shared rituals’ speaks to Maurice Halbwach’s theory of collective memory. Halbwach argued that memories are formulated through the society in which a person lives: ‘collective frameworks... are precisely the instruments used by collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society.’¹³² Memories are constructed in accordance with societal values, and as such, popular memory can play an important role in how people construct their narrative.

One criticism frequently levied at oral history is its chronological distance from the events being discussed. Invoked in this criticism is the issue of memory, as well as the influence of later events on narrative construction. However, once we accept that memory is a construction, and that a true and objective account of the past is not possible, this criticism holds less value. Alessandro Portelli has argued that ‘this problem exists for many written documents, which are usually written some time after the event to which they refer, and often by nonparticipants. Oral sources might compensate chronological distance with a much closer personal involvement.’¹³³ The value Portelli places on personal involvement is a particular strength of oral testimony. Indeed, it is the personal that makes oral testimony such a unique and rich source. Portillo furthers his argument, suggesting that ‘oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did. Oral sources may not add much to what we know, for instance, of the material cost of a strike to the workers involved; but they tell us a good deal about its psychological costs.’¹³⁴ Once oral testimony is accepted as a construction, influenced both by

¹³¹ Tess Coslett, Ceilia Lury and Penny Summerfield (eds), *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods* (London, 2000), p. 4.

¹³² Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992), p. 40.

¹³³ Alessandro Portelli, ‘What Makes Oral History Different’, in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1997), p. 68.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

the interviewee and the interviewer, rather than as an attempt at uncovering an objective and unmediated truth, then it is possible to work within these boundaries to exploit the richness of the source.

As one of the key research aims of this thesis was to better understand both the ways young people identified themselves and the ways in which they engaged with youth culture I was particularly aware of the potential impact of wider narratives about youth culture, and the ways in which these narratives could impact on the personal construction of my participants' life stories and their reflections on their teenage experiences. This was particularly the case for young people growing up in the 1960s; as Mills has argued, contemporary and reflective portrayals of 1960s youth as 'either "fun" or "trouble"... led to even more exaggerated stereotypes and put these images of youth high on the public agenda.'¹³⁵ Each generation of young people interviewed for this research grew up under a prevailing narrative, influenced by the specific cultural, social and political context of their youth. Regardless of generation, the domination of visually and behaviourally 'spectacular' youth groups in newspapers and magazines, on the television and in films, has steered the popular imagination; from mods, rockers, and hippies, to punks, football hooligans, and the new romantics, to the supposedly drug-fuelled ravers of the 1990s the post-war period has been dominated by images of youth that supposedly resist the status quo. By extension, a popular narrative that mocks and undermines the value of pop music and its related commercial products as 'cheesy' or 'tasteless' further reinforces this cultural dichotomy. For this reason, it was decided that the term subculture, or references to specific subcultural groups such as mod, punk, and skinhead, were to be avoided both in the recruitment of participants and during the interview process, unless raised by the participant themselves. It was felt that by allowing participants to discuss their youth cultural experiences without imposing existing narratives or structures

¹³⁵ Mills, 'Women's memories of 1960s youth', p. 467.

participants were given more freedom to construct their own narratives and place emphasis where they felt suitable. Similarly, by removing the use of these terms I was able to avoid, to the best of my ability, a participant tailoring their testimony to what they felt was relevant or useful for my research

The construction of the interview process, from recruitment through to interview, was an important part of the methodological approach of this research. The recruitment process for participants began in October 2014. Adverts calling for participants were placed on two local history forums, in the Sheffield Local Studies Library, as well as shared on social media. Interviews were conducted between November 2014 and October 2015, with 22 interviews conducted in total. Ten men and twelve women were interviewed. All interviewees were self-selected, and whilst I tried to maintain a gender balance, there were limits placed on who approached me. Of the 22 interviewees, twenty were white, and while not asked explicitly about their sexuality, all participants discussed heterosexual relationships. Because of the self-selecting nature of my recruitment, the majority of my interviewees were white working, or lower-middle class. Despite limitations on sexuality and race, the demographic of the 22 participants was relatively similar to that of Sheffield for the period in question. It is worth stating here that the use of oral history in this study does not claim to be representative of general experience, rather it has enabled me to ask questions about culture, identity, and behaviour that cannot be gleaned from other sources. The individual accounts used in this study are not intended to be generalised from, but key patterns and themes emerge which do help to illuminate our understanding of the changing lifestyles of youth in post-war Britain.

The same call for participants was used at each stage of the recruitments process, with the recruitment of interviewees occurring over three periods between 2014 and 2015. Participants were recruited by responding to an advert calling for 'teenagers in Sheffield' to

encourage anybody who was between the ages of 15 and 21 in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, to share their experiences and memories of being a teenager in the city. Other than stating that the interviews were being conducted as part of research for a PhD project in History at the University of Sheffield, potential participants were told nothing else about the subject of the research. Following recruitment, I answered relevant questions about the interview process, but provided no more information about the topic of the research. Participants were told to expect an informal interview, with relatively open-ended questions about their memories of being a teenager in Sheffield. This technique proved particularly effective for recruiting participants who might not have come forward to discuss youth culture more explicitly as they felt that their experiences were 'middle of the road', uninteresting, or insignificant. One participant Debbie, when discussing her involvement with ska music, caveated this by saying 'I was considered probably more middle of the road than quite a few.'¹³⁶ Another participant, Helen recalled growing up on the rural outskirts of Sheffield, saying: 'I mean my dad had a car but I couldn't rely on my dad to drive me everywhere so it didn't really happen, you know. It sounds really boring doesn't it!'¹³⁷ The experiences and recollections of these individuals may not have been collected without such a broad call for participants.

Interviews were conducted on the first and only time that I met with my participants. This was done to maintain the spontaneity of the oral testimony and privilege the immediate reactions of the participants over a more constructed account of their youthful experiences. All interviews were, with the exception of one interview conducted in the home and two interviews conducted by Skype, conducted in a public place such as a café. While it is not possible to remove the power imbalance between interviewer and interviewee in this context, it was felt that a public and informal setting would help participants feel more comfortable.

¹³⁶ Interview with Debbie.

¹³⁷ Interview with Helen H.

Following the interview participants were asked whether they would like any portion of the interview to be left out of the transcript. This offer was not taken up by any of the participants. Each interview was then transcribed verbatim and, where possible, I have tried to recreate the rhythmic flow of the spoken word and indicate verbal emphasis through punctuation. Participants were offered the option to use a pseudonym. Several participants have chosen to use a pseudonym, but for the purposes of anonymity I have not highlighted which names are anonymised and which are not. All interviewees described themselves as working class or lower-middle class. It is for this reason that this research has not focused explicitly on the University or middle-class students in the city.

The wording of interview questions was essential to the success of this approach: questions were left as open as possible so as to avoid implicit assumptions that played into existing frameworks. Every participant was asked the same set of questions, although follow-up questions and prompts differed in each interview. By utilising an approach that allowed participants to discuss their cultural experiences in a way that focused on their everyday experiences of socialising, rather than the spectacular elements of young people's lives, I was able to gain an understanding of the different ways in which young people engaged with youth culture and evening leisure spaces. Further, by keeping questions broad, participants were able to be as vague or as specific as they liked. As such, it was up to each participant to detail which information they deemed to be relevant and significant. During analysis of the interviews, similarities and patterns that emerged across different testimonies could be read as significant of wider shifts or speaking to broader issues of the time. The interview process was purposefully open-ended, and included questions such as 'where did you socialise?' and 'how often did you go out?' By asking questions about young people's broader lifestyles and habits, rather than targeted questions about specific events or movements, I was able to analyse how my participants negotiated their relationship with dominant cultural frameworks.

By removing obvious markers to particular styles it was possible to observe how the mainstream/alternative dichotomy was negotiated by my participants and how it manifested itself in their personal narrative.

Employing a methodology that privileged the voices of 'ordinary' people was a central component of this research. My participants' notion that a life story should be 'worthy of note' was a common one, but it is often the seemingly mundane details about a young person's life that can best illuminate subtle but significant shifts in their cultural experiences. By interviewing participants who were teenagers spanning a thirty-year period it has been possible to uncover important and significant changes in young people's lifestyles. These comparisons have enabled me to begin to answer not only *how* but *why* young people's lifestyles changed so dramatically between the 1960s and the 1980s.

Oral history, for all the issues surrounding subjectivity and narrative, provides a way of accessing emotion and personal memory. When not understood as a way of uncovering the past 'as it really was' oral history enables the researcher to further the scope of historical enquiry, uncovering emotions, feeling, behaviours, and traditions, and allowing us to question the validity of dominant historical narratives. By using oral history, this thesis has gone some distance to understanding the myriad of ways young people engaged with youth culture. In this sense, understanding the development of evening leisure space is only half of the story. By interviewing people who used these spaces, and by asking them about their experiences as teenagers using these spaces, this thesis uncovers the often overlooked negotiations between ordinary young people and cultural identity, and accesses emotion, sense, and feeling in a way that other approaches are unable to.

As well as oral history interviews, numerous documentary and media sources were used to build a picture of Sheffield between the 1960s and the 1980s. The sources used in this thesis can be separated into three main categories: print press, local government documents

and reports, and documents relating to specific cultural venues.

Both national and local newspapers, newspaper supplements, and magazines were used during the research of this thesis. The national newspapers used were the *Guardian*, *Observer*, *The Sun*, *Daily Mirror*, and the *Daily Mail*. These newspapers were chosen as they represented both the popular and elite press reporting of the time, and broadly covered the political spectrum. They provided a way of accessing mainstream public discussions of young people and society at the time, and gave an insight into broader popular narratives surrounding class, youth, politics, and culture. Other than *The Sun*, these newspapers were digitised and text searchable, allowing me to search for particular topics or events, as well as gain a broad overview of the period. National music magazines, primarily *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express*, were used to provide a more youth-oriented coverage of youth culture in the period. In particular, the letters pages were used to access the voices and opinions of young people at the time. Of the print press used, the local press was the most important source for gleaning information about Sheffield in the period. I used both of Sheffield's main newspapers of the post-war period, *The Star* and the *Morning Telegraph*. The *Morning Telegraph* tended to focus more heavily on business and the economy, with *The Star*'s coverage focusing more heavily on culture, society, and politics. It is for this reason that *The Star* is the main document used in the following pages. While the national press was digitised and text-searchable, the local press and newspaper supplements were only available on microfilm. Due to time constraints, the amount of material available, and the time span of this thesis, four to five months per year were sampled for *The Star*. This approach allowed me to gain a broad overview of events in the city, whilst also providing enough coverage to glean details about specific events. Where specific dates or events were pertinent to the research, more targeted research was conducted. After an initial survey of the *Morning Telegraph* it was decided that the newspaper would not offer anything substantially different from *The*

Star, so the *Morning Telegraph* was used in a more targeted way, usually to provide more evidence on a specific event.

Newspaper supplements of *The Star* were also consulted. Of these, the most significant was the teenage supplement the *Top Star Special*. This supplement was not deposited in either the British Library or either of Sheffield's municipal archives. Previously considered lost, aside from a scattered number of copies in personal collections, I found the *Top Star Special* in an uncatalogued part of *The Star's* archives. As such, this thesis is the first academic text to use this supplement. While the exact dates of the print run are unknown, I was able to access the monthly supplement between the years 1962 and 1966. The *Top Star Special* provides an important insight into the cultural landscape of Sheffield in the early 1960s, and its existence points to the increasing economic and cultural power of Sheffield's teenagers in this period. The *Top Star Special* documented national youth culture, as well as detailing the activities of local youth clubs, recording the opening of early beat clubs, and conducting interviews with both Sheffield teenagers and beat club owners. Importantly, the *Top Star Special* allowed me to overcome two significant obstacles: firstly, the early beat clubs were often unlicensed and their presence would not have been found in licensing documents; secondly, they provided a way of unearthing clubs held in hired venues that would have been difficult to find in other archival records. In the early years of the 1960s, Sheffield's evening leisure was still in development and the *Top Star Special* allowed me to uncover these developments.

Numerous archival collections were used to illuminate local changes in Sheffield, particularly focusing on the changing nature of the region's economy, the impact of budget cuts in the region and the response of Sheffield City Council and local bodies to this ongoing problem. The period between the 1960s and the 1980s saw Sheffield's economy undergo significant change, with the economy going from full employment to above average

unemployment over the course of the period. In order to assess the impact of these changes on Sheffield's young people, a number of local reports into unemployment in Sheffield and the South Yorkshire region were consulted, alongside reports into youth unemployment programmes. Other miscellaneous documents were used where relevant, including reports on local issues such as education, housing policy, and urban planning of both residential and commercial areas of the city.

The minute books of Sheffield's licensing magistrates proved an invaluable source for this research. These documents contained minutes from the monthly meetings of the licensing committee, as well as relevant supplementary materials including petitions, court records, press cuttings, meetings with police and special policy meetings. The minute books were available from 1965 onwards, and were a valuable source of information on both the number and types of venues opening and operating in Sheffield. However, they also provided materials detailing the reaction of local authorities to the changing nature of these venues, the city's growing night-time economy, and the impact of this on the city, including regular reports from the Chief Constable. The minute books detailed the meetings held by the licensing committee, and highlighted areas they felt to be of particular concern. Through these documents it was possible to gain an understanding of both how and why the city's licensed venues were licensed in the way that they were. Further, it was possible to explore the impact that these decisions had on the type of nightlife that developed in the city, by documenting venues that were refused licences, had licences revoked, or had ongoing problems with the licensing committee. These documents have formed a central part of the research of this thesis, providing historical context for the changing nature of leisure spaces and the development of the night-time economy in an urban area.

The history and development of particular venues was documented through miscellaneous council and local authority records; for example, the appeals and court records

of the Mojo club (Chapters two and five) and the court appeal between Mecca Leisure Ltd. and the licensing magistrates (Chapter five). These documents made it possible to explore in detail how evening leisure venues changed between the 1960s and the 1980s, in particular by highlighting the relationship between commercial interests and a changing entertainment landscape, and the regulation of these venues by local authorities. A significant amount of newly catalogued material was deposited in Sheffield City Archives by the Leadmill nightclub pertaining to the management and funding of the venue (Chapter four). These sources cover the initial opening of the venue in 1980 and the subsequent eight years. Containing financial records, minutes of management meetings, correspondence with local authorities, and grant applications, these documents provided a valuable insight into the everyday workings of a youth cultural venue. Perhaps most significantly these documents detail the working relationship between the Leadmill and Sheffield City Council, and offer an insight into the often overlooked relationship between the cultural industry and local authority.

Finally, to supplement oral and textual sources, photographic evidence was also used. Photographs of Sheffield throughout the period were gathered from the Picture Sheffield project.¹³⁸ The photos provided visual detail of important changes to Sheffield city centre, including pedestrianisation and building projects. Photographs were also used, where possible, to gain a better understanding about the type of buildings being used as evening leisure spaces, and their location within the city. The majority of the images relevant to this research in this collection are of the city and its buildings and little can be gleaned about culture and society from these images. However, they do provide a visual representation of important changes to the city and are an important way of tracing how the city centre developed between the 1960s and the 1980s

¹³⁸ <https://www.picturesheffield.com> [last accessed 19/07/2017].

As with all research projects there are inevitably things that have had to be left out. This thesis is primarily focused on the relationship between different forms of popular youth culture, and the ways in which young people identified themselves. Within this, the changing behaviours of young people, particularly pertaining to issues of gender and sexuality, are explored. However, there has not been space to fully explore the changing nature of LGBT spaces, or spaces inhabited by black and ethnic minority youth. This thesis does not, beyond the introduction, explicitly refer to class. The majority of my oral history participants referred to themselves as working class and those who identified as middle class inhabited the same spaces as their working class counterparts. While I recognise class as an important social category that influenced the extent to which young people were able to engage with youth culture, it is not recognised as a shaping factor in young people's cultural choices and therefore is mentioned relatively infrequently. Where the issue of class does appear, it is often with reference to Sheffield's demographic and its reputation as a political and left wing city. This thesis is not focused on the products of youth culture, rather it is interested in the myriad of ways young people engaged with young culture and to what extent this played a part in their cultural identification. As such, there is limited discussion of the local band scene, and the explosion of the *avant garde* music scene in Sheffield is only discussed in relation to its influence on the wider landscape of Sheffield's evening leisure spaces, and its influence in changing both national and local perceptions of the city. Similarly, this thesis does not engage in questions about why this music scene emerged in the city, and whether or not there was something unique about Sheffield in this period.

This thesis shows that the development of evening leisure space was central to the dramatic changes experienced by young people in post-war Britain. By focusing on one city over an extended chronological time period this thesis offers an insight into the texture of these changes, exploring the many and significant ways that ordinary young people's lives

changed between 1960 and 1989. It offers a level of detail not usually found in studies of youth culture spanning this timeframe, allowing patterns and trends to emerge across several generations of post-war youth. This thesis privileges the experiences of ordinary young people, highlighting the varied and valid ways that they engaged with youth culture. In this way, this thesis offers a new way of exploring young people's interactions with youth culture and broadens our understandings of the lives and experiences of post-war youth.

Chapter II: Emergence

‘In the years when leisure and income were far less than they are now, Sheffield’s nightlife was unsophisticated. Come evening, the majority of those who stopped work rested. Only a few had time and money to spend. It’s different now.’

-City on the Move¹

The existence of a form of youth culture can be found far before the post-WWII years, with young people attending dances, cinemas, and taking trips to the seaside, whilst university students in the years before the Second World War were developing a form of youth culture set outside of wider society. Although the arrival of commercialised and mass-produced products of youth culture in the 1950s and 1960s signalled a very visible form of youth culture, the category of youth is by no means confined to the post-1950 period. Historians such as Selina Todd, Carol Dyhouse, Harry Hendrick, John Springhall, and Jon Savage have written extensively about youth cultures and the lives of teenagers and adolescents in the years before the 1950s.² While the post-war era cannot claim the creation of youth, it remains an important period in the formation of modern youth culture. The 1960s, in particular, endure as an important decade in the history of youth culture, and is the starting point of this research. It will be argued in the following pages that the 1960s saw significant changes, not only to the products and cultural outputs available for young people to consume but also to the leisure spaces available to young people. This period saw the emergence of

¹ *Sheffield: City on the Move* [film], directed by Jim Coulthard (Sheffield City Council, 1972)

² Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950* (Oxford, 2005); Carol Dyhouse, *Girl Trouble: Panic and Progress in the History of Young Women* (London, 2003); Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford, 1990); John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta Rap, 1830-1996* (London, 1998); Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth. 1875-1945* (London, 2007).

spaces and places designed to accommodate the cultural interests and desires of teenagers and young adults. These spaces provided, in many respects, an environment in which young people could form wider group identities as well as giving them the opportunity to develop social habits and lifestyles away from the home. The emergence and development of these spaces will be the focus of the first three chapters of this thesis.

This chapter will argue that the 1960s saw real and significant changes in the leisure opportunities available to young people. Exploring the development of evening leisure spaces through the emergence of beat nights held in church halls to the opening of licenced nightclubs this chapter will show that the 1960s was a period in which young people were increasingly able to socialise outside of the home. This chapter is not just the story of new spaces; it will show that existing spaces such as the pub were being reimagined, and were under constant renegotiation as young people carved out spaces for themselves in the city.

As leisure opportunities for young people became more varied, and the spaces in which young people could socialise became more numerous, the lifestyles of young people in Sheffield shifted accordingly. This was particularly the case for young women. While subject to stricter curfews, and with more limitations placed on their leisure time than their male counterparts, this period did see the expansion of leisure aimed at young women. In many cases these spaces appealed equally to young men and women, creating an environment in which age, not gender, was the uniting factor.

Charting the changes to evening leisure spaces this chapter demonstrates the importance that these spaces held to the development of youth culture. Such pronounced changes brought challenges to local authorities which had to find new ways to manage and regulate these spaces and the young people that socialised in them.

Sheffield in the 1960s

Sheffield in the 1960s, like many British cities in this period, was a city in transition. Post-war developments such as slum clearance, mass-scale building of social housing, pedestrianisation and commercialisation of central areas of the city changed the day-to-day living of many citizens of Sheffield. One of the most significant changes in the landscape of the city came in the 1960s when Sheffield City Council declared much of the city and the surrounding area a smoke-free zone in an attempt to rid the city of the black smog that had become so synonymous with the area from the nineteenth century onwards. During his visit in the 1930s, George Orwell described the industrial skyline of the city:

It seems to me, by daylight, one of the most appalling places I have ever seen. In whichever direction you look you see the same landscape of monstrous chimneys pouring forth smoke which is sometimes black... all buildings are blackened within a year or two of being put up.³

In an attempt to move away from the popular view of Sheffield as dirty and industrial, as epitomised by Orwell's reflections on the city, the City Council began work to rebrand Sheffield as a city of the future. This is perhaps best illustrated by the release of the promotional film 'Sheffield: City On The Move', released in 1972. Designed to promote the cosmopolitanism and vibrancy of the city, *City On The Move* reflected and consolidated the transformation of the city that would come to characterise its post-war experience: a tension between old and new, production and consumption, industrial and commercial.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the pedestrianisation of much of the city centre following the destruction of the Blitz during World War Two. Following the removal of central slums in the inter-war era, it was hoped that large-scale pedestrianisation of the city centre would

³ George Orwell, Peter Davison (ed.), *George Orwell: The Collected Non Fiction* (eBook, 1st edn, London, 2017), p. 239.

create a more homogenous shopping district. One of Sheffield's most iconic city-centre schemes was the 'Hole in the Road': construction began in 1967 and created a large pedestrianised area which ran underneath some of the city centre roads, acting as a thoroughfare to department stores such as C&A Modes but also containing independent stores.⁴ It later became a popular meeting spot for many generations of Sheffield's youths. The Hole in the Road was filled in the early 1990s during the construction of the Supertram network. The building of the Hole of the Road in the 1960s is indicative of the dedication of the council to move towards a more homogenous and shopper-friendly retail centre, and is suggestive of the city's wider feeling of optimism and prosperity in the early post-war years.

The continued increase in the popularity of cheap, mass-produced goods in post-war Britain saw the rise of larger chain stores and department stores in city centres, and Sheffield was no exception. The city was home to larger stores such as C&A Modes, Woolworths, Austin Reed, Hornes, the popular Cole Brothers department store, as well as an increasing number of smaller boutiques. As part of the council's attempt to change the image of Sheffield, the city hosted an annual 'Shopping Festival' in the 1960s. The festival was advertised widely in the local press and was designed to show the redeveloped Sheffield as a consumer-friendly city centre. Further cementing this post-war image of prosperity and modernity, a *Daily Mirror* segment asked readers to nominate their favourite cities, and Sheffield was highlighted as one of Britain's 'boom cities'. By 1967 Sheffield was, according to the *Daily Mirror*, 'a Boom City in step with all the young ideas of today' and the redevelopment of the city centre was done 'with the shopper in mind'.⁵

⁴ See Figure 2.2.

⁵ 'The Boom Cities!', *Daily Mirror*, January 12 1967, p. 7.



Figure 2.1: Fargate shopping precinct before pedestrianisation, 1965.



Figure 2.2: Aerial view of the Hole in the Road. Late 1960s. Exact date unknown.

With almost full employment, large-scale building works and new shopping developments, the post-war period in Sheffield was presented as one of prosperity, progression and modernity. The ongoing changes to the city centre were important. The redevelopment of the city-centre represented a physical manifestation of the importance of commerce, retail, and leisure in this period. The redevelopment of Sheffield city centre was part of a wider reimagining of the relationship between public space and leisure time, changing the way people moved through the city and responding to new demands for retail and leisure opportunities.

This section will outline the development of evening leisure spaces for young people, and the role these spaces played in young people's lifestyles. The 1960s was a period in which venues were emerging, offering the opportunity for new ways of socialising. These changes were happening alongside the adaptation and regeneration of existing leisure spaces. Using a series of case studies, it will be argued that the 1960s was a decade of renegotiation both in terms of the use of spaces available to young people, and the behaviours and lifestyles that young people adopted and engaged with. This period saw young people socialising for later and longer becoming more common, and the emergence of evening leisure space was central to this change.

Evening leisure spaces for young people in Sheffield in the 1960s came in several different forms: pubs, hired venues, nightclubs without an alcohol licence, and nightclubs with an alcohol licence. At this stage it is necessary to clarify the use of the term 'nightclub' in this chapter. Many of the venues and events that will be discussed in this chapter cannot be understood to be nightclubs in the popular sense of the word. Often they were converted buildings with a soft drinks bar and a focus on live music as well as DJs. Similarly, the venues that gained the title nightclub were often more reminiscent of cabaret clubs than the modern nightclub.

Coffee Bars

The 1960s were by no means the beginning of young people socialising in the public sphere. The picture house, dance halls, and street corners are, among other spaces, well documented as sites of youth leisure.⁶ The milk or coffee bar had become an increasingly common sight from the 1930s onwards, but it was from the 1950s that they became a space designed primarily for the use of young people with the addition of juke boxes. The fast rise of coffee and milk bars in London's Soho district earned it the title 'Little Europe'.⁷ Joe Moran has argued that outside of London 'the espresso bar was a more mundane but still popular venue for young people largely deprived of other forms of evening entertainment.'⁸ Moran's article placed the milk or coffee bar within the context of Richard Hoggart's famous Juke Box Boys passage in the influential *Uses of Literacy*. Hoggart's observations of the 'Juke Box Boys' and their cafe, the type of which he estimated there to be 'one in almost every northern town with more than say, fifteen-thousand inhabitants', were less than complimentary.⁹ Hoggart described the 'nastiness of their modern knick-knacks, their glaring showiness', with the main visitors being 'boys aged between fifteen and twenty, with drape-suits, picture ties, and an American slouch'.¹⁰ In a rather cynical attack on their interests, Hoggart described how the youths put 'copper after copper into the mechanical record player...living to a large extent in a myth-world compounded of a few simple elements which they take to be those of American life'.¹¹ This early observation of milk bars suggests that they were a space where young people were free to display and interact with their cultural

⁶ James Nott covers the role of the dance hall in youth leisure in James Nott, *Going to the Palais: A Social And Cultural History of Dancing and Dance Halls in Britain, 1918-1960* (Oxford, 2015).

⁷ 'It's War To The Last Cup Of Coffee', *Daily Mirror*, November 13 1954, p. 3.

⁸ Joe Moran, 'Milk Bars, Starbucks and The Uses of History', *Cultural History* 20.6 (2006), p. 556.

⁹ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* (6th edn, London, 2009), p. 221.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-21.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

interests, although Hoggart's presence there may signify that it was not a youth-only domain. Moran suggests that the early milk bars 'allowed young people to congregate in a healthy, non-alcoholic setting' and 'seem to have been motivated by both paternalistic concern for and commercial exploitation of this new social group'.¹²

This rise of coffee and milk bars was prominent in Sheffield as elsewhere. Neil Anderson's book on 1960s Sheffield notes the rise of coffee bars in Sheffield city centre and suburbs, including The Side Walk, La Favourita, the Leprechaun, El Mambo, La Strada, Paramount, the Zodiac, Disc Jockey Café, Flamingo, the Mustard Seed, the Octopus, Chez Brion and the Teenager Tavern, which was located in the downstairs area of Marsdens milk bar.¹³ Despite not selling any alcohol, some coffee bars gained a negative reputation for the people they attracted. Patricia Eales spoke about her memories of the El Mambo coffee bar to Neil Anderson. She said: 'if my mum ever caught a sniff of me going near that place she'd have killed me. She told me it was frequented by the dodgiest people'.¹⁴ My own interviewee, Trish, echoed this sentiment. She explained that:

Sometimes at the end of the evening there was a coffee bar somewhere, I think it was Carver Street, called La Favourita, because the pubs kicked out at 11, half 10, 11, and that was open until midnight which was very daring and very late and after the last bus and you were in big trouble.¹⁵

That Trish highlighted that the coffee bar closed after the last bus suggests that it was the changing lifestyle -to an evening and late-night entertainment landscape- that was problematic, rather than the coffee bar itself.

The minutes of Sheffield's licensing magistrates give an indication of the ways in which coffee bars were adapting to appeal to young people in this period. Minutes for the

¹² Moran, 'Milk Bars, Starbucks and The Uses of History', p. 554.

¹³ Neil Anderson, *Dirty Stop Out's Guide to 1960s Sheffield* (Sheffield, 2011), pp. 15-16.

¹⁴ Patricia Eales quoted in Anderson, *Dirty Stop Out's Guide to 1960s Sheffield*, p. 15.

¹⁵ Interview with Trish.

meeting of 3 May 1966 show three Sheffield coffee bars being granted Music and Singing Licences until 10pm.¹⁶ The granting of a Music and Singing Licence enabled coffee bars to install juke boxes on the premises, thereby appealing more directly to a younger audience. The meeting of July 1966 similarly shows another three coffee bars being granted extensions to their hours, allowing them to open until 10pm.¹⁷ It is significant to note that in this period entertainment venues for young people were not necessarily situated in the city centre. All three cafés granted extensions in the July 1966 meeting were in large residential areas, likely where there were high populations of young people: Maisie's Café on Duke Street was located near the Park Hill housing development; Hilo Café on Cuthbert Bank Road was located in Hillsborough; and Harlequins Café was located on the high street of Crookes, a western suburb of the city. Whilst the café or coffee bar was by no means a new phenomenon, the applications to extend hours and own juke boxes are demonstrative of the ways in which local businesses in Sheffield were becoming more aware of the growing desire for, and commercial benefits of, spaces more attractive to young people. As Kate Bradley has argued, coffee and milk bars were not simply a place where adolescents went to 'dress up and show off; they were also spaces where many had the opportunity to "do nothing" while casually building social skills and confidence outside of the parental home or school.'¹⁸ The rise, and popularity, of milk bars in Britain more widely is demonstrative of the significance of space in enabling young people to engage in lifestyles and form cultural habits separate to those of their parents.

¹⁶ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 47.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁸ Kate Bradley, 'Rational Recreation in the Age of Affluence: The Café and Working-Class Youth in London, c.1939-1965' in Erika Rappaport, Sandra Trudgen Dawson and Mark J. Crowley (eds), *Consuming Behaviours: Identity, Politics and Pleasure in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2015), p. 82.

Youth Clubs

The availability and types of spaces available for young people in Sheffield was undergoing constant change in this period. Space for young people had existed in the form of youth clubs for a number of years, but these were often tied to churches, schools, and other official institutions. Similar groups existed for younger children, including Boy Scouts, Brownies, and the Boys Brigade, and were similarly affiliated with central institutions. As Kate Bradley has argued, the existence of space outside of the parental home gave young people the opportunity to socialise in new ways. However, many of these spaces were controlled and mediated through the influence of supervising adults. Emma Latham's research on Liverpool youth clubs between 1940 and 1970 highlights the links between these clubs, government policy, and ideals surrounding morality and sexuality. In discussing the rise of mixed gender clubs in the 1940s Latham notes that 'particular concern was expressed by youth workers that dancing should be regulated so as to avoid charges of sexual impropriety'.¹⁹ Similarly, Latham discusses how Liverpool's youth clubs were designed to attract young people who had left full-time education, in order that they could prepare club members 'for their future adult lives'.²⁰

The mid 1950s and early 1960s can be seen as a period of transition for the use of space designated for young people. The rise of coffee bars and a greater availability of space for young people to socialise in imposed a threat to the long-established popularity of the youth club, and this period saw a significant change in the activities that youth clubs offered young people, and their approach in trying to attract young people. *A Manchester Guardian*

¹⁹ Emma Latham, 'The Liverpool Boys' Association and the Liverpool Union of Youth Clubs: Youth Organisations and Gender, 1940-1970', *Journal of Contemporary History* 35.3 (2000), p. 431.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

article from 1958 reported how H.J Frank, the deputy general secretary of the National Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls' Clubs, was promoting the idea of running coffee bars to attract the '60 per cent of young people who did not belong to an organisation', an idea based on a 'flourishing' club in Sheffield.²¹ Frank told the meeting that 'no group had changed its tastes and habits so much in the past twenty years as the adolescent'.²² Youth clubs in Sheffield seemed to be adapting to the changing desires of young people in the 1960s. An article in *The Star* from 29 October 1960 described the opening of a jazz club sponsored by the Sheffield Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls' Clubs.²³ The '552' Jazz Club's premises opened on 1 November 1960 and John Clement, assistant organiser for the association, explained at the time that 'it's got the ideal coffee bar type atmosphere... and will be the only jazz club in this area of the city'.²⁴ The decision to open the club came, explained Mr Clement, after a series of articles in *The Star* which 'dealt with the lack of clubs for teenagers too young to hear most of the local bands, which play in pubs'.²⁵ The necessity for youth clubs to adapt became increasingly important, as in the early part of the decade much of the available space to listen to music was in licenced premises, and as Bradley's research on rational recreation shows, there were fears that the young would 'ape' behaviours seen in less reputable spaces such as pubs and bars.²⁶ As such, many young people were not allowed to enter these spaces.²⁷ The need to adapt to changing tastes and habits reflected the increasing number of leisure options for young people in post-war Britain: young people were increasingly able to dictate and influence how and where they wished to spend their time.

²¹ 'Getting Near To Young People: Coffee Bars Experiment', *The Manchester Guardian*, May 12 1958, p. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³ 'City Group Lays on "Young" Jazz', *The Star*, October 29 1960, p. 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁶ Bradley, 'Rational Recreation', p. 78.

²⁷ While the licensed status of these venues were a legal barrier to young people entering them, this thesis shows that age-restrictions were not uniformly enforced.

Aside from affiliated youth clubs, the role of churches in running activities for young people was significant in this period. An article for *The Star* in October 1960 describes the planned coffee bar of Wesley Hall Methodist Church in Crookes. The proposed coffee bar, explained Rev R. G. Jones, would be for young people, ‘without ramming religion down their throats’.²⁸ He went on to explain that ‘there will be opportunities for these youngsters to enter into youth club activities, but they will be able to sit in the coffee bar and do nothing if they so wish’.²⁹ However, the article goes on to say that coffee will be priced ‘slightly below normal’, indicating their desire to attract young people towards the Church and, by extension, their wider activities. A similar article in the *Guardian* from 1960 reported on a Salford youth club being given initial approval for ‘all the things they [teenagers] appear to be interested in, including [a] coffee bar, music, dancing, and possibly boxing’.³⁰ The report goes on to explain that the club hoped that ‘youngsters could realise the advantages of getting together and eventually could be attracted to more worthwhile activities.’³¹ The desires of the Church to attract young people ‘to more worthwhile activities’ through these ventures was indicative of the wider view that young people’s activities should be monitored and supervised and demonstrates a continuation of the Victorian idea of rational recreation, although the means through which this was achieved was becoming more varied.

The need to attract young people to youth clubs became more significant as the decade wore on. In 1964 *The Star* published an article highlighting the fears of a Mexborough area youth worker who felt that pubs and clubs were ‘drawing away members of youth clubs’.³² In his annual report, Ian Howard argued that young people were ‘finding other outside attractions to replace youth groups, and they tend[ed] to look on youth clubs as

²⁸ ‘Coffee Bar at Church’, *The Star*, October 21 1960, p. 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁰ ‘Coffee Bar Bait: Enticing Youth to Better Things’, *The Guardian*, June 24 1960, p. 20.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³² ‘Pubs, Clubs “Drawing Away Members of Youth Clubs”’, *The Star*, October 17 1964, p. 2.

“solely for the use of kids.”³³ The annual report also quoted the figures of youth club members in the Mexborough area of the county, just outside of Rotherham. In Mexborough the threat to youth clubs likely came from working men’s clubs and pubs, rather than venues aimed solely at young people. Nevertheless, the issues facing Mexborough’s youth club leaders remain relevant for the area as a whole. The figures for Mexborough show that 2,641 young people between 14 and 20 out of a possible 13,835 were part of a youth club.³⁴ Howard’s worry that youth clubs were ‘not catering for the needs of approaching adult life’ is reminiscent of the *Manchester Guardian* article detailing H. J Frank’s concerns about attracting young people of all ages.³⁵

However, one interviewee discussed his experiences of his local youth club in the mid-1970s as ‘absolutely fantastic’ in its approach to music and youth activities.³⁶

Juan explained:

They ran a load of activities, so one of the things that was great was the discos. Absolutely amazing in the sense that every so often she brought up DJs from London, so we were hearing, so I was into jazz funk, so they would come up with funky jazz, so it was a slightly different, so they would come up, I don’t know, it might be every six to eight months or whatever during the period.³⁷

Juan’s experiences of the youth club began from the age of 12, and he recalled how he stopped going at around the age of 16 or 17, or, in other words, the age at which he was able to start getting into pubs and nightclubs. Similarly, another participant, David, recalled his progression from youth clubs to pubs in the 1960s:

Well originally I used to go down the youth club on Thorncliffe side and there with me couple of shillings that I had and then after that you’d sneak down, about 15, you’d

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁵ ‘Getting Near To Young People: Coffee Bars Experiment’, *The Manchester Guardian*, May 12 1958, p. 4.

³⁶ Interview with Juan.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

sneak down to the pub and have a couple of halves of beer and play pinball.³⁸

David's progression from the youth club to the pub around the age of 15 is typical of many of the people I spoke to. However, it should be noted that it was not a clear-cut progression.

Another interviewee discussed attending rock dances at the youth club when she was around 17 in the mid-1970s, and was already attending nightclubs. As part of a wider discussion about her social groups and activities she told me:

We thought we were really grown up when we used to go to Josephine's on Barker's Pool and if you could get in without queueing that was a major bonus. But then also you, I used to go to a church youth club in Grenoside, and it wasn't churchy. But people just went. And they got me into heavy music, heavy rock music as well.³⁹

It is important to note that Jacqueline's attendance at the youth club at an age when she was going to nightclubs was connected to music. Rather than attending the youth club on a regular basis, the youth club was used by Jacqueline as another space for her to experience a certain type of music. Jacqueline's recollection that in the 1970s the church youth club wasn't 'churchy' is also suggestive of the ways that some clubs moved away from an overt focus on morality to better adapt to the needs of young people over the course of the post-war period. Jacqueline and Juan's experiences of discos and music in the 1970s present a stark contrast to the image of nightclubs presented by Emma Latham in 1940s Liverpool, suggesting that the institution of the youth club had undergone significant changes. While the development from youth club to pubs and nightclubs was not strictly linear, and there were stages at which it overlapped, the youth club was primarily used by younger teenagers. By the latter part of the 1960s the youth club was used as a stepping stone by young people to a social life based outside of the home, and conducted primarily in the evenings.

³⁸ Interview with David.

³⁹ Interview with Jacqueline.

While Latham's study highlights that youth clubs in the immediate post-war period were designed to guide young men and women towards adulthood, by the 1960s, with the rise of a wider variety of leisure spaces for young people, the youth club became a place for younger teenagers to socialise. As a 'respectable' space under the supervision of adults, the youth club was a stepping-stone for young adolescents to begin to socialise and build social networks outside of the traditional spaces of home and school. While the role and activities of youth clubs undoubtedly changed over the latter half of the twentieth century, the youth club remained a structured and supervised space that lost appeal to older teenagers as alternative evening leisure spaces arose.

Regulating Nightlife in the 1960s

As the demand for leisure opportunities increased, a growing number of purpose-built and repurposed buildings emerged in Sheffield, designed to attract young people predominantly between the ages of 15 and 21. The rise of these types of venues signals the point at which popular youth culture and evening entertainment met, providing the opportunity for young people to socialise away from the home *en masse*. Alongside this change to young people's leisure choices came the need for formal regulation of these venues.

The 1960s was a significant period of wider societal change, with new licensing laws to both ease and regulate alcohol consumption and entertainment venues. The Licensing Act of 1964 made it possible to extend opening hours for the first time since the 1920s.⁴⁰ The

⁴⁰ James Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England* (Manchester, 2009), p. 194.

changes to licensing laws in the latter part of the 1960s meant that larger purpose-built venues emerged, capitalising on the desire for a night-time economy by opening clubs with restaurants, bars, dance floors and live acts which stayed open longer than previous venues in the city.

However, the earlier part of the decade, 1962-67 in particular, saw a growth of venues and events in Sheffield aimed at a younger audience. As licensing documents are not available before November 1965, it is difficult to ascertain the ways in which the licensing magistrates dealt with this, but documentation from 1966 onwards detail how the magistrates were becoming increasingly concerned with both the behaviour of young people and the type of venues in which they were socialising.

A key concern for the magistrates in December 1965 was the granting of Music, Singing and Dancing licences to venues they felt to be unsuitable. Holding a special meeting to discuss the application of four public houses for Music, Singing and Dancing licences, the magistrates noted that ‘at first licences were only granted where a floor area of at least 600 square feet was available if a room was to be used for dancing or 400 square feet for music only but that this rule had gradually disappeared with the introduction of music by mechanical means.’⁴¹ At the time of the meeting in December 1965 Sheffield had four public houses where dancing was permitted. The application of a further four public houses in 1965 was a cause of concern for the magistrates as they felt the premises were unsuitable, and they were unsure how these changes related to established protocol for fire and safety regulations. However, the magistrates were also concerned about the rise of drinking in young people as displayed in the 1965 annual report by the Chief Constable to the licensing magistrates, who stated that ‘young people were attracted to dances’.⁴² The Chief Constable reported that there

⁴¹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 14.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

had been an ‘increase in drunkenness in the 14 to 20 age group’, demonstrating both that being underage wasn’t a barrier to young people gaining entry to, and drinking in, these places, and that evening entertainment was becoming a more popular pursuit among this demographic.⁴³ In reply to the report the chairman for the licensing magistrates stated that ‘this committee, and the Courts that deal with certain applications, must constantly exercise appropriate controls over every aspect of licenced activity’.⁴⁴ The chairman continued to tell the Chief Constable that ‘in respect of offences concerning persons under 18 purchasing or drinking intoxicating liquor on licenced premises the increase last year [1964] was 9% and that figure has been added to by 22% this year’.⁴⁵ The meeting of 23rd December 1965 and the annual report of the same year demonstrate the growing concerns around the behaviour of young people in the city, and how best to regulate it. The licensing documents, particularly the minutes of special meetings, provide a valuable insight into the discussions developing around the changing behaviour of young people in 1960s Sheffield.

