JUST 4 U LONDON

Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective

Niels Frederik Birket-Smith

Just 4 U London – Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

My master's thesis *Just 4 U London – Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective* focuses on the phenomenon of contemporary London-based illegal pirate radio. The thesis is situated in the academic context of urban and cultural geography, employing phenomenological qualitative research methods of field trips, interviews, audio/video broadcasts and recordings, and more. Theoretically, the thesis utilises the recent strain of 'music geographies' and selected works of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, as well as contemporary works inspired by the said two.

Putting pirate radio into a geographic perspective involves analysing how the urban space of London is tactically and temporarily appropriated, embodied and produced. Urban space, in this case, does not simply equal physical spatialities, such as in the case of temporary broadcast studios in derelict industrial units, tower blocks, and council estates, etc., but also equal mental and social spatialities. Acting as mental and social spaces for communities of avid listeners, as well as for pirate DJ's, MC's and producers, the phenomenon of pirate radio provides an unfiltered outlet for their music and soundscapes, especially of the locally produced bass-heavy urban and electronic genres.

Pirate radio serves as an influential urban space for aspiring artists to socialise and network with listeners and established pirates alike, while at the same time serving as a community vehicle through which they can make themselves be heard. This space also serves as a talent incubator for the established pirates, an instrumental steppingstone that on a regional and national scale can lead to professional careers on legal radio stations. Operating on an informal, non-political, grass-root level, the phenomenon of contemporary London-based pirate radio provides a musical geography of resistance.

Appreciated as an alternative, but vital urban way of life, pirate radio generates a right to the city by enabling the possibility of a public, free, and unfiltered voice in an urban space of its own. With a phenomenological perspective, my research contributes to urban and cultural geography with a snapshot of the mental, social, and physical relationships between contemporary London-based pirate radio and the production of urban space.

Keywords: Pirate radio; London; UK; soundscapes; phenomenology; music geographies; production of urban space; tactics; re-use; appropriation; embodiment; temporality; bass culture; urban geography; cultural geography.

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Dedikeret til min farmor.

CONTENTS

FIGURES

Front: The 25 storey Draper House Estate, Elephant & Castle, South London. The roof top is seen fitted with several illegal pirate radio aerials. Copyright James Burns

Inside spreads: Panoramic view of London photographed from St. Paul's Cathedral in Central London, 2007; the first spread faces North East and East London, including the skyscrapers of the City of London, the second spread faces East and South London, including the River Thames. Copyright David Iliff, Creative Commons

1. Wyndham and Comber Estate, Camberwell, South London. The same blocks were featured in the video to Goldie's drum'n'bass classic *Inner City Life*. Copyright James Burns
2. A pirate radio crew tags the wall of a tower block, leaving a message to fellow pirates. Copyright James Burns
3. A collage of (from top left to bottom right) Radio Caroline; Radio Mercur; a Danish radio set with the frequency of Mercur printed on the front; the Maunsell sea forts; and some of the first Jamaican immigrants arriving in the UK. Copyright unknown
4. Grime MC's spitting bars on an unknown pirate radio station in Bow, East London. Copyright Simon Wheatley
5. The logo for the short-lived Danish pirate radio station, Pirat Radio 69. Copyright unknown
6. Dizzee Rascal. Copyright unknown
7. A radio dial 'locked on'. Taken from the logo of London-based UK garage record label, Locked On Records. Copyright Locked On Records
8. A collage of (from top and bottom left to right) a burnt out car in front of the three tower blocks of the Crossways Estate in Bow, East London. According to photographer James Burns, it was the estate from which both Kool FM and Rinse FM used to broadcast. It has since, according to the photographer, been refurbished; a detail of a massive sound system subwoofer; a collection of various Rinse FM tapes and flyers; and a derelict building in East London with posters of grime MC Skepta's new album, photographed by Bixentro.
9. Several illegal pirate radio aerials fitted on a tall mast made out of scaffolding. According to the photographer, the photograph was taken just before Ofcom came to dismount the mast. Copyright James Burns
10. The 33 boroughs of London. Copyright the author
11. The five sub-regions of London. Copyright the author
12. Map of the UK with the red dots symbolising the cities I visited during my two field trips in the spring of 2010. Copyright the author
13. Two grime MC's; one spitting bars, the other showing off a short samurai sword. The DJ, record in hand, is seen on the left. Unknown pirate radio station in Bow, East London.
14. A collage of (from top left to bottom right) the Iration Steppas (formerly known as Ital Rockers) sound system at the controls during a soundclash in Leicester; a poster promoting a massive UK funky concert at Wembley Arena, London; the Neumann cutting lathe at Transition Studios in Forest Hill, South London, cutting my first dubstep release; Jah Vego in front of his shop in West London; a drastic change in urban space as Holly Street Estate rises high in Hackney, photographed in 1988 by Chris Dorley-Brown; a poster for the soundclash I attended in Leicester, May 2010.
15. Outdoors sound system dance at the Notting Hill Carnival 2005, West London. Copyright Marcus Riccoboni

16. Sound system operators at the Notting Hill Carnival 2005, West London. Copyright Marcus Riccoboni
17. A whistle-blowing participant at the Notting Hill Carnival 2008, West London. Copyright Carlo Nicora
18. Rum & Black's 12" vinyl release *Fuck the Legal Stations* (1990). Copyright Shut Up & Dance Records
19. A hand-drawn map and chronology of the many UK pirate radio stations in the period of 1969-1988, as depicted in Soul Underground magazine, July 1988. Copyright Bill Dew, John Shonubi and Soul Underground
20. Screen shot of the Rinse FM streaming application for Apple's iPhone. Copyright Rinse FM and Code Army
21. Detail from a former Kool FM studio, unknown location, London. Copyright James Burns
22. A grimy looking area; Putting Mill Lane, East London. According to the photographer, it was taken in 1999 from what is now inside the London 2012 Olympic site. Copyright Chris Dorley-Brown
23. A collage of (from top left to bottom right) Ofcom inspecting a tall pirate radio aerial; a home-built aerial made out of scaffolding and copper wire seen in between mobile telephone and television aerials; a DJ of the Ragga Twins crew on air at a former Kool FM studio, East London; Uncle Dugs (right, standing), Chef (centre, seated) and unknown at a former Kool FM studio; a London tower block as presented on the Rinse FM website; and a fire door leading to one of the former Kool FM studios in which the Ragga Twins are live on air, some of them visible through the window.
24. A map of London showing the areas of East London that Geeneus of Rinse FM point out. Copyright the author
25. Kool FM pirates in action, live on air. Unknown location, London. Copyright James Burns
26. A collage of (from top left to bottom right) pirate MC and DJ on air at Flex FM, unknown location, London; a cassette player loaded with adverts for use on a pirate station; a crew of young kids hanging out at a pirate station in Bow, East London; Rinse FM's headquarters in the Brick Lane area of East London, the numbers in the windows visualising their at the time (autumn of 2010) new official broadcast frequency of 106.8 FM; the Ragga Twins and crew live on air at a former Kool FM studio in East London; a massive home-built dub reggae sound system on the sidewalk at the Notting Hill Carnival 2008 in West London; and a 'Legalise Kiss 94 FM' badge from the late 1980's, as the station applied for an official, legal broadcast license.
27. A map of London showing the placement of Canary Wharf in relation to Ciaran O'Hagan's story on the turf war between rival pirate stations. Copyright the author
28. Detail of several illegal pirate radio aerials fitted on a tall mast made out of scaffolding. Copyright James Burns
29. 'Where's the pirate station?'. Taken from the artwork *The Island* (2008) by Stephen Walter, this detail of East London is just one of the areas of the extremely detailed and massive 101 x 153 cm hand-drawn map, which took two years to complete, depicting London as an island. The artist tells of the map; "My drawings evolved with a growing lexicon of public and sub-cultural signs and symbols, leading me to look at maps and their keys. I began to invent my own, creating fictitious lands as well real places in my life. […] The Map is as much about the personality of its viewer than it is about of my own. In other words it acts as a mirror." See the full map at: www.bl.uk/magnificentmaps/map4.html Copyright Stephen Walter

DVD

An accompanying DVD is attached this thesis. It includes audio and video examples of relevance to my research on the phenomenon of pirate radio. At the beginning of each chapter, it is advisable to turn to the respective folders on DVD (depicted as Preface/Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; and so on), as the audio and video examples serves to ease the reader in understanding what pirate radio is and what it sounds like.

READING GUIDE

Just 4 U London - Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective is written as my final thesis as a master's student at the department of geography, Roskilde University, Denmark. The research focus of the thesis is the phenomenon of London pirate radios: Illegal radio broadcasts and transmissions that have become not only a part of British youth culture, but also the everyday urban life of London. As a Danish student at a Danish university, one may wonder why have I chosen to conduct a research study on a British phenomenon, and why the thesis is written in English, There are reasons to this: Despite its illegal status, pirate radio, as I shall argue in great detail throughout the thesis, is a valuable urban and cultural phenomenon, and a geographic study of it brings a better understanding of how urban space - physically, mentally and socially - is appropriated, embodied and produced by informal, apolitical communities and movements, operating on a grass-root level. As to why the thesis is written in English and not in Danish, I offer two simple explanations: First, because almost all empirical data on the topic is in English; and second, because I would like my thesis to be available to non-Danish-speaking researchers and students alike.

Several features have been included in the appendix to familiarise the reader with the phenomenon of pirate radio. A DVD accompanies the thesis, containing select examples of audio and video. In the lead-in to each chapter, look for a red circle. I recommend the reader to make use of the DVD. A list of some of the slang and abbreviations that are used throughout the thesis, but are not part of the academic language of geography, is included in the appendix. It is advisable to consult this list when in doubt what 'DAB, 'sound clash' or 'MC' mean. *Just 4 U London* is divided into a preface, seven chapters and an appendix. Using the Roskilde University standard of 2400 characters to a thesis page, my thesis consist of approximately 88 pages (not including abstract, references, and appendices). The design of the thesis presents as follows:

- **The preface** - *London Calling* - provides an introduction to the research topic, as well as how I was introduced to the phenomenon and why I want to study it further. This serves as the lead-in for the first chapter.
- **Chapter 1** - *Rebel Radio* - presents a brief overview of the history and development of the pirate radio phenomenon. By this, the chapter provides a theoretical and empirical entry by which the scope of study is identified. The problem formulation emerges as the final part of the chapter.

- **Chapter 2** - *Inner City Life* - deals with the first of two parts on research methods; It features a theoretical view on urban space inspired by Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991 [1974]) and *Writings on Cities* (1996 [1967]), and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988 [1984]). Second, with a 'music geography' perspective, a connection between the production of urban space, music and sound is revealed. Finally, a phenomenological view on the theory of science is put in focus.

- **Chapter 3** - *Scale, Data and Methodology* - covers the second and final part on research methods, including discussions of scale(s), the collection and processing of empirical data, and the methodology.

- **Chapter 4** - *Ships, Sea Forts and Tower Blocks* - examines the first of a two-part analysis; the history of the UK pirate radios from the pioneering sea-based pirate radio vessels of the 1960's to the contemporary pirates of the 2000's. By this, four generations of UK pirate radio are traced, and a historical understanding of the research topic is established.

- **Chapter 5** - *A London Someti'ng Dis* - features the second and primary part of the two-part analysis; the analyses of contemporary pirate radio in relation to four analytical themes of the global and local; communities; talent incubation; and urban temporality.

- **Chapter 6** - *Original Pirate Material* - offers the conclusion of the thesis. Besides critically summing up what is gained from my analyses of the pirate radio phenomenon, chapter six provides an answer to the thesis statement.

- **Chapter 7** - *Roots'n'Future* - explores a brief two-levelled discussion of firstly what can be learned from my research, and secondly which other strains of geography could be included in a possible continued and expanded research study of the phenomenon.

- **The appendix** consists of seven appendices: **1)** Internet links to the artists and institutions mentioned throughout the thesis; **2)** a glossary of abbreviations used throughout the thesis; **3)** a list of London FM pirate radio stations presumed active, including station names, frequencies and genre(s) of music; **4)** a 'how-to' guide on setting up your own small-scale pirate radio station; **5)** summaries of the interviews conducted [recordings of the interviews are available on the accompanying DVD]; and finally **6)** two articles; one (for Politiken, a Danish news paper) in which I was interviewed regarding my research (in relation to a rave I promoted in August 2010); and a second (for Soundvenue, a Danish music magazine), from October 2010, for which I was asked to draw a parallel between the phenomenon of London pirate radio and the Danish music radio culture [provided in Danish only].

"Them a call us pirates
Them call us illegal broadcasters
Just because we play what the people want
Them a call us pirates
Them call us illegal broadcasters
DTI try stop us, but they can't

What seems one of the few reggae/dancehall tunes to address pirate radio, *Pirate's Anthem* (1989) by Home T feat. Cocoa Tea and Shabba Ranks is a four minute lyrical tribute to the illegal British broadcasters of the 1980's. When former pirate station Kiss FM on September 1st, 1990, went legal the first tune to be played on the station was this.

LONDON CALLING - THE PREFACE

I find myself at the entrance to Mile End tube station in the East End of London. Spring, early May, the sun is setting. It is Election Night 2010, and while people all around me hurry home to catch the latest news and results, I am waiting for Uncle Dugs - one of the dons at London pirate radio station Kool FM, an established drum 'n' bass DJ in his own right, and previously one of the daily managers at Rinse FM, another pirate station. I am to visit the radio studios of Kool, London's longest running pirate station, established in 1991. My phone rings, Dugs has arrived and is parked just around the corner. In a nearby alley, I can hear deep bass frequencies from a black sports car. One of the tinted windows rolls down, and a cloud of ganja smoke filters out. Uncle Dugs and his driver mate smile and greet me warmly, they seem friendly. I am offered a place in the small back seat of the car. The digital display of the radio FM dial is set to 'KOOL,' the speakers are blasting sub heavy bass lines and fast-paced breakbeats. We chat while driving to the secret location. It seems they deliberately take several detours to make it difficult for me to remember the route. As we arrive, Uncle Dugs summarises his life as a pirate, "It's like it's in your blood. I'm in it 'till I die."

Illegal pirate stations have operated in Denmark, the UK, and other European countries since the late 1950's and early 1960's. Playing rock 'n' roll, soul, and pop music, the pioneering pirates championed music not featured on the public service stations. Yet, since then, it is primarily in the UK that pirate radio stations have firmly established themselves, especially in London, where as many as 25-50 stations, and according to the broadcasting regulator authority, Ofcom, even up to 75 stations (BBC, 2007b), transmit illegal radio broadcasts on a daily or weekly basis. The broadcasts consist primarily of music, but also include news, local community information, political debates, and entertainment.

My interest in the pirate radio phenomenon began in the early 1990's, when I started to collect records, produce music, and perform as a DJ. Because my primary musical interest has been intensively focused on the British underground music scenes, pirate radio is a topic of which I have heard and read a lot about. However, it was not until I moved to London in 1999 that I realised how widespread the pirate radio phenomenon was. When I turned on my radio in London, the illegal stations were present all over the

Figure 1. Wyndham and Comber Estate, Camberwell, South London. The same blocks were featured in the video to Goldie's drum 'n' bass classic Inner City Life.

FM dial. It was a tremendous source of musical inspiration while living in the UK. As one British DJ puts it, "In the darkness of London the light of the pirates kept burning though no matter what, and that sensitivity I had towards them left the deepest imprints […]" (Pipe Down, 29-03-2010).

In June 2009, while participating in a Roskilde University field course to the UK, I had my first opportunity to visit a pirate radio station. I was invited to DJ on a Leeds pirate radio station by two of the station's host, both of them from Manchester. This particular radio station had at the time recently lost its transmitter in a raid, and was temporarily broadcasting only through the Internet. Later on, I became aware that the station manager and owner of the station was fined nearly £3500, as well as given a jail sentence. However, the station came back on the air, and is in the process of applying for a full time FM licence (Radio Frequency, 2010).

In Denmark, I have organised and promoted music events for several years, bringing over a great number of UK artists to perform. Through the process of getting to know the artists, I realised that many had started their music careers on local pirate stations. For some UK artists, the illegal broadcasts seem to be one

of the only opportunities to be heard by a like-minded audience. For some, it is even a way of breaking through to the mainstream music business. A few of the artists have since become known worldwide, but though they tour the world's most prestigious clubs, raves, and festivals, they still gladly produce a regular show on a local pirate station (Crazy D, 2010; Riko, 2010; Skream & Benga, 2010). It seems that the pirate stations are not only incubators of new talent, but also an important cultural lifeline to like-minded listeners and fellow artists in the local pirate communities. By establishing temporary DIY radio studios and sites of transmission in often worn-down and deprived areas of London, the pirates engage their surrounding urban space. In informal, yet illegal, ways, their actions speak of challenging the rules and regulations of not just British broadcasting politics, but also of urban space. It is these experiences that intrigued me, and led me into researching the topic of contemporary UK, and especially London-based pirate radios further. As Mary Anne Hobbs (2010) of BBC Radio 1 said in an interview I did with her; "It's not breaking the law to say you love a pirate, is it?"

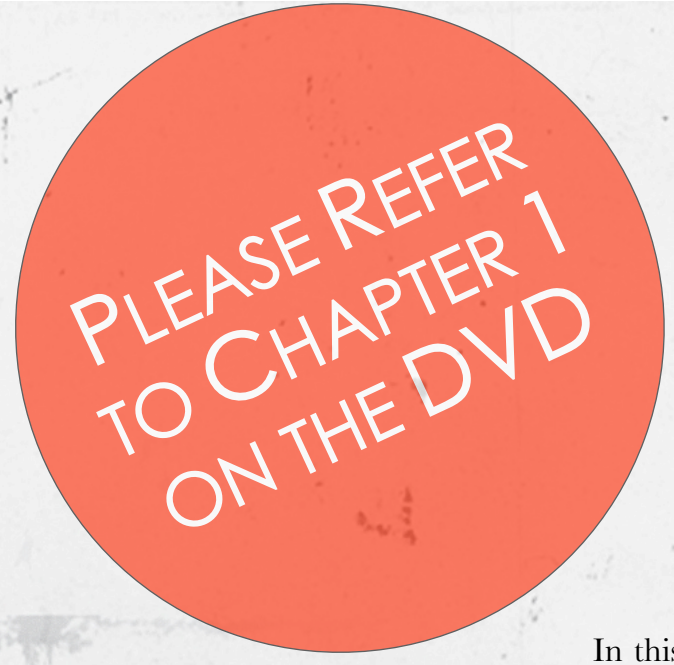
The aim of *Just 4 U London - Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective* is to establish an analysis of how the contemporary London pirate radio phenomenon within the context of geography appropriates, embodies and produces urban space. I hope it shall provide an interesting and valuable read - not only for urban and cultural geographers, but also for researchers of other academic fields, and those with an interest in urban pirate culture.

Niels Frederik Birket-Smith

Frederiksberg, Denmark, February 2011

Figure 2 (next page). A pirate radio crew tags the wall of a London tower block, leaving a message to fellow pirates.


THIS BLOCK
BELONGS TO SHOCKIN 90
PS- I LEFT THE
RIG ON THE ROOF
FOR YOU AND I WILL
SEE YOU LATER?
HERES
TO ALL



1

REBEL RADIO - MY RESEARCH FOCUS

In this chapter I present my research focus; at first briefly highlighting the history of British pirate radio, and from this, introducing my 'dual personality' involvement in the research filed as both an academic (master's student) and a professional (DJ, producer, and promoter). I strengthen my research focus with a presentation of some of the current debates on and studies of pirate radio. The chapter is finalised with the problem formulation, guiding my research of the phenomenon of London pirate radio.

From Denmark to Britain

> "Turn on the radio in London (and in most major UK cities) and wedged in between Radio Four shipping forecast and the latest from Elton John you'll hear a clattering of upfront beats and red-hot street slang" (Brewster & Broughton, 1999:351).

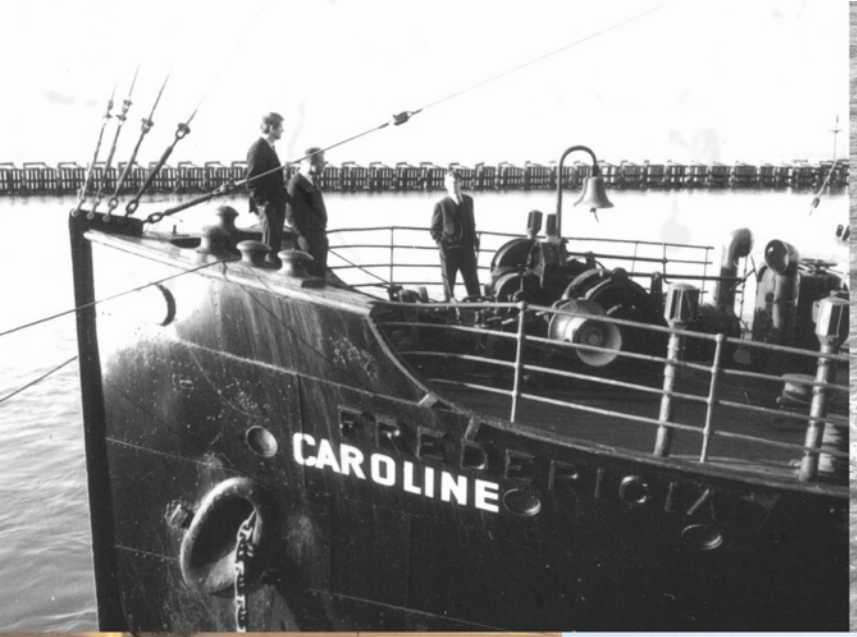
The story of the European pirate radios begins in Denmark in the summer of 1958. From Øresund, the narrow waters between Denmark and Sweden, the Radio Mercur ship broadcasts a brand-new type of radio. Inspired by American radio shows, funded by commercials, and with a focus on the music of the young generations, the old vessel is upgraded with aerials and transmitters, and operated by young entrepreneurs who challenges the national radio of Denmark, DR(Nørgaard, 2003). The idea of commercial offshore-based broadcast vessels quickly spread to Sweden, Holland, Belgium, and in particular the UK (Crisell, 2005 [1997]; Harris, 2007 [1968]).[1] The most well known of the British pirate radio ships of the time includes Radio Caroline and Radio London, broadcasting off the coast of the British Isles (Brewster & Broughton, 1999; Coyer, 2007). Like the Danish ship Mercur, the British ships are converted into broadcast vessels, and even British WW2 sea forts are squatted and refurbished as illegal radio stations [Leonard, 2004].

> "Radio Caroline essentially galvanized the cultural momentum at this time – countercultural music required countercultural transmission. The promise of transmission from an offshore perspective is also the promise of hearing something one cannot find elsewhere, fully embodying the mythology of the pirate vessel appearing as if from nowhere, thereby participating in the movements of radical autonomy" (LaBelle, 2010:231).

However, despite support from the younger generations, both the UK and the Danish pirates feel a strong political pressure against them. Even though the pirate stations proves highly popular, at least with the younger audiences, the 1960's is both the beginning and the end for almost all European pirates. In the UK and in Denmark, respectively, the BBC and DR establishes new national stations featuring to an extent the same kind of popular music formats as the pirates (Crisell, 2007; Nørgaard, 2003).

Figure 3 (opposite page). A collage of (from top left to bottom right) Radio Caroline; Radio Mercur; a Danish radio set with the frequency of Mercur printed on the front; the Maunsell sea forts; and some of the first Jamaican immigrants arriving in the UK.

1 For more on the British and European pirate radio stations (including the political pirate stations), please see Coyer et al. (2007); Downing (2001:184-191); Harris (2007); Hendy (2000); Humphrey (2003); LaBelle (2010:114-231); Leonard (2004); Lodge (2003); Nørgaard (2003); and Rasmussen (2007).


CAROLINE


RADIO CAROLINE


RADIO MERCUR


EX. A
VESTJYLLAND I
AARHUS I
MERCUR VEST
FYN I
KØBENHAVN I
90
92

Radio 1[2] and Program 3,[3] the British and Danish sister channels, musically caters exclusively to the same audiences as the pirate stations, while new reforms are initiated by the respective governments in order to stop the illegal broadcasters (Harris, 2007 [1968]; Miles; 2010; Nørgaard, 2003). Even so, from the mid and late 1970's, and in particular in the early 1980's, a new type of pirate begins to operate in the UK, and a land-based pirate radio culture emerges. London in particular sees a large share of pirate stations. The land-based stations plays black music such as reggae, hip hop, soul, and dub, not available on Radio 1, or other legal UK radio stations for that matter. Illegal stations such as Dread Broadcasting Cooperation [DBC], Invicta, JFM, Horizon, LWR, and K-Jazz provides London with upfront music as well as local community news to a growing audience of dedicated listeners (Hebdige, 2007 [1987]; Hind & Mosco, 1985). With the advent of rave culture and genres such as acid house in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the phenomenon of UK pirate radio flourishes. In 1989, the pirate radio phenomenon is dubbed "the bush telegraph of acid house" (Soul Underground, 1989/1990:313), as it becomes one of the main communication links of the rave communities. Especially the music of the 'hardcore continuum'[4] (Reynolds, 2009a; 2009b) such as jungle, drum 'n' bass, and UK garage[5] spawns a greater amount of pirate stations than ever before - again particularly in London (Brewster & Broughton, 1999; Christodoulou, 2009; O'Hagan, 2004; Reynolds, 2008 [1998]). Pirate station crews actively participates in organising and promoting club nights, raves, and warehouse parties. In many communities, pirate radio is heralded as not only the antipode of the legal radio broadcasters, but also as the only true voice of the UK music underground (Thornton, 1995:146-148). On the rooftops of London's tower blocks, aerials and FM transmitters are set up, while radio

2 BBC Radio 1 was established in 1967.

3 Danmarks Radio Program 3 (P3) was established in 1963.

4 "This hardcore continuum is just one continuum among many in music. It's even not the only dance continuum […] I call it a 'continuum' because that's what it is: a musical tradition/subcultural tribe that's managed to hold it together for nearly 20 years now. […] The point of the continuum is, it doesn't stay still, ever. […] The hardcore continuum operates through a different kind of utopianism, not constituted through space but through time. […] I sometimes think of the hardcore continuum as being like a rocket, it sheds all these stages as it hurtles into the beyond. It is burning with such intensity that it can just shed these sounds behind it […] as a cultural engine that produces the music., it has been about London and the most London-like cities in the UK, in terms of their multiculturalism, as well as their multiracialism. […] It does have a romance of place - the Just 4 U London thing" (Reynolds, 2009).

5 The accompanying DVD features examples of these and other genres that relate to pirate radio.

studios are established in deserted industrial units and empty flats. Being land-based, however, does not change the way the radio stations are perceived politically. They are considered illegal. The Broadcasting Act of 1990 forces the pirates to consider moving in one of two directions; either continue broadcasting illegally, or apply for an official broadcast licence. Many stations continue their illegal FM broadcasts, while Kiss as the only major pirate station turns legal (Thornton, 1995:146-151). The illegal pirates are increasingly raided and prosecuted by the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI)[6] and the police. Formerly known as the DTI, Ofcom in cooperation with the police, is responsible for seizing illegal transmitters and aerials as well as raiding pirate studios, prosecuting the illegal broadcasters to protect the radio spectrum from interference [Ofcom, 2007). According to Ofcom, the problem is that pirates interfere not only with the legal FM broadcasters, but also with the flight control of the airports and the emergency radio bands of fire and ambulance departments (Ofcom, 2007). In an article from The Evening Standard (15-04-2005), the broadcasting authorities "say such stations steal electricity, damage buildings and interfere with other radio signals - including those of emergency services." Briefly put, Ofcom regulates the radio spectrum as well as television and other electronic communications services under the Communications Acts (The National Archives, 2003), to "make sure that people in the UK get the best from their communications services and are protected from scams and sharp practices, while ensuring that competition can thrive" (Ofcom, 2010a). With Ofcom on their heels, major pirate stations turning legal,[7] the BBC featuring more dance and urban music than ever before (Hobbs, 2010; Paul, 2010), and with the arrival of DAB and Internet radio, the FM-based pirates would appear to lose their relevancy (New Statesman, 30-08-2007). This development, nonetheless, has not led to the demise of pirate radio. On the contrary, it seems that it is thriving as a vibrant and important part of UK music culture and London urban life. Turning on the FM radio in London, as I did on two field trips to the UK in 2010, exemplifies this fact. On said field trips I have with the background of a geography student researched the phenomenon of pirate radio, however, on many occasions it proved to be my professional music background that paved the way for these studies. This dual involvement in the research field I will account for in the following.

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6 Now known as Ofcom (www.ofcom.org.uk).

7 Kiss in 1990; Rinse in 2010.

Academic and professional involvements

As of this writing (spring to winter of 2010), I have been a student at Roskilde University for five years, at the moment undertaking the final ascent of the master's study. While at Roskilde University I have worked with what my father, a doctor of psychiatry, might call a 'dual personality'. On one side, I have been involved in my academic studies at the university, while on the other side I have continued my work as one of the leading Danish DJ's, producers, and promoters of bass-driven electronic and urban music. Since 1993, I have worked professionally with the UK music scene as a DJ and recording artist (under the alias of 2000F), promoter of dubstep, grime, UK garage, and drum 'n' bass music (co-organising, amongst others, the OHOI! and RAW events in Denmark), and as a dubstep record label manager (Kraken Recordings). In 2005, alongside the RAW events crew, I had the privilege to work with BBC 1Xtra, broadcasting live from our rave in Copenhagen to the world, and in 2008 I was invited to DJ on London-based Kiss, a former pirate station, now broadcasting legally. Therefore I find it necessary to comment on both my academic and professional involvement with the particular research topic.

It was not until I began my Bachelor studies at Roskilde University that I realised my academic and professional personalities could be combined, and I have since attempted to combine the two even further. With *Bass Culture Weekender - En forundersøgelse* (Birket-Smith, 2009), my final semester thesis at Performance-design, Roskilde University, I combined my academic research theories and methods with empirical data from my professional life to analyse how the bass music culture of Jamaica and the UK can be rooted in Denmark. The research position I maintain for this current study holds a similar duality by which I on the one side try to maintain an academic researcher's distance to the topic, yet on the other hand utilising my professional network. This network has helped me to gain access to otherwise limited information on the phenomenon, as well as enabled me to get in contact with relevant persons. During one of the interviews conducted on my field trips to the UK, I asked if the interviewee in question could help me get in touch with a certain pirate station manager, to which the interviewee replied, "He'll know your records anyway, so that will help" (Clark, 2010), proving the importance of my professional network. The dual perspective of the academic and the professional again came into play when Danish music magazine Soundvenue (October 2010) asked me to write a short feature on UK pirate radio and what lessons Danish music radio can learn from it. Furthermore, the Danish newspaper Politiken

Figure 4. Grime MC's spitting bars on an unknown pirate radio station in Bow, East London.

(06-08-2010) interviewed me regarding the development of contemporary London pirate radio in relation to one of the raves I promoted during the summer of 2010.[8] Finally, for Ungdomshuset,[9] I contributed a few DJ mixes to their short-lived Pirat Radio 69, broadcasting on 101.8 FM in the Copenhagen area.[10] Short-lived indeed, the Pirat Radio 69 station was illegally

Figure 5. The logo for the short-lived Danish pirate radio station, Pirat Radio 69.

on air from December 14, 2006, to March 1, 2007. A final mention on this matter is that before I started at Roskilde University, DR, the national broadcaster of Denmark, interviewed me twice regarding the underground London movement of grime music[11] and the associated cultural phenomenon of pirate radio (Danmarks Radio, 2005; Danmarks Radio, 2006). It seems that I, with this master's thesis on pirate radio, have come full cycle, and finally to a full extent can combine my 'dual personality' of the academic and the professional.

The first outline of the research

The phenomenon of pirate radio can be divided into two distinct types: 1) the music pirates, and 2) the political pirates. It is the first of the two types that is of my interest, and of these, it is especially the contemporary London-based stations. It is not my intention to dwell on other kinds of pirate mediums or technologies such as computer and software hackers, music and film bootleggers, and peer-to-peer and file sharing networks.

8 Please see appendix six for the Politiken and Soundvenue articles [provided in Danish only].

9 Ungdomshuset ('the Youth House') was an autonomous squatter house in the Nørrebro neighbourhood of central Copenhagen, Denmark. In active use from 1982 to the police clearing raid of March 2007, Ungdomshuset was primarily used by squatters and left-wing activists, yet was owned by the Municipality of Copenhagen until 1999 when it was sold to a private developer and later on demolished.

10 For more on the Pirat Radio 69 of Ungdomshuset, please go to: www.myspace.com/piratradio69

11 For more on grime music, please see Simon Wheatley's *Inner-City Youth, London*; a narrated and interactive photo blog from 2005 on grime music and youth culture in deprived areas of London: http://todayspictures.slate.com/inmotion/simon. Though not of recent date, the DVD *Lord of the Mic - Battle Arena Vol. 1* (Hotheadz Promotions, 2004) features London grime MC's clashing.

