What is Cool?
Exploring Consumer Experiences

A thesis presented
By

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This thesis is solely the work of the author and is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the subject of Marketing

University of Liverpool

Supervisors:
Professor Anthony Patterson & Professor Lee Quinn

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David Fell: What is Cool? Exploring Consumer Experiences

Abstract

The notion of cool, or the label of coolness with respect to people’s identity shaping practices, has fascinated scholars and marketers since its emergence in the mid-20th Century, but remains difficult to describe. Most previous studies frame it as a positive and desirable concept, but often theorise without seeking deeper empirical insights. CCT studies, however, advise exploration of historical discourses to understand difficult consumer phenomena. Disassembling cool, also unearthed many negative connotations. Cool seems edgy, so disturbances to psychological margins appear relevant. Anthony Giddens (1991) concept of ontological security describes a strong drive where individuals seek to create a sense of continuity and order in their lives. Its disturbance creating ontological insecurity, where identity or its boundaries seem threatened (Mitzen, 2006). As cool and ontological security/insecurity have not been previously connected in research, this thesis offers new theoretical insights.

The subjectivity of cool summoned gathering a wide-range of consumer perspectives. I therefore developed an interpretive case-study methodology, exploring consumer experiences that were bounded by some describable cultural-forces. Two contemporary lifestyles commonly linked with cool; a) skateboarding and b) surfing provided contexts where individuals might be pursuing cool identities. A third anti-case; c) caravanning, provided a counterfoil, exhibiting few attributes associated with coolness. The case-studies involved 47 skateboarding, 31 surfing and 74 caravanning participants. Their insights and uncovered practices, allowed thematic, intertextual and emerging understandings of relationships between cool and various forms of ontological security and insecurity.

My case-study research reveals those seeking coolness are often reacting to feelings of ontological insecurity. Driving a need to change by engaging in ‘reskilling’; deliberately seeking-out precarious, exciting, fateful encounters. Surmounting them leads to higher-levels of ontological security. Mastery indicating successful morality and the ability to share progressive futures. Colonising the future, though, also needs legitimate belonging to progressive communities. Conformance within them builds trust but also requires mastery of unique cultural practices, while shielding the edgy desirability of the identity. Cool, though, is far more than narcissistic survival, requiring a profound, broader-consciousness for negotiating various threats to ontological insecurity. Those successfully attaining higher-levels of ontological security through true, committed relationships, however, seem less concerned. Transposing their anxieties towards other threats; protecting jobs, property or their intimate relationships.
Declaration

The work presented in this thesis is entirely my own work and it is not copied or plagiarised from other sources.

Signed: …David Fell…………………………….. Date: …..27th January 2019…….

David Fell
Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank Professor Anthony Patterson and Professor Lee Quinn for being incredibly supportive supervisors, mentors, whose support, advice and guidance have been crucial to this thesis.

Secondly, I would like to thank my wife, Anita for supporting me unstintingly throughout the process, but also my children Joe and Sam, who have patiently accepted the sacrifices I have needed to make to complete this PhD journey.
Access to Contents

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### Glossary of Terms

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<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Aesthetics is based on the sensation and feeling of a subject, which can relate to how they feel about many things (Baumgartner, cited in Gregor, 1983).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Ability or capacity to act or exert power; active working or operation; action, activity (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Worry over the future or about something with an uncertain outcome; uneasy concern about a person, situation, etc.; a troubled state of mind arising from such worry or concern; Strong desire or concern for something to happen or to do something; an instance of this. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy</td>
<td>Freedom from, or insensibility to, suffering; hence, freedom from, or insensitivity to, passion or feeling; passionless existence; Indolence of mind, indifference to what is calculated to move the feelings, or to excite interest or action. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Skill; its display, application, or expression; Skill in doing something, esp. as the result of knowledge or practice (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefact</td>
<td>A non-material human construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>Propositions that are taken for granted, as if they were true based upon presupposition without preponderance of the facts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au Fait</td>
<td>To be well instructed or ‘up to the mark’ in, thoroughly conversant with, expert or skilful in (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiography</td>
<td>A subgenre of Biography, in which the subject and the author are the same person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful</td>
<td>Highly pleasing to the sight; embodying an ideal of physical perfection; possessing exceptional harmony of form or colour. Also in weakened use; Of a person (now esp. a woman), the face, figure, etc.; possessing attractive harmony of features, figomentum; exceptionally graceful, elegant, or charming in appearance; Realizing an ideal of intellectual or moral excellence; pleasing to the mind, esp. in being appropriate or well-suited to a particular purpose; highly attractive or admirable in character (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>A descriptive thought that a person holds about something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>A narrative, intimate or gossipy history of the life of a person, house, city, or commodity. Most biographies provide an account from birth to death, or to the time of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand equity</td>
<td>Describes the value of having a well-known brand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand identity</td>
<td>The elements of a brand i.e. name, logo etc. which makes it identifiable and recognisable to consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand image</td>
<td>Perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand longevity</td>
<td>Describes the endurance of the brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand narrative</td>
<td>Equates to brand story-telling; it is any account of events connected to a brand, and presented to consumers in a sequence of written or verbal words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravan(ning)</td>
<td>To travel or live in a caravan (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>A careful study of some social unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic</td>
<td>Of acknowledged excellence or importance; Of the first class, of the highest rank or importance; constituting an acknowledged standard or model; of enduring interest and value; Archetypal; very typical of its kind, representative (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classy</td>
<td>Of high or superior class, esp. stylish and sophisticated (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>Free from anything that dims lustre or transparency; Clear of all encumbrance or restrictions; Pure, undefiled, unsullied; Free from any defiling or deteriorating ingredient; unmixed with foreign matter, pure, unadulterated. Now commonly expressed by pure, except when the contaminating ingredient is ‘dirt’ (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Culture Theory (or CCT)</strong></td>
<td>A framework that refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Critic</strong></td>
<td>The art or action of criticizing; criticism; an instance of this. (OED, 2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Desire</strong></td>
<td>To wish or long for; crave; want</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DIY</strong></td>
<td>Do-It-Yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Differentiation</strong></td>
<td>Process of distinguishing a brand/product/service from others, to make it more attractive to a particular target market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emic</strong></td>
<td>Features or items analysed with respect to their role as structural units in a system, as in behavioural science or linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td>The philosophical theory of knowledge; how we know what we know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnography</strong></td>
<td>The branch of anthropology that deals with the scientific description of individual human societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Etic</strong></td>
<td>Features or items analysed without considering their role as a structural unit in a system, as in behavioural science or linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook</strong></td>
<td>A social networking site on the internet, used by individuals to connect with family, friends and to form groups and social contacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiction</strong></td>
<td>An imaginative work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freak</strong></td>
<td>Informal term, usually meaning a person a person who is obsessed with a particular activity or interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geek</strong></td>
<td>Frequently depreciative. An overly diligent, unsociable student; any unsociable person obsessively devoted to a particular pursuit (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>Kind; Sort; Style; A particular style or category of works of art; esp. a type of literary work characterized by a particular form, style, or purpose. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td>The sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition of being a single individual; the fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality; Who or what a person or thing is; a distinct impression of a single person or thing presented to or perceived by others; a set of characteristics or a description that distinguishes a person or thing from others (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-depth interviews</strong></td>
<td>A long conversation between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insecurity</strong></td>
<td>The condition of not being sure; want of assurance or confidence; (subjective) uncertainty; The state or quality of being unsafe; liability to give way, fail, or suffer loss or damage; want of firmness or safety; an insecure state of affairs, a condition of danger. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet (or the Net)</strong></td>
<td>The vast and burgeoning global web of computer networks with no central management or ownership; the World Wide Web is its user-friendly access standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpretivism</strong></td>
<td>A tradition in social science with the view that all knowledge is a matter of interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instagram</strong></td>
<td>A photo and video sharing social-media platform that is owned by Facebook and involves following and interacting with others such as friends, peers, associates or celebrities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irony</strong></td>
<td>In its simplest form is a trope that consists of saying one thing and meaning something else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juxtaposition</strong></td>
<td>A literary or visual device wherein the author places a person, concept, place, idea or theme parallel to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lifestyle</strong></td>
<td>A person’s pattern of living as expressed in his or her activities, interests and opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limitation</strong></td>
<td>The quality of being limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary criticism</strong></td>
<td>The study, evaluation, and interpretation of literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
<td>A social and managerial process whereby individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others</td>
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<td>Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>The marketing logic by which the business unit hopes to achieve its marketing objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>A figure of speech that describes a subject by asserting that it is, on some point of comparison, the same as another otherwise unrelated object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Methods</td>
<td>Is the use of numerous methods to investigate the same research question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motive (drive)</td>
<td>A need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction of the need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>A traditional story, typically involving supernatural beings or forces, which embodies and provides an explanation, aetiology, or justification for something such as the early history of a society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythology</td>
<td>A body or collection of myths belonging to a people and addressing their origin, history, deities, ancestors, and heroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naff</td>
<td>Unfashionable, vulgar; lacking in style, inept; worthless, faulty (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need</td>
<td>A state of felt deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerd</td>
<td>An insignificant, foolish, or socially inept person; a person who is boringly conventional or studious. Now also: spec. a person who pursues an unfashionable or highly technical interest with obsessive or exclusive dedication (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>A story with the point of view of the narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netnography</td>
<td>Is the branch of Ethnography that analyses the free behaviour of individuals on the internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>The faculty or power of observation; the habit of observing, perceiving or taking notice (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ollie</td>
<td>In skateboarding: a jump executed by pressing the foot down on the tail of the board to rebound the deck off the ground (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online interviews</td>
<td>Similar to 'in-depth interviews' only taking place on the internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>The metaphysical study of the nature of being and existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigm</td>
<td>The generally accepted perspective of a particular discipline at a given time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parody</td>
<td>A literary composition modelled on and imitating another work, esp. a composition in which the characteristic style and themes of a particular author or genre are satirized by being applied to inappropriate or unlikely subjects, or are otherwise exaggerated for comic effect. In later use extended to similar imitations in other artistic fields, as music, painting, film, etc. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathos</td>
<td>A quality which evokes pity, sadness, or tenderness; the power of exciting pity; affecting character or influence. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>A person's distinguishing psychological characteristics that lead to relatively consistent and lasting responses to his or her own environment; it is the particular combination of emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural response patterns of an individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>The representation of an abstract quality or idea in the form of a person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td>A doctrine contending that sense perceptions are the only admissible basis of human knowledge and precise thought; The application of this doctrine in logic, epistemology, and ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary data</td>
<td>Information collected for the specific purpose at hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pristine</td>
<td>Of a man-made object: spotless, pure in colour; fresh, as good as new; (also) brand new, newly made, unused. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organisations and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative research</td>
<td>Research that derives data from observation, interviews, or verbal interactions and focuses on the meanings and interpretations of the participants to gain a deeper understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rad</td>
<td>orig. Skateboarding. Challenging, risky; extreme; = radical adj; More generally: admirable, excellent, fashionable; ‘cool’ (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retro</td>
<td>Esp. of fashion, music, or design: characterized by imitation or revival of a style from the (relatively recent) past; (more generally) backward-looking, nostalgic, esp. affectedly so; A style characterized by imitation or revival of something (esp. fashion, music, or design) from the (relatively recent) past; retro fashion, music, etc. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridicule</td>
<td>The action or practice of laughing contemptuously at a person or thing; derisive language or behaviour; mockery, derision (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanticize</td>
<td>To make romantic or idealized in character; to make (something) seem better or more appealing than it really is; to describe, portray, or view in a romantic manner (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Freedom from care, anxiety or apprehension; absence of worry or anxiety; confidence in one's safety or well-being; The state or condition of being protected from or not exposed to danger; safety. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard(ing)</td>
<td>A narrow platform mounted on roller-skate wheels, on which the rider coasts along, usually in a standing position (orig. developed from surf-riding, chiefly as a pastime). (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Actualisation</td>
<td>Realization or fulfilment of one's true nature or ideal self, esp. regarded as a human need. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among people. It is based on user participation and user-generated content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subculture</td>
<td>An identifiable subgroup within a society or group of people, esp. one characterized by beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger group; the distinctive ideas, practices, or way of life of such a subgroup (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublime</td>
<td>Of a feature of nature or art: that fills the mind with a sense of overwhelming grandeur or irresistible power; that inspires awe, great reverence, or other high emotion, by reason of its beauty, vastness, or grandeur; In weakened use: excellent, superb; wonderful. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>To ride or be carried on the crest of a breaking wave, esp. using a surfboard; to surfboard. Also trans.: to ride (a wave) in this way. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story</td>
<td>A usually fictional prose or verse intended to interest or amuse the hearer or reader. It is primarily a cohesive and logical sequence of events that demonstrate a change in the state of the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appended to nouns, forming adverbs and adjectives with the general sense ‘(in a manner) characteristic of or befitting——’. (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trademark</td>
<td>A symbol, word, or words legally registered or established by use as representing a company or product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twee</td>
<td>Now only in depreciatory use: affectedly dainty or quaint; over-nice, over-refined, precious, mawkish (OED, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>A social networking site on the internet, used by individuals to communicate short messages of less than 280 characters. Visit <a href="http://www.twitter.com">www.twitter.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual analysis</td>
<td>The deconstruction of visual images in order to reveal hidden/layered meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>A social networking site on the internet, used by individuals to share videos. Visit <a href="http://www.youtube.com">www.youtube.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 – The Importance of Being Cool

This chapter begins with the rationale and justification for this research project. Introducing ‘cool’ as an area primed for investigation within consumer research. The research background and problem; the aims of the study and the research questions are described and explained. The perspectives adopted throughout this thesis are provided and the method is introduced and justified. The delimitations are then discussed. The chapter concludes by presenting the composition and content of the entire thesis.

1.1 Rationale and Justification for the Research

Cool has become a dominant, aspirational ideology of contemporary consumerism which is deeply connected to personal identity (Gurrieri, 2009; McGuigan, 2013; Nancarrow, et al., 2001). Individuals, lifestyles and brands are subjectively judged by their coolness. As a natural corollary those deemed cool or trendy are often viewed as popular or desirable (Belk, et al., 2010; Gladwell, 2000; Klein, 2000/2010; Olson, et al., 2005; Solomon, 2003; Southgate 2003; Taylor, 2009; Warren & Campbell, 2014; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). The message that cool is important to individual’s sociality and status is frequently reinforced through advertising, movies, music and media (Belk, et al., 2010; Taylor, 2009). Yet despite its obvious importance to consumer behaviour, research on cool remains surprisingly formative (Rahman, 2017; Warren & Campbell, 2014). With some notable exceptions, there remains a puzzling lack of coherent theory to guide marketing scholars or practitioners (Cowan, et al., 2013; Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). Scholarship therefore struggles to provide theoretical explanations for why cool is ubiquitous to consumer and capitalist societies and how it differs from other consumer concepts (McGuigan, 2016; Warren & Campbell, 2014).

Nonetheless, its lack of theoretical grounding has not dampened the fervour of consumer brands seeking to cash in on its cachet. In an attempt to elicit its magic they employ an array of storytelling tropes. For example, Apple created an enduringly cool image by casting themselves as an anti-corporate underdog and, of course, an unremitting purveyor of enchanting consumer technology (McGuigan, 2016). The brands, Vans and Supreme, became cool via association with edgy subcultures, and urban street-wear scenes (Belk, 2006; Borden, 2016; Kawamura, 2016; Sold Out: The Underground Economy of Supreme Resellers, 2015). To tap into cool, Abercrombie & Fitch, even created a fictional narrative for their Hollister brand. Emboldened with unlimited latitude, its marketers envisioned a brand whose spiritual home could only be California. The celebrated motifs of this place include: a youthful outlook; a sunny climate which naturally promotes an informal approach to life; and a strong track record in creating innovative consumer goods that have transformed American life (Transworld Business, 2008). In addition, cool-hunting agencies such as Sputnik, The L. Report and Bureau de Style, scour the streets for the latest trends to meet the demand
of corporations, who struggle to originate that elusive cool factor (Klein, 2000/2010). Meanwhile, advertising agencies like Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB), are briefed to create cool campaigns for corporate clients (Frank, 1997; Solomon, 2003).

While cool has desirable and popular characteristics, it also has contrarian or countercultural tendencies, seeming important as they create distinction or a sense of otherness (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012; 2018). A quality particularly important to fashion, where being novel or having a distinctive identity is key to creating the latest trends that perpetuate and drive consumerism (Heath & Potter, 2004; Kawamura, 2016). Consumers enacting their idiosyncratic identities through ambiguity, unpredictability, originality and scarcity (Barthes, 1967; Kawamura, 2016; Koenig, 1973; Veblen, 1899; 1964). Being conspicuously cool through consumption of the latest fashions or edgy subcultures seems to elevate an individual’s social-status or provide them with a means for accessing valuable subcultural capital (Belk, et al., 2010; Thornton, 1995). Contemporary consumer cultures are often therefore structured around the aesthetic consumption of these types of lifestyles, clothes, goods and leisure services (Bauman, 2005).

Despite most previous consumer studies viewing cool in positive terms, as consuming cool things can be pleasurable, it also seems fraught. Most find being cool a struggle (Belk, et al., 2010). Social tensions exist around being too distinctive or standing-out from the crowd, where consumers fear being too outlandish or different (Belk, et al., 2010; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). Possibly relating to underlying or unresolved states of narcissism (O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000). It is also possible, however, that insecurities are driving their behaviours. Relating to their own sense of self-identity and anxieties formed around ‘desiring what one fears’ (Kierkegaard, 1944). Indeed, Marlene Connor (1995) felt that African-American cool was perpetually misunderstood by white-Americans who saw it as arrogance rather than a coping mechanism. Most perceptible in the phenomena of disenfranchised and underprivileged youth fetishizing or appropriating symbols of wealth; while those more privileged regularly seek-out the cultural dowry and symbols of harder, poorer street styles (Belk, et al., 2010; Gladwell, 2000; Klein, 2000/2010; Solomon, 2003). Cool is unusual, as it seems one of the few ways disenfranchised consumers can subvert traditional forms of power, knowledge, wealth and status (Belk, et al., 2010; Taylor, 2009). Tensions, however, also seem present for mainstreamer’s trying to fit in with cooler-peers or alien-subcultures (Nancarrow, et al., 2001; O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000). These relationships between countercultures, subcultures, consumer-tribes and mainstream-sensibilities, though, are becoming increasingly complex, plural and market-mediated (Cova, et al., 2012; Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003). They may be driving paradoxical consumption behaviours, where different subjectivities are viewing and interpreting cool differently.
British sociologist Anthony Giddens developed the concept of *ontological insecurity* in his *Modernity and Self Identity* (1991). It addresses these types of fears and existential anxieties that are a normal part of individuals negotiating their positions in the world and are often related towards forms of otherness. It acts constantly, driven by a fear of uncertainty and the avoidance of events which disturb an individual’s sense of meaning and continuity in life or their identity within it (ibid). A precarious state of being where one must face up to a lack of meaning, ultimate condemnation and annihilation (Laing, 1961). A fear of engulfment and a dread of being consumed by the other, of losing one’s separate identity through processes of being loved, despised or even destroyed (ibid). Ontological insecurities, however, are complex as they are structured subjectively for individuals and are confusing towards what actually represents the other in society. People often feel in states of false-identity, false-security or an insecurity due to a lack of clear self-identity (ibid). A loss of unity which necessitates the preservation of a true and inner-self, but also the creation of an actual, real or outer-self (Laing, 1960). This involves the construction of a mask which gives the security of a protective cocoon around one’s identity perimeters (Brown, 2000; Laing, 1960; 1961). Driven by a need to protect oneself from a world that is seen as threatening to their individual identity (Laing, 1961). These insecurities towards otherness or uncertainty can therefore produce a need to securitise relationships through trust, or by seeking to overwhelm those threats by behaving in appropriate ways (Giddens, 1991). Building trust in one’s own self-identity by constructing routines and an integrity in one’s personal narrative (ibid). The need for ontological security is so strong, it can even drive social behaviours that jeopardise the individual’s physical security (Mitzen, 2006). Such threats to identity, however, can also result in a paralysis or a failure to act, where the individual feels overwhelmed (ibid). Investigating these insecurities and tensions in a wide range of contemporary subjectivities, is therefore important for understanding contemporary cool and its widespread prevalence. Particularly for consumers in contemporary, consumer cultures; facing the possibility of apparent freedom and choice, which also produces and perpetuates states of anxiety or dread (Kierkegaard, 1944).

These tensions, layers or masks of identity are important as cool has been described in terms of a strategy for managing inner and outer passions, hiding awkwardness, embarrassment or masking competitiveness (Milner Jr, 2004; Newmark, 2013; Pountain & Robins, 2000). These sorts of pressures, however, do not just act on consumers but pervade the work lives of industry professionals. Marketing executives fret over whether their brands are cool, and if they are in-touch enough with new generations of hip consumers (Klein, 2000/2010). They also resonate with cool’s historical narratives and discourses, which has seen successive waves of ontological crises reflected in each consecutive generation’s new sense of reality and their aspirations (Hebdige, 2007). Repeated cycles of rejection of the inherited and out-
moded parental trajectories of identity, driven by a need for social-survival in their own changing circumstances (ibid). Some examples which directly relate to cool being: Norman Mailer’s (1957) descriptions of the strangling of possibilities, or a lack of creativity many of the beat generation felt when confronted by the expressivity or otherness of jazz. Similarly, the emergence of the UK punk scene in the 1970’s was an alienating reaction to the threat posed by the emergence and popularity of British-Caribbean culture and music (Hebdige 1979; 2003). The sorts of tensions which Fitchett, et al., (2014) felt often produced peculiar responses from an omni-powerful but impotent mainstream, who at the same time as seeking to repel incursions of otherness also fear being left behind by failing to absorb new ideas. In contemporary societies, consumer’s must also seek to consume or align with new lifestyles and products they are constantly presented with, replacing a cogent and autonomous development of their self-identity (McDonald & Wearing, 2013).