The development of licensing laws and practices in Sheffield had a significant impact on the types of venues available. As alcohol licenses were hard to come by in the early part of the decade many venues held events with a soft drinks bar, and the early 1960s saw the repurposing of buildings and church halls as clubs and places to dance. Following the Licensing Acts of 1964 and 1976 these venues were gradually replaced by larger purpose-built venues.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Hired Venues and Weekly Club Nights

Before the opening of dedicated clubs for young people, the hired venue played an important part in providing Sheffield's teenagers with leisure opportunities. In a period when formal dances still dominated, it was difficult for young people to find spaces to listen and dance to their own music. The Gaumont Cinema in Sheffield's Barker's Pool began to host Saturday morning 'Teenage Shows' in the 1950s that were a mixture of live acts and a film screening, but it was the introduction of twist and beat sessions in church halls and ballrooms across Sheffield in the early 1960s that signified a move towards music-based evening leisure.

In the early part of the decade the use of ballrooms and dance halls for teenage dancing was becoming increasingly common. Ballrooms such as City Hall, Cutlers Hall, and the Empress Ballroom could be found advertising 'beat' nights in August 1964.⁴⁶ These venues recognised the attraction of these nights to teenagers and began to advertise these sessions regularly in *The Star* throughout the early part of the decade. After its reopening in July 1962, *Top Star Special* wrote that the Central Ballroom in Attercliffe was 'already attracting teenagers from miles around with twist and bop sessions on four evenings every week'.⁴⁷ It went on to explain that 'all the customers at the Central Ballroom are teenagers who can twist the night away for as little as two shillings.' Nether Edge Hall, in the South West of the city, held 'teenage' nights in the 1960s before becoming Turn Ups nightclub in the 1970s. As a venue it had a capacity of 460 for dancing and its teenager nights were popular enough to attract the special attention of the licensing magistrates, who ensured that

⁴⁶ *The Star*, August 14 1964, p.2.

⁴⁷ *Top Star Special*, September 22 1962, p. 10.

‘the service of alcohol shall cease one hour before the dancing’ on teenage nights.⁴⁸

The increased appetite for ‘beat’ and ‘twist’ sessions encouraged new venues to open. Peter and Geoff Stringfellow, who would later go on to open the popular King Mojo Club, ran their first two ventures from church halls. The Black Cat Club, opened on Friday nights in St Aidan’s church hall, City Road, in 1962, with the Blue Moon Club opening a year later. Peter Stringfellow gained a reputation in the city for booking acts on the brink of success, and this was cemented by his booking of the Beatles in 1963. The gig coincided with the rise of ‘Beatlemania’ and had to be moved to the Azena Ballroom in Gleadless as a result of high ticket demand. In an interview with *The Star*’s monthly teenage supplement, *Top Star Special*, in 1962 Peter Stringfellow, then 21, explained that ‘there is not enough room in some pubs for a really swinging session, and a lot of young people do not like going in to pubs anyway.’⁴⁹ Less than a year later, in May 1963, *Top Star Special* reporter Carole Newton wrote about the Black Cat Club:

Peter began by hiring St Aidan’s Church Hall, City Road, for a couple of nights a week and has done so well that he opens four nights a week and the church authorities have allowed him to hold his own club there and decorate the premises as he wishes. He does in fact help the hall to support itself.⁵⁰

The coverage of the Black Cat Club in *Top Star Special* demonstrates the important role that hired venues held in the development of nightlife in Sheffield. The Stringfellow brothers’ venture was so successful that it was allowed to open four nights a week, and was making enough money to encourage St Aidan’s Church to keep them on. The Stringfellow brothers moved on from the Black Cat Club in 1964 to open the King Mojo, and on handing it to

⁴⁸ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 198.

⁴⁹ *Top Star Special*, September 22 1962, p. 10.

⁵⁰ *Top Star Special*, May 25 1963, p. 3.

another manager the club had 1,800 members.⁵¹

The church hall continued to be important in the development of Sheffield's nightlife. In the mid to late 1960s The Ark club was run from the church hall of St Nathaniel's in the Crookesmoor area of Sheffield. Comprehensive licensing documents are not available for Sheffield before November 1966, so it is not possible to date exactly when The Ark began. However, minutes of the Licensing Magistrates from 1968 detail that the renewal of a Music, Singing and Dancing licence was not possible at St Nathaniel's until structural work had been carried out, indicating that St Nathaniel's church hall was being used as an evening leisure venue by 1968.⁵² The Ark became well known in the city for playing Tamala Motown and Northern Soul. As well as demonstrating the continuing use of church halls at the end of the decade, the emergence of the soul nights at the Ark are significant, as it is demonstrative of a diversification in the types of leisure opportunities available to young people in the city.

A similar example was the Frecheville R'n'B Club at the Frecheville Community Centre near Gleadless, in the south east of the city which began in 1962. The *Top Star Special* highlighted the problem with these types of venues when it covered the club in the March 1965 edition:

Although the hall is still used for other purposes as well and they are limited in the décor they can provide, they provide an atmosphere on a Saturday and a Tuesday that compares with the city beat clubs that have the advantage of a permanent site.⁵³

The hired venues were restricted in what they could offer young people, both by licensing restrictions and décor, as well as the fact that they had to compete with other events on the venue's calendar. The Frecheville R'n'B club was a success despite this, but the *Top Star*

⁵¹ *Top Star Special*, June 27 1964, p. 22.

⁵² Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 261.

⁵³ *Top Star Special*, March Edition 1965, p. 4.

Special coverage demonstrates why dedicated spaces for young people were felt necessary by some in the city. Indeed, when speaking to the magazine about his ambitions for his clubs in the future, Peter Stringfellow said in 1962: ‘if we make money, my idea is to get a hall of our own which we can decorate as we like and have rock and twist sessions every day of the week’.⁵⁴

While not confined to the early part of the decade, hired venues such as church halls and community centres played an important role in the formation of the cultural landscape of Sheffield in the early 1960s. They provided a space for entrepreneurs such as the Stringfellows to test what was commercially viable, and later provided a space for diversification from the commercially popular clubs.

Nightclubs

The emergence of three clubs signalled a major expansion of evening entertainment dedicated to young people in Sheffield. These were Club 60, the Esquire, and the King Mojo Club. Club 60 was the first permanent venue in the city centred on music and dancing that was aimed at a teenage audience. Club 60 opened in Shalesmoor, a fifteen-minute walk from the city centre, on 5 October 1960. It was opened by Terry Thornton, a musician who wanted to create a space for young music lovers after being refused use of the City Hall for rock and roll by the council.⁵⁵ Club 60 was housed in an old pub cellar and was billed as a jazz club; however, after introducing ‘pop’ nights on a Saturday, Thornton discovered that these were

⁵⁴ *Top Star Special*, September 22 1962, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Dave Haslam, *Life After Dark: A History of British Nightclubs and Music Venues* (London, 2016), p. 95.

much more popular than the jazz nights that he had originally planned for the club.⁵⁶

Thornton's Club 60 only had a capacity of 250, but its popularity made clear that a larger venue would flourish. Within two years Thornton opened his second venue, the Esquire.

The Esquire was housed in abandoned industrial building on Leadmill Road, and Thornton spoke to the *Top Star Special* about its conversion and opening in September 1962.⁵⁷ The article describes the original schedule of the nightclub, which opened from Thursday to Sunday, with two evenings dedicated to twist, and two to jazz. Like Club 60 the Esquire did not hold an alcohol licence, instead creating a balcony with a coffee bar area. Thornton told the *Top Star Special* that a rehearsal room had been provided to allow groups to practise during the three days when the club wasn't open. The provision of a practice room in the Esquire is demonstrative of the importance of live music during this period. The bills for both Club 60 and the Esquire focused on live acts, often featuring local artists. Joe Cocker, Dave Berry, Frank White, and others, often played at local nightclubs and had a strong local fan base. One of my interviewees, Sue, a student at art college in the mid-1960s, recalled the abundance of live music in the period:

It's just that, there were lots of local groups but there were also visiting groups from America and it was very common to just be able to go out, and I think you could have gone to live music every day of the week if you'd wanted. Frank White band was always on at the Peacock at Firth Park.⁵⁸

Sue's memories highlight the importance of live music as a part of nightlife in this period, and shows the widening of leisure options for young people by the mid-1960s. Where live music was the domain of licensed venues in the early part of the decade, the introduction of teenage beat clubs in the middle of the decade provided a space for younger people to

⁵⁶ Anderson, *Dirty Stop Out Guide to 1960s Sheffield*, p. 21.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵⁸ Interview with Sue.

socialise with live music.

Perhaps the most famous nightclub in Sheffield in the 1960s was the King Mojo Club, opened by Peter and Geoff Stringfellow in 1964 in a converted house in Pitsmoor. The Mojo was the Stringfellow brothers' third venture, following the Black Cat Club and Blue Moon Club nights in church halls. The Mojo quickly gained fame due to Peter Stringfellow's approach to publicity. Unlike Thornton, Stringfellow regularly advertised in *The Star*, and was interviewed on a regular basis in the *Top Star Special*. For this reason, information on the Mojo is far more readily accessible than information on the Esquire. Like the Esquire, the Mojo did not hold an alcohol licence, but stayed open until 2am.



Figure 2.3: Exterior of the King Mojo Club, Pitsmoor.

The introduction of the Private Places of Entertainment Act in 1967 significantly influenced the teenage club scene in the city. The Mojo was refused a licence, and there is no evidence that the Esquire applied for one. Following the closure of both of the teenage beat clubs in 1967 the following few years saw the dominance of licensed, and often corporation-owned, evening entertainment. These new venues were marketed at an older and often wealthier audience, and signalled a wider shift toward evening leisure in which alcohol became a central component and where, in many respects, live music took a back seat.

Following the introduction of the Private Places of Entertainment Act two types of licensed venue emerged to replace the unlicensed teenage clubs. The first was small-capacity discotheques. The second was larger entertainment venues which tended to hold a more varied roster including cabaret and variety acts.

The period between 1966 and 1969 saw a rapid expansion in the number of licensed clubs dedicated to evening entertainment and music. 1966 saw the granting of a publican's licence to the Heart Beat Club, housed above the ice rink on Queens Road, in the south of the city. Provisional licences were also granted for Club Cavendish, and the soon-to-be completed Top Rank complex on Arundel Gate in the same year. The Rank Entertainment group had an existing discotheque in Doncaster, and its arrival in Sheffield signified the first purpose-built nightclub in the city. The Top Rank Suite was granted a Final Order publican's licence in November 1967 with a capacity for 2,500 people and was open until 2am during the week, Fridays and Saturdays, and 11.30pm on Sundays.⁵⁹ The venue regularly held discos, live bands, dinner dances, and had under-18 nights on Tuesdays and under-16 discos on Saturday mornings. The Top Rank Suite underwent several changes in ownership over the following twenty years, but remained a major venue for both discos and live music

⁵⁹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 173.

throughout the period studied in this thesis.

The first recorded alcohol licence for a late-night venue in Sheffield was given to the Heart Beat Club, which successfully applied for a provisional publican's licence in January 1965.⁶⁰ In November 1965 it was granted a Final Order Publican's Licence and an article on the Heart Beat in *Top Star Special* at the end of 1966, when the club had been open for a year, reported that the club had over 10,000 members and three DJs.⁶¹ The article interviewed the new manager of the club, who told the magazine that he was 'hoping to install a small stage for twice weekly cabaret, although this is aimed at the older patrons.'⁶² The inclusion of Heart Beat in the *Top Star Special* suggests it was visited by younger teenagers, despite being a licensed venue. The Heart Beat club was part of the ice skating complex on Queens Road in the south east of the city near the Bramall Lane football ground, and as such would have been familiar to younger teenagers. Indeed, Sue recalled visiting the complex as a 15-year-old:

I used to go to the skating rink on Queens Road, ice skating rink. And they had a nightclub there called the Heart Beat erm, not quite sure how I managed to get in there at my age but I did manage to... I don't remember being challenged. Which is odd because I, I didn't look particularly old for my age. Perhaps they just weren't as strict then.⁶³

Despite Sue's illusions of things being less 'strict' in this period, the approach of the licensing magistrates was developed to try to minimise the attendance of underage youth at licensed venues.

The minutes of the licensing magistrates and associated licensing documents provide an insight into the ways licensed venues were developed, the issues they faced and the conditions they had to meet. The opening of Club Cavendish is particularly well documented

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶¹ *Top Star Special*, December Edition 1966, p. 4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶³ Interview with Sue.

and shows how the licensing magistrates worked with venues to regulate and manage them. Club Cavendish first applied for a provisional publican's licence in September 1966. This was accepted, and following the affirmation of this application in the following month the licensing magistrates provided a list of conditions for members of Club Cavendish. Conditions included that only members and bona fide guests were allowed to enter Club Cavendish. Guests were deemed to be 'a person who, having attained the age of eighteen years, is admitted to the licensed premises accompanied by a member whose guest he is and who, together with the introducing member has on that occasion signed the Visitors' Book, which shall be kept at the licensed premises.'⁶⁴ Furthermore, any changes to the Club rules were to be 'notified in writing to Clerk to the Licensing Justices and the Chief Constable within seven days of coming in to force'.⁶⁵ In May 1967 Club Cavendish was granted a final order publican's licence and allowed to open from 10am until 2am with a capacity of 1,200. According to the agreed rules, membership to Club Cavendish cost one guinea (£1.05), and the dress code was to be 'informal, but male members must wear a collar and tie. Jackets and not sweaters will be worn'.⁶⁶ It is worth noting that the membership for the Esquire was half a crown (12.5p), and this significant difference in price is demonstrative of the type of clientele Club Cavendish was trying to attract. The strict conditions of membership were designed to limit underage drinking, although as Sue's anecdote suggests, these conditions may not have been strictly enforced by the venues themselves. Further, the enforcement of a dress code at Club Cavendish speaks to wider concerns about respectability; with the nightclub designed to be a space primarily for hedonistic leisure, venues were under pressure to appear outwardly respectable. By policing the appearance of both guests and décor, venues were more likely to gain the support and favour of licensing magistrates and local authorities.

⁶⁴ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 102.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Another nightclub to open in this period was Penny Farthing, later known as Penny's, and then Scamps. The Penny Farthing nightclub first appeared in the magistrates' minutes in November 1965, when their application for a Music, Singing and Dancing licence was adjourned with no decision given.⁶⁷ The decision to grant the licence came three months later in February 1966, when the club was licensed until 2am each weekday, with a relatively small capacity of 200. The rules for the club stipulated, like other similar venues that opened in this period, that only those over eighteen were allowed to enter the club, and that 'the sale and supply of intoxicating liquor shall be limited to members of the Penny Farthing Club... and their guests.'⁶⁸ The inclusion of membership in these venues was not unprecedented- many of the teenage clubs required membership- but the over-18 clause of the licensed venues was designed to exclude many young people from socialising in these venues, despite the age limit being erratically enforced.

Not ones to miss out on a commercial opportunity, the Stringfellow brothers moved into licensed entertainment following the closure of the Mojo in 1967. Their new club, The Penthouse, was on the fourth floor of a building in the city centre, and although originally designed with murals similar to those found in the Mojo, the clientele had changed to reflect the new location and licensed status. Peter Stringfellow sold the club on moving away from the city and the Penthouse eventually became a rock club, with one interviewee, David, describing the venue as 'a scruffy dive.'⁶⁹ The Penthouse had numerous and ongoing difficulties with the licensing magistrates. Following the annual reapplication for renewal, its licence was reluctantly extended until 2am by the licensing magistrates, with a capacity of 200 for all purposes in April 1969. However, by September the venue was facing complaints

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶⁹ Interview with David.

and was at risk of having its licence revoked.⁷⁰ The licence was renewed, but in February 1970 the club was in trouble again when it was found that several members of staff were in possession of offensive weapons on the premises.⁷¹ The Penthouse was one of the only licensed venues in this era without a specified dress code and the conditions of the Penthouse licence shows that it also operated without a membership club; instead, the sale and supply of alcohol was limited to ‘such persons as shall have been admitted by ticket or on payment at the door of the premises at a minimum entrance fee of five shillings.’⁷² Without a dress code or controlled membership list, the Penthouse was unable to present the image of respectability that was expected of licensed venues in the city and came under frequent criticism from the licensing magistrates.

The rise of licensed venues aimed at over-18s was part of a wider change in youth leisure in the 1960s. Where there had been church halls and non-licensed clubs aimed at younger teenagers as well as over-eighteens, the rise of larger purpose-built venues owned by large corporations, such as Rank Entertainment in the case of the Top Rank Suite, became more commonplace. In Sheffield, the closure of both the Esquire and King Mojo clubs in 1967 signalled a departure from unlicensed venues focused on live music, moving towards a culture focused on alcohol and disc jockeys.

Pubs

As alcohol began to play a more central role in the leisure choices of young people,

⁷⁰ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 331.

⁷¹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 10/02/1970-17/01/1971, p. 6.

⁷² Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 232.

the pub became an important part of youth culture in the 1960s. Though not a space exclusively inhabited by teenagers and young people, certain pubs across Sheffield became more tolerant of the custom of young people. In the first twenty years of the twentieth century beer consumption had fallen from 214 pints per person annually, to 80 pints per person by the end of the First World War.⁷³ The pub was increasingly facing competition from other leisure pursuits, and it responded by ‘sloughing off its image as a mere drink shop and presenting it instead as a place where alcohol provided just one of a wide range of leisure choices’.⁷⁴ James Nicholls argues that pub-going among young people increased from the 1940s onwards. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century licensing laws had developed to ensure the public house was an adult-only space, but the Licensing Act of 1961 relaxed restrictions and allowed pubs to play radio, television or recorded music without the need for a separate licence. Nicholls’ argues that while the 1961 Act ‘coincided with a diminution of public concerns over drinking’, it is clear that the ensuing changes made the public house a more welcoming place for young people.⁷⁵

Despite these changes, not all pubs were as welcoming to younger people in this period, and if they were, there was no guarantee they would remain so. Sue recalled that the students from the art college would often spend their lunchtimes in the Banner Cross pub in Ecclesall. However, she explained that:

A landlord came to the Banner who got rather tired of us all sitting there not drinking at a pace. Because he was used to pubs that were all older blokes who came in to get stoked up basically so he started barring things like jeans, or putting your coat on the floor... there was a period when we were not welcome at the Banner.⁷⁶

⁷³ Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol*, p. 180.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁷⁶ Interview with Sue.

Licensing minutes show a transfer of the licence at the Banner Cross in February 1968 which coincided with Sue's time at art college.⁷⁷ The landlord's arbitrary ban on certain items of clothing such as jeans acted as an indicator of an anti-youth stance, but also shows clothing acting as proxy for respectability. While the pub had traditionally been seen as a place for heavy drinking by men, younger generations of male and female drinkers also saw the pub as a central location for socialising. Sue referred to the Banner Cross as 'sort of the common room' for the art college, 'so at lunchtime everybody went down there'.⁷⁸ The presence of students who sat with one drink was in sharp juxtaposition to the traditional use of the pub as a place primarily for heavy drinking. Sue's example highlights the period of transition undergoing the spaces inhabited by young people in this period, and the reaction of this from older generations.

Another interviewee, Trish, explained that she had a specific pub run in the city centre that her and her friends would follow. The existence of a pub run suggests three things; firstly, that there were a number of pubs in the centre of the city which catered to, or were at least welcoming of, a younger audience, secondly that the pub was becoming part of a wider set of leisure patterns in which groups of friends would move from one venue to another, and thirdly that the presence of women in pubs was becoming more commonplace. The presence of women in pubs is analysed in further detail in Chapter five.

Another interviewee, David, discussed the role of pubs in the way he socialised at a weekend. David explained:

We never drank alcohol outside of the pubs... I mean, even when we sat on the city steps, we'd sit in the Albert until they shut at three o'clock then we used to go and sit on the city hall steps and meet people and chat. There used to be hundreds of us. And

⁷⁷ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 202.

⁷⁸ Interview with Sue.

then when the Albert opened up again at half past five we'd all pile back in.⁷⁹ The City Hall steps were only a short distance from The Albert pub. David's anecdote suggests that the pub was a central meeting place for socialising for his friendship group, highlighting the importance of the public house for some young people in this period.

Trish described this area, commonly known as the 'boneyard': 'on a Saturday they'd be hanging around, they were sort of half beatniks, pre-hippies kind of thing and they'd sit around... the cathedral forecourt out there and everybody would be disgusted as they walked past at all these long-haired layabouts'.⁸⁰ The licensing hours of the period undoubtedly shaped how young people chose to, and could, spend their time, but despite the two and a half hour closing period in the afternoon, David and Trish's anecdotes suggest that the pub was becoming an increasingly significant space for socialising.



Figure 2.4: Barker's Pool, with The Albert public house in the left of the frame and City Hall in the right of the frame, 1960.

⁷⁹ Interview with David.

⁸⁰ Interview with Trish.

As pubs became less hostile to large groups of young people, the ‘traditional’ pub soon became one of only several types of drinking establishments for them to choose from. One example of the widening range of pubs was the emergence of rock pubs and bars in Sheffield, which catered to a specific section of Sheffield’s youth. David spoke at length about the rock pubs. He explained that on a Saturday he and his friends ‘would all meet up in the various rock pubs in Sheffield. The Albert, the Nelson, the Buccaneer, all those. We were all regulars in those places’.⁸¹ The Buccaneer, and later the Wapentake, were two of Sheffield’s biggest rock pubs. Both lay under hotels in the city centre and were managed by a middle-aged mother of four, Olga Marshall. Marshall began working at the Wapentake bar as a barmaid in 1964, and spoke to the management about bringing in a DJ. Marshall told author Neil Anderson: ‘I tracked down George Webster who was playing at the Cannon Hall social club at Page Hall. The Buccaneer took more on our first night with George than it did on its average weekend.’⁸² The Buccaneer continued to thrive until 1973 when the Grand Hotel in Leopold Square, the hotel above The Buccaneer, was scheduled for demolition. Trust House Forte, the group which owned the Grosvenor House Hotel underneath which the Wapentake bar sat, then approached Marshall to manage. Marshall managed the Wapentake from 1973 until her retirement in 1996, and testament to her influence on the rock crowds of Sheffield, the band Def Leppard returned to play a show at the venue for her retirement.⁸³

Sheffield’s rock pubs were an important part of the lifestyle of teenagers like David. The rock pub provided a space that not only welcomed young people, but actively sought to attract them by providing youth-centred entertainment. That Trust House Forte approached Marshall to manage the Wapentake suggests that by the mid-1970s, attracting a young

⁸¹ Interview with David.

⁸² Neil Anderson, *Take it to the Limit* (Sheffield, 2009), p. 10.

⁸³ Def Leppard, Tour History: 1995 <http://www.deflepparduk.com/2015newsoc49.html> [last accessed 19/11/2015].

audience was a priority. The emergence of the rock pub is an important signifier of a wider cultural shift that saw the traditional space of the pub respond and diversify in reaction to the changing lifestyles of young people. By providing a space that appealed to a predominantly young audience, Sheffield's rock pubs were contributing to an overall widening of leisure options that recognised young people's desires and autonomy.

In the 1960s pubs became an important part of the live music scene for young people. David recalled how City Hall would host big name acts, but the pubs were an important site for smaller bands and local music.⁸⁴ David was heavily involved in Sheffield's folk scene throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and his experiences of folk in the 1960s resonated with other interviewees of the period. Folk was a particularly influential scene in Sheffield in the 1960s, with two pubs, The Highcliffe and the Three Cranes at the centre.

Of the people I interviewed about their youth in the 1960s, three spoke at length about the folk clubs in 1960s Sheffield. Trish explained she 'didn't go to the [night]clubs... so mainly it was sort of going to pubs.'⁸⁵ She went on to tell me about her music tastes and said there were:

Two strands. A bit of folk music, there was the folk club at the Three Cranes which was a big folk club and Sheffield has still got a bit folk scene and that's probably the bit that's stayed with me the most... so yeah, the Three Cranes folk club was a big part. Then after that it was sort of, usual stuff. Jimi Hendrix, Cream, then onto things like, a bit later on, Doors, Jefferson Airplane.⁸⁶

The folk club at the Three Cranes was called the Barley Mow, and was set up in 1964.

Singing From the Floor: A History of British Folk Clubs comprises 140 oral history interviews detailing the history of folk clubs in Britain. The Barley Mow and the Highcliffe

⁸⁴ Interview with David.

⁸⁵ Interview with Trish.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

both feature. The author, Sheffield-born J. P. Bean, recalled his first ventures to the Barley Mow at 16 ‘as a marvellous place to be’.⁸⁷ He described how ‘the L-shaped room held about forty people comfortably, but up to 140 crammed in- sitting, squatting, standing, wedged against the walls and perched on the piano.’⁸⁸ The folk revival began in the mid-1950s, but it was in the 1960s when Sheffield’s folk scene took off. David explained that the folk scene ‘was a big one... I used to go to folk clubs on Saturday night. Thursday nights, Friday nights. There was an awful lot of folk music in Sheffield’.⁸⁹

The Highcliffe folk club began in 1967 and was described by Bean as an early form of ‘mini-concert venues’.⁹⁰ It was host to the first gigs of Billy Connelly’s and Gerry Rafferty’s Humblebums, Barbara Dickinson, and John Martyn. Sue remembered that there were ‘all sorts of the, the best of the best in contemporary folk and blues played at our local pub which was just amazing’.⁹¹ She continued:

I loved the music there because it was blues and contemporary folk, and it was always something new. And also, it was very fashionable at the time. It was the era of Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, all of these sort of, contemporary folk type people. So the fact that it was one of the best folk clubs in England... I came to some of the other ones, I went to the Beehive, and the Grapes, but the Highcliffe was the best. I was just lucky I think.⁹²

Sheffield’s folk clubs provided a space for young people to converge and express their cultural interests outside of the home. Musicologist Michael Brocken explored the divides in the folk revival movement of the 1950s and 1960s and argued that by the early 1960s there was a ‘clearly defined generation gap’ between the traditional and contemporary folk

⁸⁷ J. P. Bean, *Singing From The Floor: A History of British Folk Clubs* (eBook, 1st edn, London, 2014), Unpagged PDF e-book.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Interview with David.

⁹⁰ Bean, *Singing From The Floor*.

⁹¹ Interview with Sue.

⁹² *Ibid.*

movements, with the contemporary folk movement appealing more to younger fans.⁹³ By allowing folk clubs to be held in their venues the landlords of these pubs were actively trying to attract a younger audience.

Away from the folk and rock scene, Sheffield's nightlife was becoming increasingly centred around young people by the mid-1960s. The entertainments page of *The Star* newspaper provides a way of exploring how provisions for youth culture changed over the period. An entertainments page from Friday 14 August 1964, had three columns of adverts dedicated to jazz and dancing. *The Star* had a 'teenage club' and published the *Top Star Special*, a supplementary magazine aimed at the city's teenagers, so was likely the best place to access listings. The entertainments page for 14 August 1964 included an advert for The Esquire, featuring 'The Foresters', telling teens to 'Comb your hair out- Grandma, get on your black stockings, we're ravin' at the city's only original club'.⁹⁴ Stringfellow's Black Cat Club advertised the second round of its 'Big Beat 64' competition, whilst the recently opened King Mojo Club advertised itself as 'Sheffield's Big Club', detailing the upcoming events for the following few days. On the same advert was information about a 'special' event on Monday 7 September hosting 'the first appearance in Sheffield of the guys who are second only to the Rolling Stones- The Pretty Things'; also on the bill for that night was Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders, Sole Agents and The Kinks.⁹⁵ The majority of the page was dedicated to more 'traditional' entertainments such as cinema and theatre listings, but the majority of listings under 'dancing' were aimed at a younger audience. The increasing amount of space given to youth-focused leisure in this period is a textual representation of the wider shift towards a cultural landscape focused on the hedonistic pleasures of teenagers and

⁹³ Brocken, *The British Folk Revival*, p 87.

⁹⁴ 'Entertainments', *The Star*, August 14 1964, p. 2

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

young adults.

Conclusions

The 1960s was a period of emergence and transition for Sheffield. Throughout the decade young people were engaged in a spatial and cultural renegotiation of boundaries, challenging existing spaces and embracing new ones. The early to mid-1960s witnessed an increasing willingness by venues and organisers to cater to the tastes and desires of a younger audience, providing young people with new opportunities for leisure and changing established patterns of lifestyle and behaviour. Leisure spaces where young people could socialise free from adult supervision were becoming increasingly more common, allowing Sheffield's teenagers to socialise away from the home with relative ease.

The success of the beat clubs early in the decade, held in church halls and hired venues, provided a platform for a small number of entrepreneurs to capitalise on the growing demand for youth-oriented space. In turn, the emergence of these evening leisure spaces provided young people with the opportunity to socialise until the early hours of the morning for the first time, creating a temporal shift in young people's cultural experiences.

As the decade drew to a close, cultural and spatial changes saw the first moves toward a youth culture in which a large portion of socialising was done in the evening, away from the home. The rise of city centre youth-oriented pubs, bars, and nightclubs, would come to dominate the lifestyles of many young people in Sheffield over the following two decades. While a Friday or Saturday night out with friends did not present a new or innovative way to spend one's time, the wider variety of venues and spaces available to young people created,

by the end of the 1960s, an environment in which young people were able to engage in lifestyles and patterns of behaviour that were separate from their parents and adult society.

The most significant shift in this period was the response of venues to the increasing demand for youth leisure spaces. By providing spaces that were designed to appeal to young people this period saw a significant divide in the types of leisure in which young people were engaging. While the cinema or ballroom provided certain films or dances for a young audience, this period saw the emergence of entire venues dedicated to youthful leisure.

As a result of these changes the licensing magistrates were forced to adapt their approach. By introducing certain membership rules to licensed nightclubs, the licensing committee were taking an active role in policing the types and style of entertainment held in these venues. It also established a relationship between youth culture and authority that would become more significant as the period progressed.

Chapter III: Consolidation

The 1970s are often known for being a decade in which popular culture was over-the-top and filled with glitz and glamour to detract from a rise in unemployment, the impact of regular strikes, the three-day week, and a changing and often turbulent world, both domestically and internationally. Cultural histories of 1970s Britain have often mirrored the contemporary narrative presented in the media of the decade as experiencing political and social ‘crisis’. Many popular histories of the era draw on this imagery of crisis; Dominic Sandbrook’s *State of Emergency*, Andy Beckett’s *When The Lights Went Out*, and Alwyn Turner’s *Crisis? What Crisis?: Britain in the 1970s*, for example.¹ Indeed, opening *State of Emergency* with the Royal Wedding of Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips in November 1973, Dominic Sandbrook argues that the event ‘could hardly have unfolded against a more depressing backdrop.’² With a sharp rise in unemployment, inflation, the oil crisis, the escalation of conflict in Northern Ireland, and ending with the 1979 vote of no confidence in the Callaghan government, many were left feeling insecure and it is, perhaps, unsurprising that the 1970s is dominated by a crisis narrative.

Historians that touch on British youth culture in this period are further influenced by the crisis narrative, often situating the emergence of punk as a cultural manifestation of, and reaction to, wider political and economic upheaval. Similarly, the rhetoric of the ‘decade taste

¹ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970-1974* (London, 2011); Andy Beckett, *When The Lights Went Out: Britain in the Seventies* (London, 2010); Alwyn Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis?: Britain in the 1970s* (London, 2013).

² Sandbrook, *State of Emergency*, p. 7.

forgot' is invoked through pop culture, recalling the ways bands such as ABBA and the Bay City Rollers supposedly distracted a generation with high octane and low value pop music. Indeed, the 2010 edited collection *The Shock of the Global* argued that as well as being a period of political, social, and economic upheaval, the 1970s were 'a crisis of popular culture, too: the Beatles split up; Elvis died; ABBA was scarcely a substitute'.³ The 1970s are in many ways the 'lost decade' in the history of post-war British youth culture. Framed as the dreary era after the halcyon days of the 1960s, or otherwise in the context of the pre-Thatcher era, youth culture in the 1970s has yet to receive the same level of scholarly attention as other periods in post-war Britain. There is, however, one notable exception to this: punk.⁴ Matthew Worley has argued that by 1976, with the advent of punk, 'the kids were revolting: Britain's various "crises", be they a product of social dislocation, economic decline, or imperial hangover, appeared to have found cultural realisation'.⁵ The 1970s is, perhaps more than any other, a decade in which the values of an 'inauthentic' mainstream and a politically and socially charged subculture are positioned against each other, each representing the antithesis of the other.

This chapter will argue that the 1970s is the period in which behaviours and lifestyles that emerged in the late 1950s and 1960s become an established part of youth culture and young people's lives. Venues continued to adapt and change to accommodate changing youth interests, creating new types of evening leisure spaces, often drinking establishments, that became the focal point of many young people's social and cultural experiences. Focusing on

³ Niall Ferguson, 'Crisis, What Crisis? The 1970s and the Shock of the Global', in Niall Ferguson, Charles Maier, Erez Manela and Daniel Sargent (eds), *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (London, 2010), p. 1.

⁴ There is a significant and growing scholarship on punk. See The Subcultures Network (eds), *Fight Back: Punk, politics and resistance* (Manchester, 2017) for a recent collection of work on the topic.

⁵ Matthew Worley, 'Marx-Lenin-Rotten-Strummer: British Marxism and youth culture in the 1970s', *Contemporary British History* 30.4 (2016), p. 506.

the policy of Sheffield's licensing magistrates it will be argued that the consolidation of spaces for young people in this period played a central role in developing the 'weekend lifestyle' and cementing city-centre evening leisure as a common pastime for teenagers and young adults.

Sheffield in the 1970s

The image of 'crisis' that is so often associated with the 1970s is perhaps best exemplified by the events of 1974. Witness to the oil crisis, the escalation of the Irish Troubles, and the introduction of the three-day week, it was this year that seemed to epitomise the crisis narrative, and this was reflected in the wider press. In August 1974 the *Daily Mirror* asked 'is Britain really going broke?'⁶ 'The atmosphere', the article reported, 'is one of increasing crisis. Of desperate gloom.'⁷ Yet despite the popular narrative of fear, 1975 began with relative optimism in Sheffield. *The Star*, Sheffield's most popular newspaper, reported in January 1975 that Sheffield was 'all set for [a] boom in jobs'.⁸ The article reported that the labour demand in Sheffield remained high, and Arthur Anderson, manager for the Sheffield district of the Employment Service Agency, was quoted as saying that 'there are small pockets of short-time unemployment, but overall, our unemployment level is very low and there are plenty of jobs available'.⁹ The start of the decade was an optimistic one: the city had below average unemployment, the economy was booming, and the city council was investing heavily in the future of the city.

⁶ *Daily Mirror*, August 23 1974, p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸ 'Sheffield All Set For Boom In Jobs', *The Star*, January 6 1975, p. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

However, as the decade progressed unemployment crept above the national average, and the impact of a rapidly declining industry and job cuts overwhelmingly affected opportunities for young people and school-leavers. It is in this period that the optimism and narrative of progression of the 1960s began to collapse. Sheffield in the 1970s is best characterised by transformation: from boom to bust, from opportunity to adversity

City on the Move?

The release of the promotional film ‘Sheffield: City on the Move’ in 1972 was part of Sheffield City Council’s wider strategy to update the image of the city, and best represents the optimism of the city at the start of the decade. Focusing on technology, retail, and leisure, the film promoted Sheffield as a thriving modern city and encapsulated the forward thinking approach of the period, perhaps best exemplified by Harold Wilson’s 1964 election campaign. Made famous by the 1997 film *The Full Monty*, *City on the Move* aimed to update people’s perceptions of Sheffield. A national campaign, *City on the Move* targeted those outside of Sheffield, as well as its residents: adverts in the *Guardian* newspaper, for example, came with the Sheffield: *City on the Move* tagline attached.¹⁰

Following the Clean Air Act of 1956, numerous smokeless zones and smoke control measures were introduced across the city to limit both the industrial and domestic output of smoke into Sheffield, so that by the time *City on the Move* was released in the early 1970s, it was able to claim that ‘the city’s smokeless air gives it a justifiable claim as one of the

¹⁰ An example of this can be found in the *Guardian*, September 19 1972, p. 20.

cleanest industrial cities in Europe'.¹¹

The film also focused on the city centre, which it hoped to promote as the best shopping centre in the north of England. Indeed, the film boasted that 'no city north of London has more department stores', and this was followed by images of continental style delicatessens, wine suppliers, and markets, designed to highlight the cosmopolitan array of shopping opportunities.¹² Also featured was the newly opened Fiesta nightclub. The film claimed that the Fiesta was the largest nightclub in Europe, and portrayed Sheffield as the centre of sophisticated nightlife. The inclusion of the Fiesta in this film speaks both to the growing entertainment industry in the city, and the cultural significance a venue of this sort denoted to the city. Evening entertainment in the form of licensed nightclubs was, by the 1970s, considered to be an important part of a city's cultural landscape.

Part of the vision of the council and city planners in this period was to make the centre more pedestrian friendly. Pedestrianisation began on Fargate in 1971, with the high street being closed to vehicles other than delivery vans and buses in 1973.¹³ In 1971 *The Star* ran an article detailing how the building of bus lanes and the introduction of bus-only roads in the city's busiest streets were hoped to encourage more people to travel into the centre by bus.¹⁴ By improving public transport and pedestrianising the city centre, the council were designating this area as a space primarily concerned with commerce and leisure. In February 1974 *The Star* reported that the Moor was to be the latest area to become bus-only, although the article makes note of 'two splendid dual carriageways less than 100 yards away on both sides' of the road.¹⁵ However, doubts were raised about the layout of Sheffield's existing

¹¹ *Sheffield: City on the Move* [film], directed by Jim Coulthard (Sheffield City Council, 1972)

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ See Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

¹⁴ 'Bus Only Plan in Sheffield City Centre', *The Star*, September 19 1971, p. 9.

¹⁵ 'Another Blow for Drivers', *The Star*, February 6 1974, p. 4.

central shopping district. An opinion piece in *The Star* argued that although the shops in Sheffield ‘may be the best in the north’, their layout was problematic. Stray either side of the mile-long strip, the columnist argued, and ‘you are unlikely to come across any pretence of a “first-class” shopping area’.¹⁶

Despite being used by the council as a narrative for progress, the City on the Move motif was also invoked as a metaphor for problems in the city. A letter written to *The Star* in 1974 used the campaign slogan to argue that life outside of the city centre was not modernising at the same rate. The letter argued that there were houses on Ecclesall Road ‘which are not fit for decent people to live in and should have been demolished years ago... Cellars which flood when there is heavy rain, only a cold water tap and dilapidated toilet across a yard littered with rubble from broken walls... All this in a city on the move.’¹⁷

A more optimistic use of the slogan appeared on the front page of *The Star* in November 1981. Headlined with ‘A City on the Move’ for the report that Sheffield had been named as the fourth biggest city in England and Wales, the newspaper used the City on the Move motif to argue that, as a recognised large city, Sheffield was now more likely to get preferential treatment by the government.¹⁸ While the City on the Move motif was arguably more about marketing Sheffield as it was about real-life progress and development, it acts as an important image throughout the period and was a central part of Sheffield’s narrative in the 1970s.

¹⁶ ‘Are our shops just window dressing...?’, *The Star*, August 27 1970, p. 8.

¹⁷ ‘This is Life in City on the Move’, *The Star*, January 31 1974, p. 7.

¹⁸ ‘A City on the Move’, *The Star*, November 25 1981, p. 1.



Figure 3.1: High Street, looking towards Fargate before pedestrianisation.



Figure 3.2: Fargate during the period of pedestrianisation. 1971.

Being Young in Changing Times

The narrative of crisis that permeated the 1970s was influenced predominately by the worsening economic situation. This became particularly pertinent in Sheffield where the economy was heavily reliant on the declining steel industry. The mid to late 1970s in Sheffield was a period of significant change: the economy went from boom to bust between the late 1960s and late 1970s, with unemployment going from below the national average in the early part of the decade, to well above it in the latter part of the decade. In 1979 A.E.P Duffy, MP for Attercliffe, stated that Sheffield's economy was 'disproportionately dependent on steelmaking', causing problems with both unemployment and the local economy.¹⁹ The decline of the manufacturing industry in the city was 'swift and dramatic', creating difficulties for both an older generation of workers and many school leavers who had traditionally entered jobs in local industry.²⁰ Many struggling companies chose to run down their staff rather than make mass redundancies, resulting in a lack of job openings for young people in the city. This issue was compounded by the number of small and independent firms in the city. In July 1979 Frederick Mulley, MP for Sheffield Park, noted that 'Sheffield is second only to Birmingham in the number of small firms within its boundaries'.²¹

Despite the optimism displayed by Arthur Anderson in 1975, Sheffield's economy was beginning to slow at the start of the decade. In January 1972 the front page of *The Star* reported that unemployment in the city had jumped by more than 1,000 in the previous

¹⁹ A.E.P Duffy MP, 'Steel Industry', House of Commons Debate, 7 November 1979, vol. 973, cc435-540.

²⁰ R. J. Marshall, 'Town Planning in Sheffield', in Clyde Binfield, David Hey, Richard Childs, David Martin, Roger Harper and Geoffrey Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield 1843-1993, Volume II Society* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 29.