Even though pirate radio is illegal in the UK, I do not discuss whether it should be made legal or not. This topic has been debated fiercely since the first pirates started broadcasting in the 1960's, and has since been revisited several times with revisions of the UK telecommunication bills. What I intend to elucidate is how the pirates operate in the urban landscape of London, whether illegal or not. By this, I do not lend my support to illegal activity, and the thesis should not be read as a glorification of pirate radio stations. It is the geographic aspects of the pirate radio phenomenon I seek to investigate further.

The urban and cultural strains of geography, which I regard as my primary academic foundations, provide methods and theories which enable me to analyse, as I will show in the following chapters, how pirate radio appropriates, embodies and produces urban space. One aspect researchers seem to agree upon is that pirate radio stations are an important factor in the development of music communities as well as fostering new talent and genres. Pirate radio not only provides a self-organised cultural home for the communities of artists, DJ's, MC's, and listeners, but they also inspire an ethos in which musical experimentation is key. Pirate radio, argues Matt Mason, author of *The Pirate's Dilemma* (2008) and former pirate radio DJ, "act as musical Petri dishes" (Mason, 2008:44), especially for the dance, elecronic and urban styles of music. They provide a foundation for artists to network and develop their particular genre of music. Similarly, author of *Sonic Warfare* (2010), lecturer in music culture at the University of East London, Steve Goodman (a.k.a. dubstep producer and DJ Kode9) introduces the methodological concept of 'audio virology,' by which he analyses the dialectical relationship between the over and underground of the London music industry. Goodman argues that the overground mainstream industries feed from artists that develop in the underground pirate radio communities, yet also *vice versa*. It is through pirate radio that the latest musical trends are presented, and these trends cross over into territories of the professional and established music industry, on some occasions creating mainstream stars such as Tinchy Stryder, Tinie Tempah, Chipmunk, Kano, Devlin, Professor Green, Skepta, Roll Deep, and especially Dizzee Rascal (Danmarks Radio, 2005). Dizzee Rascal, often proclaimed to be the most commercially successful grime MC to date, is an example of how underground artists eventually can become mainstream stars. Dizzee Rascal has from childhood, like so many other artists of the British music underground, listened to pirate radio to seek inspiration. The stations also act as talent incubators, where young, inexperienced artists can test and hone their skills. Dizzee

Rascal, who had his record debut in 2003, tells how he developed his unique rap style while in elementary school;

> "Even when I was at school, I was on pirate radio. I was at one radio station in North London, where I used to go after school sometimes. And I went on going on Rinse FM – it's one of the big pirate stations, probably the biggest in London. And I used to do that 1 o'clock in the morning to 3 o'clock in the morning – and then go school the next day" (Danmarks Radio, 2005).

The pirate stations, it seems, provide a voice not only for the established DJ's, MC's and producers, but also for those considered up and coming talent. Pirate radio is an important outlet for immigrant communities too, providing a multicultural mash-up of the music of almost every foreign community in Britain,[12] which, according to some, all too often is not found on legal radio (Lepke, 2007; New Statesman, 30-08-2007). For British youth, whether of immigrant background or not, it is a matter of self-identity as, "mainstream society often prefers to see us as part of an amorphous community than as individuals. We are both visible and invisible. [It is] about demanding to be heard […]" (Lazarides & Cunningham, 2001). With pirate radio, British youth can make themselves be heard, and in this process

12 Genres such as reggae, bhangra, dub, soca, dancehall, afrobeat, hip-hop, soul, calypso, and r 'n' b.

Figure 6. Dizzee Rascal.

unique subcultures seem to be forged. By fusing the music and cultures of British and immigrant communities, Goodman sees pirate radio acting as incubators of not only new talent, but also new home-grown genres of 'mongrel' music'[13] (Goodman, 2010a:181; Goodman, 2010b). That pirate radio incubates new talent and genres is a point to which Mason can agree, arguing that;

> "Pirate radio is an incubator where new music can mutate. Initially, the new strains of music it produces are seen as too risque for the mainstream to touch, but once this music reaches a critical mass in popularity, anthems from the pirates start hitting the pop charts, pirate DJ's become crossover celebrities, and the scenes created by these stations grow into cottage industries and worldwide exports" (Mason, 2008:44).

Nevertheless, Goodman does not see the relationship between the underground pirates and the overground music industries as strictly positive. Rather, argues Goodman, "Once pirate and mainstream culture enter this tighter symbiotic relationship of affective contagion, the distinction between pirate or DIY microcultures and a co-opting capitalism becomes flattened" (Goodman, 2010a:180-181). This requires an increased awareness of the unique qualities the pirates have to offer, by paying "more affective attention to the sometimes inaudible, vibratory, carrier waves which animate the babble of voices; how do the affective orientations of bass cultures and their deployment of sound systems, from pirate radio to the dancehall, work to produce invention in terms of movement and sensation" (Goodman, 2007:54).[14]

With a specific interest in the "interweaving of various high and low-tech media systems for the broadcast and intensification of music" (Fuller, 2005:6), Matthew Fuller, author of *Media Ecologies* (2005) and reader at Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, concludes that, "The contemporary London pirate scene provides a rich lode of activity for thinking through the interrelation of self-organized cultural activity with media systems" (Fuller, 2005:7). Continuing, Fuller notes that pirate radio "provides a zone of experimental combination with which other forms of media culture can learn" (Fuller, 2005:13). Bringing forth the concept of 'the pirate's dilemma,' Mason (2008) embraces not just pirate radios, but also the world of hackers, bootleggers of film, music, clothes, software, peer-to-peer networks, and so-called punk capitalists

13 Genres such as UK garage, jungle, UK hardcore, drum 'n' bass, grime, dubstep, UK funky, bashment, and more.

14 According to Goodman (2010b), the 'the babble of voices' indicates the different musical and spoken languages, which the BBC and other legal radio stations does not make room for in their broadcasts.

and graffiti millionaires. Where Mason's concept of the pirate's dilemma becomes of interest to my thesis research is when he directs the analyses towards the pirate radios of London. The pirate's dilemma, in this case, means that the pirates "highlight areas where choice doesn't exist and demand that it does. What pirates do differently is create new spaces where different ideas and methods run the show" (Mason, 2008:46-47). This perspective of new experimental zones and spaces raises my geographic interest; how does pirate radio appropriate, embody and produce the urban space of London? According to assistant professor of culture and communication Erik Granly Jensen and Brandon LaBelle, author, artist and professor of new media, it is done through the radio medium, as it "constructs moments of get together across geographical borders" (Granly Jensen & LaBelle, 2007:11), and "is not only a medium for reporting news, but a vehicle for reflecting back to a given community its very own culture and events" (Granly Jensen & LaBelle, 2007:13). In continuation hereof, the pirate communities have over the years developed a unique form of active participation and interaction - listeners on the one hand and pirates on the other (Fuller, 2005:17). Mason sustains the analysis of how pirate radio can promote change by noting;

> "The actions of pirates raise questions, and when they do something society finds useful, it creates productive discussions that often lead to changes in the law, which result in social and economic progress. If democracy is about creating progresses that allow people to empower themselves, then pirates are clearly the perfect catalysts for such processes" (Mason, 2008:46–47).

However, this catalyst of change is not without its problems. For some pirates, being illegal implies a romantic, yet rebellious notion of 'them against us' (Hobbs, 2010), which is held in high esteem, even if it involves criminal activities such as trespassing, squatting, and vandalism. In a television news report from 1993, pirates at Rush FM, a now defunct illegal station based in Hackney, East London, is claimed to have "turned the tops of London tower blocks into fortresses," apparently to secure their radio studio from the DTI, the police as well as other competing pirates. Over the years, pirate radio culture has also been linked to more serious crime charges such as drug dealing and gang violence (The Independent, 18-08-1993; House of Commons, 2006; House of Commons, 2009), as well as interference of safety-of-life radio networks such as the air traffic control and the fire brigade (Ofcom, 2007). Not quite as dramatic, but nevertheless a problem, is that the pirate stations often neglect that a large part of the FM radio frequency band is in use by legal stations, who are paying great sums for official

broadcasting licences. The pirates lock into what seems a free space on the FM dial, yet their transmissions can cause interference with the transmissions of the legal radio stations broadcasting on the nearby frequencies, so-called 'leakage.' On one occasion in 2009, a North London-based pirate station was raided and shut down by the police and Ofcom due to, as a television presenter puts is (Towerblockradio.com, 2009), "numerous complaints from people saying this station is interfering with their enjoyment of legitimate commercial broadcasters." Yet, most pirates seem to reject many of these accusations, arguing that they do not interfere, as "Most pirates use transmitters that are 'crystal-locked,' so that the whole emergency frequency scare is just a lie. […] The FM frequency band goes up in 0.05 steps, and to be locked means that your signal is precisely on that 0.05, and there is no leakage either side of it", says a pirate of Don FM (Reynolds, 1998). Concerning the interference of the air traffic control and fire brigade frequencies, Funky Flirt, a pirate DJ of Kool FM, dismisses the accusations and claims that the relevant authorities have never contacted the pirate stations. Says Funky Flirt, "If it is as bad as they say it is, I mean, they would be getting in contact with the pirate stations to say: XYZ, can you please do XYZ 'cause you are interfering with air traffic and emergency service."

What stands clear is the battle of the FM bands has prevailed for more than 40 years with the government and Ofcom on one side, and the pirate communities on the other. The debate for and against pirate radio is to this day still prevalent. All the same, my research aim is as mentioned not to establish yet another discussion of this. Rather, I focus my research on the geographic aspects of pirate radio, and by this, my aim is to establish an understanding of how the contemporary illegal broadcasters are an integral part of producing the urban space of London.

Focusing the research further

A further outline of my research draws on selected theoretical works by French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) and French philosopher and historian Michel de Certeau (1925-1986) primarily, but also on works inspired by the two. In the second chapter, a selection of the theoretical works of the said two, as well as a selection of works on so-called 'music geographies', is fused into one 'urban ontology.' Even though the selected works of Lefebvre, which include *The Production of Space* (1991 [1974]) and *Writings on Cities* (1996 [1967]), and de Certeau, which include *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988 [1984]), are more than 25 years old, it is my conviction they still have a relevant say. By using the term 'urban' in relation to my

research, I look towards Lefebvre's definition of it (1996:103), indicating "a social reality made up of relations which are to be conceived of, constructed or reconstructed by thought." This notion highlights non-physical aspects too, such as the mental and social spatialities. A discussion I will return to in chapter two. Nevertheless, keeping Lefebvre's interpretation in mind, I turn my attention towards pirate radio as seen in the perspective of a theoretical research, focusing upon how pirates, operating in the realm of Lefebvre's understanding of the 'lived space,'[15] can appropriate, embody and produce the urban space of London - a space, which in the words of Lefebvre's is recognised as the 'spatial practice' (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:362). These operations of urban appropriation, it is my argument, can be analysed by implying de Certeau's theoretical notion of 'tactics' (de Certeau, 1998 [1984]:37).[16] The pirates tactically re-appropriate urban space, and this in a fashion that could have been inspired by the urban rethinking theories of the Situationist movement (McDonough (ed.), 2009; Sadler, 1999:69-103): The London pirates temporarily convert empty flats and industrial units into radio studios, and the roof tops of tower blocks into transmission hotspots. By refitting the high-rise tower blocks with aerials and transmitters and by hijacking the FM dial, pirate radio creates 'geographies of resistance' (Pile & Keith (ed.), 1997) across London. Withal, this resistance is not against the established society *per se*. It is a resistance to what is considered the mono-cultural broadcasting formats of the UK public service and commercial radio stations; a resistance to how urban space is planned and designed; and a resistance not least to "allow for the emergence of a non-planned, spontaneous 'urbanity'" (Groth & Corijn, 2005:503). This, of course, is neither the words nor the conclusions of a London pirate; it is a point of view I develop by theoretical means. It is within the theoretical and empirical scope of urban and cultural geography this thesis finds its academic legitimacy. By establishing an ontology of the urban and with a focus on so-called 'music geographies', I achieve an analytical tool to understand how urban space is appropriated, embodied and produced by the pirates. Through this, unregulated street-level geographies and alternative spaces of 'the other' (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]) are created. How this theoretical ontology is established I will address in the second chapter, though to

15 Lived space; "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:39).

16 Tactics; "do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it. […] The space of a tactic is the space of the other […] It takes advantage of 'opportunities' […] [Tactics are] determined by the absence of power" (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:29; 37; 38).

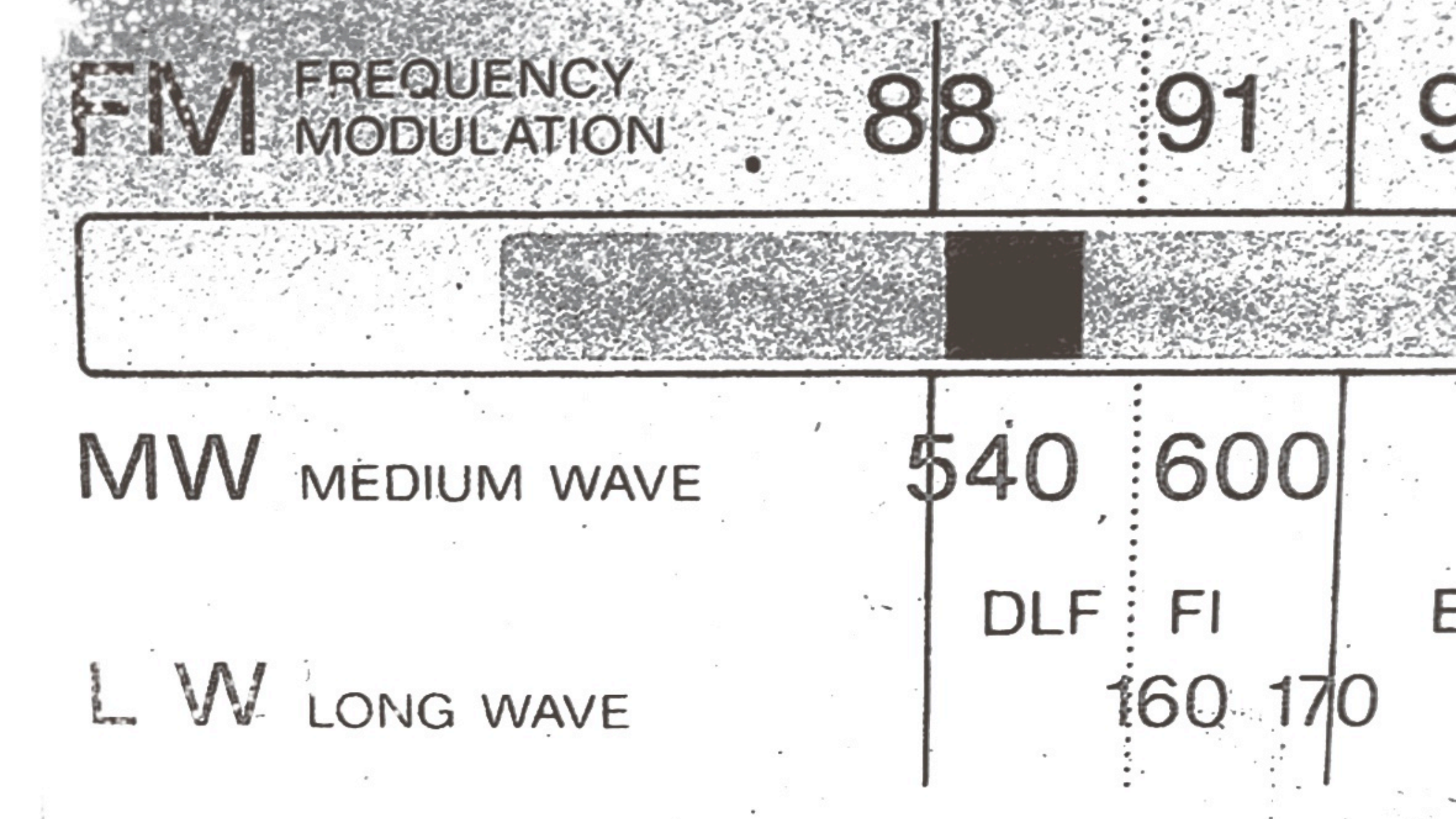
explore the phenomenon of pirate radio further, the following thesis statement serves as the guiding problem formulation of my research:

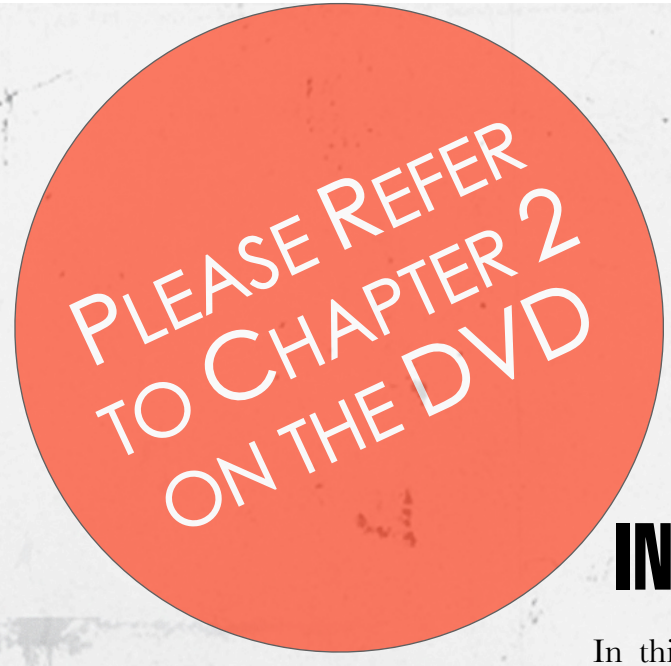
> *How does the phenomenon of contemporary pirate radio appropriate, embody and produce the urban space of London?*

The problem formulation and research perspective points toward a three-levelled method of study, interconnecting the theoretical and empirical horizons of geography. On an overall level of methods, my research encompasses discussions of: 1) phenomenology ['the phenomenon of']; 2) music geographies ['pirate radio', in relation to music and space]; and 3) urban space [the production of 'the urban space of London']. In reverse order, I will discuss this three-levelled study.

The first task at hand is to establish an ontology of the urban, and by this, the main theoretical structure of my research is given shape. This is done in the following chapter, *Inner City Life - An Urban Ontology of Music*.

Figure 7 (next page). A radio dial 'locked on'. Taken from the logo of London-based UK garage record label, Locked On Records.


FM FREQUENCY MODULATION
88
91
MW MEDIUM WAVE
540
600
DLF
FI
LW LONG WAVE
160
170



2

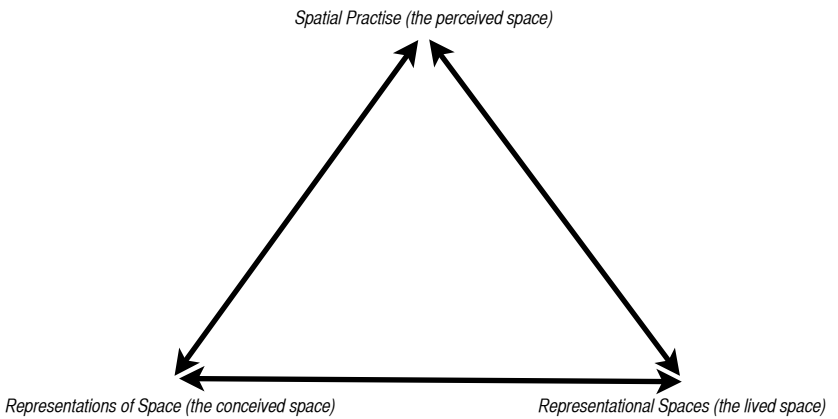
INNER CITY LIFE - AN URBAN ONTOLOGY OF MUSIC

In this chapter I present the first part of my research methods. Incorporating selected works of Lefebvre and de Certeau, as well as works inspired by the said two, *Inner City Life - An Urban Ontology of Music* theoretically outlines 'a right to urban life' through the production of urban space by tactical appropriation and re-use, physical, mental and social spaces of 'the other', embodied practices and representations, and music geographies. As the last part, a phenomenological perspective sheds light on the theory of science.

Urban space and the right to the city

> "Pirate radio operators [...] would remind us that the streets exists not just as physical space, but as a contested ether of sonic space and communication, and would therefore point to the role of local governments [...] in closing down the city's lively cacophony" (Ferrell, 2001:223).

First, to analyse the phenomenon of pirate radio in an urban context, my ontological perspective encompasses Lefebvre's theory on the production of space. According to Lefebvre, a city consists of not only physical space, but mental and social space too (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:11). By emphasising the importance of the third spatiality, the social, Lefebvre overcomes the philosophical duality he regards as problematically characterised by "oppositions, contrasts or antagonisms" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:39).[17] The binary spatiality of physical and mental space is deconstructed and merged with the social. Lefebvre terms this analytical concept 'spatiology' (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:404). It is with this Lefebvre points out that space is not to be reduced to either a 'dead' physical object or to a solely mentally understood object (Hansen & Simonsen, 2004:169-170; Merrifield, 2006:105), social space is of great importance too, as it is to be understood as "the space of human interaction" (Merrifield, 2006:105). It is the social space that "'incorporates' social actions" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:32). In answer to this, Lefebvre establishes a conceptual triad by combining the three different spatial modalities of space he terms the perceived, the conceived, and the lived space.



With the triad it is possible to analyse the on going interrelationship of the three spatialities of urban space. In spatial terms, Lefebvre translates the triad modalities to 'spatial practice' (the perceived space), 'representations of space' (the conceived space), and 'representational spaces' (the lived

17 For more on the third spatiality, Soja (1996) addresses and unfolds the notion of what he terms the 'thirdspace,' drawing theoretical inspiration from Lefebvre.

space) (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:33ff). Three modalities, which "at the same time are analytically set apart and in constant harmony" (Hansen & Simonsen, 2004:170, my translation). In Lefebvre's triad 1) the perceived spatial practice is produced and reproduced in a constant relationship with 2) the conceived representations of space, and 3) the lived representational spaces. Yet, to truly comprehend and make use of Lefebvre's triad, one of his primary arguments needs to be considered. Arguing that, "interest must be expected to shift from things in space to the actual production of space" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]: 36-37), Lefebvre regards space as in a constant production and reproduction. Writes Lefebvre, "Thus production process and product present themselves as two inseparable aspects, not as two separable ideas" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:37). Lefebvre's argumentations brings forth a notion of power, and by claiming that, "space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and action" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:26), he emphasises that space cannot be discarded as merely a static object which is free of relations and regulations of power. Rather, maintains Lefebvre, "space signifies […] do's and don'ts - and this brings us back to power. Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order - and hence also a certain disorder. Space commands bodies. This is its *raison d'être*" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:121).

> "Urban life suggests meetings, the confrontation of differences, reciprocal knowledge and acknowledgement (including ideological and political confrontation), ways of living, "patterns", which coexist in the city" (Lefebvre, 1996:75).

Even though Lefebvre points out that the "only products of representational spaces are symbolic works, […] and, after a time, having provoked a series of manifestations and incursions into the imaginary, run out of steam" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:42). He, on the other hand argues that, "the space of the everyday activities of users is a concrete one" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:362). So, though the movements of the lived representational spaces, such as the pirates, according to Lefebvre, might run out of symbolic and cultural fuel, they manage to produce activities that bring changes to urban space. Geographer Andy Merrifield (2006:107) summarises the impact of Lefebvre's argumentation;

> "Now, space is no more a passive surface, a tabula rasa that enables things to 'take place' and action to ground itself somewhere; space, like other commodities, is itself actively produced. It isn't merely the staging of the theatre of life as a paid-up member of the cast. Indeed, it's an 'active moment' in social reality, something produced before it is reproduced, created according to definite laws, conditioned by a definite stage of social development."

Second, my ontological perspective includes Lefebvre's theoretical reflections of the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996:63-181); implying a right to "urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms, and time uses, enabling the full and complete usage of these moments and places" (Lefebvre, 1996:179). This is a right, Lefebvre contends, that is the right of all city-dwellers. Lefebvre argues against the technocratic representations and conceived space of urban planning and architecture (Hubbard, 2006), as it does not leave adequate room for the potential manoeuvrability and flexibility of everyday life, and "only to a very small extent provides opportunities for residents to leave their own imprint and to live out their own projects" (Larsen *et al.*, 2007:230, my translation). Lefebvre points out the importance of the city-dwellers' ability to make the urban space their own, as "all 'subjects' are situated in a space in which they must either recognize themselves or lose themselves, a space which they may both enjoy and modify" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:35). The theoretical notion of 'the right to the city' has since been often quoted (Kofman & Lebas, 1996:6) in numerous academic works. One of these is by professor of geography David Harvey (2003), in which he picks up and continues the argumentation of Lefebvre; "The right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it after our heart's desire" (Harvey, 2003:939). Yet, to have influence on urban space, Harvey (2000) calls for a utopian vision of spatial form and social process, to which professor of geography Don Mitchell (2003:235-236) responds;

> "Utopia is impossible, but the ongoing struggle toward it is not. [...] Claiming the right to the city requires never taking that right for granted, never being satisfied with how it is for now 'closed,' how it is for now 'secured,' how, for now, utopia has been materialised."

Urban strategies and tactics

Third, how can such a struggle for the right to the city and an urban utopia take place? Although Lefebvre does not exclude the possibility of the representational spaces ability to alter the spatial practice of urban space, it is de Certeau (1988 [1984]) that brings forth an operational concept of how this can take place. Where Lefebvre analyses space as produced by a triad of spatial relationships, de Certeau analyses how space is intervened in, reclaimed, and appropriated by the dialectic relationship of what he terms 'strategies' and 'tactics.'

Even though the city-dwellers such as pirates are subject to the rules, regulations, and norms of society, they can in creative

ways re-use urban space (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:30); a form of recycling of the urban space by use of the operations and movements of everyday life, taking *tactical* advantage of the unregulated opportunities and spaces as they become available. These tactics are "an art of the weak," concludes de Certeau (1988 [1984]:37), and exemplifies how the tactics can interfere in the production of a *strategically* controlled urban space;

> "These styles of action intervene in a field which regulates them at a first level [...], but they introduce into it a way of turning it to their advantage that obeys other rules and constitutes something like a second level interwoven into the first. [...] Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of plurality and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation" (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:30).

In contrast to the tactics stands the strategies, implying a controlled space which "is organized by the postulation of power" (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:38), such as the FM bands controlled by Ofcom. The dialectic relationship between the two notions is described as; "While some have the power and ability to dominate entire cities or urban areas by strategic projects, […] others have to tactically scrape through the arena already defined and organised by strategic projects" (Larsen *et al.*, 2007:231, my translation). It is the everyday actions and operations that interest de Certeau; especially how the city-dwellers, despite being in between certain strategies and constraining orders, can utilise an informal *modus operandi* of tactical re-use to intervene in, reclaim, and appropriate the 'cracks' of urban space. These methods of operating create opportunity for alternative uses of the city (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:30), as "these transverse tactics do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it" (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:29). Elaborating his point of view, de Certeau (1988 [1984]:37) remarks that;

> "The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of foreign power. [...] It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of 'opportunities.' [...] This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected."

To resist the notions of an urban space strategically regulated and "imposed 'from above'" (Hubbard, 2006:106), Lefebvre and de Certeau, each in their own way, argues for a right to the city exercised on a grass-root level. The city-dweller should be able


BASS


RINSE 1003
RINSE FM
TOTAL BLISS
M.D.C.
TOTAL BLISS
Every Friday
RINSE FM 91.8


SKEPTA
DOIN' IT AGAIN
OUT 31/01/11
SXFX
SKEPTA
DOIN' IT AGAIN
OUT 31/01/11
SXFX
SKEPTA
DOIN' IT AGAIN
OUT 31/01/11
info@nasty.fm

to establish street-level geographies of their own with “a degree of plurality and creativity” (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:30), which can stand in opposition to the controlled urban space Lefebvre so fiercely argues needs to be confronted;

> “Pressure from below must therefore also confront the state in its role as organizer of space, as the power that controls urbanization, the construction of buildings and spatial planning in general. [...] Its ability to intervene in space can and must be turned back against it, by grass-roots opposition, in the form of counter-plans and counter-projects designed to thwart strategies, plans, and programmes imposed from above” (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:383).

Yet, the urban ontology is not complete without a reflection on music geographies. A geographic study of the relationship between space, music and sound, enhancing my research with a contemporary geographic perspective.

Figure 8 (opposite page). A collage of (from top and bottom left to right) a burnt out car in front of the three tower blocks of the Crossways Estate in Bow, East London. According to photographer James Burns, it was the estate from which both Kool FM and Rinse FM used to broadcast. It has since, according to the photographer, been refurbished; a detail of a massive sound system subwoofer; a collection of various Rinse FM tapes and flyers; and a derelict building in East London with posters of grime MC Skepta’s new album, photographed by Bixentro.

The sound of urban space

According to geographers Anderson *et al.* (2005), Carney (1998), Leyshon *et al.* (ed.) (1998), and Nash & Carney (1996), the turn towards a research of music and sound in relation to geography is relatively new, at least compared to the other academic strains of geography. In the late 1960’s and mid 1970’s, the first scholarly papers and theses on geographies and music were published (cf. Nash, 1968; Gordon, 1970; Ford, 1971; Zelinsky, 1973), with a steadily growing increase in publications on the subject in the last ten to fifteen years. This recent body of academic research puts music and sound in various geographic contexts, such as questions of embodiment (Saldanha, 2005); place and identity (Connell & Gibson, 2004; Hudson, 2006); soundscapes (Smith, 1994); scale (Howitt, 1997); methodology (Wood *et al.*, 2007); societal and spatial articulations and representations (Smith, 1994; Smith, 1997); performance spaces (Morton, 2005); global and local perspectives (Halfacree & Kitchin, 1996; Krims, 2007); and more. In extension of these varied examples, a question relating to my research of pirate radio emerges: How is music linked to urban space? To which geographers Allan Watson *et al.*, (2009:857) replies; “Music is not only made in urban spaces, but also for urban spaces.” An argument music geographer Susan J. Smith (1994:232) agrees

to, as she notes that, “music, in particular, structures space and characterises place” (Smith, 1994:232).
Continuing, Watson *et al.* (2009:859) defines three categories of music geographies, which in recent years, various scholars of geography have researched. The first category concerns studies of how music constructs cultural and social space, place, and identity. The second explores soundscapes, and performative aspects, as well as the production, distribution and consumption of music. The third category considers economic aspects of geographies and music in relation to technology and culture industries. With these three classifications of music geographies as guidelines, my research on the phenomenon of London pirate radio primarily focuses on the first category of the relationship between music and the production of place and space, though to some extent it also explores the second category, mainly the interconnected relationship between urban soundscapes and music production, distribution, and consumption. The geographies of music can contribute an appreciation and understanding of the auditory in relation to the production of space, questioning the predominant disposition of the visual analyses, which, debates geographers Jim Ingham *et al.* (1999) and professor of music analysis Adam Krims (2002), characterises most of geographic research. Why sound and music is important to geography, is because it has “the power to evoke a sense of space different from that evoked by sight,” as Smith (1994:233-234) puts it, while at the same time noting that the scholar in this case contributes with an ability to highlight the symbolisms, relations, and meanings, thereby putting music and sound in context. Music especially “may act as social glue,” remarks Leyshon *et al.* (1995:431). This is a point, as I will argue in later chapters of the thesis, which is validated by the phenomenon of pirate radio. Bruce Ray Smith (2004:389), professor of English, sums up the previous argumentation, claiming that, “Sound provides the most forceful stimulus that human beings experience, and the most evanescent.”

Spaces of music

Expanding their argumentation, Watson *et al.* (2009:857) concludes that in particular urban geography, “both material and imagined,” has a pivotal role to play in the analyses of music and associated networks, spaces, places, technologies, and cultures. Though not a geographer, LaBelle (2003:215-216) maintains the argumentation, extending it to include everyday life and the body (drawing upon Lefebvre and de Certeau), stating that the theories of urban geography clarify the importance of the embodiment of place, “both as geographic spaces and

psychological centres, as intersections of political and social values." Drawing on the research of Hall (1998), such spaces and places of geographical and psychological importance, such as large cities, often embody a certain creativity that, if nurtured and developed under the right conditions, can blossom into a unique culture. In the case of modern-day music, the classic American examples include genres such as the soul music of Motown in Detroit, country and gospel music of Music Row in Nashville, soul and funk of Stax/Volt in Memphis, soul and disco of Sigma Studios in Philadelphia, and in recent years also hip-hop and garage of New York, grunge of Seattle, house of Chicago, techno of Detroit, and bass of Miami. Also in the UK, cities are associated with certain genres, such as the 'Merseyside' pop and rock music of Liverpool, the Factory Records and 'Madchester' dance music of Manchester, the trip-hop music of Bristol, the 'bleep' music of Sheffield, and, of course, the pirate radio championed music of London.

The substance that music geographies contribute to my research is an analytical focus on how urban space, such as in the case of music via pirate radio,[18] should be seen as "transformed symbolically in imaginative landscapes through the material practices of musical creativity" (Watson *et al.*, 2009:873). A second analytical focus provided, is how music is to be understood as a societal and cultural glue, through which meanings are constructed and uttered, and, thereby become a vehicle through which "those whose condition society tries its best not to see can begin to make themselves heard" (Smith, 1997:502).