To underpin my examination, I use an interpretive, multiple-case-study methodology for investigating cool via some selected consumption-lifestyles. The subcultures of skateboarding and surfing are chosen as they present contexts where consumers might be attempting to create a cool identity, while provoking other complex identity-tensions for them. A third case-study, caravanning, offers an anti-case where consumers might be perceived as being less concerned with a cool-image, but also have muddled consumption practices, balanced within familial environments. Each case-study, therefore, provides a diverse series of contexts, where consumer’s perspectives and the precariousness of their subcultural-membership or shared-identities can be explored. An investigation of cool through forms of ontological security/insecurity has not previously been researched. There is an opportunity, therefore, to delve much deeper into these aspects of consumer experiences and how they influence their behaviours. Framed by their ontological insecurities, sources of ontological security and other emergent theoretical relationships. It delves into a myriad of perspectives, acknowledging the plurality and complexity of individually-imagined or desired shared-identities. Recognising how perceptions towards forms of otherness are often nuanced. By investigating the phenomena in these new ways, this research contributes to knowledge by exploring and understanding consumer’s drives to consume or avoid cool, and the types of roles it plays for them. This thesis, therefore, caters to the sophisticated, in-depth understanding of human behaviour, across a range of consumption contexts.

This research extends Warren & Campbell’s (2014) interest in the mystery of cool’s ubiquity and pervasiveness, but also McGuigan’s (2013; 2016) trajectory for exploring why cool has emerged and evolved as a major global concern for contemporary consumers. It views the jeopardizing societal forces that capitalism and neoliberalism
have imposed on individuals as important in driving contemporary consumption of cool (McGuigan, 2013).

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The research problem addressed in this thesis is:

“Can explorations of how consumer’s use cool to construct their identities, tensioned by their constant anxieties and ontological insecurities, help develop a deeper understanding of cool’s role in driving their behaviours?”

Each of the case-studies provides opportunities to observe and discuss these issues with consumers, back-dropped against the subcultural and lifestyle contexts that each case-study provides. Allowing discursive and developing narratives and themes which collectively inform consumer research scholarship and marketing management perspectives.

The main objectives of the study, therefore, are:

1) To review and synthesize the literature on cool in a general context, examining its roots, emergence, and proliferation, using the critical perspectives of social science, consumer psychology and consumer culture.

2) To develop an appropriate methodological framework for investigating cool within the selected case-studies and through appropriate lenses.

3) To explore cool in relation to the stresses, and ontological insecurities that contemporary society exacts upon consumers.

4) To consider these insecurities towards the discourses of each of the case-studies and how they affect consumer choices.

5) To contribute to the academic debate on cool and its role in consumer behaviour, outlining implications for management.

The types of questions asked in each of the case-studies include; i) ‘How do consumers perceive cool?’, ii) ‘How do they incorporate it into their identity?’, iii) What impact does it have on their lifestyles?’, iv) ‘How do prevalent discourses affect their perceptions?’, v) ‘How do ontological threats to their identity affect their behaviours?’, vi) ‘What do consumer’s narrative accounts reveal about the types of tensions they face?’, vii) ‘How do they affect their consumption choices?’, viii) ‘How do organisations create, maintain or even exploit the opportunities that ontological insecurity provides in these sorts of environments?’
1.3 Research Perspectives

This research thesis is positioned within an interpretivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Theoretically situated within the CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2015) branch of consumer research and marketing scholarship (Macinnes & Folkes, 2009). CCT is a foremost branch of interpretivist consumer research, having well-established methods for investigating consumers and consumption phenomenon, and their interrelationships with the cultural and market forces that influence them (Arnould & Thompson, 2015). This is important as cool is affected by discourses which operate across macro and micro-spectrums. CCT actively encourages the use of sociological frameworks as theoretical lenses, providing this form of interpretivist consumer research with scholarly authority and relevance to marketing practices (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Brown, et al., 1998; Fitchett, et al., 2014; Quinn & Patterson, 2013).

Cool can often stand for fleeting (Klein, 2000/2010) aesthetic judgements, psychological states or phenomenological experiences (Mandoki, 2007). Types of states, however, as Lyng (2016) acknowledged, often derive from much deeper reflections towards a society where risk-taking is highly complex and requires constant reflexive interpretations towards the self. At this deeper level of identity formation, ontological insecurity, existential anxieties and needs for greater ontological security are the foremost concerns (Burkit, 2008; Brown, 2000; Giddens, 1991; Laing, 1961; Mitzen, 2006). Cool’s history, however, also acts as a secondary backdrop to this study as it affects its contemporary meanings, while the term has also kept many of its original tenets (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012; Moore, 2004). Cool is an unusual form of slang, having survived several generational turns; absorbing new associations and therefore continuing to sound fresh (Moore, 2004). Historical discourses imbue it with cultural imagery; symbols whose connotations help form part of its synchronic and diachronic meanings (Williams, 1983). Its continuous use and maintenance as part of a globally-shared vernacular, however, means its connections keep expanding and as a result are difficult to pin-down (Gurrieri, 2009; Haselstein, 2013).

Cool now seems strongly linked to fashion, consumerism or the excitement or desirability of people or cultures (Rahman, 2013). Particularly appealing to youth, innovative fashion industries and rapidly changing technological markets (Rahman, 2013; Solomon, 2003; Warren & Campbell, 2014). For old and new consumers, however, cool continues to signify a supplementary cachet for people and objects in ways that no other word can (Belk, et al., 2010; Burrows & Satariano, 2012; Frank, 1997; Klein, 2000/2010; Moore, 2004; Olson, et al., 2005; Quartz & Asp, 2015; Rahman, 2013; Rahman & Laud, 2016). A unique attribute of liking; inspiring mimicry while also offering something else as well (Belk, et al., 2010; Bird & Tapp, 2008; Gurrieri, 2009; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Warren & Campbell, 2014; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). This ‘something-else’ appearing at the heart of the mystery of cool or
coolness, where significant theoretical gaps continue to obfuscate understanding of how cool is perceived, practiced and performed by consumers, even at basic levels. It means complementary theories are also needed, which while having a subordinate significance to the empirical studies, help construct more discursive understandings. The theoretical areas used to help untangle cool’s history and provide further insights into consumer experiences therefore include:

a) Etymology and keyword analysis (Williams, 1983)


c) Macro, and micro-discourses and their intertextuality (Allen, 2011; Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Foucault, 1983; Koepnick, 1999).


f) Aesthetic experiences (Addison, 1854; Adorno, 2013; Benjamin, 1970; Berger, et al., 1972; Burke, 1757; Dessoir, 1970; Freud, 1919; Kant, 1951; Kierkegaard, 1944; Mandoki, 2007; Thompson, 1973).

g) The psychology and sociology of optimal flow experience (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi, et al., 1993; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988).

h) The psychology and sociology of voluntary edgework (Lyng, 1990; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Thompson & Üstüner, 2015).

1.4 Case-Study Methodology

This research uses an interpretive, multiple-case-study methodology (Feigin, et al., 1991; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994; Zucker, 2009). The choice of the three case-studies; skateboarding [Case-study A], surfing [Case-study B] and caravanning [Case-study C] is based on their collectively diverse demographics and the types of ontological, psychological and phenomenological states and shared-identities they compel. A complexity of pleasures, tensions, anxieties and insecurities which both instigate threats to identity or produce opportunities for its development. Affected by whether the subject feels core to the practice, positioned around its periphery, or are seen as outsiders. In contemporary neoliberal societies, skateboarding and surfing are often...
used by brands to generate cool-imagery. Disproportionately influencing mainstream consumption and fashion (Belk, et. al., 2010; Colburn, et al., 2002; Dixon, 2016; Quartz & Asp, 2015; Turner, 2016) in ways reminiscent of parallel-uses of street-styles or hiphop. Used representatively across broader market spheres to ignite consumption elsewhere (Borden, 2016; Dixon, 2016; Neil, 2015).

In collective case-study research, a deviant case-study is recommended to give contrasting perspectives (Zucker, 2009). Viewing cool wholly positively or believing that it is an aspiration for everyone (Kerner & Pressman, 2007), misses the point that trying to be cool may disrupt or foreclose other identity options, lifestyles or relationships (MKTG555 & Costley, 2012). For example, caravanning is a highly-popular lifestyle choice for many UK consumers, but offers few obvious signs of being cool or having any role in fashion or youth culture. It therefore provides a useful counterweight to the first two case-studies. Caravanning also provides opportunities to explore autonomous and micro-level discourses (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000) of cool. More sophisticatedly informing understandings through a greater variety of uses. Indeed, Quartz & Asp (2015) felt that forms of cool, might well be found in these types of unlikely places.

Each lifestyle and subculture has been researched previously, but from different perspectives to ontological security/insecurity and cool. Caravanning has previously been connected to ontological security, due to practices which produce reformations of home (Larsen, et al., 2007). For rigour, a review of the prior literature in each case was therefore first completed to understand broader, identified relationships. Enabling a more complete understanding of the practice and its cultural-history, while also introducing autobiographical, cultural and literary sources when deemed appropriate as research-materials. The case-studies, however, primarily involved empirical investigations of consumers. Their consumption practices being interpreted, through a range of complementary, qualitative research techniques. Including observation of participants and consented semi-structured, narrative interviews with them. The studies were mainly based in UK locations with UK consumers. This research involving forty-seven participants in the skateboarding study, thirty-one in surfing, and seventy-four in caravanning. Each study also involved some auto-ethnographical work to build understanding and empirical connections within each practice. Each case-study is presented as a separate findings chapter in the thesis.

1.5 Positioning the Research within CCT

While there is an absence of studies within CCT that directly pertain to cool, there is no absence of literature that indirectly relates to it. Representing a broad concept like cool, however, within such a diverse research field is problematic. To help structure CCT research, Arnould and Thompson (2005) devise four thematic spheres for
assembling CCT studies; a) ‘Socio-historic patterning’, b) ‘mass-mediated marketplace ideologies’, c) ‘consumer identity projects’, and d) ‘consumer’s interpretive strategies’. They use these frameworks to connect how consumers work with marketer generated materials to align themselves with particular goals and inhabit certain positions. In broad terms, cool relates to all these frameworks, but this research thesis, strongly relates to c) ‘consumer identity projects’. This is because in investigating how consumer’s ontological insecurities affect their types of behaviours, we can begin to connect it to the field through how cool is tensioned towards an individual’s self-actualisation. Arnould & Thompson (2015) also form four thematic areas to reflect the emerging trajectories of knowledge production within CCT; e) the ontological conception of culture as distributed networks, f) the politics of consumption, g) consumer marketing theoretics and h) regional cultural theoretics. This research thesis is framed towards producing theory for the areas of; f) ‘politics of consumption’, and g) ‘consumer marketing theoretics’. It is acutely recognised, however, that theory must account for changeable contexts (Brown, 1996; Brown, 2009). Cool’s subjectivity (Warren & Campbell, 2014) and temporality (Belk et al., 2010) intensifies this need for reflexivity in approach to avoid the illusion of theoretical legitimacy and repeatability (Ardley & Quinn, 2014). There is also the concern, as Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) warned, that generating theory can impede empirical consumer research, by causing the overlooking or foreclosing of important complexities of experience. Condensing empirical data and representing qualitative insights in reducible forms is, however, crucial for effective dissemination and a necessary and legitimate part of the communication process (Gummesson, 2001; Quinn, 2010).

1.6 Delimitations of Scope and Key Assumptions

While cool is a difficult concept effort should be made to research and understand it. We have seen considerable progress in grasping other abstract concepts such as culture and identity. Those studies have made important contributions to a more sophisticated understanding of consumer’s mind-sets (Mansfield, 2000; Moran, 2015). To construct a coherent study of cool, though, we must recognise it as a phenomenon that is bounded to some degree. A unique social, cultural and linguistic phenomenon, that is explorable and explainable (Belk, et al., 2010; Frank, 1997; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Stearns, 1994; Warren & Campbell, 2014).

The research problem investigated, penetrates many aspects of consumer’s complex lives. Using case-studies, however, allows a more coherent study to emerge. It is recognised, that other, equally appropriate subcultures could have been selected for the research including; hip-hop, street-wear, jazz, night-life, or all manner of other products, brands or services. The case-studies selected, though, offered the possibility of less-obvious perspectives, greater accessibility, and clear distinctions between
subcultural membership and exclusion. That is, skateboarding, surfing, and caravanning, have distinct delineations between those consumers who are actively engaged in the practice and those who are not. This research is an exploration of cool and consumer’s forms of ontological insecurity and security. The three case-studies therefore afford a way of dispersing these subjectivities within certain lifestyle contexts. This study is not attempting to answer the question of ‘what is cool’ definitively. Instead seeking to use the case-studies to offer insights which help understanding of consumers through the instances uncovered and their theoretical explanations. As the research is of a sample of mainly UK resident consumers in the fields of skateboarding, surfing and caravanning, it can only represent and illustrate subjective perspectives from the sources used. The research, therefore, cannot speak for comprehensive, cross-cultural meanings of cool or all manner of the types of ontological insecurities that affect all consumers. It does, however, offer insights for similar research contexts through processes of entextualization which allow the forming of a probing and coherent thesis (Jones, 2011).

1.7 Content and Structure of the Thesis

This section outlines the role and order of each chapter in the thesis:

Chapter 1 introduces the research and discusses its rationale.

Chapter’s 2 & 3 are a literature review. They investigate the extant literature which discusses cool from sociological, cultural, psychological, consumer research and marketing standpoints. The major theoretical research perspectives and the consumer research literature which pertains to this study are also discussed in detail. To research cool, however, greater clarity of meaning is needed to resolve conflicts of representation (Wooten & Mourey, 2013). The literature review, therefore, disassembles meanings through exploration of the discourses relating to cool, so providing a greater clarity without seeking to essentialise the phenomenon. Chapter 2 concentrates on the historical narratives of the formation of cool and their sociological meanings. Chapter 3 expands how cool became commodified and therefore evolved for consumers with an enforced consumer society and the resultant consumer cultures that use it.

Chapter 4 presents the methods that the research thesis employs. The interpretivist paradigm and each method are justified and defended. It details each of the case-studies and the research activities undertaken within them.

Chapters 5 (Case-study A - Skateboarding), 6 (Case-study B - Surfing) and 7 (Case-Study C- Caravanning) are presented as three separate series of findings from the case-studies. They each explore and present, extant literature, documentary, literary and empirical sources that inform their practices. The empirical research provides
diverse and contrasting insights of consumer practitioners into the contemporary phenomenon of cool. Together they form themes which are presented in each of the chapters.

**Chapter 8** presents and discusses the overall findings of the research by connecting the literature review to the case-studies as units of analysis. It explains how the research expands the understanding of cool as a consumer and marketing concept. Discussing and conceptualising the major contributions of this study.

**Chapter 9** presents the conclusions of the research. It places the findings within CCT theoretical frameworks. The research limitations are also discussed and ideas for further research are proposed.

Each chapter addresses the research objectives stated in section (1.2).

- Chapter’s 2 & 3 address objective 1.
- Chapter 4 addresses objective 2.
- Chapters 5, 6, & 7, address objective 3.
- Chapter 8 addresses objective 4.
- Chapter 9 addresses objective 5.

**1.8 Conclusion**

This chapter lays the foundations for the thesis. It introduced the research problem and research questions. Then, the research was justified, the methodology was briefly described and rationalized. The structure of the thesis was outlined, and the limitations were given. On these foundations, it can proceed with a detailed description of the research.
Chapter 2 – Sociological Prologue on Cool

This chapter [together with chapter 3] explores cool from the literature, addressing objective ‘1) To review and synthesize the literature on cool in a general context, examining its roots, emergence, and proliferation, using the critical perspectives of social science, consumer psychology and consumer culture’. As introduced in Chapter 1, a lack of synthesis of literature and sociological-theory obstructs a sociologically-informed understanding of cool. Sequencing themes via their temporality, however, allows etymological and subjective developments to converge. Related sociological frameworks which help untangle how and why cool emerged, can therefore be introduced. From antiquity to early forms of European urbanity; to emerging forms of American identities; to the middle of the 20th Century. Where cool began taking on a more discernible role in American and European societies, gaining a major foothold in popular culture and identity formation.

2.1 Introduction

The most recent article published in the venerable Journal of Consumer Research to investigate cool is; “What makes things cool? How Autonomy Influences Perceived Coolness” by Caleb Warren & Margaret Campbell (2014). While Warren & Campbell strongly link cool with autonomy, they also seek to identify and organise important themes from the broader literature to help explain it. Cool, having also been researched from varied perspectives and fields within sociology (including psychology, cultural-studies, consumer research and management theory). Cool appearing to be; socially constructed and a perceptive attribute conferred by other participants, audiences, or bystanders (Belk, et al., 2010; Connor, 1995; Gurrieri, 2009; Leland, 2004). Subjective and socially dynamic, changing temporally and across individuals, populations and cultures (Danesi, 1994; MacAdams, 2001; O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000). Although difficult to define; easily identified by individuals, although nuances and opinions vary between subgroups, cultures and their particular social contexts (Belk, et al., 2010; Leland, 2004). Perceived as a positive and desirable valence or personal-quality (Bird & Tapp, 2008; Heath & Potter, 2004; Pountain & Robins, 2000), but more than a positive-quality coming with difficult to describe or define ‘emotional or cultural baggage’ (Warren & Campbell, 2014).

The eminent consumer researcher Russell W. Belk together with co-authors, Kelly Tian and Heli Paavola in “Consuming cool: Behind the unemotional mask” (2010) published within Research in Consumer Behaviour, thematically categorise prior studies in four ways; a) African-American studies and their cultural contributions to cool; b) the creation of commercial cool through objects and adverts; c) the sociological studies of fashion and d) studies that are socially assembled within certain consumption practices. Deriving from the literature that cool appears to relate to emotional control, style, knowingness and normally being the domain of outsiders.
A major study by Pountain & Robins (2000) characterises the aim of cool as being narcissistic, hedonistic and shielded by ironic detachment. Possibly a masculine trait signifying ambiguity, autonomy and power distance (Stok, et al., 2010) but exhibited through performativity or mastery (Belk, et al., 2010). Having a peculiar understated excitement and expressivity (Dinerstein, 2017; Rahman, 2013; Wooton & Mourey, 2013). An ideal attitude or state of comportment that was proliferated by popular culture, cultural media and various cultural-icons throughout the 20th Century (Dinerstein, 2017). Part of cool’s allure seemed the freedoms inherent in consumerist societies (McGuigan, 2016) and an attendant desire to associate with powerful and desirable American styles (Stearns, 1994). Other studies, however, also frame cool as an autonomous aesthetic response (Haselstein, 2013; Moore, 2004). One which savvy organisations and advertisers can co-opt, diversifying cool and reinvigorating the concept towards their own, specific commercial aims (Frank, 1997; Taylor, 2009).

Most recent consumer research studies, while acknowledging the history, conceptualise cool as a key arbiter of status and linked to fashionable desirability. A trajectory of meaning recently substantiated by Rahman & Laud (2016) in ‘Why Consumers Seek ‘Coolness’? Evidence from the Arab World’. “Consumer-related research” towards cool, however, “remains in its infancy” (Rahman, 2017, p. 125). A lack of empirical research and theoretical guidance has led to some management research studies seeking to gather themes by reinterpreting the body of literature. For instance, Read, et al., (2011) list some possible qualities of cool as being authentic, anti-social and innovative. Cool most typically being achieved through being rebellious and autonomous from the mainstream via membership of subgroups, but also developable through expensive or retro-styles. Van den Bergh & Behrer (2011; 2016) think originality, popularity and appeal seem important. Mohiuddin, et al., (2016) include deviating from norms, self-expressiveness, maturity, subversiveness, pro-social, evasiveness and being attractive as ways of being cool (p.121). Gurrieri (2009) highlights value, sociality, progressiveness, unconventionality and a pervasive elusiveness. Rahman & Cherrier (2010) include stylishness, cultural knowledge, aesthetic sensibility, humour, uniqueness, materialism, status concern and brand consciousness.

While summations of cool are helpful, these vast, paradoxical layers of meaning can be bewildering. Viewed as a single text, they remain forbidding and offer no clear or concise theoretical model to provide helpful instruction. Creating an elusiveness which disrupts all other levels of analysis (Cowan, et al., 2013; Fitton, et al., 2012; Horton, et al., 2012; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). Few studies consider a variety of subjectivities, and how they relate to their specific peer-communities (Fitton, et al., 2012). As a result, the literature remains in a confused state and “what makes things cool”, continues to puzzle “academics and marketers alike” (Warren & Campbell, 2014, p. 557). An
uncertainty of meaning which impacts upon and forestalls empirical investigations (ibid). Wooten & Mourey (2013) therefore advised that any subsequent attempts to research cool must consider, identify and explore the “tensions that are reflected in” these “conflicting definitions of coolness” and “the forces that give rise” to them (p. 175).