²¹ Frederick Mulley MP, 'Regional Policy', House of Commons Debate, 24 July 1979, vol. 971, cc361-489.

month, making a jobless percentage of 4.7%.²² Ken Brown, area manager for the Department of Employment explained that the majority of job losses had come from the steel industry, and the increasing number of unemployed people who had ‘considerable skill’ was a particular cause for concern.²³ The growing issue of unemployment in the city was reported in *The Star* throughout the decade, and the paper had a particular focus on youth unemployment. In 1971 *The Star* ran an editorial on the plight of school leavers from Hinde House School. The article followed thirty 15 year olds who left school in July of that year, and reported on their progress in the month following their departure. The article noted that with the number of unemployed school leavers at 535, and over 10,000 total unemployed in the city, the prediction that ‘school leavers would face the worst job-hunting situation since 1945 is being proved correct’.²⁴ A similar editorial ran in 1975 following the prospects of 16 year old Jane Martin, ‘the girl with six CSEs and no job’.²⁵ In March 1972 A.E.P Duffy raised the issue of school leaver unemployment, highlighting to Parliament that a recent unemployment report had shown:

More than 900 boys and girls unemployed in July compared with a previous high of 746 nine years ago. This, as I said in a Question to the Prime Minister just a week ago, highlights the problem of youth unemployment. I asked the Prime Minister whether the Government would not levy some kind of grant for industrial training and whether more grants could not be given to education authorities for career education. I pointed out that of 32 comprehensive schools in Sheffield only 12 were equipped with careers rooms.²⁶

Sheffield’s schools were ill-equipped to deal with the changing economic situation. By 1975 the number of unemployed school leavers in the city had reached 1,300. Two days after the

²² ‘Sheffield Jobless Leaps By 1,000- Now Stands At 11,589’, *The Star*, January 20 1972, p. 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁴ ‘Why One Fifth of These School Leavers Still Haven’t Found A Job’, *The Star*, August 26 1971, p. 8.

²⁵ ‘The Girl with Six CSEs and No Job’, *The Star*, August 20 1975, p. 3.

²⁶ A.E.P Duffy MP, ‘Budget Resolutions and Economic Situation’, House of Commons Debate, 27 March 1972, vol. 834, cc36-167.

article about Jane Martin, *The Star* published an article arguing that young people were being hit the hardest by the ‘dole queue crisis’.²⁷ While the local increase of 0.8% was in step with national averages, the article pointed out that it showed a significant increase of 86% in the last year alone.²⁸

Youth unemployment was a national issue, with national youth unemployment reaching 11.4% by July 1979.²⁹ Following the Holland Report of 1977 the Callaghan government introduced the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) in April 1978.³⁰ The YOP was designed to provide paid work placements to young people struggling to find work. However, Wallace and Cross have argued that the Holland report was fundamentally flawed as it failed to recognise the wider problems of the job market at the time.³¹ The Holland Report, argued Wallace and Cross, identified young people as the problem; the young were unqualified, in direct competition with adults, and more affected by the seasonal nature of the job market. As a result of this, the YOP was failing ‘on most criteria’ by the 1980s.³² Despite its problems, the YOP scheme was a popular way of providing young people with employment experience. Reports into unemployment in the South Yorkshire region show that the number of YOP placements increased steadily each month between September 1978 and April 1980. The total number of YOP participants engaged in Work Experience on Employer’s Premises increased from 344 to 511 between September 1978 and January 1979, falling briefly to 298 in July 1979 before rising dramatically to 624 in December 1979.³³

²⁷ ‘City School Leavers Suffer Most in Dole Queue Crisis’, *The Star*, August 22 1975, p. 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁹ Sheffield Archives, ECON/EMPL/17, ‘Trends in Youth Unemployment in South Yorkshire’.

³⁰ David Raffe, ‘Education, Employment and the Youth Opportunities Programme: Some Sociological Perspectives’, *Oxford Review of Education* 7.3 (1981), pp. 211- 222.

³¹ Claire Wallace and Matthew Cross (eds), *Youth in Transition: The Sociology of Youth and Youth Policy* (London, 1990), p. 31.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³³ Sheffield Archives, ECON/EMPL/17, ‘Trends in Youth Unemployment in South Yorkshire’.

Unemployment in the South Yorkshire region rose by 42% between January 1976 and January 1980, with the unemployment rate in Sheffield specifically rising by 41% for a total of 1306 jobless under the age of 20 in January 1980.³⁴ A Youthaid Bulletin from September 1979 reported that ‘the scale of youth unemployment in South Yorkshire is staggering compared to that of two years ago. The situation for the under 25s is bad enough but for school leavers the prospects are appalling’.³⁵ By the end of the decade the issue of youth unemployment in Sheffield was a significant one.

While the economic problems of the decade did not stop the expansion of spaces and opportunities for youth culture, the increasing levels of youth unemployment over the decade undoubtedly impacted on and limited some young people’s access to youth culture. A better understanding of the locale within which young people experienced and accessed youth culture in the post-war period can provide a fuller understanding of how young people reacted to, and how youth culture adapted to, this period of transition.

Following the emergence of youth-oriented licensed evening leisure in the late 1960s, the 1970s marked the beginnings of a period of consolidation in the ways venues were being used by young people, and in the wider lifestyle choices being made by young people. An important part of this was the increasing centralisation of leisure spaces in the city. Licensing magistrates became increasingly concerned about the disruption caused to local residents by suburban venues. In their meeting in March 1971 the magistrates discussed applications for extensions and Special Hours Certificates for the Easter period, and agreed that ‘for premises such as Tiffany’s, Penny Farthing and Heartbeat, and other places of like nature not in a residential area similar applications should generally be granted’, and with regards to the

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Sheffield Archives, MPB/3/20. ‘Youthaid Bulletin’.

application by Shades ‘the committee was of the opinion that in view of the fact that these premises were situated in a residential area the applications should not be granted’ for non-weekend hours or for late-night extension of weekend hours.³⁶ Using a number of case-studies this section will argue that the regulation of evening leisure spaces was a significant influence on the way that spaces for young people developed in this period, and by embarking on a period of consolidation the licensing magistrates created an environment which enabled young people to move easily between a variety of city centre venues.

With the growth in late-night leisure provision and the increasing centrality of alcohol and pop music to the leisure spaces frequented by young people, the issue of disruption to local residents became a recurring feature in the discussions of the licensing committee. These issues were first raised in the 1960s during the opposition to the King Mojo nightclub in Pitsmoor, and continued throughout the decade and into the 1970s, with particular attention paid to Shades on Ecclesall Road, and Turn Ups in Nether Edge. The Turn Ups issue was ongoing, and exemplified the wider debate about the location of nightclubs in the city. Turn Ups was subject to repeated petitions by residents complaining of noise and disruption, and in 1976 the licensing magistrates revoked the venue’s licence pending investigation. The magistrates commented that ‘even in this day and age, people in a residential area are entitled to a reasonable level of peace and quiet. Equally, people are entitled to go to clubs and seek relaxation and enjoyment, and we recognise the part these play in the life of the city’.³⁷ Following further complaints the owner of Turn Ups moved the premises to Commercial Street in the city centre, and agreed to surrender the licence for the Nether Edge venue.

³⁶ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 02/02/1971-22/10/1973, p. 242.

³⁷ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 13/01/1976-06/12/1977, p. 222.

The licensing magistrates repeatedly voiced their support of non-residential venues, and worked closely with residents and the council to ensure that nightclubs deemed to be a ‘nuisance’ were held to account. During the 1976 meeting about Turn Ups, the magistrates said: ‘we want to say now, with emphasis, that commercial interests seeking to come into residential areas with entertainment centres should recognise that they face the risk of losing a very great deal if their operation cannot be made congenial to local residents.’³⁸ This policy was one the magistrates enforced strictly, and the Turn Ups ‘problem’ was one that they wished to avoid in the future. Regarding an application in 1983 to open a venue in Beighton, on the outskirts of the city, the visiting magistrate commented that he ‘could not recommend the application and envisioned another “Turn Ups” situation.’³⁹ By the end of the decade the licensing magistrates had established a clear policy of refusing licences in residential locations, thus establishing the city centre as the primary location for evening entertainment. In 1980 a disco at a popular nightspot, Fleur De Lys in Totley, had its licence revoked. This revocation was well publicised, and in refusing the licence the magistrates commented:

Once again our policy of maintaining that people living in residential areas should be entitled to live in reasonable peace and quiet, undisturbed by unacceptable levels of nuisance, was upheld.

Speaking to *The Star* in the wake of the withdrawal of the licence, the licensing chairman said: ‘we have to ensure that householders in a residential area are able to enjoy a reasonable level of peace and quiet.’⁴⁰

A direct result of this policy was the centralisation of spaces for young people in non-residential areas, and particularly in the city-centre area. The use of public transport allowed

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

³⁹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 08/02/1983-17/01/1984, p. 511.

⁴⁰ ‘Pub Disco Loses Its Licence’, *The Star*, October 22 1980, p. 5.

young people mobility, and coupled with the increasingly concentrated nature of spaces for young people, the well-connected city centre increased the accessibility of these venues. The importance of public transport was a regular feature in my research interviews. One interviewee Juan, noted that the 75 bus route was a central factor in deciding where he and his friends went: ‘when it comes to like the evenings, as I say, starting point in terms of bars or pubs erm, old Blue Bell because that was just off the bus stop’. When discussing Tiffany’s nightclub, Juan again recalled its proximity to the bus route: ‘I don’t even remember if they’ve changed the name, but I remember it as Tiffany’s. Which again was handy so I could catch the bus and get it all the way down!’ Another interviewee, Jaqueline, noted that the bus was essential for her and her friends: ‘although we were quite far out in travel time the bus system was so good, that it [nightlife] was accessible to us.’ The increasing centrality of spaces began to change the nature of nightlife in the city. The Chief Constable’s Report for 1976 was presented to the licensing magistrates in January 1977 and it was argued that:

Sheffield has become the entertainment mecca for South Yorkshire and coach loads of people come into the city centre from South Yorkshire, North Derbyshire and Nottingham at weekends for a drink. In my opinion many of these people who go to the nightspots are inebriated when they arrive at the premises sometime after 10.30 pm and they continue to drink into the early hours. It has been found necessary to set up a special squad to try to combat the increasing drunkenness among customers at night clubs and discotheques.⁴¹

While the Chief Constable's statement focused on the inebriation of people in the city centre- another consequence of the increasingly consolidated nature of licensed venues in the city- the fact that the police had recently set up a special squad to combat drunkenness suggests a marked change from the past.

This change was the converse of the increasing amount of time spent by adults inside

⁴¹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 13/01/1976 – 06/12/1977 [insert].

the home. Claire Langhamer's article on the post-war home argues that although the idea of domesticity was not 'sufficiently distinct from inter-war experiences to be viewed as a "new" model of living', there was a move toward home-based forms of leisure and an increase in the home as a centre of consumption.⁴² Studies of youth culture have also examined the role of the home in the lives of young people. The late 1970s saw a focus on young people's domestic lives, with scholars such as Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber reacting to the absence of girls from the male and street-oriented cultures written about by scholars of youth at the time. McRobbie argued that the 'bedroom culture' of teenage girls positioned the home as the central site of cultural production and consumption.⁴³ The girls at the heart of McRobbie and Garber's study were aged between 10 and 15, and were perhaps too young to engage with youth culture to any significant extent outside of the home. Vivienne Griffiths has argued that physical and social maturity were important factors in understanding the bedroom culture. Griffiths' ethnographic study of 12-16 year old girls found that the 14-16 year old girls felt 'less restricted to bedroom culture, seeing it as only one of several options for their leisure time since they had more freedom from their family homes'.⁴⁴ My own participants generally began frequently socialising in the city-centre between the ages of 15 and 17. The bedroom has been presented as a central site of cultural consumption for young and adolescent girls, but their cultural experiences were not limited to the domestic sphere. Siân Lincoln's research on bedroom cultures of girls in the late 1990s recognises how the bedroom plays part of a wider role in the 'going out ritual'.⁴⁵ Lincoln notes that while

⁴² Claire Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40.2 (2005), p. 362.

⁴³ McRobbie and Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures', pp. 1- 15.

⁴⁴ Vivienne Griffiths, 'From "playing out" to "dossing out": Young women and leisure' in Erica Wimbush and Margaret Talbot (eds), *Relative Freedoms: Women and Leisure* (Philadelphia, 1988), p. 54.

⁴⁵ Siân Lincoln, 'Teenage Girls' "Bedroom Culture": Codes versus Zones' in Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris (eds), *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Hampshire, 2004), p. 104.

McRobbie's focus on clothes and beauty was in pursuit of a romantic fantasy within the confines of the bedroom, the 'going out ritual' engaged in consumption in a public sphere.⁴⁶

The public sphere was becoming an increasingly important part of the lifestyle choices of young people, and this change ran concurrently with the emergence and consolidation of spaces designed to appeal to young people. Central to the move towards a lifestyle increasingly positioned around social experiences in the public sphere was the rise of pubs and bars aimed at a younger audience. My interviewees from the period often spoke to me about the same drinking establishments, indicating that there was a type of venue that appealed more to teenagers and young adults in this period. These pubs tended to be based around the city centre area rather than in neighbourhoods and more suburban areas. One interviewee, Juan, recalled his route of pubs and clubs and explained:

You'd sort of go up into town. You wouldn't really stay local, there wasn't really much to do in terms of where I am, Fir Vale, because you go there for the odd sort of local stuff, you wouldn't go and hang out.⁴⁷

Another interviewee, Tony, explained that he and his friends had a set route of pubs in town:

We used to call them tramlines. We used to meet in town... Fitzalan Square, and then the Hole in the Road... there was the fish tank town there and that was the meeting point down there. Everybody in the world used to meet. Everybody would say, 7.30 at the fish tank. And that circular area underground on a Saturday, well, Thursday, Friday, Saturday night was packed.⁴⁸

Tony and Juan both made clear that the city centre was central to their plans for weekend evenings. Juan's statement that 'you wouldn't go and hang out' in the local neighbourhood is indicative of a wider move away from the home by young people in Sheffield in this period as more attractive options were increasingly accessible to Sheffield's adolescents and young

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁴⁷ Interview with Juan.

⁴⁸ Interview with Tony.

adults.

Another interviewee, Helen, explained that going ‘down town’ was essential for her and her friends as she lived more rurally:

Friday night was *the* night out really, and most of my friends, as I say, lived in other villages... Friday night was the priority. That was *the* night out.⁴⁹

Debbie recalled:

Sometimes community centres would put something on, but they were crap really. They weren’t very good. So the things that were happening were in town.⁵⁰

The majority of the bars were clustered around the Barker’s Pool area of the city, or at the top of the high street. This area was the commercial heart of the city, in a non-residential area with good transport links. The congregation of many these venues within a kilometre of each other is testament to the increasing centrality of spaces frequented by young people.

David Gutzke’s book *Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century* notes that from the 1960s onwards young people were developing a culture of drinking that centred around pubbing and clubbing. Gutzke argues that ‘traditional drinkers ceased to be a major factor dominating drinking habits from the 1960s’, and that by the 1980s four-fifths of all young people in Britain visited pubs and clubs.⁵¹ Importantly, Gutzke notes that by the 1970s ‘women now joined men in drinking, but significantly in entirely new venues, wholly unassociated with neighbourhood locals.’⁵² The problems faced by Sue and her art college friends in the 1960s were becoming less of an issue as new pubs emerged to cater specifically to the youth market. Their economic power, Gutzke adds, ‘revolutionised

⁴⁹ Interview with Helen H. Emphasis of ‘the’ placed by interviewee.

⁵⁰ Interview with Debbie.

⁵¹ David Gutzke, *Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2014), p. 194.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 204.

the layout, atmosphere, products and clientele of drinking venues'.⁵³ With more opportunity than ever before to socialise in the city-centre, in venues relatively free from adult surveillance, the 1970s marked a new stage in the social lives of teenagers and young adults in Sheffield.

The Stone House and Sheffield's New Bars

An example of this new type of venue is the Stone House pub in the city centre. The Stone House became a popular haunt for young drinkers in the 1970s with its innovative décor. One interviewee, Helen, recalled:

There was the Stone House, that was very smart back in the day. There was a little courtyard in the back and it was all cobbled and you'd sit there and there were all the buildings with lights on around you, and you looked up and it looked like all the stars were above you, of course it was all inside. I think I can remember it being on Look North because it was this smart new place called the Stone House and nobody had done that before.⁵⁴

Another interviewee, Jacqueline, told me:

If you were on a proper night out with like the girls you'd come into town on a Friday and you'd go to the Stone House.⁵⁵

My interviews support Gutzke's argument that new drinking establishments were frequented by, and appealed to, women. The Stone House was an important part of Jacqueline and Helen's nights out; that 'nobody had done that before' was clearly one of the venue's biggest draws. The Stone House's design was created with a younger clientele in mind. As Gutzke

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁵⁴ Interview with Helen H.

⁵⁵ Interview with Jacqueline.

notes, the notion of the ‘traditional’ drinking establishment did not appeal to many young people, and the success of the Stone House’s design is supportive of this idea. Traditional pubs were often unwelcoming of younger drinkers and the rise of new, city centre bars provided a space that was not only welcoming but actively appealing to younger drinkers. Another interviewee, Darren, mirrored Helen’s memories of the pub. He said:

There was like a courtyard out the back, that looked like you were outside. And stars on the ceiling. So everybody used to go in there. The Stone House was the place to be seen.⁵⁶

The aesthetic of the Stone House was clearly an important element in understanding its appeal to a younger audience. The Tudor ‘courtyard’, in reality an area to the rear of the bar with artificial building facades and a black ceiling, was mentioned by every participant who discussed the Stone House with me.⁵⁷ Darren’s comment about the Stone House as ‘the place to be seen’, and Jacqueline’s recollection of the venue as part of a ‘proper night out’ indicates that the bar was aimed at, and frequented by, a younger and non-traditional crowd. In 1983 The Stone House submitted an application for structural changes, to include a first floor balcony and cocktail bar. This was eventually declined due to health and safety reasons, but the application showed a desire to adapt to changing tastes and respond to changes in the market.

A point of departure from traditional venues was the types of licences held by drinking establishments. By the 1970s Music and Singing licences were common in larger venues and the licensing magistrates were receiving more applications for gambling machines. James Nicholls’ *Politics of Alcohol* discusses the ways in which venues adapted to

⁵⁶ Interview with Darren.

⁵⁷ See Figure 3.3.

attract the younger audience.⁵⁸ Part of the shift away from traditional pubs was the extension of opening hours and the holding of Music, Singing and Dancing licences.

A popular venue in Sheffield was the Crazy Daisy, renowned as the place where the second line-up of the Human League were formed. The Crazy Daizy (renamed the Crazy Daisy in 1978) opened in 1973 on the site of the popular Bierkeller on the High Street. The venue was a late-night bar which was granted a Music, Singing and Dancing licence between 8pm and 12 midnight Monday- Thursday, and until 1am on a Friday and Saturday, with a capacity of 450.⁵⁹ In 1977 the Crazy Daisy had its hours extended to include lunchtimes, making its new opening hours 11am-3pm, and 6.30pm-2am on weekdays. The Crazy Daisy advertised its lunchtime hours- designed to appeal to city-centre office workers- in *The Star*.

Advertised as the 'fun palace', a 1974 advert tells patrons about its lunchtime opening hours in addition to the DJing of George Webster and his 'progressive sounds'.⁶⁰ The Crazy Daisy was best known as a music venue, and in May 1976 the Crazy Daisy breached the conditions of its Music, Singing and Dancing Licence by exceeding the permitted number of 450 people by 125. Mecca, the owners of the venue, were fined £100.⁶¹

⁵⁸ James Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England* (Manchester, 2009), p. 180.

⁵⁹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 13/11/1973-09/12/1975, p. 99.

⁶⁰ *The Star*, February 11 1974, p. 2; See Figure 3.4.

⁶¹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 13/01/76-06/12/1977, p. 299.



Figure 3.3: Promotional image of the interior of the Stone House taken for Tetley's, 1971.



Figure 3.4: Advert for the Crazy Daizy placed in *The Star*, 1974.

Music had long been an element of public houses, be it informal sing-alongs or local musicians, but Paul Jennings argues that this was becoming less important over the course of the 20th century as competition from music halls and the cinema contributed to the ‘diminution of [the pub’s] centrality in working class leisure.’⁶² In short, ‘the pub’s importance as a meeting place was lessening.’⁶³ By the 1970s the appearance of live music in certain pubs and bars was arguably a signifier of the venue as non-traditional, aimed at attracting younger patrons.

Youth Culture, Clubs, and Commerce

Youth culture and commerce have always been inextricably linked. Whilst a study of Sheffield can reveal the intricacies of the development of youth culture, it is important to recognise the wider influences of music trends and national corporations in shaping youth culture, particularly with regards to the development of new spaces for young people. Many of the larger venues opening in this period, and indeed smaller venues such as the Crazy Daisy, were owned by large entertainment companies with a commercial interest in attracting young people with disposable income and the desire to spend it on leisure pursuits. The owners of the Crazy Daisy, Mecca, also owned two other popular venues in Sheffield: Tiffany’s and Samantha’s.⁶⁴

⁶² Paul Jennings, *A History of Drink and the English 1500-2000* (London, 2016), p. 83.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁶⁴ Managers Handbook of Mecca Venues, 1977. <http://www.locarnoboy.co.uk/mecca-ltd-published-a-1977-managers-handbook-of-all-venues-listed-below-are-those-in-the-dance-halls-and-disco-section/> [last accessed 20/02/2017]. The website is a collection of privately owned documents.

Mecca has a long history in the entertainment industry, dating back to the dance hall era of the 1920s and 1930s, and the company played a formative part in the rapid rise in popularity of dancing as a leisure pastime during the interwar period. Various historians, including James Nott, Claire Langhamer, and Allison Abra have reflected on the role of the dance hall as part of both popular and youth culture in the interwar years.⁶⁵ The rise of the dance hall provided a space for young people to socialise and provided the opportunity to meet potential partners, although as Tom Crewe has noted, ‘interaction was constrained by convention: women waited to be asked to dance, and men were encouraged to be polite, even chivalrous, in their attentions.’⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the dance hall undoubtedly became an important site of interaction between adolescents and young adults in the interwar period. Central to this was the chain of Mecca dance halls, the largest group of dance halls in Britain.⁶⁷ The commercial influence of Mecca continued into the post-war years, and the organisation reacted to changing tastes in leisure by converting a number of its dance halls and ballrooms into nightclubs. In Sheffield the Locarno Ballroom, a popular venue for jive and twist and beat sessions until the mid-1960s, was converted into a nightclub and was rebranded as Tiffany’s from 1968.⁶⁸

In 1977 Mecca owned 101 venues across the UK, including 51 nightclubs with the Tiffany’s branding. Mecca operated across the UK often owning several locations in larger cities, including five in Birmingham, nine in London and three in Manchester.⁶⁹ As well as

⁶⁵ James Nott, *Going to the Palais: A Social And Cultural History of Dancing and Dance Halls in Britain, 1918-1960* (Oxford, 2015); Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920–60* (Manchester, 2000); Allison Abra, ‘Doing the Lambeth Walk: Novelty Dances and the British Nation’, *Twentieth Century British History* 20:3 (2009), pp. 346-369.

⁶⁶ Tom Crewe, ‘Warrior, Lover, Villain, Spiv’, *London Review of Books* 38.1 (2016), p. 21.

⁶⁷ Abra, ‘Doing the Lambeth Walk’, p. 347.

⁶⁸ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 249.

⁶⁹ <http://www.locarnoboy.co.uk/mecca-ltd-published-a-1977-managers-handbook-of-all-venues-listed-below-are-those-in-the-dance-halls-and-disco-section/> [last accessed 20/02/2017].

the Top Rank group, which owned the Top Rank Suite leisure complex, other Sheffield venues were owned by EMI group limited. EMI entertainment was founded in 1974 and owned Romeo's and Juliet's, of which there were several venues including Derby and Doncaster.⁷⁰

The opening of nightclub and bar chains across the country is testament to the economic power of young people in this period. Charting the rebranding and changes in these larger commercial venues is one way of exploring how young people's use of space changed over time. The move by Mecca to turn its dance halls into nightclubs in the late 1960s, and the opening of several large chains of nightclubs in the 1970s, demonstrate that the 1960s and 1970s were a period of rapid and significant change in the lifestyle choices of young people. However, these companies were not able to rebrand and update without prior permission from the planning authorities and Sheffield's licensing magistrates. Chapter four details the troubled relationship between Mecca Leisure Ltd. and Sheffield's licensing magistrates.

The 'Upmarket' Nightclub

Reflecting both the economic optimism of the early 1970s, and the popularity of evening entertainment, the early part of the decade saw a rise in the number of nightclubs in the city aimed at an older and wealthier audience. Clubs such as the Fiesta and Josephine's were designed to appeal to people 21 and over, and were marketed as upmarket leisure venues. The Fiesta opened in 1970 and was a central part of the council's 'On The Move'

⁷⁰ 'EMI Reports and Accounts: Chairman's Review 1974', <http://www.kronemyer.com/EMI/EMI%20Music%20AR%201974.pdf> [last accessed 29/04/2017].

campaign to rebrand the city. The film claimed ‘Sheffield presents the nightlife expected of any modern city: theatre, cinemas, late night restaurants, discotheques, dancehalls, several nightclubs, one of them the biggest in Europe, and internationally famous cabaret artists. Sheffield of the seventies swings.’⁷¹



Figure 3.5: The interior of the Fiesta, 1970s.

The Fiesta was granted a publican’s licence in August 1970 with a maximum capacity of 1,300. The Fiesta booked acts for a week at a time, and pulled in many popular acts such as The Shadows, The Four Tops, the Jackson Five, and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. Upon its opening *The Star* reported that ‘Sheffield took another step towards becoming a regional centre and a much more attractive place to visit last night with the opening of its latest club, The Fietsa, in Arundel Gate. With fine facilities... and plans to present top-line entertainers, this club will give another big boost to the new Sheffield image of a city on the

⁷¹ *Sheffield: City on the Move* [film], directed by Jim Coulthard, (Sheffield City Council, 1972).

move'.⁷² The Fiesta's entertainment roster was its biggest attraction, and was the central feature of its marketing campaigns. An advert placed in *The Star* newspaper in January 1972 featured the Fiesta's 'Dial A Star' campaign, showcasing the variety of big names appearing at the venue, with acts including Tommy Cooper and Ken Goodwin.⁷³ As well as attracting big names, the Fiesta often held week long residencies for its stars. Ken Goodwin, for example, performed for a week in February 1972.⁷⁴ Author Neil Anderson argues that 'nowhere was more representative of the buoyant and confident mood of the city at the time it opened. Sheffield had full employment, a thriving industrial base and was one of the best retail centres in the country.'⁷⁵ The club closed in 1976 following accusations of corruption and strikes amongst the staff. It reopened shortly afterwards but closed its doors for the final time in 1980. An article in *The Star* from 1982 reported that the owner of the club had been traced to Florida after fleeing the country with over £500,000 worth of debt.⁷⁶ Despite its relatively quick demise, the Fiesta was a short-lived but important place in the cultural landscape of 1970s Sheffield, representing the optimism in the economy and the ever increasing demand for leisure in the city.

As the nightclub became an established part of leisure in the city the types of venues operating diversified. The biggest difference between venues wishing to market themselves as 'sophisticated', and disco-style venues aimed specifically at a younger audience was marketing. Adverts for both clubs Scamps and Samantha's in 1976 highlight the reduced entrance rate for attending the nightclub early. Samantha's was 10p admission before 11pm,

⁷² 'Fiesta Time', *The Star*, August 20 1970, p. 8.

⁷³ *The Star*, January 21 1972, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷⁵ 'Those Vegas Nights', *Sheffield Telegraph*, <http://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/news/local/those-vegas-nights-1-4998673> [last accessed 12/08/2014]. Note: The *Morning Telegraph* was relaunched as the *Sheffield Telegraph* in 1989.

⁷⁶ 'Runaway nightclub boss in cash mystery', *The Star*, December 3 1982, p. 6.

jumping significantly to 80p after 11pm. The cheaper entrance fee was a way to entice people into the club at an earlier time, making them more likely to spend money on alcohol inside the venue.

Indeed, Scamps nightclub advertised a ‘Nurses’ Night’, with admission for nurses costing 15p. Helen, who was a student nurse in the 1970s, recalled: ‘I’d got a bit of a wage coming in and we would come out into town quite frequently into the student places where drinks were cheaper.’⁷⁷ She went on to say that she ‘probably went out midweek more than weekends because it was cheaper’, although she noted that as a shift worker she probably worked more weekends than most, making going clubbing and drinking on midweek nights a viable option. However, Helen’s focus on the price of a night out indicates that money was a key factor in where she decided to go. The discounted entry offered by Scamps nightclub would have had a significant influence on the types of people attending the venue.

The adverts for Scamps and Samantha’s in the December 1976 edition of *The Star* are in sharp contrast to the adverts for Genevieve, the Mona Lisa, and Josephine’s nightclubs. Genevieve and Mona Lisa were owned by the Sheffield entrepreneur Max Omare who opened Shades nightclub on Ecclesall Road in the 1960s. The advert for Genevieve’s is twinned with the Mona Lisa- the two venues were housed back to back- and bills the venue as ‘super deluxe’.⁷⁸ The advert boasts ‘continuous dancing to superb stereo sound. Two dance floors. Fibre Optic effects lighting. First in Europe. A la carte restaurant, and food servery and wine bar’. It is worth noting that the high-end fittings promoted by Genevieve’s would have required considerable commercial investment, highlighting the strength of the night-time economy in Sheffield in this period. In contrast to the focus on cost shown in the adverts

⁷⁷ Interview with Helen H.

⁷⁸ *The Star*, December 8 1976, p. 2.

for Scamps and Samantha's, Genevieve's focus was on quality. Indeed, if the difference between the two was not already clear to potential patrons, a small note advertises their university night although, where Scamps made this the centre of their advert, Genevieve placed this towards the bottom. Tellingly, rather than appealing directly to students, the notice reads: 'Professors, Lecturers, Administrators', before adding students to the end of the list. In a similar vein, the Mona Lisa advertised itself as 'the over-25s nightspot', with the tagline 'The Nice Place for Nice People.' Josephine's, as well as billing itself as 'Sheffield's Superscene', asked patrons to 'please note we operate a very selective door'. The varying approaches to marketing were a central way of distinguishing between different types of venues, and advertising offer a way of exploring the segmentation and diversification of the market in this period.

Though the emerging nightlife of the 1960s and 1970s was driven primarily by the youth market, not all evening leisure was designed with young people in mind. The dance halls and ballrooms of the city had appealed to older generations as well as courting couples, with traditional ballroom dancing being a popular leisure pursuit throughout the duration of the war and the post-war years. The upmarket cabaret clubs and nightclubs such as Genevieve's and Josephine's were designed primarily with older adults in mind, and marketed themselves to people with higher levels of disposable income than many young people had access to. However, these upmarket venues did feature in the cultural experiences of young people in the city. Some interviewees expressed how those types of nightclubs were perceived by Sheffield's youth; Jacqueline recalled: 'We thought we were really grown up when we used to go to Josephine's.'⁷⁹ Many of my interviewees recalled visiting these nightclubs on special occasions. Jacqueline's comment hints at the somewhat aspirational

⁷⁹ Interview with Jacqueline.

nature of venues such as Josephine's. They offered a more sophisticated form of evening entertainment that was at odds with many other venues in Sheffield in this period. Indeed, Helen recalled:

You got chicken in a basket in Josephine's, it was really smart. I guess they were more expensive to get into, the drinks were more expensive but we'd go there perhaps on special occasions you know, somebody's birthday or hen night.⁸⁰

Tony further recalled his visit to Genevieve's:

I mean you went in there and it was the place that had the guy in the toilets with aftershave, and you thought this is class. It was very, very upmarket. And they looked you up and down. It wasn't just a case of having a suit, you had to have a suit - not a jacket and tie- a suit. They even checked your shoes, in those early days... But we liked that idea that we were somewhere that was slightly [upmarket].⁸¹

Helen again highlighted the issue of money when she discussed her visits to Josephine's. As a trainee nurse money was an important factor in Helen's leisure choices, and her interview made clear that visits to venues such as Josephine's were reserved for special occasions.

Tony's recollection of his visits to Genevieve's when he returned from the Army in his early twenties highlights the aspirational nature of these venues. His recollection of the smart dress code again highlights how important dress was as an indicator of respectability, something Tony also saw as marking Genevieve's as a more upmarket and sophisticated venue. Leisure was not simply a way of spending time, but played an important part in identity formation and presentation of the self. By attending Genevieve's Tony felt he was a part of something more exclusive.

Another of my interviewees, Debbie, discussed attending the Fiesta nightclub underage:

And I used to go and see gigs at the Fiesta where you had to be eighteen, but

⁸⁰ Interview with Helen H.

⁸¹ Interview with Tony.

obviously you bought your ticket and went in and nobody challenged you.⁸²

Debbie's attendance at the Fiesta would be to see a live band, rather than to engage in the wider dining and cabaret style events designed for older patrons. Her anecdote also highlights the continuation of underage drinking in the 1970s, something discussed later in this chapter.

When discussing Josephine's, she said:

Because Josephine's was a bit like, for slightly older people. And by that I mean twenty-one plus. But when you're sixteen, seventeen, eighteen you don't really want to be with twenty-one plus. You want to be with people your own age.

Debbie's recollection raised an important point: adolescents and recent school leavers were less likely to want to socialise in an 'adult' environment. For teenagers like Debbie, whose leisure choices enabled her to socialise away from parental control and adult supervision, the idea of socialising at a more upmarket venue like Josephine's or Genevieve's was unappealing. However, Tony found these sorts of venues aspirational as, in his early twenties and a full-time worker, the need to escape adult supervision likely felt less urgent. The nightclub was used by different people depending on their needs. While some saw upmarket nightclubs as the reserve of older adults, some liked the idea of being in a place that represented glamour and sophistication. The example of Josephine's and Genevieve's highlights how different places were perceived by different groups of young adults. The large and upmarket cabaret clubs of the early 1970s were often not designed with young people in mind. High levels of employment in Sheffield at the turn of the decade meant that leisure providers were as keen to attract the disposable income of older generations as they were that of adolescents and young adults. The number of clubs in Sheffield increased significantly in the 1970s, particularly in the middle part of the decade. Notably, clubs open since the 1960s were beginning to change and develop in response to changing tastes in leisure entertainment.

⁸² Interview with Debbie.

The members-only clubs of the previous decade were giving way to discotheque-style venues with more of a focus on casual dancing, as well as an increased diversification of the types of music available in these venues. As the night-time economy of the city centre continued to develop and diversify, pubs and nightclubs were fast becoming the final destination of the night following visits to several bars, part of a wider evening circuit rather than just discrete entertainment spaces

‘Alternative Spaces’: The Limit

By the late 1970s the evening leisure scene in Sheffield consisted of a number of large upmarket nightclubs, smaller disco-style venues, as well as a few smaller venues which tended to specialise in alternative music. One of the central venues for live music in this period was the Black Swan pub, on Snig Hill. The Black Swan was a popular live music nightspot and host to the Sex Pistols on their first trip to Sheffield, supported by The Clash who were making their live debut.⁸³ Without a dedicated late-night licensed venue the alternative scene in the 1960s and 1970s was dominated by the rock pubs detailed in Chapter two.

An important moment in the development of spaces for young people was the opening of the Limit nightclub in 1978. Billed as Sheffield’s ‘alternative’ venue the Limit faced problems with the licensing magistrates from its inception. The issues faced by the Limit nightclub need to be understood within the wider context of national moral panics over the

⁸³ Neil Anderson, *Dirty Stop Out’s Guide to 1970s Sheffield* (2010, Sheffield), p. 32.

emerging punk scene, and particularly with regards to the role and influence of the licensing magistrates within the wider running of Sheffield's nightlife. The Anarchy in the UK tour of the Sex Pistols and other punk bands was met with outrage from local councils, with many venues cancelling dates. In December 1976 *The Star* ran a front page story detailing how 'Sheffield May Ban Pistols'.⁸⁴ A spokesman for the City Hall said 'we are not having obscenity, vulgarity and deprivation in our hall'.⁸⁵ Indeed, Keith Gildart has argued that 'in Sheffield, local politicians framed the Sex Pistols as purveyors of obscenity.'⁸⁶ Gildart argued that reactions to The Anarchy in the UK need to be understood locally, as well as nationally, suggesting that the national media was 'just one player, albeit a fairly dominant one, in articulating a sense of crisis and anxiety in British society in December 1976'.⁸⁷ The Anarchy in the UK tour was prevented from coming to Sheffield, and the paranoia and outrage surrounding punk music was impacting on Sheffield's licensing. The Limit nightclub was reportedly only given its licence if it agreed never to book the Sex Pistols.⁸⁸ It was common practice for venues to reapply for licences on an annual basis, but the Limit was subject to stricter conditions and had to apply biannually between March 1978 and September 1979. Indeed, where the Limit nightclub was concerned the reports of the licensing magistrates took on a distinctly moral undertone, highlighting the importance of respectability in the eyes of the licensing magistrates.

In addition to implementing stricter licensing controls, the magistrates reported on a visit they had undertaken in April of 1979. The visitors reported:

Whilst the Police, Fire Brigade and Environmental Depts. thought there had been a vast

⁸⁴ 'Sheffield May Ban Pistols', *The Star*, December 3 1976, p. 1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Keith Gildart, "'The antithesis of Humankind': Exploring Responses to the Sex Pistols' Anarchy Tour 1976", *Cultural and Social History* 10.1 (2013), p. 143.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁸⁸ Anderson, *Take it to the Limit*, p. 7.

improvement in the state of the premises, the two justices were still critical of the premises and the attitude of the licensee. One small room which was for the use of visiting bands only and not the public, had walls which were entirely covered by graffiti, mostly obscene and a small wash basin appeared to have been used as a urinal. It was decided that the licence be renewed for a further six months but before being renewed in September the premises should be visited again.⁸⁹

The comments about graffiti and the ‘attitude of the licensee’ reveal the contempt with which the licensing magistrates held the Limit. Given that the small room that so disgusted the visiting magistrates was not seen by the public, it is unlikely that their objections arose from a concern that obscene graffiti did not constitute suitable decoration for a licensed venue. This focus on respectability became a prominent feature of the licensing magistrates’ decision making in this period, and continued into the 1980s.

A similar comparison can be made to the way magistrates approached the Penthouse. As detailed in Chapter two, the Penthouse was regularly visited by both licensing magistrates and members of law enforcement. Following a visit in 1979, it was reported that the Penthouse was:

Found to be in a very dirty state. Seating was torn, carpets were filthy and greasy and in the toilets there was no toilet with a seat or toilet paper. The lavatory bowls were dirty and the whole of the premises were generally run down. The safety lighting had fused and the fire alarm did not work.⁹⁰

Licensing magistrates were particularly concerned with the décor and cleanliness of venues such as the Penthouse and the Limit because of the type of people they were deemed to attract. Until the opening of the Leadmill venture in the 1980s the Limit was the only nightclub in Sheffield which actively appealed to an alternative audience. Due to its décor, lack of dress code, and patrons, the Limit marked itself as different from other nightclubs in

⁸⁹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 10/01/1978-11/12/1979, p. 877.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 949.

the city and, as a result, gained the attentions of the licensing magistrates. The increasing diversification in the types of venues available to young people in Sheffield challenged predeterminations about what a licensed venue should look like and the type of entertainment it offered. Popular narratives that positioned youth movements as subversive and dangerous impacted on the wider regulation of evening leisure venues, with stricter restrictions placed on venues which did not adhere to the preconceived notion of respectability. In this way, the licensing magistrates and local authorities wielded significant power in shaping the type of evening leisure spaces young people had access to.

Conclusions

The 1970s was a decade in which patterns of behaviour were being consolidated, and youth cultural ‘norms’ were being established. Despite being a period of social unrest and economic and political crisis, young people’s leisure choices and patterns of consumption remained remarkably stable. Rather than disrupting newly-established lifestyles and behaviours, young people’s engagement with evening leisure continued to increase in this period. As the youth-oriented bars and nightclubs became an established part of the city centre, the spaces for young people to socialise became further removed from the context of work, education, and home. These late night licensed venues were increasingly designed to appeal to a younger audience, further increasing the divide between youth leisure and other forms of leisure.

The policy of consolidation pursued by the licensing magistrates enabled young people in the city to easily access youth cultural spaces, and created a culture of pub and bar-

hopping that often culminated in visiting a late-night licensed venue. The development of these behaviours are explored in more detail in Chapter five of this thesis, but this chapter has shown how the enforcement of a policy that refused licences to venues in residential areas led to the majority of evening leisure spaces emerging in the city centre. Similarly, the increased number of licensed venues, increasingly at the heart of young people's leisure choices, positioned alcohol at the centre of many social experiences, marking a break from the alcohol-free venues inhabited by youth in previous decades.

As the number of evening leisure spaces increased, the types of venues in which young people could choose to socialise were becoming more diverse. Responding to the changing tastes of a large identifiable market of adolescent customers, venues began adapting their spaces to appeal more directly to young people. In addition to the lifestyles of young people becoming increasingly distinct from previous generations, the spaces inhabited by youth were also becoming increasingly distinct. The Stone House, for example, created a space designed to attract a younger clientele, and became a regular part of many of my interviewees' cultural landscape. In this way, leisure began to play a larger part in identity formation, with young people being able to choose between a variety of different venues offering different music, décor, and dress-code options, and choosing venues which they felt best represented their interests. Oral testimony highlighted how certain nightclubs and bars were both presented and perceived as aspirational and sophisticated, whereas others were the preserve of students and workers on a cheap night out. However, as will be argued in Chapters five and six, the correlation between where people chose to socialise on a night out and their own personal cultural interests was not necessarily clear cut.

However, with increasing diversification came challenges from the licensing magistrates who sought to uphold ideals of respectability in licensed venues. Reactions to

both the Limit and Penthouse venues demonstrated the hands-on approach the licensing magistrates were willing to take to uphold these ideals, something that only continued into the 1980s.

The 1970s was a period in which socialising in the city-centre in late-night licensed venues became an established part of many young people's lifestyles. The diversification of venues offered young people the opportunity to engage with their cultural interests in the public sphere, whilst the consolidation of these spaces created areas of the city centre which were, in many ways, spatially and temporally distinct from parts of the city occupied by older generations. The emergence and consolidation of evening leisure spaces in Sheffield was central to creating a cultural landscape in which the lifestyles and leisure choices of young people were becoming increasingly distinct from wider society.

Chapter IV: Divergence

The final of these chronological chapters will focus on the 1980s, exploring how the development of spaces for young people in the 1960s and 1970s continued into the 1980s, and how these changes impacted on the behaviours and lifestyles of young people. While the 1970s saw the consolidation and diversification of evening leisure spaces available to young people, the 1980s was a period of slower growth. The spaces available to young people were becoming more diverse in layout, décor, and in the types of cultural experiences on offer, but this was accompanied by the development of a clear and cohesive strategy by the licensing magistrates, designed to combat anti-social behaviour.