Urban phenomenology

As the last part of this chapter, I turn to a discussion of the theory of science. As I throughout the thesis, when describing my subject of study, use the term 'phenomenon,' a particular perspective on the theory of science comes into view. Inspired by phenomenology, my aim is to understand rather than explain the contemporary London pirate radio phenomenon. I consider my phenomenological reference to be based on a methodological rather than philosophical perspective, by which I imply that the phenomenology in this case serves to highlight the "embodied practices, and practices as interpretative or meaning granting schemata" of the pirates, "which in turn are seen as being part of a form of life, or socio-historical environment" (Mendieta, 2001a:

18 Also in the case of sound system clashes, outdoors dance hall gatherings, street-level carnivals, 'warehouse' raves in disused industrial locations, illegal squatting parties, and similar events of temporary spatialities.

8). Kirsten Simonsen (08-02-2008), professor of geography, argues that the geographic (Neo-) Marxist theory of science, such as presented by Lefebvre and to some extent de Certeau (Hubbard, 2006:97), regards space as relational and societal; space has no defining ontology, as it is 'produced' through the eyes of the various beholders. So how can I claim to establish a useful ontology for my research if urban space is constantly produced according to the various beholders' perspectives? In a phenomenological context, nevertheless, such a perspective does make sense. What the urban ontology of my research provides in this regard is a guiding - not defining - theoretical perspective of how urban space is appropriated, embodied and produced. The phenomenological perspective captures not only the mental and physical relationships between pirate radio and urban space, but also the various social life worlds of those who are engaged in pirate radio (Rendtorff, 2004:286). In continuation thereof, geographer John Pløger (2004:100-101, my translation) points out that for the city-dweller, "The city can be experienced as negative and positive, or you can have an ambivalent relationship to it. In any event, the fact is that the city and the city life are also always 'read' in a situative and reflexive manner, and on this basis produces different meaningful schemes of significance on urban life that also change over time." According to Simonsen (2003), the relationship of spatial practices and bodies, and urban scale and life, needs to be highlighted, as to emphasise how urban space institutes a power of the body, but also *vice versa*. With a phenomenological optic, 'the embodied city' provide a perspective on the relationship between urban space and the body. The relationship highlighted by Simonsen not only raises a question of physical embodiment, but also of a mental and social one. As an example of this, although still in Denmark, I can feel as if I am part of the London pirate radio communities. This is due to the various pirate station's live internet streams[19], while the listeners including myself are able to interact through mobile phone and online social media platforms, forums and chats. While I am not transported to London *per se* - at least not physically – a global group of keen listeners, including myself, feel connected socially and mentally to the phenomenon of London pirate radio. As an example of this, please refer to the audio examples on the accompanying DVD featuring myself interacting with pirate stations via so-called 'name check'. I SMS, email or chat with the particular station that I am 'locked' in to, to which the radio DJ or MC call our my name and/or number as a sign of respect and acknowledgement.

19 For example Kool FM, Flex FM and Rinse FM.

Summary

What I have established is an ontology of the urban; a theoretical understanding of how urban space is geographically appropriated, embodied and produced by various spatialities. In the production of urban space, it is a matter of continually chasing the utopian balance between de Certeau's strategies and tactics, and Lefebvre's triad of the representations of space, the representational spaces, and the spatial practice. "In other words, diversity is a constitutive element of urban life and urban culture" (Simonsen, 2007:130, my translation). This provides insight into how the right to the city can be appropriated by informal grass-root movements and communities such as radio pirates. The ontology further establishes a theoretical foundation of how the right to the city can be claimed with a focus on the use of music and sound; creating unregulated street-level geographies and alternative urban spaces of 'the other.' The informal DIY grass-root communities, like all other city-dwellers, are entitled to be heard, to act, contribute, and, if needed, resist by what Lefebvre calls "counter-plans and counter-projects" (Lefebvre, 1974 [1991]:383). Even though the selected theoretical highlights of Lefebvre and de Certeau dates back more than three decades, I consider their perspectives still to have a relevant voice regarding research on the production of urban space.

However, to bring a more contemporary theoretical perspective to my analyses of pirate radio, a focus on a comparatively new strain of cultural geography has been put forth, focussing on how "[m]usic […] plays a unique and often hidden role in the production of space" (Cohen, 1991:288). In the context of pirate radio, the role of music and sound, I argue, is of analytical relevance, as it provides important urban networks for various communities and movements, while at the same time is "a marker of difference at a variety of spatial scales" (Smith, 1997:509). Music and sound, as for example distributed via illegal radio transmissions, provides on the mental and social scales a public, free and easily obtainable space of identification, representation and identity (Averill, 1994; Kruse, 1993; Stokes, 1994), which on a physical scale accumulates in, often temporal, meeting places such as at radio broadcast studios, and also at raves and club nights. Music and sound acts as the radio pirate communities' "skeletal frameworks of alternative, albeit fleeting and contradictory, 'public spheres.' They are significant spaces in which particular musical practices and relations of cultural production and consumption can be potentially enacted against the current dominant trend […]" (Jones, 1995:19). Music,

therefore, holds a special yet relevant place in a geographic analysis of the production of urban space.

Finally in this chapter I have, with a phenomenological perspective on the urban ontology, argued for how by using empirical data, my analytical understanding of the pirate radio phenomenon act as contextual knowledge. By this, I argue that my analyses provide qualitative 'snapshots' of the pirate radio phenomenon, not generalisations or objective truths. In an urban setting, my research on the phenomenon of pirate radio is conducted by experiential analyses of the social interaction and schemes of significance as mediated through the empirical data I have compiled, and which I turn to in the following chapter.

Figure 9. Several illegal pirate radio aerials fitted on a tall mast made out of scaffolding. According to the photographer, the photograph was taken just before Ofcom came to dismount the mast.

PLEASE REFER TO CHAPTER 3 ON THE DVD

3

SCALE, DATA AND METHODOLOGY - THE RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter I present the second part of my research methods. Featured first is a discussion of scale, by which I argue that my research of pirate radio is not settled on just one scale. Rather, it focuses on several scales, as the phenomenon of pirate radio is situated at both global, regional, and local scales. This then leads to a presentation of my empirical data, using a multitude of qualitative sources of data. In the end of the chapter, I turn to reflections on methodology.

Scale

The first discussion of this chapter concerns the scale at which my research is carried out. Serving rather as a geographic method than a theory, analyses of scale reveals the spatial dimensions of relations, as well as the hierarchical dimensions of size and the areal dimensions of level (Howitt, 1998, Paasi, 2004). Scale, concludes professor of geography Andrew E.G. Jonas (1994:257), ought to be accepted as more than just "a dimension of spatiality," while professor of geography Anssi Paasi (2004) argues for a perspective by which attention is focused on how various scales are produced in a constant relationship - and not on ontological questions of scale itself. This brings my research to contemplate how analyses are carried out, as the multitude of intertwined links between the scalar categories of the global, regional,[20] national, urban, local, body, etc., are put into perspective (Simonsen, 2005; Smith, 1993). In the context of my research, this perspective of multiscaled production highlights a question of which scale(s) the phenomenon of pirate radio produce(s). This is a question I will in greater detail return to in my analyses in chapters four and five. In the broader view of methods, my research situates itself between various scales, chiefly between the scales of the global and the local, and the scales of the urban and the body. The research thereby, is not set on a static nor a neutral scale, rather it is focused on what Larsen (2007:41-42, my translation) denotes the "'practised participation' of density, togetherness, and diversity as co-creative steps in the formation of […] culture in the context of the city." It is a perspective that highlights how city-dwellers are brought together, constituting themselves in loose, informal communities "in a common effort to manage different situations" (Nielsen & Simonsen, 2003:922) This perspective recalls Lefebvre's and de Certeau's reflections on how urban space is a product of the social, mental, and physical actions of everyday life. By tactically constituting themselves in various communities, city-dwellers - such as radio pirates - by appropriation acquire informal creative influence on their surrounding urban space. The 'energy' deployed through such urban-cultural activities is, according to Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 13) important, as changes in the physical spatiality of the city can be directly linked to changes in everyday life and *vice versa*; "To change life is to change space; to change space is to change

[20] In this context, region is to be understood as 'the capital of London and its surrounding suburbs and regions'.

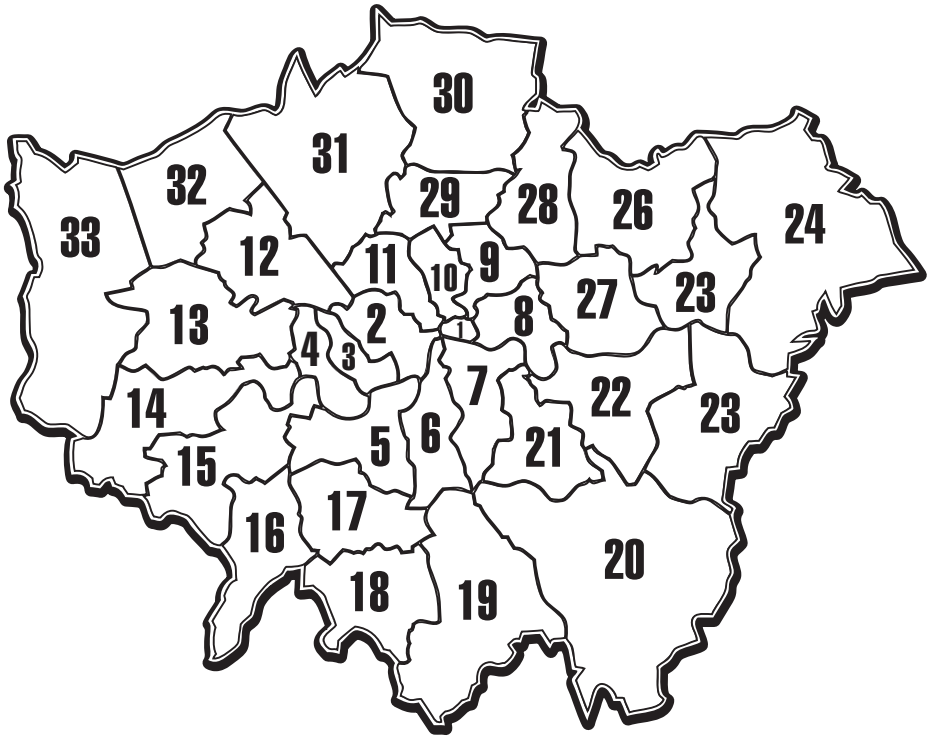


Figure 10. The 33 boroughs of London.

1. City of London Corporation (not a borough) / 2. City of Westminster / 3. Kensington and Chelsea 4. Hammersmith and Fulham / 5. Wandsworth / 6. Lambeth / 7. Southwark / 8. Tower Hamlets / 9. Hackney / 10. Islington / 11. Camden / 12. Brent
13. Ealing / 14. Hounslow / 15. Richmond upon Thames / 16. Kingston upon Thames / 17. Merton / 18. Sutton / 19. Croydon / 20. Bromley / 21. Lewisham
22. Greenwich / 23. Bexley / 24. Havering / 25. Barking and Dagenham / 26. Redbridge / 27. Newham / 28. Waltham Forest / 29. Haringey / 30. Enfield
31. Barnet / 32. Harrow / 33. Hillingdon

Reference: Greater London Authority, 2008: ***The London Plan - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. Consolidated with Alterations since 2004***, London. Available at: www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/docs/londonplan08.pdf

Figure 11. The five sub-regions of London.

1. North (boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Westminster)
2. North East (City of London, and boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest)
3. South East (boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark)
4. South West (boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Lambeth, Merton, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth)
5. West (boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea)

Reference: Greater London Authority, 2008: ***The London Plan - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. Consolidated with Alterations since 2004***, London. Available at: www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/docs/londonplan08.pdf

life" (Merrifield, 2006:108). By acknowledging "a mental aspect to his physical environment" (Ørskov, 1992:25), the city-dweller imbues urban space with meaning - a perspective similar to the Situationists, who argued for the importance of analysing the link between space (scales of the local and the urban) and city-dwellers (the scale of the body), as; "The environment in which we live influences our activity, but reciprocally this environment is a product of our creative activity" (Nieuwenhuys, 1959 in McDonough, 1999:111). Scale, in this case, becomes "the geographical organizer and expression of collective social action" (Smith, 2003:228). In regard to my research, the urban space of London serves as an arena of appropriation, creating room for 'practised participation' (Nielsen & Simonsen, 2003:922). Pirate radio culture is constituted and articulated on various informal, vertical levels by city-dwellers of shared hopes and passions, but also on horizontal levels in relationship to authorities such as Ofcom. By this, the scale of my research becomes a "socially constituted, politically contested, and historically variable dimension of those relations" (Brenner, 2000:367). In the words of Simonsen (2005:24, my translation), my research is not fixed on one scale, but is rather "a complex articulation of social relations created on different scales."

One of my arguments is that the phenomenon of pirate radio produce different scales of the global and the local, and of the urban and the body. The reason for this is that while the pirate radio communities are settled and organised locally, each in their own respective area or part of London, their FM broadcasts regionally reach the surrounding areas of the capital, and their Internet broadcasts nationally and globally reach the rest the UK and the world. Over great distances, which are not just measured in physical terms of kilometres or miles, but also in terms of culture, social background, religion, and ethnicity, pirate radio transgresses a multitude of geographic scales. The production of the global, regional and local spatial scales, in this case, enhances a link between the influence of global music[21] on a local level and *vice versa*, while the scalar categories of the urban and the body implies a link between urban planning, architecture, social and cultural communities, physical meeting places and everyday life. These perspectives reveal how scale is a product of, and at the same time produces, several ongoing social, political, cultural and economic processes, that are often

21 For an example the (Afro) American genres of hip-hop, techno, house, funk, garage, soul, jazz, and electro; the (Afro) Caribbean genres of reggae, soca, dub, calypso, salsa, dancehall, and reggaeton; the (Desi) Asian genres of bhangra, Hindi pop, filmi, and bollywood.

driven by relations of power and social conflicts (Simonsen, 2005:18-19). As previously mentioned, I will in greater analytical detail develop these intertwined scalar dimensions, and relate them to the phenomenon of pirate radio in chapters four and five.

Empirical data

In the second part of this chapter, I turn to a discussion of the empirical data gathered. Combined, these include a substantial body of qualitative data of notes from two field trips to the UK; sixteen interviews; newspaper and magazine articles; website features; academic theses and papers; radio broadcasts; television reports; documentary and feature films; various books and publications; and internet forums, sites and blogs. Dealing with multiple sources provides a varied empirical data set, and these assorted sources I have divided into six categories, however this division does not imply that some sources rank higher than others, or that some are given more attention. The six categories of qualitative empirical data are:

- Field trips, interviews;
- Newspapers, magazines, blogs;
- Video;
- Audio;
- Websites; and
- Books, papers, theses.

In what follows, I will comment on the collection of the empirical data, beginning with the first category of field trips and interviews.

Field trips, interviews

> "Though fieldwork is often portrayed as a classical encounter in which the fieldworker lords it over her/his respondents, the fact of the matter is that it usually does not feel much like that at all. More often it is a curious mixture of humiliations and intimidations mixed with moments of insight and even enjoyment" (Thrift, 2003:16).

During the spring of 2010, I made two field trips to the UK, one on March 1-8, and one again on May 6-11. On both field trips the primary place of stay was London, yet, I also visited Manchester and Lancaster in the North West of England, Redhill and Windsor in the South East of England, as well as Leicester in the East Midlands. I stayed in the UK for approximately a week at a time, networking, interviewing, listening to pirate radio broadcasts, as well as conducting observations at raves and

night clubs. I also attended a sound clash,[22] and even managed to visit the pirate studio of Kool FM, somewhere at a secret location in East London.

Reflecting on my professional experiences gained previously as a DJ, promoter, and producer working with UK artists, there was no doubt in my mind that if the interviews planned for the research were to succeed, I had to travel to the UK. On other occasions related to my professional life, I had experienced how busy (or sometimes, it seemed, stoned…) many UK artists could be, often resulting in unanswered emails, text messages and phone calls. I therefore settled on two field trips of a total of two weeks, hoping that it would be possible to conduct all interviews while in the UK. Unfortunately, in a few cases, some seemed suspicious of my motivations, and to a certain degree, even projected a 'why should I talk to you?' attitude.[23] What did seem to help in these situations was my professional network. It proved exceptionally valuable, especially as my university is not well known in the British pirate radio communities. As professor of sociology Dick Hobbs (2001:212) notes, "it is not uncommon for ethnographers to utilise their own biographies in order to gain and maintain access to deviant groups."

Even though I did not do ethnographic observations *per se* (cf. Bryman, 2004:291-317), I attended club nights and raves to be around if a pirate showed up, but also to get an update on the music and culture of which the pirates are a part of. To procure further information, I also visited record stores, a music publisher, and an artist agent. On these trips, I took field notes of observations, and descriptions of places and areas I visited, radio programmes I listened to, etc. The notes serve as background knowledge rather than specific empirical data, and are not intended for "public consumption [that] has to be presented as a definitive account of the social setting and culture in question" (Bryman, 2004:309), and are rather for "Personal […] consumption" (Coffey, 1999:112). Therefore these field notes are not published as part of this thesis.

The primary task of my two field trips was to conduct interviews with people either associated one way or the other with pirate radio, or professionally involved in academic research, or the broadcasting and music industries. In the appendix, I have

22 On May 8, 2010, featuring the UK sound systems Channel One versus Iration Steppas versus Aba Shanti-I, held at the Starlight 2001 venue in Leicester.

23 As an example, Geeneus, one of the co-founders of Rinse FM, apparently did not wish to be interviewed, even though myself and helpful people in my network tried to convince him otherwise. He made his position quite clear by showing a rather indifferent attitude, as well as not responding to any enquiries at all.

attached a brief description of each of the interviewees I managed to speak to, as well as a summary of what I gained from each interview. Of the sixteen, some are DJ's, MC's, or pirate station managers. Some are researchers of rave culture and Caribbean music; some again are record label managers and music producers; while other work on legal radio stations such as the BBC and Kiss. Overall, the interviewees can be divided into two categories of:

- **Present and former pirates such as DJ's, MC's, music producers and/or pirate station managers** Bluesy; Crazy D; Heny.G; Mala; Mulder; the Ragga Twins; Riko; Skream and Benga; The Steppahs; and Uncle Dugs and Chef.

- **Employees of legal radio stations, journalists, and/or academic researchers** Christopher Partridge; Ciaran O'Hagan; Martin Clark;[24] Mary Anne Hobbs;[25] Ray Paul;[26] and Steve Goodman.[27]

Some interviewees, nonetheless, transcend the two categories, as in the case of Clark and Goodman, whom besides writing and researching on the phenomenon of pirate radio, are also, or have been, active pirates. In those two cases, I primarily focused my

24 Please note that Martin Clark is an active pirate DJ at Rinse FM.

25 Please note that Mary Anne Hobbs has left the BBC as of September 2010.

26 Please note that Ray Paul has left the BBC as of the autumn of 2010.

27 Please note that Steve Goodman for several years was an active pirate DJ at Rinse FM.

Figure 12. Map of the UK with the red dots symbolising the cities I visited during my two field trips in the spring of 2010.

attention towards their research rather than pirate experience. Diving into the somewhat clandestine world of the pirates is indeed a bit intimidating, and while my presence was met with some scepticism, the majority I spoke to and interviewed were more than happy to share their stories, information, and networks with me. Over the course of several months, I managed to conduct a total of sixteen interviews - some in the UK, some in Denmark. Why conduct sixteen interviews one might ask? As professor of anthropology James Ferguson (1999:208) answers; "there is much to be understood, but none […] can claim to understand it all or even take it all in."

From one extreme to the other, the shortest interview conducted was five minutes long,[28] the longest two hours,[29] and the rest between 25 to 60 minutes. With the interviewees' consent, the interviews were recorded on a handheld digital Dictaphone, while at the same time I took notes of what I needed them to elaborate on further. Afterwards, I edited and levelled all the recordings due to the occasional noisy conditions at which the interviews took place. Apart from two interviews,[30] all interviews are available on the accompanying DVD as mp3 files. For the most part of the interviews, the individual interview designs were made in advance according to interviewee's background, position, and involvement in pirate radio. Based on four themes, these designs were customised to fit the context of the specific interview, and modified as the interview progressed, allowing "room to pursue topics of particular interest" (Leidner, 1993:238). The interviews were of the semi-structured type (Bryman, 2004:320-321), by which a certain degree of open-ended flexibility is placed in the hands of both the interviewee and the researcher, providing leeway for additional discussions not planned for. The information acquired from the interviews provided insight into the phenomenon of pirate radio by "networked […] motivated persons" (Van Audenhove, 2007:5) with "insight in aggregated and/or specific knowledge" (Van Audenhove, 2007:5). Excluding a few theoretical questions that I prepared for the academic researchers Goodman, O'Hagan, and Partridge, the interview guides were loosely based on the following thematic,[31] enabling the interviewee to:

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28 In the case of Skream & Benga.

29 In the case of Heny.G.

30 Except for the interviews with Mulder, which was done via email, and with The Steppahs, which unfortunately was not recorded due to technical problems.

31 Inspired by Christodoulou (2009:33-34).

- Regard and talk about their personal involvement with pirate radio, whether as an active pirate, a listener, a legal radio colleague, a scholar;
- Account for to which extent pirate radio is relevant to their career/profession;
- Provide insight into technical, political, financial and/or cultural details of pirate radio; and
- Reflect on the future of pirate radio, the relationship to other pirates and legal stations, as well as broadcasting authorities.

During the interviews, nonetheless, the questions were reformulated and not asked in that particular sequence. The theories of the urban ontology and music geographies were deliberately not incorporated into the interview thematic, as only very few of the interviewees would appreciate the academic language and terminologies of urban and cultural geography. Except for the interviews with the aforementioned journalists and academic researchers, the theoretical vocabulary of Lefebvre and de Certeau was not a part of the interview questions, nor was the concept of music geographies. Rather, I chose to ask questions in the style of the interviewees' daily language, to let the interviewee take the lead. This meant that my academic language had to be minimised compared to my professional language. It seems that I am not the only researcher to have experienced this, as the following example shows: A journalist asks Geeneus, co-founder of and station manager at pirate station Rinse FM, a series of questions on 'the cultural significance of his illegal radio station,' to which Geeneus frankly answers, "I don't know how to answer that" (Typewriter Trash, 05-09-2010). During my interview with Mala, South London-based dubstep DJ, producer and label owner, I experienced similar difficulties phrasing and translating the questions to a non-academic language, why he said; "It's mad to sit down and try and analyse it. When someone asks you a question, I wanna speak truth to you, so I have to try remember. I have to try remember what my mind set was back then" (Mala, 2010), implying that some questions proved too difficult to answer due to various reasons. With this in mind, O'Hagan (2004:245), PhD and researcher of the connections between UK garage, pirate radio, and drugs, remarks that academic researchers need to "appreciate that they will also need to adopt and adapt procedures to tailor their methods to the requirements of the formation under investigation" (O'Hagan, 2004:245).

Even though the sixteen interviews in their own way have contributed great amounts of empirical data, I have decided to seek out other sources too because, "Some academics have argued that too much emphasis has been accorded to fans' views, criticising insider approaches to fan studies as privileging

what participant opinions and positions" (Christodoulou, 2009:35). The main part of the interviews I conducted were chiefly with pirate radio and fans of pirate radio, so the quote highlights a problem to consider when doing research studies. Another reason for seeking out other sources too is because four of the interviews I had originally planned for unfortunately came to nothing. Ofcom, for one, was not interested in doing interviews, and as a result, the possibility of getting an authoritative perspective on my research topic became somewhat more difficult to achieve. As the main part of the conducted interviews revealed a bias towards the pirate's perspective, the inclusion of a source such as Ofcom was paramount. As associate professor of communication Leo Van Audenhove (2007:7) puts is, "Expert knowledge is not neutral." In this case I had to rely on other sources than an interview instead, which includes official Ofcom publications, news report interviews, and websites. A second example of this is aforementioned Geeneus. An established producer and DJ, Geeneus is considered one of the pioneers of the recent strains of London urban music such as grime, dubstep, and UK funky. An interview with him, I hoped, would provide valuable insight into the daily management of a London pirate station such as Rinse. Yet, Geeneus very rarely consents to being interviewed, though, during my field trips I met him on one occasion at the FWD club night in East London. Even though he agreed to talk the following day, he never got back to me despite several emails, phone calls and text messages. In August 2010, he DJ'ed in Copenhagen at the RAW rave - which I co-organise - and I hoped to interview him on my Danish 'home turf' instead.

Figure 13. Two grime MC's; one spitting bars, the other showing off a short samurai sword. The DJ, record in hand, is seen on the left. Unknown pirate radio station in Bow, East London.

This time he declined. On other occasions, however, Geeneus has given interviews, especially during the summer of 2010 when Rinse FM was awarded an official community broadcast license. These interviews, available online and in newspaper and magazines, highlight interesting perspectives of his, which I have chosen to include as if were they from interviews I had done with him myself.

Besides the interviews and ethnographic field trip notes collected, I have also included a large amount of other sources, which I will highlight in the following. These sources bring other perspectives to my research, and even though the introduction of these do not account for as much discussion as the field trips and interviews, they are not considered secondary. On the contrary, by including the following categories of data too, a more evenly distributed balance of sources and bias is brought in place. It may appear that pirate stations such Rinse and Kool are featured to a greater extent in my thesis than other contemporary London pirate stations are. This is true, but there are explanations to this. First, as the two stations are considered the biggest of their kind, they have received intensive press coverage, while the smaller stations have only been given perfunctory interest. Second, the two stations have built up strong music and radio brands, actively promoting their name and format, not just locally and regionally, but also nationally and globally. Third and last, it has proven to be difficult to get in contact with the smaller stations, as they tend to exist only on a short, temporary basis. With the other five categories of empirical sources I will present in what follows, I have strived to collect data on the smaller stations as well.

Newspapers, magazines, blogs

As some pirates did not want to either participate in, or could not find the time to be part of my study, I have gathered instead a great deal of data on these from sources such as newspapers, magazines, and online articles and features. This second category of empirical data is derived from publications such as The Evening Standard, Drowned in Sound, The Guardian, The Independent, NME, and Soul Underground. The articles I have selected feature interviews with, or reports on pirate radio, and some too deal with British Caribbean music and youth culture.

Video

Third, I have collected empirical data from documentary and feature films, as well as video sharing sites such as YouTube. It seems that in recent years, the video sharing websites have

seen an increase in video clips on pirate radio. On the accompanying DVD, a selection of these video clips is included. I have watched several video clips on the topic, and while some are of lower budget DIY style, others are from the BBC and similar resources. Furthermore, I have compiled additional empirical data from a selection of documentary and feature films on pirate radio as well as British and Caribbean music culture.

Audio

The fourth category of empirical data is audio, which is divided into two interconnected subcategories of 1) FM recordings; and 2) Internet podcasts and streams. On the field trips to the UK I brought a portable FM radio with me. Its audio output was connected to my laptop, and with this simple setup I recorded a selection of pirate broadcasts. I have supplied these recordings with further podcasts and streams from various London pirate stations, and together this provides a valuable and fascinating listen - especially for those who are not acquainted with the sounds of pirate radio. Of special interest is a recording of a Rinse FM broadcast in June 2010, on the day when their official FM license was announced. This, and other recordings and podcasts are available on the accompanying DVD.

Websites

Fifth, I have furthermore relied on the use of Internet websites, forums and social media from which I have compiled background information, links, pictures, video, audio, and much more. On some sites, I have been able to get in touch with pirates, some active, others not. As the list of websites I have used is very long indeed, I have chosen to include only the sites I have visited the most. These are websites with a specific focus on the (pirate) radio medium, British and Caribbean urban and dance music, as well as youth culture. The long list includes websites such as:
www.amfm.org.uk;
www.laughingpoliceman.com;
www.ofcom.org.uk;
www.londonpirates.co.uk;
www.totalkiss.com;
www.bbc.co.uk;
www.transmissionzero.co.uk/radio;
www.rinse.fm;
www.dubstepforum.com;
www.flexfm.co.uk;
www.blackdownsoundboy.blogspot.com;
www.koollondon.com; and
www.radiorewind.co.uk.

Books, papers, theses

Finally, for the sixth source of empirical data, I have turned to books, papers, and theses. I have selected a main part which deals primarily with pirate radio now and then, as well as a secondary part which deals with the immigration history of the UK, youth movements such as Mods, Skins, Punks, etc., British-Caribbean music and culture, raves, dance music, and DJ culture, London nightlife, radio media, and the history of British broadcasting. In some cases, publications indicated a considerable bias towards the subject of pirates. In such cases, in an effort to push the selection of data towards a more evenly balanced bias, I sourced other publications on the same topic.

Methodology

With a total of six categories of qualitative empirical data from various sources compiled, the final task at hand is to account for the analytical strategies and processing of the data. This addresses the methodologies, by which I organise and analyse the data gathered from the various sources described. The task at hand is to introduce the two intertwined methodological paths that guide my research and analyses:

- To translate, prepare and compile the theoretical perspectives and notions of the research into usable interview questions and guides; and afterwards
- To analytically highlight, collect, and deduce a number of themes from the empirical data.

Concerning the first methodological path, during my preliminary talks with members of the UK and London pirate radio communities, I came to the conclusion that to establish usable research interview questions and guides, I had to, at least to some extent, dilute the theoretical perspectives of the urban ontology and music geographies; translating and organising them into ‘a language of a pirate.’ A task, which at times did not seem all that easy - especially not in those sudden situations at which an otherwise unplanned interview was to be conducted spontaneously. Also, to make the theoretical notions of, for example de Certeau’s ‘tactic’ (1988 [1984]), Smith’s ‘soundscapes’ (1994) and Lefebvre’s ‘production of space’ (1991 [1974]) palatable in one way or the other to the interviewees (at least those without a higher level academic background, which proved to be all but three), [32] the interview guides had to be open for new empirical directions, and therefor loosely structured (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:122-123). Each interview guides was

32 The three being Christopher Partridge, Ciaran O’Hagan, and Steve Goodman.

unique, created specifically to suit the interviewee's profession, background, affiliations, etc. While most guides were intended for providing me with the interviewees' unique perspective on the subject of pirate radio, other guides were intended for providing me with otherwise non-obtainable background knowledge such as technical details, historical facts, and a 'who's who.' For the first type of interview guides, I had to consider how my theoretical and ontological arguments and notions should (or even could) be translated and diluted. This, I realised, was not possible to distinguish before hand, but rather while an interview was taking place. This led to several situations in which I had to 'freestyle' a non-academic, and slang-heavy, language to make the interview viable. In situations such as these, my background and networks in the music communities proved valuable. For some pirates, when I mentioned the academic sides of my research, it seemed not just a linguistic barrier, but likewise a cultural barrier. A barrier so strong at times, that during the field trips I mostly presented myself as a Danish DJ, promoter, and producer with a similar musical background as the interviewee's, although, of course, with an academic interest in his or her culture, geography and way of life. A curious example of such a situation, is the following email correspondence between myself, Hatcha, a pioneering dubstep DJ and producer of South London pirate radio background, and his producer at Kiss, where Hatcha alongside dubstep MC Crazy D holds a weekly radio show. Hatcha addresses his producer, telling him of who I am and what I do;

> "[H]e me pal jus sent me this he's a realy cool and has bin promoting dubstep from day one over there he's proper sound he's now had a kid and is studing as proffesor in sum mad thing regarding sound and music,but anyway i leave this wiv u..." (Hatcha, 21–12–2010).

I have left the quote untouched. No spell checking, and without the usual elaborations and comments I tend to include to establish the origin of the quote. It is, I think, a great example of how many pirates and music industry people in the UK tend to regard me. While the kid is not there yet, but will be in the summer of 2011, what Hatcha writes to his producer, more or less sums up, in the context of my study, how the professional character of '2000F' rather than the academic character of 'Niels Frederik Birket-Smith' gains access to the otherwise clandestine and secretive world of pirate radio via a network of 'gatekeepers' (Ryan & Peterson, 1982) and 'cultural intermediaries' (Bourdieu, 1984; Negus, 2002) of the pirate radio communities and the music industry.

The second methodological path to be discussed is an ongoing process of the collection of empirical data, and a subsequent analytical deduction of its themes. With theoretical points of reference to the ontology of urban space and music geographies, at first the data is studied.[33] During this process, the ontology acts as the theoretical guideline, and by this I highlight and point out certain reoccurring themes in the data. I compile the data sources into groups of four distinct, yet entwined, primary themes of:

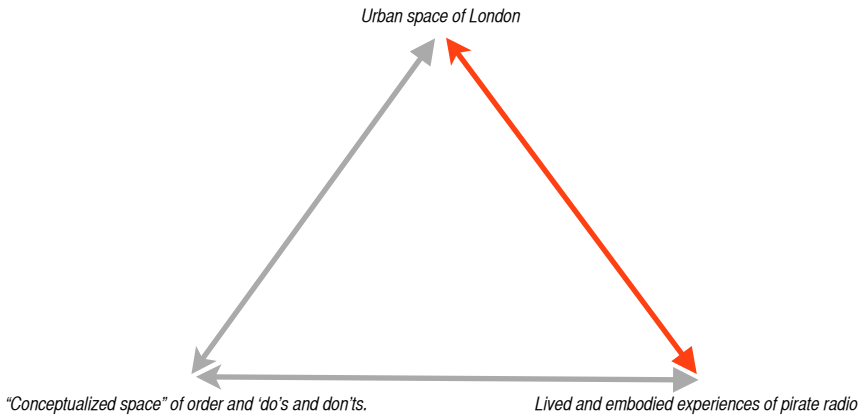
- The global and the local;
- Communities;
- Talent incubation; and
- Urban temporality.