Findings from previous research studies provide diverse, sometimes connectable and other-times paradoxical associations. I therefore thematically arrange them in [Figure 2.1]. All could theoretically affect subjective popularity or desirability in some contexts (although each could speculatively also be sources of ontological security or insecurity).

![Figure 2.1: Literature Review; Thematically Arranged (Major) Previous Findings](image)

The problem of understanding is further complicated by cool’s contemporary meanings being significantly influenced “by the darker history of the word” itself (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012, p. 175). The history of cool, however, can help inform the types of sociological theories which are able to enlighten new research. What we would now recognise as cool first appeared in the 1940’s American Jazz scenes as a new and distinctive slang-term (Dinerstein, 1998; Green 1998; Rahman, 2013; Southgate, 2003). An example of African-American signifiyin(g); meaning the practice of using tropes to disguise subversive meanings and supplant conventional ones (Gates, 1986). Cool symbolised personal freedom; an attitude of defiance towards social injustices, requiring the artistic, masterful, but understated expression of one’s subjectivity to
create a distinct identity (Connor, 1995; Majors & Billson, 1992; Dinerstein, 2017). To be cool meant making a statement by surmounting one’s environment and fears towards often inhospitable ghetto milieus (Connor, 1995). A form of self-mastery displaying an ability to suppress or conceal visible emotions such as anger, excitement or embarrassment while remaining passionate, hot-blooded and artistic (Dinerstein, 1998; 2013; 2017; Majors & Billson, 1992; Thompson, 1973; 2011). Masking a highly competitive but impenetrable state (Pountain & Robins, 2000), which obscured the self from the other’s subjectivity (Du Bois, 1989). The unreadability of cool placed the individual as the feared other in society, provoking complex emotions including mistrust, but also intrigue and feelings of inadequacy towards real intentions (Haselstein, 2013). Cool therefore symbolised a resistance against the oppressive mundanity of mainstream American sensibilities and the rigidity caused by conservative fear (Dinerstein, 2017). Through music and popular media, it became a more prevalent and desirable emotional style that somehow opposed the sentimentality of earlier era’s (Moore, 2004; Stearns, 1994). Particularly appealing to the beat-generation of hipsters whose collective reaction to a broadly felt existential crisis was to reject identification with the stale conformity, oppressiveness, inequality and prejudices of white-America or their parents (Mailer, 1957). It being a period when changes in society where amplifying individual’s need for a desirable and sustainable self-identity (Giddens 1991; Lasch, 1960).

While rapidly globalising contexts mean identity is perceived less rigidly, definable or polar as it was in 1940’s America (Mansfield, 2000), historical narratives continue to significantly affect contemporary contexts, where “ascribed characteristics like race or ethnicity have the potential to shape perceptions and constrain performances of coolness” (Wooten & Mourey, 2013, p. 175). There therefore remains a need to understand how, where and why cool came to synthesise important cultural meanings, influencing social-identity and self-fashioning (McGuigan, 2016). Using the history of cool to inform the present, however, is a precarious approach, as while its history is important, there is a sense that “research and theorizing on cool” too often has “focused on the origins rather than the destinations” (Belk, et al., 2010, p. 185). Cool should not be confined to “a purely historical moment”, as it now applies well-beyond any “particular ethnic group or gender” (Southgate, 2003, pp. 181-182). For example, due to the now global importance of cool, similarities between Japanese virtues/customs and American cool have been investigated to seek insights (Giannoulis, 2013; Heise, 2013; Hijiya-Kirschner, 2013). Indeed, one of the areas Belk, et al. (2010) researched, was how consumers in dislocated locations such as Finland, blended different versions of cool. Finding they often used Japanese cool as well as more obvious American influences. Contextualised, however, by their local tastes and values. Such forms of cultural synthesis can therefore help provide new insights and a “better understanding of how perceptions” change (Warren & Campbell, 2014, p. 558).
Researching a concept, or phenomenon, as culturally and etymologically complex as cool, however, requires solid theoretical guidance. CCT studies, encourage rhetorical analysis to understand how market phenomena are constructed and resisted (Fischer, 2001). Critical studies of historical narratives being useful in unmasking contemporary discourses (Tadajewski, 2010). Most fruitful in encounters between rich contexts “and solid theory” (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011, p. 397). Anthony Giddens (1991) considers in contemporary globalised societies, separations of time and space causes time to become an ‘empty dimension’ and space less privileged. History is therefore often used to make ‘new history’ or futures, although substantial historical material is needed to trace-out any individual themes (ibid). Welsh scholar Raymond Williams [1921-1988], queries how vocabulary and culture often interrelate, investigating the meanings of difficult words. Some terms abstractedly and peculiarly maintaining importance within culture, by standing for and capturing significant shifts in human perceptions (Durant, 2006; Moran, 2015; Williams, 1983). His works help describe how historical meanings can inform contemporary ones. Explaining how words create interactions in the senses, which undermine their comprehension in use. Causing sensory interactions in two ways; i) Synchronic meanings being where different “meanings coexist in a single historical moment and a particular instance of use” (Moran, 2015, p. 3). “This might occur when different senses arise and are meaningful at the same time within a sole use of a word, with both senses required in order to communicate the meaning” (pp. 3-4). ii) Diachronic meanings, however, are different historical instances of use (Williams, 1983). When using the word as a material expression of thought, the user is pulling together the imagery of historical meanings and the repetitive effects of uses by themselves and others, combined in a single context (Moran, 2015). It is this relationship between historical meanings and contemporary ones that causes obstructions to understanding (ibid). The nominal continuity of use masks changes, innovations, obsolescence’s, specialisations, extensions, overlaps and transfers of meaning, which in the short term are hardly perceptible. Over longer periods, however, they create marked or radical transformations (p. 32).

Analysing temporal changes therefore gives a means of disassembling the term (Durant, 2006; Moran 2015; Williams, 1983). This, however, is principally an analytical problem as in synchronic use they are inextricably related and linked (Williams, 1983, p. 8). One of the problems in gaining insights from synchronic and diachronic meanings is they operate as cultural discourses at multiple levels. Meaning at different units of analysis and as various forms of communication, including imagery (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). The tapestry of meanings also varies for both speakers and receivers due to discrepancies in their subjectivities and cultural backgrounds (Moran, 2015). Theories of discourse, however, guide a researcher to first understand how a phenomenon has formed and changed to reveal the pre-existing conventions. Current meanings being intrinsically tied to the social, cultural, political and economic
contexts that gave rise to them (Fairclough, 1995; Olsson & Heizmann, 2015; Parker, 2015; Williams, 1983).

Multiple sources also allow a broader understanding of the phenomenon by creating informative patterns (Besley, 2015; Fitchett & Caruana, 2015; Gee, 2005; Olsson & Heizmann, 2015; Thompson, 2004; Wetherell, 1998). A paradigm where individual cases and their contexts “exemplify the features” being discussed as “social, not individual, phenomenon” (Taylor, 2013, p. 49). It creates an intertextual relationship through diversity of material, where cultural uses and rhetoric in all their forms are explicitly recommended to be included, for a robust analysis of the phenomenon (Allen, 2011; Eisenhart & Johnstone, 2008). Entextualization and interdiscursivity therefore create systems of meanings where various texts inform and influence each other (Fairclough, 1992; Wood & Kroger, 2000). As discourses they give a theoretical framework for linking words, images and aesthetics, recognising that they are often conflicting and have varying degrees of influence towards similar and diverse identities (Olsson & Heizmann, 2015). They do, however, help to clarify power relations and provide important insights into various forms of subjectivity (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000).

Whereas bigger discourses can be overly deterministic and minimise the importance of individual agency, more autonomous ones can place too much estimation on the power of individual social-actors and overlook the sway of larger cultural forces (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011). Lower level discourses, however, remain important as they help reveal intricate social meanings for actors (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). Their combination allowing localised social-actions and cognitive forms of shared sense-making to be framed (ibid). For example, cool can be an autonomous individual judgement, but also has meanings that are culturally agreed to some extent (Haselstein, et al., 2013).

In order to disassemble cool in terms of its diachronic meanings, the Oxford English Dictionary is a vital source [as recommended by Williams (1983)]. The following sections are therefore interspersed with etymological studies. Demonstrating how cool’s meanings have become socially and culturally constructed. In attempting to synthesise the literature, a chronological-structure is helpful as it allows similar or related concepts to be introduced and connected. Explaining how new paradigms and changes in subjectivity interrelate. For example, how new realms such as urbanity, modernity and media have changed individual’s perspectives and their senses of self and identity.

This disassembling of cool, together with the main theories and themes covered, are summarised in Figure 2.2 below. It shows the chapter’s structure, but also how the etymological sections, the literature directly pertaining to cool and the fresh theoretical
lenses intertwine. Precursors of, or emerging forms of cool are, therefore, linked to temporal forms of subjectivity or instructive theoretical concepts, including: the sublime, anxiety, dread and identity politics.

Each is now explored in the following sections.
2.2 Precursors of Cool – (Foundations)

Cool has been equated with historical cultural concepts such as classical *stoicism*, West-African *itutu* and Italian *sprezzatura*. It is in etymological terms, however, an old English word, deriving from German or Dutch:

2.2.1 Etymology\(^1\) – Origins and Old English (pre-1100AD)

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2017) cool is based on Old High German *kuolī*, Middle High German *küele*, German *Kühle*; or Middle Dutch *coel*, *coele*, meaning moderately cold or peaceful (Dutch *koel*). It is pronounced slightly differently in the UK and USA (OED, 2017). Cool, in old English, however, was not always distinguishable from a cold temperature\(^{ET1}\). It was sometimes used figuratively to describe an individual’s cold, harsh\(^{ET2}\), violent, or controlled actions\(^{ET3}\).

2.2.2 Classical Stoics

A metaphoric form of coldness was a feature of the antiquitus European ideals of stoicism which stood for the qualities of strength and icy determination (Thompson, 1973). In Roman society, composure was particularly highly-valued both in military combat and the politics of the forum (Selden, 2013). A stoicism which was inherited from classical Greece, where the eradication of *páthe* (pain, fear, desire and pleasure) and an opposition to *páthos* were perceived as the centres of ethical virtue (Newmark, 2013). Avoiding páthos meant not allowing oneself to empathise with other’s misfortune or being aroused by heightened fear of the expectation of imminent painful or destructive events (Belfiore, 2014). To possess these ethical virtues, therefore, meant being free from pain, fear, self-destructive desires or pleasures (Newmark, 2013). Being overly stoic, however, could mean being dismissed as too dispassionate, hard, uncaring or tediously rational. Indicating a thoughtless or stifling fear of intimate emotional contact or pleasure (Haselstein, 2013; Newmark, 2013; Pountain & Robins, 2000). To be cool requires heroism, but rendered desirable through a visibly sublimated and deeply held intense passion and not its complete absence as *apathy* (Dinerstein, 2017; Newmark, 2013; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Selden, 2013). In traditional European literature, these types of attractive qualities were mostly mythologised as exclusively European virtues (Haselstein, 2013).

2.2.3 Nicomachean Ethics

Nick Southgate (2003) drew from *Nicomachean ethics* to conceptualise cool as a balancing of passions. Aristotle’s virtues of *courage, temperance, generosity, magnificence, greatness of soul, temper, friendliness, wit, justice and friendship* were

selectively and astutely needed to be managed towards temporal environments; “we must not lack courage, for this would make us cowards, nor have too much courage, which would make us foolhardy” (p. 168). ‘Playing it cool’ in the wrong context could therefore be self destructive. A dialectic where excessive or incontinent displays of sentimentality or negative emotions such as “parental wrath, patriotic fervour” and “moral outrage” would be the “very definition of uncool” (Pountain & Robins, 2000, pp. 119-120). There also being a need to avoid excesses which can be perceived negatively as flaws (Paulicelli, 2014). Southgate, however, acknowledged a fundamental problem in his omission of aesthetics. Thinking cool may somehow involve the beautiful or universal responses to pleasure and pain.

2.2.4 Etymology - Middle English (1100-1500)

In Middle English, cool modified somewhat, meaning a relatively cold temperature which contrasted with the discomforts of heat or cold (1430\textsuperscript{ed}). Cool could be agreeably refreshing or mildly pleasurable. As when describing a ‘cool [cole], refreshing breeze’ (1393\textsuperscript{ed}).

2.2.5 Itutu

African-American cultures have rightly been emphasised as playing a key role in the development of cool (Belk, et al., 2010; Connor, 1995; Majors & Bilson, 1992). We are reliant, however, on the work of Robert Farris Thompson [b. 1932] for their historical investigation. Thompson’s studies of West-African cultures, particularly the peoples of Nigeria and Benin, identified the Yoruban word \textit{itutu} as literally translating as cool. The origins of itutu dated back to the late 15\textsuperscript{th} Century (Rahman, 2013). In the \textit{Aesthetic of the Cool} (1973), Thompson described it as a metaphor for moral and cultural aesthetic accomplishment. While its features reflect the control, stoicism and equilibrium of Nicomachean virtues, it evokes a more vivid sense of vibrancy and spirituality. The emotional state of the mind and body are not separated and are more formed and commanding; “ideally strong within their poise suggesting” a “depth of dignity and insight” (p. 42). Where “the blending of muscular force and respectability leads to the appreciation of the fit human body in the cool, a right earned” (p. 42). Signifying a grace under pressure as a mask of the mind itself (Thompson, 1973).

“Mastery of self enables a person to transcend time and elude preoccupation” (p. 41). “Surly detached expressions and somnambulistic movement and attitude” during difficult performances are considered highly attractive and a sign of high purity and are

\footnote{“The only virtue that would have to be added to round out a modern notion of cool would be one of aesthetic response. One of cool’s concerns is the elegant expression of good actions, which demands an aesthetic sense. Equally, being able to discern the beautiful is also an important part of being cool (particularly given the large number of artists we regard as cool)”} 

(Southgate, 2003, p. 19)
ancestral in nature (p. 41). Representing a freshness and “immaculate concentration of” the “mind” (p. 41). Itutu was a way of conserving energy and signifying this attribute:

“An ability to be nonchalent at the right moment ... to reveal no emotion in situations where excitement and sentimentality are acceptable—in other words, to act as though one’s mind were in another world. It is particularly admirable to do difficult tasks with an air of ease and silent disdain”

(Thompson, 1973 p. 41)

This effect is cogently rendered in art by serene and expressionless Kamajor hunting masks and Yoruban figures, which depict this state of transcendence (Majors & Billson, 1992; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Thompson, 2011). Their states symbolic of the complimentary nature of heat and coolness, represented by calm flowing water and the vividness and colourful contrasts of the orange sun and green medicine herbs (Thompson, 1973).

Itutu therefore ritualistically recognised the importance of artistic mastery of passions and community rather than an unsophisticated dulling of fear or stoicism (Majors & Billson, 1992; Thompson, 1973; 2011). Important as all individuals relied on the respect, group pleasures and social-stability of their community for both status and survival (Thompson, 1973). Itutu was not only for times of stress but celebrated by intense community pleasure. “Wild upsurges of” “vitality are tempered by metaphoric calm, such is the elegance of this symbolically phrased reconciliation”. “Humor and ecstasy are not necessarily denied. Nor is physical beauty itself”. “A force which brings persons together via saturated expressions of sexual attractiveness and deliberately attractive behavior and charm” (p. 42).

Itutu was a communal movement where individuality was encouraged but only if personal styles added interest or value to the group aesthetic (Dinerstein, 1998; 2013; Thompson, 1973). A state of equilibrium which when thrown out of balance by individual-transgressions must be resolved, or healed, to restore the group’s cool (Thompson, 1973). Restored by “means of ecstatic unions of sensuous pleasure and moral responsibility” (p. 42). This form of social enrichment would extend across the Atlantic to Haiti, Cuba, the Caribbean islands and the American diaspora by the privations of enforced slavery. Becoming creolized through new experiences and subsequent exchanges with European cultural histories (Gilroy, 1993).

2.2.6 Sprezzatura

The Italian renaissance concept of Sprezzatura, as a form of nonchalance or grace, is considered as having similarities to cool; reflecting socially-motivated philosophies towards the self and methods of deportment (Pountain & Robins, 2000). Its principles being popularised throughout Europe by Baldassare Castiglione’s [1478-1529] widely
read³ ‘The Book of the Courtier’ (1516). Castiglione offered the insight that moral refinement was the great unspoken contribution of women to society, where respect for them provides men with the greatest freedoms but also their greatest restraint (Roeder, 1933/2011). Observation and intrigue could socially isolate or destroy an individual, requiring a way of behaving as if constantly under surveillance (Kennedy, 2001).

“In these matters, most men judge more by their eyes than by their hands. For everyone is capable of seeing (you), but few can touch you. Everyone can see what you appear to be, whereas few have direct experience of who you actually are.”

(Machiavelli, Il principe, XVIII; cited in Paulicelli, 2014, p. 51)

This distance meant that superiority of the individual could be mastered through projection. Presenting mastery as naturalness as a “gift of nature and the heavens” (Paulicelli, 2014, p. 55), where grace implies transcendence, blood-line, deity or inherited superiority (Kennedy, 2001). Putting “in place a vivid image of a constructed naturalness extended to all parts of the individual” through “accurate and long” exercises “of dissimulation” (Paulicelli, 2014, p. 55). “A velvet glove that exhibits the contours of the handiness it conceals” (Berger, 2000). Its widespread knowledge meant anyone could gain status which aroused a culture of suspicion (Kennedy, 2001). Revelation as a forgery was caused by visible affectation construed as faults and the result of excess:

“Avoid affectation in every way possible as though it were some very rough or dangerous reef; and” “conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it”

(Castiglione, Book I, XXVI, 32; cited in Paulicelli, 2014, p. 55)

A form of self-moulding, where artifice is concealed by the signifying strength remaining unexhausted, and an absence of self-irony through awkwardness signalling self-control (Paulicelli, 2014). This meant looking natural in the most “trying of situations, without ever sacrificing style and distinction in dress and demeanour” (p. 54). A diligence is therefore required to show the illusion of nonchalant mastery in whichever field of expression the individual undertakes, beit athletics, dancing, music or conversation (Berger, 2002). “A style that lies somewhere between informality and elegance” (p. 54) and “a sense of grace that is devoid” of “all excess” (p. 55). Subjects must represent their ‘self’ to others while also monitoring themselves reflexively (Berger, 2000). Dangerous as the individual creates a self-fulfilling subjectivity based around theirs and other’s suspicion (Berger, 2002). Maintaining this façade risks the individual losing themselves within it, where the subject guards their true feelings, desires, thoughts and intents through defensive irony (ibid).

³ Italian cultural virtues became models of behaviour, subsequently influencing the styles of French and English aristocrats, and the romantic reserve of romance poets (Dinerstein, 2017; Leland, 2004; MacAdams, 2001).
Sprezzatura naturally becomes embodied in the technology of clothes by playing a crucial role in identity (Paulicelli, 2014). It has “links to exteriority and social space” while also being experienced interiorly through “the sense of touching and feeling”. Clothing therefore materializes sprezzatura, whereas fashion would eventually institutionalize it (p. 59).

2.2.7 Etymology – Early Modern English (16th-18th Centuries)

In this period, English began to take on loanwords from the Romance languages (Crystal, 1995). Cool’s meanings also became more figurative in relation to emotions and their control. The blood was the source of human passions so cooling the blood meant a control, regulation or mastery of them (1500; 1606). Fear, however, was still perceived as obstructive or disabling to the mind (1600; 1663). Cooling negative emotions such as the heat of anger, however, also afforded more pleasurable experiences and the delights of patience (1597) and grace (1623). Cool could characterise a disdainful form of visible moral authority without the need for impulsive force (1788). A superiority of poise and grace which shocked through its impudence, by being assured and unabashed where diffidence and hesitation had been anticipated (1787).

2.3 Development of the Self - (New Urban Paradigms)

The advent of increasing industrialisation and urbanisation of Europe transformed societies from the court to the street. New street-scapes, bars, night-clubs and retail-spaces emerged. In London dandies became proto-explorers of fashion, while in Paris, Bohemians and flaneur's perfected the artistry of city-life:

2.3.1 Dandies

In the English Regency period, dandies were viewed as pioneers of urban consumerism and self-fashioning (Cicolini, 2005; Vainshtein, 2009). The dandy was most famously personified and celebritised by George Byan Brummel (1778–1840), a middle-class British military officer who held court in London’s exclusive White’s club (George, 2004; Kawamura, 2016; Vainshtein, 2009). Brummel was famous for not doing very much (George, 2004), but personified new social urban mobility where good-taste was privileged above birth-right and wealth (Vainshtein, 2010). “A male fashion icon” “having a distinguished bearing, dignity of manner, cool self-possession, and a pleasing

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4 European men of wealth had traditionally worn extravagant clothes, even high heels, but in the late 18th century started dressing down with less flamboyance, abandoning decorations (Flügel, 1930). The Industrial Revolution had caused extravagant clothes to appear irrelevant and effeminate, neither functional nor associated newer forms of social status (Flügel 1930; Kawamura, 2016). Wealth was now vicariously presented through female elegance and was a feminine duty (Kawamura, 2016; Simmel, ([1905]; 1997); Veblen, 1899). By using simplified silhouettes in the form of male suits they no longer wished to be considered beautiful (Flügel, 1930; Kawamura, 2016).
voice. He had good humor, wit, and a tongue that was often caustic” (Parker in Brummel [1932] 1972: x; cited in Kawamura, 2016, p. 86). “The first to invent a very important and modern principle of vestimentary behaviour, the principle of ‘conspicuous inconspicuousness’” (Vainshtein, 2009, p. 92). Meaning the importance of dressing austerely but unobtrusively elegant to avoid “attracting undesirable attention” (p. 92).