By the 1980s the ‘weekend lifestyle’ was firmly entrenched in many young people’s lives. The night out with friends was a common occurrence for many young people, and formed a primary part of their social lives. However, the weekend lifestyle of young people was coming under frequent scrutiny, and the increasing divergence in the types of spaces available was accompanied by a dramatic change in approach and policy by the licensing magistrates. The strategy adopted by Sheffield’s licensing magistrates demonstrated a continued concern about young people’s morality, and focused on alcohol as a social concern. This final chronological chapter, then, will not only explore the spaces available to young people in Sheffield in this period, but also seeks to examine the influence of local government in Sheffield’s nightlife, how this was negotiated by commercial venues, and the impact of this on the city’s nightlife. Focusing on the relationship between local authority and evening leisure venues, this chapter will argue that regulatory bodies played a crucial role in shaping the cultural landscape of the city, and that this often overlooked element of the

development of youth culture was complex, and at times contradictory.

The 1980s was a period in which youth culture in Sheffield became symbolic of wider societal and political changes. The political rule of the left-wing council known as the ‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire’ and the explosion of electronic music in this period positions Sheffield as a politically and culturally dynamic city in the 1980s. Local government approaches to culture in this period can be seen to symbolise the transition of the city between the 1960s and the 1980s: the tensions between the old world of production and industry collided with the new world of culture and consumption in Sheffield City Council’s approach to the Leadmill nightclub. However, local authority approaches to youth culture were conflicting and often contradictory; there was a shift from simple regulation to more complex policy-making by Sheffield City Council and the licensing magistrates. The 1980s was a period in which the changing economic and social backdrop of Sheffield reached a crossroad, with the tensions clearly shaping the cultural landscape of the city.

Sheffield in the 1980s

The economic downturn of the 1970s continued into the 1980s with a vengeance. The election of the Thatcher government in 1979, the continuing levels of high unemployment, the declining levels of steel production and eventual privatisation of the steel industry in 1988, the closure of mining pits, and cuts to local government budgets meant that Sheffield, along with other industrial towns and cities, was disproportionately affected by the macro-economic shifts of the 1980s. In many ways Sheffield has come to be most closely associated in the popular imagination with the 1980s: the crippling impact of a declining industry,

miners' strikes, Orgreave, the Hillsborough disaster, the city's political stance as the 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire', the release of the 1984 nuclear war film *Threads*, and the rise of electro music with Sheffield bands such as ABC and Human League finding success in the charts, all contributed to Sheffield's image in this period.

Sheffield's success in the charts came at a stage when the city was quickly losing its industrial identity. The impact of this swift deindustrialisation was highly visible. The factories, fire, and smoke that had once dominated Sheffield's landscape were quickly becoming memories, to be slowly replaced by derelict land, tower blocks, and shopping centres. Described as 'famed only for cutlery and viewed by motorway flashers-by as the most probable place for God to place a few fallen angels' by the NME in 1978, the popular image of Sheffield as a gritty northern town was ubiquitous during, and in the wake of, this era of industrial decline.¹ The experience of living in the city during this period shaped the outlook of several of my interviewees. Damon explained that during this era:

There was a, that kind of perception changed a bit when you know, Human League and Heaven 17 and ABC suddenly were ruling pop music all at the same time. And I think Human League had Christmas number one in 1981 and that was a sudden moment of oh perhaps this place where I live isn't so second division, it's actually doing something that people all over the country are interested in. And I think, so maybe from that point, it started to become a growing awareness, that actually I like being from this place and a lot of people don't understand what's good about it. Almost like its pleasures aren't immediately obvious necessarily.²

Indeed, in 1982 in reference to its musical success, local Barnsley band *Danse* described Sheffield as the 'current land of milk and honey'.³ Sheffield received regular attention from the music press in the 1980s, but it was not just the newfound musical fame that shaped

¹ Andy Gill, 'This Week's Leeds- Sheffield, Yorks', *New Musical Express*, September 9 1978, p.6.

² Interview with Damon.

³ Frank Worrall, 'Clocking Up On The New Danse', *Melody Maker*, January 2 1982, p. 11.

people's experiences in Sheffield in the 1980s. Tamar explained how the wider image of Sheffield in the 1980s influenced her as a teenager:

If I'd grown up in a slightly left wing family in Hereford I don't think I would have had the same sort of you know, experience of, you know, a little bit earlier but the whole miners' strike stuff, and the effect that had on the city and then the reputation that the city had as well erm was quite important as well I suppose. You know, just that whole Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire stuff and people knowing that when you spoke about where you were from, that was the reputation that people had, so you were expected to talk about that. And that whole sort of, steel working erm gritty northern dirty city type thing was, you know, I took that image with me when I left Sheffield for a bit.⁴

In this climate of change, local authorities were keen to maintain the image of Sheffield as a modern and thriving city. In 1990 the Chairman for Sheffield licensing magistrates said:

Sheffield is facing an increase in alcohol abuse and at a time when Sheffield is being ardently promoted as a City of the future attracting national and world-wide attention with the new shopping developments and sporting facilities. It is essential therefore, that Sheffield is not allowed to lapse into a City with a serious problem of this nature.⁵

By the end of the 1980s, Sheffield had successfully bid for the 1991 World Student Games, finished building Meadowhall, a large retail centre built on a site previously occupied by steelworks, and was in the process of refurbishing Tudor Square, the theatre quarter of the city. The Chairman's promotion of Sheffield as a 'city of the future' echoed the City on the Move campaign from the late 1960s and early 1970s. The local authorities pushed this image of Sheffield throughout the decade: in January 1988 *The Star* reported on the council's 'Sheffield's Moving On- Are You?' exhibition. The exhibition was aimed at the long-term unemployed with the intention of 'highlighting the bright future facing Sheffield' by showing how 'the World Student Games and plans to build business and commercial centres in the

⁴ Interview with Tamar.

⁵ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 05/01/1990-23/11/1990 [insert].

area' would create jobs.⁶

The regeneration of the city became increasingly important as huge swathes of land became derelict. In an emotive article in 1983 *The Star* featured a double-page spread on the 'urban decay that signals the end of Sheffield's east end heritage'.⁷ 'The back-to-backs and precipitously narrow alleyways of Attercliffe and Darnall – and Heeley at the other side of the city – are as much a part of Sheffield's industrial heritage as the artfully preserved machinery of Kelham Island or the crafts of the Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet.'⁸ With the decline of the city's steel industry the surrounding residential areas fell into increasing disrepair as families moved elsewhere.

The impact of Sheffield's industrial decline was laid bare in an open letter to Prime Minister Thatcher, ahead of her visit to Sheffield in 1983. The letter implored Thatcher to recognise 'a human cry of distress from a community that is suffering and full of fear for the future.'⁹ It went on to explain that 'it is suffering because its once proud steel industry, famous throughout the world, has been hacked and shaken almost beyond recognition and is now struggling for survival.' Highlighting the emotional impact of Sheffield's plight, the letter continued by saying: 'what many Sheffield residents suspect you may not fully appreciate is the damaging effect such desolation has on people. Only those without work and without hope of work can fully understand the sickening despair that seems to take all meaning out of life.' Prime Minister Thatcher's visit was met with protests, eggs and flour were thrown, and thirteen people were arrested, demonstrating the unrest and sense of anger of the city at the time.¹⁰ The loss of Sheffield's industrial identity hit the city hard: between

⁶ 'Showtime for City on the Move', *The Star*, January 22 1988, p. 9.

⁷ Stephen McLawrence, 'Wastelands', *The Star*, January 29 1983, p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹ 'Sheffield Today: An Open Letter to Mrs Thatcher', *The Star*, April 28 1983, p. 10.

¹⁰ 'Eggs and flour bombs hurled at Maggie: 13 held', *The Star*, April 29 1983, p. 5.

June 1971 and September 1989 the percentage of people employed in the steel industry fell from 16% to 3.1%.¹¹ As in the previous decade, the collapse of industry and manufacturing in the city hit school-leavers and young adults the hardest.

Youth Unemployment: Money and Youth Culture

The rate of unemployment was soaring across the country in this period: in October 1980 it was reported that unemployment had risen by 23,000, bringing the national unemployment rate to 8.5%.¹² However, it was young people and school leavers who were often most affected by the increasing rates of unemployment. In the 12 months between April 1979 and April 1980 youth unemployment in the South Yorkshire region rose by almost 45%.¹³ An article in *The Star* from 1980 reported that by 1982 one in every two school leavers would go straight on to the unemployment register.¹⁴ A 1981 report on youth unemployment in South Yorkshire further stated that by the end of the year 80% of 1981 school leavers were expected to be without work; the youth unemployment rate in the South Yorkshire region had risen from 16.5% to 28.3% in the space of just two years, bringing it well above the national average of 24.2% in July of 1981.¹⁵

The difficulties facing young people in this period were recalled by my interviewee Darren:

When I left school, very, very few people actually went to work. People either stayed

¹¹ Karen Evans, Ian Taylor and Penny Fraser, *A Tale of Two Cities: Global Change, Local Feeling, and Everyday Life in the North of England* (London, 2002), p. 64.

¹² '23,000 more on the dole', *The Star*, October 2 1980, p. 1.

¹³ Sheffield Archives, SYCC CB 613 'Trends in Youth Unemployment in South Yorkshire, 1976-80', p. 5.

¹⁴ '23,000 more on the dole', *The Star*, October 2 1980, p. 1.

¹⁵ Sheffield Archives, SYCC CB 587 'Youth Unemployment Priority: The case for South Yorkshire', p. 7.

on in education, a few people just dropped out and signed on... and a lot of people went on what was called a Youth Training Scheme, or a Youth Opportunity Scheme... Some people did ok out of them, and other people got used as cheap labour. But no, very few people would have actually gone on to get a job at 16. Very few.¹⁶

Another interviewee, Mark, left school in 1988 and went straight onto a Youth Training Scheme.¹⁷ He explained: 'The YTS I was based on was very much clerical and admin kind of roles, and I was trying to go for those kind of jobs. And it was computer driven as well, very based around computers.'¹⁸ In June 1988, around the time that Mark left school, *The Star* reported that only 70 jobs were on offer for around 7,000 young people.¹⁹ With 100-1 odds on finding a job, many young people had no choice but to take up a Youth Training Scheme placement. Adrian's experience of the YTS mirrored Darren's statement about 'cheap labour'. He recalled:

I went to the engineering industry training board, and I think I spent about a year and a half where they were trying to make me into an engineer ... So yeah, I ended up, I was moved around on placements essentially and it really was, it was terrible. There was one place they sent me to and all I did was paint rails. And another one was putting handles on screwdrivers.²⁰

Competition for jobs was a problem throughout the 1980s. An article in *The Star* from June 1980 reported that over 1,000 young people had applied for 75 Sheffield works department apprenticeships.²¹ The plight of school-leavers and young people, it was reported in 1983, is 'bleak nationally, and in a city like Sheffield there is little chance of finding jobs for even the

¹⁶ Interview with Darren.

¹⁷ The Youth Training Scheme (YTS) replaced the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) in 1983.

¹⁸ Interview with Mark.

¹⁹ Mark Thompson, 'Teenagers face 100-1 battle in "bleak" job hunt', *The Star*, June 2 1988, p. 9.

²⁰ Interview with Adrian.

²¹ '1000 youths apply for 75 jobs', *The Star*, June 21 1980, p. 5.

majority'.²²

The impact that unemployment could have on the lives, attitudes, and behaviours of young people was a concern throughout the 1980s. During the nation-wide youth riots of the early 1980s a Sheffield career advisor warned: 'I don't think there will be a lot of unrest [in Sheffield]. But it is well something that could well grow in the next 12 months. I don't want to be alarmist, but it is a good possibility we must look at and be ready for.'²³

The role that leisure space played in keeping young people occupied and out of trouble was recognised as increasingly important. In 1984 a report published by the Sheffield Association of Youth Clubs argued that 'youth clubs can play a vital role in giving jobless teenagers the responsibility and self-respect they would once have found in work.'²⁴ Ian Lindsay, a Sheffield-based youth worker, argued that 'because of high unemployment they are getting less experience of taking responsibility... Youth clubs can give them that experience and responsibility'.²⁵ The words and advice of youth workers in the 1980s mirrored the moralistic approach of youth workers in previous decades, and shows a continuation of older ideas of rational recreation being socially beneficial. The need to provide young people with a sense of purpose and opportunities for responsibility took on new meaning in the precarious economic climate of the 1980s.

It was not only youth clubs that were recognising the impact of the economic climate on young people. In an attempt to attract striking steel workers in 1980 Tiffany's nightclub placed an advert in *The Star* for reduced entry of 50p before 10.30pm throughout the duration of the strike, and the Leadmill nightclub regularly had reduced rates of entry for those with an

²² Isabel O'Keefe, "'Gissa Job" is the plea as teens face dole', *The Star*, April 16 1983, p. 3.

²³ Clark Herron, 'The Crime of Being Jobless', *The Star*, June 6 1980, p. 11.

²⁴ 'Vital Role of Clubs in Helping Jobless', *The Star*, March 28 1984, p. 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Unemployment Benefit Form 40 (UB40).²⁶ By changing their pricing in times of economic difficulty Sheffield's nightclubs were still able to profit from the city's adolescents and young adults. Importantly, these pricing changes meant that socialising in pubs and nightclubs remained an accessible leisure choice for many young people. Irene Farrell was featured in an article in *The Star* on Steely's club night and said that 'it's a special thing for Saturday nights. I'm out of work at the moment but my mum gives me the money to come here'.²⁷ Socialising with friends provided a valuable distraction from the monotony of the job hunt.

The impact that widespread unemployment and the precariousness of many employment opportunities had on youth culture in the city was a common theme in discussions with participants who grew up in this period. Many of my interviewees expressed the feeling of being unable to afford to fully participate in youth culture without a job, highlighting how important money was in enabling young people to make leisure choices. Tamar explained that she had been interested in fashion from a young age 'so fashion was really important, but it was really sort of voyeuristic until I got a Saturday job and could afford them for myself.'²⁸ Gillian explained: 'but you couldn't afford to buy them [clothes]. I used to save up and I'd have all my pound notes folded over and, so you couldn't afford to buy records, you couldn't afford to buy anything really.'²⁹ Darren recalled that he adopted a practical approach to clothing:

I couldn't afford to go buying clothes every week, so I'd buy clothes that would sort of last and I think if I buy this pair of trousers I want them to last six months and that sort of thing. I didn't think oh I'll buy these and then oh I'll buy something else, because I was a bit poor in those days.... Yeah, with me it was probably more

²⁶ *The Star*, January 26 1980, p. 2.

²⁷ Simon Tisdall, 'Sheffield's Theatre of Light and Sound', *The Star*, December 28 1977, p. 10

²⁸ Interview with Tamar.

²⁹ Interview with Gillian.

functional.³⁰

However, despite the economic troubles facing Sheffield, the heightened rate of youth unemployment, and accompanying drop in disposable income, the night-time economy in Sheffield continued to thrive during this period.

By the beginning of the 1980s the weekend trip ‘down town’ was an established part of the majority of young people’s lifestyles. The consolidation of evening leisure spaces in the 1970s meant that, by the 1980s, Sheffield city centre was the primary site of socialising for many young people in the area. With the opening of the Limit nightclub in the late 1970s, and the establishment of the Leadmill in the early 1980s, the city had cultural spaces dedicated to the interests of alternative youth, with loosened dress codes and a broader range of musical tastes being catered for. Equally, the wider club scene continued to develop, with venues investing large sums of money to provide state-of-the-art entertainments: for many, glamour and luxury continued to be a drawing factor to many of the city’s nightclubs.

Focusing on a number of case studies, this chapter will argue that the role of local authorities shaped the city’s evening leisure spaces in an important way. The 1980s marked the point at which the licensing magistrates developed a coordinated policy, shaping the wider cultural landscape of the city. By pursuing a strict policy of ‘need’ licensing magistrates were able to strictly control the type of venues operating in the city, limiting spaces they felt to be problematic or perceived as worsening the rise of anti-social behaviour in the city centre. However, the support of the Leadmill nightclub by both Sheffield City Council and South Yorkshire County Council contrasted with the work of the licensing magistrates. The 1980s were a period of divergence, not only in the venues available, but in

³⁰ Interview with Darren.

the approaches taken by local authorities.

Licensing Policy

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the licensing magistrates wielded significant power over the developing pub, bar, and nightclub scene. Their policy of ensuring that youth nightspots were kept away from residential areas ensured that the city-centre became the site of the vast majority of this new entertainment for teenagers and young adults. As the years passed, young people's lifestyles were increasingly centred around evening weekend entertainment, and the types of spaces being frequented by these young people were evolving at an ever increasing rate. As a result of this the late 1970s and 1980s saw a change in the way that licensing magistrates approached their role.

The magistrates' policy of refusing licences in residential areas continued, with a 1981 application for a venue in the suburbs being denied because of the 'danger of another... Turn Ups situation being created'.³¹ Indeed, a sense of continuity was something the licensing magistrates valued. In December 1980 the licensing magistrates reflected on their own expectations of their role in the city; during this meeting it was reported that 'there was a general response with the weight coming down on the side of long service to gain experience because of the complex work of the committee.'³² One committee member went so far as to suggest that 'if there was to be a choice between democracy and continuity then the emphasis

³¹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 05/02/1980-17/12/1980, p. 5.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 279.

should be on continuity'.³³ The committee generally agreed that experience created expertise, and therefore longer service was desirable. A corresponding document from November 1980 detailed the length of time members of the committee had served: of the membership of fourteen, eight had served between 7 and 15 years.³⁴ Young people's lifestyles were undergoing swift and dramatic changes in the post-war period, and in turn the spaces they socialised in were subject to similarly fast-paced change. A licensing magistrates comprised of long-serving members would likely be less responsive to, or understanding of, these swift changes.

The magistrates strongly believed that unfettered growth of licensed venues for young people was to be avoided. In reply to an appeal by the Fleur De Lys nightspot in Totley, the licensing magistrates commented that:

We also wish to refer to the increasing concern being widely expressed regarding the consumption of alcoholic drinks and the problems arising therefrom. We are sure that you will agree that this licensing committee must take heed of those sentiments and where appropriate they must influence our decisions. We are satisfied that there is, in this day and age, a need to continue strict control over the availability of liquor.³⁵

This 'need' became an increasingly important part of the magistrates' policy over the course of the 1980s amid fears of excessive alcohol consumption and the trouble caused at weekends in the city centre, and was the driving force behind many of the decisions taken by the licensing magistrates in this period. At the beginning of 1980 the committee set out their plan for the year ahead:

We take regretful notice of the increase in convictions concerned with the purchasing or consuming of intoxicating liquor on licensed premises by persons under the age of

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, [insert].

³⁵ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 06/01/1981-16/12/1981, p. 3.

18. This represents an increase of 26½ percent... the overall picture indicates a need to continue firm control over the availability of liquor.³⁶

In discussing their response to increased convictions by underage teenagers, the magistrates made a direct link with city-centre venues:

Members of this committee from their general observations have become aware that certain licensed premises, mainly situated in the city centre, seem to be mentioned too frequently in our courts generally, when cases in respect of a variety of offences are being heard.³⁷

The licensing magistrates released an addendum in 1983 detailing their new approach to licensing. In October they released a formal statement of their policy:

The increase of alcohol related problems which according to relevant indicators, has taken place over recent years, and of which the committee is aware from its own knowledge and experience, is considered to be due in some part to the great availability of alcoholic liquor. The committee therefore state as a matter of general policy that the question of need and undue proliferation of outlets are factors which are taken into account in the consideration of all applications for new Justices' licences.³⁸

In November of the same year this concern with issues arising from the city-centre were reiterated by the Chief Constable in his reply to the addendum:

The proliferation of licensed premises, especially in the city centre, has undoubtedly been a contributory factor in the increase in cases of drunkenness and drink related offences dealt with by my officers. By adoption of more stringent criteria for the granting of a licence, the Justices will minimise any further increase in respect of licensed premises and their attendant problems.³⁹

The Chief Constable went on to say:

Unruliness and bad behaviour at night time can be attributed mostly to young people over indulging in intoxicants and... any curb on outlets for their re-sale will at the worst prevent the situation deteriorating and perhaps lead to the city centre becoming a more pleasant and safer place for the many law abiding people of Sheffield who

³⁶ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 05/02/1980-17/12/1980, [insert].

³⁷ *Ibid.*, [insert].

³⁸ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates 08/02/1983-17/01/1984, p. 540.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, [insert].

transit through, and work in, the centre at night.⁴⁰

By 1983 the licensing committee and police were both in agreement that the proliferation of venues in the city-centre, in part a result of the magistrates' policy to deny and revoke licences in the suburbs, had become problematic enough to require new licensing policy. This marked a development in the approach of the licensing magistrates; the introduction of a clear and cohesive strategy, in coordination with the police, marked a new stage in policy development that was not present in the previous decades. By the 1980s, the magistrates had changed their approach, moving from granting licences on an individual basis to an approach that included taking into account other licensed venues in the area.

This change culminated in the 1987 statement of policy. The magistrates' focus on 'need' was enveloped into a more moralistic approach encompassing fears about the dangers of alcohol alongside wider concerns about anti-social behaviour. The committee stated that two general propositions about the situation in 1987 emerged:

- a) There is at present a very serious problem of alcohol misuse in our society. One publication refers to it as an "endemic disorder of frightening magnitude".
- b) The ease with which alcohol can be obtained through the various types of outlet has a bearing upon the level of consumption. That is to say, the greater the availability of alcohol the greater the consumption will be.⁴¹

The magistrates then outlined 'that in view of the exercise of its jurisdiction it is necessary' to:

- i) To have regard to social welfare and the health of the community
- ii) To exercise a restrictive influence upon the spread of facilities for the retail distribution of intoxicating liquor.
- iii) To seek to ensure the manner in which alcohol is presented to the public always reflects its special nature. In this connection for instance we aim to ensure that in mixed premises, licensed goods are allied to foodstuffs rather than to other commodities.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, [insert].

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, [insert].

- iv) To seek to ensure that all outlets for the sale of alcohol are maintained to a satisfactory standard in all respects and that those having responsibility for management, namely Licensees, are fit and proper persons to hold positions of public responsibility.⁴²

In developing this new policy, the licensing magistrates were advertising their intent to pursue a far firmer line of approach to decisions made about new and existing licences. This rhetoric of licensing for public benefit continued for the remainder of the decade. In 1988 the chairman stated it was ‘the essential purpose of this committee so far as it is able to do so, to hold a proper balance between ordinary commercial considerations on the one hand and the general public interest as we perceive it, on the other’.⁴³ In 1989 the chairman’s comments again declared that ‘close and careful control over the number (or proliferation) of outlets can only be for the greater public good’.⁴⁴

This concern about ‘public good’ extended beyond the role of nightclubs in the context of evening entertainment. In 1983 a licensing committee member raised concerns about ‘the practice of using public houses for the provision of all-day restaurant facilities’.⁴⁵

The committee member continued:

The aspect of this type of operation which is of particular concern to the Justices is that children are, apparently, freely admitted to the public house throughout the opening times, including the permitted hours. The Justices are aware of an alarming growth in the incidence of alcohol-related social problems and, indeed, are necessarily affected by this awareness in their general approach to the exercise of their powers. They regard the introduction of children to the influence and example of an adult drinking environment as being particularly undesirable.⁴⁶

⁴² *Ibid.*, [insert].

⁴³ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 07/02/1988-08/01/1989, [insert].

⁴⁴ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 15/01/1989-17/12/1989, [insert].

⁴⁵ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 08/02/1983-17/01/1984, [insert].

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, [insert].

Concerns around the harmful effects of alcohol consumption had been conspicuously absent in discussions of the licensing magistrates in the previous two decades, but as the proliferation of licensed venues made alcohol a central element of the lifestyles of young people the attitude of alcohol as ‘problematic’ returned.⁴⁷ This concern around the proliferation of evening leisure spaces for young people, and the increasingly central place they held in the lifestyle choices of young people, was considered serious enough to spark significant change in the approach of Sheffield’s licensing magistrates in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Occurring against a backdrop of wider anxieties about football hooliganism, sexual violence, and rising crime, this move towards tighter regulation was influenced by wider concerns about young people’s morality.

The proliferation of nightclubs was not the only concern of the licensing magistrates. The standard of licensed venues and the changing ways in which young people used these spaces continued to be a topic of discussion for the licensing magistrates throughout this period. Concerns around respectability and expectations about what a licensed venue should look like and provide continued to attract debate. Long-serving and increasingly out of touch licensing magistrates repeatedly clashed with venues in this period.

James Nicholls’ *The Politics of Alcohol* argued that the installation of gaming machines was part of a post-war drive by pubs and bars to attract young drinkers. In 1982 the licensing committee continued to take a strong stand against Amusement With Prize (AWP) machines in pubs. In step with the increasingly restrictive approach of the licensing magistrates in this period the chairman of the committee stated: ‘after February 1981,

⁴⁷ There is an extensive literature which deals with alcohol and morality. See James Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England* (Manchester, 2009); Henry Yeomans, *Alcohol and Moral Regulation: Public Attitudes, Spirited Measures and Victorian Hangovers* (Bristol, 2014); David Gutzke, *Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2014) for examples of this.

applications for renewal or new Permits were made in respect of all existing sitings until it became clear that, despite previous approval by the Committee's predecessors, certain sitings and machines were no longer acceptable to the present Committee.⁴⁸ This statement marked a clear break from previous approaches. The old approach was both uncoordinated and haphazardly applied. The chairman of the committee further stated: 'We recognise that licensed premises have, through the years, provided certain facilities for the general public; this is the image that the "trade" invariably projects, but we are not satisfied that some licensed premises should be turned into something approaching amusement arcades.'⁴⁹ After refusing or revoking licences for AWP machines from several sites the magistrates were accused of being arbitrary and unclear in their implementation of their policy. A letter from solicitors representing several venues wrote:

From recent experience, it appears that the committee are not anxious to take into account the wishes or needs of customers in determining how they exercise their overall discretion. Yet, if the customer demand is patently present, how can such demand be an unacceptable interference with the general standard, comfort or convenience of the premises? There is no doubt that in a number of cases where the committee have decided to reduce the existing two sitings to one machine, Licensees have been at a loss to explain to their customers why the other machine has had to be removed after so many years!⁵⁰

The increasingly strict approach taken by the licensing magistrates caused confusion amongst venues, unsure how the new focus on morality and cohesive strategy would impact on their commercial provision.

Of particular concern to the magistrates was the venue Rebels, previously known as the Penthouse. At a meeting in June 1982 a licensing committee member 'felt he could no

⁴⁸ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 18/01/1982-04/01/1983 [insert].

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, [insert].

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, [insert].

longer wait to pass comment on the Rebels night club.⁵¹ The committee member told the meeting of:

... the appalling state of the premises. Also that the premises were overcrowded, underage people were present and that there was a smell of hashish being smoked. The lighting was at a minimum level and the emergency exit could not be seen. On the entrance stairway there was some broken glass and the nosings [an edge or trim] on the steps were damaged and dangerous.⁵²

Other Justices who visited the premises:

expressed themselves as utterly appalled and disgusted at the conditions and circumstances they encountered there. The dangerous condition of the long flight of stairs by which the premises are approached has long been a source of concern; there were many broken bottles and glasses about: the premises appeared to be grossly overcrowded: there were reports of 14/16 year olds being there in the early hours of the morning: the emergency exits were not discernible: the lighting was of an unacceptably low level: the toilets were in an atrocious state: there were pictures on the walls of an obscene or indecent nature: the visiting justices were generally alarmed by the type of clientele and their activities.

Following these complaints, the magistrates agreed to hold a special meeting to discuss the state of the city's nightclubs on 27 August 1982 in which the licensing magistrates were to meet with representatives for the police and fire brigade. At this meeting a committee member 'spoke at length regarding his visit to Rebels and the deplorable state of the premises. The access stairway was littered with broken glass and he was certain the premises were overcrowded as the Magistrates could only just get past the entrance.'⁵³ Following this meeting it was decided to more strictly regulate the clubs which were felt to be causing problems: namely Faces, Rebels, and the Limit.

The need for stricter regulation of nightclubs was a matter of discussion for the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

remainder of the decade. In 1988 the police also served a notice of objection to the licensing magistrates about the owners of Maximillians, Sinatras and Charlie Parker's, alleging that they were not fit and proper persons to hold a licence. The problem was deemed to be that the 'methods of operation of these night spots are such that inevitably incidents of disorder arise resulting in the police having to attend.'⁵⁴ As the city's evening leisure spaces developed the licensing magistrates were forced to professionalise, focusing on coherent strategies and holding venues to increasingly higher standards.

Throughout 1985 the magistrates worked with the police to complete comprehensive visits to nightclubs in the city to ensure that they were being run according to their licence conditions. In reply to the Chief Constable's annual report, the Chairman told the meeting:

Our experience was not uniformly satisfactory. In some cases we were concerned with the poor standard of cleanliness and the apparent inadequacy of supervision. In some, there appeared to be strong evidence of overcrowding; we have, in fact, one licensee before us this morning with a conviction for gross overcrowding contrary to the terms of his Entertainments licence. Some indeed were flagrantly in conflict with licensing requirements in that no food at all was available. We remind all licensees that they are not permitted just to run late-night public houses. The sale of intoxicating liquor is ancillary or secondary to the provision of music and dancing and substantial refreshment. We have asked the Police and other relevant Authorities to keep matters generally under review.⁵⁵

The magistrates' comments about venues being run as 'late-night public houses' demonstrates how national licensing policy was increasingly out of step with the ways in which these venues were being used. The requirement for a late-night licence included providing food, a restriction that did not reflect the activities being undertaken by young people at these venues, which were predominantly drinking and dancing. The issues raised by the magistrates with regard to the changing use of evening leisure space in these venues show

⁵⁴ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 07/02/1988-08/01/1989, p. 45.

⁵⁵ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 16/01/1986-19/12/1986, [insert].

clearly that licensee holders were reluctant to be beholden to the views and restrictions placed on them by an increasingly out-of-touch licensing committee.

Mecca Leisure Ltd. versus Sheffield Licensing Magistrates: A Case Study

In July 1982 the licensing magistrates were in conflict with Mecca Leisure Ltd. over plans to change the layout of their London Road venue, Tiffany's. Formerly a cinema, Tiffany's had been run as a dancing venue by Mecca since 1955, and as Tiffany's nightclub since 1970. In 1982 Mecca submitted plans to the licensing magistrates detailing their intention to increase the dining area and remove the dance floor on the first floor to create a longer bar. Mecca decided to 'change the appearance and style of the club which they were running at the premises and which for many years had been called Tiffany's because the simulation of a South Seas Island... had become outdated'.⁵⁶ These initial plans were refused by the licensing magistrates, and a lengthy appeal process ensued. The gulf between the legal restrictions placed on venues and realities of how these venues were used by young people is best demonstrated through this court case.

The licensing magistrates' reasons for refusing the proposed plans were twofold: that 'the sale of liquor must be ancillary to music and dancing (not music alone) and substantial refreshment', and that the proposed plans would reduce the amount of space available for dancing.⁵⁷ Sheffield Licensing Magistrates recommended that dance floors should provide 6 feet of space per person. In providing evidence to support Mecca's appeal, Top Rank's

⁵⁶ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 08/02/1983-17/01/1984, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 18/01/1982-04/01/1983, p. 4.

Deputy Controller, formerly with Mecca, stated that he had ‘never experienced the size of the dance floor being determined by the occupancy’.⁵⁸ Mecca’s Director of Property and Estates, Mr Jones, told the appeals court that ‘during the past 12 years Tiffany’s has catered for both ballroom and disco-style dancing [but] ... the style and habits and demands for dancing have changed.’⁵⁹ ‘From the old time’, he continued, ‘we have passed through an era of jitterbug, be-bop, jive and twist. The biggest change... came in the early 1960s with the twist when dancers no longer needed space to twirl around.’⁶⁰ The appeals court record Mr Jones as concluding that ‘dancing has become more static. The big demand for listening to the music came in. The emphasis has changed to static dancing and listening.’⁶¹ These appeal documents are clear evidence of the changing use of space in nightclubs, and Mecca’s appeal to change its layout demonstrates the disparity between the use of these spaces by young people, and the licensing restrictions enforced by magistrates.

Sheffield’s licensing magistrates argued that by reducing the size of the dance floor, the venue would no longer be suitable to uphold the conditions of its Music, Singing and Dancing Licence. The capacity of 800 people was calculated on the presumption that 50% of those inside would be using the dance floor, and by reducing the space available for dancing people would instead be using the venue primarily for the bar facilities.

During the appeal Mecca attacked the stance of Sheffield’s licensing magistrates, arguing that ‘the policy therein submitted is wholly arbitrary, unreasonable and capricious. It is submitted that throughout the country and in existing clubs in Sheffield this “crude and unrealistic yardstick is not applied, it is irrelevant”’.⁶² Counsel for Mecca further submitted

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

that ‘there is not a single whisper of evidence to suggest that if you took 50 per cent of capacity and multiplied it by 6 square feet you would magically arrive at a state where drinking would be magically ancillary to dancing’.⁶³

The stance of Sheffield’s licensing magistrates, and their staunch defence of it, suggests that their fears over the abuse of alcohol by young people in nightclubs was amounting to more than simply publishing their statement of future policy. In refusing Mecca the changes seen in their other venues, the magistrates were standing firm with their belief that alcohol consumption in young people should be managed and controlled. It is worth noting that it was during the ongoing court battle with Mecca Leisure Ltd. that the licensing magistrates released their 1983 policy addendum. In standing by their refusal of Mecca, the licensing magistrates were demonstrating their unwillingness to be swayed by commercial influence. Further, this court case demonstrates the significant power that licensing magistrates held in shaping nightlife provision in a city. Sheffield’s licensing magistrates were not simply enforcing national licensing laws, but were actively determining and enforcing their own agenda.

The appeal was refused by the Crown Court, and was eventually taken to the High Court. Over a year after the appeal was first launched, the High Court ruled in favour of the licensing magistrates, but questioned the ruling made by the Crown Court. Following the initial refusal of the plans, Mecca sought a ruling that the policy implemented by Sheffield’s licensing magistrates was ‘unlawful and irrelevant’, despite having sold the club.⁶⁴ Mecca felt that ruling in support of the 6 foot yardstick was ‘misconceived and would produce

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁴ ‘Judge Endorses 6ft Rule For Dances’, *Morning Telegraph*, November 4 1983 [page unknown, insert in Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 08/02/1983-17/01/1984, p. 67.]

draconian, absurd and very damaging consequences.’⁶⁵ Further to this, Mecca submitted that the Crown Court ‘erred in holding that the need to ensure that drinking should be ancillary to music and dancing was a relevant factor to be considered on an application for structural alterations’.⁶⁶ The High Court, whilst agreeing that the Crown Court had ‘overstepped the bounds of relevance’ in linking the size of the dance floor to whether or not dancing was to remain the main activity, ruled that the 6 foot yardstick applied by Sheffield’s licensing magistrates was lawful. The Judge commented that ‘their anxiety and diligence to ensure that observance of the conditions of licences granted by them is commendable and their formation of a “policy” to guide them in considering applications for renewals, transfers and new licences cannot, in my view, in principle, be criticised.’⁶⁷ In providing support for this policy, the High Court provided a mandate to the licensing magistrates, encouraging them to continue to take a hands-on approach to licensing.

Mecca was not the only organisation to feel the effects of the firmer approach to licensing in this period. In 1985 Barry Noble’s Roxy, having taken ownership of the venue from Top Rank earlier that year, submitted an application for structural changes which included increasing the size of the dance floor, providing extra seating, and installing extra bars. The licensing magistrates commented that since the original licence was granted in 1967 the dance floor had been significantly reduced in size from 5400 sq. ft. to 3100 sq. ft.⁶⁸ Although the new owners planned to increase the size of the dance floor, the magistrates feared that plans to install two new bars and reduce catering facilities would ‘be creating a “late night pub” and drinking encouraged rather than dancing or eating.’⁶⁹ The proposed

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁶⁶ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 08/02/1983-17/01/1984, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 14/01/1985-09/12/1985, p. 143.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

plans were approved with the exception of the new bars. In 1989 Barry Noble's Roxy submitted further plans in which the bar serveries were to be 'substantially increased', and the committee were 'concerned particularly that the emphasis was on drinking and dancing'.⁷⁰ The application was not recommended as 'the balance between the facilities to be provided for dancing and eating and those for drinking was being altered'.⁷¹ The repeated refusal of the licensing magistrates to grant the venue the changes they desired again demonstrated the significant power wielded by the licensing magistrates and the extent to which they were able to shape the development of evening leisure space.

The cases of Mecca and Barry Noble's Roxy are important in several ways: they show an impasse between the desires of commercial venues on the one hand, and the policies introduced by Sheffield licensing magistrates in the 1980s; they demonstrate the continuing influence of licensing magistrates to shape and direct nightlife in a city, and in the case of Sheffield, shows a reluctance to accept the changes in young people's behaviours and lifestyles; finally, the specific plans submitted to the licensing magistrates reveal the ways in which the use of space in nightclubs had changed over the course of two decades. In exploring these case-studies, it is possible to see how the licensing magistrates implemented the policy outlined in their 1983 addendum, how they reached their policy decisions, and the tangible impact this had on nightlife in Sheffield.

⁷⁰ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 05/01/1990-23/11/1990, p. 1.

⁷¹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 15/01/1989-17/12/1989, p. 277.

Defining 'Need'

A result of the licensing magistrate's desire to tackle the proliferation of venues was introducing a focus on 'need'. When considering whether to grant a licence the committee would first look at other licensed venues in the area to determine how the area was already serviced by licensed venues and whether the licence was required. This approach was problematic; it was difficult to enforce this policy in a coherent and uniform way, and it often failed to recognise the social need for spaces designed for marginalised and underrepresented groups.

In January 1985 an application was submitted for an LGBTQ-friendly venue. At the end of 1984 an applicant who had previously been refused a licence told the licensing magistrates that he intended to proceed with a new application 'on the basis of a club for homosexuals and lesbians. He thought that he would be able to prove "need" easier for this class of patron.'⁷² When the application for the Gaiety Club reached the committee in 1985 it was reported that:

The intention was for the applicant to bring evidence of need for another pub providing facilities for 'gay' people. It is expected that there will be an objection from the operators of the existing 'gay' club, Lydia's at Attercliffe Common. It was the general opinion of the committee that as relates to the question of 'need' the considerations should be those applied to any licence application. The desirability of a speciality 'pub' should not be considered as evidence of need.⁷³

The licence was eventually granted in October 1985, but the fact that the desirability of a 'specialty pub' did not constitute evidence of need suggests that the committee had not

⁷² Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 07/02/1984-18/12/1984, p. 329.

⁷³ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 14/01/1985-09/12/1985, p. 3.

considered the social need for such spaces, instead relying simply on the issue of proliferation when making their decision.⁷⁴

Within two months of the application for a licence at Gaiety Club, the licence of Lydia's club was then revoked. The magistrates visited the premises following a reapplication under a new owner, and under the new name of Pandora's, and reported:

... the intention was to set up a club for female gays. The premises had previously been licensed and known as Lydia's with renewal of the licence having been refused on 2 April 1985. They were in a very poor state of repair and the committee expressed their concern about licensing such premises again, particularly as the intention was to operate with the benefit of a special hours certificate. It was thought that the Gaiety Club would be objecting to the application and several witnesses were expected.⁷⁵

The licence for Pandora's was not recommended as the premises were deemed to be 'not suitable.'⁷⁶ That the magistrates were concerned about the state of repair of the venue suggests of two things: firstly, the image of licensed premises was important to the licensing magistrates and was indicative of the link they drew between image and respectability; secondly, given the importance placed on image and décor, it is likely that larger venues, with a greater amount of money to spend on decorating and maintaining their premises, would more easily gain the favour of the licensing magistrates, in turn shaping the cultural options available to young people in Sheffield.

Four years later a similar venture in an old theatre was proposed 'which was primarily to provide facilities for lesbians. However, there was an objection from Rockies [formerly Gaiety]... The question of need also had to be satisfied.'⁷⁷ The location of these two venues were close to each other, in the industrial area of north east Sheffield. It is perhaps due their

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

⁷⁵ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 16/01/1986-19/12/1986, p. 5.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷⁷ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 15/01/1989-17/12/1989, p. 277.

close proximity that the magistrates were focused on the issue of ‘need’ but with so few venues designed for the LGBTQ community the close proximity of these two venues could have been overlooked. These examples highlight the problematic nature of this policy

It was not just new licences that were affected by the firmer approach of the licensing committee. The granting of Special Orders of Exemption to existing venues with Special Hours Certificates was also affected. The wider implementation of the policy of ‘need’ was somewhat arbitrary, with no clear guidelines for what this meant, or what could be considered a ‘special’ circumstance. Indeed, in the run up to the Royal Wedding of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson there was confusion between the licensing magistrates about how to approach this event, and whether or not it could be deemed to be ‘special’. A meeting in May 1986 showed the committee discussing ‘whether or not the forthcoming Royal wedding should be treated as a “special” occasion and special orders of exemption granted’.⁷⁸ It was then decided that ‘the government had not declared the day a national holiday and the general opinion was that Special Orders of Exemption should not be granted’.⁷⁹ However, in July a blanket grant was given to all public houses to open from 3-5.30pm and until 12 midnight on the day of the wedding. One committee member ‘asked why the decision of the committee not to adjudge the occasion as “special” had been ignored as a result of which there had been a lack of uniformity.’⁸⁰ Another committee member who had been present ‘when the public house “blanket” grant was approved said that as the event had developed their opinion had been that the wedding was of a “special” nature and therefore it had been granted.’⁸¹ The magistrates then concluded that the Royal Wedding was ‘a “one off” situation somewhat

⁷⁸ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 16/01/1986-19/12/1986, p. 191.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 293

unique and some liberality was called for.’⁸²

In August 1989 the magistrates were discussing extensions for the Christmas period.