Methodologically, my analyses are organised in two chapters, respectively chapters four and five. The first of these two chapters, *Ships, Sea Forts, Tower Blocks - Four Generations*, serves as the historical and cultural lead-in to the main analyses, which follow in chapter five. Thus, chapter four is used to narrow my primary analytical focus to feature what I term the fourth generation of British pirate radio only, while still retaining what I argue is an important background knowledge of the phenomenon's cultural history from its genesis in the mid 1960's. The fifth chapter, *A London Somet'ing Dis - Pirate Radio and Urban Space*, is thus concerned with the contemporary aspects of pirate radio. It is with this chapter I utilise the four primary analytical themes, linking the empirical data to the urban ontology.

As my aim is to *understand* rather than *explain* the phenomenon of London pirate radio, my analyses of these themes are to be understood as interpretations providing insight into the field of research, and this being an interpretation with a specific geographic perspective. This methodological path of choice brings to my research a concretisation of embodied experiences, actions, practises, and representations (Mendieta, 2001b:214), not analytical objective truths. By placing emphasis on social space as much as physical and mental space, and with a phenomenological twist to it, my research methodology provides an empirical leeway for a multitude of voices to speak and be heard. Each of these appropriate, embody and produce an urban space of London differently from the other. In the theoretical terms of Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), this brings change to the triad

33 Depending on the type of data; either read, listened to or watched.

introduced in chapter two, with the representational spaces of the lived and embodied experiences of pirate radio as a prime producer of the urban space of London.



In theoretical terms, my study seeks to provide an understanding of how the relationship between music (exemplified by pirate radio) and the production of urban space aids to an appropriation of what Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) terms the spatial practise of society, and in terms of my research constitutes London. The empirical data reflects the multitude of pirate radio 'life worlds,' (Rendtorff, 2004:286) which in different ways, whether intended or not, are engaged in a tactical production of an urban space of the 'other' (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]). The representational spaces (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]) of pirate radio, as accented by lived and embodied experiences, transcends the "conceptualized space" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:38) of order and 'do's and don'ts.' The medium to achieve this, as I will argue, is music, which, transmitted by way of pirate radio, embodies the urban space of London with meaning (Smith, 1997).

Summary

In the preceding paragraphs I have accounted for A) the scale(s) of my research; B) the empirical data; and C) the methodology. These provide the second and final ballast of methods for my research on the phenomenon of pirate radio. With A) scale, I argue for a phenomenological analysis of how pirate radio produce various entwined scales of the global, regional and the local, and of the urban and the body. Addressing the phenomenon of pirate radio on different scales reveals how the production of urban space is constituted of networks of informal communities. Second, I argue for the selection of the multiple sources of qualitative empirical data, including field trips, interviews, recordings, and more. Third and last, I argue for the methodology, by which I provide the empirical sources a voice to speak in the analytical context of geography. It is the analyses I turn to in the following two chapters.

PLEASE REFER TO CHAPTER 4 ON THE DVD

4

SHIPS, SEA FORTS, TOWER BLOCKS - FOUR GENERATIONS

In this chapter I present the first and introductory part of my analyses. The chapter serves as the lead-in to the primary analyses, which follow in chapter five. Focusing on four generations of pirate radio, in this chapter I analytically trail the history of UK and London pirate radio, establishing a historical understanding of the development of the phenomenon from the pioneering sea-based stations of the 1950-1960's, over the 'black music' land-based stations of the 1970-1980's, to the urban-based rave culture stations of the 1990's, and finally to the globally oriented stations of today.

A Danish beginning

> "Until 1990, dance music radio was illegal in Britain; the only stations to offer a hundred percent dance programming were the 'pirates'. From sharing the same DJ staff through to club tie-ins, reciprocal promotions and overlapping audiences, pirate stations and dance clubs had been entangled in a web of financial and ideological affiliations that went back to the sixties. Before founding pirate Radio Caroline in March 1964, for instance, Ronan O'Rahilly had run the Scene, a fashionable Mod hang-out in Soho, and throughout the 1970–80s, reggae, soul, then house music pirate stations organized 'blues parties,' 'shabeens,' warehouse parties, clubs and raves. Pirate radio stations have long been positioned as the antithesis of the official, government-funded Radio One [sic]. Despite being for-profit narrowcasters, they are cloaked in the romance of the underground. Like fanzines, they are supposed to be the active voice of subcultures and like graffiti or sampling, their acts of unauthorised appropriation are deemed 'hip'" (Thornton, 1995:146–147).

The idea of European pirate radio finds its beginning in Denmark with the launch in 1958 of Radio Mercur and in 1961 of Danmarks Commercielle Radio (Nørgaard, 2003). Situated in international waters, the two illegal stations broadcasts offshore the Danish coast and pioneers the music of a budding Western youth culture. The name of the game is rock 'n' roll and pop music, and the operation of the stations is funded by advertisements (Harris, 2007:1-3; Nørgaard, 2003:13-16). The Danish youth quickly recognises the potential of the new medium, yet the stations and especially the new genres of music that were being promoted, such as rock 'n' roll, were not favoured by all Danes, as a Danish dance instructor notes in an interview; "Is it [rock 'n' roll] performed correctly, it is mesmerising and narcotising, like how jungle drums work on Native Indians and cannibals. It begins monotonous - dumm - dumm - dumm. Gradually, it excites more and more. Eventually the dancers go berserk. They get in the wildest ecstasy" (Jacobsen *et al.*, 1980:4, my translation). The Danish national radio, as well the government, is not excited either by the prospect of this type of radio broadcast. In 1962, the Danish government declares the breach on the radio monopoly of the stations' as illegal, and forces them to shut down (Nørgaard, 2003:181-218).

Yet, in the UK pirate radio is just about to take off, and in 1964 Radio Caroline is launched, breaking the monopoly of the BBC. Often heralded as the pioneer of British pirate radio culture, Radio Caroline too has Danish roots in form of the former passenger motor ferry Fredericia, which is converted into a broadcasting vessel (Harris, 2007:3). It is by the genesis of British pirate radio this chapter takes its point of departure, and with it, a special focus on two cultural changes of the UK society

post World War II that I argue are prominent in the rise of a UK pirate radio phenomenon: The arrival of immigrants from the colonies of the British Empire, and the budding youth culture.

Post-war immigration and youth culture[34]

In the years to follow the end of World War II, British society experiences major changes due to an expansion of the economy and an increasing demand for labourers. The British Nationality Act of 1948 grants the citizens of the Commonwealth right to settle and work in the UK freely, and immigrants from especially the New Commonwealth nations such as the West Indies, Pakistan, and India come, filling up the vacant lower-paid positions around the UK (Mason; 2000 [1995]:24-26; Oakland, 2006 [1989]:60-64; Walvin, 1984:108). Some of the first to arrive in the post-war years are the black Caribbeans. In June 1948, the SS Empire Windrush berths at port outside London, bringing approximately 500 Jamaicans to the UK. The low standard of living at home and the dire prospects of little or indeed no work at all, accelerates the Caribbean immigrations, James Walvin (1984:107-108), researcher of British social history and of the slave trade, argues, "So poor were the opportunities and conditions at home that it proved very hard for many Caribbeans returning from wartime service to readjust to the limitations afforded by their homelands; and future prospects were bleak. Britain, for all its inhospitable qualities and its cold and dreary winters, could at least offer the prospects of work." It is to be the first wave of many post-war immigrants from the far stretches of the vast British Empire (Sandhu, 2007:92). Settling in and around the major cities such as London, Birmingham, Leicester, Leeds, Liverpool, and Bristol, the Afro-Caribbean immigrants of Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago works in the National Health Service, public transport, and manual trades, and the Desi immigrants of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh in primarily the textile industries (Fryer, 1987 [1984]:367-378; Mason, 2000 [1995]:24-25; Oakland, 2006:60). Even though the post-war years of the late 1940's and the early 1950's are often heralded as the origin of black presence in Britain, professor emeritus Stuart Hall (2007:7), Jamaican born, British-based cultural theorist, argues it is a misconception to believe that the influx of black immigrants does not begin until 1948: "The Windrush, which is often given an original status in the narrative of the formation of a black British Diaspora was not really the origin of anything. Rather, it served as an important hinge

34 *Unordinary People* (Lange *et al.* (ed.), 2009) features a unique photographic insight into the various youth culture moments of the UK from the 1960's to the 2000's.

between the large numbers of black men and women already represented in many walks of British social life before the war."
Filling up the low-paid positions faster than anticipated by the government, the Commonwealth Immigrations Act of 1962 is passed to restrict the number of immigrants entering the UK, while the Race Relations Acts of 1965, 1968, and 1976 are established to prevent discrimination and protect the rights of the immigrants who have already settled (Mason; 2000 [1995]:26-29; Oakland, 2006:62). Yet, as early as 1960, British sociologists Ruth Glass and Harold Pollins (1960:120) notes that, "coloured people are feared as competitive intruders; they are thought of as promoters of crime and carriers of disease; they are resented when they are poor; they are envied when they are resourceful and thrifty. They are looked down upon; they are patronised; occasionally they are treated just like everyone else." In the late 1950's and throughout the 1960's, racial tensions between the white and the coloured citizens of the UK rises alarmingly, resulting in the 1958 riots of Nottingham and London, yet the topic is rarely challenged by the police nor the government, to which Fryer (1987 [1984]:381) concludes that the UK at this time surrenders to racism; "Between 1958 and 1968 black settlers in Britain watched the racist tail wag the parliamentary dog." However, the immigrants of Jamaica, India, Bangladesh, Barbados, Pakistan, etc., manages to settle in the UK, and to a great extent organises themselves in communities such as the Caribbeans in Brixton, South London.[35] Notably the black Afro-Caribbean immigrants of Jamaica, and to some extent of Trinidad and Tobago, provides a rich musical culture which over the years roots itself in the UK (Partridge, 2010b), exemplified by the sound systems (Hebdige, 2007 [1987]; Jones, 1995,) and bass culture (Bradley, 2001) of Jamaica, and the carnival culture of Trinidad and Tobago (Dudley, 2004). Yet, for several years after the war, blacks are not allowed into the clubs and dance halls, therefore settling for the so-called blues dances[36] held "in houses, in basements, in the shebeens, or in school dinner halls," (Bradley, 2001:115) Jah Vego, a Jamaican sound system pioneer based in London, recalls. Continuing, he accounts for how he reckons this led to the development of what has since become a unique UK sound system culture (Partridge, 2010a), and by this creating a geography of music of their own;

> "So come the weekend you have to relax, completely, among your own crowd and be able to carry on like you did back home. Not

35 See Patterson (1963) for a study on how such a migrant group absorb into the surrounding British society.

36 In this context to be understood as the 'party'; 'event'.

> that there was much choice for us, because so many places in London wouldn't let black men in. [...] There weren't no big clubs, even though the need for them was big. Which is why the sound-system business take off here [in the UK] like it did. [...] – here they look forward to them as one of the only bits of Jamaica they can still partake in" (in Bradley, 2001:115–116).

Ska, rocksteady, reggae, calypso; the black music of the British Caribbean Islands takes root in the UK immigrant communities (Hebdige, 2007 [1987]:90-95) alongside the black music of the United States, such as jazz and rhythm 'n' blues, which already had built up a dedicated following in the UK during and after the war (Miles, 2010:54-56). Also rock 'n' roll, and later on soul music, gained strong followings in the UK, though not just in the black communities. In the mid and late 1950's the rock 'n' roll fever rages all over the UK, and it is out of this that British youth culture make headlines, in particular with the rise of pirate radio stations such as Caroline. However, only with few exceptions does the immigrant music make it to the official British music charts (Hebdige, 2007 [1987]:91-92).

While the Jamaican immigrants in the UK to some extent focusses their attention towards replicating the sound system culture of 'back a yard' (Bradley, 2001: 114-124; Hebdige, 2007 [1987]:90-95), the immigrants of Trinidad and Tobago take to the streets and dance halls with their steel pan bands, mas, and carnival, while participants and onlookers cheeres loudly with whistles and horns (Hebdige, 2007 [1987]:35-42). From the mid 1960's onwards, the Notting Hill Carnival in West London is established as the prime showcase of Caribbean culture in the UK, every year drawing an increasing number of decorated floats, steel pan bands, sound systems, and not least onlookers (Miles, 2010:189-190; Notting Hill Carnival, 2010). In these years, the first UK-based sound systems are established in the black communities of London by Jamaican immigrants such as Duke Vin, Count Shelly, Count Suckle, Chicken the Thunderstorm, and Lloyd Coxsone (Bradley, 2001:111-153; Hebdige, 2007 [1987]:92; NME, 1981). As in Jamaica, the focus of the British-Caribbean dances[37] is all about sound, all about bass. There is no distinct separation between the artists and the audience (Lesser, 2008:93). Jamaican music producer and singer Derrick Harriott remembers; "But more than just hearing the music, the equipment was so powerful, and the vibe so strong, that we feel it. Like when we were dancing you were actually part of it. It was ours" (Bradley, 2001).

37 Again, in this context to be understood as the 'party', 'event'.

Figure 14 (next page). A collage of (from top left to bottom right) the Iration Steppas (formerly known as Ital Rockers) sound system at the controls during a soundclash in Leicester; a poster promoting a massive UK funky concert at Wembley Arena, London; the Neumann cutting lathe at Transition Studios in Forest Hill, South London, cutting my first dubstep release; Jah Vego in front of his shop in West London; a drastic change in urban space as Holly Street Estate rises high in Hackney , photographed in 1988 by Chris Dorley-Brown; a poster for the soundclash I attended in Leicester, May 2010.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The first generation

At the same time, the craze of bluebeat, modern jazz, and R&B music hit the UK, yet again it is not just the black immigrants who champion it. Rather, white middle-class youth adapt the American and Jamaican music as well as developing a razor sharp and clean clothing style. Out of this scene, the Mods movement is born. It is the antithesis of the Rockers 'leather boys' movement of the same period, whose community favoured rock 'n' roll music, and what one Mod calls, "filthy, dirty, scruffy, smelly leather jackets and grease and dirt and studs" (Rawlings, 2000:66). It is during these years the British pirate radio ships appeares in the guise of Radio Caroline, Radio London, Radio Atlanta, and Swinging Radio England,[38] as well as Radio Sutch, Radio City, Radio Invicta, and Radio 390, which have temporary broadcast studios fitted in the abandoned Thames Estuary Maunsell sea forts of World War II (Crisell, 2005 [1997]:142-144; Harris, 2007 [1968]; Leonard, 2004). As the BBC stations of the time plays "about three hours of rock 'n' roll a week" (The Independent, 18-03-2009), the music is neglected to such a degree that Richard Curtis, director of *The Boat That Rocked* (2009), a star-cast feature movie based on the British pirate radio culture of the 1960's, recently calls the situation of the mid 1960's, "the worst mismatch of supply and demand in history" (Financial Times, 21-03-2009). Initially inspired by American popular music and commercial radio formats, as well as by the pioneering efforts of Radio Mercur, the first wave of UK pirates take on the BBC monopoly with full force, raising a spectacular cry of joy from the British youth. From the British government and radio official's perspective, however, there is nothing but an outcry of disbelief. For several years, the pirate stations at sea provides the UK with a non-stop parade of pop music not available on the BBC. It becomes a huge success, especially with the younger generations of Britons, who tunes their transistor radios to the American-inspired sounds on the new offshore British pirate stations;

> "Bedtime for children and teenagers meant taking your transistor radio under the covers, tuning to 199 metres, medium wave, and listening through your plastic earpiece as a succession of hyperactive, logorrheic young men introduced records, whooped with glee, sang along, talked like carnival barkers, made suggestive remarks, told childish jokes, did animal impressions, speculated about the behaviour of listeners in their boudoirs, held competitions and never seemed to calm down or sleep" (The Independent, 18–03–2009).

38 *Radio Pirates - A tale of Pirates, Texans and Teenagers* (Pierson & Greene, 2009) is a documentary, which provides the interesting story of the 1960's Swinging Radio England pirate station.

Figure 15. Outdoors sound system dance at the Notting Hill Carnival 2005, West London.

Figure 16. Sound system operators, Notting Hill Carnival 2005, West London.

It is, however, to end sooner than many of the pirates can imagine. In 1967, the BBC launches Radio 1 and the Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act is passed with the purpose of extending the legal powers of the British government beyond the territorial waters surrounding the British Isles (Crisell, 2005 [1997]:143-145). The offshore broadcasters on ships and sea forts are deemed illegal and forced to close, and as a result, the first pioneering generation of UK pirate radio fade.

The second generation

Setup in 1974 to discuss the future of British broadcasting, The Annan Committee in 1977 presents a radical new view on British broadcasting politics, technologies and programme standards, yet it is not taken note of politically. Arguing for a broader perspective in broadcasting, The Annan Committee concludes that, “Our society’s culture is now multi-racial and pluralist: That is to say, people adhere to different views of the nature and purpose of life and expect their own view to be expressed in some form or other. The structure of broadcasting should reflect this variety” (Annan Committee, 1977:30). Though the official British broadcasting does not reflect this conclusion, by the 1970’s a new generation of “black Britons” (Mullard, 1973:145) born in the UK to Commonwealth immigrants further develops the musical foundations laid out by their parents. It is no easy task, as British-based filmmaker, DJ and musician Don Letts, born to Jamaican immigrants, notes, “I am first generation British-born black. But in the mid 70’s, this was a really confusing concept. There was no blueprint for this kind of social experiment” (Letts, 2010). As only a few immigrants of the Windrush era can afford a hi-fi system, or even a radio, many Caribbeans had grown up ‘back a yard’ in the Caribbean with a musical focus on sound systems rather than radio. Music producer Bunny Lee notes that in his upbringing in Jamaica, sound systems is considered the primary public outlet for music. If you want to hear the latest tunes and musical trends, you have to go to a dance hall where the sound systems rule; “Sound system was our radio station, ya’ understand?” (Natal, 2007). In England, on the other hand, the new generation of black Britons come to rely not only on sound system culture, but on radio too, despite the lack of support from the legal British broadcasters.

The rise of a new generation of pirates not only signifies a shift to a land-based platform, but also a shift towards a musical horizon of primarily black music (Coyer *et al.* (ed.), 2007:19-21; Hebdige, 2007 [1987]:153-156; Hind & Mosco, 1985:19-38). As the seafaring pioneers of the 1960’s are forced to shut down, new pirate stations settle ashore. Invicta, heralded as the first UK

pirate station focusing exclusively on black music, starts its land-based broadcasts in 1970, thereby not just showing the way for a new sound on radio, but for a new urban land-based platform. Soul and funk becomes the stable of the second generation of UK music pirates such as Invicta, JFM, Solar, and Horizon. From the late 1970's, for example the Mastermind DJ team at Invicta performs their style of 'master-mixing,' featuring a non-stop mix of American funk and soul, while in the early 1980's they progresses to the sounds of electro-funk and hip hop (Hind & Mosco, 1985:20-25). Around the same time LWR, another successful black music pirate station of the 1980's, champions hip-hop too. In 1984, then LWR pirate DJ, Tim Westwood co-organised one of the biggest hip hop festivals in London of the 1980's, with 30,000 attendees (Hebdige, 2007 [1987]:155; Hinds & Mosco, 1985:27). Pirate station Dread Broadcasting Corporation (DBC) follows in 1981, focusing on Afro-Caribbean and African styles of music, while broadcasting using a home-built transmitter and an aerial setup in the backyard of station founder DJ Lepke's house. Remembers Lepke's sister, Miss P, then a DJ alongside Neneh Cherry and Lepke at the DBC;

> "Lepke took what he thought was his only course of action and built his own radio station after acquiring a medium-wave transmitter. By use of a 60ft high mast in the back garden of his house in Neasden, north-west London, he broadcast shows that had been pre-recorded onto cassettes" (The Independent, 01–11–2004).

Gaining his musical apprenticeship on sound systems, Lepke brings to the radio media a different way of presenting music that appeals not only to the black Caribbean immigrants but to the white British youth too. Lepke presents the music on DBC quite differently than other UK radio stations by rewinding the records, as well as using echo units, reverb machines, and electronic sound effects. By this, the DBC creates an "inventive and entertaining" (Hind & Mosco, 1985:33) radio format which, according to Lepke, required planning, dedication, and stamina: "let one of those professional Radio One [sic] DJ's come here and try to do what we're doing - they couldn't! Cueing records, mixing in jingles, answering the door, making tea! We run down the road to get cigarettes while turntable's running, hear the record on the radio in the shop, and get back in time to start the next record" (Lepke in Hind & Mosco, 1985:35). Continues Miss P, "Our format allows us to play music that would otherwise never be heard publicly. We create movements within the industry" (Hind & Mosco, 1985:34).

The Jamaican influence on English youth and music culture is particularly profound throughout the 1970's and 1980's, as the Jamaican reggae and dub culture grows rapidly due to the

worldwide success of Bob Marley & The Wailers, Max Romeo, King Tubby, Lee Perry, and many others. In the UK, the Punks, guided by among other aforementioned Don Letts, turns towards the militant and 'roots' styles of reggae for both musical and political inspiration (Gilroy, 2009 [1987]:159-163), as both movements in different ways rebels against the rules and laws of the established society by "chanting down Babylon" (McLeod, 2009 [2004]; Murrell *et al*. (ed.) 1998). Comments Letts, "I was very touched to see how my culture could affect my white bredrin'. That's something I learned from punk rock, that it was through the understanding of our differences that brought us closer together. It was by not trying to be the same" (Letts, 2010). The local UK reggae scene at the same time produces successful bands and artists such as Aswad, Steel Pulse, Smiley Culture, and Tippa Irie,[39] while UK sound systems like Jah Shaka, Saxon International, Admiral Ken, Channel One, and Jah Tubbys[40] build up strong fan bases in both the black and white communities.[41]

In 1984, however, the DBC seizes their pirate broadcasts, and Miss P is recruited to BBC Radio 1 (BBC Radio London, 14-02-2007). While black music such as hip-hop and soul music prevails on the pirate stations, one station in particular stands out musically. Kiss FM starts their pirate broadcasts in South London in 1985, quickly expanding to cover almost all of London, and even at one point apparently attracting up to 500,000 listeners (Books LLC, 2010:29-35; Osborne, 2009:165-173). With such a large following, Kiss successfully launches some of the first acid house club nights in the UK, and in 1990 even acquires a legitimate radio broadcasting licence, thereby becoming the first pirate station ever to do so (Books LLC, 2010:30; Thornton, 1995:146-151). Kiss features hip hop and soul as well as upfront electronic dance music from the United States.

The third generation

Fuelled by the sensation of a mood enhancing drug called Ecstasy, the electronic sounds of house, garage, and techno music hit the British dance floors in 1987-88, and though originating in the American cities of Chicago, New York, and Detroit, the UK DJ's and producers are swift to create their own take on the sound. It becomes known as 'rave' (Reynolds, 2008

39 Some of these bands and artists are covered in the documentary film *Reggae in a Babylon* (Büld, 2009 [1978]).

40 The early 1980's UK sound system movement is the subject of the feature film *Babylon* (Rosso, 2008 [1980]).

41 *Musically Mad* (Folke & Weslien, 2008) documents the contemporary UK sound system culture.

[1998]:36-68; Watson & Watson, 2009). Author and then DJ, Neville Watson, remembers the explosion of acid house and rave as something unique;

> "I loved the anarchy of those early parties. It was as if all those years we spent trying to jack the system through things like punk and aggression had no effect, and then suddenly all these kids who'd never consider themselves political were creating this revolution. It was more punk than punk ever was" (Watson & Watson, 2009:127).

The Caribbean influence on British music and youth culture roots in rave too, for example the Trinidad & Tobago carnival tradition of making noise with whistles and horns as a sign of respect of the DJ's and MC's. The Jamaican sound system and dub plate tradition inspires sonic experiments such as a fusion of rave and dub music, championed by amongst others Leeds-based Ital Rockers[42]; "They'd [Ital Rockers] cut just twenty or thirty tracks on acetate, and have sound-systems parties underneath this hotel. No lights, 200 people, and they'd play reggae, then hip-hop, then these bleep-and-bass tunes. And they'd be toasting on top of it" (Steve Beckett in Reynolds, 2008 [1998]:99). Beckett, founder of Warp Records, one of the most successful

42 Now known as Iration Steppas.

Figure 17. A whistle-blowing participant at the Notting Hill Carnival 2008, West London.

Figure 18. Rum & Black's 12" vinyl release Fuck the Legal Stations *(1990).*

independent UK labels for electronic music, leads the 'bleep and bass' music movement of the late 1980's and early 1990's with releases of UK artists such as 808 State, Unique 3, Sweet Exorcist, and LFO. On these releases too, the influence of Jamaican music culture can be heard, especially in the case of *LFO* by LFO. Turning the inside out of subwoofers at raves in 1990, the LFO release features a bass line so massive it can be felt physically - a respectful homage to the Jamaican bass-heavy sound system culture. The Ragga Twins, then MC's on local London reggae sound systems, at first does not appreciate rave music, though later on realises the potential of fusing their trademark fast-style ragga dancehall toasting with the instrumental backbone of what become known as the sub-genres of UK hardcore and breakbeat house (Ragga Twins, 2010). This uniquely British fusion of Caribbean, American, and European music heralds the start of what British author and music critic Simon Reynolds (2009a; 2009b) terms 'the hardcore continuum' of UK music. A continuum that continually grows, develops, and changes, fostering new genres and sub genres such as UK hardcore, jungle, drum 'n' bass, UK and speed garage, 2-step, and now recently grime and dubstep. The rise of rave culture also sparks the third generation of pirate radio, fuelled by the genres of the hardcore continuum, and by

technological advances of mobile phones and cheap(er) DJ and broadcasting gear.
From the rooftops of, and flats within the concrete high-rise tower blocks and council estates of especially East and North East London, the pirates broadcasts illegally to a growing number of avid listeners. In often grimy and worn-down locations, the pirates setup their broadcast wherever they can. The founder of Kool FM, Eastman, remembers how they barricade their broadcast equipment as not to lose it to the DTI (Knowledge Magazine, December 2004:114);

> "we got an empty flat on the 20th floor, blocked it up with concrete filled with girders and iron bars and left our rigs in it. We put a metal door in, then a front door and climbed up side of the building, no ropes. [...] [The pirates] Risked their life and limb to play their music."

The 1990's sees an increase in pirate stations, and as the number of pirate stations multiplies, so does the DTI and police raids, with a whopping 536 conducted in 1992 alone, "resulting in 68 convictions" (The Independent, 18-08-1993). Affiliates of the Ragga Twins, London-based producers Rum & Black comments in 1990 on the status of the strict British broadcasting politics by releasing an EP labelled *Fuck the Legal Stations*. This, and other tunes of the hardcore continuum, ignites the pirate radio communities, which invents simple, but ingenious illegal broadcast equipment. In 1993, a DTI representative displays a selection of various confiscated pieces of equipment fitted by pirates on the rooftops of tower blocks and estates around London such as: "One transmitter was built inside tubing and held with a car-jack in a sewage pipe in a block of council flats. Another was inside a biscuit tin" (The Independent, 18-08-1993). Eastman (Kool FM, 1998), former sound system operator and founder of Kool FM, points out that the way the DTI/Ofcom and the pirates are intertwined is through what he terms a cat and mouse game. On being chased around the estates and tower blocks of London operating as an illegal radio pirate, Eastman remarks that, "It's a buzz when you go out at night, creeping about, sling the aerial up, and sneak around." Elaborates Reynolds (2008 [1998]:228-229) on the pirates' ingenuity, "Surviving as a pirate station in the Nineties involves a mix of graft, skill, and cunning similar to that possessed by their seafaring namesakes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." Survive the pirates do, and the music producers, DJ's, and MC's continually pushes the limits further by incorporating almost every possible genre into the melting pot of London urban and electronic dance music.

Inspired by the vocal tradition of Jamaican reggae dancehall and American hip hop, the UK pirate radio MC's come to dominate the airwaves, acting as both hype men for the pirate DJ's, and as mediators between the station and its listeners as they take charge of the phone-in's and text messages (Goodman, 2007; Goodman, 2010a). By this, the listeners are held in high esteem, and during the years a unique network between pirates and listeners has developed. This generation of pirates, increasingly supporting the many technological advances, create a 'rave at home' space for the listeners that cannot partake in the regular raves held in and around London. As Kenny Ken, a jungle and drum 'n' bass DJ and producer, puts it; "If you can't afford to go to raves, at least you can tune in on your radio" (Seely, 1993).

While many legal radio stations interact with their listeners, pirate radio takes the interaction to the extremes with non-stop communicative interaction by 'name checking' through text messages, emails, chat boards, and 'ring-ins;' the latter implying that listeners phone the station, letting it ring only once, indicating that they are locked on to the station's broadcast. The MC's and DJ's in charge at the station continually trace the log of missed calls, while calling out the last three digits of each one: "out to the 365, the 768, the 976, 315…" (Goodman, 2007:49). A feedback process which O'Hagan (2010) sees as a "community resource […] [as] they serve a function by backing areas of social life that might be ignored […] They embrace it" (O'Hagan, 2010). The interactivity between pirates and listeners acts in ways similar to the informal yet interactive performer-audience relationship at the sound system dances (Lesser, 2008). Furthermore, the pirate stations realises the potential of promoting not only their station but also their DJ's and MC's at raves. Pirates and promoters become affiliated; a leader of this throughout the 1990's is Kool FM. Just after a few years on air, the station launches its successful Jungle Fever brand of raves and club nights (Bluesy, 2010). In this way, the pirates create physical meeting places for the communities in and around London. These meeting places holds an expanding community together, which Reynolds (2008 [1998]: 225) argues helps create a space in which many finds a united yet chaotic-sounding voice;

> "All through the Nineties, London's 'ardkore rave and jungle pirate stations have disrupted the decorum of the FM airwaves with their vulgar fervour and rude-boy attitude. Pirate DJ's unleash a mad multi-generic mash-up of hip hop breakbeats, dub-reggae bass and Euro-rave synth-bombast. The MC surfs this polyrhythmic pandemonium with a freestyle Dada-doggerel of druggy buzzwords, party-hard exhortations and outlaw war-cries: sublime "nonsense" that is purely invocatory, designed to bind its scattered addressees into a community, mobilise it into an army."

Figure 19 (opposite page). A hand-drawn map and chronology of the many UK pirate radio stations in the period of 1969-1988, as depicted in Soul Underground magazine, July 1988.

BILL DEW—
ILLUSTRATION

JOHNNY S.—
RESEARCH AND
TEXT

PIRATE RADIO STATION TO STATION

PIRATE RADIO HAS BEEN THRIVING FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS, LONDON WITH RADIO 1! IN THE EARLY 1960s, POP MUSIC WAS REFUSED AIRPLAY BY THE BBC, EVEN THOUGH THE YOUTH OF THE DAY YEARNED FOR IT! IN MARCH, 1964, **RONAN O'REILLY** TOOK THE INITIATIVE AND ANCHORED **'RADIO CAROLINE'** IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. THREE YEARS LATER, THE MARINE OFFENCES ACT OF AUGUST, 1967, MADE OFF-SHORE BROADCASTING ILLEGAL. JUST ONE MONTH AFTER THE PASSING OF THE ACT, RADIO 1 CAME ON AIR, BUT A NEW BLACK CULTURE WAS DEVELOPING THE NEED TO BE HEARD. THANKS TO THE FORTUITOUS MEETING OF **BOB TOMALSKI, TONY JUNS** AND **ROGER ST. CROSHAW, INVICTA RADIO WAS BORN ON A** TAXI BAND OF 88.7 AM. FROM MIDNIGHT UNTIL 1.30 AM. FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF **RADIO FREE LONDON**, **'INVICTA'** MOVED TO FM IN THE AUTUMN OF 1970. BY THE TIME THAT **J.F.M.** AND **'HORIZON'** STARTED, **'INVICTA'** SHOWS ON **'SKYLINE'** TRANSMITTERS, BUT THE COMPETITION PROVED TOO MUCH. WERE REPAYING

J.F.M. WAS LAUNCHED BY BRIAN ANTHONY DURING THE AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY OF 1971, AT 'LEX' BROADCASTING AWAY FROM A BIG MOUTH. **'D.B.C.'** ASTONISHINGLY, THE FIRST BLACK STATION TO PLAY BLACK MUSIC, WAS FORMED BY **LEPKE** IN 1981, FROM WHENCE **THE RANKING MISS P.** HAS SINCE BEEN SNAPPED UP BY THE BBC. **'HORIZON'** CIRCA 1981 REACHED ENORMOUS POPULARITY AND HELD MANY SUCCESSFUL ALL-DAYERS BEFORE **CHRIS STEWART** MOVED ON TO PASTURES NEW. MANY **'HORIZON'** D.J.S BANDED TOGETHER TO FORM **'SOLAR'** IN MAY 1985.