On urban streets, class distinctions became more blurred (Vainshtein, 2009). Dandies therefore explored the possibilities of urban modernity and its emerging paradigms and systems of visual relations (ibid). Being inconspicuously conspicuous was a quality for self-survival, but also allowed the possibility of being noticed. A form of narcissism that was pleasurable; “one of the dandy characters confesses, for instance, that he comes to the Hyde Park to see the ladies, but even more ‘to show myself, to be admired’” (p. 86). “Full of lightning-quick glances” between “the observer and the observed”. A “completely unique visual tension, in which two impulses successfully interacted, voyeurism and exhibitionism”. “Myself seen from without, such as another would see me” (p. 86). Dandies attention to appearance placed them in stark contrast to ordinary men, endangering themselves while also risking being viewed as obsessive figures (Carter, 2003).

At the White’s club, Brummel would often sit visible from the street through a large bay window (Vainshtein, 2009). Passers-by desired to be positively critiqued by him, but even his merciless criticism could provide a moment of prestigious participation (ibid). His “glance itself turned into the refined instrument of dandiacal power, his transparent ‘sceptre’” (p. 88). For those “who approached him, the power of his gaze meant that their “weak point was immediately hit” (Moers, 1960, p. 37). His expression cloaked the sincerity of his words (Vainshtein, 2009). A calm but wondering gaze which could encircle and cut the individual, while preventing them from accosting you (p. 90). Dandies like Brummel were more adept at utilising social and economic resources and principles, that were also available to rest of the male populous (Carter 2003; Kawamura, 2016; Veblen 1899).

Thorstein Veblen [1857-1929] in ‘The Theory of Leisure Class’ (1899), would come to frame such forms of conspicuous consumption as predominately serving social functions. Clothes, adornments and lifestyles were signs of surplus where the contextual reasons for their excess revealed their social significance (Kawamura, 2005; Veblen, 1899). Fashion served a purpose not only in its expense but as an “insignia of leisure” (Veblen [1899]; 1957, p. 171). Aesthetically modelled to convince others of the social merits of sharing relationships with them (Kawamura, 2016; McNeil 2009). It clearly demonstrated dandy’s freedom for leisure time and their resourcefulness to consume it pleasurably.
2.3.2 City of Mirrors

Walter Benjamin [1892-1940] considers Paris, as the burgeoning metropolis of the 19th-Century, would develop into the world's cultural capital. Becoming intrigued by how its changing city-scapes and the fetishization of consumerism had impacted modern subjectivity and altered human perceptions (Hanssen, 2006). The fleeting qualities of urban environments had been depicted in the poetry of Charles Baudelaire [1821-1867]. Baudelaire was both a Bohemian and a Dandy where the urban was his subject matter (Benjamin, 1969). Rejecting the supremacy and romanticism of nature in favour of a new urban sensibility, bringing the city’s details to life by portraying its vice and decadence (Haine, 2000). Adopting a position in opposition to the romantic’s notion of the fundamental goodness of man (Haine, 2000). His poem ‘Fleurs du mal’ cladded the city in a cold and sinister beauty (Richardson, 1994).

For the two decades following 1822, many Parisian street passages became marbled-floored, iron-framed and glass-covered shopping-arcades (Benjamin, 1969). Benjamin’s later voluminous studies of them, chronicled their rise and decline (Hanssen, 2006). Paris became a ‘city of mirrors’ providing constant reminders of the self, but also through the critiques of the multitudes through the glances of passers-by:

*Benjamin: “Women see themselves here more than elsewhere, thus arises the specific beauty of Parisian women. Before a man looks at them they have already seen themselves reflected ten times. But the man too sees himself flashing up physiognomically ... Even the eyes of passers by are hanging mirrors”*

(Buck-Morss, 2006, pp. 56-57)

The blank eyes which do not return their glance become addictive, causing a sensation of submission or male impotence (Buck-Morss, 1991). As protection, “the dandy should aspire to be sublime, continually. He should live and sleep in front of the mirror” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 429). The ability to share emotions was the opposite of this narcissistic self-absorption, but urban milieus intensified the need for this form of identity construction (Buck-Morss, 2006). A necessary defiance towards the city causing a petrified state of unrest and constant disquiet (1991). The multitude of choices presented (Benjamin, 1999) caused a sense of insecurity, where Baudelaire used his own newness or novelty as his chosen defence against this form of capitalism (Buck-Morss, 2006). It being neither interpretable nor comparable (ibid). Ironically, this would later become a main attraction and feature of commercialised fashion (ibid).

Benjamin’s (2008) insights predicted that human sensory perception acted beyond natural drives, adapting to social changes, while also partly formed from historical perspectives. In urban environments, the new, however, would constantly unite itself with the classless society as their greater multitudes and collective unconscious had vaster share in them (Benjamin, 1999). Utopian images of the new would always accompanied by imaginings of primal history, updating the old and imbuing the new
with claims to eternity, through the mythic nature of the past (ibid). They representing wish images where the new and the old interpenetrated and entertained images of their successors (ibid). For Benjamin, new technologies therefore provided “momentary anticipations of” a “utopia”, where en-vogue mythic elements of the past could help them lay claim to eternity (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 159). Past narratives that were no longer fashionable resulted in the “mortification of” their “matter”, disintegrating their aura and them as wish images (p. 159). This death of a previous epoch usually being brought through farce (p. 257). Hegel argued such ideals or epoch’s could, however, also be preserved and annulled by synthesising two contradictory positions as a higher unity (McDonald, 2017).

2.3.3 Flâneurie

Metropolises provide constant distractive stimulae which are not well assimilated through consciousness, but can intoxicate and create a sense of loneliness, alienation and existential isolation (Buck-Morss, 2006). Introducing shock consistently through vehicles and sharp, spontaneous noises that threaten a person’s aura (Benjamin, 1999). Benjamin perceived an exteriority of authentic boredom as the externality of unconscious dreaming, which should ideally be held in these intoxicated states of walking the streets (Hanssen, 2006). A state of full possession of individuality (Benjamin, 1999) comparable to the dandies use of disregard as a veil to evoke their superiority and disinterest (Hanssen, 2006, p. 4). The challenge for the city dweller was, therefore, to take these contests in their stride by creating an identity that rose above environmental threats (Benjamin, 1999). The urban act of milling, watching and strolling (flâneurie) therefore became a basic requirement of a consummate city-dweller, to be at home in the crowd (ibid). Their familiarity with the city and use of space producing them as a noticeable individual; a “distinct actor on the urban stage” (Wilson, 2003, p. 3). A socially intricate form of performance, involving crucial minutiae of gestures that form perceptions of personality (Benjamin, 2002). The act of flâneurie places an individual by providing a reading of their persona, while the presence of the crowd partly veils them through anonymity (ibid). It creates a person, a memorable one, who stands out from the crowd, accepting however only ‘the heroic style, the sublime” in being a subject “known to everyone” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 108). In stark contrast to the flâneur, the greenhorn to the city loses their individuality by being openly naïve to the surrounding spectacle (ibid).

“The rubberneck disappears, absorbed by the external world,… which moves him to the point of intoxication and ecstasy. Under the influence of the spectacle, the rubberneck becomes an impersonal being. He is no longer a man, he is the public; he is the crowd”. “At a distance from nature, his naïve soul aglow, ever inclined to reverie....”

(Benjamin, 1999, p. 429)
“Everything that towers or plunges, above or below him”, “causes him prudently to take to his heels. The sublime always affects him like a riot” (p. 301). To fail to present a self-image that creates difference from the crowd endangers the individual. “Shame results from the failure to successfully project a positive self-image acknowledged by one’s group, and is bound to the threat of social death” (Haselstein, 2013, p. 73). Ulla Haselstein (2013) uses Edgar Allen Poe’s (1840) poem, ‘The Man of the Crowd’, to illustrate how a look of disinterest is affective, making the person mysterious and unreadable. Such characters are disturbing as they cause observers to interpret their ability to mask feelings as a sign of “evil designs”, jarring them from their complacency (p. 64). Signalling a dissolution of the social order and a fear of the unreadable man, as the embodiment of societies menacing other (p 64). “Aesthetic detachment and rationality give way to anxiety and unconscious aggression” creating “a chain of metaphoric substitutions” for the meaning of the term “cool” (p. 64):

“The startling effect of being unable to place a man, unable to read his life history through face and clothes, he attempts to form some analysis of the meaning conveyed by an act of introspection, but is promptly overcome by ideas of vast mental power, of caution, of penuriousness, of avarice, of coolness, of malice, of bloodthirstiness, of triumph, of merriment, of excessive terror, of intense, of extreme despair”

(Haselstein, 2013, p. 64)

2.3.4 Urban Bohemia

The style and flamboyance of European bohemians influenced fashion and therefore cool (Haselstein, et al., 2013; Pountain & Robins, 2000). Bohemians were romanticised and popularised by author Henry Murger [1822-1861] in ‘Scènes de la vie de bohème’ [1847-49]. Based on his own experiences as a poor struggling artist in Paris’ cosmopolitan Latin quarter (Merger, 2013; Wilson, 2003). Bohemians were an intriguing phenomenon of the early 19th-Century symbolising inventiveness and urban pleasure seeking (Merger, 2013; Wilson, 2003). The city beckoned as phantasmagoria, bringing nightlife which the bohemian flâneur sought to live to the fullest (Benjamin, 1999). Energetically boisterous and light-hearted but considered lazy and unconcerned with tomorrow (ibid).

Bohemians were complex figures reliant on contrarian values and their dialectics to create distinction (Wilson, 2003). They had a thirst for change, criticising the status-quo by splitting apart from mainstream society (p. 3). Marking their individuality while participating in a social milieu created against the dominant culture”. “A startling transformation from paid ideologue to violent critic of society” (pp. 2-3). Their lifestyles were glamorous but outlaw-ish. Audacious vagabonds who would coolly trick those more affluent to survive (Murger, 2013, p. 190; Wilson, 2003). Their spirit and bittersweet humour charmed as did themes of love, personal sacrifice and selling-out (Haselstein, et al., 2013; Merger, 2013; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Wilson, 2003).
Murger’s stories were marked by the sense of tragedy, angst, and sorrow of self-destructive characters who often died in poverty unrecognised for their creative genius (Murger, 2013; Wilson, 2003). It is a mystery why such youthful poverty and personal angst is viewed so romantically (Nicholson, 2003). Artists such as Dylan Thomas [1914-1953], however, have perceived it as a vital ingredient of their artistic creativity (ibid). Walter Benjamin also felt that Charles Baudelaire’s poetic genius was nourished from his melancholy (1969). Edmund Burke [1730-1797] explained there being a personal delight in this form of tragic theatre (1757). A stimulation of feelings of the tragedy and the sublime represented through the individual’s adventurous, moral or noble spirit (Doran, 2015). A “muted despair” that registers “style” and “personal suffering for its audiences”, without which there would be a “flat effect” of “coldness” or “lack of consciousness” (Dinerstein, 2017). In descent towards tragedy, even death, however, the individual must show no fear; for if we succumb its effects creates a beautifully tragic heroism (Benjamin, 1970). A lasting image that transcends and conserves the individual’s aura (2008). A phenomena exampled much later in the 20th-Century, through the shortened lives of Jimi Hendrix, James Dean and Jim Morrison (Pountain & Robins, 2000).

Benjamin conceptualises aura as the unique or incomparable apparition of a natural object formed from distance however close that object might be (Benjamin, 1970; Björkman, 2002; Shaviro, 2005). An aura tending to cluster around an object of our perception, augmented by involuntary memory of its practices and past narratives (Benjamin, 1970). A magical or supernatural force having exclusive value in time and space by laying claim to authenticity through its uniqueness (2008). Experience of aura is therefore an emotionally-charged experience of anxiety or joy, relating to a longing desire to add attractive values to something (Björkman, 2002). A subjective power of desire having a dignity which resists devouring, but indicating the wildest-interest (Adorno, 2013).

When aura is linked to individuals or cultures, it creates a uniquely artistic personal identity, and becomes a socially productive achievement as a product of individual agency (Adorno, 2013; Björkman, 2002; Shaviro, 2005). Requiring the exhibition of freedom and an intuitive separation of cause and effect (Hendrix, 2005). An emotional tone where the whole is determined by the parts, but the parts are also determined by the whole (Ottaviani, 2013: p. 54). Presented as layers of meaning that are deeply personal and critique-able (Adorno, 2013). It, however, confirms a pride and ‘amour-propre’ (Berger, et al., 1972) and an intuitive acceptance of aesthetics being resident within everyday life (Featherstone, 1991). A person’s aura was also something which intrigued Andy Warhol [1928-1987]. Feeling it was something which could only be seen by others and not oneself. “I think ‘aura’ is something that only somebody else can see, and they only see as much of it as they want to. . . You can only see an aura
on people you don’t know very well or don’t know at all.” (Shaviro, 2005). Getting to know someone too well, risks destroying their aura through disintegration (Buck-Morss, 1991). Withering their capacity for a better-nature and therefore central to the battle for potency (Benjamin, 2006). Endangered and depreciated by copying, causing a loss of authority and autonomy (ibid). A particular quality of mass societies, which attempt to detach uniqueness from a personal or localised tradition (ibid).

2.3.5 Etymology – British Colonial Expansion (18th & 19th Century)

British colonialism in the 18th Century expanded the global reach of the English language (Mugglestone, 2017). The American Revolution, however, created a rift between the two most populous groups of first language users in Britain and the USA (ibid). Meanings started to reflect this division, by expanding and becoming more diverse. In addition to prior meanings, cool could represent a distancing of others to avoid being drawn into their undesirability (1855[ET14]). It meant a cool criticism (1883[ET15]), a wickedness or someone craftily acerbic; ‘a right cool fish’ (1825[ET16]). A resistance to being dominated by others or overcome by their foolish rush to action (1890[ET17]).

2.3.6 Aesthetics – The Sublime

Understanding the sublime, is a difficult treatise; as although the word is now used for the most ordinary of reasons, it points to a higher aesthetic meaning which philosophers and artists have long pursued (Llewellyn & Riding, 2013). The first mention of the sublime was by Longinus (AD 1st Century) who applied it to great rhetoric which had an extra-ordinary quality (Roberts, 1899). An elevated style, having the essence of simplicity while creating wonder and ecstasy for its audience, rising above them with unshakeable power (Doran, 2015; Roberts, 1899). Indicating a presence of noble passion, while also creating a sense of dismay in the spectator (Roberts, 1899).

The sublime remained untouched until the Eighteenth century when British adventurers experienced the grandeur of alien nature. Aristocrats John Dennis [1658-1734], Anthony Ashley-Cooper [1671-1713] and Joseph Addison [1672-1719] being inspired by the horrors and harmony of crossing the irregular peaks and precipices of the Alps for the first time (Shaw, 2006). Their visions provoked an agreeable kind of horror, eliciting higher emotions which both attracted and repelled (Doran, 2015). A contrast of qualities, at once pleasurable to the eye as music is to the ear but intermingled with astonishment and occasional despair (Nicolson, 1974). A pleasure in feelings of safety, knowing that the dangers were too distant to harm, or were now in the past (Addison, 1854; 1965; Anthony Ashley-Cooper, cited in; Shaw, 2006, p. 37).

Edmund Burke, in ‘A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful’ (1757), further developed the sublime in relation to nature, but also explored its physiological effects. The sublime interrupted the senses due to the need
to notice danger and therefore bordered on terror, being the most powerful passion and necessarily superior to beauty, as it was linked to survival and self-preservation (ibid). The sublime sensation could be moved by the expectation of potential pain, temporally represented as a “threat of violence, mitigated by the effects of distance”; or the knowledge or perception that its imagined presence was now a fiction (Burke, 1757; cited in Shaw, 2006, p. 6). The critical pleasure to the emotion being a duality of fear and attraction, a negative of pain which invoked relief, delight or joy (Burke, 1757; Koepnick, 1999). Burke describing how the imagination could be moved to fear and awe by fading the sight of an object, making it dark, uncertain and confused (1757).

Immanuel Kant [1724-1804] in ‘The Critique of Judgement’ (1790) describes the sublime as not a property of objects but resided solely in the subject’s mind. Culturally mediated as knowledge of objects is required for understanding fear, where a crisis in the faculties is caused by formlessness, infinitude and un-representable qualities of paradoxical natures (ibid). Sublime feelings were therefore subjective but Kant timidly limited his theories to experiences of nature (Adorno, 2013). G.W.F Hegel [1770-1831] in his ‘Lectures on Fine Art’ (1975), saw intricate patterns, or juxtapositions of cultural-difference as inducing the sublime, capable of generating awe, astonishment and fascination. Arthur Schopenhauer [1788-1860] treated the object’s capacity for power, threat or domination over the subject as creating a scale of feelings. Weakest in proximity to benign objects of beauty, but stronger for those that are hostile, likely to harm and in extreme cases capable of destroying the individual (Schopenhauer 1966; Kover, 1998). Rudolph Otto [1869-1937] linked the sublime to a numinous tendency, invoking fear, trembling, or shrinking in the observer, which through fascinans; attracts, entralls, and compels (Gooch, 2000).

This notion of a sweet-spot of distanced pleasure when observing menacing objects (or others), simultaneously creating awe, fascination or astonishment, resonates in obscure terms with cool. Despite this, no studies have as yet appeared to directly connect them. This is perhaps partly due to there being a problem in linking antiquated descriptions of the sublime with contemporary forms of subjectivity. As we have learned, even Walter Benjamin in ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ (1935/2008) viewed the advent of urbanism and new technologies having altered aesthetic perceptions. The sublime had transformed from a fear of god or nature, to a supplanted sensation of being exposed to the frequent shocks of the city. New and powerful forms of media such as film and photography blended with them, compelling a balance of empirical reality and the fantasy of immersive, imaginative experiences (2008). Benjamin’s use of image epistemologies rather than traditional sensation-based aesthetics, explained how feelings and images were dialectics constantly locked in a negotiation of their past narratives and futures, but captured fleetingly in the present (ibid).
Postmodern views of the sublime have also focussed towards modifications in subjectivity. Jean-François Lyotard [1924-1928] viewed the postmodern sublime as represented by forms of difference which when juxtaposed cause shock (Silverman, 2016). He viewed ‘the other’ in society as no longer predominately nature, eclipsed by technology, capitalism and globalisation (Jameson, 1991). The significance of the sublime in postmodernity was its representation as an impassable doubt expressed at the edge of our conceptual powers, within the instability and multiplicity that society began to represent (Lytard, 1994). Slavoj Žižek’s [b. 1949] ‘The Sublime Object of Ideology’ (1989) provided a negativistic model of this edge, where the sublime object embodied a radical negativity or antagonism to the subject’s existence. An objectification of a certain lacking in the subject where they face the signifying impossibility of their own self-representation. A means of mediating and transferring subjectivity (Perlow, 2004). These limit-situations also represented by what can be acceptably rationalised as thoughts or words in terms of a subject’s self-realization (Tsang, 1998).

2.3.7 Dread

Theories of the sublime are limited as they are often associated with the objectification of fear or out-moded concepts of subjectivity. Søren Kierkegaard [1813-1855] seperated-out the sublime as a simple experience of transcendence (Milbank, 1996). A more complex problem of subjectivity seemed understanding why individuals appeared attracted to, or fascinated by things they fear, or fear things they lack; beyond their own limits of the self. A form of dizziness, which appeared in a moment of suspension.

“The sublime sensation arises before an abyss, a gulf, an ultimate edge, an interval without apparent end; before this suspension we must remain, temporarily, ‘in suspense’, and so (ontologically) ‘anxious’.”

(Milbank, 1996, p. 320)

This anxiety, angst or dread is an unfocused fear caused by the freedom of the subject to approach or react to the most terrifying possibilities that the object offers (Kierkegaard, 1944). Anxiety is viewed as an alien power which the individual cannot and does not want to break free from; for what one fears, one desires (ibid). These anxieties are not necessarily negative occurrences as they are representative of the free choice of individuals who must choose who they are and who they will become (ibid). For Kierkegaard, dread related to a situation or coincidence of opposites where sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy are aroused meaning they could either attract or repel. Hope and fear as a conjunction whereby hope represents their salvation and fear the condemnation of the individual (ibid). The inherent fear of being alone in the world, forgotten and overlooked is a condition the person must constantly traverse (ibid). It is this doubt which startles and frightens subjects destroying their joy and security; creating a sorrow or a combination of emotion and cognitive turmoil as
angst (Kierkegaard, 2013). Creating a noumenal tendency or fascination based upon the “the shudder of the idea” (p. 9).