This was an annual discussion, but as New Year’s Eve fell on a Sunday:

The special hours certificate did not operate until 2am as normal... The committee agreed on a block extension of until 11.30pm on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day, and until 12.15am on New Year’s Eve. It was for individual applicants to seek more than this, however, mere Christmas and New Year festivities would not be considered as special for this purpose.⁸³

Again, the committee did not provide a reason for not designating the festive period as ‘special’, leaving venues unsure as to which restrictions would be placed on their licence.

The stricter restrictions being placed on licensed venues, and those wishing to apply for a licence, influenced the ability of different types of venues to operate in the city. The policy of the licensing magistrates demonstrated the significant impact that local authorities could have on the ability for nightlife in a city to flourish and develop. Evening leisure space and cultural provision for young people did not develop in a vacuum; local authorities and regularity bodies played an important part in influencing and shaping these spaces.

Local Approaches to Youth Culture: A Case Study of the Leadmill

One venue that developed a working relationship with local government authorities was the Leadmill. Opened in May 1980, the Leadmill cooperative became one of Sheffield’s

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁸³ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 15/01/1989-17/12/1989, p. 273.

most successful venues. Denied an alcohol licence in September 1980, the venue ran primarily as a community theatre for the first few months of its existence. The story of the Leadmill provides a fascinating example of the relationship between youth culture, commerce, and authorities. The uniqueness of the Leadmill lay not only in the ethos of its management, but in its receipt of City and Council funding.



Figure 4.1: Exterior of the Leadmill, 1980s.

The Leadmill opened on Leadmill Road, a short walk from the train station and city-centre, in an area of abandoned industrial buildings in the premises that was once occupied by the Esquire nightclub. The venue was developed by a team of volunteers in the hope of creating a cultural space for marginalised and unemployed people in the city. As well as the main venue, the space contained workshops to support local artists and craftspeople and regularly held exhibitions to display the work produced. The main venue applied for an alcohol licence, but was refused by licensing magistrates in September 1980. The Leadmill's

application for a licence was in order to ‘subsidise a co-operative craft unit and natural food café’, and the venue stressed that it would not get off the ground without the financial income from bar sales.⁸⁴ The visiting magistrates, ‘whilst admiring the ideals of the organisers’, denied the application on the grounds that there was an existing public house within 50 yards of the Leadmill.⁸⁵

The Leadmill opened briefly before closing until 22 September 1982. A letter to *The Star* newspaper in October 1980, one month after its closure, demonstrates the social role that the venue played in its very early days: ‘it provides a service much needed by local groups, and the best opportunity the kids of Sheffield have to see these groups in pleasant surroundings, at reasonable prices, and without worrying that there is a possibility of trouble’.⁸⁶ A benefit gig was held at the University of Sheffield in February 1981 to raise funds for the venue, featuring local stars Cabaret Voltaire. It was reported in *The Star* that The Fall, a Manchester band playing at the benefit, were ‘one of the last bands to play at the Leadmill... before it closed in September after magistrates refused a drinks licence application.’⁸⁷ In its few months open in 1980 The Leadmill filled the need for a space for young people that wasn’t legally off-limits to under-18s, and actively sought to promote and support the local music scene. But, despite this, the Leadmill fell short of proving the ‘need’ for the venue to the licensing magistrates, and was therefore unable to become financially viable.

The Leadmill’s failure to get a licence in 1980, and its subsequent closure, demonstrated the necessity of being commercially successful. Whilst the Leadmill’s aims to

⁸⁴ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 05/02/1980-17/12/1980, p. 127.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁸⁶ ‘Leadmill’s Service’, *The Star*, October 22 1980, p. 12.

⁸⁷ ‘Benefit gig for The Leadmill’, *The Weekend Star*, February 21 1981, p. 2.

support minority cultural tastes and groups were supported as a welcome intervention in the city's cultural landscape, the Leadmill's inability to execute these aims whilst breaking-even sounded a death-knell for the venue. A *Melody Maker* article from 1983 claimed this was a problem for the music industry more generally:

To be safe these days you've got to put on your R&B, rock 'n' roll good-time drinking bands- because all the difference between breaking even and losing money is beer sales. If we're not careful all that most clubs are going to be able to put on, and make sure of not losing, is the Woodstock generation's equivalent of trad jazz bands. They're the ones who've got an audience used to spending a fair few quid on drink.⁸⁸

The ethos and aims of the Leadmill were central to the way the venue was promoted and run, and played a large part in gaining the support of the council. In a 1983 funding application to the City and County councils, the management of The Leadmill set out the three 'broad objectives' of the venue: 'to encourage artistic activities, particularly those appealing to minority (non-profit making) cultural tastes'; 'to provide a venue for popular music at a price affordable by the unemployed'; 'to encourage the use of the premises as a meeting place by the unemployed, ethnic minorities, and the general public'.⁸⁹ These objectives remained at the core of the running of the Leadmill throughout the 1980s, and provided a point of departure from the existing models of for-profit venues catering for Sheffield's youth.

The ability of the Leadmill to host a varied and diverse range of events depended on the commercial viability of the venue as a whole. It was the success of, and profits derived from, 'mainstream' or 'commercial' nights that allowed the venue to cater for more alternative audiences.

⁸⁸ *Melody Maker*, January 22 1983, p. 4.

⁸⁹ Sheffield Archives, SYCC/CB/1526 Employment Programme Committee Application, July 1983.



Figure 4.2: A Sunday afternoon jazz session at the Leadmill, 1986. Image provided by interviewee Damon.

The three backers of the Leadmill registered the venue as a co-operative in March 1981, and acted as the management team upon its reopening in September 1982. In a visit to the Leadmill as part of the reapplication for a publican's licence, a licensing magistrate commented that 'a lot of work had been done and the premises were much improved since an application was refused two years ago'.⁹⁰ The magistrates commented on the need to ensure the separation from customers under the age of 18 from the licensed area, but granted the licence on 21 September 1982. Despite the licence being granted, the Leadmill's issues with the licensing magistrates were not at an end. On a 1984 visit one magistrate said 'he thought the standard of decor and finish existing left little to be desired. In his opinion it was not good

⁹⁰ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 18/01/1982-04/01/1983, p. 187.

enough'.⁹¹ However, as Figure 4.2 shows, the Leadmill's décor was minimalist and industrial, designed to be in keeping with the building's industrial heritage. Such comments reveal the gap between the desires of consumers and the attitudes of the licensing magistrates at this time.

Despite often being at odds with the licensing magistrates, the venue did have support from local organisations. The Leadmill quickly became a central part of Sheffield's cultural landscape. In July of 1983 Julian Spalding, then the Director of Arts for Sheffield City Council, noted that 'the Leadmill, in the space of ten months, has established itself as a major multi-purpose arts centre in the city... they have successfully attracted a wide range of social groups, which is both culturally and socially desirable.'⁹² In his concluding remarks on the venue, Spalding summarised what he felt to be the benefit of the Leadmill to the city:

There is an urgent need for entertainment centres of this type which can cater specifically for the needs of the unemployed and the disadvantaged. This is not being provided for by the commercial sector, which tends to cater only for an 'identifiable' market. Commercial provision is often therefore socially isolating. Closures also tend to be dictated more by the financial needs of the owners rather than the financial needs of the public.⁹³

In his note Spalding urged the Community Arts Panel and the Performing Arts and Entertainments Panel to consider the future of the Leadmill given the state of arts provision within the city. The support of such a high-level member of the arts division was likely beneficial to the Leadmill in their quest to secure funding.

A document showing the funding received by the Leadmill between November 1980 and February 1983 shows regular, and sometimes substantial, grants from both Sheffield City

⁹¹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 07/02/1984-18/12/1984, p. 243.

⁹² Sheffield Archives, SYCC/CB/1526 Letter from Julian Spalding to the Community Arts Panel, July 1983.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Council and South Yorkshire County Council to the Leadmill. A 'Traditional Urban Programme Capital Grant' of £14,000 was given to the Leadmill in March 1982 by Sheffield City Council, while an Urban Aid grant of £16,000 was provided by South Yorkshire County Council in June 1982.⁹⁴ These were significant sums of money in an era of cuts to local government, and are demonstrative of the level of support the Leadmill initiative garnered. The council's support of the Leadmill was part of a wider initiative developed by the council: in 1981 the council set up its own Department for Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and part of the department's strategy focused on the development of local cultural and media industries.⁹⁵ Many of these first grants were provided in order to redevelop the building to make it suitable for purpose.

The largest grant given to the Leadmill during the period from 1980-1983 was from the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). This government scheme was established to tackle the huge rise in youth and school-leaver unemployment and was designed to provide training to those struggling to find paid work. Part of the Leadmill's philosophy was to provide a space for the unemployed in Sheffield, but the venue was also dedicated to hiring and training unemployed youth throughout the 1980s. A management meeting in May 1986 discussed the need to look for a new Sound Engineer, and it was noted that the venue needed 'a versatile Sound Engineer who would also be capable of training young people'.⁹⁶ The MSC grant totalled £40,900, dwarfing the grants made by local government. The £40,900 grant, and a smaller grant of £4,600, meant that MSC funding comprised just over 41% of all grant income received by the Leadmill.

⁹⁴ Sheffield Archives, SYCC/CB/1526 The Leadmill Association, funding received to date (November 1980-February 1983).

⁹⁵ Astrid Winkler, 'Sheffield City Report', CASE 45, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/5133/1/CASEREport45.pdf> [last accessed 21/02/2017].

⁹⁶ Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/8 Leadmill Management Meeting 08/05/1986.

These grants were essential to keep the venue afloat. In September 1986, four years after reopening, the management discussed the importance of local government support: ‘It is necessary to show what we are doing for “the community” in Sheffield. Funding is not going to be easy to extract from Sheffield City Council unless we can show some value for money, some usefulness to the city.’⁹⁷ The need to show ‘value for money’ only increased as the decade continued. In a 1987 letter from Adrian Vinken, one of the co-founders of the Leadmill, to David Patmore, the Director of Arts at Sheffield City Council, Vickers acknowledged the ‘grave and difficult position the City finds itself in as the new financial year approaches.’⁹⁸ With a forecasted loss to the Leadmill of 13% of Sheffield City Council’s funding, Vickers wrote that ‘if public support for the Leadmill significantly reduces and cuts have to be made then... either its low pricing policy must be abandoned involving further grave financial risks or jobs and areas of service/programming are inevitably jeopardised.’⁹⁹ Without substantial funding, the Leadmill would have been unable to run as a community-oriented venture. It was such a sustained focus on the educational and cultural enrichment of the city that marked the Leadmill as different from other music venues in the city, or indeed different from the majority of music venues across the country.

The Leadmill’s policy of aiming its activities and programmes towards minority groups and the unemployed remained central to the venue throughout the 1980s, and arguably contributed to its ongoing financial difficulties. In an attempt to make the venue more financially viable, the company split into two separate trading companies in 1987. Shortly after its reopening a report by the county treasurer noted that the ‘additional customers’ (i.e., the employed) were ‘helping to subsidise the facilities provided for the clientele for whom the

⁹⁷ Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/9 Leadmill Management Meeting 24/09/1986.

⁹⁸ Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/9 Letter from Adrian Vinken to David Padmore 13/03/87.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Leadmill was established.¹⁰⁰ In other words, the Leadmill relied on the commercial success of the venue in order to carry out its primary aims and objectives. In a management meeting in 1985, Adrian Vinken explained that ‘with regard to the Bar/Office functions, the Leadmill now operated on a commercial (as distinct from “Cultural and Community”) basis on at least three and a half nights a week.’¹⁰¹ Budget sheets make clear that profits from the bar were a significant form of income for the venue. A first budget draft for the 1986/1987 financial year suggested £70,500 net-profit from bar sales alone, and the management noted that ‘all four “commercial” nights have received full-house attendances with associated healthy receipts by the bar’.¹⁰² The reliance on these ‘commercial’ nights, and the precarity of music venues more generally, was highlighted by the management in their reply to the draft budget:

In respect of these ‘commercial’ evenings we are in a highly competitive market subject to the vagaries of local fashion. Certain evenings at certain venues become fashionable, have a short reign as ‘the place to go’ on those nights and then lose their popularity. It is unusual if not unprecedented for one venue to dominate on so many nights.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Sheffield Archives, SYCC CB/1526 Report on the Leadmill by South Yorkshire County Council treasurer 16/08/1983.

¹⁰¹ Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/8 Leadmill Management meeting 20/06/1985.

¹⁰² Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/8 Budget 1st Draft, 1986/1987.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

The Leadmill's roster of events changed regularly to accommodate changing fashions, and the venue often held one-off fundraisers and benefits. In June 1984 the Leadmill organised a benefit for the miners to be held at the Polytechnic, the University of Sheffield, and the Leadmill. The poster for the event specified free entry to NUM members, demonstrating the venue's policy to appeal to marginalised groups.¹⁰⁴ Martin Bedford, resident artist at the Leadmill between 1980 and 1992 who was responsible for all of the venue's poster artwork, recalled that many Leadmill evenings had half price entry with the UB40.¹⁰⁵

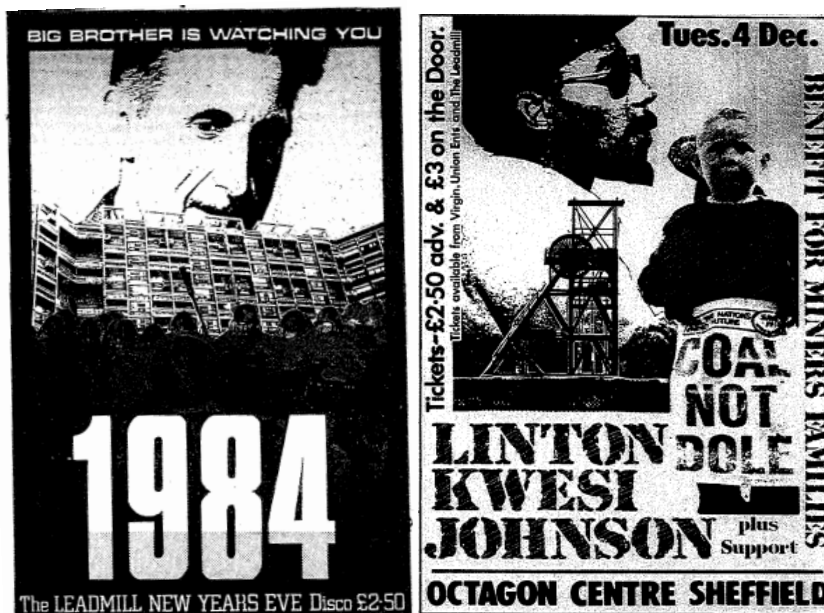


Figure 4.3: A selection of promotional artwork from Leadmill artist Martin Bedford.

A 1983 report details the regular evening events being held at the Leadmill in this period, with a breakdown of attendances and any issues.¹⁰⁶ The programme was as follows: Mondays- Theatre; Tuesdays, Punk Night/Gay Bop held alternately; Wednesdays- Jazz; Thursdays- Mixed Media Night (music, comedy, dance, performance, and video of an

¹⁰⁴ Martin Bedford, *Up Against The Wall- Leadmill Posters 1980-1992* (Sheffield, 2008), pp. 18-19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁶ Sheffield Archives, SYCC CB/1526 Leadmill functions, appendix to treasurer's report of 16/08/1983.

‘alternative’ nature); Fridays- Video Disco; Saturdays- Live music/disco; Sundays- Country/Contemporary Folk. The Leadmill’s varied programme of events ensured its place as a popular venue in Sheffield’s ‘alternative’ scene.

The city’s alternative venues were comprised of the Limit and the Leadmill, and competition between the two was something the Leadmill was aware of. In March 1986 it was reported that the Limit, which had applied to the licensing magistrates for structural changes in the same month, ‘have now obtained new premises and will shortly be in direct competition with The Leadmill.’¹⁰⁷ A September 1986 meeting contained discussion of the changing of the commercial format to ‘prevent these events becoming stale, and with the possibility of a newly refurbished and expanded “Limit” nightclub (who regard us as their main competitors).’¹⁰⁸ Later in the same meeting it was reported that ‘the future of The Limit nightclub is far from certain at the moment, but they appear to be having problems which is good news for the Leadmill’.¹⁰⁹ The submitted plans for the Limit’s expansion were initially denied, but were eventually approved in October 1986.¹¹⁰ The expansion of the Limit was something that concerned the Leadmill’s management. Adrian Vinken commented that in the past the Limit had ‘provided a service for the Leadmill in filtering out undesirables’, but this meeting concluded with discussions on how the Leadmill could maintain its share of the market following the expansion.¹¹¹

Indeed, interviewees made clear that the opening of the Leadmill was a welcome addition to the alternative scene in Sheffield. One participant, Damon, explained:

I think a big thing for me was really when I started going to the Leadmill... I didn’t

¹⁰⁷ Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/8 Leadmill Management Meeting 20/03/1986.

¹⁰⁸ Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/9 Leadmill Management Meeting 24/09/1987.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 16/01/1986-19/12/1986, p. 377.

¹¹¹ Sheffield Archives, CA 990/93/8 Leadmill Management Meeting 20/03/1986.

like the idea of going to those glitzy chrome and mirrors sort of nightclubs. So the Leadmill was really important. And there was also the Limit which you'll have heard of... basically you were either a mainstream sort of person or you went to the Leadmill and the Limit.¹¹²

Damon went on to explain that he was attracted by the ethos of the Leadmill:

It was almost like a political thing the Leadmill. Because it had backing from the council, it was very much a sort of Do It Yourself kind of thing... This was a million miles away from Josephine's and a totally different ideology of what a nightclub or venue should be... Every night was different and they were catering for people who weren't catered to anywhere else. All that was highly attractive to me. That outlook really, I thought it was brilliant.

Another interviewee, Adrian, discussed how important the live music was to him as a teenager:

I spent a lot of time at the Leadmill. When I was really young I was probably in there five nights a week sometimes. It was just to see whoever was on. I'd look at the listings... so I'd just wander down there, have my half a pint of lager or whatever I could afford, and yeah, I became a bit of a fixture and a fitting.¹¹³

Tamar, another interviewee, explained: 'I went to the Leadmill practically every Saturday night for about three years. But it wasn't to see who was on, we just went, and as a matter of course you saw the band.'¹¹⁴ Tamar's recollection of her time at the Leadmill suggests that it was the venue itself, as a home of alternative culture, as well as the act of socialising outside of the home, that was important, rather than the music or bands that were put on. Adrian recalled a similar sentiment: 'When I found the Leadmill I just stayed there because they kept putting bands on so I just wandered in every night'.¹¹⁵ Referencing his discovery of acid house and dance music, Adrian said 'it took my shift in musical taste, as it became more prevailing, and suddenly the options suddenly became there really. You've got these different places to go.'¹¹⁶ Adrian was initially drawn to the Leadmill because of the live music, but

¹¹² Interview with Damon.

¹¹³ Interview with Adrian.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Tamar.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Adrian.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

stayed because he felt more comfortable there than in the more ‘mainstream’ venues, before being drawn away to other specialist nights outside of the city. The examples of both Tamar and Adrian suggest that it was the act of going out that was as important as the destination itself. Their attendance at the Leadmill was dictated as much by its home as a place for the ‘alternative’ crowd as it was by any affiliation to the bands or music on show.

The Leadmill provides an important case study in understanding the role that commerce plays in alternative youth culture, but also provides a fascinating example of the relationship between youth culture and local government. The support of South Yorkshire County Council and Sheffield City Council demonstrate the extent to which attitudes towards youth lifestyles had changed. The council supported the venue not only because of its work with marginalised members of the community, but because of its role as a space for unemployed youth. In so doing, local government in Sheffield became involved not only in regulating nightlife, but actively recognised it as having the potential for good. Daisy Payling’s research on the politics and activism of Sheffield’s left in the 1970s and 1980s suggests that the ‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire’ was a ‘vibrant response to the pressures of Thatcherism and a serious attempt at an alternative politics.’¹¹⁷ It is within this context of an alternative approach to politics that we can understand the support given to the Leadmill project. The relationship between the Leadmill and governing bodies suggests that by the 1980s attitudes towards nightlife were beginning to change, and challenges the notion that ‘alternative’ culture was necessarily anti-establishment. This relationship existed in stark contrast to the approach of the licensing magistrates in this period, highlighting the contradictions in local authority approaches to youth culture.

¹¹⁷ Daisy Payling, “‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire’: Activism in Sheffield in the 1970s and 1980s”, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham (2015), p. 290.

Conclusions

While the 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence and consolidation of venues aimed at young people, the 1980s was a period in which the licensing magistrates sought to regain control. The concern about proliferation and drunkenness that dominated the debates of the licensing magistrates throughout the decade represented a shift in attitudes towards the lifestyles and behaviours of young people. Fears about binge drinking and youth violence led to the restriction of licences and a simplistic approach to the question of ‘need’, as well as a reluctance to adapt policy to better suit the times, leading to the magistrates being accused of ‘still living in the days of the veleta and the foxtrot’.¹¹⁸ The approach of the magistrates was best summed up in a 1986 meeting:

We have to consider carefully each case and in doing so we face considerable commercial pressures, quite properly and naturally, but it is our endeavour to hold the balance with the public interest in mind and by so doing to promote the cause of sensible drinking... Liquor licensing is but one element, though in our view a very important one, in a preventive approach to this problem. To some it may be irritating and irksome if seemingly attractive commercial opportunities are denied. We cannot please everyone and we have to act in what we perceive to be the broad public interest.¹¹⁹

For the licensing magistrates, the ‘broad public interest’ meant overlooking the significant changes that had undergone the way young people moved within evening leisure spaces. Further, their management of the cultural landscape in Sheffield failed to recognise the social good that such venues could provide, focusing instead on the negative aspects of drunkenness and social disorder.

¹¹⁸ ‘Council Move on Nightclubs Curb’, *The Star*, February 23 1982, p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 16/01/1986-19/12/1986, [insert].

This chapter has demonstrated the central role that local authorities played in shaping the nightlife of a city. The adoption of a cohesive and co-ordinated policy by Sheffield's licensing magistrates in 1983, their response to Mecca and Barry Noble's Roxy, and their approach to AWP machines demonstrates how the committee were not only enforcing national licensing law but shaping and taking on an independent approach to local licensing. Further, the approach of the magistrates had a significant impact on the types of venues that could run in the city. Without the support of the left-leaning Labour council it is unlikely that the Leadmill venue would have been able to offer such a range of culturally diverse events. Further, the relationship between the Leadmill and local governing authorities demonstrates that alternative spaces did not always exist outside of, or in resistance to, bodies of authority or established and popular forms of youth culture. This chapter has demonstrated how central regulatory bodies were in shaping the types of evening leisure young people had access to.

Chapter V: Behaviours, Lifestyles, Generation, and Gender

Following uproar over a television documentary featuring Sheffield nightclub the Esquire in the 1960s, owner Terry Thornton retorted that ‘they just wouldn’t understand the way the kids let off steam’.¹ Thornton’s comments highlight the drastic shift in young people’s lifestyles that were manifesting in increasingly visible ways in the 1960s. Having charted the development, regulation, and consolidation of space in Sheffield between the 1960s and 1980s the first of these thematic chapters seeks to explore how young people used these newly emerging spaces, and what role these evening leisure spaces played in changing young people’s behaviours and lifestyles. It will argue that this period saw a real transformation in the lifestyles of young people, with a growing number of spaces dedicated to young people offering new opportunities for leisure and recreation. With these new opportunities came fear and suspicion from both society and the authorities, who struggled to adjust to the increasingly separate nature of both the spaces and leisure activities enjoyed by young people. These spaces provided young people with the opportunity to socialise away from the home and school with a level of anonymity, and provided new forms of interaction between young people.

This chapter will argue that the way young people used and moved through these spaces constituted a significant shift from the leisure choices of previous generations. By focusing on youth culture at a local level, it has been possible to illuminate the different ways young people moved through space, and the differing ways they engaged with these spaces.

¹ *Top Star Special*, April Edition 1964, p. 21.

By placing the emergence and development of these spaces at the heart of this research, this thesis illuminates how central these spaces were to the changing lifestyles of young people in post-war Britain. Whilst older generations were moving toward home-based leisure choices and more family-based socialising, my interviewees suggest that evening leisure spaces for young people in post-war Britain played an important role as one of the central sites for socialising.

This chapter will explore the changes to young people's lifestyles, the reactions of wider society to these changes, and how these changes influenced the way young men and women engaged with each other. It will argue that over the relatively short space of thirty years young men and women were socialising in increasingly distinct ways, and moving through spaces that were removed from the experiences of wider society. It will detail how the leisure opportunities available to young men and women were changing, how young women were moving in new leisure spaces, and how attitudes to sexuality were changing as a result of these new leisure spaces.

Young people's lifestyles changed in dramatic and significant ways over the course of the post-war period; this chapter engages with what it was to be young in post-war Britain, arguing that as the period progressed the very category of youth changed. It will demonstrate how important generation was in this period, both as a way of understanding societal reactions to youth culture but also as a way of understanding how the lives of young people changed between the 1960s and the 1980s.

‘They distort the meaning of unconventional into the grotesque’: The Beatnik Ball

The post-war period was witness to significant changes in the lifestyles of young people in Britain. Many young people were going out more often and staying out longer, and it was becoming increasingly common for young people to spend a significant portion of their leisure time socialising outside the parental home. While the act of socialising outside of the home was by no means a new one, the types of behaviours that young people were engaged with in these new spaces did mark a shift from the lifestyles of previous generations of youth. These changes brought with them panic and suspicion from those in authority, wider society, and members of the local community. From uproar over the ‘flapper’ craze of the 1920s to disdain for the ‘Juke Box Boys’, the lives of young people have rarely been free from the gaze and judgement of adults.²

These changes were a cause for concern for older generations in Sheffield, particularly in the 1960s when these cultural and leisure changes were manifesting themselves in a visible way. Using two case studies, the reactions to the University of Sheffield’s Rag ‘Beatnik’ Ball and reaction to the teen beat clubs the King Mojo Club and the Esquire, this section will explore the reactions of local authorities and wider society to young people in Sheffield in the 1960s. The changing lifestyles of young people were the cause of generational conflict between those who engaged with the increasingly visible products of

² Richard Hoggart famously wrote about the ‘Juke Box Boys’ in his 1957 book on working class life: Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (6th edn, London, 2009); Good examples of the popular focus on young people’s morality are Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (3rd edn, Oxford, 1987); Adrian Bingham, “‘Stop the Flapper Vote Folly’: Lord Rothermere, the *Daily Mail*, and the Equalization of the Franchise, 1927-28”, *Twentieth Century British History* 13.1 (2002), pp. 17-37; John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta Rap, 1830-1996* (London, 1998).

youth culture, and those who wished to regulate and control the increasingly unfamiliar lifestyles and leisure choices of Britain's teenagers.

The reactions to the Beatnik Ball, held for the Rag charity by the University of Sheffield in 1960, provides a good case study for the debates surrounding the emergence of a more visible youth in the early part of the decade. Coverage of 'Beatniks' was a regular feature of the *Star* in 1960, so much so that an opinion piece was published weeks before the Beatnik Ball. The article, 'Where's the harm in these so-called "Beatniks"?' jumped to the defence of Sheffield's teenagers, arguing that 'because some of today's teenagers dress just that little bit differently, with eccentricities in clothing and "casual" haircuts, parents gain the wrong impression and soon begin to entertain thoughts of juvenile delinquency and teenage gang warfare.'³ The writer continues, 'the very word "Beatnik" conjures up an image of a hot-eyed fellow in beard and sandals, of a straggly haired "chick" with long black stockings and unwashed face. But the Sheffield public are wrong to assume that our teenage rebels are on a parallel with American Beatniks'. However, following the event, the Beatnik Ball was marred with accusations of debauchery and immoral behaviour.

The Vulcan column in *The Star* covered the Ball, and the piece continued to reverberate in the letters column over the coming days and weeks. The Beatnik ball was open to non-students, and tickets were advertised in *The Star* in the weeks leading up to the Ball. The Ball was held on 14 October 1960 at City Hall and was host to several hundred students and 'another two hundred folk who at the end of it were probably thankful they weren't students'.⁴ The Vulcan column described those in attendance as using 'the Beatnik gimmick as carte blanche for any kind of ridiculous and puerile behaviour. They distort the meaning of

³ 'Where's the harm in these so-called "Beatniks"?', *The Star*, October 1 1960, p. 6.

⁴ Vulcan Column: 'Beatniks', *The Star*, October 18 1960, p. 6.

unconventional into the grotesque'.⁵ The column's scathing remarks about students, and Beatniks more generally, caused extensive debate in the days following its publication. A senior member of the University Rag Committee wrote to the letters page saying 'I can only conclude in reference to Vulcan's article that he was either not present at the Ball which he so actively criticises or that he is running sadly short of material with which to fill his column'.⁶ Another letter from the father of an undergraduate said he and his wife were 'distressed' to read the Vulcan column, and continued to say that 'neither of us has any sympathy with the Beatnik cult in the University or elsewhere'.⁷ However, the father concluded by arguing that 'if one deliberately goes muck raking a little will be found in institutions of every kind'.⁸ The reactions to Vulcan's column were a mix of outrage at his comments about the students' behaviour at the Ball coupled with disgust at the supposed goings on of student 'Beatniks' in the city.

The case of the 'Beatnik Ball' demonstrates the fear and confusion of many members of the public to a more visible form of youth culture. The article and follow-up column played on these fears and uncertainty surrounding the 'Beatnik' in Sheffield, and was undoubtedly catering to a wider sensationalism of youth movements. Nevertheless, the Ball acts as a microcosm of the wider fears emerging about the morality of youth lifestyles in the post-war period.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶ 'Beatnik Ball: Students rap Vulcan', *The Star*, October 20 1960, p. 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

'A new menace to teenage morals': Youth Culture and Generational Difference

The suspicion of the authorities and the community was particularly heightened with regard to the big teen 'beat' clubs in Sheffield: the Esquire and the King Mojo Club. The generational difference in experience was amplified by the increasing popularity of these clubs. Indeed, Louise Jackson's article on beat clubs in post-war Manchester argues that these clubs were 'spaces removed from the normative gaze of adults', in effect making them 'alien territory'.⁹ Jackson argues that there was a 'continued operation at a local level of the technologies of moral regulation despite the wider context of 'permissiveness' that has been associated with the 1960s.'¹⁰ This local-level moral regulation could be seen in Sheffield: following the coverage of the Esquire nightclub on the BBC documentary 'The Long Journey' in April 1964 *The Star* was inundated with letters from viewers who found the young people featured on the programme 'sordid'.¹¹ A short article in the *Star* from November 1963 reported on the planned filming, saying that 'the club, which celebrated its first birthday a short while ago, has been chosen from hundreds of northern nightspots because of its tremendous atmosphere and originality'.¹²

Following the film's airing, however, popular opinion turned against the beat clubs. In reaction to this, and in what was no doubt an attempt to garner extra publicity, Peter Stringfellow issued an open invitation to parents in the *Top Star Special* to visit his clubs to

⁹ Louise Jackson, 'The Coffee Club Menace', *Cultural and Social History* 5.3 (2015), p. 290.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

¹¹ *Top Star Special*, April Edition 1964, p. 21.

¹² 'TV film planned on city club', *The Star*, November 8 1963, p. 3.

see that everything was ‘above board’.¹³ Stringfellow added ‘the club shown in the film was not one of mine, and I happen to know it is a perfectly respectable club. Every teenage club in Sheffield is attended, in the most part, by decent, fun loving youngsters who love dancing and rhythm and blues’.¹⁴ This invitation by Stringfellow is an early example of the continuing ways that clubs and venues had to appear respectable to appease local authority and wider society. The King Mojo, a club which was bold and outlandish in its decor and, as will be detailed further on this chapter, in the appearance of its patrons, was regularly challenged by local authority and as a result had to ensure that it was regularly seen to be providing a positive and moral atmosphere.

However, Terry Thornton, owner of the Esquire, told the *Top Star Special*, ‘I am not inviting parents down to the Esquire. They just wouldn’t understand the way the kids let off steam.’¹⁵ Thornton’s assumption of the view of parents is suggestive of a significant generation gap; the cultural experiences of post-war youth were vastly different to those of their parents who had grown up during the war and immediate post-war period. Indeed, a warden at a youth club in Sheffield conceded in November 1964 that ‘most of us will admit that this teenage behaviour is rather beyond our comprehension.’¹⁶ Thornton’s dismissal of Stringfellow’s invitation to parents is demonstrative of the increasing separation between many young people’s lifestyles and wider society in this period; by refusing to allow parents to visit the Esquire Thornton was simultaneously designating the space as separate from wider spaces of leisure, and providing a space where young people could socialise away from adult supervision.

¹³ *Top Star Special*, April Edition 1964, p. 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁶ ‘Pop Fans Know No Bounds’, *The Star*, November 3 1964, p. 2.

Of particular concern to older generations was the time until which young people were socialising until. With the closure of pubs at 10.30pm in Sheffield, the arrival of beat clubs that opened until the early hours was a drastic change. An article in *The Star* from October 1960 reported on ‘all night parties’ happening in Sheffield. These parties, described as ‘a new menace to teenage morals’, were attended by ‘crowds of uninhibited youngsters’.¹⁷ The article drew attention to the length of these parties, often lasting all night, and the behaviour of the young people attending them. Particular attention was drawn to the behaviour of the women in attendance: the article noted that ‘some of the younger girls spend the early hours totally incapable of any real moral judgement’.¹⁸ This fear for the morals of young women was not uncommon; Louise Jackson argues that Manchester beat clubs were initially targeted by police ‘because they were viewed as sites of sexual danger to girls’.¹⁹ By socialising in new spaces that were distinct from wider sites of leisure, young people’s behaviour and sexuality could no longer be policed by traditional social and gender conventions. It was fears over young people’s morality, in spaces that were increasingly unknown to adults, rather than any evidence of behavioural changes, that meant beat clubs such as the Esquire and Mojo were the focus of such scrutiny by adults in Sheffield.

‘Letting them get up with the beat’: The Stringfellow Brothers and The King Mojo Club

Perhaps the most telling reaction to the changes in young people’s lifestyles can be

¹⁷ ‘These “parties” are a menace to the city’s teenagers’, *The Star*, October 27 1960, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁹ Jackson, *Coffee Club Menace*, p. 294.

found in relation to the King Mojo Club. Following its opening in 1964, the venue in Pitsmoor, a residential area just north of the city centre, was subject to ongoing issues with police, local residents, and licensing magistrates. The King Mojo became famous for holding ‘all-nighters’ where guests could dance until the early hours. An advert in *The Star* for the Whitsun weekend of 1965 shows the planned all-night session on Whit Monday would run from 7.30pm-7.30am.²⁰ Similarly, an advert in December 1966 promotes the Mojo’s Christmas opening hours: the Mojo was to be open until 2am on the 23rd December, Christmas Eve, and Boxing Day with the celebrations culminating on New Year’s Eve with an all-night session.²¹ In a climate of suspicion around the teenage beat clubs, the Mojo was faced with numerous complaints from local residents about noise and the behaviour of those who attended the Mojo. In 1965 an 86 name petition complaining of noise and disruption was submitted to the council. However, after investigation by the Town Planning, Watch, and Health committees it was decided that no action could be taken as the building had previously been used as a dancehall in the 1930s.²²

The Stringfellow brothers were keen to maintain a good image for the Mojo, particularly in the face of so much criticism. An advert placed in *The Star* in July 1965 specified that ‘only the city’s smart teens and twenties [are] allowed in’.²³ Following the investigation a member of the council stepped forward in partial defence of the Mojo. Alderman Sidney Dyson told the *Top Star Special*: ‘I take the view that in the main clubs help to dissipate the energies of youth by letting them get up with the beat. This is in a sense filling up a kind of vacuum. It allows them to let steam off’.²⁴ Dyson continued by saying of the all-nighters: ‘I

²⁰ *The Star*, May 28 1965, p. 2.

²¹ *The Star*, December 16 1966, p. 2.

²² ‘No action to be taken against city beat club’, *The Star*, July 3 1965, p. 5.

²³ *The Star*, July 9 1965, p. 2.

²⁴ *Top Star Special*, April Edition 1964, p. 21.

think they want limiting. I do not think it is quite reasonable to expect that young people should stop all night.’ However, despite assurances by the management that the Mojo club was not the source of excessive noise or disruption, or the centre of immoral behaviour, the club continued to face problems.

Perhaps the biggest issues facing the Mojo came from the licensing magistrates. In 1966 the Mojo applied for an alcohol licence. In an article covering the application of the licence, Peter Stringfellow told *The Star*:

It is still going to be very exclusive. We shall be very careful about the types we shall allow into the bar. We don’t want any roughs. And we are not going to allow anyone in above the age of 30. At the moment we are going to settle for the 18s and late 20s.²⁵

Despite assurances, the club was denied its alcohol licence. In the hearing Geoff Stringfellow argued that club members were not able to go into local pubs before they went to the Mojo because of the way they dressed. Stringfellow’s statement highlights the problems faced by many young people in Sheffield during the early 1960s: outside of the city centre the city’s drinking establishments were the mainstay of traditional drinkers, and flamboyant groups of youths were not welcome, and often excluded from these places. Because of their ‘mod gear’, members were not welcome in Pitsmoor’s pubs.²⁶ To demonstrate to the Justices what was meant by ‘mod gear’, Peter Stringfellow sported ‘a grey and white pinstriped jacket with an orange tie’.²⁷ However, the Stringfellow brothers were told that their club attracted ‘the undesirable element’, and the licence was refused.²⁸

Problems with the licensing magistrates continued in 1967, when the Mojo applied for

²⁵ ‘Mojo Club to apply for drinks licence’, *The Star*, June 11 1966, p. 5.

²⁶ “‘No” to drinks please for Mojo Club mods’, *The Star*, July 6 1966, p. 5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

a Private Places of Entertainment licence and was again refused. The appeal documents demonstrate the concerns of local residents about the behaviour of young people attending the club. One licensing magistrate commented that:

So far as catering for customers aged sixteen to twenty-five is concerned, I am not sure it is right for people to speak of those ages as if they were a strange and different race. It seems to me they are perfectly entitled to dress as they like and should have whatever amusements they like, but at the same time they have exactly the same rights and obligations as any other section of the population.²⁹

Addressing the arguments presented by residents who lived near the club, the magistrate argued that:

All of them speak of frequent occasions of people urinating in their gardens, on their gates, in their drives. All of them have found a variety of different kinds of objects left in their gardens, contraceptives, panties, brassieres, sanitary towels and objects of that kind. They have, in addition, been subjected to a considerable measure of rudeness.³⁰

The complaints against the Mojo were fuelled in part by its disturbance of a residential area, but the argument presented by those who lived nearby focused as much on the supposedly immoral behaviour of the young people who attended the club as on the disturbance and noise.

The examples of the Beatnik Ball and the teenage beat clubs demonstrate the worries about the changing behaviours of Sheffield's youth, and the fears about their behaviour outside of the home in the 1960s. Hannah Charnock's work on youth sexuality between 1955 and 1975 suggests that young people used spaces such as the cinema as a site for sexual exploration, taking advantage of low lighting and loud music. However, whilst young people had been exploiting 'traditional' spaces for their own needs these spaces were very rarely

²⁹ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 19/11/1965-06/01/1970, p. 188.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

entirely free from the company of adults.³¹ Stringfellow's comment about not letting over-30s in, and Thornton's refusal to allow parents into his club suggest the importance of these spaces remaining an unknown entity. While fears for the morality of youth were by no means a new phenomenon, the increasing visibility and new spatial dimension to youth culture in the form of beat clubs and late dances, coupled with a move away from 'traditional', and often supervised, forms of leisure such as ballroom dances and cinema trips, created a world unfamiliar, and by extension transgressive, to older generations.

'Just to be out': The Changing Leisure Opportunities for Young Adults in Post-War Britain

'I'd go out Friday, Saturday, possibly Sunday, erm, then eventually Thursday... it was just socialising, and just to be out, not to be in.'³²

When recalling her time as a teenager in the 1960s, my interviewee Trish's statement that 'it was... just to be out' highlights the importance of space outside of the home to post-war youth. Over the course of the post-war period the act of going 'down town' became an established and recognised part of many young people's lifestyles, and the weakening of wider social and gender conventions that had dictated much of the pre and immediate post-war landscape of young people's social lives was offering new opportunities for young people, and for young women in particular.

³¹ Hannah Charnock, 'From the back row to the back seat: The spatial politics of teenage sex in Britain, c. 1955-75', paper given at *Seen But Not Heard? The Spatial, Emotional and Material Sites of Childhood and Youth from Antiquity to Modernity*, University of Sussex 20 January 2017.

³² Interview with Trish.

When asked how often she socialised outside of the home, Debbie, a teenager in the late 1970s, explained:

Debbie: I went out, I would say, a good three or four, five times a week.

S: Every week?

Debbie: Every week! Staying in? [shakes head]³³

Oral testimony provides a valuable way of exploring the way young people used evening leisure spaces; it is possible to see how they moved through space, how they experienced space, and how these spaces formed part of their wider lifestyle choices. By interviewing participants from across the period, it has been possible to chart not only the impact of the development of evening leisure space for young people on their lifestyle choices, but how their experiences were mediated through the wider lens of contemporary society.

Trish's testimony revealed that the majority of her socialising with friends occurred outside of the house. After detailing how often she socialised outside of the home, she went on to say: 'we had, me and my friends had a pub run, and we'd have a big gang of friends and you'd meet them in... the Cossack'.³⁴ Trish went on to list the venues her and her friends would move between: all were pubs and all were in the city-centre. Another participant, David, portrayed a similar lifestyle. As detailed in Chapter two, David recalled spending a lot of his time in Sheffield's rock pubs:

Well we all used to meet up in the various rock pubs in Sheffield. The Albert, the Nelson, the Buccaneer, all those. We were regulars in those places. But I also used to go to folk clubs on Saturday night. Thursday nights, Friday nights.³⁵

David's experience was similar to that of Trish's. Their social groups were both large and focused around a certain number of preferred locations, suggesting that central venues in the

³³ Interview with Debbie.