CAPITAL RADIO LONDON — PETE TONG — LYN PARSONS — BOB TOMALSKI

INVICTA 88.7/1 FM — 92.9 — JFM 94.2 — MAC — MAX AND DANE DEFECT

CAPITAL — WESTWOOD DEFECTS

SKYLINE 212 AM / 90.2 — CITYSOUND 94.3 — CONTRAST 90 — LWR 92.5

HORIZON 94.8 — DBC 103.8 — SOLAR 102.5 — FAME 97.3

WESTWOOD — KISS 94 — BOBBY + STEVE — SOL 94.3 — CJ CARLOS DEFECTS — TIMO 102.4

JBC 104.3 — STUDIO 92.7 — SKY FORMERLY 'TWILIGHT' 92

GUEST 89.9 — ROCK II ROCK 90.2 — PHASE 1 90.9 — TIME 103.7 — GROOVE 89.9 — WBLS 88.6 — DEFECTION — STARPOINT 94.2

JOY 97 — WMK 102.8 — JWT — MANY OF EX-'STARPOINT' D.J.'S — K-JAZZ 94.2 SHARED 'STARPOINTS' FREQUENCY — RJR 90 — D.J — REACH 94.2

ROY C. DEFECTS

CITY 99.1 — PASSION 90.6 — FRESH 103.3 — GALAXY 89.7 — WLIB 98.2 — MELODY 102.4

STRONG ISLAND 96.8 — SOUL 96 — RAM JAM 98.7 — TRAX — GIRLS 96.2 — ORIGINALLY ALL-FEMALE — TOUCH 96.1 — TRAFFIC JAM 97.9 — CLASSIC 105.2 — CJR 98.6

STAGE 102.2 FORMED BY ERROL HAMILTON — SUNRISE 88.6 — CD93 93.2 COMPACT DISC ONLY

1969 — 1980 — 1981 — 1983 — 1984 — 1985 — 1986 — 1987 — 1988

MANY STATIONS HAVE FALLEN FOUL OF THE LAW.....

KEY

STATIONS EVOLVED — D.J. DEFECTION

NO LONGER ON AIR — 1-5 BUSTS — 5-20 BUSTS

L·WR. BEGAN AS A POP-ORIENTATED STATION WITH A HANDFUL OF SPECIALISTS LIKE **WESTWOOD** OPERATING SOUL AND HIP-HOP SHOWS, BUT MANAGEMENT UP-HEAVALS ALLOWED FOR GREATER DIVERSITY. **'J.F.M.'S GORDON MAC** TEAMED UP WITH **GEORGE POWER** AND **TOSCA** TO FORM **'KISS'** FEATURING SOUNDS FROM **NORMAN JAY'S** RARE GROOVE, TO THE BHANGRA OF **ASHOK HAMAR**. **'CONTRAST'** WAS LAUNCHED IN 1984 AND CLOSED A YEAR LATER AFTER DEFECTORS FORMED **'STUDIO.'**

K-JAZZ — RJR

SOUL — GIRLS — STARPOINT — WMK — JWT — CLASSIC

CITY SOUND — WBLS — GALAXY — SKY — TRAX — RAM JAM

PHASE 1 — GUEST — CITY — PASSION — GROOVE — STRONG ISLAND

TKO — JBC — TIME — FRESH — MELODY — ROCK II ROCK

LWR — FAME — CONTRAST — STUDIO — KISS — SOL

INVICTA — JFM — HORIZON — DBC — SKYLINE — SOLAR

The fourth generation

The community feeling that Reynolds argues is created by the third generation of UK pirates is prevalent too in the 2000's as the fourth generation of pirates begin to appear. Besides FM broadcasts and the promotion of raves, the new generation of pirate radio builds up even bigger brands using online social media platforms. By focusing on this medium, they stand to gain not just a bigger local following, but also a global one. One of the latest offspring of the hardcore continuum is dubstep, which draws on the musical legacy of the Jamaican sound system culture but also many other genres and musical cultures (Reynolds, 2009b). Mala (BBC, 2006a) states at a Mary Anne Hobbs BBC Radio 1 show, that sonically in dubstep: "We don't just deal with bass – we deal with sub!" To which fellow dubstep DJ and producer Pinch elaborates; "If your chest ain't rattling, it ain't happening" (BBC, 2006a; British Council, 2007). Still, some argue, even though the BBC and other legal stations to some extent have entered the musical territory of the pirates (Hobbs, 2010; Paul, 2010), it is still the pirate stations that provide the most upfront and undiluted format: The raw sound of the streets of London (Clark, 2010). Here is an argument presented in a news magazine article on the phenomenon;

> "This listening experience is all the more exciting because you know that you will not hear these sounds on Radio 1: as the success of dubstep and grime has proved, Britain's boldest new music needs non-commercial stations that are prepared to take risks" (New Statesman, 30–08–2007).

A dubstep producer himself, Bluesy (2010) of Kool FM concludes that if legal radio validates the music and format of pirate radio as Hobbs (2010) argues, "It shows that we are doing something good." Originally developed in London in the 2000's, the bass-heavy sound of dubstep has since developed into an international movement.[43] East London-based Rinse FM, hailed by blogger, journalist, and producer Martin Clark as "the Barcelona FC of grime stations," (Clark in Gibb, 2010) has built up a strong local as well as global fan base. With a successful roster of DJ's and MC's, Rinse broadcasts via FM, the Internet, and mobile 3G technologies,[44] while at the same time organising and promoting raves and club nights in London. By this, the station has built up a strong international and national brand. By implementing this strategy, Rinse sets the standard for other

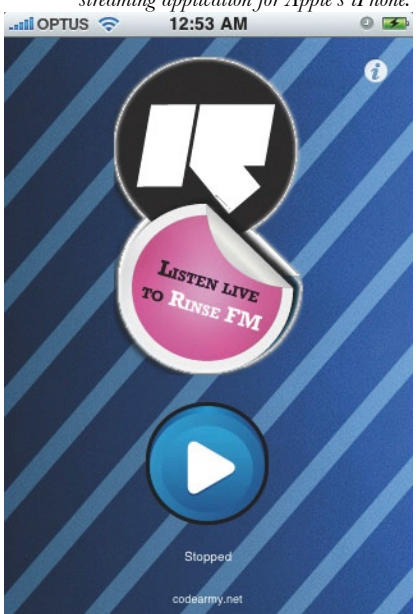
43 *Bassweight* (2010 [2008]], a documentary by Studio SRK, explores the world of British and international dubstep producers and DJ's.

44 In 2009, Rinse FM launched its live streaming application for the Apple iPhone. The application is available for free from the Apple iTunes Store. More information: http://rinsefm.codearmy.net/m/#_about

pirate stations to follow (Clark, 2010). Kool FM also reaches a local, as well as global audience, broadcasting drum 'n' bass via both the Internet and FM. In 2007, a radio amateur in Finland managed to pick up the Kool FM broadcasts transmitted from East London - the illegal FM waves had travelled more than 2000 kilometres (Kujala, 2007).

Now acting on a global scale too, the debate in the UK on pirate radio, however, has not changed much since the 1960's. In a news report of 2002, London pirate stations are deemed a dangerous phenomenon; "It's hip, it's hyped, and it is totally against the law. Tune your radio dial these days, and chances are you'll enter a criminal underworld. Pirate radio is still illegal, but there are more stations today than ever, beaming everything from trance music to anarchy into Britain's homes" (Channel 4 News, 2002). While anarchy hasn't taken root in homes across the UK, at least not yet, pirate radio is considered a problem to be reckoned with. So too are the so-called 'Chavs' and 'Hoodies' (Hayward & Yar, 2006; Martin, 2009; Pearson, 2006), slang terms for two of the latest stereotyped British youth characters. This youth stereotype is often associated with 'ASB', antisocial behaviour, such as gang and criminal activity (Burney, 2005; Flint (ed.), 2006; Heale, 2009; Millie, 2008). Though not specifically associated with pirate radio *per se*, the Chavs seem to have resurfaced some of the fashion deeds originally linked to the Mods and Skins as well as the Casuals subculture of hooliganism. Wearing expensive, or at least expensive looking jewellery and British designer brand clothes, the Chav style seems to spread across the UK, and they are noticeable at British raves and club nights too, as I witnessed on my field trips in 2010.

Figure 20. Screen shot of the Rinse FM streaming application for Apple's iPhone.



'No hats, no hoodies' is a slogan noticeable at many UK raves and club nights too, and the slogan is even read aloud in pirate station adverts for local raves and club nights. It appears that the hoodie, the hooded sweatshirt of urban sports wear, has also become synonymous with societal problems and trouble. Even in a radio advert for a London club night, UK funky MC Tippa call for a dress code of "No hats, no hoods, and clean trainers allowed" (Yellow, 2010). The Chav and Hoodie fashion statement has become synonymous with trouble it seems. London youth

culture of 2010, regardless of skin colour, has also seen a rise in the so-called 'postcode wars' (The Evening Standard, 15-11-2010), by which especially male youth are encouraged to defend their turf, and not entering areas outside of their own territory. The bad man street culture of young Britons has also crept into the world of pirate radio, in particular gaining popularity with grime MC's. Wiley, considered one of the founders of grime, at one point attracted considerable negative attention to himself, the genre, and not least Rinse FM, when he in an apparently drunken rage, "spent an hour berating and calling out a rival MC, only for the MC in question to turn up at the studio, mob-handed, while the show was still on air" (The Guardian, 18-06-2010). Commenting on the escalation of the British bad man culture, professor of social theory, Paul Gilroy says; "The Rastafari have gone, and the Rude Boys are back in force. They are ruder than ever" (Gilroy, 2009 [1987]:xiii). Yet, even though the bad man and rude boy culture seem to flourish in many parts of the UK and especially in major cities such as London, the lyrics of e.g. grime MC's should not always be analysed only in a context of gangster and crime glorification. As East London-based grime MC Riko (2007) of the Roll Deep crew puts it; "It's a joke ting, it's a musical ting. When I talk 'bout killing sound, I'm talking about killing sound [systems or other MC's], I don't talk 'bout killing civilians on the streets." Still, in a national and local perspective, the UK seems to face severe challenges on the integration of marginalised youth and immigrants. In 2000, the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain answered this by requesting that;

> "Inadequate attention is paid to issues of race, racism and whiteness in British culture, and there are insufficient representations through the performing and visual arts, of the increasingly hybrid society that Britain now is. We recommend that a national cultural policy be developed through widespread participation and consultation. It should pay particular attention to issues of cultural inclusion and identity" (The Parekh Report, 2002 [2000]:161–162).

The question of identity and cultural inclusion is a matter that is not addressed easily, yet by adhering to their local roots and ways of conducting business, some pirate stations have managed to rise to the occasion. In the summer of 2010, Rinse FM, in collaboration with youth teaching organisation Futureversity of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, launched a broadcast academy for 14-19 year old East Londoners, offering dedicated courses and lectures on how to manage and operate a radio station, produce and programme shows, conduct interviews, etc. (Futureversity, 2010; Rinse FM, 2010c). Rinse FM has with the radio academy and an impressive roster of DJ's

and MC's of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, applied for an official broadcast licence, which is granted in July 2010 (Rinse FM, 2010a; 2010b; The Evening Standard, 12-10-2010; The Guardian, 18-06-2010; The Guardian, 10-10-2010). It seems that the twenty-first century has brought major changes to pirate radio, with a few major stations leading the way into a more established and professional radio territory.

Summary

In this chapter I have accounted for the history of the British pirate radio, tracing four generations from the post WW II era into the twenty-first century. Cultural events, I argue, have been instrumental to the rise of the pirate radio phenomenon - the bass music, sound system culture, and carnival tradition of the West Indies; the mainstream radio formats and underground electronic music genres of the US; and the seafaring pirate pioneers of Denmark. These have all, in one way or the other, forged and inspired a unique culture of UK, and especially London pirate radio. In the scope of my research, the four generations have, in each of their own way, produced a space of 'the other,' embodying it with music geographies and soundscapes of illegal radio transmissions, raves, carnivals, sound clashes, and dances, while each generation has utilised technology and urban space in distinct ways. In the chapter that follows, I will narrow my focus to analyses of the contemporary fourth generation of London pirate radio phenomenon.

> *We mash up de FM dial*
> *Make a nigga wanna brock wild*

East London-based grime crew, Ruff Squad, had a massive underground grime hit in *Anna* (2004), from which this excerpt is taken.

Figure 21 (next page). Detail from a former Kool FM studio, unknown location, London.


E MULTI AWARD WINNING
KOOL
16 YEARS IN THE GAME
FRIDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2007
FRIDGE
1 TOWN HALL PARADE
10PM
BENSON & HEDGES
GOLD

PLEASE REFER TO CHAPTER 5 ON THE DVD

5

A LONDON SOMET'ING DIS - PIRATE RADIO AND URBAN SPACE

Drawing upon my introductory analyses of the previous chapter, in this chapter I present the second and primary part of my analyses of the phenomenon of pirate radio. This is done with an exclusive focus on the contemporary fourth generation London-based pirates only. Utilising the four themes presented in chapter four as the empirical guideline, I put the urban ontology and the music geographies to their theoretical test. The analytical themes are; 1) The global and the local; 2) communities; 3) urban temporality; and 4) talent incubation.

The global and the local

As I have argued, after the second generation of UK pirates began operating in the 1970's, illegal radio has been primarily an urban phenomenon, and is mostly concentrated in the capital city of London. For the pirate radio communities, local urban spaces of London are a great influence. Elaborating on the influence of the urban space of London on his music, Mala, a South London-based dubstep producer and DJ, describes it as affecting him and his music in such a way that it has become a "calling, […] trying to get out of that, trying to be heard" (Red Bull Music Academy, 2009). Commenting further, Mala considers how the local London environment of grey weather and concrete architecture influences his dubstep productions, to which he remarks, "I think the reason why it could only come from London is because the grey skies – whoever designed concrete and made it grey is an absolute joker 'cause it matches the sky – so you got this constant perspective of greyness. You know, the parks are pretty limited and small. I've always felt more surrounded by buildings and concrete rather than nature […] I guess it made me into who I am now, that I won't dispute, that's a fact" (Red Bull Music Academy, 2009). Much of Mala's music can be described as reflecting this environment, bringing forth a minimalistic, bass-heavy, introverted and sometimes 'dark' interpretation of Jamaican dub and British rave music such as jungle. In response to this, blogger, journalist, and producer Martin Clark asks; "Why is so much of the music from London, from jungle to grime to dubstep, so dark?" To which East London-based grime MC and producer Jammer replies, "It's why we make grimy beats; because we were surrounded by grimy stuff" (Danmarks Radio, 2005). Even though he is based in Bristol, producer Kowton attests that "the pirate sound" and "the murky city atmosphere" of London seem made for each other (Pipe Down, 29-03-2010). These descriptions of London are indeed different to what Sukhdev Sandhu (2007:12), author, critic and director of the Asian/Pacific/American Studies Program at New York University, sarcastically argues the politicians of New Labour believe London ought to strive to become; "a blinging, pigeon-free, glass-fronted, private-finance-initiative-funded, cappuccino-sipping, Barcelona-mimicking, Euro-pizza festooned, Vanity Fair-endorsed, live-forever, things-can-only-get-better fantasia."

What Sandhu seems to call for is a debate of how the planning discourse of competitive cities leads to an appropriation and 'reinvention' of urban space to facilitate the needs of, and thereby attract, global investors, businesses and tourists. Sandhu points out that the global impact on the local urban and

cultural scale, such as in the case of the London Olympics,[45] as well as in the case of West London's Westfield shopping centre of 2008, hailed as "Europe's biggest mall" (London S.L.A., 2010), the recent restoration and transformation of Trafalgar Square in Central London (Better Public Building, 2004), and the Millennium Dome project of South East London (National Audit Office, 2005), are examples of how this global discourse, often negatively, impacts on a local scale.

While the renovation projects of East London are reaching a climax as a result of the 2012 Olympics, Martin Clark (2010) points out that many youths of London still come from deprived local backgrounds of poverty, social housing, and crime. As of August 2008, according to the Greater London Authority (2010), the capital has the highest percentage in the UK of children in poverty,[46] with the East End boroughs of Inner London such as Newham, Hackney, Islington, and Tower Hamlets reaching more than 40 per cent (Greater London Authority, 2010). It is a result of these difficult conditions, as well as other social factors, that the phenomenon of pirate radio finds it's place in London. Pirate radio provides "ways of participating in something they [the

Figure 21 (opposite page). A grimy looking area; Putting Mill Lane, East London. According to the photographer, it was taken in 1999 from what is now inside the London 2012 Olympic site.

45 In this perspective, the impact of the forthcoming London Summer Olympics 2012 in relation to urban and cultural planning, regeneration and gentrification of the capital is interesting (cf. BBC, 2007a; Citymayors, 2008; London 2012, 2008; Plum, 2010; The Guardian, 23-01-2008; Woudhuysen, 2008).

46 Child poverty of London as of August 2008 reached over 30 per cent (Greater London Authority, 2010).

youth] enjoy, whereas formalised education structures have failed them or they left those […]. It's just natural that they want a sense of belonging" (Clark, 2010). These youth seek a relationship with their community, which Nielsen & Simonsen (2003:922) argues is necessary to cope with and tackle the everyday 'hard knock life' of London.

Even though architecturally, socially, and economically deprived, many areas of London still manage to ignite a positive musical inspiration too, especially in the case of the underground music scenes, as Jammer (Danmarks Radio, 2005) and Mala argues (Red Bull Music Academy, 2009; Mala, 2010). Photographer James Burns, who has kindly provided me with several photographs for my research, and is a mate of several Kool FM pirates, views tower blocks and council estates of London as perfect breeding grounds for pirate radio, because "the design of the block was perfect for pirates, and also the fact that they were total ghetto shitholes made them legendary places to pirate radio headz" (Burns, 2010). Derelict industrial areas - especially the concrete council estates and high-rise tower blocks of modernist and functionalist design scattered all over London, are not just an artistic influence to the pirate communities, but they are also vitally necessary because, through appropriation, they can serve as 'free zones' in which temporary broadcast hotspots are established. The pirates act as "unrecognised producers, poets of their own affairs, trailblazers in the jungles of functionalist rationality," as de Certeau (1988 [1984]:34) so vividly remarks. By this appropriation, the urban space of London, as I shall argue more in depth in later sections of this chapter, provides local breeding grounds for new music and talent. On a physical level the space changes function, illegally, such as when studios are established in squatted flats, and transmission equipment is installed on rooftops. On a social and mental level too, appropriated urban space changes function, as it become the epicentre for pirate radio communities. The pirate radio musical soundscapes transmitted articulates and reproduces a different and oppositional urban space of London (Jones, 1995:2), to which the pirate communities turn to as their local, distinct and collective language, through which they articulate and express "the civic and cultural life of their communities" (Howley, 2000:256). Pirate radio stations serve as both "geographic spaces and psychological centres […]" (LaBelle, 2003:215-216), and they are "an agent of progressive social change" (Howley, 2000:256), by which the spatial practise of London urban space is "continuously being reshaped and remade" (Ingham *et al.*, 1999:299). Urban space thus, notes de Certeau (1988 [1984]: 97-98), becomes 'alive' when "a process of appropriation of the

topographical system" is carried out tactically by "a spatial acting-out of the place." As Myria Georgiou (2008:223), lecturer in media and communications at London School of Economics, concludes;

> "In these urban locations, the need to manage difference is synonymous to making them liveable and one's own. In seeking (and sometimes finding) a location in the city and a location in the world, urban dwellers shape their communication practices as forms of everyday, mundane and bottom-up tactics for the management of diversity."

Still, for decades the music of London has not been restricted to a local influence (or audience) as Clark remarks: "We're London in spirit but not always in location" (Pipe Down, 29-03-2010). In a global perspective, pirate radio is centred on the hardcore continuum sound of London, which is described by many people as upfront, and at the same time uniquely rough and raw sounding (Clark, 2010; Mala, 2010; Pipe Down, 29-03-2010). As Clark puts it: "It's strange, because on one hand the localness of it is essentially, fundamentally what makes it valuable. It needs to sound like rough and raw London. When other people clone the London sound, they forget that side. That rudeness to it, and that often makes it sound like it is less likely from London. That rawness of what pirate radio is, is its appeal" (Clark, 2010). While the bass-heavy sound of jungle, drum 'n' bass, UK garage, grime, dubstep, and UK funky has spread to almost all corners of the globe, for some London pirates it thus has become important to sound uniquely local, even though their musical inspirations in many aspects are global, as Clark (2010) explains;

> "So if you make stuff that sounds it could be made anywhere in the world, what's the point? [...] The local aspect is a unique selling point. If you go to a club in Belgium and you play the records that all the local DJ's are playing, what's your point in being there, why should they pay for your flight and your hotel? But if you represent yourself with those records that only you can have because you are from East London, then that's your unique selling point. I don't think they [the pirates] want to be narrow-minded or limit themselves, it's just that what makes them unique."

Clark's argumentation recalls a similar argument of almost 20 years prior. Paul 'Ibiza,' founder and manager of Ibiza Records, a label now regarded as championing jungle, comments on how the soundscapes of Belgium techno of the late 1980's and early 1990's influenced the London producers. At one point, however, the producers, such as himself, got fed up with a foreign sound, developing a more uniquely UK sounding music instead. He explains: "Belgium had a lot of influence in the music industry in Britain. […] And being a Londoner, I just had enough of that sort of sound" (Seely, 1993).


Technics


Fire
door keep
shut

Goodman (2010) argues that the unique qualities of London pirate radio is due to being part of a 'mongrelised' music culture; a music culture that constantly reinvents itself, finding inspiration from all over the world because of the large presence of immigrant communities in the UK. In the case of Ibiza Records, fusing the soundscapes of Belgium techno, US house and hip-hop, and Jamaican reggae and dancehall created a recognisable identity. Clark exemplifies how this uniquely British mongrel music culture can be seen as the backbone of the hardcore continuum; "A bunch of guys in London plays a U.S. house record, so what? There are guys playing U.S. house records all over the world. It's a globalised music culture, but when Marcus Nasty [UK funky DJ at Rinse FM] takes it and takes ownership, then you have something that is unique. […] It's local, but that doesn't mean their aspirations are local" (Clark, 2010).

Researching the impact of black Caribbean culture on white British youth, Simon Jones, PhD on Cultural Studies from the University of Birmingham, interviews what he terms an inner-city "black/white boy" (Jones, 1988:xiii) of white Irish-Scottish descent with black Caribbean mates. The boy, proud of being part of a multicultural melting pot, suggests the UK has changed; "I know there's no such thing as England any more… Welcome to India brothers! This is the Caribbean! Nigeria! There is no 'England' man… When will they wake up? This is the new world man, this is what is coming" (Jones, 1988:ix). The musical melting pot of pirate radio is rooted in the multicultural communities of the UK, and is especially present in the capital of London. The Caribbean immigrant communities has had a profound influence on pirate radio; for example, the Jamaican tradition of sound systems and the Trinidadian tradition of carnival are taken to the streets, such as during the Notting Hill Carnival. In a multicultural city such as London, this way of transforming urban space - even if only temporarily - is of great importance not only to immigrant communities, but also to underground cultural movements such as radio pirates. By resisting or even breaking the "certain order" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:121) that dominates urban space, the pirates establish small, local zones in which they operate on their own terms. These zones do not necessarily have to be of physical character, as I argue throughout the thesis, but can also consist of mental and social character. In these zones, the pirates produce an

Figure 23 (opposite page). A collage of (from top left to bottom right) Ofcom inspecting a tall pirate radio aerial; a home-built aerial made out of scaffolding and copper wire seen in between mobile telephone and television aerials; a DJ of the Ragga Twins crew on air at a former Kool FM studio, East London; Uncle Dugs (right, standing), Chef (centre, seated) and unknown at a former Kool FM studio; a London tower block as presented on the Rinse FM website; and a fire door leading to one of the former Kool FM studios in which the Ragga Twins are live on air, some of them visible through the window.

urban space of their own via operations of temporary appropriation, which "circulate, come and go, overflow and drift over an imposed terrain, like the snowy waves of the sea slipping in among the rocks and defiles of an established order" (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:34). By tactically imposing their order onto urban space, the phenomenon of pirate radio create a community of like-minded people similar to the way sound systems operate. Clark (2010) points out that self-regulating control is fundamental to both cultures; "if you have a sound system, no one can tell you what to play. If you have a pirate radio station, no one can tell you what to play. It's about ownership" (Clark, 2010).

For Geeneus of RInse FM, the focus is not just on creating ownership of a particular sound or music genre, but also a matter of supporting local talent: "Everyone I knew at school is in prison […] I do feel a responsibility to show young people that there is an alternative, that there are other ways of doing what you want in life" (The Guardian, 10-10-2010). DJ Hype, internationally acclaimed drum 'n' bass DJ, producer, and radio host at Kiss, started his career on local sound systems and pirate radio stations around London, gradually building up a name for himself, as well as a close community of like-minded entities. Being self-taught and growing up in the multicultural, but often hard living areas of London, DJ Hype reflects on what could have become of him had he not chosen the path of music; "I sometimes think if I'm not doing this, what am I gonna do, I don't know anything else most of the people I knew outside of this is [sic] either mad, dead or in prison" (Pyroradio.com, 2009). Kenny Ken, a fellow London-based drum 'n' bass DJ and producer, spent several years of the 1980's in prison. In *All Junglists! A London Somet'ing Dis* (Seely, 1993), a documentary about jungle and drum 'n' bass, he recalls how tuning in to the local music communities of pirate radio and rave culture set him on a straight path;

> "It's made me see life in a different way, really. You know what I mean, when I was younger, I just wanted things quickly. I wanted my car quickly, I wanted my bike quickly, I wanted dem clothes quickly. But now, because I'm involved in something constructive for the first time in my life, I'm prepared to wait. I'm not in no hurry now. 'Cause it's not going away, and it's there to stay. As long as I don't mess up, init, then it'll be there for me, you know what I mean? Because, like... before I started DJ'ing, and before I started working on the London Transport, I was always in and out of prison. And I'd never had a future. But, the last sentence I've done I came out in '86, and I thought to myself, 'I can't go back to jail again. I'm a big man now. I gotta try and sort something out.' And lucky for me the rave scene started, and I just got involved with that and made something of myself."

While the local feeling of identity and belonging yields a strong community spirit between pirates and listeners, it, on the other hand to some extent, blinds them to other parts of the city. Often, the myopic focus on the local scene is like wearing blinders, forcing them to concentrate primarily on the music and artists in their immediate area of the city. Hailing from Croydon in South

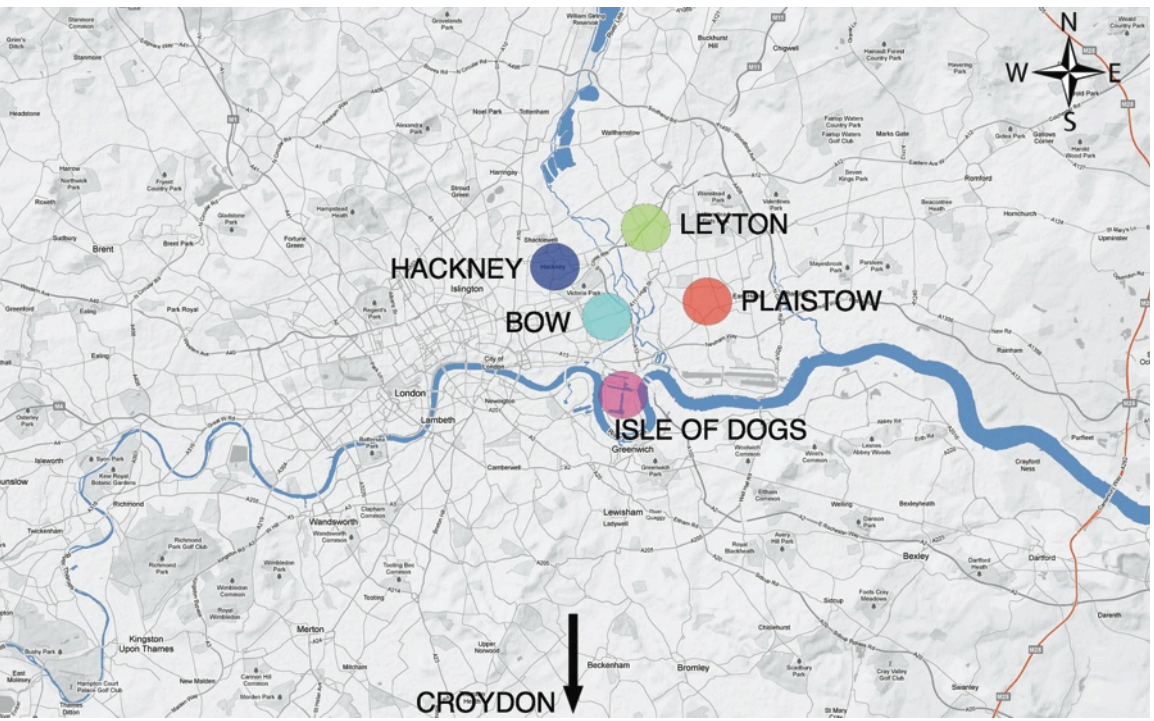


Figure 24. A map of London showing the areas of East London that Geeneus of Rinse FM point out.

London, dubstep MC Crazy D remembers that the grime music of East London was completely unknown to him until he started MC'ing on East End based Rinse FM; "I still never knew about grime until […] I got on Rinse. That was when I knew about grime" (Crazy D, 2010). The local urban scale is of great importance to many pirates, including Geeneus of Rinse who notes that, "Most people will say the music comes from London, but we can break it down further. Like between Roman [Road, East London] and Isle of Dogs comes grime. Croydon is dubstep," and further claims to be able to tell from which part of London MC's are from; "I could break it down to Plaistow, Leyton, Hackney, Bow, straight away" (The Independent, 22-03-2009). As grime and dubstep blogger Martin Clark points out, the aspect of local support is unique to pirate radio, by which talent from the local area(s) can access a community of others sharing a common interest; "A lot of this stuff is about accessibility, geographic accessibility; who lives in the area: take a CD and go up to the show and play it" (Clark, 2010).

In such an example, pirate radio cuts across geographical borders, social status, and cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, forming important music communities (Jensen & LaBelle, 2007:7). For producers and DJ's such as Skream and Benga (2010), who more than most in the London dubstep scene

have gained national and international impact, the importance of pirate radio is great. Although they, as of 2011, also broadcast on BBC Radio 1, the two quite simply feel connected to a community of like-minded souls when they host their weekly Rinse FM show. Besides weekly DJ training, the radio slot also offers them the opportunity to test out brand new music and, of course, network with producers and listeners. For Benga (2010) pirate radio, “is our roots.” In my interview with Ciaran O’Hagan (2010), he elaborates further on Benga’s point of view, arguing that, “You are keeping connected to the core. You are allowed to go off and do your things, but you’ve got to come back to maintain that essence.” The core at which the pirates are connected is the pirate radio community, which I will focus on in the next part of this chapter.

Communities

The various communities through which pirate radio is articulated towards, consists of more than just a handful of illegal radio enthusiasts. With networks across the capital of London and its surrounding suburban regions, the pirate radio communities link listeners and radio DJ’s, MC’s, and producers together. For pirate radio, such communities create “moments of get together across geographic borders“ (Granly Jensen & LaBelle, 2007:11), and are vital for the up-keeping of the unique urban culture it represents. As Dappa, a pirate DJ of Rinse FM, out it; “Rinse is the people’s station!” (Rinse FM, 29-09-2010). What music researcher Christopher Small (1987:7; 26) terms the dramatisation and re-enactment of “the shared mythology of a culture or social group, […] serves to define themselves as much by what they are not as by what they are […].” In the case of the pirates, the shared mythology implies a definition of themselves and their communities by and through primarily music, which acts as “a crucial channel through which social relations are formed and reproduced […]” (Krims, 2007:xxxvi). Thereby, pirate radio becomes “a vehicle for reflecting back to a given community its very own culture and events” (Granly Jensen & LaBelle, 2007:12), acting as what Krims (2007:xix) terms “a socializing agent with its own complex channelling from, and

back into, the organization of society as a whole." The communities, thus, becomes "flexible spaces'"(Smith, 1997:523), in which certain geographies of music are produced and maintained. Pirate radio is serving "a function by backing areas of social life that might be ignored. […] They embrace it" (O'Hagan, 2010).