This sensation of anxiety can result in a condemnation of the self, which can be a focus for change. The individual must consider what they fear and desire, which is usually freedom, possibility, the future and their own constant re-creation (Bellinger, 1992). For Kierkegaard, anxiety is therefore caused by the simultaneous fear and desire of our transformation and the possibilities of our human relations. This is a difficult task to perform well, however, as most individuals are subjective towards themselves (Kierkegaard, 2013a). The higher aim therefore is to be objective towards oneself and subjective towards all others (ibid). This is a form of subjectivity that requires a commitment to reorientation of the self, as trust or taking risks is a leap of faith, avoiding of the comfort of eschewing change (Bellinger, 1992). A leap of faith that is deeply individual and requiring total commitment without any guarantee of success (ibid). Kierkegaard, advised that the moral and spiritual are a primary life task where the individual must also question the sources of their own hereditary sin (Mooney, 1991). In this way, anxiety can be viewed as a teacher or a surgeon where creation is in the present and anxiety allows us to understand our true self. The ideal being the reconciliation of the sublime and the harmony of the beautiful (Milbank, 1996, p. 320). A pleasing anxiety of a non-violated subject:

“The constitutive distance of subjectivity, its arising as a vista upon the sublime, may indeed be the terrible, may be suspended violence, yet may also be the distance of erotic mystery and promise. This faith that infinite distance will not destroy ‘continuity’, meaning the intense and harmonious realization of human desires, but prove to be the ground of possibility for such a non-formalizable and indefinite continuation, reconciles, beyond Burke and Kant, the sublime with the beautiful”.

(Milbank, 1996, p. 310)

Kierkegaard, therefore explains how anxiety is dealt with differently between individuals based upon their subjectivity and felt identity. A possibility to feel hope, fear or lust, or to be exalted by things that seem dangerous (de Mul, 2011). A harmonisation of experience that can lead to the desire and hope for a better life, by bringing form from chaos (ibid). This can be self-deceiving, however, if individuals making changes are simply refashioning their self-love or selfish love; uniting a selfish love of a new self, or through plurality a combined self (Kierkegaard, 2013a).

2.4 Identity-politics and New Media – (American Succession)

The growing importance of American society, cities and manufacturing/cultural industries in the late 1900’s and early 20th-Century propelled America’s importance and influence internationally, while continuing to draw-in from other cultural influences. The horrors of America’s deeply-divided past, however, had alienated and
divided populaces. Their economic inequalities causing immense fractures, which disturbed each’s subjectivity and sense of identity:

2.4.1 Subjectivity and Identity Formation

Subjectivity means “a particular someone, at a particular time and place in history” (Fensham, 2000, p. vi). Incorporating their “political, or personal” issues, “ideas” “and experience” (p. vi). The sense of ‘I’ or ‘myself’ is important, as a “focus on the self” and the “meeting-point between the most formal and highly abstract concepts and the most immediate and intense emotions” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 1). It is the “centre both of lived experience and of discernible meaning” and has become a defining issue “of modern and postmodern cultures” (p. 1). Subjectivity, therefore gives insights into an individual’s personal consciousness. In European philosophy, the concept of the subjective started when Descartes [1596–1650] interpreted rational-thinking as the proof of the existence of a subject (1970). Rousseau [1712–1778] perceived an individual’s consciousness becoming corrupted and weakened by life’s experiences (1953). Kant considered the primary relationship with the world to be the conscious mind, a subject’s perception prompting sense making through their reasoning, judgement, morals, and ethics (1914; 2011). The irrational mind, however, stayed largely unexplored until Sigmund Freud [1865–1939] developed the field of psychoanalysis in the early twentieth century5 (2005). Freud (2005) considered the subconscious mind acted invisibly to rational consciousness, being a stronger force due to its primeval instincts. A pre-consciousness that drove, fascinated and consumed rationality and when threatened repressed it (Freud, 2005; Mansfield, 2000). Jacques Lacan [1901-1981] departed from Freudian views by seeing the subject as more constructed through language (Mansfield, 2000). Lacan and Freud may have disagreed towards the origin and processes of identity formation, but both agreed it was a focus of power and inequality and strongly linked to a fear of incompletion or loss (Mansfield, 2000, p. 48).

Martin Heidegger [1889–1976] believed the ‘being’ of existence meant all concerns must emanate from and be deeply connected to all other subjects and cultures (1996). Michel Foucault [1926-1984] (1983), Nikolas Rose [b.1947] (1996) and Judith Butler [b.1956] (1990) established how processes of subjectivisation created socially constructed identities, linking with Heidegger’s views of individuals as connected to others through social discourses and culture. Rejecting any idea “of the subject as a completely self-contained being that develops in the world as an expression of its own

5 Subjectivity was prior to Freud, explored through literature and popular fiction. The ‘horrors’ of the subconscious were explored by Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) ‘Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships’ (1726), Mary Shelley (1797-1851) ‘Frankenstein’ (1818), and Robert Louis Stevenson’s (1850-1894) ‘Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde’ (1886) (Mansfield, 2000, pp. 25-26).
unique essence” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 13). Subjectivisation or identity formation therefore become processes, practices and discourses that work together to constitute an individual as a type of subject (Moran, 2015). Based upon construed genderisation, heteronormativity, racialized, or classed frameworks that are performed within certain cultural contexts (ibid). Involuntary or voluntary ‘self-subjection’ leading to legitimised norms for how a subject should “behave, perform, desire, self-present and relate to others”, creating rituals, norms and taboos which are discursively settled (p. 4).

Fantasies of interior subjectivisation and subjectivity are played out through the “corporeal signs” of bodies, and their “surface politics” (Butler, 1990). It redraws the perimeter of the self, representing a fantasy of a subject’s “uniqueness”, and creates an “imaginary line around the perimeters of” their “bodies” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 82). Defining “subjectivity as the unique density of matter contained within that line” (p. 82). Possessions, membership of subcultures and selective lifestyles, expand this sense of identity (Belk, 1988; Brooks, 2000; Hebdige, 1979; 2007; Hebdige & Potter, 2008; Kawamura, 2016) and become socially important by representing forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Often intentionally focussed towards specific-peers, local-settings or social-scenes (Cova, et al., 2012; Thornton, 1995).

Differences between the externality, interiority and “integrity” of the subject therefore become the focus of public-social discourse as identity-politics (Butler, 1990, p. 136). Shared characteristics of identity are categorised, subjectivised and objectified; and is now the dominant political logic and defining personal issue (Moran, 2015). Creating and enforcing categories based around ethnicity, religion, gender and class, the subject becomes politicised and exposed to discourses around legitimisation and de-legitimisation (ibid). Culture is contested between various agents, meaning power-relations and structures can be destabilised through discourses (Besley, 2015). These processes both inhibit and empower individuals, generating a realisation that identity and its essentialisation can create social-movements and focusses for change (Fuss, 1990; Moran, 2015). Signs of essentialisation which indicate categories, therefore, become points of convergence and resistance for individuals who seek to modify their identity and its meanings (Fuss, 1990). Subjects begin constantly reproducing themselves in response to historical and cultural changes, understanding a need to manage their ethics (Mansfield, 2000). Foucault, though, encouraged this consider all viewpoints and their inherited codes of behaviour, as mainstream subjectivity also can feel like an imposition (ibid). As well as the subjectivisation of marginalised groups, mainstream subjects must also negotiate any attacks on their ‘given’ identity (ibid).

Identity-politics therefore cause subjective processing of individual degrees of agency, confronted by levels of “compromised agency” and their subjective “aspirations” (Hall, 2004, p. 46). This performativity of personal-identity therefore provides the possibility of self-empowerment, but also limits public displays or their necessary repression
(Mansfield, 2000). Varying cultural and social contexts mean subjects must seek to appear ordinary in some cases or make an impression in others. Standing-out requires accepting an element of social risk but affords the benefit or pleasure of being remembered (p. 4). Allowing individuals to challenge the “restrictions of conventional life” (p. 56). Using their power and knowledge and engaging in aesthetics to prove a willingness to “embrace the fictional and the fantastic” for pleasure (p. 64).

2.4.2 Etymology – 19th Century American Slang

As the USA expanded, cool entered American slang. American dialects, however, remained divided based upon ethnicity, geography and cultural contexts (Gates, 1986; Henri, 1975; Lemann, 2011). An early version \(1833^{\text{ERS}}\) ’to cool off’, meant ‘to kill’ (Rahman, 2013). 1833 Sketches & Eccentricities D. Crockett xi. 145, ‘I can kill more lickur..and cool out more men than any man you can find in all Kentucky’ ” (O.E.D., 2017). American uses would gain increasing importance as by the early 20th-Century, North American users easily outnumbered British ones (Ayto, 2017).

2.4.3 American Slavery

Cool has been heavily influenced by the subjectivities and subjectivisation of African-Americans and their cultures (Belk, et al., 2010; Southgate, 2003). While ethnicity is now perceived as not absolutely definable, less rigid and socially constructed (Mansfield, 2000), explaining the lingering effects of racism upon the psyches and self-conceptions of African-Americans (Hall, 2004) is still important. “Few scholars can argue against the concept that Black manhood in America is deeply rooted in the slave experience and the period of Jim Crow segregation” (Van Thompson, 2010, p. vii). Healing is measured; “Those processes are very slow, indeed, and the horrible legacy of slavery and its impact on subjectivity linger to this day on the African continent, in the USA, and across the globe” (Hall, 2004, p. 39). While it is recognised that these topics “cannot be spoken about authoritatively from outside of the affected group” (p. 35), exploring subjectivities affected by these horrors is crucial for understanding cool.

Henry Louis Gates Jr. [b. 1950] views 18th and 19th centuries studies of subjectivity being mainly considered from pejorative European perspectives and not those subjected to colonialism (Gates, 1986). Some important records documenting African-American subjectivity from that period do, however, exist; including philosophical works by Harriet Jacobs [1813–1897], Frederick Douglass [1818–1895] and W.E.B. Du Bois [1868–1963]. Harriet Jacobs in ‘Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl’ (1861) believed slavery had been “a curse to the whites as well as to the blacks” (Jacobs, 2001, p. 56). Douglass (1882) explained the dehumanising effect on slaveholders and how irresponsible power corrupted and poisoned their souls. Demonising and enraged them, as their fear of slave revolts and ongoing racist constructions of the black male
as dangerous and lecherous, solidified fear-mongering narratives in the white population (Girard, 2010; Twai, 2014; Van Thompson, 2010, p. vii). Deeply affecting their states of belief, fears manifested towards the “unreadability of Black people” and miscegenation (Van Thompson, 2010, p. vii). A paradoxical relationship as African-American males were viewed as critical to Anglo/European-American wealth but a significant threat to their domination (ibid); acting to deform the subjectivities of both groups (Hall, 2004). Douglass explained the effects on self-hood, creating a necessary ‘dissembling’ tactic for protection and survival. Partly due to the slaveholder’s frequent use of spies to find true views and feelings (1882). For example, African-American forms of irony and ‘jive⁶’ served to confuse and fool the suspicious white population (Douglass, 1882; Gates, 1986). The oppressed had soon learned to turn the tactics of their suppressors back on them. Using deceptive ingenuity and impiety against the welfares of the empowered group, which created a hybrid-existence, mingling aspects of each’s cultures (Hall, 2004).

Du Bois (1903/2016) in ‘The Souls of Black Folk’, illuminated African-American subjectivity as markedly distinct (Hall, 2004). Highlighting the debilitating effect of being blighted by objectification through European-American subjectivities and the internal disharmony of striving to be a whole subject, despite societal constraints (Du Bois, 2016). Viewed as a problem or other by mainstream society, “a member of a group long oppressed, still suffering the effects of that oppression, and yet judged by external standards of conduct and self-actualization that wholly ignore the force of oppression” (Hall, 2004, p. 38). A peculiar sensation of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of those that objectify, even if this means seeing their contempt as well as through one’s own subjectivity (Du Bois, 1989; Hall, 2004; Van Thompson, 2010). Creating an unreconciled self-consciousness needing immense strength to bind; “A double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretence or revolt, to hypocrisy or radicalism” (Du Bois, 1989, p. 142). Inviting a double form of subjectivity, tempting the mind towards a ‘double consciousness’ (ibid). The effect was to create a ‘veil’, ‘a visual manifestation of the colour line’ visible to African-Americans but opaque or obscure to European-Americans (ibid). DuBois characterised it as the gift of second-sight but also a curse due to its economic, political and social constraints. The veil made African-American social, cultural and community life inaccessible to European-Americans but also restricted themselves within it (Du Bois, 2016; Majors & Billson, 1992).

⁶ Jive being linguistically analogous to some West-African terms; “hepi (to see); Hipi (to open one’s eyes); jev (to talk falsely); dega (to understand), morphing towards. Hep, Hip, Jive, Dig” (Belk, et al., 2010, p. 189).
Between 1915 and 1970, around 5 million African-Americans left the rural Southern States for northern and western cities, to escape segregation and limited socio-economic opportunities (Henri, 1975; Lemann, 2011). In these radically changed urban environments, cities within cities, they “recast their culture in contact with the new rhythms, sounds, sights, and tastes of the city” (Trotter, 2009, p. 83). Staying true to their ‘roots’ but transforming debilitating segregation into a congregation, was a culturally empowering experience (p. 83). Marlene Conner (1995) in ‘What is Cool? Understanding Black Manhood in America’ describes cool as developing within these harsh economic and socially challenging environments. New models of urban flâneurie, creating a way of gaining respect by instilling fear (Connor, 1995; Dinerstein, 1998). Cool was a coping mechanism, a collective cultural reaction to inhospitable, poor and violent urban-settings and their continued repression (Connor, 1995). A projection of a chilly aura of imperturbable self-assurance often mingled with a suggestion of menace (ibid). Euro-American’s distorted subjectivity often mistaking this attitude as arrogance or a pose (ibid).

**2.4.4 The Technological Sublime**

David Nye (1996) argued that the late 19th and twentieth centuries were notable as the sublime became freed from European ideals towards an expansion of nature through technological advancements. It became submerged in the struggles and hostility endured through practices that demonstrated the superiority of human endeavour and technology in conquering nature rather than an abstract ideal (Shinkle, 2013). In this American sensibility, technology and nature were equal and melded sources of the sublime, which Nye (2013) related to difficulty, magnificence, awe and astonishment. Making the individual conscious of their destination and moral worth (ibid). The act of crafting notable structures or artworks visibly narrating the indelible hand of their creators (Benjamin, 2002). Boundaries of perception would be constantly moved towards new experiences of transcendence, where yesterday’s sublime would become today’s banal (p. 237).

Victorian middle-classes had long differentiated themselves from poorer, colonially subjugated groups or immigrants, through their emotional culture and technological capacity (Pountain & Robins, 2000; Stearns, 1994). Historian, Peter Stearns (1994) in ‘American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-century Emotional Style’, however, questions why Victorian culture was so completely replaced by cool through the course of the 20th-Century. Arguing the trauma of the First-World-War had created collective rejections of out-moded values, and represented an emotional flight from individual-sentimentality, and those repressive regimes blamed for the great-toll. The First-World-War’s ending had brought grim relief, releasing the utopian hedonism of flappers, Avant-Gardes, Dadaist and art-deco movements (Pountain & Robins, 2000).
The collapse of Germany also resulted in the creation of the liberal Weimar Republic, becoming a breeding ground for Marxist intellectuals and artists. The soullessness of manufacturing and its rejection of anything vague or dreamy, endangered design becoming banal (Schlemmer & Schlemmer, 1990). The Bauhaus art school was therefore founded by Walter Gropius ([1883-1969], striving to rejuvenate design in everyday life (ibid). It taught gestalt principles based upon the concept that when viewing a group of objects, the whole is seen before individual items (Nalley, 2014). Recommending “reducing form and motion to the smallest number of shapes and” movements (False Art, 2015). Film and radio broadcasting emerged, influenced by dramatists like Berthold Brecht (Pountain & Robins, 2000). The general dark-mood being reflected by the popularity of German-Expressionism and narratives of horror, Gothic romance, thrillers and crime mysteries (Brockmann, 2010; Hayward, 2000; Spicer, 2002). Films grew in cultural importance being “intimately bound up with the mass movements” of their day and their “most powerful agent” (Benjamin, 2008, p. II); having the unique ability to capture empirical life delivered as an instantaneous vision, affording the rapid cognition of simultaneous and non-simultaneous representations of images, movement and aural effects, structured as narrative (Benjamin, 2008). Provoking mental images in the audience felt as personal epiphanies, dreams and desires (Benjamin, 1970; Cochrane, 2016; Rando, 2014). “Poetic and at the same time” “real”, where “only persons in the most sublime, most mysterious moments of their careers might be permitted to move within its atmosphere” (Benjamin, 2008, p. 21). Their presentation as distracted entertainment ceased audiences to critique them as connoisseurs, instead absorbed as aesthetic experiences (Adorno, 2013). Airing to mass-audiences however, meant they became politicised (Benjamin, 2008; Koepnick, 1999). A cultural weapon where portrayals served significant social functions that defined the subject’s relationship to society. Their ‘class or social stratum’ appearing with them as morals, together with their spiritual conflicts (Piscator, 1929/1998). Such art and technology could easily be used to produce social-hierarchies and supress other ethnicities (Gates, 1986). For, if art and commerce are set as the highest standards of individual endeavour, excluding others creates a pre-eminence for the dominant group (Mansfield, 2000).

2.4.5 Film Noir

In the 1930’s, Brechtian dark and mysterious aesthetics were incarnate through film noir (Dinerstein, 2017; Pountain & Robins, 2000). Melodramas which appealed strongly to the emotions (Dinerstein, 2017) and heavily influenced by German-Expressionism (Spicer, 2002). Noir\(^7\) reflected a need for alienation in film; the chief

\(^7\) The first classic American film noir was Stranger on the Third Floor (1940). The style heavily influenced other productions. The Brit-Noir spy cool of Harry Lime in The Third Man (1949), would later be reproduced in James Bond (Dinerstein, 2017; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Quartz & Asp, 2015).
protagonists being ambiguous characters or anti-heroes; hard-boiled private investigators, a plain clothed policeman, a victim of circumstance, a criminal, or an innocent lured into crime (Dinerstein, 2013; 2017). Immortalising styles of American gangsters, or the ‘sang froid’ of literature detectives (Barthes, 1979; Belk, et al., 2010; Harris 2000; Leland, 2004). Heroines were feline-femme-fatales like Marlene Dietrich or Greta Garbo (Dinerstein, 2017).

I mmortalising styles of American gangsters, or the ‘sang froid’ of literature detectives (Barthes, 1979; Belk, et al., 2010; Harris 2000; Leland, 2004). Heroines were feline-femme-fatales like Marlene Dietrich or Greta Garbo (Dinerstein, 2017).

Humphrey Bogart’s cool was powerfully codified in Casablanca (1942), who as Rick Blaine would retrospectively become a classic icon of cool (Pountain & Robins, 2000); becoming “the nation’s favorite iconic cool anti-hero of all time” (Dinerstein, 2013, p. 117). Blaine was a man emotionally beaten, creating “a bond with the audience: this is a common man, an average man, a man without connections, a man who has suffered, a man who has been beaten and yet pulled himself up by his bare hands” (p. 208). Revealing the “double-edginess of the noir figure: a person who brings drama into one’s static life of compromise and to whom the acolyte is in thrall” (p. 193). In contrast, Bogart’s love rival Victor Laslow, was far too straight-forward and good to be cool (ibid). Blaine had engaged “both good and evil within” himself having “experimented with” his “dark side” and “come out in control” (p. 25). Carrying “a social charge of charisma, style, and integrity, of having developed an edge” “that is all one’s own” (p. 25).

2.4.6 Etymology – African-American Sygnifying (1940’s)

In the early 20th-Century, cool had evolved to represent sometimes personal ‘negative attributes’ that were to be admired. Particularly linked to someone’s wit or cunning (1918[ET]19); “1918 Bodleian Q. Rec. 2 152 ‘A case, A lad, A head, A cool kid, all words for expressing admiration for another's cleverness or cunning”’ (O.E.D., 2017). Cool entered African-American slang where the expression ‘cool breeze[ET]20’ described someone, shrewd, fashionable or amiable. A negative tone now taking on a more positive pitch (Moore, 2004). Cool was a cachet, but shadowing something darker and more sinister (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012). There seemed greater emphasis on underground perspectives. Cool meant something great, especially relating to attracting females (1933[ET]21); “1933 Z. N. Hurston in Story Aug. 63 ‘And whut make it so cool, he got money 'cumulated. And womens give it all to 'im.'” (O.E.D., 2017). Cool’s meaning had crucially changed through the African-American practice of signifyin(g); a rhetorical strategy reforming conventional meanings through subversion (Gates, 1988). Using indirection and irony to convey opinions, thoughts and ideas together with double (or reversals of) meaning (ibid). Thereby communicating within the community but obfuscating meanings for outsiders (Gates, 1988; Haselstein, 2013). By 1940 cool meant fashionable or ‘with it’ (Green, 1998). In 1938 and 1944, however, cool was still not important enough to be officially documented as jive. “Cab Calloway published a glossary in 1938” “entitled Cab Calloway's Catalogue: A Hepster's Dictionary”. Although it “contains terms like 'hep’, 'jive', 'groovy' and 'square' it does not contain 'cool'. Nor does 'cool' appear in Dan
Burley's Original Handbook of Harlem Jive, a 1944 publication” (Southgate, 2003, p. 181). For a while cool would remain entangled with its allied concept of ‘hip’ (Klein, 2000/2010). Post-war, however, cool firmly became a part of Jazz and bebop scenes (1948[16]). Denoting cats[16] and cool customers while also describing a unique style of jazz; ‘cool jazz’ (1948[17]). At a personal level, being cool meant being calm, self-possessed, aware, and sophisticated (Green, 1998).