³⁴ Interview with Trish.

³⁵ Interview with David.

city were the primary site of meeting for these social groups.

Sue, a student at the art college, had a slightly different experience as her social life was focused primarily around the epicentre of the art college, which was within walking distance of her family home. Unlike David and Trish, the primary site of Sue's social life was based away from the city centre and relatively close to her neighbourhood. However, as Sue's social group was made up of art students rather than local residents, she was offered a relative level of separation from the traditional neighbourhood social scene despite the close proximity to her familial home. Sue's interview again demonstrates the amount of time she spent socialising outside of the home. Sue said:

I went out every night except Sunday night when I was at art college. Every Wednesday was the Shades, and every Friday was the, no no no, every Saturday was the Shades. Every Friday was the Highcliffe... and then the other nights I would be in the Banner... I would go there straight from art college and then it was walking distance from home so I'd walk home every evening.³⁶

The experiences of Sue, David and Trish demonstrate that young people were carving spaces for themselves in Sheffield in the 1960s. In the period before the proliferation of pubs and bars aimed at young people, many of Sheffield's teenagers and young adults were still choosing to socialise away from neighbourhood and work affiliated spaces.

However, other people that I spoke to went out less often. Pat tended to go out once or twice a week, and generally at weekends. She described finishing her Saturday job and heading into town: 'we'd go for a coffee, we might go to the Top Rank'.³⁷ Similarly, Kevin, who was married young and had a child at nineteen said:

I had a Saturday job at Wickfalls on the Moor when I was going out with my wife before we were married and I got £1.25 a day for it. I'd bank 25p of it and spend the rest. And

³⁶ Interview with Sue.

³⁷ Interview with Pat.

that lasted me all week including going out. It'd usually be Friday Saturday nights we'd go out.³⁸

Kevin also limited his going out to the weekends when he was at school. When asked how often he went out he said 'oh only once, maybe twice a week'.³⁹

Marian told a similar story: 'I would say we probably went out every Friday and some Saturdays, but in the holidays it would be more daytimes because we didn't live close to each other.'⁴⁰ Marian, whose grammar school friends came from a large catchment area, explained that 'our parents were very much involved until we were 18. It would take half the night to get there on the bus so one father would bring us back one week and one father the other week.' For Marian and her friends, it seems that location was one of the primary factors in her lifestyle choices; the centrality and increasing consolidation of leisure spaces in the immediate city centre was the cause of her socialising there at weekends. Indeed, Marian recalled taking advantage of study time during her A-levels in the early 1970s: 'we used to go in the library when we were studying for A-levels then go to the Buccaneer afterwards in school uniform!'⁴¹ The centrality of the Buccaneer was utilised by Marian and her friends during their period of study-leave in the central library; their usually disparate locations ensured they took advantage of leisure opportunities when they could.

The amount of time that people spent away from the house varied amongst different types of groups, and by location, but the research interviews indicate that for most young people by the 1960s and early 1970s, the act of socialising with friends away from the home, predominately in pubs and nightclubs, was becoming a common feature of their lifestyles. Of

³⁸ Interview with Kevin.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Interview with Marian.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

the interviews conducted with participants who were teenagers in the 1960s, it was a minority who would regularly stay out later than the closing time of pubs; this was due as much to logistics - being able to get the last bus, access, and the suburban location of many of the clubs in Sheffield at the time- as it was about desire. These external factors serve as an important reminder that many young people's experiences of youth culture and evening leisure were limited by structural agents such as location, family commitments and access to enough disposable income.

By the 1970s the frequency with which young people were socialising in evening leisure venues was increasing; the introduction of late-night venues onto the Sheffield scene ensured not only that Sheffield's young people continued to socialise away from the confines of the city-centre, but that they were increasingly socialising into the early hours of the morning.

Gillian recalled going out regularly during the middle of the week because it was cheaper. She said: 'we used to be clubbing in the middle of the week. You'd get in at 2 or 3 and get up for work the next day.'⁴² Similarly, Helen, who moved into Sheffield from the outskirts of the city to study at the nursing college said: 'I was living in the Nurses' Home, it was a bit of a culture change. I'd got a bit of a wage coming in and we would come out into town quite frequently into the student places where drinks were cheaper.'⁴³

The frequency with which young people were accessing these venues was increasing.

Juan recalled to me:

When I was off on my hols [from Coventry Poly] it probably would have been three/four nights, I mean I was out all the time. Yeah... I definitely did R&Js

⁴² Interview with Gillian.

⁴³ Interview with Helen H.

[Romeo's and Juliet's] definitely did Tuesdays and I definitely did Thursdays and Saturdays it was switching between the different clubs.⁴⁴

Similarly, Jacqueline recalled: 'It got to the point where I'd go out three, four times a week. But for different places.'⁴⁵ By the late 1970s and early 1980s going out multiple times during the week and at weekends was not uncommon for many of Sheffield's teenagers. Tony recalled: 'We used to go out every night. We would go out every night. Every night. Normal.'⁴⁶ Similarly, Debbie remembered: 'I went out, I would say, a good three or four, five times a week.'⁴⁷ The late closing hours of 2am for many nightclubs was three and a half hours after the closing time of pubs; the city centre, then, was frequented mainly by young people during these late hours, creating a temporal dimension to the development of young people's lifestyles.

Where night buses were once the mainstay of shift workers in local industry in industrial Sheffield, they were now utilised by young consumers of Sheffield's nightlife. Following the Local Government Act of 1974 Sheffield's buses were run by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE).⁴⁸ Throughout the 1970s, and until the deregulation of SYPTTE in 1986, a 2am night-bus would run from the city-centre after the 'last bus' of the night which, depending on the route, usually departed between 11pm and 11.30pm.⁴⁹ Indeed, a significant number of those interviewed who were teenagers and young adults in the 1970s and 1980s discussed the late-night bus, which is suggestive of the central role it played in the

⁴⁴ Interview with Juan.

⁴⁵ Interview with Jacqueline.

⁴⁶ Interview with Tony.

⁴⁷ Interview with Debbie.

⁴⁸ Karen Evans, Ian Taylor and Penny Fraser, *A Tale of Two Cities: Global Change, Local Feeling, and Everyday Life in the North of England* (London, 2002), p. 112.

⁴⁹ Following the deregulation of buses in 1986 private bus companies took over operation. By 1994 some 66 bus operators were servicing Sheffield. While some night buses continued after deregulation the timetables and routes were far less cohesive than under the PTE system and fares jumped to £1, making taxis a more viable option. Statistics from Evans et. Al., *A Tale of Two Cities*, p. 103.

night out of many young people. Juan recalled:

So you ended up 2 o'clock bus or whatever... luckily the bus that I got was the 75 route [and that] just came out at 2 o'clock.⁵⁰

Similarly, Jackie relied on the late-night bus as part of her cheap weeknights out:

There were other nights you came into town [on the bus], 2p, and you'd go clubbing, like Isabella's, it was a nurses' night on a Tuesday and it was a pound a pint, so you'd catch the night bus back, there used to be a night bus back, so our taxis even then used to be £5... so you'd have to catch a night bus.⁵¹

The moderately low cost of the night bus when compared to the taxi reinforces the importance of public transport to many young people; it provided them with low-cost mobility, enabling them to access to evening leisure without relying on parental transport.

By the 1980s the frequency with which young people socialised into the early hours contributed to a visible deluge of late-night revellers in a consolidated area of the city-centre. Tamar recalled that after her nights out 'the way home was the night buses, the quarter past 2 night buses. And that was sort of where everybody converged.'⁵² Similarly, Darren recalled the scenes in the city-centre following the departure of the last bus:

A taxi rank used to be in there [Fitzalan Square] as well, black cabs would be queueing, on the top side. And at 2 o'clock, quarter past 2, there'd be a massive queue there, because the last buses had gone.⁵³

The introduction of subsidised travel by the Labour council in the 1970s meant that children could travel for 2p and adults for 10p. The buses in Sheffield were accessible, enabling young people to move through the city with ease. The provision of a late-night bus enabled young revellers who were socialising in one of the city-centre clubs to socialise far

⁵⁰ Interview with Juan.

⁵¹ Interview with Jacqueline.

⁵² Interview with Tamar.

⁵³ Interview with Darren.

later than the traditional closing time. The later opening hours of clubs, paired with the option to socialise until 2am, introduced a temporal separation between the cultural experiences of young adults and wider society; following the departure of the 11pm bus, and with it the departure of the traditional drinkers identified by David Gutzke, the city-centre at night had become, by the 1970s and 1980s, a place dedicated to the hedonistic pursuits of youth.⁵⁴

‘Gymslip drinkers’: Adolescents and Alcohol

By the late 1970s and 1980s, going to pubs and nightclubs at weekends was an established part of many young people’s lifestyles. In 1988 the licensing magistrates quoted a Home Office report to evidence their policy of working for the greater ‘public good’ in pursuing their policy of restricting the number of licences in the city. They said:

A very recent report prepared for the Home Office indicates that about 20% of all males are drinking regularly in pubs and bars by the time they are 15 years of age. These statistics are some reflection of the current national situation concerning young people which is worrying by any standards.⁵⁵

The Home Office report demonstrated the extent to which young men were socialising in pubs, but also highlighted the frequency of underage drinking by young people. Of my interviewees from this period, the majority said they started going out to pubs and clubs when they left school or started college, at around 16 or 17. Damon recalled his first few years drinking in pubs, explaining ‘you would pick and choose the ones where you could get served and where you felt comfortable in what you were wearing. So we didn’t roam very far, we were pretty unadventurous.’⁵⁶

⁵⁴ David Gutzke, *Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2014).

⁵⁵ Sheffield Archives, Minutes for Sheffield Licensing Magistrates, 07/02/1988-08/01/1989, [insert].

⁵⁶ Interview with Damon.

Ricardo remembered:

We used to go down to town, only it was a bit risky at 16. I mean we were quite tall, but we used to go in a pub called The Compleat Angler and we'd buy a pint and a coke. And the police used to raid it quite a lot so we just used to hide the pint and drink the coke and we never got done.⁵⁷

Getting served underage wasn't a problem for Tamar either. She recalled:

I went out on my 18th with my mum for a meal and we went into the Hornblower afterwards and I went to the bar and I bought my first legal drink from the pub that I'd been going into for eighteen months! So it was just really weird you know, but we never got challenged. Occasionally we'd get a little bit worried that you'd get challenged going into a club but that was only if I was going out with work colleagues on a townie night, because the alternative ones would never really challenge you.⁵⁸

Debbie also discussed her underage drinking, and explained:

I don't think young people then got lairy on drink. We always used to have two or three drinks, sitting quietly. We didn't really draw attention to ourselves. And nobody bothered you. And that was very accepted. By parents, by pub landlords, by society. It wasn't frowned upon like it is today.⁵⁹

Both Debbie and Ricardo recalled having strategies to avoid detection: for Ricardo it was hiding his pint with coke, while Debbie and her friends ensured they didn't draw too much attention to themselves. The experiences of participants who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s was markedly different to the experiences of those growing up in the 1960s. Debbie's comment of 'nobody bothered you' highlights an absence of generational challenge; unlike Sue's experiences of being banned from the Banner Cross, and the Mojo's patrons being refused entry to Pitsmoor pubs, the 1970s and 1980s heralded a period in which it was far more common for young people to meet and drink in pubs unchallenged.

⁵⁷ Interview with Ricardo.

⁵⁸ Interview with Tamar.

⁵⁹ Interview with Debbie.

The changing image of young people was picked up by licensees and the wider media as a cause of underage drinking. A 1970 article in the *Guardian* reported that licensees were being ‘defeated by teenagers’ dress’.⁶⁰ The article explained that licensees and chief constables ‘confirmed that the considerable difficulty of telling the age of young people’ could be linked to their dress.⁶¹ Indeed, a similar article in *The Star* focused on the difficulties of telling what age young people, particularly young women, were.⁶² ‘Deborah Dalton’, the 1974 article exclaimed, ‘is a schoolgirl by day and a modern swinging Miss by night.’⁶³ The paper explained that they had chosen 13-year-old Deborah to ‘show the problem licensees are facing from what they call the gymslip drinkers.’ A spokesman for Sheffield licensees commented that ‘one minute they are in school uniform, and half an hour later they are dressed up in their “dolly” clothes, platform shoes and makeup’. A 1977 article on the Top Rank club’s Saturday night Steely’s featured a bouncer who admitted that although 18 was the minimum age of admittance into the venue, ‘it’s a difficult job to tell what age a lot of the kids are’.⁶⁴ While oral testimony suggests underage drinking was a relatively common occurrence in the post-war period, the Office for National Statistics did not begin collecting data from underage drinkers until 1998, and with the lack of other comparable data it is difficult to discern wider historical trends for this.

Fears over underage drinking in this period had a specific focus. Although the Home Office report stated that the statistics were ‘worrying by any standards’, Henry Yeomans argued that despite young people being ‘viewed as a violent, disorderly menace from which the general population must be shielded’, he also noted that the harmful effects of alcohol

⁶⁰ ‘Licensees defeated by teenagers’ dress’, *The Guardian*, April 29 1970, p. 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁶² ‘Now it’s schoolgirl Deborah... and guess her age again!’, *The Star*, August 26 1974, p. 7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Simon Tisdall, ‘Sheffield’s Theatre of Light and Sound’, *The Star*, December 28 1977, p. 10.

were rarely the centre of discussion in this period: ‘the problem of youth drinking was... defined by the age of its participants more than its potentially harmful consequences’.⁶⁵ This attitude was mirrored in the articles in the press about underage drinking. In an article on underage drinking in *The Star*, the focus was on the illegality of the action and the young age of many drinkers, as opposed to the potential harm caused by underage drinking. A spokesman for the licensing magistrates commented that: ‘we appreciate the licensees’ difficulties, but we still ask them to try to reduce this figure. I think this makes us the champions of the country’.⁶⁶ While this changed towards the 1980s as the licensing magistrates attempted to tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour, the ‘menace to teenage morals’ was still present, and while the focus of scrutiny was still on youth morality and young people’s lifestyle choices, the emphasis had shifted to fears about underage drinking as young people’s lifestyles developed to centre more on evening entertainment in licensed venues. Anxieties about sexual activity were articulated through a continued focus on the presence of women in licensed venues; while becoming more common, the use of 13-year-old Deborah by *The Star* demonstrated continuing fears about young women’s morality.

‘You’d always have a pre-club pub’: Moving Through Evening Leisure Space

The pub remained an important space for socialising during this period. Tamar recalled she’d socialise ‘probably two or three times during the week, pub or at friend’s

⁶⁵ Henry Yeomans, *Alcohol and Moral Regulation: Public attitudes, spirited measures and Victorian hangovers* (Bristol, 2014), p. 153; *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁶⁶ ‘Top for underage drinkers’, *The Star*, February 8 1972, p. 5.

houses, and then something on a Saturday night- clubbing.’⁶⁷ She continued:

Well, we went all up West Street and Division Street for pubs. So they would be sort of Frog and Parrot, Hallamshire, Hornblower, Beehive, and they were all like the student areas really at that time. Whereas now I think essentially it’s what we would have called townie, whereas at the time it would have been alternative. So they’d be the pubs we’d go to. Occasionally the Bath [Hotel] or the Red Deer as well, which we thought we were being ever so ironic going to old men pubs.

Darren also discussed the pubs aimed at young people. He said:

There was probably two pubs on Division Street. So there weren’t as many places to go. And there were probably six or eight pubs aimed at young people, so that’s why you tended to stick to them, because there weren’t that many to choose from!⁶⁸

An article in *The Star* article from January 1983 noted that despite beer sales falling since 1979, people between 18 and 34 were responsible for 48% of the beer sold in pubs. It also noted that this age group are ‘consistent drinkers. Some 43% will have had a pint in any week.’⁶⁹ The use of pubs by young people as a place to socialise continued throughout the period.

The role of the pub was both as a place to drink, and as a place to socialise before heading to a nightclub. Adrian said, ‘we would start, we’d always start in a pub. That was a tradition that went right though really. You’d always have a pre-club pub.’⁷⁰ Adrian’s comment highlights an important development in the way that young people moved through space. The pub was, by the 1980s, one of several leisure options for young people and was often part of a wider pattern of nightlife consumption. On weekends the pub became a space of passage as young people moved through these venues on pub crawls, making their way to the final destination. Damon and Darren, both teenagers in the 1980s, discussed the role of

⁶⁷ Interview with Tamar.

⁶⁸ Interview with Darren.

⁶⁹ ‘The Great British Beer Drain’, *The Star*, October 3 1983, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Interview with Adrian.

alcohol in explaining why young people often ended their night at a nightclub.

Damon said:

So if you wanted to carry on drinking, you had to go on somewhere else. But I think that's maybe one reason why nightclubs at that time had such a hold on, they had such a vital place in people's lives because if you weren't going home at half ten they were the only place you could be.⁷¹

Darren echoed this, recalling:

It shut at 11 o'clock, the pub shut. That's it. And in town, 11 o'clock, bell went. Five past 11 they were trying to throw you out. Bouncers sort of lurking over your shoulder. Once you'd finished spending they wanted you out. So you went in the nightclub, because that's the only place you could have another drink. Erm, and sometimes if you went in a bit earlier it was a bit cheaper, in the nightclubs. It was always free before 10 o'clock or something. But yeah, it was pubs and then it was a walk around town and then some sort of nightclub normally.⁷²

Alcohol continued to form a central part of young people's lifestyle choices and was a central element in the spaces that emerged. The night-time economy growing around teenagers and young adults in the 1970s developed primarily in licensed pubs and nightclubs, so the increasingly central role of alcohol in young people's social experiences should not be overlooked. There are, however, significant limitations as far as studying the drinking habits of young people are concerned. In *Illegal Leisure* Judith Aldridge et al. noted that there were very few large scale studies of alcohol consumption by young people before the 1970s, so our knowledge of youthful drinking dates from the late 1970s onwards⁷³. Aldridge et al. argue that although the 1970s and 1980s can be seen as a relatively stable period of alcohol consumption in young people, the period was punctuated with moral panics over issues such

⁷¹ Interview with Damon.

⁷² Interview with Darren.

⁷³ Judith Aldridge, Fiona Measham and Howard Parker, *Illegal Leisure: The Normalisation of Adolescent Recreational Drug Use* (London, 1998), p. 52.

as the role of alcohol in football hooliganism, and the number of young people drinking underage in licensed venues. The role of a night out ‘down town’ was becoming increasingly central to young people’s lifestyles, and within these spaces emerged new behaviours, less restricted by traditional moral and social codes.

‘You’ll meet the wrong sort of people’: Gendered Experiences of Evening Leisure

While increasing access to a variety of leisure options was affecting the majority of young people’s lifestyles, it was young women who experienced the greatest level of change. Between the 1960s and 1980s it was becoming socially acceptable, and relatively common, for groups of young, unmarried women to socialise until the early hours, providing women with greater freedom and more leisure opportunities than their pre-war counterparts. However, the experiences of these women were often mediated through the lens of contemporary society and it is important to recognise that despite the increasing number of leisure options available to young women, there were important differences in gender experience, both in terms of how men and women used the spaces of pubs and clubs, and how men and women experienced these spaces.

Perhaps one of the biggest shifts over the period was the frequency with which young women were socialising in drinking establishments. Women’s entry into the male-dominated world of public houses was a lengthy process and by no means confined to the post-WWII period. In his book *Women Drinking Out in Britain Since the Early Twentieth Century* David Gutzke provides the first sustained attempt to chart women’s drinking patterns over the

course of the twentieth century. Following gains during the First World War and interwar years, Gutzke argues that ‘the emergence of companionate marriage offered wives and courting women the chance to share with the men in their lives’ wider leisure activities.’⁷⁴ However, the post-war years increasingly saw women socialising without men, and the rise of the ‘girls’ night’ as an important part of many young women’s social groups is an important manifestation of this change. Societal stigma towards women in pubs was lifting by the 1970s, no doubt helped by the rise of youth-oriented drinking establishments such as the Stone House. Indeed, Gutzke notes that in 1970 pub avoidance by women in the 18-24 range was only 17%, compared with their mothers at 36%, suggesting that social boundaries were shifting, and that it was no longer seen as inappropriate for young women to socialise in drinking establishments.⁷⁵ However, whilst the presence of women in drinking establishments was becoming more common, the women I spoke to during the course of my research made clear that they favoured less traditional pubs. Gutzke argued that ‘drinking etiquette powerfully sustained masculine culture and dominance, discouraging most unescorted women from encroaching on men’s leisure space well into the 1980s.’⁷⁶ Women were still not regularly entering pubs dominated by ‘traditional’ drinkers; instead, they took advantage of the increasing number of city-centre bars and pubs designed with the young drinker in mind, and where ‘masculine culture and dominance’ came second to age.

The gendered experience of pub-going was particularly pronounced in the 1960s. Of the women I spoke to who grew up in the 1960s, socialising in the pub was often presented as an unusual and somewhat transgressive act. It is significant to note that during the course of the interview process there were no gender specific questions about frequenting of pubs, so

⁷⁴ Gutzke, *Women Drinking Out in Britain*, p 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

its repeated mention leads me to believe that it was a significant part of young women's experience of growing up in the 1960s. One interviewee, Pat, explained how she 'didn't go into pubs, because mum and dad didn't like me going into pubs. You'll meet the wrong sort of people I was told'.⁷⁷ The attitude of Pat's parents was not uncommon. In a wider conversation about parental expectations, Sue told me that her parents were:

Very working class, and strode very hard to be respectable and my dad especially was very restrictive with times I had to be in by and what I could be seen to do and what I could not be seen to do. So most of the time I had to be careful not to be seen to do!... They believed in the 1950s version of respectability, and so, I did have a fight on my hands.⁷⁸

She went on to explain that how this attitude affected her behaviour in pubs:

There was a struggle there, yes... There was a way that you needed to behave, you couldn't be seen to be drunk because then you would be throwing away your right. You would be proving the 1950s attitude right. So to some extent you were fighting for your freedom, but you were also fighting for your dignity. You were fighting to be taken seriously... and women, especially bearing in mind we'd only just grabbed the right to go into pubs on our own, if we then acted like we couldn't take it [alcohol], we would have been proving the point of the older generation.

Sue's comments about fighting to be taken seriously suggests that her decision to drink in pubs had a more significant meaning to her than as simply somewhere to socialise; she recognised that her existence in that space was part of a wider societal framework, and perceived the change as something that was hard won, but precarious. Helena Mills has argued that the 1960s was witness to 'new opportunities for British young women', and that they were then encouraged 'to pursue self-fulfilment and self-expression. However, these new possibilities often conflicted with older values and expectations that privileged duty, self-sacrifice, marriage and motherhood'.⁷⁹ Sue's discussion of the '1950s attitude' of her

⁷⁷ Interview with Pat.

⁷⁸ Interview with Sue.

⁷⁹ Helena Mills, 'Using the personal to critique the popular: women's memories of 1960s youth', *Contemporary*

parents speaks to Mills' argument, suggesting that Sue's lifestyle was in conflict with the expectations placed on her by her family. She hid her pub-going from her parents as she knew they wouldn't approve. She recalled:

I do remember my dad finding out that I was spending my lunchtimes in the Banner [Cross] when I was 16, because his cousin worked in the pork shop across the road and had seen me! Erm, but it didn't seem to be as bad going in at lunchtime. But at night time, well of course I went in every night as well! But some things, there were some things he just couldn't fight.⁸⁰

Sue's recollection that frequenting the pub during the day 'didn't seem to be as bad' is similar to Trish's memory of attending the late-opening coffee bar La Favourita as 'very daring'.⁸¹

Pat, while not socialising in pubs, was going to nightclubs such as the Top Rank from the age of 15. However, she also explained how her leisure choices were curtailed by what her father would allow her to do. She recalled:

As soon as I started working, dad said well if you're old enough to start doing that you're old enough to go but I had to either get the last bus home or he'd come into town to fetch me. We'd finished at 11. We had to be back home.

Despite working and having her own disposable income, Pat's cultural experiences were dictated by what her father felt was acceptable. Socialising late at night remained a transgressive act for many young women in the 1960s. Mills has further argued that 'young women were subject to stricter parental control than their brothers'.⁸² This is true of the women that I interviewed from this period. Indeed, Sue recalled how her brother manipulated this fact to keep evening leisure spaces for himself. She said:

My brother was three years older and he went to the Mojo and the Esquire, and saw Dave Berry and all the, all the blues singers over from America you know your Long

British History 30.4 (2016), p. 466.

⁸⁰ Interview with Sue.

⁸¹ Interview with Trish.

⁸² Mills, 'Women's memories of 1960s youth', p. 466.

John Baldrys and people like that. Er, but he made damn sure that I didn't, he made it all sound so serious that I couldn't possibly be allowed to go so I didn't get to go to any of those places for which Sheffield was very famous for at the time.

The experiences of Pat and Sue suggest that the position of women in public spaces, particularly spaces as the traditionally masculine pub, were under negotiation in this period. Whilst Pat was simply not allowed in to pubs, Sue was conscious of the way she behaved to ensure that her rights as a woman in a pub were not taken away from her.

By the 1970s and 1980s the increase in the number of spaces available for young women to socialise in was challenging wider societal views about what was appropriate for young women to do. Moral panics over women's drinking continued and the increasing frequency with which women were seen to be drinking sparked debate in the popular press: in 1975 the *Daily Mail* responded to research that suggested that women's 'liberation' was to blame for the increasing numbers of women drinking. In an interview with a doctor one article suggested that 'a combination of starting [drinking] at an earlier age', and 'a changed social climate in that the heavy female drinker isn't so much frowned upon' were contributing to the rise in the number of female alcoholics.⁸³ A *Guardian* article from 1980 similarly focused on the increased pressures faced by many women when juggling a full-time career and domestic duties, suggesting that it could be this aspect of women's 'liberation' that contributed to the rising numbers of female alcoholism.⁸⁴ However, fears about binge drinking by adolescent and young women would not come to dominate the popular debate until the 1990s.

Of the women I spoke to who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, few referred to pubs and bars as places that were out of bounds to them. Indeed, for many young women, the pub

⁸³ June Tarlin, 'Is this the price we have to pay for our liberation...?', *The Daily Mail*, June 10 1975, p. 10.

⁸⁴ Brenda Jones, 'The poisoned chalice', *Guardian*, October 7 1980, p. 8.

and bar became a central part of the 'girls' night out'. Jacqueline recalled:

There used to be some nights where all the boys would come into town and it was quite sex divided. So the boys would go out on their own, and the girls would go out on their own. And on a Friday night there was a set pub routine and then you'd meet at certain points if you'd got a boyfriend to go home.⁸⁵

She continued:

If you were on a proper night out with like the girls you'd come into town on a Friday and you'd go to the Stone House which is near to where TK Maxx is now and then you'd go down by the Cathedral on Trippett Lane all of those and Dove and Rainbow and then you'd go to a club.

Similarly, Helen recalled visiting certain pubs when she went out with her female nursing friends:

Used to be the Museum on Orchard Square is now... There was the Stone House, that was very smart back in the day... there was the Mulberry Tavern, there was the Dove and Rainbow.⁸⁶

Gillian drew a distinction between going out with a big group, and just going out with the girls, suggesting that the 'girls' night' was becoming a more important part of female friendship groups. She recalled going to:

Romeo's and Juliet's and places like that when it was the girls... but you see when I went to the more rock ones, [that] was when I was seeing someone who was more into that type of music.⁸⁷

When the experiences of women who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s are compared to the responses of female interviewees from the 1960s such as Pat and Sue, it is possible to suggest that over the course of the 1960s and 1970s a subtle but significant culture shift had occurred in which regularly socialising and drinking alcohol in city centre venues was no

⁸⁵ Interview with Jacqueline.

⁸⁶ Interview with Helen H.

⁸⁷ Interview with Gillian.

longer off-limits to groups of young women. The lives of young women changed in important ways over the course of the post-war period. While their behaviour and lifestyles were still subject to ongoing criticism, the rise of youth-oriented spaces provided an alternative to the continuing dominance of traditional masculinity that had excluded young women from many licensed leisure spaces.

‘Going out and copping off was just a bit of fun’: Evening Leisure Spaces as Sites for Sexual Encounters

The development of evening leisure space for young people provided heterosexual adolescents with new ways to meet and engage with members of the opposite sex.⁸⁸ Sex and relationships have long been the focus of historians wishing to learn more about domestic lives, marriage, and gender roles. Indeed, Adrian Bingham argued that much of the scholarship on intimate life in the twentieth century has been dominated by studies of sex.⁸⁹ Marcus Collins’ book *Modern Love* focuses at length on the increasing importance of mutuality in relationships between men and women. Charting changes over the twentieth century, Collins argues that mutuality ‘helped to define what was “modern” about twentieth-

⁸⁸ This thesis does not engage at length with queer space. The behaviours discussed in this chapter refer to relationships between heterosexual youths. For more on queer spaces see Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain: How the personal got political* (Manchester, 2011); Daisy Payling, ‘City limits: sexual politics and the new urban left in 1980s Sheffield’, *Contemporary British History* 31.2 (2017), pp. 256-273; David Hugh, *On Queer Street: A Social History of Homosexuality 1895-1995* (London, 1997); Helen Smith, *Masculinity, Class, and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895-1957* (Basingstoke, 2015); Phil Hubbard, *Cities and Sexualities* (London, 2011).

⁸⁹ Adrian Bingham, ‘The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution’, *Contemporary British History* 29.2 (2015), p. 284.

century Britain'.⁹⁰ However, aside from looking at the rise of mixed boys' and girls' youth clubs from the Second World War onwards, Collins's focus does not extend to the intricacies of intimate relationships between adolescent boys and girls in this period, instead choosing to focus on the inter-marital relationships of adults. Where Collins did give attention to young adults was in the form of a study of the counterculture. Collins argues that 'free love came harder to women than men, who proved on the whole less troubled by bonds of affection and more enamoured with libertarian ideals.'⁹¹

Similarly, historians such as Hera Cook, Jeffrey Weeks, and Claire Langhamer have long been interested in the everyday relationships of people, but this has rarely extended to the relationships of adolescents.⁹² Hannah Charnock's doctoral research into adolescent sexuality during the supposed 'Sexual Revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s promises to shed light on an as-yet underexplored aspect of young people's lives. What is presented in this section is only a small intervention into a topic that requires far more research. The sexual lives of young people were not part of the scope of the original research conducted for this thesis, yet the gendered ways in which the men and women interviewed discussed their experiences as adolescents leads me to believe that the development of space for young people played a part in broadening opportunities for sexual encounters for heterosexual young people.

Accessing the sexual behaviour of adolescents and young adults is difficult, and often

⁹⁰ Marcus Collins, *Modern Love* (London, 2003), p. 5.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁹² For more on English sexuality see: Hera Cook, *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex, and Contraception 1800-1975* (Oxford, 2004); Jeffrey Weeks, *The World We Have Won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life* (London, 2007); Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love: The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution* (Oxford, 2013); Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England, 1918-1963* (Cambridge, 2010); for sexuality and popular culture see Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press 1918-1978* (Oxford, 2009).

comes with severe limitations. The personal nature of sexual relations predicated its absence in the archives, forcing historians to rely on sporadic, and often limited, contemporary studies into sexuality. Indeed, while studies into the sexual behaviour of adolescents in the post-war period are scarce, the majority of this work is focused on the 1960s, forcing Lesley Hall to conclude that ‘at the end of the seventies, once again the picture is ambiguous.’⁹³ Studies conducted at the time offer a glimpse into the changing attitudes and behaviours of young people with regards to sexuality and sexual activity. In 1965 Michael Schofield’s ‘The Sexual Behaviour of Young People’ survey found that of 415 girls under the age of 16, only 6% had any sexual experience, and this number rose to 16% when girls over the age of 16 were asked.⁹⁴ However, by 1980 these figures had changed significantly. In April 1980, *19* magazine published the results of a survey of 10,000 women. The magazine stated that ‘taking all girls under 21... 26% claimed to have had their first sexual experience before the age of 16. Of all sexually experienced girls... 39% claimed to have had sexual experience at under 16 years of age’.⁹⁵ The differences between these two studies indicate that a significant shift in attitudes, and corresponding behaviours, had occurred in the intervening fifteen years. While there was by no means a complete sexual revolution in terms of attitudes and behaviours, there was a move towards cohabitation, increased likelihood of pre-marital sex and ‘petting’, all of which changed the ways in which young people were interacting with each other.

Claire Langhamer has referred to the period between the 1930s and the 1970s as the ‘golden age of courtship’.⁹⁶ Langhamer argued that courtship, particularly for working-class

⁹³ Lesley A Hall, *Sex Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* (2nd edn, Hampshire, 2013), p. 164.

⁹⁴ Michael Schofield, *The Sexual Behaviour of Young People* (London, 1965), p. 252.

⁹⁵ Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (4th edn, London, 2003), p. 209

⁹⁶ Claire Langhamer, ‘Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England’, *The Historical Journal* 50.1 (2007), p. 178.

girls, was a central element of leisure activities for young adults who had reached courting age. Langhamer notes that the progression from courting, to going steady, to marriage was an important one and ‘the primacy of courtship within young adulthood was certainly picked up by a number of social investigators of the period, becoming more central to youth culture as the period progressed.’⁹⁷ However, across all social classes amongst both men and women the age of marriage began to steadily rise from 1971 onwards signifying a change in attitudes to marriage. While Marcus Collins points to mutuality as an important development in the expectations people had about marriage, Langhamer recognises the implicit difficulties in writing about love, and suggests that disparities in the naming of courtship practices suggests ‘a potential instability and re-working of established models within the intimate personal relations of youth across the central years of the twentieth century.’⁹⁸

Taking Langhamer’s premise of a re-working of established models of courtship, the period leading up to, and after, 1971 is witness to an important change in the behaviour of young people. Oral testimony certainly allows me to suggest that newly-established rituals such as the 2am dance at the end of an alcohol fuelled night at the discotheque or nightclub were part of a casualisation of courting rituals amongst heterosexual young people. The ways in which young men and women engaged with each other in this space suggested that it was becoming an arena that was increasingly separate from more traditional notions of sexuality. Behaviours developed in tandem with the space: the anonymity of the dance floor allowed young people to engage in more casual forms of courtship.

With the establishment of the nightclub as a space for young people in the post-war period, it is important to explore its role in the changing attitudes of young people towards

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

meeting sexual or romantic partners. Unlike the meetings at dance halls that were dictated by restrictive social and gender conventions, nightclubs offered the opportunity for much more.

Both Tony and Debbie recalled the last song of the night at 2am. Debbie said:

And at the end they always used to play something like the Blue Danube so if you'd copped off with a lad, you'd always have the last dance, like a snoggy dance with him. But if you didn't cop off with anybody you'd go and get your coat!⁹⁹

Both Tony and Debbie saw this element of their weekends as a bit of fun. Debbie said that:

If you wanted to see them again you'd arrange to meet somewhere... but often you didn't want to see them next Saturday because you wanted to meet somebody else do you know what I mean! And then you'd let him buy you a couple of drinks, you'd have a dance, you'd have a snog with him. And then you'd think, oh beer goggles. I don't think so!¹⁰⁰

Tony talked at length about meeting women on nights out with his friends, and it seemed to be more of a priority for Tony and his friends than it was for Debbie. Tony recalled frequenting the Wig and Pen because 'all the solicitors would go there- and the solicitors' secretaries!' He also told me how he and his friends:

Were a group of lads from what most people would say was the rougher end of town, so we used to come through to Abbeydale and Fulwood and the posher end, and it's very, very laddish, and I suppose a sign of the times, but that's where all the posh girls were. We were always on the lookout, should you say.¹⁰¹

This 'laddish' behaviour continued into the weekend when Tony and his friends would compete to spend the night with the most attractive girl.

They'd all have their handbags, dancing round their handbags sort of thing- and we'd all be nodding and voting sort of thing, and when it got to the New York New York at the end of the night and you'd done the two o'clock dance and had a smooch and changed phone numbers - always got a fake phone number to give them - and then it got to New York and lights would go up and that was it really. We'd all go and queue up for a taxi. But the guy who'd won would be going out on the following Saturday night for free. We would cover his drinks. So there was a real element of competition to win. A real prize for next week if you went out the following week on a free night out so there was a real, yeah it got very competitive.

⁹⁹ Interview with Debbie.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Interview with Tony.

Similarly, Darren explained: ‘I don’t really like nightclubs. I’ve never really been into them. I used to go because it was the thing to do and it was where all the girls were basically. But that’s the only reason.’¹⁰² This attitude is mirrored in an article in *The Star* about the Steely’s club night where it was reported that ‘as far as meeting new friends is concerned, the lads are... enthusiastic’.¹⁰³

However, for the women attending these nightclubs male attention was not always welcome. Indeed, Gillian recalled that the sexualised nature of nightclubs and bars often made her feel uncomfortable. Of the Stone House she said: ‘I never liked places like that though because it was always girls dancing round their handbags, you’d got to dress up, and all the lads just leering round the sides which is why I preferred places that were a bit more down to earth.’¹⁰⁴

While attention was not always desired, for women who did engage in the sexual aspects of nights, out the bar and nightclub offered the opportunity for casual encounters. When she discussed her trips to town Debbie highlighted the casual nature of these relationships:

But you could meet a different boy every week and spend the night with him, or whatever. I don’t mean at home, I mean in the club... I mean that’s why you went to Romeo’s and Juliet’s. To meet your friends but also to see who you could cop off with. But they didn’t tend to last long those relationships. It tended to be people you met in your school or in your neighbourhood that you tended to have the most- going out and copping off was just a bit of fun.¹⁰⁵

Jaqueline also spoke about the casual nature of meeting men on a night out. She explained: ‘sometimes if you were seeing somebody you’d meet them as part of the night, but also if you

¹⁰² Interview with Darren.

¹⁰³ Simon Tisdall, ‘Sheffield’s Theatre of Light and Sound’, *The Star*, December 28 1977, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Gillian.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Debbie.

met somebody you met somebody.’¹⁰⁶ Both Jaqueline and Debbie recognised that these encounters were unlikely to lead to anything serious, suggesting that the expectations and desires of young women were changing in the 1970s and 1980s.

The nightclub became an increasingly important space to meet members of the opposite sex over the course of the period. Several of my interviewees referred to the door policy of ‘mainstream’ nightclubs promoting an equal balance of men and women. Darren recalled:

It depends how busy they [were] and it depends who’s in. If they [didn’t] like the look of you for one particular night or if there’s loads of lads and not enough girls in they’d start turning lads away... It’s in their interests to try and keep it balanced.¹⁰⁷

Tamar recalled: ‘having that whole sort of equal measure of girls and boys... was just really odd like, people are counting? That was just, it was also known as a meat market to us as well. People only went out to cop off.’¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Adrian recalled one of the reasons why he avoided the Roxy nightclub: ‘it was a meat market as well. It was the kind of place where they had ‘Grab a Granny’ nights and it was just a bit, no I wasn’t really down for that really.’¹⁰⁹ While the sexualised nature of nights out was not appealing to all young people the evidence suggests that the nightclub had, by the 1970s and 1980s, provided a new space in which young people could meet and have casual and fleeting sexual encounters.

The extent to which this is indicative of a wider move towards ‘permissiveness’ is unclear. Ultimately, marriage or extended cohabitation was the eventual goal for many people in this period, although the route was much less clear-cut than in previous years. However, I

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Jacqueline.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Darren.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Tamar.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Adrian. Note: ‘Grab a Granny’ was a name given to over-25 nights at the Roxy.

think it is plausible to suggest that the 1970s and 1980s saw a loosening of pre-marriage courtship behaviours, and a more casual form of dating that was less bound by strict gender and societal conventions. Young people had long engaged in sexual acts with partners before marriage. However, the space of the nightclub provided a very public place to do this. I would also argue that the changing ways in which young people were socialising in this period is central to understanding these behaviours. The increasing popularity of visiting licensed nightclubs as a leisure activity for the majority of young people by the 1970s marks a distinct break from the supervised dances of previous decades. The anonymity of the dance floor served as a space where more sexualised forms of behaviour could be performed. The changing nature of the nightclub in the 1970s - disco-style, with low lights and loud music - and the increasing frequency with which young people attended these venues provided a space for young people to engage with each other away from, and in ways that began to challenge, traditional notions of courtship.

This section has shown that the development of evening leisure spaces was contributing to changes in young people's sexual behaviour. By providing a space distinct from wider society, and free from adult supervision, the nightclub enabled young people to engage in casual encounters with each other.

'A lot of them got married and moved away': Changing Understandings of 'Youth' in Post-War Britain

The years between 15 and 16 and the point of marriage were central to young people's experiences of youth culture. Following marriage, patterns of behaviour, use of

income, and priorities changed, and it is traditionally seen as the end-point of 'youth'.

However, this model was complicated by the late 1980s: youth experiences were increasingly continuing further into adulthood, with many young people going to nightclubs in their late twenties and early thirties.

During the 1970s the age of marriage rose slowly, before rising sharply towards the end of the decade and into the 1980s. Throughout the decade the average age of women at first marriage was between 22 and 23, with the average for men being 24.¹¹⁰ Of my interviewees who reached adulthood in the 1960s and 1970s, many spoke about the impact of marriage on both their own social habits, and their wider social group. One interviewee, Helen, explained: 'I was married at 23 so I suppose, I mean that's quite young now isn't it, but most of my friends were married sort of early to mid-twenties and started having families shortly after that.'¹¹¹ She went on to explain that she stopped attending pubs and nightclubs after she was married because:

The money went in the bank rather than on going out drinking and clubbing and what have you... Start saving up you know, trying to put a bit of money away. This was back in the days when you could get a mortgage relatively easily as long as you'd got a bit of money in the bank, a deposit, you were ok really.

Another interviewee, Debbie, recalled: 'By the time I was 21 and I'd got married and I'd stopped going down town... Not that your husband wouldn't let you, it's just that you led a different kind of life then.'¹¹² Gillian similarly recalled: 'I was 23. I bought my first house because we had low mortgages... [I was] struggling to pay the mortgage and eat', meaning

¹¹⁰ 'Marriages in England and Wales: 2014', Office for National Statistics (ONS), 14th March 2017. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/bulletins/marriagesinenglandandwalesprovisional/2014> [last accessed 02/05/2017].