While the networks between radio station managers, DJ's, MC's and producers are important to maintain professional connections to various parts of the music industries and scenes, some argue that, to the pirate radio communities, the listeners are equally important. It is with the listeners that the pirates are confronted directly, in real time, with an audience of like-minded enthusiasts. While some listeners of the pirate communities are musical connoisseurs, others are simply interested in social networking and getting to know which parties and raves are in their area. Cleveland Watkiss (Pirate-Radio.org, 1997), London-based jazz singer and drum 'n' bass MC, remarks that it is often only the pirate stations that supply information on what is happening locally. Chef, daily co-manager of Kool FM along with Uncle Dugs, thinks this is only natural, because pirate radio is the primary underground communication. "Direct to the people" as Chef puts it (Uncle Dugs and Chef, 2010). Asked who he thinks listen to Kool FM and other London pirate radio stations, Uncle Dugs maintains that it is a wide spectrum of Londoners; people of all age groups, ethnicities, sexes, religious, social, cultural, economic and geographic backgrounds, including "from teachers to prison officers to unemployed fucking thugs. […] White, black, Asian, young, old, important, not important, drug dealers, drug takers, people who are against drugs, you know. Right across the board. Music is music, init?" (Uncle Dugs and Chef, 2010). According to Dugs, and others I interviewed (cf. Clark, 2010; Heny.G, 2010; Hobbs, 2010; O'Hagan, 2010, Ragga Twins, 2010; Skream & Benga, 2010), the communities bring together a diversity of urban life, creatively confronting and questioning the traditional "ways of living, "patterns," which coexist in the city" (Lefebvre, 1996:75), and thus the shaping of cultural and social identities, which are "a product of contested processes, always in the process of becoming and unbecoming" (Hudson, 2006:629). Even though not from London, pirate Solo One of Birmingham's pirate station Mix FM, explains how the communities of pirate radio gave him and his pirate mates a sociable space; "My flat became a community centre where DJ's if they weren't playing they wanna come down and be part of it. Because there's nothing to do, we were in a small town. The only thing was drinking or pirate radio. So we chose the pirate" (Chandler, 2010).

Yet, argues Watson *et al.* (2009:873), “Diversity alone is, however, not sufficient to sustain creativity. The presence of supporting networks is crucial in this respect, fostering and driving creativity.” Such supporting networks can be manifold, consisting of for example raves, record shops, night clubs, music publishers and distributers, legal and illegal radio stations, music production studios, record labels, managers and agents, pressing plants and manufacturers, and news media. Mary Anne Hobbs of BBC Radio 1 claims that while the FM and online radio communities are vital to pirates and listeners alike, so too are the club and rave communities, at which they get to connect physically;

> “In the same way a club, like FWD [which is linked to Rinse FM], is absolutely pivotal to the scene, the pirate networks are completely invaluable [...]. You have to, as an artist or a group of artists, find some sort of physical and spiritual home you can gravitate towards, and I think really for a scene to gather momentum, there has to be a club environment and also a radio environment” (Hobbs, 2010).

Stations such as Rinse and Kool, and Kiss before them, have not just built up strong local communities in their respective parts of London, but their influence is also felt on a wider scale in the region of the capital and its surrounding suburbs. This is not only a result of technical aspects, such as how the pirates work with their broadcasting wattage and the placement of transmitters and aerials, but also due to the success of their respective radio station brands, which have been successfully featuring raves, club nights, merchandise, as well as rosters of acclaimed producers, DJ’s and MC’s. In continuation of this, the Ragga Twins, drum ‘n’ bass MC’s of Kool FM, use their radio show as an easy and direct way of communicating with their fans; “We got a hardcore following that want to hear us and wanna hear Kool

Figure 25. Kool FM pirates in action, live on air. Unknown location, London.

FM. So we are getting out there to our community" (Ragga Twins, 2010).

How the pirates, such as for example the Ragga Twins, engage and address their community of followers is important because they wield the power to maintain the communities. The larger the communities and supporting networks, the greater the stations, and accordingly how effective and powerful their tactical appropriation and production of the urban space that they are part of is. For his PhD research on the link between drug usage, UK garage music and pirate radio, Ciaran O'Hagan (2004:221) concludes that pirate radio stations "are fundamental to the formation of discourse […] and should therefore be considered as significant providers of the kind of cultural knowledge which this audience are more likely to engage with and trust." With a theoretical perspective in mind, how the pirates engage and address their communities becomes important, as "the credibility of a discourse is what first makes believers act in accord with it. It produces practitioners. To make people believe is to make them act" (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:148).

Steve Goodman (2010b) points out that while pirate radio can make their communities believe and act, they have a non ideological agenda, appearing as an urban "radiophonic guerrilla network […] that is most powerful when it's apolitical […]." Fundamentally, pirate radio, debates Goodman, is about the community spirit, "generating excitement and hype, and building a music culture that reaches people from all different backgrounds." This, he concludes, is done "Without preaching at them with this particular ideological agenda. Clearly, it's always political; it's illegal, it's avoiding the state and so on, but it is not ideological in quite the same way" (Goodman, 2010b). It is a way of life, however, at least to the pirates who run and manage the various stations in and around London, as both Heny.G (2010) of Flex FM, and Chef (2010) of Kool FM assert. Bluesy (2010), of Kool FM too, agrees with this, and explains that despite their cultural, geographical and ethnic backgrounds "The guy who owns Kool FM brought me on as a child, and he's treated me like one of his kids. It's like a family operation for me."

While the illegal stations and the pirates behind them might have different etching, geographical, cultural and even musical backgrounds, they share a common musical agenda of pushing new sounds and talent, which inspires legal stations such as BBC Radio 1 and 1Xtra, as both Mary Anne Hobbs (2010) and Ray Paul (2010) of the BBC reveal. In this respect, research on the so-called micro radio movement of the United States sheds valuable light on what illegal radio communities provide; an "ability to focus attention on the inadequacies of commercial and

non-commercial media alike" (Howley, 2000:262). In London, pirate radio is vital as a musical crossroad and melting pot that provides a different output than the legal stations, explains dubstep and grime blogger Martin Clark (2010), elaborating that pirate radio is "the heartbeat for it all. It's the source, and the closer you get to it, the closer you'll understand where the actual underground is, where the cutting-edge is. If you are interested in urban music, then that's where you wanna be. […] As a whole, pirate radio is where the cutting-edge is" (Clark, 2010).

With the advent of Internet broadcasting technology, London pirate radio, despite its otherwise distinct focus on the local, has in the last five to ten years seen a shift in scale from a local to a more global perspective, as the following quote from The Guardian (10-10-2010) accentuates; "In the middle of his set, DJ Dappa turns down the pounding beat for a moment to shout out to the Clapton crew, but these days - thanks to the station's internet broadcasts - he could be hailing listeners in Denmark or Detroit." With Internet streaming, podcasting and 3G technology, the cutting edge soundscapes of pirate radio have reached a wider audience than before, and although this has created a global community of avid listeners, some argue, like Geeneus of Rinse FM (Typewriter Trash, 05-09-2010), for the pirates it has instead created a feeling of localness; "I think what the Internet done for us is brung [sic] everything more local. The thing that we represent, the young thing, the new music thing, got branched out to other places [e.g. nationally and globally] and it connected with a lot of people and it kind of give us more of a 'local' feeling." What Geeneus means by local is not in physical (spatial) terms, but rather in social and mental (spatial) terms. In recent years, with the rise of online social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Ustream, SoundCloud, Twitter, and Myspace, aspiring DJ's and MC's look to other outlets than pirate radio for promoting themselves locally and globally (Clark, 2010; O'Hagan, 2010, Riko, 2010). As Martin Clark points out, "They know now that they are not just broadcasting to London. The potential audience must be, in theory, now larger because it's not restricted by the M25.[47] You are not restricted by how high you can get an aerial because of streaming" (Clark, 2010). On a local level, however, the FM broadcasts are still of importance to many, especially the London-based listeners. Though public transport serves many Londoners, the car is an important transport factor too, and while driving around London, FM radio is vital, as Matt Mason (The Independent, 22-03-2009), Martin Clark (2010), and Riko (2010) argues. Oneman, DJ on Rinse

47 The M25 is a motorway surrounding Greater London (marked red/orange, as seen on the right side of figure 24).

FM, views radio as an essential part of his excursions around town; “I’m always checking for pirates in my car because it’s the only time I get to listen to the radio. […] When I’m in my car, I make a point of not putting on any CD’s, especially when I’m in London, because I like to see what’s out there” (Blackdown Soundboy, 13-08-2010). There is indeed a lot out there, the London airwaves bustling with local music and talent, and new genres appearing rapidly, as my two field trips to the UK proved.

One of the recent genres that has been fostered in London is grime, though it should be added that eight to ten years is not considered recent by London pirate DJ’s and MC’s. Since its introduction around 2000-2001 in and around East London, grime has enjoyed a strong local pirate radio following, as the grime MC’s use the airwaves to establish themselves by clashing other MC’s, or forming communities (‘crews’) with like-minded MC’s, DJ’s, and producers (Riko, 2010). Dizzee Rascal, who was once part of the same East London-based Roll Deep crew as Riko, launched his career on various local London pirate stations, and so has Wiley - one of the founders of the said crew. Reflects Riko (2010), “Everyone in Roll Deep owes everything to pirate radio, trus’ me. That’s where they all started: Wiley, Breeze, Razor, Scratchy, Karnage, Flow Dan, everyone.” For many grime MC’s, clashing each other lyrically on pirate radio is an important factor in establishing and maintaining spaces for local hierarchies and networks. Since Dizzee Rascal in 2003 won the prestigious Mercury Prize for his debut album *Boy In Da Corner* (Mercury Prize, 2010), some MC’s see him as neglecting his street-level past of his local ‘ends’ of Bow, East London. Crazy Titch, an East London-based grime MC, argue that Dizzee Rascal spent too much time with his awards and the media, neglecting to share the limelight with his MC mates; “He [Dizzee Rascal] is not telling what’s really going on. […] He’s just doing it to get more album sales in the ‘hood, it won’t work, blood. […] You didn’t bring no one from your ‘hood, blood. Who did you bring from the ‘hood? No one!” (Crazy Titch, 2004).

In what could seem an answer to Crazy Titch’s critique, but is rumoured to be an answer to another grime MC, Wiley, whom Dizzee once teamed with in the aforementioned Roll Deep crew. In the following excerpt from *World Outside*, taken of his 2007 album *Maths + English*, Dizzee Rascal tells of his move from an East London estate to the national and global music industry, stressing that he has not forgotten his local roots .

I got shit I wanna share with you
Couple things explaining reasons why
I can't be there with you
Back in the day we parred and
thought we'd never split paths
Didn't see no definite ending to the madness and the laughs
Never thought I would pack in the jackin' for something more solid
Running around hype and criminal antics fed me for a while
But studio gave me a lot more creative style
And took me to another world beyond the estate
Some kind of haven from the beef
and some of the stress, mate
I wouldn't call it no escape, the roads are in my heart
Making it that more difficult for me to climb the chart
But it's the sacrifice I made, it's all good, star
Same reason I ain't always in the hood, star
I do my thing, you know I'm grafting like I always was

In 2003, a MC clash on London pirate radio station Deja Vu between Crazy Titch and Dizzee Rascal ended in a brawl. While the pirate radio clashes can be friendly and not necessarily (physically) violent, Crazy Titch is currently serving a prison sentence of 30 years minimum for manslaughter and murder committed in November 2005.[48] What had happened was, Shak, a fellow grime MC, wrote disrespecting lyrics about Crazy Titch's half-brother, Durrty Goodz. While Crazy Titch and other MC's have accused Dizzee Rascal of losing touch with the local community and area because of their success, Shak accused Durrty Goodz of the same too, writing the following lyrics: "Over the years, things change in the 'hood. I used to have a lot of respect for Durrty Goodz - not no more" (BBC, 2006b; The Guardian, 03-11-2006). Shak and his producer were shot, the producer died. Battling each other, MC against MC, station against station, is serious business. Driving around London, at least with a pirate as your companion, reveals this darker side to the phenomenon, as the illegal stations are not just locked in an ongoing battle with Ofcom, but also with each other.

Figure 26 (opposite page). A collage of (from top left to bottom right) pirate MC and DJ on air at Flex FM, unknown location, London; a cassette player loaded with adverts for use on a pirate station; a crew of young kids hanging out at a pirate station in Bow, East London; Rinse FM's headquarters in the Brick Lane area of East London, the numbers in the windows visualising their at the time (autumn of 2010) new official broadcast frequency of 106.8 FM; the Ragga Twins and crew live on air at a former Kool FM studio in East London; a massive home-built dub reggae sound system on the sidewalk at the Notting Hill Carnival 2008 in West London; and a 'Legalise Kiss 94 FM' badge from the late 1980's, as the station applied for an official, legal broadcast license.

48 Less than a month prior to the incident, Crazy Titch performed at a rave in Copenhagen I co-organised with the OHOI! crew.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ITCHY FINGA


LEGALIZE
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IN STEREO

Geographical territories are fought over as, “there is only certain number of tower blocks that you can broadcast from” (Clark, 2010), and this has led to an increase in ‘turf war’ as Ciaran O’Hagan (2010) explains. On visiting a pirate station in East London, O’Hagan (2010) realised how serious some pirates would deal with the politics of territory;

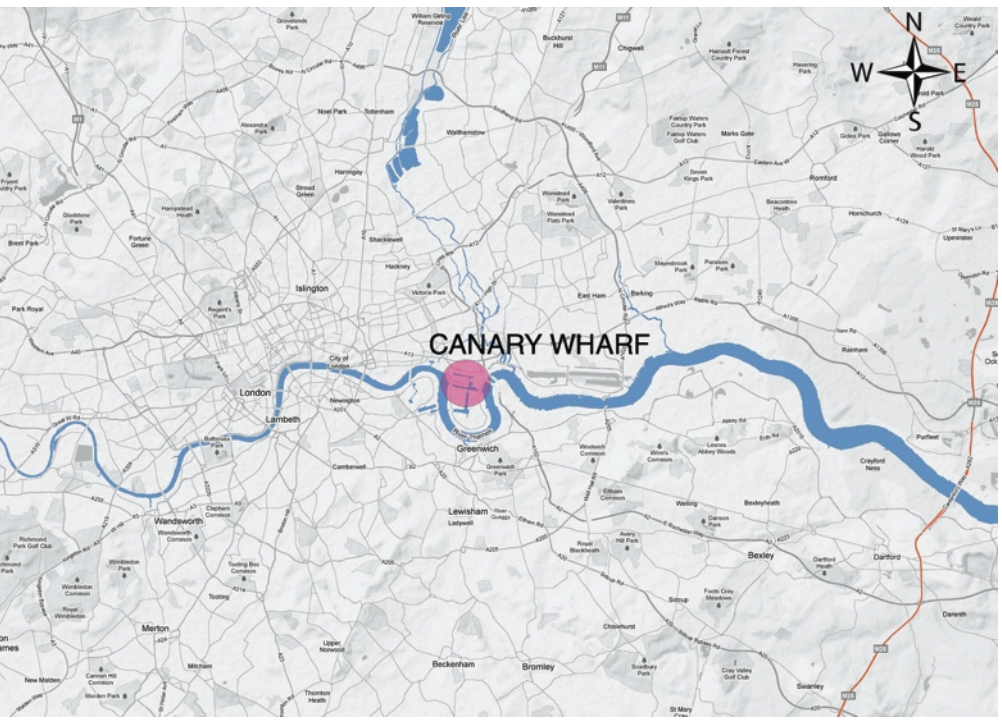

Figure 27. In relation to Ciaran O’Hagan’s story on the turf war between rival pirate station the map shows the placement of Canary Wharf, East London.

> “[It] was in East London near Canary Wharf, and you came out of there not too far from the station and you went down a road; it was a dead-end road, and there was some corrugated iron up against the wall. [...] There was a door in the corrugated iron and it just opened. [...] It was a very small room, totally fucking littered with bottles of beer and stuff like that. Really, really messy. [...] What happened with this lad [the station owner] was that his frequency was interfering with another pirate radio station, [...] and they had an informal meeting with him and said, ‘Look, move your frequency or we’ll move it.’ He was, ‘They are on that side of the river, I’m on this side, fuck it,’ and I think they gave him a second warning. They didn’t know the location of his [radio] studio, but they knew some of his DJ’s, so they followed some of the DJ’s just to see where they where going. Within a few weeks he was raided and a gun put to his head and told, ‘You gotta sort it out!’ So that was it, he closed down. There and then. The studio [was] smashed up. He was given, and that’s how it is, a nice little warning first, then a second warning, and then the guns came out. [...] He paid the consequence of ignoring an informal warning.”

The rules of when who ‘owns’ which local area and tower block are unwritten (Bluesy, 2010; Heny.G, 2010), yet “certainly spoken of” (Clark, 2010), and the aspect of hardcore turf war, concludes Clark (2010), “makes you look at the skyline of East London really differently.” Outlaw, a pirate of Flex FM, London, explains, that there are “do’s and don’ts: Don’t steal each other’s rigs, unless you got a good reason to, you know. Unless someone

have come over and nicked yours, and it's like on! [laughs] There's not like a rule book, but there is honour among thieves if you wanna put it like that" (Chandler, 2010). The aspect of pirate radio 'turf war' relates to how the pirates temporarily appropriate the urban space of London, often trespassing the physical and/or physiological borders of what other pirate's thinks belongs to their stations territory.

While some of the previous examples highlight the darker sides of pirate radio communities, there are other examples proving the opposite - that pirate radio provides an important platform for, and positive influence on the talent incubation of music genres and artists. In this case, the illegal stations are the pirate communities' nerve centre; "broadcasting systems which are profoundly adapted to their needs, and which mirror, in their structures and relations, the institutional contexts in which they are embedded" (Hall, 1977:264). The pirate communities "come together in locales of creativity and production [...] networks of musical creativity" (Watson, *et al.*, 2009:857), and by this helping "more kids than Tower Hamlets job centre," (Pitchfork, 09-11-2005) as an unidentified member of the Rinse FM management defends.

Talent incubation

In 2010, Dizzee Rascal commented on the importance of his early beginnings on the pirate radio circuit: "It helped give me a drive, focus and subsequently an outlet for my music when otherwise there would have been none," (The Evening Standard, 12-10-2010) to which Rinse FM co-manager Sarah Lockhart comments: "Pirate radio has been like a pressure valve for kids ever since Radio Caroline, and we are carrying on with that" (The Guardian, 10-10-2010). The station has also helped pave the way for DJ's such as Logan Sama, Hatcha, and Target, who have progressed from Rinse to the legal stations of Kiss and BBC 1Xtra. Continues Lockhart: "Now we can legitimately help people with talent that would otherwise go to waste" (The Evening Standard, 12-10-2010). Norman Jay, DJ and organiser of the legendary Good Times sound system dance at the annual Notting Hill Carnival in West London, argues too that pirate radio does have a significant relationship to the legal world of British broadcasting: "My peer group all graduated through the pirate platform and without it [BBC] Radio 1 would have looked a different animal" (The Independent, 22-03-2009). As a radio pirate, argues Ray Paul of the BBC's 1Xtra and Radio 1 channels, the driving force is the passion for playing music whatever it may take or require. This passion, he argues, can't

be taught like radio presentation and engineering skills can. Commenting on establishing 1Xtra, BBC's DAB radio channel for urban music, he says: "It was the passion of the pirate scene […] we were after; being able to bottle that up" (Paul, 2010). Yet, the talent incubation taking place at pirate stations such as Rinse not only provides fresh talent to the legal stations, sometimes the talent is headhunted to other pirate stations too. Remembers Geeneus of the years when his station, Rinse, had a musical focus on primarily jungle and drum 'n' bass; "The only problem we had with jungle was that Kool FM was the biggest station, and every time someone got really big on our station, they would end up going to Kool FM. It was kinda like we were a stepping stone for Kool" (FACT, 01-01-2009). A situation that could explain why Rinse has since concentrated on other genres such as UK garage, grime, dubstep, and recently UK funky.

What makes the pirate stations unique compared to the legal commercial and public service stations, is the fact that youngsters are able to make themselves be heard and network with older and more established artists. They are even encouraged to do so, as Reynolds (2008 [1998]:454) comments; "Pirate radio is really the kids' link to the scene – 'cos if you're a teenager, you can't get into clubs yet. A lot of pirates are actually run by kids, so that's where you'll hear the future of the music. The pirates break new tunes." Whether run by youngsters or not, Ciaran O'Hagan (2004:221-222) reveals how the pirate radio phenomenon is key in establishing relationships not only between listeners and artists, but also among the artists themselves. The relationships among the artists of pirate radios is characterised by a hierarchy, revealing which producers, DJ's, and MC's 'run tings' in the various scenes - an important factor for artists and listeners alike. Dubstep producer and DJ Mala remembers how pirate radio made a profound impact on him, as he first tuned in to the illegal London transmissions, fascinated by the (at the time) new sounds of jungle;

> "I remember coming back here from my Nan's one Christmas, and I got a little hi-fi stereo for Christmas, and that's when I first tuned into a pirate radio station. So I used to hang my aerial – a made-up aerial of coat hangers – out of the window to pick up the reception better. [...] Ever since I started listening to pirate radio stations, I think that's when my reaction to music and my perspective of music totally started shifting" (Red Bull Music Academy, 2009).

Besides serving as a vehicle for local incubation of up and coming talent, it also seeks to develop the established artist. Crazy D has been MC'ing on various London pirate stations since the late 1990's, currently holding a weekly show on legal station Kiss alongside DJ Hatcha. His progression from a local

pirate station to a regional legal station is not atypical however, confirms Mary Anne Hobbs (2010) and Ray Paul (2010) of the BBC. Crazy D (2010) tells the story of how Hatcha and himself progressed from station to station;

> "We went on to Flight [FM, a pirate station] for about three years. Opening up, closing. All sorts, until Rinse got hold of Hatch [...] Somebody at Rinse went to Hatch and was like; 'Yep, we love what you're doing. We want you to come over, you and Craze, to do a couple of shows.' So we got on there, and we was doing our thing basically. We was on there for about four years, man. That's where, I think, we got a broader listener base" (Crazy D, 2010).

The shift to Kiss has, I presume, broadened the listener base even further. For many other MC's, DJ's, and producers as well, a local pirate radio affiliation has been the stepping-stone to the regional or national levels of stations such as Kiss and the BBC. Skream and Benga of Rinse FM, who have also broadcast for BBC Radio 1 since January 2011, began on local London pirate stations while attending school. For the two now worldwide-known dubstep producers and DJ's, performing on a pirate station was something big and exciting; "it was a night out, going to radio. It was like a Friday night" (Skream & Benga, 2010). Elaborating, Skream tells that; "From where we are from […] pirate radio is the first step you get to [national] radio" (Skream & Benga, 2010). Now, while touring the world as well as broadcasting on both Rinse and BBC Radio 1, they have the possibility of inspiring and "providing the hope for a lot of the youth in the community" (Wheatley, 2005). Uncle Dugs of Kool FM, and formerly Rinse, remarks on the development Skream and Benga represent; "I can't think of anyone who's a DJ, who has not come through pirate radio in the last 20 years. Everyone who's big. […] They've all gone through pirate radio; all the big DJ's on Radio 1 and whatever, they've all started around these sort of places [pointing towards a former industrial warehouse unit, which at the time of the interview houses the secret radio studios of Kool], whether it be a flat or a unit, or whatever" (Uncle Dugs, 2010).

Steve Goodman, formerly a DJ on Rinse too, now combining a career as both an academic and a producer/DJ/label owner, researches on this dialectic relationship between (underground) illegal pirate radio and (mainstream) legal radio, such as in the case of BBC's 1Xtra channel, which has intentionally been established to sound more or less like a pirate station (Paul, 2010). Yet, Goodman (2010b) does not recognise the talent incubation of the pirates on which the legal stations feed as problematic, as some, he argues, tend to think and argue;

"BBC 1Xtra incorporates pirate radio into a state top-down centralised institution. So it kind of absorbs, tries to absorb, everything that is interesting about pirate radio into the mainstream. Usually the story would go that, that's bad for the underground, the underground gets recuperated into the mainstream, and diluted and watered-down, and made palatable to a mass audience. [...] For me, it is slightly more complicated than that. [...] It seems to me it is a much more two-way relationship, where what we understand as underground music culture feeds off the mainstream in a lot of interesting ways, while at the same time mainstream culture obviously feeds off of the underground. So I see it as a much more viral relationship of parasite and host, going in both directions. For example, pirate radio parasites off of the legalised radio spectrum, it's like a parasite, it finds a little slot in between a tiny bit of bandwidth in between two legal radio stations. In that sense, legal radio plays like a host to the parasite pirate radio. At the same time, clearly the biggest pirates are the government and the capitalist entertainment corporations. There is a sense in which the biggest pirates of them all are the mainstream, and strategically what is useful for the underground to do, is lodge itself in this big pirate, and kind of cream off what it ever finds useful to do. [...] It is conflictual, but in actually, the relationship is symbiotic in a sense that they are both feeding off each other. They are both hosts, and they are both parasites. They are mutually parasiting off each other" (Goodman, 2010b).

While the BBC cannot condone or support pirate radio, as it is illegal and conflicting with the BBC's and other legal stations transmissions, Mary Anne Hobbs (2010) argue that there is something to Goodman's theory of 'audio virology,' in the sense that legal stations such as the BBC have "culturally and historically had a very, very successful relationship with the pirates" (Hobbs, 2010). While the grass-root talent incubation of the pirates, for example in the case of Dizzee Rascal, Skream and Benga, inspires positive commentary, the fact that the pirates are illegal and act accordingly raises negative comments too, as the following quotes from two readers of The Evening Standard (12-10-2010) attest:

> "The noise emanating from these pirate radio stations is a nightmare and if you lived next door to one of these stations you would be in despair."
>
> "Pirate radio is a menace and should be stopped at any cost. All pirate operators are criminals and should be treated as such."

To such comments, DJ and blogger Martin Clark (Pitchfork, 09-11-2005) argues that, "No one is disputing the fact that pirate radio, as the law stands, is illegal. But kept outside of the law, the pirate radio community are left open to be criticized by any kind of allegation, without the right to reply." In continuation of these

comments, Geeneus of Rinse emphasises that, “We want to be legal. We don't want to be legal to play stupid adverts and make loads of money from advertising. We want to be legal to say; look at our scene, look at what we're doing. We're a business, we're not criminals. We're supplying something that no one else is supplying, and we're professional” (The Guardian, 18-06-2010). As mentioned earlier, Rinse did turn legal as of the summer of 2010, since operating as a so-called legal community radio station.

Musically, the incubation of pirate talent brings a notion of the underground to the mainstream professional music industries as well as British society in general.[49] Music styles such as those championed by the pirates, argues music geographer Susan J. Smith (1997:502), is “a medium through which those conditions society tries its best not to see, can begin to make themselves heard.” By making themselves heard, the pirate talent serves an important pioneering function, as they test their new lyrics and/or music productions on the ring backs[50] they get if the music is generating excitement or not. If they received plenty of missed calls asking for rewind, then they know it’s a good production. So in a sense it helps refine the genre and test the music for people” (O’Hagan, 2010). Thus, the pirate radio stations provide previews of what musical trends and genres are active in the underground music scenes. For several of my own music productions I have received both legal and illegal radio station support, and in one case[51] a tune of mine circulated in ‘the dubplate circuit’ for almost two years prior its release. The function of previewing and testing upfront tunes as ‘dubplates’ is historically and musically linked to the Jamaican sound system culture (Barrow & Dalton, 1997; Jones, 1995; Partridge, 2010; Stolzoff, 2000; Veal, 2007), and with this tradition in mind, “You could think of the pirate scene as the [music] industry's R&D wing, a research program that's working overtime” (Pirate-Radio.org, 1997). Testing lyrics is an important part of the pirate radio talent incubation too, as both grime MC Riko (2010) and drum ‘n’ bass MC’s the Ragga Twins (2010) attest. Riko, like the Ragga Twins, is inspired by Jamaican Patois dancehall toasting, bringing a different musical and a global flavour to the

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49 Such as in the case of dubstep group Magnetic Man (which consists of Artwork, Benga and Skream) and drum ‘n’ bass DJ and producer Goldie visiting Buckingham Palace in October 2010, to which Artwork of Magnetic Man commented,“We were well chuffed, I never had [Prince] Harry down as a basshead.” (The Sun, 23.10.2010).

50 Also known as a ‘phone-in’ (see chapter four; ‘The third generation’).

51 The *You Don’t Know What Love Is* 12” vinyl I released with co-producer JKamata on Steve Goodman’s Hyperdub record label in 2009.

multicultural, yet local melting pot of London pirate radio. For both the Ragga Twins and Riko, pirate radio is not just a matter of connecting to the communities and networks of listeners and pirates, but also of testing their skills and lyrics. Elaborates Riko (2010);

> "It's training, init. Like a footballer has gotta go training, init. You gotta go on radio and keep yourself in shape, bruv. You gotta go learn your fresh bars, know what I mean? If you don't go radio, you might not have a rave for two weeks. You have to be on point, so it keeps you in shape. Nuff man can't come and do a rave for hours, spitting bars. They've got a couple of hits they can do and that's it. But I know I can go to a rave and spit bars on my own for an hour because I go radio every week, as much as I can."

Appropriating the London airwaves illegally, the talents of the pirate DJ's, MC's, and producers are mediated and represented in the capital city through through music broadcasts, constructing meaning for their communities, and evoking a sense of urban space of their own and capturing the flavour of a segment of society that differs from the ordinary (Smith, 1997:524). Listening to the "radio waves crackle and fizz with the sound of a thousand venomous MCs spitting and freestyling rhymes from inside high-rise council estates" (Sandhu, 2007:80), another representation of London is revealed, affording the researcher a "way to observe changes in cultural feel for the city, as cities are described and projected throughout great swathes of musical history, across numerous genres" (Krims, 2007:xxxv). This public, yet illegal, free-for-all radiophonic output of music and soundscapes provides a theory of how the pirates experience the urban space "of society as it is and as it aspires to be" (Attali, 1985). For Mary Anne Hobbs of the BBC, the talent and music that pirate radio bring forth is some of the most interesting and intense happening in the London music scenes;

> "If you wanna find sound at a genesis point, if you wanna find passion that burns in a pure and absolute sense, you cannot go to a better source than pirate radio. [...] Much of the music that Rinse has supported for years, half a decade practically, is only just finding a foot-hole. [...] At this point; at the point at which Skream has had a gold record for the La Roux remix, at the point which Pharrell [of The Neptunes and N.E.R.D.] is ringing Benga's phone, at the point at which Snoop Dogg is jumping on the beat, etc., finally the specialist's shows on other [legal radio] networks are turning their head and taking an interest in dubstep. It took years, probably half a decade, of Rinse battling away, really pushing and really, really championing and supporting it, before the other networks really took it seriously. Except for me [laughs]" (Hobbs, 2010).

Urban temporality

The pirates' geographical appropriation and production of urban space, such as certain tower blocks and council estates, "serves as a tool of thought and action" (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]:26), and by tactical means they confront on a grass-root level what Lefebvre (1991 [1974]:121) terms the "do's and don'ts" of urban space. Urban researchers Jacqueline Groth and Eric Corijn (2005:503) conclude that such intervention by 'informal actors' like pirates is based on different motives such as "marginal lifestyles, informal economies, artistic experimentation," and that, "these sites and actors involved also spatialise and visualise a resistance and temporary alternative to the institutionalised domain and the dominant principles of urban development" (Groth & Corijn, 2005:503). An urban domain which, according to scholars Zygmunt Bauman (1998), Anders Lund Hansen (2006), and Don Mitchell and Lynn Staeheli (2006), becomes a battleground of 'space wars' between the 'far order' and the 'near order' (Larsen, 2007:91-93; Lefebvre, 1996:113), in this case between the official regulators such as Ofcom, the police, and the government, and the pirates. Yet, through spatial appropriation (Jiménez-Dominguez, 2007) and geographic resistance (Pile & Keith (ed.), 1997), urban space can be transformed into "different spatialities from those that are defined

Figure 28. Detail of several illegal pirate radio aerials fitted on a tall mast made out of scaffolding.

by the law and state" (Hubbard, 2006:106-107). Still, in the context of the pirate radio phenomenon, the resistance does not have to be a struggle aimed actively at certain oppressors, as professor of geography Peter Jackson (1989:59) remarks. The pirates do not always target their resistance intentionally against Ofcom and the government, but establishes it rather as a contrast to the broadcast spheres of public service and legal commercial radio stations. The resistance, as professor of geography Tim Cresswell (1996:22) puts it, is "directed against some disliked entity with the intention of changing it or lessening its effect." By providing academic analyses of the world of skateboarding, professor of architecture and urban culture Iain Borden (2001) brings forth another contemporary argumentation related to my research, showing how certain cultural movements such as skaters act in the urban space of the city. "Skaters' representational mode is not that of writing, drawing, or theorising, but of performing - of speaking their meanings and critiques of the city through their urban actions" (Borden, 2001:25). By replacing 'skaters' with 'pirates,' Borden's argumentation becomes relevant in the context of my research, and it is informal movements such as those of the pirates that, in London, live out and create a "spontaneous 'urbanity'" (Groth & Corijn, 2005:503). This spontaneous urbanity, though sometimes framed in the context of turf war as I have argued, in some way resembles what Overmeyer *et al.* (2007) and Studio Urban Catalyst (2003) characterises as *zwischennutzung* (temporary use) of Berlin and other German cities. Often non-intentionally, the London radio pirates, to some extent, act as 'urban pioneers,' establishing temporal hot spots in whichever area of the city that best suits their purpose at the time; "Large abandoned urban industrial spaces, such as old warehouses and factories, are transformed symbolically in imaginative landscapes through the material practices of musical creativity" (Watson, *et al.*, 2009:873). Yet, whereas the urban pioneers often intentionally politically resist the top-down controlled master plans of urban developers by intentionally creating their own temporary urban spatialities (Groth & Corijn, 2005), the radio pirates, Goodman (2010b) argues, do not seem to have the political perspective of urban development as their focus. Often the areas chosen by the pirates are culturally, economically, socially, and physically worn-down; the reason for this being that it makes it easier to establish the stations broadcast studios and/or transmitter and aerial platforms without too much attention from the residents, the local government, and the police. In stark contrast to the discourse of 'creative urban development,' in which the intentional establishment of temporary spatialities often are seen as a key

initiative in urban development, such as by the aforementioned Urban Pioneers in Berlin or the now defunct Creative Space Agency[52] in London, the temporality of the pirates does not seem planned, nor with a focus on the discourse of creativity and culture in relationship to urban development and planning. Acting on their own without prior consent from, or in accordance with (or intentionally against) official urban regeneration and development plans, the radio pirates utilise almost whatever space is available. My visit to the now former Kool FM broadcast studio somewhere in East London provided insight into how the pirates establish themselves with a temporal scope, in this case in what seemed an anonymous derelict industrial unit, located behind iron gates, secluded from the main roads. Inside the rather dingy premises, behind several locked doors, the Kool FM studio was established. Since then, according to Bluesy, the studio has moved premises, and the studio I visited was not the first location either. Other pirate stations also move around various premises in London to avoid being detected and raided by Ofcom and the police. Rinse, established in 1994, had its first unlicensed broadcast in Tower Hamlets, East London, from the 18th floor flat of one of Geeneus' friends' mom (The Guardian, 10-10-2010), and the station has since used countless other premises too. Now apparently residing in the area of Brick Lane in East London, the station has also had its temporary home at co-founder and grime DJ Slimzee's parents house. For four months the two had to "sneak the DJ's past his [Slimzee's] mum and dad while they was [sic] in the front room and pretend it was just mates coming round" (Typewriter Trash, 05-09-2010). Though not confirmed by the two, Rinse apparently also had its former broadcasting headquarters based in more dodgy premises, as the following testifies; "Early studios included the flat of a drunk that station founder Geeneus paid to return to Ireland so they could broadcast without disturbance. At another base, a crack addict – thought to have been hired by a rival station whose equipment was 'borrowed' by Rinse – lodged a knife in Geeneus' throat" (Dummy, 2010).