2.4.7 Cool Jazz

It is often claimed that American Jazz tenor saxophonist and soloist Lester Young [1909-1959] was the originator of the expression ‘cool’ (Dinerstein, 1998). Phrasing ‘I’m cool’ to indicate being relaxed in a safe environment but within his own style and under his own control (Dinerstein, 2017). “Leroi Jones” “explained cool as”: “The term cool in its original context meant a specific reaction to the world, a specific relationship to one's environment” (Moore, 2004, p. 71). Being cool was “in its most accessible meaning, to be calm, even unimpressed, by what horror the world might daily propose”, or “the horror”, at the “deadeningly predictable mind of white America” (p. 71). Cool was a real attitude amongst African-American men who had served their country during the Second-World-War, but many felt that the freedoms they were fighting for were not open to themselves (Dinerstein, 2013). Young’s personal war experience of serving one year in detention barracks in Alabama for possessing alcohol and marijuana had wisened him up (Dinerstein, 1998). He became more resistant, exhibited less joie de vivre; his broad smile gone; “That was then, this is now” (p. 260). "To be cool was to be in charge, unfazed by the bullshit of life” (Moore, 2004, p. 71); fermented by a tragic shadow and a hardened cold bitterness of irony (MacAdams, 2001). Cool attracted the disenfranchised by offering the allure of power; linked to survival, so in tough neighbourhoods crime was considered good or worthy of admiration (ibid).

Young, himself, established distance and aloofness by turning away from his audiences to dismiss their critical gaze (Daniels, 2004; Ross, 1989). He wore dark-sunglasses while playing and a porkpie hat (Dinerstein, 1998; Ellison, 1964). His artistic relaxation, state of equipoise and laconic expertise was loosely buoyant but grounded kinetically with energy that created excitement, without himself becoming excited (Dinerstein, 2017). Developing an easy style with loose rhythm and poise, while at the end somehow managing to land-on-his-feet (Dinerstein, 1998; 2017).

8 “(who later changed his name to Amiri Baraka)” (Moore, 2004, p. 71)
Cool-Jazz was a pivotal departure from bebop [which had a faster-tempo and rapid-chord-changes] (Winke, 2013). Later, Miles Davis9 [1926-1991] explained the key difference with cool-jazz was to emphasise the notes you did not play10; being as important as the ones you do (MacAdams, 2001). Bebop and cool-jazz reflected the West-African traditions of playing ‘hot’ and ‘cool’ music (Dinerstein, 1998). Socially defiant Jazz artists like Lester Young and Miles Davis11, though, also represented new role-models12 for African-Americans (Dinerstein, 1998; 2013; 2017). The emergence of the Blues and Jazz were fulfilsments of African-American desire (Morrison, 1992), and clearly demonstrated the power of African-American subjectivity13 (Hakutani, 2006). Jazz being considered high-art, represented an elevated achievement which revealed an autonomous and imaginative subject (Morrison, 1992, p. 93). Averting “the critical gaze from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined, to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served” (p. 90). A fluid, no-sweat attitude of self-mastery provided a sense of empowerment by being valued (Dinerstein, 1998). An “expressive life-style” that transformed “the mundane to the sublime” and made “the routine spectacular”. It was, however, a “dynamic rather than a static art-form” (Major & Billson, 1992, p. 70). The “African-American male’s” then “impotence in the political and corporate world’s” was countered by “a potency and verve” that bordered on the “spectacular”. “Through the virtuosity of a performance”, tipping “socially imbalanced scales in his favour”. “See me, touch me, hear me, but white man, you can’t copy me” was his “subliminally assertive message” (pp. 70-71).

2.4.8 Existential Crisis

After the Second-World-War, a depleted Paris was overtaken by New York as the world’s cultural capital, drawing admiration through its wealth and diversity (MacAdams, 2001). In Harlem and Greenwich Village, artistic conjunctions between

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9 Davis would go on to create the first popular cultural artefact that directly marketed cool. The ‘Birth of the Cool’ consisting of 11 compiled songs recorded in 1949/50, but was released in 1957 (Dinerstein, 1998).

10 As a musical phrasing is remarkably reminiscent to gestalt principles.

11 Davis’s original performances are informative aesthetic experiences; “his (Davis’) language, the language of music, or what he (Davis) calls “so, what..” (Davis, 1959).

12 Clothing styles were heavily influenced by American Film Noir and jazz players like Miles Davis and Duke Ellington also recognised bohemianism as having influenced their approach to attire (Dinerstein, 2013; 2017).

13 A problem that endured, however, was “women of colour became doubly marginalised; ignored both by a predominantly white liberal feminism and by a predominantly male racial politics” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 160). It created an “oppositional consciousness” and a lack of specific creative identity (Haraway, 1991, p. 156). Resistances normally act against domination and exploitation or those aspects of subjectivity that ties the individual to themselves, forcing them to submit to others (Foucault, 1983, Besley, 2015). It is therefore puzzling why male uses of cool have been dominant, considering females have been continuously subjected to dominance and suppression (Butler, 1990; Frese, 2013).
jazz and beat identities propagated cool, where hip and cool where culturally conjoined (Dinerstein, 1998; Klein, 2000/2010; MacAdams, 2001). Beat authors “Jack Kerouac\(^{14}\) and John Clellon Holmes helped popularize” the term (Moore, 2004, p. 71). Holmes in his 1952 novel ‘Go about the beat culture of New York’ wrote; “when the music is cool, it’s pleasant, somewhat meditative and without tension. Everything before, you see, just last year, was 'crazy,' 'frantic,' 'gone.' Now, everybody is acting cool, unemotional, withdrawn” (p. 72). Political author, journalist and film-maker, Norman Mailer’s [1923-2007] controversial essay ‘The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster’ was printed in a 1957 special issue of Dissent. Mailer described how the atrocities of the war had created a psychic turmoil or existential crisis in the American mainstream population. The injustice and horrors that the war publicly exposed were mirrored within American society. For white-American’s a widespread anxiety and dread spread due to a resulting ethical crisis (Dinerstein, 2017). The possible consequences instigated a malaise of depression which stifled dissent and created a deep cultural state of conformity (Mailer, 1957). Mailer thought the grip of this conservative fear was foreseen taboos, but their unforeseeable consequences constricted individuals. Contrasting this state with ‘the liberal’ who sought to disbelieve, evade or be fooled (ibid). Classifying the American existentialist or ‘hipster’ as the dialectic opposite of both conventional states; aiming to be fully equipped and aware and able to deal with necessary changes while maintaining their sense of confidence and control (ibid). Rejecting the conservative condition, which the young equated to boredom or a slow-death (ibid). Attributing them to the stifling expectations of parents and society and the impending restrictions of domesticity and emasculation (Whiting, 2005). A smothering by institutions or the responsibilities of marriage, childcare and the accompanying necessity for jobs and home security (Mailer, 1957).

Old nervous systems strangled possibilities by restricting expressivity (Mailer, 1957). While tranquilising neuroses they equally damaged passion, serving to make the subject less interesting, contradictory and creative. The antidote meant introducing danger into one’s life; requiring audacity (ibid). The rebellion, violence and liberated sexuality of African-American culture was highly attractive to Hipster’s, who perceived them as more expressive role-models (ibid). Culturally equipped to deal with oppositional existences which they now felt exposed to, having been forced to live with danger for every step of their history (Sainato, 2016). Their constant struggles cognisant with living on the margins between totalitarianism and democracy where anxiety is graver; and any unconventional action takes disproportionate courage (Mailer, 1957). For Mailer, hip was therefore about energy which for the man at the

bottom is all he has, so he must learn to conserve it for the opportune moment. To find the courage to meet an exciting opportunity and seek to win, where individual victories restore growth and increase the powers of one’s perceptions (ibid). A desirable, and enviable form of self-mastery that avoids the kinds of defeats that lead to boredom, desperation and self-destructive rage (ibid). The hipster was therefore also seeking to develop a new nervous system for themselves; by experimenting with danger through marijuana use, visiting late night jazz-clubs, or through street criminality or protests (ibid). What made them feel good became the good (ibid). Complex sexual energies and racial mixes were therefore highly attractive to such thrill-seekers (Dinerstein, 1998).

Viewing African-Americans as both rivals and role-models15, meant the cultural benefits, pleasure and liberation Euro-Americans felt also created feelings of emasculation and inferiority (Mailer, 1957). A competitive desire that is a significant undertow and central paradox of cool; “a shallow pose that conceals ferociously competitive instincts”, “at its most obvious in the context of sexual conquest” (Pountain & Robins, 2000, p. 29). A tension two male’s also feel when pursuing a single female-subject, as their desire becomes inherently referenced towards each other (Girard, 1965). Creating equivalent and powerful bonds through their rivalry (Sedgwick 1985, p. 21):

“Successful winning of the woman becomes not merely a sign of victory, but the symbol of all types of literal and abstract ascendancy: the hero’s moral superiority, his higher truth, his role in assuring social order through a future free of corruption, and so on”

(Mansfield, 2000, p. 98)

John Leland (2004) similarly believed hip’s convergences represented a power contest or feedback loop between dialectic opposites, each seeking cultural authenticity. A synthesis of these two major American identities, who by living more closely in each other’s orbit but not having equal statuses, created mutual-fascination (ibid). The wealth and power of white-America and the complexities of African-American cultural expressivity (ibid). Their intermingled allure helping America become the global standard for style and culture (ibid). Whereas Jazz and beat had been one, however, they would soon split apart (MacAdams, 2001).

Tyrannical Second-World-War occupations were also exposing European existentialist thinkers to confront worn-out western ideologies (Dinerstein, 2017). They were cemented by post-war colonial uprisings that caused physical, cultural, intellectual and spiritual disgrace (ibid). Lorraine Hansberry [1930-1965] linked this intellectual malaise of the patriarchy to the death of colonialism (ibid). A malaise set in as “a form of intellectual cowardice, an inability to face up to the rise of oppressed peoples”. “The

15 This would typify a gripe of Miles Davis, who later reflected on his resentment towards white men who would bring their girls to Jazz clubs not for the music but for the sole benefit of impressing them (Dinerstein, 2013).
lives of Black Americans” also became “emblematic of the struggles of exploited and oppressed human beings in general” (p. 134). “To want to be free and equal” was to not “want to be white” (p. 30). Being cool became “a walking indictment of society”, a “valorization of the individual against larger dynamic forces” (p. 25). Creating a ‘shrinking’ in mainstream masculinity as “unlike the patriarchy that” was “being replaced, contemporary masculinity” wanted “to exercise its power”, but no longer wanted to “admit to being powerful” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 93).

2.4.9 Etymology – American Cultural Expansion (1950’s)

By the early 1950’s, being cool was increasingly desirable to American teenagers for both their sociality and style (1952[et72]). Changing American uses easily crossed the Atlantic through the elevation of American cultural media (Mugglestone, 2017). Coming to replace British meanings with American ones in some first language and second language uses (Ayto, 2017); (1957[et73]; 1959[et74]). Cool therefore became famous as “an American (English) word that” was “integrated into the vocabulary of many languages around the globe” (McGuigan, 2016, p. 31).

2.4.10 Mass-Media

During the 1950’s, the critical social difficulty became how best to survive in a mass society (Gleason, 1983). Erving Goffman [1922-1982] and Helen Merrell Lynd [1896-1982] established how personal image and identity became consuming concerns. Stigma and shame were anxieties causing subjects to increasingly stage their interactions with others (Goffman, 1961). Film and television thrust dramaturgical life into people’s homes and social-spaces (Goffman, 1959). Mounting relationships between individuals, mass-society and media therefore created a disquiet (Moran, 2015). Idealised realities and desires disturbed ego-identities (Lacan, 1960). Mass-media, race, religion and politics therefore placed impositions on individuals (Shinn 1964). Producing anxieties which also risked forcing them into culturally institutionalised, dull, inoffensive or unremarkable identities (Goffman, 1961). The individualism and generational rebellions of the 1950s were therefore partly a means of remaining salient and relevant in the face of these restrictions (Moran, 2015).

Fascination with identity also coincided with cool’s emergence, entering the consciousness and popular jargon of music, entertainment and the film industries (Rahman, 2013). Cool as a style was suddenly accessible to global-mass-audiences (Dinerstein, 2013; 2017; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Stearns, 1994); where “American films and actors” became key ways “of learning about coolness” (Belk, et al., 2010, p. 196). Hollywood movies not only depicted the look of cool, but played “a major role in its” development (Pountain & Robins, p. 126). Jean Paul Sartre [1905-1980] was similarly fascinated by Hollywood’s global influence and its portrayals of heroic,
existential loners who seemed to capture the imagination (Dinerstein, 2017). Earlier romanticised identities tended to eulogise western frontier character-types as personified by *John Wayne* (Newmark, 2013); rugged, taciturn, individualists presented as heroic wardens against existential threats (Dinerstein, 2013; Haselstein, 2013; Pountain & Robins, 2000). Sartre, though, was more taken by *Gary Cooper*, whom he considered handsome and tall, but with grace (Dinerstein, 2017). Ethically confident, obscure, instinctual and slow to anger (ibid). Sartre felt that Cooper fulfilled a void in himself. Telling others; “I should have liked to be him” (p. 131). Cool’s first American screen idols were also powerfully attractive to both men and women (Pountain & Robins, 2000). Their attention to personal appearance avoided traditional, dull male non-styles and were attuned to feminine attitudes (p. 152). Balanced with a “mysterious, intimidating, kinetic hero living by a private code” as “an image of implacable male force” (Dinerstein, 2017, p. 10). Performed with a requisite “projection of toughness and self-mastery through a blank facial expression and a corresponding economy of motion” (p. 11). This “look of Hollywood cool” was “a mask covering an extreme form of romanticism”, which involved “an emphasis on feeling and content rather than order and form, on the sublime, supernatural, and exotic, and the free expressions of the passions and individuality”, but “preferring the bitter sweet variety” (Pountain & Robins, 2000, p. 119-120).

Film’s aesthetics, romantic-attraction and their insights towards social situations, created emotional bonds that inspired imaginative participation or imitation as an escapism from ordinary life (Addis & Holbrook, 2010; Konstantinou, 2016). Films stood for consumer fantasies; used as templates for interpretive, iterative identity constructions (Fennell, 1985; Holbrook, 1986a; Hirschman 1985; Holbrook & Grayson, 1986; Kozinets, 2001; Mick, 1986). Sensual impulses presented as a dream-world, holding some form of elevated knowledge or wisdom over the audience (Adorno, 2013; Freud, 2005). Film’s semblances as performances, maintained their absorption as entertainment, but part of a capitalistic culture industry which fed fetishes as passive satisfaction (Adorno, 1991; 2013). Placating and satisfying the unconscious, while sublimating “in a disguised form” their “most troubling oedipal obsessions” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 35).

### 2.5 Conclusion

In early forms of English, cool and cold were similar[^2.2.1]. In time, however, cool diverged to characterise a more pleasurable sensation[^2.2.4]. Expanding into figurative and metaphorical uses, describing desirable traits and behaviours. Linked with physical, anthropological or social-survival. Conquering incapacitating fears under stress, or the control of anti-social passions. Cool therefore indicated superiority of comportment[^2.2.7]. An ability to distance other's undesirability and resist domination[^2.3.5]. In American slang, cool became more informal and relaxed, but
had menacing tones; such as to effortlessly appropriate wealth or be hostile\textsuperscript{[Sect:2.4.2]}. African-American signifyin(g) transformed it with playful uncertainties and insinuation. A veiled double-meaning where coolness denoted suggestive pleasure, but with a hint of menace or threat\textsuperscript{[Sect:2.4.6]}. Being cool meant mastering fears in a memorable style; originally fashioned and brought alive through the relaxed virtuosity of cool-Jazz\textsuperscript{[Sect:2.4.7]}. A style subsequently developed and promoted through television, film, music and media. Cool became a cultural phenomenon, but with difficult subtexts. Reflecting the angsts and existential anxieties individuals felt increasingly exposed to\textsuperscript{[Sect:2.4]}. Fear or existential dread became more widespread and instigated feelings of lacking, beginning to play greater roles in individual’s identity formation\textsuperscript{[Sect:2.3;2.4]}. This thesis will now proceed to Chapter 3, to further discuss cool’s subsequent development. Particularly how youth subcultures and consumer cultures in the latter part of the 20\textsuperscript{th}-Century, further altered subjectivities. Giving cool a new role in identity construction and becoming useful in cultivating consumer’s interest in new commercial offerings.
Chapter 3 – Cool in Consumer Cultures and Fashion

This chapter [in conjunction with Chapter 2] addresses the objective ‘To review and synthesize the literature on cool in a general context, examining its roots, emergence, and proliferation, using the critical perspectives of social science, consumer psychology and consumer culture’. It explores how changes in social and economic conditions and the increasing importance of youth culture, made cool a pervasive force globally. Becoming embedded within commercial practices, fashion, identity and consumer culture. Psychological and sociological theories which help enlighten contemporary cool experiences such as Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) optimal flow and Lyng’s edgework are discussed. The chapter closes, however, by introducing Anthony Giddens (1991) concept of ontological security/insecurity, which forms the central theoretical lens of this research thesis.

3.1 Introduction

Cool, formed around a time when a number of disenfranchised groups began rejecting the stereotypes pervaded by conventional western subjectivity, art and culture (Dinerstein, 1998). The demise of traditional institutions after the end of the Second-World-War, appeared to offer freedom, but also meant many individuals felt less-secure towards their futures and how to negotiate their day-to-day lives (Giddens, 1991). Obliged to learn how to traverse these conditions via market solutions and the selectivity of their consumption choices (Chaney, 1996; Cushman, 1990). Self-identity therefore became linked to an emerging consumer society, which helped individuals structure themselves (Giddens, 2003). The emergence of subsequent neoliberal hegemonies under the guise of free-choice, have today created conditions where subjects are offered few-choices to develop their identity other than through restrictive market-systems (Giddens 1991; Lasch, 1960; McGuigan, 2016). Cool has also evolved to be a central part of many of these consumption practices (Belk, et al., 2010). Indeed, cool and neoliberalism may have helped propagate each other to some extent (McGuigan. 2016). These consumer cultures, however, have now become so pervasive, that cool is seemingly taken for granted as a positive ideal, despite it also potentially representing an imposition for many consumers (ibid).

To understand how cool has become important within consumer cultures, the chronological structure of Chapter 2 is resumed. New etymological developments, forms of subjectivity, identity and their socio-cultural influences are introduced. Including the development of youth-cultures, fashion and their commercial importance. Theories which help rationalise individual cool consumption experiences are then discussed. Finally, the theories underpinning this research thesis; ontological security and ontological insecurity are described.
This further disassembling of cool, together with the main theories and themes covered in this chapter is summarised in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Structure and Order of Chapter 3

Each area is explored in the following sections.
3.2 Youth, Subcultures and Fashion

Cool seems important during precarious stages of identity development; i.e. during adolescence and early adulthood. Individuals often seek to affiliate themselves with cooler peer-groups or subcultures to elevate their status. Symbolically presented through their complementing values, attitudes, lifestyles or fashion:

3.2.1 Etymology – Contrarian Youth

By the 1950’s and 1960’s, cool began describing peer relationships, meaning an armistice or uneasy truce (1958[ET28]; 1964[ET29]; 1966[ET30]). Adults or teachers had to remain cool to stay dignified, handling insolence and threats from disruptive youths to avoid ridicule. Cool also started to expand with each new generation; having their own icons16 which clarified cool for them (Moore, 2004). Youths, though, also needed to maintain their composure in-the-face-of illicit or inappropriate behaviours of others (1967[ET31]). By the 1970’s, the phrase ‘too cool for school’ appeared (Moore, 2004).

3.2.2 Subcultural Movements

The term subculture emerged in the 1940’s to account for increasing plurality and clear fractures in society (Kawamura, 2016). Earlier American studies had researched deprived groups17 that were viewed as being detached from the mainstream body (p. 41-42). Subcultures were also perceived as a lower or working-class phenomena, as the elite-classes were considered as having no need for them (ibid). In the 1950’s, however, Rock n’ Roll fused American music styles with cinema, creating a boom in consumption of this form of youth-culture18. In 1956, the first rock ‘n roll film Blackboard Jungle featuring ‘Rock around the Clock’, had caused Britain’s first rock riot involving ‘teddy-boys’; when shown at a cinema in Elephant & Castle, South London (Hebdige, 2004; Mccarthy, 2007). It portrayed the wrongdoing of multi-ethnic working-class youths in a New York inner-city school, creating terror and therefore muted-subservience in their teachers (Mccarthy, 2007). The UK’s post-war urban societies had also been transformed by restructuring, processes of de-colonisation and immigration (Kawamura, 2016). As a result, new British youth subcultures were attracting large numbers of working-class adolescents (Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979). Drawing upon the highly accessible resources of

16 Tied less implicitly to the concept, as unlike Brando, Kerouac, and Davis, they did not emerge simultaneously with the term (Moore, 2004, p. 14).
17 ‘Polish immigrants’ (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918), the homeless ‘Hobo’ (Anderson, 1922), Chicago gangs (Thrasher, 1927) and the African-American family (Frazer, 1939).
18 The first globally cool music superstar was Elvis Presley, although his performance in Jailhouse Rock (1957) led to claims he stole the blues from African-American cultures (Belk et al., 2010; Leland, 2004; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Watkins, 2005).
popular culture (McRobbie, 1991, p. xv). The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was therefore established in 1964 at the University of Birmingham, and began providing important studies of them (Kawamura, 2016). It produced important cultural theorists; including Stuart Hall [1932-2014], Paul Gilroy [b. 1956], Angela McRobbie [b. 1951] and Dick Hebdige [b. 1951].