¹¹¹ Interview with Helen H.

¹¹² Interview with Debbie.

she had little spare income to spend on going out.¹¹³ Ricardo, who was in his mid-thirties when he married, explained how his social group changed when many of them started to settle down: ‘a lot of them got married and moved away. But the ones that lived local, they never seemed to come out without their wives’.¹¹⁴ For many young people, marriage marked an important turning point in their lives; as well as being the point at which many left the parental home, financial priorities often changed as thoughts turned towards raising a family and buying a home.

However, using marriage as a traditional marker for the end of ‘youth’ becomes more difficult by the late 1980s. Of those interviewed who grew up in the 1980s, the traditional patterns of behaviour that marked the transition from adolescence to adulthood seemed to undergo a shift.

Damon explained how he and his wife began clubbing again after moving to Liverpool. He said:

I held fast until the mid-nineties when me and Bidy, my wife, just got massively back into it again. It was when we moved to Liverpool and Liverpool had a different atmosphere and we just really got back into it again. I was hitting 30 by this point so you know, that was the power, to me that was the power of dance music and the legacy of acid house was you could carry on doing this stuff when you were, what I would previously have considered as, middle aged! Certainly when we were going to the Leadmill and stuff, if someone had told me that they were 30 you know, it would have been like what on earth are you doing in there, and they would have felt like they were sticking out like a sore thumb, but mid-nineties this was all changing.¹¹⁵

Similarly another interviewee, Jeff, explained the legacy of acid house on his social life.

After completing his post-graduate degree and starting work he explained:

I eased off punishing myself a bit by having this austere approach to life and being

¹¹³ Interview with Gillian.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Ricardo.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Damon.

very sensible, or trying to be. So then I started getting back into clubbing a bit and yeah, then the nineties came along and I got into rave culture, wholeheartedly.¹¹⁶

Tamar, who had her first child as a student, began clubbing again when her children were old enough. She recalled:

There was a point where it slowed down for me and that's because I got pregnant in '93 so I graduated in, I finished my degree in the summer '94, and had my baby in the summer '94... So I stopped for a good period of time and then I had my daughter as well and then I suppose I got back into clubbing yeah, when my daughter was about 3 or 4 and going out and yeah.¹¹⁷

Similarly, Mark, who had his first child at the age of 19, recalled going out more in his thirties. He explained: 'I wanted to get out there, and my eldest he was growing up, well, he'd just turned 11. And I just wanted a bit of a break. And that's when I started drinking again, erm, and coming back into town.'¹¹⁸

While the lives of many young people were undoubtedly changed by marriage and the arrival of children, it is possible to suggest that the age at which youth turned into adulthood extended, and to some extent became blurred, between the 1960s and the 1980s. The rising age of marriage, coupled with the rise in cohabitation and number of children born out of wedlock blurred the traditional boundaries between youth and adulthood. As young people got married later, and entered the workplace later, the amount of time that young people were engaging with youth culture was undoubtedly lengthening over the course of the period. This lengthening of youth surely marks a significant shift in both young people's lifestyles and attitudes of wider society toward traditional notions of 'youth' and 'adulthood'. With the continued marketing of music to older groups, and the rise of music magazines targeted at wealthier audiences such as *Q magazine*, established in 1986, popular music was,

¹¹⁶ Interview with Jeff.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Tamar.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Mark.

by the 1980s and 1990s, no longer the reserve of adolescents and young adults.

Conclusions

By focusing on changing behaviours, gendered experiences, and ideas about age and youth, this chapter has argued that the development of evening leisure space had a significant impact on the ways young people spent their leisure time.

While fears about young people's morality was by no means a new phenomenon, the rise of leisure spaces dedicated to the hedonistic pursuits of youth in the 1960s created an environment in which the behaviour of young people was removed from the adult gaze, heightening fears about young people's engagement with a newer, more visible form of youth culture. As the post-war period progressed it was the behaviours and lifestyles of young people that became the focus of adult concern; the increased centrality of alcohol in evening leisure spaces frequented by youth led to concerns about underage drinking and violence.

By the 1970s and 1980s a significant amount of evening leisure venues for youth had developed in a way that was spatially distinct from wider leisure spaces; pubs and bars aimed at young people had different décor, played different music, and were often unappealing to older generations. In this way, the development of evening leisure space led to young people's leisure experiences being, to a significant extent, distinct and separate from that of wider society. Importantly, this separation was not only spatial, but temporal. The increased centrality of the nightclub to youth leisure, often licensed until 2am, meant that a significant majority of young people were moving through the city centre in the early hours of the morning on a regular basis. The hours after midnight were, by the 1970s and 1980s, the

primary domain of youth.

Young people moved through these spaces, building them into wider patterns of behaviour that saw young men and women socialise in groups segregated by gender as part of the boys' or girls' night out, socialise in mixed groups, and engage in more casual sexual behaviours. Within these spaces young people had the opportunity to explore new social and sexual experiences, free from the restrictive gaze of adults, and with less focus placed on traditional gender and social conventions. These changes to young people's lifestyles and behaviours developed in tandem with the spaces in which they occurred; understanding the development and use of space allows a better understanding of why young people's lifestyles changed over the course of the post-war period.

The changes to young people's lifestyles in this period meant that, by the 1980s, the category of youth itself was complicated. Traditional markers of adulthood such as marriage, moving out of the parental home, and parenthood, no longer signified a halt on engagement with elements of youth culture such as clubbing. The period between the 1960s and the 1980s saw a swift and significant shift in the way that young people engaged with elements of youth culture, meaning that by the 1980s it became, for many, part of a wider lifestyle as opposed to a set of behaviours confined to young adulthood.

Chapter VI: Culture and Identity

The second of these thematic chapters will focus on culture and identity. The history of youth culture has tended to favour the spectacular elements of youth culture, isolating cultural movements and examining their emergence and cultural legacy. Often these cultural movements are easiest to trace in the archive, and have left the most visible mark on society. However, by focusing on young people's use of space, it has been possible to illuminate the nuances in young people's cultural experiences, and in particular has enabled me to shed light on the experiences of 'ordinary' young people who are so often absent from studies of youth culture.

While this thesis seeks to move away from a model of youth culture that positions mainstream and alternative cultures as in opposition to one another, this chapter does not seek to argue that there is no difference between mainstream and alternative cultures. Rather, it will be argued that it is the perceived, as opposed to the actual, differences between the two that are significant. This chapter will show how reflective conversations engage with this wider cultural framework, and how people engage with and negotiate these frameworks when building a narrative of their youthful experiences.

In order to explore the lived experience of youth culture I will undertake a close-analysis of my oral history interviews to analyse the way my interviewees reflected on their youthful experiences, and how this impacted on their portrayal of their teenage identity and experiences. Adopting Paul Thompson's approach of reconstructive cross-analysis this section uses oral testimonies to 'construct an argument about patterns of behaviour or events

in the past.¹ Thompson has argued that this approach is driven more by analysis than other approaches to interview interpretation, which tend to focus on the overall direction of a narrative or life story. ‘Wherever the prime aim becomes analysis’ Thompson argues, ‘the overall shape can no longer be governed by the life-story form of the evidence, but must emerge from the inner logic of the argument.’² The extracts presented here have been separated into several thematic sections to allow for a sense of cohesion between different interviews.

Robert Hollands has criticised the work of Steve Redhead and other subcultural scholars for providing ‘very little room for the actual voices and actions of young people engaged in club-cultures. We therefore know very little about their wider lives, in terms of their employment, household situation and local conditions.’³ Alongside biographies of each oral history participant in the Appendix, this chapter presents a number of longer passages of oral testimony. In doing this, this section will argue that young people engaged with youth culture in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. Exploring my interviewees’ use of space, their wider cultural practices, and their own engagement with wider narratives of youth culture suggests that while the popular narratives of a creative and active alternative culture existing in diametric opposition to a passive and commercialised mainstream is one that some of my participants engaged with, their cultural experiences were fluid and their decision-making process with regards to their lifestyle choices extended far beyond the limits suggested by this binary paradigm.

By presenting longer extracts of text it is possible to highlight the process of narrative

¹ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (3rd edn, Oxford, 2000), p. 271.

² *Ibid.*, p. 271.

³ Robert Hollands, ‘Divisions in the Dark: Youth Cultures, Transitions and Segmented Consumption in the Night-time Economy’, *Journal of Youth Studies* 5.2 (2002), p. 156.

construction by the interviewee. Longer extracts of text like the ones presented here offer an opportunity to analyse the wider narrative and context of the discussion, rather than shorter extracts which can remove context and distort meaning. Through these longer extracts it is possible to gain a sense of how the conversation progressed, and how interviewees reached certain anecdotes or reflections. Further, these extracts highlight the individuality of youth experience; while several patterns emerge, it is clear that young people's engagements with youth culture were formulated through a wide range of experiences that make the application of strict cultural frameworks difficult, if not untenable. Martha Rose Beard has argued that 'any scholarly attempt to categorise or make generalised observations concerning oral histories- or indeed any history- therefore renders the discourse reductionist in every sense.'⁴ In this section I present a range of oral testimonies. In doing so I have avoided making generalised observations about individual testimony, and instead I have focused on broad patterns that emerged across the range of interviews I conducted. This chapter does not attempt to recreate the way 'things really were', but to highlight the many ways young people identified themselves, and each other.

The extracts presented here are adult reflections on teenage experience, and thus are not a reflection of their teenage thoughts or emotions. Their memories were viewed through the lens of adulthood and this was reflected in the stories they chose to tell and the way they chose to tell them. At various points, my interviewees actively reflected on their experiences, and tried to provide explanations for their teenage thoughts and actions. For example, Tamar reflected on her identity as a teenager saying:

But I think that's, I think a lot of teenage life is about just, let me try this persona for a bit and see if that fits and all of mine was in some alternative to what was mainstream

⁴ Martha Rose Beard, 'Re-thinking oral history- a study of narrative performance', *Rethinking History* DOI 10.1080/13642529.2017.1333285, p. 14.

at the time.⁵

While a teenage Tamar would likely not have viewed her cultural experimentation as trying on new personas, Tamar had the benefit of hindsight and adult experience with which to explain her teenage outlook. Similarly, Jeff recalled moving through a number of styles as a teenager, before quipping ‘Yeah, it was cultural, personal capital. It was, I don’t know, who knows what was going on in one’s teenage mind. It was about, it was kind of a self-esteem thing really.’⁶ Jeff spoke at length in his interview about the ways he pursued and curated his identity, discussing the need for external validation from his peers. By interrupting this anecdote with the reflective comment of ‘who knows what was going on in one’s teenage mind’ Jeff was tempering his youthful experience through the lens of adulthood. In some ways both Jeff and Tamar played down the significance of their association with alternative youth cultures as a product of adolescent experimentation. The extracts presented here should not be read as an attempt to retrospectively uncover the realities of youthful experience; instead, this section will use oral testimony as a way of understanding how young people engaged with youth culture, and how they negotiated cultural frameworks in their reflections on teenage experience.

‘I never understood fashion if I’m honest’: Young People’s Engagement With Youth Culture

Sheffield provides a particularly interesting city to examine the influence of structural

⁵ Interview with Tamar.

⁶ Interview with Jeff.

factors such as class and income as the area remained divided between east and west, with the majority of wealth found in the south west of the city. One area in which this division directly affected the lives of young people was through education. Aside from two schools, Firth Park Grammar School and Ecclesfield Grammar School, grammar schools in Sheffield were located in the south-west of the city. This consolidation of 'elite' schools in a small area of the city had a significant impact on the educational opportunities available to students in the east and the west of the city. The continued success enjoyed by many former grammar schools following the introduction of the comprehensive system in 1965 meant that many more young people continued into higher education in the west of the city. Indeed, Bethan Thomas et al. noted that:

Between 1971 and 2001 the number of residents of Hallam constituency with a university degree rose from a tenth to more than a third, the number in Brightside from 1.3% to 7.7%. For every extra resident of Brightside with a degree, more than four extra graduates gained a degree or moved with one into Hallam over those thirty years.⁷

The geographical disparity between the industrial east of the city and the affluent south-west of the city provides an opportunity to explore the impact of class on young people in Sheffield.

For young people who passed the 11 plus in the 1960s, this often meant travelling across Sheffield to go to school. My interviewee Pat recalls only becoming aware of class when she started grammar school at the age of eleven:

We were very working class. It was a terraced house we lived in. But when I passed the 11 plus I went across Sheffield to the posh side of town to, through Abbeydale and near Dore and Totley. And there were two different classes of people there. Some

⁷ Bethan Thomas, John Pritchard, Dimitris Ballas, Dan Vickers and Danny Dorling, *A Tale of Two Cities: The Sheffield Report* (Sheffield, 2009), p. 14.
http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/research/sheffield/a_tale_of_2_cities_sheffield_project_final_report.pdf [last accessed 11/04/17].

whose mums didn't have to work, some who had brand new uniform and didn't struggle, didn't have to get Saturday jobs.⁸

Similarly, Marian recalled:

I was brought up on a council estate and then we moved off there around the same time that I passed the 11 plus. And then we were mixing with doctor's daughters and dentist's daughters and that really brings it home to you.⁹

Sue, whose working class family moved from Intake to Ecclesall at the age of eleven attended the local grammar school and recalled, 'certainly at the grammar school they were mostly from more middle class backgrounds'.¹⁰ For Marian, Pat, and Sue, while their move to grammar school highlighted their class position to them, this did not correspond with a sense of anger or a desire to reject or challenge their working-class identity. Marian explained that grammar school 'was the first time I actually thought about it at all... It didn't worry me at all.'¹¹ Pat echoed a similar sentiment: 'I wasn't really, really aware of it, it was just one of those things.'¹²

For some, though, the move to grammar school from poorer areas of Sheffield came as a shock. Trish explained how her experiences of grammar school affected her:

Definitely working class and yes I had a very big chip on my shoulder. Especially going to grammar school, especially going to grammar school on what in those days was on social security. I remember going to school with holes in my shoes... So yes I was very aware of it... to the extent that, I didn't even think there were other people like me there. Although in retrospect there were, there were quite a few other, what you'd probably class working class girls there.¹³

Trish explained that her background led to her feeling 'a bit of an outsider' which is why she

⁸ Interview with Pat.

⁹ Interview with Marian.

¹⁰ Interview with Sue.

¹¹ Interview with Marian.

¹² Interview with Pat.

¹³ Interview with Trish.

was drawn towards what she termed the subcultural elements of Sheffield's youth culture. That Trish described herself as having a 'chip' on her shoulder about her background is indicative of how class could affect the ways in which young people engaged with the wider world, but the responses of Pat, Marian and Sue demonstrate that this was by no means universal, and working class teenagers who attended grammar school were not necessarily drawn towards alternative forms of culture as a result of their class background.

As detailed in Chapter one, the centrality of class to the first wave of analysis of youth cultural movements in the 1970s has been contested by a wide range of historians. However, Tracy Shildrick and Robert MacDonald have argued that much of this 'post-subcultural' work has tended to 'ignore the youth cultural lives and identities of less advantaged young people, and that, theoretically, they tend to under-play the potential significance of class and other social inequalities in contemporary youth culture.'¹⁴ They continued, arguing that 'once one accepts that, for some people at least, social divisions still shape youth cultural identities, the postmodern tendency to celebrate the fragmented, fleeting and free-floating nature of contemporary youth culture becomes difficult to sustain'.¹⁵ The topography of Sheffield meant that geographic income disparity was significant, and the demography of the city meant that the majority of my research participants were from a working or lower-middle class background. Almost all interviewees described themselves as working class, and for those who grew up in the late 1970s and 1980s a number of participants were involved with Youth Training Schemes. By examining how these young people moved through evening leisure space it is possible to see how the categories which often cut through youth- such as age, class, gender, ethnicity- work in practice. My own interviews have shed a light on the

¹⁴ Tracy Shildrick and Robert MacDonald, 'In Defence of Subculture: Young People, Leisure and Social Divisions', *Journal of Youth Studies* 9.2 (2006), p. 126.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

role of class in cultural preferences and decisions, and, to a more limited extent, the influence of gender.

This section will explore the extent to which, and the varying ways in which, young people engaged with elements of youth culture. For many young people, clothing was a significant economic and cultural investment. It allowed young people to express their identity and, for many, was one of the first ways they were able to curate their own image. A large body of work exists on the role of fashion in society, the social significance of shopping for clothing, and the relationship between fashion, gender, and class.¹⁶ Anne Boulton and Robert Jerrard have argued that ‘body–fashion interaction lends expression to the unconscious experience of self, both internally as part of a “selfing” process, and externally by creating an identity to present to others.’¹⁷ Importantly, they argue that people’s relationship with fashion was a conflict between a desire for social cohesion and wanting to ‘fit in’ and the desire to display an individual self. They note:

Alongside our need to belong is the equally powerful need to see ourselves as unique; this is the concept of differentiation. The feeling of being unique supports our sense of self, and the fact that physically we are unique reinforces that feeling. Body awareness provides a focus for differentiation, and the need to maintain uniqueness translates into our feelings about clothes.¹⁸

In this way, the relationship between clothing and the individual can be understood at an analytical level as representing the conflict between belonging and differentiation, as opposed to representing a wider reflection of that individual’s cultural values. An individual’s fashion and clothing choices represent more than their allegiance to, interest in, or indeed perceived

¹⁶ See Diana Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (London, 2000); Pasi Falk and Colin Campbell (eds), *The Shopping Experience* (London, 1997).

¹⁷ Anne Boulton and Robert Jerrard, ‘Ambivalence, and Its Relation to Fashion and the Body’, *Fashion Theory* 4.3 (2000), p. 301.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

lack of interest in, certain forms of youth culture. This relationship was also impacted by structural factors such as access to disposable income, geographical distance to shops, and autonomy over one's clothing choices.

One interviewee who had to navigate a limited income was Trish. Trish, who grew up in a working-class family in the 1960s recalled:

I'd sort of save up and buy material and make clothes every now and again. Because of my size I couldn't buy ready-made, you know, I was too tall for anything to fit. Erm, so I'd perhaps spend it on some material and things like that. Yeah. I remember my first pair of Levis... Yeah. Just, made what I needed.¹⁹

That Trish remembered her first pair of Levi's suggests both their cultural and economic importance. As somebody who made a lot of her clothes her first pair of Levi's was a significant milestone for her. She continued:

They were so stiff you could stand them up. You could stand them up on their own and they needed shrinking to fit- I'm sure other people have told you this. Get in the bath and shrink them to fit and then I shuffled round the concrete path round- my parents lived in a bungalow- shuffled round the concrete path on my bum to try and get a bit of fading going on the bum there and on my knees. And another pair, just after I passed my A-levels I went to stay in my sister's caravan with my friend, at Mablethorpe, big deal- a week in Mablethorpe. Erm, and I had a new pair then and I walked in the sea in them and then walked along the sand so they were sand washed, genuine sand washed jeans!

That she recollected how she customised her jeans during a significant holiday suggests the material value they held to her. Trish associated her new Levi's with a trip to Mablethorpe to see her older sister. That Trish invoked this memory is noteworthy; as a child from a working-class family Trish was not accustomed to regular holidays. Her memories of walking on the sand in her new jeans indicates their importance. The anecdote was incidental to her broader point but signified the meaning that this piece of clothing held to her. For

¹⁹ Interview with Trish.

Trish, buying and customising a pair of Levi's was a substantial economic investment and her recollection of the process of customisation in the wider context of a significant holiday indicates the important position they held as part of her youth cultural experiences.

Trish's interview also detailed how she was often unable to buy 'ready-made' clothing due to her height, therefore excluding her from many of the new products available to other girls her age. Furthermore, these clothes were, while being cheap and accessible for some, a significant economic investment for others. Despite Trish's limited finances she was still able to engage with youth culture, but was forced to be both thrifty and resourceful. She recalled her eldest sister, who was fifteen years older than her, helping her:

One thing I did do, because my eldest sister used to help, she teases me that I'd walk in with a packet of material and throw it at her and say here I'm wearing it tomorrow. But, yeah, made a, a full length, an ankle length coat once in the weekend.²⁰

Trish utilised the skills of her family members to enable her to engage with youth culture despite having a limited income. That Trish made clothing with her sister suggests a significant investment of time. Her anecdote about the ankle length coat further suggests that she dedicated a sizeable portion of her time to making her clothes. Making clothes became, for Trish, part of her youth cultural experience. Her leisure time was spent curating her image not just through shopping, but also through making items of clothing.

When asked how he would describe himself as a teenager, another participant David recalled: 'I was a weirdy, I was a hippy. Kaftans, crotched cardigans, long hair, head bands, you name it.'²¹ David actively engaged with parts of Sheffield's alternative culture, and identified his clothing as a central part of his cultural identification. However, when asked

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Interview with David.

about how much of his disposable income he spent on clothing David was dismissive, recalling: ‘very little. Mostly I bought records. I used to make a lot of stuff... I was just, I wanted to be weird, different.’²² The clothes David wore were part of his identity creation, yet his tone suggested it was not particularly important to him. However, as Trish’s interview suggests, making clothes could be a time consuming activity and suggests a significance perhaps lost in his adult reflections on the period. While David dismissed clothing, he used it to direct the focus of the conversation to music. It is worth noting that David’s interview may have been shaped by the constraints of normative masculinity, making records and music a more familiar topic of conversation. David ran a number of folk clubs throughout his adult life, and music was something he spoke passionately about during our time together. David’s love of records and folk music was the main focus of his interview and formed the most significant part of his teenage recollections.

Damon, who grew up in the 1980s, similarly recalled privileging records over clothing. However, he did reflect on his experiences of buying clothes as a teenager. He recalled:

I didn’t have a lot of disposable income anyway and to be honest I was more interested in buying records. There was, the plus side of buying scrimp army surplus in jumble sales was obviously you were paying pence, or a couple of quid, you weren’t spending very much money on clothes. So although it was, it kind of mattered to me what I looked like, it didn’t matter to the extent that I had to spend loads of cash on it.²³

Damon began buying clothes from army surplus stores as a teenager in the mid-1980s. When asked what his cultural influencers were, Damon replied:

I mean it certainly was coming from the music side of things. And other people, my

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Interview with Damon.

friends who were into similar things. Certainly the idea of going to jumble sales and things like that, there was one particular kid in our school who, he suddenly started wearing- an important thing actually, I'm trying to put a date on, but probably around 1981 or 82 across Sheffield, school uniform was abolished... So suddenly you were able to come to school into all kinds of stuff. At the time I thought it was brilliant, but as a parent now I don't know how I'd quite feel about that. It's easy to just pack them off in a school uniform. Erm, so yeah there was one particular kid who suddenly started wearing granddaddy looking shirts and kind of, with trousers that didn't quite fit and interesting jackets and stuff but looked dead good, and we said oh where do you get all this stuff and he said oh you just go to jumble sales and it's like 5 pence for a shirt and stuff so I started doing that.

Damon's anecdote echoes David's sentiment; by shopping at army surplus stores he was able to curate the image he wanted, but clothing was not a key priority for his disposable income. However, the impetus may have been on Damon to curate a stronger image for himself due to the abolition of school uniform in Sheffield during his time at school.²⁴ For Damon clothing formed an important part of his identity creation, but he prioritised records as a more significant economic investment for him.

Adrian, who was also a teenager in the early-mid 1980s, shared a similar outlook to Damon. Preferring to spend his money on records, he recalled that clothing wasn't particularly important to him:

I was never really very, I never understood fashion if I'm honest. My interests were very nerdy stuff really, I was very into, there was the 8-bit computer revolution... I'd always had an interest in music but 13, 14, it really took hold and I really got into stuff that wasn't necessarily considered to be chart music ... So I'd spend any money that I had would be spent on import music from Virgin Megastore in town as it was back then, so things like that. Primarily music.²⁵

However, he continued:

I thought, I gave this particular thought because I was never what you would call fashionable, but I did sort of follow the pack in terms of, or I made an effort to follow

²⁴ School uniform was made non-compulsory in some schools in Sheffield under the left-wing Labour council in the 1980s. While not a complete abolition of uniform, some schools allowed students to wear their own clothes.

²⁵ Interview with Adrian.

the pack.

As with David, Adrian initially dismissed clothing, but did return to reflect on it as the conversation progressed. Adrian's comments on wishing to follow the pack presents an important nuance to the traditional focus of creativity in alternative scenes. As somebody who self-identified as alternative his relationship with fashion could be portrayed as a somewhat passive one; he wore the 'right' clothes but followed wider fashion trends at the time. This extract questions the centrality of authenticity that has become synonymous with alternative style, suggesting that the passivity that was seen to embody the 'commercialised' mainstream was equally found in alternative circles. Where Adrian's relationship with clothing was neither creative nor one of engagement, his engagement with music is what defined his teenage experience. Adrian's involvement with the alternative scene demonstrates that obvious visual markers such as clothing do not necessarily correlate with a person's interests and lifestyle.

Sue, who grew up in the 1960s, used her clothing as a key way of expressing her sense of individuality. She recalled attending the local art college after an education at grammar school, saying:

Sheffield Art College was then on Psalter Lane and was an annex on Union Road and I could talk about it forever, I would. It was, it was very free and easy after a very strict grammar school. Erm, where you hadn't been taught to think for yourself which was the problem you were totally expected to think for yourself. Nobody else was going to do it for you. And I still don't know how to stretch a canvas! So that was a bit of a disaster. But socially it was like coming home. It was like everybody who didn't fit in anywhere else fitted at the art college. And you could be whoever you wanted to be, and it was wonderful.²⁶

For Sue clothing was a large part of her identity creation during her years at the art college.

²⁶ Interview with Sue.

She explained:

I always loved clothes. I can remember some of my outfits now. Erm, when I was at college I'd already started buying from Oxfam but there was also, there was a Biba in town ... there was a Biba boutique upstairs and I liked to buy from there. Oh heck... see I can remember the boutiques but I can't remember the names of them. But I wasn't averse to C&A either! I didn't buy posh. I was very, I liked to keep a little bit ahead. It was an obligation.

Sue actively set herself against the 'mainstream', yet her clothing often came from high-street clothing stores. Whilst her clothing choices and appearance often set her apart from her peers, Sue's experiences highlight that for young people who engaged with elements of 'alternative' youth cultures, their consumer choices often existed within the wider prism of the high-street chain stores and boutiques. However, Sue's use of charity shops was a cost-effective way of experimenting with style. In a period of emerging affluence, image curation still had to be cost-effective for many. There were financial limits placed on what many young people could do. Sue spoke explicitly about finances when she recalled her clothing purchase, saying:

I do specifically remember Biba, that was quite late on in the 60s I think erm, and was exceptional. I think it was financially exceptional. But I also wore a lot of, this isn't helpful to you, but my grandfather's wife, who wasn't my grandmother, died in the 60s. And when we went through her drawers, there were all these 1930s clothes, and 20s, that were really beautiful, beautifully cut, silk, and I used to wear a lot of those.

S: So were you quite into creating your own style?

Yeah. Especially around 17, 18. It was, they were just, they just felt so nice they just looked so nice and even better they were free! But at art college you were expected, if you like, to look different. I remember that there was the best part of a year where we didn't wear shoes. It was 1967. Or if you did you wore clogs. And I'm talking proper clogs, wooden clogs! Erm, I suppose we did try to draw attention to ourselves, but look like we weren't drawing attention to ourselves which we were. And mark ourselves off as different.²⁷

It is important to recognise the potential influence of Sue's wider social climate. As a student

²⁷ *Ibid.*

at the art school where looking different was ‘expected’, Sue had to negotiate being culturally innovative on a limited budget. Further, her decision to dress in the way she did may well have been influenced by peer pressure and a perceived societal obligation to ‘keep up’.

Jeff, whose clothing choices and image were also part of a wider attempt to ‘distinguish’ himself from others, went to greater extremes to ensure that his image was individual. He recalled:

We would go to Manchester or Kensington Market or whatever and come back with these exotic creations and it would take a while to learn how to wear a hat. You couldn’t just get a hat and wear it. It would probably take a day or two of wearing it in the house indoors to blend with it. I don’t know. To work it out. There had to be a sort of jaunty angle or something which would make it work but er, yeah, probably looked quite ridiculous really but I suppose the point was the more ridiculous the better really, to stand out.²⁸

Jeff explained that his desire to showcase his individuality came from:

Establishing an identity, there was a bit of rebellion. I think my identity was a bit rebellious so yeah, I wanted to make a statement. And it was creativity as well. Yeah, it was a, not being an artist or anything, not being able to draw or play music or anything but kind of thinking of new costumes to wear was a sort of outlet for that kind of creativity.

Jeff recalled that he’d been drawn to alternative cultures since his early teenage years, citing Shane Meadows’s *This Is England* as charting his changing cultural tastes.²⁹ Jeff’s relationship with fashion was an outlet for his personality and creativity, and his desire to ‘make a statement’ seemed to be the central draw to alternative culture. He reflected how this influenced his wider image, recalling:

Mike and I we were just partners in crime. Yeah, I think somebody had a name for us.

²⁸ Interview with Jeff.

²⁹ Shane Meadows’ drama *This Is England* focused on skinhead culture in 1983 in the north of England. Subsequent television series *This Is England ’86*, *This Is England ’88*, and *This Is England ’90* focused on the mod revival, new wave, and rave scenes of the late 1980s.

Because we would, yeah to express our creativity, individuality and all the rest of it, we would wear, we had an impressive hat collection. We would wear different hats. So this DJ in Sheffield called Parrot, who became quite well known, he had a band called The Funky Worm and I think he still does stuff with music, I think his real name is Mark Barret, but his nickname was Parrot. Well known DJ in Sheffield in the 80s, his nickname for us was Mr and Mrs Hat.³⁰

Jeff and his friend built a reputation for outlandish behaviour, which informed future clothing choices and shopping behaviours. For Jeff, clothing was not just a way of denoting his personal taste, but a way of drawing attention to himself.

For another interviewee, Jacqueline, clothing was very important. While Jacqueline's love of clothes didn't manifest itself in a desire to 'make a statement', it was an important part of her youth cultural landscape. Shopping and buying new clothes formed a significant part of her economic and cultural experiences as a teenager. She recalled:

I can't even remember my wages but I knew I'd like save it so I could go clothes shopping. But I was also lucky in the fact my mum gave me my family allowance so I had that. So I always had a lot of clothes... I wasn't one of those who set to the clothes for all of the tide, but there were some people around who were like that. Like I said, if rah-rah skirts were in we were in a rah-rah skirt, but if Harrington jackets were in we'd do that. I think I was a more of a, what's in fashion, you know.³¹

Jacqueline's statement demonstrates how identity creation fitted into a wider pattern of social meaning and expectation. By noting that she 'wasn't one of those people who set their clothes for all of the tide', Jacqueline was positioning her own experiences directly against those of other people. This extract also signifies an awareness of the 'spectacular' other; Jacqueline tempered her own experience against those that she perceived to be more committed to youth styles.

³⁰ Interview with Jeff; Note: DJ Parrot is Richard Barratt, DJ and founding member of The Funky Worm in the 1980s.

³¹ Interview with Jacqueline.

Experiences like Jacqueline's have often been overlooked in favour of more overtly 'spectacular' practices such as Jeff's. However, by focusing on the lives of young people more widely it is possible to shed light on the many different cultural practices of young people; Jacqueline shopped in similar high-street stores to the more overtly 'alternative' Sue, and the different levels with which Sue and Jeff, both 'alternative' in their outlook, engaged with curating their image through clothing provides nuance to more traditional models of subcultural youth that tie music, politics, and clothing neatly together.

For some young people music was a driving factor in their clothing choices. Debbie explained how her love of 2 Tone ska music heavily influenced her fashion choices as a teenager:

I was really into the ska music at the time and I wore the black and white asymmetrical dresses and my boyfriend at the time he wore the 2 Tone suits and the pork pie hat... I remember me and John, as it were then, really being into the ska music and all that style. And the little shoes and everything that went with it.³²

Similarly, Tamar's clothing choices were influenced by her wider interests. She explained that clothes were:

Massively important. But I couldn't afford them. So fashion was really important, but it was really sort of voyeuristic until I got a Saturday job and could afford them for myself. Yeah, loved all the sort of punk and new romantic stuff when I was really young, in the sort of, 83, 84. And then sort of moved on to I suppose the indie scene and Morrissey and all the sort of, grandad coats and all that sort of thing. And then you know, later, late teens, it was grunge and rave were the things that I went into.³³

As Tamar had mentioned specific youth styles I then asked her whether her fashion and clothing directly related to the music she listened to when she was a teenager. She replied: 'the music I was listening to and the scenes I wanted to be involved in. Yeah, definitely.'

³² Interview with Debbie.

³³ Interview with Tamar.

Tamar's clothing choices were part of a wider identity formation formed around a more coherent youth scene. She continued:

Politics and music were big for me. A sort of feeling of despair if you like you know, the financials, and being bought up in a slightly left wing family then that whole... against the yuppie thing that was on, that making money was not- so I didn't know how I was going to, what was I going to do when I grew up if you like, because this wasn't what I wanted to be yet there didn't seem to be any place for me, so I escaped through culture, through art, through music, through fashion, rather than going into the sort of that whole, I suppose what typified it would be Harry Enfield's Loadsamoney character.

When asked about class, Tamar said:

Not middle class but yeah not necessarily working class. Dad was at work but he was a nurse, mum wasn't working. We didn't have much money, I know that. Quite left wing unionised family sort of, I used to get sent out to deliver the party leaflets and that sort of thing. So I suppose working class.

Tamar's cultural identification encompassed her political beliefs, her musical tastes, and her clothing choices; by building her identity in opposition to the prevalent yuppie culture of the time Tamar's consumption habits align more closely with traditional presentations of youth culture. However, Tamar's identity creation and consumption practices do not necessarily correspond with a more authentic, or higher, level of engagement with youth culture than her less-easily categorised peers. Tamar has worked in the creative sector in her adult life, and as a child from a unionised left wing family is perhaps more used to reflecting on and communicating the influence and role of politics in her own life.

Other young people's engagement with youth culture was far less visible. Mark, for example, was an avid music fan and spent a significant majority of his time and income on buying records and experimenting with music technology. When asked what he spent the majority of his income on he recalled:

Money as in clothes then I don't think it was that much. I'd go and buy the odd pair of

jeans or the odd t-shirt.... But, the main thing that my money went on is music. Love my music. Tapes, blank tapes all the time. Very interested in twelve-inch records.³⁴

He continued:

You hear the old jokes of listening to the Top 40 and pressing record. A lot of that went on, but I was very much interested in listening to music and seeing how the 12-inch music would play and then I would try and edit my own music. I would try and set up like a three way recording system to erm, try and make music sound different.

The way that Mark engaged with elements of youth culture was not as outwardly visible as Tamar. His engagement with music took place in the home, and did not form part of an affiliation with a wider or coherent cultural movement. Notably, Mark told me that, despite his ongoing love of music, he had never been to a gig. This serves to further highlight the numerous ways that young people interacted with youth culture. Mark's interests focused on recorded music and sound, rather than the more recognised, and public, act of gig-going and clubbing. As a teenager and young adult Mark invested a significant amount of his disposable income on music, but his interactions with youth culture took place primarily in the private sphere rather than in the more visible space of the live gig or nightclub. Mark's youth cultural experiences were less easily traceable, and as a result experiences such as his have been overlooked by many historians of youth culture.

Tony, who joined the army at 18 and travelled the world, recalled having different priorities from many of his peers. He recalled:

I think in my clothing and stuff, I've never ever been into that label or acquiring stuff. So no, I tended to spend my money more on travel. I had stuff and I had to have stuff because I worked in an office I had to have suits, I had to have so many shirts and I had to have so many ties and so many pairs of shoes. And that was work. And then you had to have your going out gear. And again, a couple of suits would be going out gear because at those times it was disco and they expected you to wear a jacket and a

³⁴ Interview with Mark.

tie, you know.³⁵

Tony's approach to clothing was practical; when he lived and worked in Sheffield he socialised regularly and often attended pubs and nightclubs with his friends but only purchased the clothes needed to gain entry to these nightclubs. Tony's love of travel gave him a different focus for the majority of his disposable income, affecting the ways in which he chose to engage with elements of youth culture.

Historical scholarship on private practices of youth culture has been dominated by a focus on the bedroom cultures of adolescent girls. One way to access a wider variety of young people's voices may be to focus on the private consumption habits of adolescent boys and girls in order to ask wider questions about the differing ways young people engaged with youth culture. Scholarship on youth culture has often failed to account for the varying ways in which young people have engaged with youth culture, the varying levels of public and private consumption that young people participated in, and the structural factors such as income and family situation, that may have impacted on young people's ability or desire to engage with youth culture in post-war Britain.

This section has demonstrated the myriad of ways that young people could engage with youth culture. Focusing on clothing, it has demonstrated how many young people were managing competing priorities, often on a limited budget. For a number of young people clothing, traditionally the visible marker of youth cultural interests, was simply not a priority, and has highlighted the need for an approach to writing histories of young people that better understands less overtly visual engagements. For those young people who did engage with fashion, a variety of approaches were used including traditional high street shopping, buying

³⁵ Interview with Tony.

from charity shops, and hand making items. There was also the influence of the wider peer group, which undoubtedly contributed to the decisions made by some young people.

Young people's relationship with clothing could be complex. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s young people were navigating this in different ways. This section has shown that visibly clear markers are not an accurate representation of the level of engagement with youth culture. For those who chose not to, or were unable to, engage with fashion and shopping, these interests often manifested themselves in other ways. In short, this section has argued that visual markers should not be taken as the only marker of engagement of interest. There were many varied and valid ways of engaging with youth culture in post-war Britain.

'You just tend to go along with what everybody else wants to do': Cultural Identity and Evening Leisure Space

For many young people their personal cultural interests did not necessarily correspond with their wider lifestyle; their social groups and the places they chose to socialise were often separate from their own cultural interests, and the public and private parts of their engagement with youth culture were not necessarily linked. As Chapters two to four demonstrated, the evening leisure spaces available to young people in Sheffield grew significantly between the 1960s and the 1980s, providing a range of different spaces for the city's adolescents to enjoy. This section will explore the different spaces young people inhabited, and the reasons why young people chose to socialise where they did. It will be argued that by looking at evening leisure space through a wider lens it is possible to see the

different ways in which young people negotiated evening leisure space, and their own interests, musical or otherwise, were often only one of several influences.

Evening leisure spaces such as the live music venue and the nightclub are often presented as part of a wider environment of cultural resistance, with the focus centred on a select number of culturally influential venues. However, far less has been said about the ways in which young people move between and use different evening leisure spaces. Using oral testimony this section will explore how and why young people attended certain venues before exploring the significance of cultural identity in understanding why young people socialised where they did.

For many young people social groupings were a central part of their youth cultural experiences. Discussing her involvement with a theatre group, Jacqueline described the different circles she moved within. When she was talking about socialising with her theatre group she recalled:

So if I went out with them that was a very different conversation to if you went out with like my friends from school who were quite, let's get dressed up, let's go for a drink let's go clubbing. And then there were other friends who it was about, you know they were the ones who'd all gone to school together so you just went for a chat.³⁶

Jacqueline moved between groups of friends depending on how she wanted to spend her time. She further recalled:

Friday night was always dressed up. Sunday night was casual. But again, depending on the group of friends you were with, like there were some groups of friends that really liked to dress up, even if you were just going round the village, you'd dress up on a Friday and Saturday and we even used to go out on a Sunday night until late, but if you were out on Thursday night that was jeans and a smart, you know it was casual.

³⁶ Interview with Jacqueline.

Tamar was similar in the way she moved between groups:

And I was quite lucky in that I had a diverse set of friends. So it wasn't necessarily that you only did one thing. I moved in between depending on who was going where and what I fancied doing.³⁷

Juan's experiences similarly mirrored Jacqueline and Tamar's. He explained:

One of the things I noticed was various groups of people I could hang out, and hung out with. So there was one group which was maybe Afro-Caribbean, erm oh god I was in the Boys Brigade- keep that quiet! - but the Boys Brigade was absolutely brilliant. That was another thing, the Boys Brigade was another, actually quite progressive, we ended up doing all sorts... So that was one group of mates, and that also crossed over, some went to school, some went to different schools, some went to the youth club, so there was people from the youth club so there was that lot, school mates. And that was a mixture of boys, girls. And as we started going out and there were people that you would meet along the way.³⁸

Regardless of their own cultural identification my interviewees moved between a wide range of different social groups, giving them access to a range of leisure options. Different groups of friends fulfilled different social needs. Juan's position as an Afro-Caribbean teenager growing up in a predominantly white area (he recalled 'there were hardly any black people, as I say, on my road') meant that socialising with other Afro-Caribbean teenagers performed a different social function from other friendship groups for Juan.³⁹ In order to gain a fuller understanding of the lives and experiences of young people more focus needs to be placed on their wider social movements to better understand how and why they engaged with elements of youth culture in the ways that they did.

Tamar recalled how she chose where to socialise on a night out in 1980s Sheffield:

I think mainly for me it was about the music. So I don't know if- I mean the townie scene was very much erm, nightclubs and suits and completely sort of made up and

³⁷ Interview with Tamar.

³⁸ Interview with Juan.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

handbags.⁴⁰

While Tamar stated she liked the music played in her chosen venues she also alluded to a wider avoidance of 'townie' nightclubs. Similarly, Sue recalled of the 1960s nightclub

Shades:

And it was very good. It was just, it wasn't like the townie nightclubs in town which were very glitz and glitter and martinis and that sort of thing. It was more pints and, Joe Cocker used to play there every Wednesday... I loved to dance. And I could dance at Shades at least two nights a week, so it was my, it was the thing that really made me buzz. It was my drug if you like, was dancing.⁴¹

Like Tamar, Sue's identity as part of an alternative scene influenced where she chose to socialise. However, Sue continued:

Places I did occasionally go to in town were the Top Rank, and the Locarno but that was more for individual events rather than somewhere that I went regularly.