The temporal spatiality of pirate radio not only affects the broadcast studio premises, but also the premises where the transmitters and aerials are located, which is usually at a different place from the studio in order to make it harder for Ofcom to track the station and its crew. Gilles Peterson, a London-based former pirate radio DJ now broadcasting on BBC

52 Supported by the Arts Council England and Creative London – London Development Agency, between 2006 and 2008, the Creative Space Agency was "an innovative service that links owners of vacant property with creative professionals looking for potential spaces in London in which to work, exhibit, perform or rehearse." More information on: www.creativespaceagency.co.uk

Radio 1, recalls how pirate station K-Jazz, which he had established with some DJ mates in the mid-1980's, was raided - by another pirate station (Peterson, 2010). The rise in raids by the Ofcom, and rival pirates too, have forced pirate radio stations to setup their transmitters and aerials only temporarily, hiding and disguising them creatively, as Heny.G (2010) of Flex FM tells, moving them when needed to other premises. The aspect of temporary locations forces many pirates to trespass restricted areas, whether public or private, in search for new premises. Aforementioned Slimzee of Rinse FM was given an ASBO,[53] prohibiting him from accessing the tower blocks of East London borough of Tower Hamlets, as he was caught several times on roof tops, setting up unlicensed broadcasting equipment (FACT, 01-01-2009; The Guardian, 01-10-2010). The Evening Standard (15-04-2005) tells the story of Slimzee's ASBO;

> "A pirate DJ who ran an illegal radio station from the top of a tower block has been banned from every roof across an entire borough. [...] After a year-long hunt by Ofcom and Tower Hamlets officers, [Slimzee] was caught by surveillance cameras at Shearsmith House in Stepney. [Slimzee] received a three-year conditional discharge at Thames Magistrates Court after admitting operating a pirate radio station and causing £10,000 of damage by erecting broadcast equipment. The court agreed to Tower Hamlets council's request for an Asbo prohibiting him for five years from entering any roof of any building over four storeys without permission."

Mary Anne Hobbs of BBC Radio 1 has embraced the sounds of pirate stations such as Slimzee's Rinse for several years, and is especially fascinated with their passion, as she explains; "you can't argue with that total utter spirit of defiance and independence. They'll do anything to get on air" (Hobbs, 2010).
As the example of Slimzee's ASBO, and as Ciaran O'Hagan (2010) and Christopher Partridge (2010) suggest, many pirates have a certain 'we don't care' attitude towards Ofcom and the government. Mary Anne Hobbs (2010) argues that, to some extent, there exists a romanticism of the rooftop pirate, fighting a grass-root level guerrilla war on the established authorities and legal stations, which O'Hagan (2010) agrees too; "It's still got an element of being illegal. It's always nice to stick two fingers up to authorities, there is that element of 'Fuck you, we gonna do it anyway!' […] It's a free space for people."

Figure 29 (opposite page). 'Where's the pirate station?'. Taken from the artwork The Island *(2008) by Stephen Walter, this detail of East London is just one of the areas of the extremely detailed and massive 101 x 153 cm hand-drawn map, which took two years to complete, depicting London as an island. The artist tells of the map; "My drawings evolved with a growing lexicon of public and sub-cultural signs and symbols, leading me to look at maps and their keys. I began to invent my own, creating fictitious lands as well real places in my life. […] The Map is as much about the personality of its viewer than it is about of my own. In other words it acts as a mirror." See the full map at: www.bl.uk/magnificentmaps/map4.html*

53 'Anti-Social Behaviour Order.' Please see Millie (2008) for an academic research of the phenomenon.


CRAPTON
HACKNEY
ISLINGTON
THE LANE
ROCKWELL
UN-HOMELYTON
THE WICK
DE BEAUVOIR
LONDON FIELDS
HOXTON
OLD ST.
PLEASANT?
BETHNAL
MILE 1/2 END
ROMAN ROAD
SPOT THE ARTISTS
GO EAST
CHATSWORTH
DALSTON
JUNCTION
NIGERIA
TURKEY
WEST AFRICAN
ANGRY BRIGADE
Rows of Mournfull Terraces
Worst Deprivation
DRAWING ROOM
SEWER DITCH
VYNER CENTRE
Modern Art Inc
VICTY PARK
Festival Site
Gunmakers Gate
FISH ISLAND
New City Pads?
ST PAULS
CHISENHALE
CARIBBEAN
The Krays
Pie Mash Jellied eels
GEFFRYE
CANONBURY
ALMEIDA
ST LUKES
FOUNDRY
Ban the Beard ... Beware Of Being a Twat

Hobbs (2010) elaborates this point of view, by noting that;

> "The incredible British spirit of 'let's just do it,' kind of pervades the whole of the underground music industry in the UK. Nobody waits for the broader patronage of the traditional music industry. The underground in the UK has always operated completely independently and alone; artists, clubs, and labels. People create their own stratosphere; they create their own environment, their own world, their own universe. The UK underground is completely unique in that way, in that it is totally self-sufficient, completely self-supporting. The British are not gonna sit and wait for a hand-out, they are not gonna sit around waiting for approval. If they wanna do it, they just gonna do it."

Putting this and the previous arguments into a theoretic perspective, de Certeau can be used to analyse how the authorities deal with the pirate radio phenomenon; "there is a rejection of everything that is not capable of being dealt with in this way and so constitutes the 'waste products' of a functionalist administration […] it is a symptomatic tendency of functionalist totalitarianism […] that it seeks precisely to eliminate these local authorities" (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:94;106). Though their temporary broadcast studios and aerial locations are kept very secret, as I experienced during my two field trips in the spring of 2010, the pirates do experience raids by Ofcom and the police, losing their broadcast and DJ equipment, records and aerials worth several hundred or even thousands of pounds. This, however, does not deter pirates such as Bluesy, Eastman and Uncle Dugs of Kool FM; "I wouldn't say I don't care, 'cause I do care, but I'm willing to fucking do that because I love it. I love it that much. And if I lost them [his records] I'd be gutted. […] Even back in the day I always thought it's more important to do this, than to be scared of what happens if I get caught," as Uncle Dugs (2010) stresses. Bluesy (2010) tells that it can be tedious to find the right premises for the radio studios and the right rooftops for the aerials and transmitters, but when they do, "money talks" (Bluesy, 2010) he muses when asked on how they persuade the tower block caretakers to get unhindered access. While this might sound simple, Eastman (2010), founder and owner of Kool FM, describes how the operations of an illegal radio station such as Kool involves moving from one temporary urban premises to the next "about every three, four months, it all depends. 'Cause the trouble is with Kool FM, a lot of the DJ's are so well known, if they're seen on the street in Hackney or East London, next thing they're on the radio, people have seen them going into that building, so they might know where we are. […] On average about every two weeks we get our aerials taken down. Sometimes we have our aerials taken down three times in one weekend. But it is just about determination." Such

determination seems linked to the continuous grass-root embodiment of urban space in the form of “Counter-plans and counter-projects,” which Lefebvre (1991 [1974]:383) argues are necessary to resist the “strategies, plans, and programmes imposed from above”, in this case the rules and regulations of British broadcasting. For the pirates, de Certeau asserts that, “There is a certain art of placing one’s blows, a pleasure in getting around the rules of a constraining space” (de Certeau, 1988 [1984]:18).

Summary

In this chapter I have presented four analyses consisting of the global and local; communities; talent incubation; and urban temporality. These four analyses combined represent the main part of my analytical research on the phenomenon of London pirate radio, which is aimed at establishing an analytical understanding of how the contemporary pirate radio phenomenon of London, within the context of geography, appropriates, embodies and produces urban space. With my research situated in between various scales and spatialities, the four analyses I have produced in this chapter theoretically rest on the primary notion of what I term ‘the urban ontology’. This ontology serves as the guiding theoretical perspective, consisting of the urban spatial perspective of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, and the more contemporary perspective of music geographies. In the chapter to follow, I will combine the analyses of this chapter in the concluding comments of my research.

This one's a banger, release your anger
Who's the best?
My brum goonies will tell you de answer
All the suit wearing guys in cities can't stand us
They don't understand us
When we speak in slang like dis

Taken from dubstep producer Sukh Knight and grime MC P Money's hit single collaboration on London slang, *Slang Like This* (2010), it brought the street slang of London to the pop charts. It even spawned a wave of 'answer tunes', in which other people rapped in their own local slang, with for example *Scouse Like This* representing Liverpool.

6

6. ORIGINAL PIRATE MATERIAL - CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In this chapter I present my concluding comments regarding my research of pirate radio. Drawing upon the analyses of chapters four and five, I argue for how the phenomenon of pirate radio appropriate, embody and produce the urban space of London, as questioned in the problem formulation put forth in the first chapter.

With a research focus on the phenomenon of contemporary London-based pirate radio, my master's thesis *Just 4 U London - Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective* encompasses geographic analyses on how the urban space of the British capital is appropriated, embodied and produced by this phenomenon. Urban space, in this context, as I have demonstrated throughout the thesis, is not to be understood as a physical spatiality only, but rather as being comprised of mental and social spatialities too. This is a perspective I develop from the first part of my theoretical ontology of the urban, inspired primarily by selected works of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, but also of other urban theorists. With the second part of my urban ontology, I have emphasised a more recent research strain of geography, the so-called music geographies, by which I have argued how the music and soundscapes of pirate radio are an important part of the production of urban space.

How does the phenomenon of contemporary pirate radio appropriate, embody and produce the urban space of London, I ask? In the academic context of urban and cultural geography, my ontological perspectives highlights how pirate radio tactically and temporarily appropriates, embodies, and produces urban space via illegal broadcasts and the formation of representational spaces and communities across geographical, ethnic, cultural, and social borders. As such, the pirates acquire a profound influence on their urban surroundings consisting of what Lefebvre terms the physical, mental, and social spatialities.

Physically, the phenomenon of pirate radio appropriates, embodies and produces urban space by establishing temporary broadcast studios in, for example, tower blocks, council estates, and industrial units - as well as on the FM dial, as radio frequencies are hijacked and pirated. These spaces are physically amplified by supporting networks of associated club nights and raves, as well as by record shops, sound clashes, and street carnivals, at which the pirate communities of DJ's, MC's, producers, and their listeners have the possibility to meet and socialise, creating a heightened sense of togetherness. This sustains a mental spatiality of cultural and urban belonging and awareness, and thus pirate radio become the psychological and physiological home for various communities. The illegal broadcasts, as many of the interviewees testified, are temporary musical beacons to which they turn for inspiration. For these communities, London pirate radio is a life-supporting social nervous system by which the everyday social, civic and cultural life can be identified, articulated and expressed. Publicly, pirate radio produces and provides a space for socialisation, forming and reproducing relations, and developing networks. The illegal

broadcasts articulate a different and oppositional urban space of London - a musical geography of resistance. However, this oppositional resistance does not necessarily contain a distinct agenda of e.g. regeneration politics or urban development. Rather, my analyses lead to an understanding of the phenomenon as a cultural medium informally held together on an urban grass-root, DIY level, reflecting a multitude of life-worlds and communities. Thus, pirate radio is accented by various lived and embodied experiences that transcend the spatial order of 'do's and don'ts.' As a physical, mental and social space, pirate radio is an important urban and cultural epicentre.

While this trifold production of urban space takes place on primarily local and regional geographical scales as the FM transmissions have only a certain physical distribution, the rise in Internet and mobile technologies have spread the pirate radio gospel to other territories too, having an impact on national and global scales. Globally inspired by the multicultural influx that comprises modern London, and locally inspired by their urban surroundings, the pirate communities contribute to society with a cutting-edge mongrel music culture; an often bass-heavy undiluted, raw and rough soundscape. Since the 1960's, pirate radio, as a vehicle of talent incubation, has creatively introduced new musical genres and talents, and in the case of contemporary London-based pirate radio, as I have displayed with various examples, this is still the case. Despite being illegal, the transmission of these musical soundscapes, as I have argued, embodies the urban space of London pirate communities with meaning, yet at the same time also serves as an inspiration to the professional music industries, including some of the legal radio stations as well.

What has interested me throughout my research is how pirate radio appropriates, embodies and produces the urban space of London. With simple tools, the airwaves and radio frequencies of London are seized, the protagonists justifying the illegal operations as necessary due to the lack of support from the legal stations. Producing a space of its own, a space of 'the other,' pirate radio contributes with a local, distinct, yet collective language, through which the communities articulate and express their musical culture. These ways of operating, to paraphrase de Certeau's term, is a way of turning the spatial practise of urban space into 'free zones' of ones own. A DIY grass-root level approach to the production and ownership of urban space,. A geographic resistance to a certain 'official' order that dominates the urban space of the radio spectrum, and indeed society as a whole. For many pirates, these ways of operating become their everyday way of life, as several of those I interviewed

proclaimed, uniting together in communities of like-minded listeners, DJ's, MC's, and producers.

Forging a space of its own, the phenomenon of contemporary London-based pirate radio, it is my argument, is to be appreciated as an alternative, but vital way of urban life. A phenomenon, which by the temporary appropriation, embodiment and production of urban space, generates a right to the city by enabling the possibility of a public, free, and unfiltered voice, as well as establishing culturally important communities of like-minded souls. With pirate radio, urban space is appropriated, embodied and produced not only on the FM dial or on online social media platforms, but in real life too. *Just 4 U London - Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective* presents a phenomenological snapshot, not objective truths, of the mental, social, and physical relationships between pirate radio and the production of urban space.

7

ROOTS'N'FUTURE - MY RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

For the final part of my thesis, I turn to a brief discussion of 1) what can be learned from my research on the phenomenon of contemporary London pirate radio, and 2) which other theoretical and methodological strains of geography seem interesting and relevant if I am to continue this research further.

Regarding the first discussion of what can be learned from my research, I wish to emphasise that the phenomenon of contemporary London pirate radio holds an interesting perspective on the production of urban space. This perspective is not only of relevance to my research, but to other researchers as well, as it is an example of why and how the cultural 'undercurrents' of our cities challenge, confront, and resist the rules and regulations of urban space. Other examples that share similar ways of operating like pirate radio includes squatters, political movements such as Reclaim the Streets, artistic communities such as the Billboard Liberation Front, visual actions such as graffiti, stencils, street art, and sports subcultures such as skateboarding. While some of these examples have a political agenda, others do not.

The second discussion is of special interest to myself, an inadvertent result emanating from the process of my thesis research. I have come to appreciate how other geographic theories and methodologies can shed a new, fascinating and different analytical light on my research topic. While my research primarily focuses on how contemporary pirate radio appropriates, embodies and produces the urban space of London on three intertwined spatialities of the physical, mental, and social, I have considered continuing and expanding this research, for instance with a theoretical and methodological focus on the so-called 'reception studies' and 'sensory geography,' analysing in greater detail the relationship between pirates and listeners. Such a study would additionally be able to embrace questions of if, and how, pirate radio can be viewed as a 'cultural intermediary' and 'gatekeeper' of various music communities, as well as explore questions of how the relationship between FM and Internet broadcasting seems to shift drastically, thereby changing (or not?) how pirate radio is operated, produced and expressed.

As an expansion of these questions, a final study could also analytically emphasise the mobile aspects of pirate radio, highlighting how pirate broadcasts find their way into car stereos, transistor radios, laptops, mp3 players, smart phones, and other mobile devices. Such a study would be able to situate the phenomenon of contemporary London-based pirate radio in the interesting area of tension between urban re-territorialisation and de-territorialisation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Internet links

This appendix provides Internet links to the artists and institutions mentioned throughout the thesis, should more information and background knowledge be required.

Aswad www.aswadband.com
BBC 1Xtra www.bbc.co.uk/1xtra
BBC Radio 1 www.bbc.co.uk/radio1
Benga www.myspace.com/bengabeats
Bluesy www.myspace.com/blu945
Channel One www.myspace.com/channelone
Chef www.myspace.com/chef946
Christopher Partridge www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/ppr/profiles/christopher-partridge
Ciaran O'Hagan www.hackneydaat.org.uk/daat/management-and-communication-team
Cleveland Watkiss http://clevelandwatkiss.net
Crazy D www.myspace.com/crazydubstep
Crazy Titch www.myspace.com/titchindahood
Dizzee Rascal www.dizzeerascal.co.uk
DJ Hatcha www.myspace.com/djhatcha
DJ Hype www.myspace.com/hypehypehype
Don Letts www.myspace.com/65223957
Dread Broadcasting Corporation www.myspace.com/dreadbroadcasting
Flex FM www.flexfm.co.uk
Flight FM www.myspace.com/flightfm1015
FWD www.ilovefwd.com
Funky Flirt www.myspace.com/djfunkyflirt
Geeneus www.myspace.com/geeneus
Gilles Peterson www.gillespetersonworldwide.com
Heny.G www.myspace.com/djhenyg
Ibiza Records http://s.dsimg.com/label/Ibiza+Records
Iration Steppas www.irationsteppas.co.uk
Ital Rockers www.discogs.com/artist/Ital+Rockers
Jah Shaka www.myspace.com/jahshakamusic
Jah Tubbys www.jahtubbys.co.uk
Jah Vego peoplessound.blogspot.com
Jammer www.myspace.com/murkleman1
Kenny Ken www.myspace.com/djkennyken
Kiss www.totalkiss.com
Kode9 www.myspace.com/kode9

Kool FM www.koollondon.com
Kraken Recordings krakenrecordings.blogspot.com
Kowton www.myspace.com/narcissist
Lepke www.wikipedia.org/wiki/DJ_Lepke
LFO warp.net/records/lfo
Logan Sama www.myspace.com/djlogansama
Mala www.myspace.com/malamystikz
Marcus Nasty www.myspace.com/marcusnasty
Martin Clark blackdownsoundboy.blogspot.com
Mary Anne Hobbs www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006wqb7
Matt Mason http://thepiratesdilemma.com/about-author
MC Tippa www.myspace.com/tippademus
Norman Jay www.normanjay.com
Ofcom www.ofcom.org.uk
OHOI! www.ohoi.dk
Oneman www.myspace.com/1mandj
Pinch www.myspace.com/tectonicrecordings
Radio Caroline www.radiocaroline.co.uk
Radio Invicta www.radioinvicta.com
Radio London www.radiolondon.co.uk
Radio LWR www.lwrradio.co.uk
Ragga Twins www.myspace.com/raggatwins
RAW www.rawcph.com
Ray Paul www.raypaul.co.uk/about-us
Riko www.myspace.com/rikodan
Rinse FM www.rinse.fm
Roll Deep www.myspace.com/rolldeepofficial
Rum & Black www.shutupanddance.co.uk/artist/rum_and_black=623.98.html
Saxon International www.myspace.com/saxonsound
Skream www.myspace.com/skreamuk
Simon Reynolds energyflashbysimonreynolds.blogspot.com
Smiley Culture www.myspace.com/smileyculturefans
Slimzee www.myspace.com/djslimzeee
Steel Pulse www.steelpulse.com
Steve Goodman sonicwarfare.wordpress.com
Target www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0071ryj
The Steppahs www.myspace.com/steppahs
Tim Westwood www.bbc.co.uk/1xtra/westwood
Tippa Irie www.tippairie.com
Uncle Dugs www.myspace.com/uncledugs
Warp Records www.warp.net
Wiley www.myspace.com/eskiboywiley

Appendix 2: Abbreviations and slang

Acetate Also known as a 'lacquer.' A one-off aluminium gramophone disc covered with acetate lacquer, in which music is cut real-time by the use of a cutting lathe. It is made for DJ's as well as for vinyl record production. See 'Dubplate.'

Back a yard Jamaican slang for 'back home.'

Babylon Rastafarian term depicting the state, the system, the police. Also refers to imperial and colonial powers of the West, e.g. the UK.

Bad man Jamaican slang for antisocial delinquents and/or criminals. See 'Rude boy'.

Bars Slang for [rap] lyrics.

Big up Jamaican slang for a sign of respect and/or greeting.

Blood Slang for 'mate'; 'brother'.

Bredin 'Brother' in Jamaican patois, originating from the Biblical word brethren. Often used by practitioners of the Rastafari religion.

DAB Abbreviation for 'Digital Audio Broadcast'; a digital radio medium.

DJ Short for 'Disk Jockey;' the one who operates the turntables.

DTI Department of Trade and Industry; see 'Ofcom'.

Don Slang for 'boss'; 'person in charge'.

Dubplate Also knows as a 'dub.' A term with two meanings; 1); See 'Acetate'; 2) a special, exclusive version of a tune, in which the lyrics are changed to fit a certain DJ or sound system.

Ends Slang for area or neighbourhood. See 'Turf'.

Format A format "enable radio stations to deliver to advertisers a measured and defines group of consumers" (Fornatale & Mill, 1980:61). It is "not a unique concept for a particular programme, but a more generalized type of programming like 'Contemporary Hit Radio' […]" (Hendy, 2000:61).

Mas Short for 'masquerade,' a carnival tradition originating from Europe, fused with African traditions in Trinidad and Tobago.

MC Abbreviation for 'Master of Ceremonies;' the one who operates the microphone.

Ofcom The UK regulating authority of broadcasting and communications. Formerly known as the DTI.

Rewind Also know as a 'pull up,' a rewind is when the DJ spins back the record and plays it again due to a positive response from the audience or listeners.

Rude boy Jamaican slang for anti-social delinquents and/or criminals. See 'Bad man'.

Run ting Jamaican slang for being in charge .

Spit Slang for rapping.

Sound clash A battle between two or more sound systems or MC's.

Sound system A Jamaican term for a large, mobile speaker setup.

Toasting A Jamaican form of dancehall rap.

Turf Slang for area or neighbourhood. See 'Ends'.

Appendix 3: List of presumed active FM pirate stations in London[54]

Mhz	NAME	FORMAT
87.5	Maakora Radio	Religious
87.5	Mystery FM (East Anglia)	
87.5	Platinum	RnB, UK garage
87.5	UK's Finest (Buckinghamshire)	DnB, house, UK garage
87.7	Hightz Live	DnB, house, UK garage
87.9	Shine 87.9	DnB, house, UK garage
88.2	Rude FM	DnB
88.4	Vision FM	House, UK garage
88.6	House FM	House
89.4	Unknown FM	House
89.6	(unidentified)	House
89.6	UK Obsession	UK Garage
89.8	Station FM	Hip hop, reggae
90.0	Hot 90	
90.1	Rude Base FM (Essex & Kent)	
90.2	Point Blank FM	Acid jazz, breakbeat, funk, house, liquid funk
90.4	Whoa FM	Hip-Hop, house, RnB, soul
90.6	Fresh FM	DnB, house
90.8	Charge FM	DnB, UK garage
90.8	Lightning	Hip hop, reggae, RnB, soul
91.6	Genesis	DnB, house, Reggae, RnB
91.6	Innocence FM (Essex & Kent)	
91.8	Passion FM	House
92.0	Fusion FM	Trance
92.0	Pulse FM	House, UK garage
92.2	MetroLoveRadio	Hip hop, reggae, RnB, soul
92.4	Deja 92.4	Hip hop, house, UK garage
92.7	Energy	Gospel, hip hop, house
92.8	Klash FM (Essex & Kent)	Breakbeat, house, UK garage
92.9	Klimaxx	Jungle, reggae
92.9	Lynx FM	Soca
93.0	(unidentified)	Hip hop, reggae, RnB
93.0	Riddim FM	Grime
93.8	Vibes FM	Reggae
94.0	Touch FM	House, UK garage
94.6	Kool FM	DnB
94.7	Rude Base FM (Essex & Kent)	
95.2	Origin	Breakbeat hardcore, DnB, house, jungle
95.5	On Top	Grime, RnB, UK garage
96.1	Supreme Dance	House, UK garage
96.3	Hot 96	Reggae, RnB
97.6	Bounce FM	Hip hop, reggae
97.7	SLR	Reggae, RnB, soul

Mhz	NAME	FORMAT, continued
97.8	(unidentified)	RnB, soul
97.8	The Original 978	DnB
97.9	Passion FM	House
98.1	Mystic	Hip-Hop, reggae, RnB
98.3	One Love (formerly Rise One)	UK Garage
98.3	RJR	Reggae, Soul
99.1	Hav It 99.1	Bashment, reggae, RnB, UK garage
99.3	Select UK (99.4 during the week)	Electro-house, house
99.5	Galaxy	Hip hop, reggae
99.7	Flex FM	Breakbeat, DnB, dubstep, grime
100.2	True FM	House, UK garage
100.4	Rinse FM	Grime, house, UK garage
101.2	Unique FM	Hip hop, reggae, RnB
101.3	Eruption	DnB, happy hardcore
101.5	Live FM UK	UK garage
101.7	Frontline FM	DnB, hardcore, house, UK garage
101.8	Bizim FM	Turkish
101.9	The Beat	Reggae
102.0	Chillin'	Funk, house, soul, UK garage
102.4	Wax FM	DnB
102.5	Innacity Radio	Breakbeat
102.5	Juice	Hip-Hop, reggae, RnB
102.6	WBLS	Ghanian
102.8	Urban Love Radio	Bashment, hip hop, reggae, RnB
103.0	Ice Cold	DnB, house, UK garage
103.6	Dost FM	Turkish
103.8	Blues FM	Reggae
104.0	Kasaba FM	Reggae
104.0	Pure FM	DnB
104.2	(unidentified)	Turkish
104.7	Sub Jam	UK Garage
105.1	(unidentified)	
105.2	Flames Radio	Reggae
106.5	Force FM (London, Essex, & Kent)	DnB, house, UK garage
106.7	Bless FM	Gospel
106.8	Lay Low	DnB, grime, house, UK garage
106.9	Conscious FM	Soul
107.3	(unidentified)	Reggae
107.3	London Soundz	DnB, UK garage
107.4	Edge FM	UK garage
107.7	Pure Magic	RnB
108.0	Unknown FM	House

54 Source: www.transmissionzero.co.uk/radio/london-pirate-radio [Accessed throughout 2010 and 2011]

Appendix 4: How to construct a pirate radio[55]

Please note that I do not condone any illegal FM transmissions. The example is provided to give an impression of how simple it is to setup a small-scale pirate radio station. Below is a list of things needed - a list compiled from the online source. For more information on FM technology projects and transmissions, please refer to Braga (2001).

FM Transmitter (TX);
Mains lead for TX, or two clip on battery leads (large and well insulated);
Mains lead for music player, or two clip-ons and six volt bike battery;
Lead(s) for music player, connect to TX;
Music player (cassette deck, mp3 or CD player, etc.)
12 volt car battery, charged up (if not operating on mains);
Antenna (check you have butterfly bolts if collapsible);
Co-axial cable (with plug attached and clips or attached to aerial);
Fused plug board (if on mains);
Programme music (e.g. tapes, rewound to starting position);
FM radio receiver(s) to monitor broadcasts, small;
CBs for lookouts, (license fee optional);
Plastic 'gaffer tape';
Soldering iron and solder in ease of broken leads, torch;
Warm clothes;
Munchies; and a
Bus fare

55 Source: http://c6.org/drupal/node/43 - a similar list is provided in Hind & Mosco (1984:156-159).

NB: The following is a copy of the information given on the same website. Yet again, please note that I do not condone illegal activities and operations such as the following.

How to set up your gear (FM)

Before You Go

Before getting out you had best brief anyone, especially newcomers, on what will or might happen. Talk about getting caught, for instance have good excuses made up for being at or near the site. If you are planning to give false names, for instance, you'll need an address where someone will confirm you live, otherwise you might have troubles getting bail if you were arrested. In this case keep your first names the same to avoid being caught out. Make out a standard 'check list' of all you need, and go through it before you get out. It's surprisingly easy to find yourself on top of a tower block, or climbing some tree, only to discover that your cassette deck lead is at home five miles away.

On the Way

Ideally you need four people, at least two. Carry the gear as inconspicuously as possible, in holdalls or plastic bags. The antenna is a problem. If it's a big long one make it collapsible using butterfly nuts in assembly. Or try to keep it somewhere close to the site. On arrival at the site, especially if you've used it before, send an empty-handed scout ahead, to be sure the police and DTI aren't waiting for you and all is clear. Check also you're not followed.

Setting up

In the case of a tower block you should have been there beforehand and have either a key or a broken lock to get straight onto the roof. Lock the door quietly behind you. If there's two doors onto the roof have access through both. Take your gear to a lift / heating room and find a plug in wall socket (if on mains). Check it works. Wear gloves when handling gear, and clean it regularly with cloth and alcohol. They don't usually bother with fingerprint evidence, but they might start. The antenna must be cleaned regularly anyway for good transmissions. Set up your antenna as high as possible, if possible on top of an extension pole or length of scaffold pipe. Often there's a pole already, left by earlier pirates. Attach the antenna securely, with bolts or strong gaffer tape, to a length of wood, then the bottom of the wood to the metal pole (if there). The antenna must NOT be touching or blocked by metal. The co-ax cable can be soldered or bolted onto the antenna, or attached with strong, rust free car battery clips. The clips are recommended for fast dismantling and for testing and developing antennas, mark clearly which goes where. The co-ax cable should not be longer than absolutely necessary, you lose power with every extra foot, and should be good quality and well insulated. Your lookouts should already be on station, with torches or CBs, one at the foot of the tower (preferably sitting on a car or flat) and one on the roof. Keep low and quiet and wear soft shoes. (In one court case Eric Gotts (head of DTI squads) claimed he recognised an Our Radio member from the ground, 18 stories up, at night. The judge accepted his word).When the antenna is up securely, lead the co-ax back and plug or screw in to the back of your transmitter . Now plug the TX to the cassette deck keeping

the two as far as possible apart, if possible blocked by something solid, like a wall, to avoid interference. Keep the audio lead well away from the power leads. Interference between leads can often cause loss of power and/or ‘sprogs’ (unwanted signals on the wrong frequency). You can go so far as to block leads from each other with bricks. Plug in the cassette deck and the TX to your plug board (or connect to batteries) and switch on. If you have that facility just switch on the exciter stage of the TX first for testing, no need to alert Big Brother prematurely. Go on the other end of the roof with your radio receiver and tune in. Then adjust the modulation on your TX, in relation of other channels, to get the best sound. If this is OK but there's unusual knocking or crackling sounds try moving the cassette deck further from the TX, or raise it above ground if possible. Try further separating or screening the power lines from the audio lines. You may well find that you have sprogs (harmonics or spurious signals) all over the waveband. Check for this. If so check reception with your lookout 100 yards away, normally such sprogs disappear by that distance and you're OK. But if your signal is still spread all over further away switch off and clear off. Your TX is fucked up and needs difficult repair or tuning you can't do on the site. If you find you're interfering with fire, ambulance or pigs, stop, before they come after you. Most pirates are very careful not to do this. When all checks are OK, insert your programme tape, switch off, and wait for the agreed time to begin. With practice you can easily set it all up and test it in 10 minutes, but it's good to allow a half hour and to be methodical and cool. Never, for instance, switch on your TX without the antenna attached, you'll blow it. The amp stage of your TX should get quite hot when drawing the power , if not its not working. With bigger transmitters you may need also a small electric fan to cool the heatsinks on the power transistors. Once you're on air its good to go and phone friends for reception reports further afield.