While ‘the beats’ had first sought to share identity with jazz, in the UK teddy-boys confronted the immigration of the 1950’s through gang violence; creating distinct identities based on exaggerated American-stereotypes; rich in western-iconography (Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 2004). By the 1960’s, however, the establishment of “sizeable immigrant communities” in Britain’s working-class areas had allowed forms of rapport to become possible (Hebdige, 2013, p. 83). Distinctive subcultural movements offered opportunities to create focuses for change in their relations (McRobbie, 1991). ‘Mods’ being the first in a long-succession of urban, working-class youth subcultures, which grew up around West-Indian communities and would try to emulate them (Hebdige, 2007). Opposing the confrontational stance of the teddy-boys, admiring and seeking affiliation with the West-Indian ‘rude-boy’ style (ibid). Mods therefore also became lower-class dandies, obsessed with every detail of their clothing (ibid).

Subsequent British subcultures persisted in referencing themselves towards more exotic forms of Caribbean culture and music (Hebdige, 1979). Needs to affiliate confirmed “some felt, but as yet unexpressed intent or desire” or need for creativity (McRobbie, 1991, p. xv). Identifying with these expanding or admired communities was attractive as it anchored their identity (Solomon, 2003). Reggae was particularly exotic and attractive; “it’s dread and it’s cool” (Hebdige, 2007, p. 26). Having a consciousness that was highly appealing to female fans, together with a “dangerous aura of forbidden identity” (p. 26). Hebdige (2003), vividly describing reggae’s sexual allure through Gregory Isaacs:

“The same mixture of the rough and the smooth was reflected in Isaacs’ cool image. In “live” appearances he combined Rasta dreadlock, expensively tailored three-piece suits and lots of gold jewellery”. “The combination of Isaacs’ strong but gentle soulful voice and his elegant style at the microphone was irresistible.”

(Hebdige, 2003, p. 122)

“The point of bass music and top sound systems is to feel the music, to feel it reverberate through yours and your partners body, a cool joy, no pain, a sedative high” (Hebdige, 2003, p. 75). While these cool subcultures had benefits, there was a risk of exclusion if certain unalterable identity characteristics were rejected. For example, British West-Indian youth’s move towards Rastafarianism and more authentic forms of reggae required ‘dreading’ hair, implicitly excluding white-males (Hebdige, 2007). The alienation and violence of ‘punk’ seemed a backlash to this exclusion:
“The punks capitulated to alienation, losing themselves in the unfamiliar contours of an alien form”. ‘Just as the mod and skinhead styles had obliquely reproduced the ‘cool’ look and feel of the West Indian rude boys and were symbolically placed in the same ideal milieu (the Big City, the violent slum), so the punk aesthetic can be read in part as a white ‘translation’ of black ‘ethnicity’.

(Hebdige, 2007, p. 64)

Many successive youth-subcultures therefore represented a continuous observation and response between British black and white youth in UK urban spaces (Hebdige, 2007). Reflecting different realities or aspirations; coming as reactions to each’s predecessors, parent-groups and each other (ibid). Often male dominated, but competing for females through cultural legitimacy, while also negotiating their relative positions in society (Hebdige, 1979; 2007; 2013; Hebdige & Potter, 2008). These types of subcultures have distinct rituals and stylistic variants, which together form patterns or aesthetic constellations (Kawamura, 2016; McRobbie, 1991). Creating a unique gestalt, ethos or semiotic code, dynamically progressing as new members join or leave (O'Donnell & Wardlow, 2000). Views of subcultures as simple dichotomies between resistant groups and mainstream cultures, however, has become increasingly outmoded (Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003). Subcultures are now viewed pluralistically, being selectively accessed through dynamically changing contexts where members must alter their subjectivity accordingly (Irwin, ([1970] 2005)). Constantly using available local and global resources mediated towards the self (Fensham, 2000). Members of subcultures are rejecting conformity but also trying to conform with them (Kawamura, 2016). Monitoring them relatively, while actively seeking newer or more attractive ones (ibid). Driving shifts in identity which are increasingly perceived as being motivated by desire (Mansfield, 2000). Seeking to participate in a subculture is not easy, however, as complex tensions usually exist around managing boundaries. Appropriating cultural dowry or dilution is problematic if it destabilises the subculture; a sensitive issue which is often contested (Heath & Potter, 2004; Mansfield, 2000). This is one of the reasons that difficult-to-learn sports such as Basketball, rely on authentically learned moves which are difficult to imitate (Belk, et al., 2010). The African-American gait was similarly learned from an early age and therefore difficult to copy (Connor, 1995). Both deriving their authenticity as a technique of the body which arises from specific communities (Mauss, 1973). Maintaining such distinction is important as “particular combination of ideals, lifestyles and consumption” “must be unique” “to differentiate” “from other groups” (O'Donnell & Wardlow, 2000, p. 15). Flaunting association, however, can be negatively perceived if it indicates inauthentic motivation for membership (Scott & Austin, 2016). Hiding subcultural-identity from outsiders, can therefore be a way of maintaining authenticity and a status-preserving act (ibid).

The creation or maintenance of difference, though, can be precarious as it provides a means of exclusion from the mainstream and its social and economic benefits. For
instance, Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson (1992) in ‘Cool Pose: The Dilemma of Black Manhood in America’, saw cool as having evolved in American cities to be increasingly hostile. The defiance, body-language, coded-speech and immersive-lifestyles of Rap and Hip-Hop, reflected the increased assertiveness and violence required in gang-cultures (Belk, et al., 2010; Dinnerstein, 2013; Kawamura 2016). A disorganised sociality and pride in the ghetto, however, could be a heavy price to pay if it meant long-term economic disenfranchisement (Majors & Billson, 1992). Such actions could also be construed as signs of compliance towards the limiting natures of local cultures, rather than acts of resistance (McGuigan, 2016). Cool should be an indicator of social desirability (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012), but closing off other identity options and relationships can also undermine desirability outside of those groups (MKTG555 & Costley, 2012) and potentially be injurious to the self (Majors & Billson, 1992).

### 3.2.3 Precariousness of Youth

Cool is most visible during the teenage years; a ubiquitous rite-of-passage to denote obvious criteria for social inclusion and exclusion (Danesi, 1994; Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012; Milner Jr, 2004). A coping mechanism for social survival, used to gain the acceptance of important peers (Danesi, 1994; Solomon, 2003). The resultant need to forge alliances means adolescents are hypersensitive to their choices, seeking to protect themselves from embarrassment (Bird & Tapp, 2008; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). Often believing they are being acutely observed (Danesi, 1994). Becoming fraught and monitoring peers in minute detail to identify and socialise themselves through semiotic codes, indicating shared interests, activities and tastes (Thurlow, 2002). Elite-factions often privilege activities to thwart emulation, by altering and complicating norms to exclude or ridicule others (Milner Jr., 2004). Clique identities which confirm the group and close discrepancies between their ideal and actual selves (O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000; Thurlow, 2002). The dread of being perceived as unpopular or uncool means teenagers are therefore often “riddled with self-doubt” (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 69).

A dangerous or illicit persona, or the ability to be multiple things at once, can therefore seem attractive (Gladwell, 2000). Forbidden fruit or physical challenges become opportunities to prove courage and interact with desires (Bird & Tapp, 2009; Schor & Ford, 2007). Allowing youth to be more self-expressive, giving them freedom and acting as a symbol of their maturity (Mohiuddin, et al., 2016). Acts of criminality or vandalism can prove subjectivity, agency, energy and creativity (Hall, 2004). Producing things; a piece of graffiti, a hole, a statement of disaffection, or the humiliation of the oppressor’s subjectivity (ibid). Delinquency, or ignoring or concealing concerns towards academic performance, however, may not always work (Czopp, et al., 1998; Warren, 2014). Although those in tougher groups may class aggressive peers as cool, other cohorts often prefer less-aggressive and more popular
peers (Rodkin, et al., 2006). Choices are socially and individually precarious, as adolescents have several contradictory needs; including “experimentation, belonging, independence, responsibility, and approval from others” (Solomon, 2003, p. 65). Flamboyance, or provocative clothes or hair, can become alternative ways of demonstrating courage and creativity (Frank, 1997), where product and brand usage becomes “a significant medium to express” their individuality (Solomon, 2003, p. 65).

Being embedded in a consumer culture now means children can learn from an early age how their lifestyle choices create an image which socialises their identity (Quartz & Asp, 2015; Nair & Griffin, 2007). Despite traumas, the teenage years are exciting and full of possibilities, where the uncertainty about the self is offset by discovering new experiences, and developing “one’s unique identity” (Solomon, 2003, p. 65). Cool relates to a new grasp of the world where each new generation feels a need to reform it through their fresh ideologies (Albert Camus, cited in Dinerstein 2017). Cool, therefore, empowers youth by subverting traditional sources of authority (Danesi, 1994; Milner Jr., 2004). Playing on the psychological fears of older and younger age groups; “forty-somethings fearful of losing their cool” and younger children using them as role-models (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 70). Using slang and jargon, while validating their peer-identity, however, also extricates themselves from the embarrassment of associating with younger children, older-adults or parents (Pountain & Robins, 2000). Teenagers therefore seek adult-free spaces to explore covert or illicit activities, fearing they would disgust or outrage these uncool others (Schor & Ford, 2007).

3.2.4 Etymology – Fashion Status

In the 1970’s and 1980’s cool started to be more generally applied to objects and spaces as well as people. Being cool didn’t necessarily mean they had to be ‘top class’, just somehow attractive or impressive (1970); ‘It never ran, but it was a cool car’ (O.E.D., 2017). This sentiment could also be applied to clothes such as denim or jeans that became more attractive with age, and wear and tear (1980). Objects needed to be pleasurable or fun to be cool (1985). Things that became recently obsolete, however, could quickly become uncool or unfashionable (1989). This dynamic nature of trends further destabilised

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19 Similarly, “ad writers, art directors and CEOs ponder “Do the kids think we’re cool? they want to know. Are we trying too hard to be cool, or are we really cool? Do we have attitude?” (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 69).

20 Many middle-aged consumers, however, are now using cool things to offset their fear of looking old and ‘out of touch’ (Data Monitor, 2003). This is mirrored by medical and social advances allowing people to look and age un-stereotypically through their consumption (Brown, 2002). Increasingly constructing identities that defer their age, gender or class (Charles, 2002). Taking care to avoid looking, and feeling ridiculous (Belk et al., 2010).

3.2.5 Fashion and Style

Fashion, the art of the body and its adornment, are intricately linked to identity (Polhemus, 2011). For most of the 20th-Century, fashion by adornment has continued to be a female routine and quality; shunned by most men as feminine and trivial (Kawamura, 2016; Reilly & Cosbey 2008). Men’s ambition and enthusiasm for cool things, however, is comparable to women’s passion for beauty (Kawamura, 2016). Females often appearing to perform feminine attractiveness by moderating their choices, while males apparent lesser concern, signals their personal autonomy (Stok, et al., 2010). Clothes and their styles, therefore, usefully manifest and present unique and unconventional outward-appearances nonverbally (Kawamura, 2016, p. 8). Forming socially significant “latent messages”, “subconsciously spreading” their “hidden ideas” (p. 42). In fashion it is not just what is worn, however, but how it is worn that matters; a “complete package: clothes, surroundings, personality, behavior, taste, all working in concert to achieve a desired effect” (Adams, 2013, p. 8). “Wearing them with care and confidence, without ostentation or shame. That kind of unapologetic authenticity” has “never lost its power to impress” and is fun as well (p. 9).

In addition to demonstrating individual style, there appears some basic anthropological drives which cause individuals to be receptive to certain new things (Koenig, 1973). Deriving from their ambiguity and unpredictability (Barthes, 1967). Quartz & Asp (2015) consider it linked to a need to test-out risk/rewards in comparison to well-tried habits. New commercial offerings increasingly attempt to prompt and tempt such desires (McDonald & Wearing, 2013). There seems, however, a further drive for individuals to be different, by marking social-differences (Braudel, 1992). For example, the waste and excessive consumption of fashion has status-value, producing variety of choice which preserves the ability to remain conspicuously novel and different (Kawamura, 2016; Veblen, 1964). Indicating a freshness, or spare-capacity which signifies the individual’s resourcefulness (Kawamura, 2016). Cool, however, sometimes legitimises things that are shabby (Klein, 2000/2010), providing some scope for personal creativity (Solomon 2003).

The role of fashion and the significance of creating newness and differences in identity are better understood by considering the dialectic concepts of fashion and anti-fashion (Polhemus & Procter, 1978). Fashion represents change and is independent of style, whereas anti-fashion is the continuity of style towards single movements or utopian ideals (Polhemus, 2011). Anti-fashion and fashion are blurred, but fashion’s representation of change means collective transformations normally occur when social or economic forces modify; or when one group’s identity is threatened by another less-
desirable-identity, becoming uncomfortably close to imitating it (Braudel, 1992). The presence of fashion in a community, therefore, indicates the availability of social-mobility and a level of fluidity towards social-structures, meaning bridging is a possibility (Flügel, 1930; Polhemus, 2011). Fashion therefore celebrates social-mobility as a positive force, symbolising dynamic progress and forms of alienation (Polhemus, 2011). The ever-present need for this progress and the excitement of novelty is fashion’s underlying, surviving principle and what drives its change (Koenig, 1973; Veblen, 1964). Someone who is perpetually fashionable is therefore signalling their personal flexibility and social-mobility as much as the symbolism of each particular style (Polhemus, 2011). Fashion, therefore, is threatened by the spectre of stagnation (ibid). The newness, personal expression and individual difference of fashion being equally endangered by equalisation through imitation (Simmel [1905]; 1997).

Anti-fashion and fashion lie at the heart of the confusion between fashion and style, but if we view style as representing continuity (anti-fashion) then a dominance of anti-fashion can indicate the presence of rigid social-hierarchies (Polhemus, 2011). Particular styles of anti-fashion are endangered by the spectre of change or classic-styles being incorporated into new fashion (ibid). Signature classic-styles like cool (such as faded or ripped-jeans and dark-sunglasses) may actually therefore represent anti-fashion and not fashion. Symbolising the conservation of cool as a rigid utopian ideal in society between generations. The presence of new and stark intergenerational fashion changes, instead representing some aspect of their rejection (ibid). Indicating a rebuffal of some outmoded aspects of previous generation’s ideas of cool fashionability. In environmental contexts where social-mobility is valued, newness, originality and scarcity confer a status-value on the wearer (Kawamura, 2016). We can speculate that this may be more important to those who desire or have the most to gain from social-mobility. Autonomy and preferences towards counterculture (Warren & Campbell, 2014) might therefore simply be indicating a desire to alter the status-quo or create social-mobility. Their constant efforts to create distinction, being both inhibited and facilitated through duplication (Wooten & Mourey, 2013). A desire for social-mobility that also requires some degree of collaboration from those who share that ideal. Some forms of duplication are therefore probably confirmatory and to be expected (Solomon, 2003).

Fashion creates newness, but its memory becomes a manifestation of certain epoch (Koenig, 1973). For example, the imagery, style and nostalgia towards cool-icons such as James Dean, Jack Kerouac, Bob Marley, and Che Guevara are commercially reproduced for the cool-aura or utopian ideals they represented (Klein, 2000/2010; McGuigan, 2016; Moore, 2004; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Quartz & Asp, 2015; Solomon, 2003). Retro offering fertile-ground for those seeking an easier way to be cool, enabling synergistic-weaving of well-understood icons of counter-culture into
contemporary contexts (Klein, 2000/2010). Risking, however, appropriating cultural-meanings by transposing from broader sociocultural histories towards “their social spheres” (Thompson & Haytko, 1997, p. 38). Attempts to construct them as newness “through the juxtaposition of countervailing meanings”, however, “can create a localized understanding whose whole differs from the sum” (p. 38). Consumers can therefore creolise culture “to fit into local social structures and issues” (Wooten & Mourey, 2013, p. 175). Feigning connections, however, associates the wearer as being dishonest (Gino, et al., 2010) and is a source of social-shame (Kawamura, 2016).

Most people have a desire to improve their self-image, so feeling an item or piece of apparel is cool makes a connection between their “self-concept and the product” (Runyan, et al., 2013, p. 325). Mediated by their self-perceptions, shared characteristics, beliefs and how they interrelate with their reference-groups (ibid). The use of clothes and accessories therefore act psychologically for the wearer. An emotional connection that means wearing authentic products has social-merit through their recognition value (Kawamura, 2016, p. 94). For example, males like to wear authentic and cool sports shoes as they give means of differentiation, while attracting other male’s positive attentions (ibid); “Sneakers really boost your male ego. I feel cool. I feel confident” (p. 84). Wearing cool products such as sunglasses can also trigger cool-identity schemas (Dalton & Wang, 2014). Altering behaviours by causing individuals to feel less embarrassed, while muting the expressiveness of their emotions (ibid).

3.3 Consumer Culture and the Commodification of Cool

Consumer cultures have created systems for commodifying and organising symbols of youth, fashion and identity. While factions can organise themselves through brand-affiliations and the institutional logic of the market (Cova, et al., 2012; Scarabato & Fischer, 2013), consumers seeking to consume cool often lack agency under these systems:

3.3.1 The Co-optation of Cool

Thomas Frank (1997) in 'The Conquest of Cool: business culture, counterculture, and the rise of hip consumerism', was the first major work to explain how in the late 1950’s corporations had begun to see cool as a way of reaching young consumers. Music and films may have been amongst the original consumption objects to express cool, and subcultures a way of embodying it, but commercialisation expanded it as a means of stimulating consumers and creating differentiation for them (Frank, 1997). The change in their mind-sets through being exposed to television, cinema, music and countercultural ideas, however, made them more astute and sceptical (ibid). As a result,
they were more cognisant and suspicious towards the tricks of marketing\textsuperscript{21}. Traditional advertising had become staid for consumers who either no longer believed them, or wished to be entertained not lectured (ibid). To reflect these changes, companies needed to distance themselves from the wrong-doings, mediocrity and dullness that mass-society now represented to each new-phase of young consumers (Frank, 1997; MacAdams, 2001). By the early 1960’s, innovative agencies like Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) on New York’s Madison Avenue had therefore started creating campaigns that were astonishing in their honesty, simplicity and candour (Frank, 1997). Knowingly taking the side of young consumers and offering self-effacing irony, meant they could simultaneously sell their virtues while also poking fun at rivals (Klein, 2000/2010). Competitors were framed as conformist by comparison, their gentility, civility and conventionality being awkward, outmoded, inauthentic and too easy to parody (Frank, 1997). Being visual in tone afforded subversively coded, distinctive, eye-catching and disruptive content (ibid). One of the best examples was DDB’s ‘think small’ campaign; reinventing the VW Beetle as a symbol of counter-culture, immediately appealing to younger and more progressive consumers (ibid). In this apparent state of free-choice, power was exercised by arousing consumer-desire through seduction or provoking their narcissisms (Bauman, 1992; Lasch, 1979). Previously unnoticed or unfelt needs were brought to their attention by increasingly pervasive and aesthetically rich mass-media (Lasch, 1979). Such commercial messages, however, acted beyond their target reference groups. The appearance of a booming consumerist society exposed and taunted those historically and economically marginalised (McGuigan, 2016). The social importance of consumption for status (Veblen, 1899), identity (Klein, 2000/2010) and their manifestation through the dreams of consumption, would be one of the main reasons for the intensification of identity-politics in the latter part of the 20\textsuperscript{th}-Century (McGuigan, 2016).

\subsection*{3.3.2 Cool Hunting}

As successive waves of youth emerged, advertising became a creative industry built around perpetual cycles and trends:

\begin{quote}
"Every few years, it seems" "new rebel youth cultures bubbling their way to a happy replenishing of the various culture industries' depleted arsenal of cool. New generations obsolete the old, new celebrities render old ones ridiculous, and on and on in an ever-ascending spiral of hip upon hip". "Youth has won. Youth must always win. The new naturally replaces the old."
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{21} "The consumer was no longer merely sceptical of mass society, but positively hip, young-minded, wise to television's tricks, drawn to the alienated film-making of the era, and only reachable through the coolest of advertising agencies. "He's a very hip, aware character," “Spearheading an attitude, an awareness, that is more open, more expansive and more inquisitive at all age levels”. “Bombarded on all sides with news, sensation, art and all manner of stimuli that are explosive and exciting” (Frank, 1997, p.126).
To remain in tune with each phase of youth and the trajectory of society, companies tried to link their new products and fashions to the latest countercultural ideas (Frank, 1997). This had an added bonus, as constant reinventions by new generational consumers, meant cool became something that could stimulate consumption (Klein, 2000/2010). Consonant as cool brands appeared to be “especially valued in product categories characterized by high levels of innovation (e.g., high tech) and stylistic change” (Warren & Campbell, 2014, p. 559). This was also problematic, however, as the resulting ephemeral ity would make cool a “fleeting” quality (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 24). A volatility that generated inherent problems for managers; “creating the next cool thing” and researching it was “difficult”, as “cool things have few inherently cool characteristics and because today’s cool becomes tomorrow’s uncool” (Belk, et al., 2010, p. 202). Creating cool therefore became an uncertain process (Gladwell, 1997), partly as many young consumers were now culturally more informed than the business executives responsible for organising campaigns (Frank, 1997; Klein, 2000/2010). Even by thinking inversely, many campaigns still failed (Frank, 1997; Jackson Lear, 1994; Schor & Ford, 2007). Trends were dynamically driven by young consumers advancing their own sense of justice and aesthetic principles, together with their own ideas (Frank, 1997; Southgate, 2003).