Although Sue made a clear distinction between what she considered to be mainstream and alternative venues, labelling certain venues as 'townie', she did engage with these venues on occasion. Sue and Tamar both considered music a central part of their night out. However, their decision on where to socialise was also influenced by a wider cultural framework; their use of the word 'townie' denotes a cultural 'other' that they wished to avoid.

Jacqueline recalled attending a variety of spaces for different purposes. She explained:

But I saw Tina, but my music tastes really vary. So I saw Tina Turner, Free Country.... But my first gig was Duran Duran at the City Hall. And we went to see Human League at the Lyceum, it shut down and then it reopened but like, Human League I think I saw there. So you were constantly going to gigs. And there were some big names and like they say there's all the small stuff as well. But you'd go to a gig at city hall and then you'd go the Limit.⁴²

⁴⁰ Interview with Tamar.

⁴¹ Interview with Sue.

⁴² Interview with Jacqueline.

She continued:

The Limit was really important. If you wanted music you went to the Limit... And then there was the Top Rank. The Top Rank was one of those... if you liked dancing you could go and dance and really lose it. But at the same time you'd go the next week to see if your photos were on the wall, because there was also the balcony where you can stand and watch. But that was good for like, losing yourself music.... Erm, so again it depended on who you were out with how important the music was. So, I had a group of friends who we went to Battle of the Bands because we loved music. I'd got another group of friends I went clubbing with, they didn't care about that, they just wanted it to be part of their Friday, Saturday night. And they just wanted it to be good to dance to.

Jacqueline moved between a variety of different venues depending on what she wanted from her evening and who she was with; her social circle was varied and thus so were her social interactions and use of evening leisure spaces.

Juan, who was a fan of jazz funk, similarly recalled how he moved between spaces depending on what he wanted from his night.

I mean it depended really what you want, what type of music you're into or what sort of feeling you wanted. You're pushing your way through or if you want something quiet. And it really depended on that what you wanted to do.⁴³

He continued:

You've got so many different places that you could go to. So it depended on what you actually felt like, or whether the group of people you were going to meet or wanted to meet, hung out mainly in, if that was their favourite place.

Juan's interview highlighted an important and often overlooked element of youth nightlife: the preferences of the wider group. The decision on where to socialise was often part of a wider group decision, and therefore dependent on a wider range of factors than the individual's personal music and cultural preferences.

⁴³ Interview with Juan.

Gillian further highlighted the importance of the wider group:

I like a wide range of music. But I suppose stuff you can dance to. Disco stuff is fabulous, that's what you need there.... you just tend to go along with what everybody else wants to do.⁴⁴

For many young people such as Gillian, Juan, and Jacqueline, it was the very act of going out that was the purpose of such evenings. Music and location often came second to the simple desire to go on a night out with friends. Young people were often not socialising because of a particular band or event, but instead to be socialising with friends away from the parental home.

For some, the ambience or mood of a venue was an important aspect of a night out.

Juan stated:

I mean the thing is with deviation or trying to deviate [between different venues], it was I suppose you wanted to go where you would feel comfortable. You know, there were certain clubs where you know where you're not going to feel comfortable because it's not your genre. Other places you'd feel ok but it wasn't your genre.⁴⁵

Debbie discussed her favourite pubs and nightclubs with me and recalled:

I used to go in the Black Swan. I used to go to nightclubs. Josephine's, and Romeo's and Juliet's. That was my favourite haunt. ... And the Romeo's and Juliet's was just over the road from the Black Swan so that was very convenient.⁴⁶

When she discussed the smaller nightclubs Debbie explained:

I think it was a different kind of crowd. Yeah, and so when I went it weren't as comfortable as the crowd that, because I was quite middle of the road and that's what the bigger nightclubs catered for.

Debbie's music and fashion tastes as a teenager in the late 1970s and early 1980s were primarily influenced by ska but she preferred frequenting larger 'mainstream' venues. She

⁴⁴ Interview with Gillian.

⁴⁵ Interview with Juan.

⁴⁶ Interview with Debbie.

explained:

They'd play the same kinds of music throughout the night. Mainly chart music, but if you wanted specialist music you'd go to the smaller type places, the spit and sawdust types. I mean I sometimes went to the smaller nightclubs but I didn't feel as comfortable. I didn't feel as though there was any point in getting dressed up because they were so shabby some of the places.

Despite Debbie's interest in ska music, and her identification with the ska scene, she much preferred larger nightclubs because they offered the opportunity to dress up. Debbie's recollection again demonstrates that there were often other factors that influenced why young people attended specific nightclubs and it was certainly more fluid than whether they considered themselves to be alternative or mainstream.

By describing herself as 'middle of the road' Debbie gave the impression that she felt she did not fit in or belong at smaller and more specialised nightclubs, and her statement that she felt more comfortable in larger nightclubs is significant. Oral history interviews allow us access to senses, feeling, and emotion in a way that is not possible with many other sources. Debbie's interview highlights both an awareness of an 'other', more extreme, form of nightlife. More significantly, her interview reveals how that made her feel. By tempering her own experience as 'middle of the road', Debbie's interview demonstrated a sense of feeling outside of, or alienated from, certain forms of youth culture.

However, for Jeff, whose image was curated to set him apart from others, the type of venue he socialised in was important to him in other ways. He recalled:

Music was very important and yeah, gigs, live music very important. I think live music was more important in some ways than actual clubbing. Yeah, going clubbing was an opportunity to pose actually. I don't remember much dancing going on. It was just hang out and look cool, and be seen with the right people and talk to the right people... I think it was an identity thing. Yeah, it was cultural, personal capital. It

was, I don't know, who knows what was going on in one's teenage mind. It was about, it was kind of a self-esteem thing really. I hang around with cool people, therefore I must be a cool person.⁴⁷

Jeff's attendance at certain nightclubs was part of his wider identity curation. As an adult Jeff reflected on this as being caused by teenage 'self-esteem' issues, but in Jeff's case the nightclub held a wider cultural significance. He used it to signify cultural capital in a quest for the unquantifiable element of 'cool'. Jeff's involvement in the alternative scene was also an important way for him to socialise and network. He recalled what drew him to certain venues:

It was kind of like a, a sort of subculture, with its own kind of ecosystem you know. There was music, there was clothes, there was a social scene. There was very much the in crowd, and the cool people. And erm, I found that when I started to dress in this kind of way, you know, looking trendy, then I found that people were actually more interested in talking to me as well.

Over the course of the post-war period the nightclub became one of the central cultural spaces in which young people socialised. The development of the 'night out' as a leisure pastime positioned the nightclub as an important part of many young people's cultural landscapes. This section has shown that the nightclub was used in many different ways by young people, and held a different significance depending on their needs and wants. This section, by highlighting the multiplicity of young people's engagements with the space of the nightclub, demonstrates the social relations between individuals and places as presented by Doreen Massey and shows the fluidity of young people's negotiations with place.

⁴⁷ Interview with Jeff.

‘Against the mainstream people’: Identifying Divisions Between ‘Mainstream’ and ‘Alternative’ in Oral Testimony

This section will explore the ways in which my participants engaged with the popular cultural framework of alternative versus mainstream. In particular, it will explore the othering of the mainstream, and analyse what this means for the writing of youth culture.

Angela McRobbie has argued that since the 1970s:

The old model which divided the pure subculture from the contaminated outside world, eager to transform anything it could get its hands on into a sellable item, has collapsed, even though there still remains an ideology of authenticity which provides young people in youth cultures with a way of achieving social subjectivity and therefore identity through the subcultural experience.⁴⁸

McRobbie further argued that if ‘we deconstruct the notion of resistance by removing its metapolitical status, (even when this exists in some disguised, magical or imaginary form, as it did in CCCS theory), and if we re-insert resistance at the more mundane, micrological level of everyday practices and choices about how to live’ we can better understand subcultural enterprise as a career option.⁴⁹ By using McRobbie’s approach of examining everyday practices and choices about how to live this section posits that although alternative and mainstream cultures maintained a level of distinction between the 1960s and the 1980s, the two were intertwined and young people’s engagement with youth culture depended on a wide range of structural and social factors. While the focus of this thesis is not on subcultural enterprise, McRobbie’s approach offers another way of understanding those who identified as alternative, without imbuing their experiences with implicit cultural values such as

⁴⁸ Angela McRobbie, ‘Shut Up And Dance: Youth Culture and Changing Modes of Femininity’, *Young* 1.2 (1993), p. 19.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

authenticity.

Identity was an important part of young people's cultural experiences in post-war Britain, and many of my interviewees have referred to the 'tribal' nature of youth culture in this period. However, despite describing the youth cultures of the period as 'tribal', indicating sharp divisions and oppositions between groups, the language used by interviewees when they described their own approach to identity was much less defined than this. When asked about her relationship with music, Tamar said: 'Were clothes and music linked? Yes, yeah. The music I was listening to and the scenes I wanted to be involved in. Yeah, definitely.'⁵⁰ Despite saying this, Tamar never described a specific scene, instead saying she wasn't 'mainstream'. She explained:

There was a real sort of, the word we used at the time was townie. And that was, we weren't townie, we weren't understood by townies and didn't want to understand townies either so that was, yeah. It was the other if you like, we were the other.

Damon used similar language, recalling:

Basically I always wanted to not be in the mainstream... I never really wanted to go down that route of buying things from Topman and all that, or those sort of places. I certainly had a kind of snobbish, an inverse snobbery about people who shopped in those places. I didn't like the idea of buying clothes from Topman I also didn't like the idea of going to those glitzy chrome and mirrors sort of nightclubs. So the Leadmill was really important. And there was also the Limit... basically you were either a mainstream sort of person or you went to the Leadmill and the Limit.⁵¹

Indeed, when asked how he thought he viewed himself at the time, Damon explained:

Post-punk is quite a good term for it all, but I've only really heard that used for it quite recently. I don't particularly remember that at the time. That would have been quite handy. Oh yeah I'm a post-punk you know, that probably would have summed it up quite nicely. But I don't really actually remember having a label or a term that would have described what I was until communist.

⁵⁰ Interview with Tamar.

⁵¹ Interview with Damon.

Despite the supposed tribalism of youth culture, Damon didn't recall having a label to describe his youth cultural interests. Throughout our discussion he referred to the mainstream, but spent less time reflecting on what his own identity meant. The emphasis was placed on not being the 'other'. I do not read this as resistance, rather it is symptomatic of the lack of specific cultural markers or boundaries between different types of youth cultures. The cultural boundaries that are so often drawn around youth culture do not map on to the lived experiences of my interviewees.

Another interviewee, Adrian, said: 'It's like everyone belonged to a tribe. That tribalism. So I belonged to, it might not have been evident to look at me, but I was part of that tribe basically.'⁵² Adrian's comment that 'it might not have been evident to look at me' suggests that the boundaries that historians and sociologists have drawn around young people, particularly with regards to the role of dress as a signifier of identity, may be misleading. Adrian, Tamar, and Damon all viewed themselves as being part of an 'alternative' youth culture, but none of them used a specific subcultural term to describe themselves. However, in discussing their identities they all set themselves against the 'mainstream'.

This oppositional framing was also apparent in interviews conducted with people who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. David said he was: 'basically against the mainstream people. The boring people like my elder sister, who I still love to bits.'⁵³ When asked what it was he didn't like about the 'mainstream', David replied: 'Boring clothes, rubbish music, they expected you to grow up by the time you were about 20 and start listening to Frank Sinatra and rubbish like that!' David's mainstream consisted of a comment on clothing and music

⁵² Interview with Adrian.

⁵³ Interview with David.

that reflected his own tastes more than any specific style or genre, alongside a wider comment on societal expectations of the 1960s.

Across the board, my interviewees gave a sense that their positioning of themselves as ‘against’ the mainstream did not correlate to a cohesive group identity. Trish recalled:

As for identifying with them [alternative groups], I think it was acceptance. It was acceptance of everybody and anybody. You just went in and if you showed up often enough you were one of them... but yeah, probably acceptance. Probably acceptance and a chip on my shoulder.⁵⁴

Tamar echoed this sentiment. She explained:

And it wasn’t just about looks or music, it was about an attitude as well. An element of education or aspiration as well was sort of the, and acceptance. If you were accepting of difference then you weren’t a townie.⁵⁵

Tamar, Trish, and David all pointed to an ‘attitude’ being the key difference between mainstream and alternative groups. Rather than the traditionally recognised signifiers, music and clothing, my interviewees suggest that youth cultural groupings were defined as much by attitude as anything else. While for some, such as David, this was seen to manifest itself in certain types of clothing or music, these interviews suggest that it was not the cultural products themselves that were seen as supposedly problematic, but what they were perceived to represent.

By the 1980s Sheffield’s evening leisure spaces had developed and diversified, providing a spatial dimension to the city’s alternative scene. This ‘othering’ of youth culture became most apparent when my interviewees from this period were discussing nightlife. Of those who considered themselves to be alternative, all three were regular visitors to either the Leadmill or the Limit, and Damon said ‘apart from those two places really I’m hard pushed

⁵⁴ Interview with Trish.

⁵⁵ Interview with Tamar.

to think about where else I would have willingly gone.’⁵⁶ Tamar explained: ‘I mean the townie scene was very much erm, nightclubs and suits and completely sort of made up and handbags and jokes about not wearing coats and tights in winter and all that sort of thing.’⁵⁷ Othering became more apparent when a physical space was there to embody it. This was mirrored in Sue’s description of why she chose Shades nightclub, but became a more common trope in my interviews from the 1980s. The emergence of the Leadmill and the Limit in the late 1970s and early 1980s provided young people with a way to physically position themselves as one or the other; these nightclubs provided a space for people to more clearly visualise and conceive of the ‘other’. In this way place is important to building and maintaining alternative cultures, as these places provide a tangible and physical marking of difference.

The preconceived ideas that Tamar had about ‘mainstream’ venues were mirrored by Damon. He said:

When we were in sixth form, we’d have sixth form parties, that was just something that the sixth form did. There was a little organising committee and every few months they’d have a party in town and it’d always be in one of those shiny nightclubs. It was always like, oh should I go, I’ll be compromising my principles and well I will go because it’s all sixth formers, it’s all my friends, but what will I wear, because it’s sixth form night will they let us in wearing this or, I’d have to borrow some shoes off my dad or something. But paired with some jumble sale trousers or something. But they would always turn out to be great nights so maybe at that point I started to be a little less judgemental about those places and think, oh you can have fun there.⁵⁸

Damon’s anecdote is significant because it highlights how the line between subcultural or alternative youth culture and mainstream, or popular youth culture cannot be neatly demarcated. Damon actively identified as part of the alternative scene in Sheffield, and used

⁵⁶ Interview with Damon.

⁵⁷ Interview with Tamar.

⁵⁸ Interview with Damon.

the narrative of alternative versus mainstream in his discussion with me. He had his own prejudices against what he perceived to be the mainstream but this does not mean that he did not encounter or engage with the 'mainstream'. Clubs like the Top Rank, which Damon was referring to in his interview, were the site of varying and fluid social interactions.

The line between 'mainstream' and 'alternative' was primarily drawn by those of my interviewees who considered themselves to be of an alternative persuasion. These divisions were also drawn between those who considered themselves 'alternative'. The testimonies provided by my participants on alternative cultures provides evidence for Sarah Thornton's theory of subcultural capital. Further, it highlights the 'subtle relations of power at play' within popular cultures; while some of my participants positioned their own experiences against the 'mainstream' they also negotiated hierarchies of authenticity when positioning themselves within alternative culture.⁵⁹ The issue of authenticity that so much subcultural work is concerned with was, in some ways, replicated in the discussions I had with interviewees. Alison Huber, reflecting on her own complex relationship with the 'mainstream' after finding herself drawn to a Top 40 song by boy band Ultra, recalled:

What we can observe in my confused reaction to this moment of 'mainstream love' is the range of complex relationships between the idea of a mainstream and identity politics, taste and cultural value, entwined as they are with practices of consumption. We can also find a sense of why mainstream matters so much to the articulation of these relationships. I had learned from my peers explicitly and tacitly through the very same cultural studies training that alterity to the mainstream of culture was what should be desired.⁶⁰

Huber's reflections offer a way of understanding exactly why it is my interviewees of an alternative persuasion positioned their own experiences so frequently against the mainstream

⁵⁹ Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 14.

⁶⁰ Alison Huber, 'Mainstream as Metaphor: Imagining Dominant Culture' in Sarah Baker, Andy Bennett and Jodie Taylor (eds), *Redefining Mainstream Popular Music* (New York, 2013), p. 5.

in a way that other interviewees did not. The identity politics of those who considered themselves to be alternative meant that they perceived their experiences as holding a higher level of cultural value, and this was reflected in their narrative construction.

When talking about the Limit, Tamar hinted at a cultural hierarchy of those who attended. She recalled:

It was a student night, but you had the Goth Box which was basically your permanent sort of, people to look up to who really made an effort. And they took over a certain part of the club. And you weren't, and gradually over the years you made your way up there and into it... The Limit was something that was aspirational for me. I wanted to be part of that, I wanted to be as alternative as that but I wasn't.⁶¹

In stating 'I wanted to be as alternative as that' Tamar was highlighting how she perceived her own position within Sheffield's cultural hierarchy, and a suggestion that she considered her cultural capital to be inadequate to gain her entry to that social grouping. A *Melody Maker* article from 1982 provides evidence for Tamar's notion of a hierarchy at the Limit.

Writing a review of a band called Hula, the reviewer explains:

One of the easiest ways to get yourself noticed as a contender in Sheffield is to associate with the elite- those who've already cracked it. Tonight the Limit's homely little bar is brimming with talk about Hula's credibility and the general opinion is that they're simply puppets of Cabaret Voltaire.⁶²

In discussing her nights out, Tamar said 'for me my crowd was the Leadmill. I knew the Limit people, and I could go in there and be part of it but I didn't feel at home in the way that I did going to the Leadmill.'⁶³ Adrian also discussed a sense of not feeling 'cool' enough in alternative spaces. When asked where he went record shopping he recalled:

There was Warp which was really specialist dance stuff but I always found it really intimidating going in there because there were all these kids in there who were a bit

⁶¹ Interview with Tamar.

⁶² *Melody Maker*, February 13 1982, p. 40.

⁶³ Interview with Tamar.

older, and they were all really cool. Kids were all a bit older and they were all really cool and it was, and it wasn't the most comfortable environment. So I used to go to Block in Manchester, I used to go on the train and go over there and that was a bit more friendly. It had the same stuff.⁶⁴

Tamar's and Adrian's anecdotes echo the sentiment raised by other interviewees about the importance of feeling comfortable, and highlights the hierarchy of authenticity employed by young people to position themselves within a wider youth cultural stratification. As Thornton suggested, young people's cultural capital came from imposing and upholding and this cultural hierarchy. Those adults who reflected on their teenage experiences with the alternative scene continued to uphold this hierarchy as a way of validating their experiences.

This section has highlighted how the hierarchies of authenticity were upheld by young people themselves, but that this does not translate onto cultural experience in any meaningful way. Instead of continuing to hold hierarchies of authenticity by placing value on style, scholars should instead be asking questions about why young people use markers of youth culture in this way.

Conclusions

Oral history provides a way of accessing perspectives onto the past not usually afforded by other historical sources. It is the product of both the interviewer's approach, and the interviewee's response, and as such offers the opportunity to ask questions about culture, identity, and emotion in new ways. This chapter has shown how oral history can be utilised to explore culture, arguing that the cultural frameworks placed on young people in post-war

⁶⁴ Interview with Adrian.

Britain rarely mapped onto lived experience. By asking broad and open-ended questions about their youthful experience, my interviewees constructed a narrative that reflected their ongoing engagement with cultural frameworks, rather than closed and directed reflections on a specific topic. As such, this chapter has explored how these cultural frameworks influenced my interviewees' perceptions of their youthful experience, and has provided evidence to support an approach to youth culture that recognises the fluidity and individual nature of young people's engagement with youth culture, whilst not overlooking the ongoing structural factors such as class and access to disposable income, gender, race, or geographical restrictions and family commitments that may influence the extent to which a young person is able to engage with elements of youth culture in this period.

However, despite arguing for an approach that recognises fluidity and individuality in approaches to youth culture, this chapter has not sought to argue that the mainstream/alternative dichotomy that is so pervasive in academic studies of youth culture and popular music had no bearing on young people's perceived sense of self. This chapter has shown that the identity politics of those who moved in alternative circles sought to uphold a separation between themselves and what they perceived to be the 'mainstream'. This image of the mainstream was influenced by wider narratives of cultural value, with the mainstream/alternative dichotomy replicating earlier divisions between high and low culture. However, where academics have sought to categorise and label youth movements, and focused on the spectacular elements of youth, this chapter has shown that for the majority of young people, their experience was not defined by specific categories. By examining the language used by interviewees who considered themselves to be alternative it is possible to see that this identity was bound in very loose terms, built against an imagined mainstream that represented an attitude as much as any stylistic or cultural traits.

This chapter has also shed light on the cultural practices of the supposedly unspectacular young people of post-war Britain. It argues that traditionally visible markers of youth cultural involvement, such as clothing, do not necessarily correspond with how young people lived and experienced youth culture. A lack of interest in fashion, for example, should not be read as denoting a wider lack of engagement with elements of youth culture. Further, for those young people who did engage with fashion this was often influenced by their wider social group; while studies of fashion and identity have recognised the relationship between clothing, society, and identity, more work needs to be done in studies of youth culture to recognise the influence of societal pressure. Studies that hold up of the products of youth culture as celebrated artefacts detract from the lived experience of ordinary young people. As such, this chapter has argued that studies of the lives of ordinary young people are needed to better understand the myriad of ways in which young people engaged with youth culture, and has demonstrated that the alternative/mainstream dichotomy highlighted by many scholars does not map clearly onto the actual experiences of young people.

Conclusions: Youth in Changing Times

The industry has collapsed now. The name of the knife blade reads Korea or Singapore. The Little Mesters' workshops, where self-employed craftsmen applied the beauty and finish to cutlery blanks, have all closed. The terrifying buffer girls, cutlery polishers who- still wrapped like parcels in protective brown paper and string- marched arm-in-arm when work was done, are gone. The endless black steelworks, each an inferno of molten metal and noise, are demolished. Our industry was our identity, and now we have lost both.¹

Writing for the *Guardian* in 1991, Richard Burns documented the post-war decline of Sheffield's industry, describing with poetic and devastating detail the impact this had on the city's identity. Sheffield went from boom to bust, from production to consumption between the 1960s and the 1980s, struggling to find its place in a post-industrial Britain. The city's history and culture had been dominated by steel and cutlery, the landscape dominated by fire and smoke; by the end of the 1980s large swathes of the city were being reclaimed by nature as dereliction replaced industry.

The story of post-war Sheffield in this period is perhaps best encapsulated by the Meadowhall development. Construction began on the Meadowhall shopping centre in 1988, in the Lower Don Valley on the outskirts of Sheffield. The development was situated on a derelict area of land once dominated by the Hadfields steel factory. In an editorial in the *Guardian* on the changes of the 1980s, Peter Large argued that 'a new symbol is now replacing deserted factories by the M1'.² That new symbol was Meadowhall, 'a domed palace

¹ Richard Burns, 'Sheffield, the city of craft and graft', *The Guardian*, October 16 1991, p. 21.

² Peter Large, 'City of steel cuts a fresh new dash: Frontiers of work', *The Guardian*, June 9 1989, p. 17.

of leisure and consumerism', employing 10,000 people and designed to remedy the economic woes of the last decade.³ The development consisted of shops and restaurants, with an entertainment complex featuring a bowling alley and multiplex cinema opening next door, becoming Valley Centertainment in the 1990s. Meadowhall, and the rest of the Valley Centertainment complex, was built on the site of an old steelworks, embodying the changes experienced in Sheffield over the course of the post-war period. Where grandparents and parents had worked in the steel mills and little mesters of Sheffield, sons and daughters would work in shops built on the industrial heritage of the city they called home. The change was swift and dramatic, and the lives of Sheffield's citizens were changed irreversibly with the loss of industry.

But what happened to Sheffield's young people? How did the generations of young people who grew up in a city undergoing such pivotal change navigate their teenage years and young adulthood? For all the stories of decline and industrial malaise, the cultural lives of Sheffield's young people continued to change and develop, while the cultural landscape of the city stood steadfast through economic and societal strife. This thesis has shown how the lifestyles of post-war youth changed and developed, how they engaged with an ever increasing amount of evening leisure space, and how they moved through a city centre that was increasingly dedicated to the hedonistic pursuits of youth.

Between 1960 and 1989 the lives of young people in Britain underwent an undeniably dramatic shift. The emergence of a visible youth market in the 1940s and 1950s provided young people with clothes, music, and media aimed at their interests. High street boutiques and department stores stocked an increasing number of clothes aimed at young people,

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

allowing them to differentiate themselves from older generations, and from each other. Magazines, television, and radio scrambled to attract this growing market, while newspapers and contemporary commentators analysed and, in many instances, vilified the post-war generation. Sociologists attempted to make sense of the emergence of youth, stratifying and categorising the visible and spectacular elements of youth culture. However, beneath all the change and spectacle, millions of ordinary young people were going about their everyday lives, going shopping, meeting friends, and going dancing. This thesis has sought to understand these ordinary young people, and has offered an insight into the changing lives of youth in a period of extraordinary change.

The changes to post-war youth culture manifested themselves in the rise of evening leisure space. Music and space combined, creating an environment in which young people were able to dance and socialise away from adult supervision. It was with the emergence of evening leisure space that the lifestyles, as well as the interests, of young people became divided from wider society. From the teenage beat clubs of the early 1960s, to the rise of pubs, bars, and nightclubs in the 1970s and 1980s, the leisure spaces inhabited by young people were increasingly removed from the gaze of adults. Understanding the development of these spaces, how young people built them into their wider lifestyles, and how these spaces played a part in the wider identity politics of young people enables a greater understanding of how the lives of young people changed over the course of the post-war period in Britain.

Chapters two to four demonstrated how these spaces developed in Sheffield over the course of thirty years. The reactions to the Beatnik Ball and the Esquire club in the 1960s demonstrated the extent to which youth culture was seen as a corrupting and negative influence, whilst the ongoing clashes between local residents and the King Mojo Club highlighted the suspicions of wider society about these new spaces in the early 1960s. The

rise of licensed venues in the city in the late 1960s further changed the ways young people were engaging with evening leisure space; alcohol became a central component of a night out, with young people increasingly moving between different spaces before heading to a nightclub, where they stayed until the early hours of the morning.

Chapter five detailed how the emergence of these spaces impacted on the lifestyles of young people, demonstrating that the rise of the nightclub created a spatial and temporal dimension to youth culture; moving through the city centre at night became a central part of the night out, and as such large parts of the city became the domain of youth on a Friday and Saturday night. Chapter five also highlighted the importance of space outside of the home to post-war youth. In the period before the emergence of pubs and bars aimed at young drinkers, young people were carving out spaces for themselves. The pub became a site of renegotiation as young people sought to negotiate a place for themselves in a space dominated by traditional working-class masculinity.

Recognising the commercial benefits of attracting the youth market, a new range of pubs and bars aimed at young people emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter three demonstrated how these spaces played a part in offering new leisure opportunities to young women. While the lives of young people were undergoing extensive change in this period, it was young women who felt the impact of these changes most keenly. Traditionally masculine spaces such as the pub and working men's clubs were out of bounds to young or unmarried women, while many leisure options such as the dancehall and cinema were built into wider courting rituals, dictated by traditional gender conventions. As Claire Langhamer has argued, 'an expectation of marriage framed youthful visions of the future and underlined leisure

experiences and social life'.⁴ Courtship dominated as a primary social activity in mid-twentieth-century Britain. However, by the 1980s the girls' night out was a regular part of many young women's lifestyles, and 'copping off' at the nightclub was part of the fun.

This thesis has argued that the emergence of evening leisure space was central to this change. The emergence of evening leisure spaces such as the nightclub provided a space separated from wider society, where young people could socialise in relative anonymity, with fewer restrictions placed on their social interactions. However, the freedoms offered to adolescent girls and young women in the way of leisure space were often mediated through others. Subject to ongoing moral panics about their behaviour, a continuation of societal double-standards regarding sex and relationships, and harsher restrictions placed on their leisure choices and lifestyle by family members, young women's engagement with youth culture was in many ways limited and shaped by wider society. However, despite limitations and restrictions, the increasing number of women socialising in pubs and bars and the rise of the alcohol-fuelled girls' night out is an important development. It indicates a real and significant shift in young women's lifestyles and leisure choices that should not be overlooked.

Oral history formed a central part of the methodology of this thesis, and enabled this research to ask important questions about the different ways young people engaged with youth culture, shedding light on the intricacies of young people's youth cultural experiences. They enabled me to explore how young men and women navigated the youth cultural landscape with limited finances, how they interacted with each other, and how they chose to spend their leisure time. Chapters five and six demonstrated how oral history can be utilised

⁴ Claire Langhamer, 'Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 50.1 (2007), p. 179.

to access the corporeal experiences of youth leisure. By using oral history, I was able to analyse the way young people moved through evening leisure space, and the senses and emotions they attached to such places during their reflections. The interviews further highlighted the importance of friendship groups, clothing choices, and access to disposable income, demonstrating the factors that influenced how, and to what extent, young people engaged with youth culture.

Identity is central to youth culture. Products of youth culture are chosen to denote and represent personality and individuality, in some cases these products are used to denote affiliation with a certain group or movement, while the identity politics of us-versus-them in frameworks of alternative cultures and mainstream culture produce hierarchies of authenticity. Chapter six showed how young people curated their own identity, and how they navigated cultural frameworks of identity in their oral testimonies. It demonstrated that the binary paradigm of mainstream/alternative is untenable; my interviewees engaged with youth culture in a myriad of ways, none of which mapped on to bounded frameworks of culture. Further, evidence from oral testimony showed how those of an alternative persuasion often built their identity against an undefined 'other', suggesting that alternative cultures were often undefined, and identified as much by what they were not than what they were.

A central theme that runs through this thesis is that of regulation and policing. From the moral policing of women's leisure choices from wider society and family, to the practical regulation of evening leisure space by licensing magistrates and local authorities, the types of youth culture that young people had access to were regulated and managed. The regulation of evening leisure space by licensing magistrates played a crucial role in shaping nightlife in Sheffield. Chapters two to four demonstrated how the licensing magistrates responded to the swift emergence of evening leisure space, detailing how they moved from a policy of

management to one of active restriction. Chapter two detailed how the licensing magistrates responded to the emergence of teenage beat clubs, developing a policy that restricted licences in residential areas. The rise of licensed nightclubs marked the establishment of youth leisure as a permanent feature of the city's landscape; Chapter three detailed how the licensing magistrates dealt with the changing cultural landscape of the city. The rise of bars such as the Stone House cemented evening youth leisure as a feature of many young people's lives, and there was an increasing diversification in the types of leisure spaces available to young people in this period. However, these new evening leisure spaces challenged previous ideas of rational leisure and preconceived ideas about what a licensed venue should be. Understood in the context of the national uproar at the emergence of punk the licensing magistrate's response to the Limit nightclub demonstrates how important the image of respectability was to gaining the favour of local authorities. Chapter four detailed the extent to which approaches to licensing shaped Sheffield's cultural landscape. The 1980s marked an era of 'professionalisation' in the licensing magistrates' approach; their introduction of a coordinated policy designed in tandem with the police to restrict the number of licences marked a shift from previous approaches. However, the involvement of Sheffield City Council and South Yorkshire County Council in the establishment and running of the Leadmill venue demonstrated how local approaches to policy were rarely coordinated across different authoritative bodies. The example of the Leadmill further demonstrated that alternative and creative spaces did not necessarily exist in resistance to, or outside of, authoritative bodies; in the case of the Leadmill this was a relationship of cooperation and mutual benefit.

This thesis has demonstrated the significant, and often overlooked, role that local authority had in shaping the cultural landscape of a city. The youth culture that young people

had access to was often shaped and mediated through licensing bodies. The continuing development of Sheffield's licensing magistrates' approach to evening leisure space for youth is demonstrative of the continual shifts in these spaces; the entertainment they were offering, the design of these spaces, and the way young people moved through them were constantly changing, requiring new approaches and tactics. By focusing on the developments in nightlife in one city this thesis has been able to chart in detail the debates and discussions of the licensing magistrates, shedding light on the ways authorities approached the ever-changing lifestyles of young people in post-war Britain.

So what of youth at the end of my period? Following thirty years of cultural change and development, what did it mean to be young at the end of the 1980s? Chapter five demonstrated how the category of youth was changing towards the end of this decade. This chapter argued that the point at which young people moved away from youth cultural activities was complicated by the arrival of acid house, with marriage or children not necessarily being the traditional marker it once was. The very meaning of youth had changed between the 1960s and the 1980s and youth culture was, in many respects, no longer the preserve of young people. My interviewees highlighted the rise of acid house, and later the popularity of rave, as significantly altering the way they engaged with youth culture.⁵ My interviewee Damon explained to me:

Once acid house and everything like that happened, that changed the game for me completely. That was, suddenly you weren't just stood around waiting for the odd few records that you liked and you'd go and have a dance to and then you'd stop again.

⁵ The cultural effects of 'acid house' on the club scene have been explored by several historians and sociologists. For more on this see Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge, 1995); Matthew Collin, *Altered State: The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House* (London, 1997); Steve Redhead, Derek Wynne and Justin O'Connor (eds), *The Clubcultures Reader: Readings in Popular Cultural Studies* (Oxford, 1997); Andrew Hill, 'Acid house and Thatcherism: Contesting spaces in late 1980s Britain', *Space and Polity* 7.3 (2003), pp. 219-232; Andrew Hill, 'Acid House and Thatcherism: noise, the mob, and the English countryside', *British Journal of Sociology* 53.1 (2002), pp. 89-105.

Suddenly this notion of, you dance as soon as you get in and you dance until 4 in the morning and collapse. That was brilliant to me. So that was 87, 88. That was like, the Universe tilted. It felt that important as a cultural shift.⁶

Tamar further recalled:

And then the rave stuff happened more sort of at people's houses, or at warehouses, not in clubs.

S: Yeah. I mean how did you get into that? Was there a network of people that you knew?

Tamar: Yeah. Yeah. Network of people that I knew. They knew the DJs, they knew the venues. Some friends had cars, we used to ring up a number to find out where we were going and we'd get in the car and follow it round and go. Erm, SCR which was Sheffield Community Radio, which was illegal, it was Pirate Radio, used to occasionally broadcast a phone number for you to ring up... I mean, that was just the way that you'd advertise it. Because there wasn't any other way to advertise it. So it was all word of mouth. And flyers. Flyers were massive at that point.⁷

While not every young person was involved with rave culture, it had an indelible impact on the British club scene. The location in which these raves were happening marked a significant shift; large-scale parties were being held outside of the remit of licensing laws, and in public places. Clubbing was no longer confined to the nightclub. The reaction from the government, the press, and local authorities demonstrated how central regulation was to youth leisure. The rise of unregulated acid house parties sparked debates in the House of Commons, and the *Daily Mail* ran predictably sensationalist headlines such as 'Scandal of the Giant Acid Party', followed by a six page special investigation into the new movement.⁸ Ian Taylor, MP for Esher urged the Secretary of State for the Environment to 'extend the powers of local authorities to regulate the holding of acid house parties'.⁹ Acid House parties were unregulated, unpredictable, and unlike anything the authorities had seen before. Dance music

⁶ Interview with Damon.

⁷ Interview with Tamar.

⁸ 'Scandal of the Giant Acid Party', *Daily Mail*, June 26 1989, p. 1.

⁹ 'Acid House Parties', House of Commons Debate, 8 November 1989, vol 159 cc978-9.

made its way into the clubs, again changing the way young people moved in these spaces. The rise of acid house marked a sensible point at which to finish this thesis; it represented both a move away from the traditional nightclub and the extent to which evening youth leisure had transformed over the previous thirty years.

The introduction to this thesis began with Bill Osgerby's assertion that 'never, in the field of social history, has so much been written by so many about so few. In contrast, most young people have been comparatively "normal" and "ordinary" in their cultural orientations and stylistic preferences.'¹⁰ This thesis has shown that the lives of these comparatively 'normal' and 'ordinary' young people, so often ignored and overlooked, were culturally and societally significant. Living through a period of dramatic change, these were ordinary young people navigating the world in extraordinary times. While often less visually spectacular than those youths who gained the attentions -and criticisms- of the media and society, and far less often the focus of sustained academic research, the lives of the young people in this thesis were no less culturally significant. This thesis has argued that the lives of ordinary young people are worthy of study, that their experiences can shed light on the intricacies of people's engagement with youth culture, and that their relationship with youth culture is often more complex than has been appreciated. Their nights out, their clothing choices, and their one-night stands constituted a series of subtle shifts that, by the end of the period, signified a sea change in the way young people lived. Sheffield's Jarvis Cocker sang about the Common People who would 'dance and drink and screw'; this thesis is their story.¹¹

¹⁰ Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 1998), p.74.

¹¹ Pulp, 'Common People' on *Different Class* [CD], Island Records (1995).

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Appendix I

Brief biographical details of the men and women interviewed:

Notes:

- i) Participants who have chosen to use a pseudonym are not distinguished from those participants who have used their real names for reasons of privacy.
- ii) Participants were asked to briefly introduce themselves, rather than filling in a biographical questionnaire. Where a section is left blank it is because this information did not arise during the interview process.
- iii) The age is given at the date of the interview.

Interview with Adrian

Born/age: 44 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Left school at 16, entered a Youth Training Scheme.
Career: Unknown.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 08/10/2015.

Interview with Ann

Born/age: 1942, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended Abbeydale Grammar School, attended Commercial College and then entered Nurses' College aged 18.
Career: Nurse.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 29/09/2015.

Interview with Barbara

Born/age: 78 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Unknown
Career: Before marriage she worked in a cutlery firm. After marriage, she was a full-time mother, but began a playgroup for local children after her three children were born.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 24/09/2015.

Interview with Damon

Born/age: 48 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school, completed a foundation course in Art and Design at Sheffield Polytechnic before attending Coventry Polytechnic to do a degree in Fine Art.
Career: Freelance writer.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 31/09/2015.

Interview with Darren

Born/age: 1967, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school, attended Richmond College before attending Huddersfield Polytechnic to do a degree in Accounting.
Career: Accountant.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 09/09/2015.

Interview with David

Born/age: 1952, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school, expelled during exams. Gained qualifications in metallurgy, photography and computing as an adult.
Career: Worked as an analytical chemist after leaving school.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 12/10/2015.

Interview with Debbie

Born/age: 51 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Left school at 16 and joined the Police Cadets.
Career: Police Constable.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 6/11/2014.

Interview with Gillian

Born/age: 1961, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school, left during A-levels.
Career: Worked in insurance after leaving school.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 05/10/2015.

Interview with Helen H

Born/age: 1960, born in Sheffield.
Education: Left school at 16 and completed a pre-nursing course at Granville College before joining the Nursing College.
Career: Nurse.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 31/07/2015.

Interview with Helen M

Born/age: 47 years old, born in the north-east but grew up in Cheshire.
Education: Attended the local comprehensive until the age of 18, before attending the University of Sheffield to do a degree in Accounting and Maths.
Career: Accountant.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 29/09/2015.

Interview with Jacqueline

Born/age: 1966, born in Sheffield.
Education: Completed qualifications at local comprehensive school before attending Nottingham Polytechnic to do a degree in Teaching.
Career: Teacher.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 03/09/2015.

Interview with Jeff

Born/age: 49 years old, born in Kent.
Education: Educated in Kent, moved to Sheffield aged 19 to do a degree in Psychology, before completing an MSc in Software Engineering.
Career: Unknown.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 28/09/2015.

Interview with Juan

Born/age: Exact age unknown; went to University in 1981, likely born between 1962-1963. Born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school until the age of 18 before going to Wolverhampton Polytechnic to do a degree in Physics and Computing.

Career: IT services.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 27/01/2015.

Interview with Kevin

Born/age: 64 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local Secondary Modern, before attending the Technical School aged 14. Failed A-levels and attended Richmond College of Further Engineering on day-release from work. Retrained as a teacher towards the end of the 1970s.
Career: Teacher.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 15/10/2015.

Interview with Marian

Born/age: 1954, born in Sheffield.
Education: Educated at Notre Dame Grammar School before attending Bradford University to do a degree in Human Purposes and Communication. She left the degree before graduating and came back to Sheffield
Career: Unknown.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 23/09/2015.

Interview with Mark

Born/age: 43 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school, left with no qualifications before joining a Youth Training Scheme.
Career: Worked in the care industry; at time of interview was retraining in academia. He was a mature MA student in History, having gained his BA degree the year before.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 18/09/2015.

Interview with Pat

Born/age: 1953, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended grammar school until the age of 18 before attending Teacher Training College.
Career: Teacher.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 25/09/2015.

Interview with Ricardo

Born/age: 52 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school, before completing O-Levels and CSE's.
Left education at 16.
Career: Has worked in family business since leaving school.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 26/01/2015.

Interview with Sue

Born/age: 1950, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended Abbeydale Grammar School. Left at 16 to do an art foundation at Sheffield Art College before attending Teacher Training College.
Career: Teacher.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 28/09/2015.

Interview with Tamar

Born/age: 44 years old, moved to Sheffield aged 10.
Education: Attended local comprehensive school before completing A-levels at Richmond College. Completed a degree at Nottingham University.
Career: Works in the creative and cultural sector.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 22/09/2015.

Interview with Tony

Born/age: 59 years old, born in Sheffield.
Education: Left school at 17 and joined the army just before his 18th birthday.
Career: Following three years in the army he joined a Sheffield tool firm, working in exports.
Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 04/11/2014.

Interview with Trish

Born/age: 1949, born in Sheffield.
Education: Attended grammar school before going to the University of Leicester to do a degree in Combined Studies. Following completion of her degree, she retrained as a teacher.

Career: Taught in mainstream schools before specialising as a teacher in Special Educational Needs schools.

Contact: Interview conducted by Sarah Kenny, 21/09/2015.

Appendix II

A map of Sheffield City Council Wards 1980-2004.

Map from <http://mdfs.net/maps/Sheffield/lgbr2002/Wards1980/> [last accessed 26/07/2017]/