Broadcasting

How to get away with it. Know your enemy. On a tower block, in London, the DTI squads can tell where you are, within 20 metres, less than 10 minutes after you switch on. So they can bust you any time. In the case of new pirates the procedure is to monitor you for a while (in case you're just messing about) before busting you. It could easily be a few months before your first attempted bust. If you play anything but straight music they will record and keep all your programmes for possible further use against you (though voice print's aren't used in court). In other cities they are generally slower to get after you. In smaller towns they don't have permanent staff so they have to come specially, depending on your usual broadcasting time, so switching your time is a big advantage. The detection squads are now directed by the Home Office through the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and are officially responsible for stamping out 'radio interference'. They have recently been recognised and upgraded with fancy new equipment. Their HQ is at Waterloo House by Waterloo Bridge and they have several other fixed triangulation stations in London, for instant tracking. They use also mobile detection vans and lots of unmarked cars and have a depot in East London for vehicles and gear. We don't know where they keep their extensive horde

of stolen transmitters prior to disposal. They also have their own radio frequencies, they used to be (and still may be) using around 86 MHz, just off the commercial FM waveband. The DTI squads are not supposed to arrest you, so they have to bring the local filth along on busts, which makes them a lot easier to spot and makes them less flexible, as they often have to wait till the cops have the time free. For large rich commercial pirates the game is to have plenty of transmitters lined up, and not to try to save them if the police and DTI raid. They often use remote links and can often switch on and off using timers or radio signals, so they don't have to go back and change tapes and no one need get caught in the act (but recently the DTI have cracked this by raiding the 'live studios' and nicking everyone and everything). But for small community / political pirates with only one or two transmitters its essential to save the gear if at all possible. At the same time its now always cheaper to lose all the gear than to get caught and pay the fines. Nowadays even for the small pirate it may be more advisable to put energy into money raising and mass producing cheap transmitters than into trying to save the gear when they're hot on your trail (though you need to guard anyway against the curious and rip-offs by other pirates).

Precautions

Don't walk and boast unnecessarily about your sites or studio. Work on a 'need to know' basis from the start. One method is to keep programme makers separate from your broadcasting team, tapes can even be delivered to a 'dead letter drop' for instance. But if you can really trust each other its better if everyone takes a turn at broadcasting, otherwise the broadcasters can both get pissed off and become a power elite ('I'm not transmitting this crap!'). Don't, of course, broadcast your location, real names or addresses. Don't give your phone number either, certainly in Britain, the days of phone-ins and instant access to pirates are numbered. If you're really into phone-ins, get a phone in a false name at a temporary address or squatted flat (NOT your studio). Tape the calls and check you're not followed there. For letters use a box address (e.g. Wuppertal in Germany) and assume all mail is read, or use a forwarding address. When travelling to sites vary your means of transport.

Appendix 5: Interview summaries[56]

Bluesy, Redhill, Croydon, UK, March 2010 Bluesy works at London's longest running pirate radio station, Kool FM. He has worked at Kool since 1996 designing and maintaining the websites, as well as helping out the station managers. Kool FM is primarily focused on drum 'n' bass and jungle, and is based in East London. I interviewed Bluesy at his parent's house in Redhill, Croydon, a 30-minute train ride south of Central London. Of Indian decent, the family lives in a semidetached suburban house. Bluesy has a small room in which he produces music and works on the Kool FM websites. While being served tea and biscuits by his family, Bluesy told me about his passion, pirate radio. It did seem, however, that his family was not to know too much of his passion, so when the tea had been served in his room, he closed the door shut, as to keep out any interested family members. What I learned from Bluesy was similar to what other pirates mentioned: Pirate radio culture is vital for London, as it helps create and maintain communities that do not find support on the legal mainstream radio stations. For Bluesy, pirate radio is a way of life, which has helped him get an education in web design, radio station management, and music production.

Christopher Partridge, Lancaster, March 2010 The interview was conducted at the Lancaster University, where Christopher Partridge, PhD, is a professor and researcher of popular music and new religions. I contacted Partridge as he in 2010 published a book on the influence of Jamaican music, culture and religion on UK society, *Dub in Babylon*. Despite his research not being focused on pirate radio *per se*, the interview with Partridge provided information on some of the founding cultural aspects that took place in the UK from the 1960s and onwards - including the arrival of the Caribbean immigrants, the link between pirate radio and pop, rock and soul music, and UK youth movements such as the Mods, Skins, Punks, Ravers, and so on. Listening to contemporary pirate radio proves that Caribbean music, slang, and culture is still a tremendous influence, in particular the genres of dubstep, jungle, UK funky, and drum 'n' bass, displaying a direct connection to the percussive soundscapes and earth-shattering sub bass frequencies of Caribbean genres such as dub, soca, reggae, and dancehall.

Ciaran O'Hagan, Hackney, London, UK, May 2010 Working as a training and communications manager at the Hackney Drug Action Team in East London, Ciaran O'Hagan gains daily knowledge of what goes on at a street level in London. Yet, it is his PhD research from London South Bank University on the link between UK garage music, pirate radios, drugs, and raves that captivates my interest. O'Hagan clarifies that the pirate stations are part of informal networks with record labels, raves, and record shops. One of his interesting points, is why most of the pirate

[56] All interview recordings are available on the accompanying DVD.

stations have been, and still, are based in North and East London. He argues that three reasons for this exist; one being the topographical conditions of London, with the valley-like conditions of the London Basin and the hills such as Parliament Hill in Hampstead Heath formed by the Bagshot Beds to the north of the city; the second being the architecture and planning of London: a quite flat city with high-rise concrete tower blocks and estates concentrated in (North) East London; which to some extent is due to the third reason: the London Blitz of World War II, at which in particular, the industry, ports, and docks of the north eastern and eastern parts of the city were heavily bombed. After the war, many of these areas were rebuilt with the aforementioned modern tower blocks. O'Hagan elaborates on the rivalry in between pirate stations, as well as on 'name check;' an important social function for the listeners and followers of the pirate radios by which they can interact with the pirates with text messages, phone-ins, emails, etc.[57]

Crazy D, Copenhagen, Denmark, November 2010 As one of the pioneering MC's of dubstep, Crazy D has been on the pirate radio scene since the late 1990's. His uncle used to run pirate radio station Upfront FM, and Crazy D got actively involved in the pirate radio and UK garage circuits. He has since been associated with the pioneering dubstep, grime and UK funky night club FWD>> as the resident MC, and has been performing all over the world with various DJ's, especially Hatcha. Together they where headhunted from Rinse FM to Kiss, and have since broadcasted one of the few dubstep radio shows on legal British radio. He reckons that the shift from pirate to legal radio has gained him (and Hatcha) and broader audience, yet that he got more recognition when he MC'ed on the underground pirate stations of London. For Crazy D, the shift from pirate to legal radio is a natural progression as he has gradually built-up a bigger audience and fan base. Crazy D originated from the darker and more underground sounds of UK garage, and pioneered dubstep since 2002.

Heny.G, Windsor, UK, March 2010 Heny.G is part of London's Flex FM pirate station. He has also DJ'd on Freeze FM and Deelight FM, as well as co-establishing React FM. Heny.G recently moved from Hammersmith, West London to Windsor, Berkshire, located to the west of London, and home of the royal Windsor Castle. At first glance, an odd place to find a pirate. Yet, due to local trouble in Hammersmith, Heny.G re-settled in Windsor, but is still active on pirate radio. In what proved to be the longest of the interviews, he accounted for his experiences with pirate radio, including how to build antennas out of scaffolding and copper wire, and where to procure broadcast transmitters. Elaborating on how the pirates are run and financed (by adverts, raves, and the MC's

57 "His mouth [the MC] becomes a modem, transmitting a stream of digits to the audience distributed across London's airwaves: "out to the 365, the 768, the 976, 315." Signalling that you are locked into the station's transmitter is made by phoning the studio number, letting it ring once, then hanging up. Acknowledgement of this signal is provided by the host/DJ/MC reciting the last three digits of phone numbers from his log of missed class on the studio handset" (Goodman, 2010a:178).

and DJ's paying 'subs'), Heny.G touches upon why the pirates attract new talent: It is a direct channel to a like-minded audience, and thereby a chance to be heard. For the younger listeners, he explains, pirates provide access to music usually only found at +18 raves. With the advent of on-demand Internet radio, Channel U, YouTube, and other online music sources, according to Heny.G, the younger listeners do not listen to FM pirates as much as before, yet he claims FM pirate radio will not die. Heny.G asserts that since the early and mid 2000's, the otherwise important link between pirate radios, record shops, and raves has gradually lost its importance. Rather, the pirates have created strong individual brands, e.g. Rinse FM.

Mala, Copenhagen, Denmark, October 2010 It took three attempts to finalise an interview date with Mala, dubstep producer, record label owner and DJ. While he does not play on a pirate radio station – he rarely performs on any radio at all – he does have a close relationship to them. I wanted Mala to elaborate on an interview he made in 2009 for the Red Bull Music Academy in which he commented on the influence of pirate radio and the urban space of London. Our interview was at first intended to take place at Mala's DMZ club night at Mass, a church turned club in Brixton, South London. He became ill, and luckily I was able to interview him after he had played the Vega night club in Copenhagen. According to Mala, pirate radio changed his perspective on music. In the early 1990's, he got his first bedroom hi-if system, and constructed an aerial of coat-hangers, while hanging out of the window to pick up the transmissions from the London pirate stations. He has since been on the forefront of the dubstep music scene, touring the world as a DJ, and running two record labels. His musical preferences, he mentions, are clearly influenced by his multi-cultural background; the sound systems of his father's native Jamaica, and the pirate radios of his mother's England. His music is also influenced by the many cultures of his native South Norwood and Croydon in South London, yet at the same time, also by what Mala terms a constant perspective of greyness; the ever present concrete tower blocks and the looming grey skies of London. Even though he does not play on pirate radio, he still finds it inspiring to listen to the new music emerging from the stations.

Martin Clark, Covent Garden, London, UK, March 2010 Also known by his producer and blogger name Blackdown, Clark is recognised as the prime blogger of dubstep, grime, and other UK bass-driven genres. We have exchanged music together for some time now, and he has on his blog supported my music and releases. Yet, doing an interview on pirate radio in the almost hysterically pink and cartoon-like surroundings of the cookie shop Candy Cakes in Covent Garden, was somewhat of a contrast. Clark has a sweet tooth it was revealed. He also has valuable insight into the pirate radio communities. Though he is not an active pirate himself, and would rather label himself a 'participant,' he listens regularly to pirate FM and Internet broadcasts, and knows many of the pirates personally. On his blog, Clark has since 2004 posted interviews with key people and reviews of the movements within the UK

underground music scenes. With a special focus on urban and bass-driven music, Clark has covered the developments of dubstep, UK garage, grime, UK funky, and other genres closely related to pirate radio. Essentially, Clark believes that the pirates provide an unfiltered, rough and raw sound that is not present on the legal stations. The pirate stations are the heartbeat of the communities and a way for the youth to be part of something. The stations provide what Clark terms 'ownership.' The pirates, nevertheless, are in a transition zone as their traditional FM broadcasts shift to Internet broadcasts, while their listeners are not solely dependent on them in their quest for new music and communities. Because of the new digital media platforms such as podcasts, Youtube, Internet radio, Channel U, etc., Clark argues times are changing for the pirate radio stations.

Mary Anne Hobbs, Marylebone, London, UK, March 2010 Quitting her 14 year stint at BBC Radio 1 as of September 2010, it was a rare opportunity to interview one of the most influential UK radio hosts of recent years, Mary Anne Hobbs. With legendary pirate radio and BBC host John Peel as her mentor, it comes as no surprise that Hobbs is keen on pioneering everything underground and 'left field.' She began her radio career on XFM, worked as a journalist for NME and other magazines, before embarking on her long career at BBC Radio 1. Besides the initial inspiration of John Peel, Hobbs argues that her radio career and music perspective is deeply influenced by the discovery of London pirate radio. In recent years, Hobbs has increasingly championed the sounds of the pirates. Despite working for Radio 1, a legal radio station, Hobbs sees herself as a sister to the pirates, rather than as a competitor. Arguing that her radio shows help validate the music, communities, and networks of the pirates, Hobbs, on the other hand, is aware that she can only provide her worldwide listeners a limited insight into the world and music of the pirates. Despite being limited, any insight is important though, as the otherwise locally oriented pirate culture is exposed to a much wider audience. It is her argument that a large part of British youth culture originated with the pirates of the 1960's, and that the pirates still to this day play a vital role by creating self-sufficient 24-7, DIY networks and movements. Hobbs is fascinated by the mysterious, and to some extent romantic notions of radio broadcasting, that she argues are rooted in the London pirate communities.

Mulder, email, February 2010 It was while searching for interview candidates on the music site www.dubstepforum.com I had the opportunity to speak with several pirate radio enthusiasts who recommended that I contact Mulder. This interview was not like the others I have conducted for the thesis, but rather a short email correspondence on UK pirate radio. Bristol-based Mulder is a former active pirate himself, and provided me with information on some of the problems pirates currently face. Among these are the ongoing battle with Ofcom, as well as the quite fierce competition and rivalry between the pirate stations themselves. Mulder told of pirates stealing or destroying other pirates transmitters and aerials in a fight for the best frequencies on

the FM band. The rivalry has also led to an increase in illegal stations broadcasting on frequencies close to the frequencies of the legal stations, which can cause interference (so called 'bleed') to both the legal and the illegal station's transmissions. The interferences trigger complaints from the listeners of the legal stations, forcing Ofcom to take action against the illegal stations. Yet, Mulder claims it is not only the legal stations and their listeners that are against the illegal broadcasts of the contemporary pirates. To some extent, the older generation of 1960's pirate radio activists and listeners are also against how the younger pirates operate.

Ragga Twins, Hackney, London, UK, May 2010 Born in England to parents from Montserrat and Dominica, the Ragga Twins are heavily influenced by Caribbean (and in particular Jamaican) music and culture. In the early 1980's, Deman Rockers and Flinty Badman of the Ragga Twins started on various local London reggae sound systems, such as Jah Marcus and Unity, performing on the mic with other British-Caribbean vocalists and DJ's. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, the Ragga Twins turned their attention to the budding UK rave scene. In derelict warehouses, and on pirate stations, a new underground sound emerged fusing the music of Kingston, Detroit, Chicago, Manchester, and New York. The Ragga Twins were drawn to the new sound, and began attending raves and releasing records. Eventually, they became household names of the jungle and drum 'n' bass scenes. They brought the culture, slang, and music of the reggae communities to the raves. At home in Hoxton, Hackney, North East London, Rockers and Badman, alongside their mates in the RTC crew of Rude Boy Keith, Pedro, Double J, and more, tell about how every Thursday evening they perform on Kool FM, DJing and 'spitting bars' with a focus on drum 'n' bass and jungle music. Being on a pirate station, the Ragga Twins explain, gives them a chance to keep fresh by testing new lyrics and tunes on a weekly basis. Performing on Kool FM gives them a possibility of reaching audiences that cannot attend the raves and dances in London, such as under 18's, people working weekends, and people living outside London.

Ray Paul, Marylebone, London, UK, May 2010 In 2005, I worked on a clubbing event with Ray Paul of BBC 1Xtra, the BBC's DAB and online radio station focusing on urban music. 1Xtra DJ's from the UK performed in Copenhagen, and their shows were broadcast live worldwide by the station. Even though BBC 1Xtra is a nation-wide legal station, the illegal, local sounds of the pirates inspire. Of Caribbean heritage, Paul began on a local UK radio, moved to the BBC in 1990, and in 2001 he was commissioned to establish 1Xtra. In just a year, Paul and his partner went to all the major cities of the UK, visiting clubs, dances and raves, as well as listening to many local and pirate radio stations across the country. In a quest not only for the best DJ's and hosts for the new station, Paul also looked for inspiration for how to programme the shows, and how to format 1Xtra. In August 2002, BBC 1Xtra broadcasted for the first time, with a distinct 'pirate sound' that is still prevalent today. 1Xtra can be

seen as a way of legitimising the illegal pirate stations, Paul notes, and though he is not too fond of it, he mentions an unofficial tag line from the early days: "1Xtra is like a polished pirate." What Paul is enthusiastic of, is the passion of the pirates - which is important for the DJ's and production crews at 1Xtra too. He can teach his staff radio skills, but he cannot teach them passion. Besides the passion, Paul argues that the undiluted, raw sound of the pirates is an important influence too, but he does not believe 1Xtra has rendered the illegal pirates obsolete, even though the music and formats seem similar. On a grander national scale, Paul remarks that the reason the pirate phenomenon is primarily settled in London is due to the density of the black communities. Second to London is Birmingham, both in the density of black communities and in the number of pirate stations, and he mentions Bristol and Wolverhampton in the same context. Interestingly, Liverpool and Manchester have a small number of pirates, even though the two cities are well known for having established music and especially dance music communities. Ray Paul has since the autumn of 2010 left the BBC and now works as a freelance consultant.

Riko, Copenhagen, Denmark, November 2010 One of the founding members of the successful grime crew, Roll Deep, hailing from Bow in East London, Riko has been MC'ing since the 1990's. Originally focussing on jungle and drum 'n' bass, Riko was due to reasons he did not want to talk too much about away from from the music scene for several years. On his return, he turned his attention to UK garage and grime, receiving critical acclaim and even chart success with Roll Deep. In the autumn of 2010 he released his latest mixtape, and performed in Copenhagen, Denmark to promote it, where I got to interview him. In the 1990's, starting at the age of 14, Riko went along with mates to a local pirate station in Bow, Pressure FM, which was run by an older friend of his. He went on to perform on Rinse FM primarily. Alongside the MC's and DJ's of the Roll Deep crew, Riko performs weekly on Rinse, showcasing new music and lyrics every Sunday evening 9-11 PM.

Skream and Benga, Aarhus, Denmark, October 2010 My reason to interview the two dubstep producers and DJ's Skream and Benga was out of simple curiosity: The two have in the last three to four years become international superstars, travelling and performing all over the world on a weekly basis and selling thousands of records. Recently they have joined forces, forming the group of Magnetic Man, with the debut album released in October 2010. Skream has for several years held a weekly radio show on Rinse FM, with Benga joining him on a regular basis since 2010. Both hail from Croydon, South London, and began on local pirate stations in their early teens. Yet, what I found interesting and the reason for wanting to do an interview with them was that they still perform on Rinse, although they perform in almost every major city of the world. They were scheduled to perform at Vega nightclub in Copenhagen, Denmark in May 2010, and we agreed to do the interview then. After their gig at Vega, however, the pair seemed more interested in partying than doing a late-night interview. Finally I managed to conduct a

very short interview with them at the Train club in Aarhus, Denmark, where they performed in October 2010. After their three hour-long DJ gig ending at 5 AM, the duo had to embark on a one hour drive back to the airport. Since I had performed as the support DJ on both of their gigs at Vega and Train, they kindly agreed to do a five minute interview. Exhausted, they told about their fascination with the music of the London pirates, and how they started their own careers on Flight FM, a pirate station. More interestingly was their account of why they still host a show on a local pirate radio station. For Skream and Benga playing at Rinse FM is simply a matter of 1) feeling connected to their musical and cultural roots; 2) the easiest way to test new upfront music; 3) getting weekly DJ practise; and, 4) supporting the station that initially supported their own music. As of January 2011, the also host a show on BBC Radio 1.

Steve Goodman, Camberwell, London, UK, May 2010 Hailing from Glasgow, Steve Goodman moved to London in the late 1990's where he has since established himself as an electronic music producer, label owner, and blogger with a special interest in bass-heavy music, as well as a lecturer in music culture at the University of East London. He recently published his first book, *Sonic Warfare* (2010), on the relationship between power and sound, noise and music, acoustic force, and sonic branding. As Kode9, Goodman runs the Hyperdub record label, established in 2004, for which I released a tune in 2009. Also a DJ by the name of Kode9, Goodman is recognised as one of the pioneers of dubstep, and held a regular show on pirate station Rinse FM from 2003 to 2007/2008. Since then, he has developed an academic approach and a set of concepts to analyse how music cultures spread and change, and how it affects us, utilising his 'audio virology' methodology, while analysing the so-called 'contagious transmissions' of the London pirates - by which he argues they act as 'parasites' on the FM dial, occupying whatever space is available on the dial, and creating a multitude of guerrilla networks across the city. Of special interest to Goodman is how the pirate sound is the product of what he terms the 'mongrel music culture' of the UK, and especially London; a musical melting pot of the many different people and cultures from around the world settling in the British capital.

The Steppahs, Manchester, UK, March 2010 I first meet The Steppahs in July 2009, while participating in a Roskilde University field trip to Manchester. They DJ together every fortnight on the Leeds-based Radio Frequency pirate radio station, transmitting dubstep locally on 88.1 FM and worldwide through the Internet. I went with them to DJ at the station, only to find out it had recently been raided by Ofcom and the police, which confiscated their transmitter. The Steppahs still support the station as it provides them with an outlet for their music and DJ'ing as well as a network of like-minded listeners, producers, MC's and DJ's. As everybody else playing on a pirate station, they pay a 'sub' of £5-10 per show, which is collected by the management to finance the station's rent, maintain the DJ and audio equipment, and buy new computers and transmitters. I went to visit The Steppahs again in March 2010, while

travelling to interview Christopher Partridge at Lancaster University, and as in July 2009, we discussed the future of pirate radio in the UK, especially in North West England. Unfortunately I was not able to record any of the interviews with The Steppahs, and have to rely on notes and memory.

Uncle Dugs and Chef, unknown location, London, UK, May 2010
During the interview with Martin Clark, he told me to contact to Uncle Dugs, who is a drum 'n' bass DJ, and since 2006 one of the daily managers of Kool FM, London's longest running pirate station. B-Live, a UK grime and drum 'n' bass MC (and a friend of mine), is one of Uncle Dugs' best mates, and he helped me to establish the contact. Before Kool FM, Dugs was from 2000 to 2005 co-managing Rinse FM, one of the other well known pirate stations of London. On Election Day, May 2010, I got to interview him. While driving to the secret location of Kool FM, Uncle Dugs and an acquaintance of his told me about the station's 19 year long history. After a drive through East London which I am not able to recall due to various detours - and I'm sure was the purpose - we arrived at what seemed to be a dilapidated industrial complex in which the Kool studio was situated inside. Here I meet Chef, another DJ and daily manager at Kool. Together with Uncle Dugs, Chef accounted for the history of Kool, and other London pirate stations too, and it became clear that they are passionate about the station and its affiliated community of artists and listeners. What became even more evident, was the fact that Kool, as well as Rinse, is more than just a pirate radio: It is a brand featuring club nights, raves, radio, website, merchandise, and a steady roster of loyal DJ's, MC's, and producers.

Appendix 6: Features in Politiken and Soundvenue

[Provided in Danish only]

Politiken iByen, 6. august 2010

'Radiopiraten fra London spiller buldrende bas'

Af Thomas Borre

Natten sænker sig over den sydøstlige del af London. To unge hættetrøjeklædte fyre har lige bestukket viceværten i den 14 etager høje bygning, og de har nu for en kort bemærkning fri adgang til den flade tagryg, der rager højt op i den disede himmel over den engelske hovedstad. Med interimistisk sendeudstyr begynder de straks at sende musik ud på FM-båndet. Uden at have spurgt om lov. For de spiller den musik, der ikke normalt finder vej til radioens spillelister. Sådan er mange piratradiostationer startet i den britiske supermetropol, der ifølge flere kilder lægger tag til omkring 150 radiostationer. Mange af disse provisoriske initiativer har en forholdsvis kort levetid bl.a. fordi de bliver opdaget af politiet og de licensadministrerende myndigheder. Men nogle af dem er særdeles overlevelsesdygtige. Og nogle ender endda med at blive helt stuerene som Rinse FM, der i år kan fejre 16 års fødselsdag med en officiel FM-licens, så stationen kan fortsætte sine musikalske missioner på legal facon.

Radio med fremtidsplaner

Siden 2006 har Rinse FM også sendt radio via internettet og således opbygget et internationalt publikum. Der findes sågar en applikation til iPhone! Bag stationen står den musikalske ildsjæl Gordon 'Geeneus' Warren, der spiller til årets udgave af den københavnske klubevent RAW. Som tidligere radiopirat er han selv overrasket over stationens gennemslagskraft: »Da det hele startede, havde jeg ikke forestillet mig, at stationen ville bestå så længe. Det var aldrig en del af planen. Det er først nu, jeg er begyndt at lægge fremtidsplaner for radioen«, har Geeneus udtalt til engelske Fact Magazine sidste år i et af sine sjældne interview.

Ambassade for britisk bas

Aktørerne bag disse FM-initiativer har oftest et brændende hjerte for et særligt hjørne af den globale og urbane engelske undergrundsmusikscene hvad enten der er tale om genrerne soca eller grime, dubstep eller hiphop. Rinse FM's enorme musikalske indflydelse på denne britiske basmusikkultur kan ses på nutidens officielle hitlister, hvor mc's som Dizzee Rascal og Wiley hærger øverst i hierarkiet. Men de trådte deres orale børnesko hos Rinse FM, der i mange år ifølge det toneangivende webmagasin Pitchfork har været kendt som 'verdens førende grime-radiostation'. Senere har dubstep-helte som Skream og Kode 9 bidraget til at profilere stationen, som på den anden side har været med til at gøre dubstep til et globalt fænomen.

Vekselvirkning mellem over- og undergrund

Frederik Birket-Smith er ud over RAW-arrangør, dj under navnet 2000F og del af det københavnske producer- og promotorkollektiv OHOI!

specialestuderende på Roskilde Universitet, hvor han læser urban geografi. Hans undersøgelsesfelt er netop engelsk piratradio: »Piratradio er et vægtigt kulturelt fænomen, som bidrager positivt til hele den britiske baskultur, som vi også har dyrket gennem OHOI! og RAW i mange år«. Piratradiokulturen rummer ifølge Frederik Birket-Smith et prægnant vekselvirkende forhold mellem under- og overgrund. Lokale producere, dj's og mc's kan gennem piratradioernes uformelle strukturer få adgang til et potentielt stort publikum og tilegne sig erfaringer og netværk, der er frugtbare for deres karriere. Og lytterne får den anden vej rundt adgang til al den musik, som de traditionelle radioer ikke kan finde plads til at spille inden for deres stramme playliste-kultur.

Ikke-destruktiv modkultur

Det er bl.a. de mange bilister i London, der skaber gode betingelser for æterbåren pirateri på FM-båndet, siger Frederik Birket-Smith, der mener, at radiopirateri i modsætning til f.eks. graffiti er et eksempel på ikke-destruktiv aktion, hvor byens borgere gør byens rum til deres eget. Det er Geeneus enig i. I et tematisk program i P1's 'Klubværelset' tilbage fra 2006 sagde han: »Vi gør ikke noget, der er dårligt. Det er udelukkende positivt, det, der kommer fra vores radiostation (Rinse FM, red.). Alle på stationen får noget godt ud af det. Dizzee Rascal kommer herfra, og han får noget positivt ud af det. Det handler om, hvordan man ser på det. Lovligt og ulovligt betyder ikke godt eller dårligt, det er bare ord«.

Lovlig radio

Og nu er den ulovlige station så blevet lovlig. Ikke mindst fordi man har måttet anerkende Geeneus' evne til at finde musik, et større fremtidigt publikum vil interessere sig for. »Den succes, som Rinse FM har opnået, skyldes efter min vurdering deres evne til at præsentere navne, der har formået at bryde op fra undergrunden. Dertil kommer Rinse FM's evne til at være 'smal på en bred måde'«, siger Frederik Birket-Smith. »Rinse FM har været gode til at brande sig selv og skabe en lidt bredere og mindre specifik subgenreprofil end sine piratradiokollegaer. Dertil kommer en god udnyttelse af netværk, der bl.a. uformelt har skabt en tæt og frugtbar synergi mellem Rinse FM og den toneangivende natklub FWD«.

I morgen lørdag kan man få en smagsprøve på det musikalske budskab, som Geeneus og hans radiokollegaer har spredt ud over den engelske hovedstad siden første halvdel af 1990'erne. Det foregår dog ikke fra en højtravende tagryg, men på Kulturkajen på Docken i København, hvor han sammen med MC Tippa holder fokus på den dansevenlige genre UK funky.

Soundvenue, oktober 2010, #45
'Speak Up - 2000F'

Frederik Birket-Smith aka 2000F (OHOI!) skriver pt. speciale om Londons piratradioer. Og dem kan vi lære meget af, mener han. For der er for langt fra det pulserende, bastunge byliv til landets FM-bånd i dag.

Det er min overbevisning, at radiokulturen i Danmark trænger til en seriøs vitaminindsprøjtning, og gerne en af slagsen med godt med bas i. Imens Kulturministeren, medieforskere og journalister diskuterer, hvordan den kommende radiokanal skal centreres omkring jazz, klassisk, nyheder og hørespil, er reggae, dubstep, techno, hiphop, drum 'n' bass og så videre knap tilstedeværende i æteren. Bevares, P3 og The Voice har enkelte specialprogrammer, og i ny og næ formår eksempelvis et dubstep-nummer heldigvis at kravle op fra undergrunden til radioernes playlister. Der er dog stadig tale om en yderst underprioriteret dækning, som jeg ikke mener står mål med hvilket omfang urban-, klub- og elektronisk musikkultur har i Danmark.

I England er det meget anderledes. I flere årtier har piratstationerne fungeret som de æterbårne netværk i Londons musikalske undergrund. Siden hovedstadens længst eksisterende piratradiostation Kool FM startede i 1991, har stationen haft de allerbedste dj's, mc's, producere og promotere tilknyttet. Via piratradiostationernes FM-bølger, der udsendes ved hjælp af illegalt sendeudstyr placeret på tagene af Londons højhuse, opstår og udvikles nye genrer. Blandt de seneste skud på den efterhånden vidtforgrenede stamme af engelske musikstilarter er dubstep, UK funky og grime. Antallet af piratradiostationer i London svinger. I perioder kan der være over 100 stationer, der bringer den nyeste urbane musik ud til lytterne. At piratradiokulturen går i blodet, kan en stor del af Londons musikalske aktører skrive under på. Piratstationerne – store som små – virker nemlig som rugekasser for unge talenter. Grime-rapperen Dizzee Rascals kometkarriere fra tower block-ghetto til Top of the Pops-shows er et eksempel på, hvordan de illegale radiostationer fungerer som springbræt for lokalt talent. Allerede fra folkeskolen hænger unge ud på den lokale radio, hvor de overværer og inspireres af de etablerede artisters shows. Efterhånden får de selv mulighed for at spytte rim og vende plader 'on air'. Dizzee Rascal har i den forbindelse udtalt, at »Selv da jeg gik i folkeskole, var jeg på piratradio. Jeg var på en radiostation i Nordlondon, hvor jeg nogle gange gik hen efter skole. Jeg var på fra klokken et til tre om natten – og så op i skole den næste dag«.

Og piratradiostationerne er bevidste om deres rolle som smeltedigel for nye genrer og som arnested for nye talenter. På Rinse FM er der etableret et decideret radioakademi for 14-19 årige. Målet er at skabe en kontrast til det homogene radioudbud i London. Et initiativ, som ikke kun skaber nye talenter til musiklivet men også sociale og faglige netværk på tværs af alder, kulturelle baggrunde, geografiske afstande og så videre. I Danmark har piratradiokulturen derimod aldrig fundet fast fodfæste, og det på trods af at Radio Mercur allerede i 1958 sendte piratradio til

København og omegn fra et skib i Øresund. Kun sporadiske piratforsøg er det siden blevet til, senest med Ungdomshusets kortlevede Pirat 69-station.

Kræver det illegale sendemaster at få en sprudlende og mangfoldig musikkultur her til lands som i London? Jeg tror det ikke. For musiklivet herhjemme blomstrer allerede, ikke mindst indenfor de elektroniske og urbane genrer. Et kig i kalenderen bekræfter, at der i august alene i København blev afholdt fire store, succesfulde arrangementer: Trailerpark, Stella Polaris, RAW og Strøm. Og så er de mange andre fester, raves og koncerter på hovedstadens klubber og pladser slet ikke nævnt. For slet ikke at tale om dem i Århus, Aalborg, Odense… Desværre kommer denne musikalske overflod ikke til udtryk på de danske radiostationer. Gode råd er som bekendt dyre, men i disse sparetider giver jeg gerne et par gratis: Kære radiofolk, lad Jer inspirere af vores fantastiske musikkulturer. Samarbejd med promotere, som allerede trækker de største udenlandske artister inden for de forskellige urbane genrer til landet. Samarbejd med klubber og festivaler, hvorfra der kan laves optagelser og transmissioner. Samarbejd med dj's, mc's og musikproducere om nye, eksklusive numre. Samarbejd med øvelokaler, musikstudier og -foreninger om spændende talentudviklingsprojekter. Jeg kunne blive ved men er klar over, at ressourcerne er små, og at ikke alle ideer kan realiseres på én gang. Det er dog trods alt ikke så meget, der skal til før dansk musikradio måske kan blive lige så interessant og indflydelsesrig som Londons piratstationer.

JUST 4 U LONDON

Pirate Radio in a Geographic Perspective

Niels Frederik Birket-Smith