A solution to the difficulties and intricacies involved in creating cool, meant that from the mid-1990’s some companies became engaged in a process termed cool-hunting (Gladwell, 1997; Gurrieri, 2009; Pham, 2010; Southgate, 2003). Malcolm Gladwell (1997) in ‘The Cool Hunt’, described how major corporations were contracting third party agents to try to catch the latest trends as they appeared. Agencies like “Sputnik, The L. Report, Bureau de Style” were all founded between 1994 and 1996”. “The idea was simple: they would search out pockets of cutting-edge lifestyle, capture them on videotape and return to clients like Reebok, Absolut Vodka and Levi’s” with profound insights (Klein, 2010, p. 72). The conventional wisdom being that young people from poorer and tougher urban neighbourhoods were the most creative and made the “most exciting outfits” (p. 63). The reality of the process, however, was that “young black men in American inner cities” were “aggressively mined by the brandmasters, as a source of borrowed “meaning” and identity” (p. 73). Belk, et al. (2010) termed it ‘ghetto cool’; condensed by commodification processes ready for instant assimilation through mass-media and mass-distribution (ibid).

Making underground emblems into mere commoditised trinkets, however, risked absorbing any malcontent and destroying their cool for the originators (Frank, 1997). Real trendsetters dislike their forms of distinction being emulated, seeming unwilling to share their identities and “insights with the masses” (Solomon, 2003, p. 86). Consumers shunned mimicry when it threatened their identity (Tian, et al., 2001).
Excessive copying and imitation therefore stopped these innovations in their tracks (Albom, 1998; Belk, et al., 2010; Frank, 1979; Southgate, 2003). Cool-hunting was implicitly flawed and many trends dissipated before the commodification process could cultivate them. Marketers chased styles as the trendsetters abandoned them (Gladwell, 1997). Sputnik warned “if the cool trend is visible in your neighbourhood or crowding your nearest mall, the learning is over. It’s too late” (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 80). While rebel trendsetters objected, their flights actually drove consumerism and competitive fashion (Heath & Potter, 2004). The lagging mainstream could sense their repeated drift into the anonymity of the crowd, their identities endangered by proximity to the unadventurous mundanity of mass-society (ibid). Causing them to react and change as well (ibid).

Kalle Lasn (1999) thought invasive commercialisation through cool-hunting cynically exploited autochthonous cultures, being unethical, divisive and detrimental to society. Consumers would have to take direct action if companies were to be reverted to a more subordinate role as submissive producers, rather than cynical arbitrators of cultural transformations (ibid). A focus towards observing and emulation, however, was also harmful to the mindsets of corporations; stifling creativity and a recipe for being second-best (Kerner & Pressman, 2007). True-cool was a gut instinct that cool designers possessed, whether they were innovative consumers or professional designers (ibid). Becoming too preoccupied with an endless quest for novelty or the processes of trend proliferation, risked poor discernment towards one’s own or other consumer’s higher-level judgements (Southgate, 2003; Taylor, 2009). For example, skateboarding and street-wear manufacturer Airwalk first became cool as its “ads were entirely visual, designed to appeal to youth all over the world. They were rich in detail and visually arresting” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 196). “Airwalk tipped because its advertising” became “founded very explicitly on the principles of epidemic transmission”, rather than the styles and high-quality content that had first made it cool (p. 196).

### 3.3.3 Seeding Cool

While cool-hunting may have appeared a cynical mining of cultural resources for commercial gain, Naomi Klein (2000/2010) argues the reality was more complex, involving symbiotic relationships. Many poorer or younger consumers equally sought to appropriate or colonise symbols of wealth or exclusive brands (Solomon, 2003). Most clearly underscored by the hip-hop philosophy of “living large” (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 76). “Poor and working-class kids” could acquire “status by adopting the gear and accoutrements of prohibitively costly leisure activities” (p. 76). They sought designer labels as symbols of ‘bling’ but crucially reconstructed them towards their own cultural contexts (Klein, 2000/2010; Kawamura, 2016; Solomon, 2003). Hip-Hop had first appeared through New York block parties in the 1970’s but for a long time
struggled to have any commercial impact (Dyson, 2007). The meteoric rise of its popularity since the 1980’s, however, combined with the cultures notorious aptitude for brand appropriation, meant favoured brands like “Nike and Tommy Hilfiger” were “catapulted to brand superstardom” (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 73). Companies could see the obvious benefits of their brands being authentically and autonomously incorporated into these edgy subcultures, so having their apparels being seen on the streets on the right people meant cultivating their popularity (ibid). Processes that fed-off “the alienation at the heart of America’s race relations” (p. 76). “Selling white youth on their fetishization of black style, and black youth on their fetishization of white wealth” (p. 76). To smooth processes, clothes “were redesigned to appeal more directly to the hip-hop aesthetic” (p. 76). For many core-consumers, however, the importance of functionality suggests it as being as meaningful as their external-looks (Bruun, et al., 2016). Cool brands must therefore prioritise the needs of trendsetting core-customers, as a failure to create exclusive-versions as marks of distinction, could mean they withdraw their crucial support (Gladwell, 2000; Kawamura, 2016). These extra, limited-editions also create mythical status amongst those crucial consumers (Kawamura, 2016). For example, Supreme street-wear used this tactic; deliberately under-producing product-lines to avoid them falling into the wrong hands, safeguarding the brand’s high social-value (Sold Out: The Underground Economy of Supreme Resellers, 2015). Highly-discerning consumers place a heavy-weight on this exclusivity and are prepared to pay high-premiums, either directly or through resale (Runyan et al., 2013). Street-innovators methods or ways of wearing clothes, however, can be too risky or ‘out-there’ for mainstreamers (ibid). Edgier consumers might say “that's so cool” but it risks being too flamboyant for widespread adoption (Gladwell, 2000, p. 201). These types of products present too risky an approach (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2011; 2016), so companies are reliant on fraught design processes; where designer’s use their aesthetic sensibilities to negotiate greater palatability across multiple-layers of underground and mainstream users (Gladwell, 2000). Cool-brands therefore require continuous efforts by designers (ibid), marketers, cool-hunting agencies and invested networked consumers (Gurrieri, 2009).

3.3.4 Neoliberalism and Cool

McGuigan (2016) questions why forms of neoliberal-capitalism and their systems of production, have remained popular for many of those who are largely excluded or appear poorer for them? Moran (2015) explains in consonant terms, however, that the freedom and hope that neoliberalism affords, is one of personal identity growth and transformation. For many young people this is colourful, attractive and appealing (ibid). The freedoms and attractions created by the expansion of neoliberalism in the 1980s

22 From time-to-time backing-away “from serious attempts to curb rampant shoplifting” (Klein, 2000/2010, p. 74).
and the benefits to personal identity, also seemingly made capitalism cool (McGuigan, 2016). Allowing freedom to produce an identity through personal unconformity and the independence of bohemianism (ibid). The disadvantaged could become cool through their creativity, processes imagined as unavailable in socialist systems, positioned as dull in comparison (ibid). A paradox, considering the often-grey conformism of work-life required to sustain capitalism (Moran, 2015). The extent to which subjects are free and autonomous in neoliberalism, however, is highly debatable due to many counterpressures, where consumers need to conform and compete for status with other consumers through work, life-styles and consumption (Heath & Potter, 2004; McGuigan, 2016; Moran, 2015). Capital as a creator of aesthetic distance through consumption, therefore increases the desirability of working lifestyles (McGuigan, 2013; 2016; Simmel, 1950). The discipline and work-ethic necessary for capitalistic production, being offset by the pleasurable sensations of modern consumerism (McGuigan, 2016; Nancarrow et al., 2001; Thornton, 1995). Becoming the foundation of an individual’s personal life, where products and services become largely aesthetic, using a wide range of sign-play, images and narratives (Baudrillard, 1970/1998; Featherstone, 2001; Lury, 1996; McDonald & Wearing, 2013; Miller, 1987).

Market based hegemonies and their status-hierarchies, have therefore also become the dominant structures for enclosing power and knowledge (Foucault, 1983; McGuigan, 2016; Scarabato & Fischer, 2013). The primary agency of individuals as consumers, means their identities and relationships must be contested through the market (Fairclough, 1995; 2009; Fitchett, et al., 2014). Consumer agents must look to create a self-identity through market-based resources, while reflexively negotiating how those market-mediated messages encircle them (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011). Actions by any agents can therefore be viewed as structuring possibilities, or fields of action for themselves or certain types of subjects (Besley, 2015). The market giving them the legitimate means to explore and experience the world in new and exciting ways (Fitchett, et al., 2014). Offset by the temporary comfort of consumption spaces, which provide security and an ability to experiment in safe and comfortable surroundings (Featherstone, 2001). In superficial terms, being cool could therefore now be described as “the having of cool things” and “the doing of cool stuff” (Horton, et al., 2012, p. 73). There being some ideology that “cool brands allow people to live their lives well” (Southgate, 2003, p. 188). Consuming seems especially about gratifying these types of desires, but tends to be a desire for desires sake, as their satisfaction appears transient (Bauman, 2004). This consumer culture, however, is on the one hand celebrated as representing freedom-of-choice and self-expression, but on the other; maligned as a hegemony designed to limit behaviours, control, condition or indoctrinate consumers (McDonald & Wearing, 2013). Needing to compete socially through consumption, leading to anxiety, debt, distress, alienation and frustration (ibid).
3.3.5 Metroethnicity

To develop longer-term strategies for attaining coolness, in the 1980’s and 1990’s firms sought to attract younger, irrational talents to cool themselves from the inside-out (Klein, 2000/2010). Having the subsidiary benefit of generating new clusters of young industrious worker-consumers (McGuigan, 2016). Brooks (2000) coined the term ‘Bobo’s’ to describe this new cultural elite, holding down well-paid day jobs while exploring hedonistic lifestyles in their free time. Working and leisure lifestyles were creating new urban-elites and cliques; using cool to boost their status (Nancarrow, et al., 2001). Subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995), however, was mostly informed by things collectively disliked; dismissing other types such as ‘city-suits’ or ‘wannabes’ (Nancarrow, et al., 2001). Cool became a sense of exclusivity or superiority, ritualised through enjoyment of the danger and decadence of sleazy-bars (ibid). Their sexual-permissiveness and feelings of being part of an underground-community, giving a sense of authenticity and legitimacy (ibid). These groups represented new forms of ‘metroethnicity’, where urbanites played with their ethnicity for aesthetic affects, only deploying it when deemed cool (Maher, 2005). All night drinking at night-clubs was a class-fantasy that enabled a temporary anaesthetic of responsibilities. Addictive, as individuals and their peers sought to be more socially-engaged and self-expressive, through newer and ever-more evocative means (Nancarrow, et al., 2001; Southgate, 2003). Due to the increasing importance of money and work to status and identity through consumption, some traditional forms of cool were no longer as effective (McGuigan, 2016, p. 36). Similarly, Hebdige and Potter (2008) found that allegiances to political or countercultural ideas were becoming less significant to cool, as they no longer could be relied on to elevate social-status. Representing a now ongoing tension between consumer’s needs for countercultural authenticity, set against the status and excitement of bourgeois consumerism (Klein, 2000/2010; Solomon, 2003).

3.3.6 Celebrity Affiliation

While consumers can seek to be cool through their conspicuous consumption, “to actually be cool is something that only a few” “can pull off”. “In large part we pursue this goal through imitating the consumption of cool people” (Belk, et al., 2010, p. 184). Music artists were traditionally perceived as arbiters of the trendy (Taylor, 2009), but this has extended to popular sports and athletics (Kawamura, 2016). Associating with the right cool people (Breckenfeld, 2009), means “youth-oriented companies” associate themselves with celebrities having an “urban, street-smart image”; where mutual-exposure via media is highly lucrative (Solomon, 2003, p. 85). Countercultural disdain for over-commercialisation, had traditionally restricted opportunities for artists to commercialise themselves beyond their creative products (Taylor, 2009). High-art was seen as intrinsically opposed to a capitalistic culture industry, which fed the fetishes of consumption through political apathy and passive satisfaction (Adorno, 1991).
Compliance meant artists would cease to be perceived as producing advanced art which was sublime, tragic and sourced from their angst (Adorno, 2013). A source of shame as art was supposed to overturn the dominions of capitalism (ibid). A discord which risked appearing comical if combined with a failure to self-realize this conflict (Adorno, 2013; Dessoir, 1970). Indicating a lack of insight, towards irony and sincerity being dialectic (Fitzpatrick, 2016; Konstantinou, 2016). Such ridiculousness could render their art and themselves as non-profound (Hartshorne, 1997). Creating farce and risking disintegration of their aura; foreclosing their popularity or epoch (Buck-Morss, 1991). Andy Warhol, described early-on, however, how artist’s auras can be ambiguous:

“Some company recently was interested in buying my ‘aura’. They didn’t want my product. They kept saying, ‘We want your aura’. I never figured out what they wanted. But they were willing to pay a lot for it. So then I thought that if somebody was willing to pay that much for it, I should try to figure out what it is”


To overcome these conflicts, advertisers needed to disguise commercial messages sophisticatedly and seamlessly within the creative production of artists and sports-celebrities (Belk, et al., 2010; Kawamura, 2016; Strinati, 1995; Taylor, 2009; Thornton, 1995). While weaving content and product placements worked, it risked both the brand and the celebrity being judged negatively (Owczarski, 2012). The enormous financial-incentives and the power shift they represented, however, appeared to obfuscate any previously important moral indignity towards selling-out (Taylor, 2009). Artists seemed agreeable to their art converging with commercial operations (p. 405), as long as it preserved their aura. The consumer, however, needed to recognise and accept the brand as being “part of popular culture”, and their identity (p. 414). Companies wanted consumers to feel a sense of pride in incorporating their brands publicly into their identities (ibid). It was a win-win as it pervaded the ideology of artists being cool, while also promoting the importance of trendiness in driving identity-based consumption (Heath & Potter, 2004; Taylor, 2009). Consumers do not follow just anybody, though, and referents can range from significant-others, regular-contacts to celebrities who vicariously affect them (Solomon, 2003). Mass social-media means consumers have far greater reach and voice (Tucker, 2013). “Consumer generated word of mouth” can be “far more powerful than paid advertising” due to its perceived authenticity (Solomon, 2003, p. 159). These milieus intertextually guide judgements on what is “right or wrong, good or bad, cool or uncool” (p. 238). To successfully integrate cool-brands into their identity, consumers must therefore correctly read a variety of subjectivities and likely responses (Quartz & Asp, 2015; Quartz & Sejinowski, 2003).
3.3.7 Institutional Fields

As well as buying cool products to feel good about themselves, confer likeability and be popular (Belk, et al., 2010), consumers also choose them to connect with others; fulfilling a desire to forge alliances and maintain a positive group-identity (Kawamura, 2016; Nancarrow, et al., 2001; Quartz & Asp, 2015). Under the system of the market, however, shared-identities become sources of empowerment or disempowerment through the creation of factions, shared-morals, ideologies and any points of resistance (Henry, 2005; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Luedicke, et al., 2010; Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Consumers forming small social-unions, while also having wider memberships of consumer-tribes, provides them with collective resources; in both cooperative forms and inside their enclaves of consumption (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Transforming milieus of consumers and corporations into consumer markets, awash with individual and collective agentic actions (Cova, et al., 2012; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Scarabato & Fischer, 2013). Social and personal identities therefore often merge, as recognisable symbols of distinction become increasingly commodified and shared (Moran, 2015).

Making product or consumption experiences meaningful is therefore an accomplishment of the consumer, inhabiting desire through them (Maschio, 2016). The role of marketers being to instigate movements, by providing arresting images that awaken some form of want or desire in them (ibid). Market discourses therefore can reveal the opaque and taken for granted practices currently in circulation (Besley, 2015; Fairclough, 1995; 2009; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2011). These interactions structure institutional fields of possibilities, where certain characteristics must be emphasised or downplayed intertextually in various contexts (Besley, 2015; Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Alignments of consumers, however, create hidden-forms of subjugation, which they might choose to confront (Wodak, 2011). Seeking to alter competitive power-dynamics, using their individual and collective-agency for their own gains; while staying referent and implicitly-connected to the institutional-logic of the market, its resources and society in general (Giesler, 2008; Scarabato & Fischer, 2013). Some consumers therefore operate politically as ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Scarabato & Fischer, 2013). Agents who seek to drive changes within the marketplace23, collaboratively or competitively in surveillance of each other (Schouten, et al., 2015). In these systems of production, “mythologies permeate consumer culture” through the free-use of archetypes or plotlines in advertising and mass-media (Thompson, 2004). Used to develop commercially advantageous and competitively drawn brand-images (ibid). These types of narratives and discourses operate from both the small-scale and through more unified forms of

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23 Scarabato & Fischer (2013) conceptualised them dynamically and referentially as resistant rebels, stigmatized seekers, mainstream actors; comfortable collaborators or ‘mainstream malcontents’
meaning to build identities (Wodak, 2011). Using arrays of meaning-making resources; “‘semiosis’ (encompassing words, pictures, symbols, design, colour, gesture, and so forth)”, that are “socially constitutive” and “socially shaped” (pp. 39-40). Consumers therefore engage with these multiple discourses as multifarious sources and texts (Olsson & Heizmann, 2015).

3.3.8 Presentation of the Cool Self

Micro-level practices also create discourses which derive from every day occurrences, although it is unclear where they originate from and who propagates them (Fitchett & Caruana, 2015). Reproducing social and cultural perspectives but self-structured towards on-site uses (Caruana & Crane, 2008; Thompson, 2004), which make consumers, institutions and groups behave in certain ways (Fitchett & Caruana, 2015). Consumers therefore form ways of enacting and become part of social group hierarchies (Gee, 2003). Non-language or broader themes being blended integrally to form socially or culturally connected meanings; used implicitly by individuals when attempting to pull-off a style (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Fairclough, et al., 2004; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). Politically conscious thoughts are often sublimated as true-identity is not always given for social reasons; remaining as closely held principles or desires (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). How they are visually, culturally or stylistically expressed can therefore more inform or reveal their true-intentions (Belk, 1988; Benjamin, 1970; 2002; Goffman, 1959; Mauss, 1973; Seregina, 2014).

Cool is also inherently competitive and complicated, meaning strategies are often hidden to conquer rivals (Pountain & Robins, 2000). Erving Goffman’s Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life (1959), established how individuals present and manage their front-regions, while hiding their back-stage processes to avoid embarrassment of themselves or others. Pountain and Robins (2000) in ‘Cool Rules: Anatomy of an Attitude’, similarly proposed cool being a form of self-representation through a person’s outer-cool, whereas their inner-cool acted behind a mask: a) Narcissistically representing an effective self-adaptation against oppressive circumstances; b) Hedonistically anticipating adventurous pleasures or successful sexual, psychological or financial conquests. A sin of vanity, seeking orgiastic pleasure but with darker motivations; c) Ironic detachment being a useful and necessary disposition to support this strategic persona. An effective weapon for both defence and attack, going further than fooling opponents by lulling them into a false sense of security, but also making them appear foolish (ibid). Quartz & Asp, (2015) see such tactics as responses to an anthropological dislike of subservience or subordination. Fuelling a desire to rebel but tempered by a calculation of social risks, and the likely benefits of maintaining social cohesion (ibid).
3.4 Fashionable Desirability: Cool-Brands, Cool-Lifestyle, Cool-Self?

3.4.1 Etymology – The Past, Present and Future of Cool

Rahman’s (2013) study of contemporary meanings within the U.A.E, confirms a “common set of themes describing the term cool: fashionable, amazing, sophisticated, unique, entertaining, eye-catching and composed” (p. 620). “Most often used in advertising trendy commodities or more generally in promoting urban lifestyles” (Haselstein, 2013, p. 31). Cool therefore remains a well-used expression (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2011; 2016), but has an unusually long-lifespan for slang; remaining in constant-use since the 1940’s (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2016). By becoming and remaining slang, it has maintained a different position in language (Moore, 2004). Having a lower-dignity than formal-speech by implying familiarity, therefore remaining tabooed in certain formal-discourses, suggesting “irony or inadequate respect for the established order” (p. 83). As slang it therefore remains free from being associated with their constricting rules and practices (p. 62). Cool, though, holds an uplifted-status amongst other slang-terms (ibid). They normally being spawned when younger-generations or groups begin to take “on a set of values starkly opposed to the values of its elders and begins”, using “a positive slang expression that is semantically linked to” their “new value orientation” (p. 59). Cool is therefore unusual, having survived a number of generational-turns (Moore, 2004). Continuing to function through cultural-production; partly supported by use in common-language (Gurrieri, 2009). Each generation, somehow managing to incorporate their own new meanings into cool, while retaining older-ones; preventing it becoming stale (Moore, 2004). Surviving as a counterword, a slang-phrase whose meaning has expanded beyond its original referent while maintaining its attributes and status (ibid). Synonyms for cool may have helped its longevity by offering short-term alternatives, fading from use when excessively prevalent or too associated with a particular group (Belk, et al., 2010). To continue to survive, it is therefore likely that meanings of cool will need to continuously expand. If socio-economic and political-situations change, or it ceases to extend cultural-meanings for new-generations, or even becomes usable in official discourses; the slang-term might die. Moore (2004) describes this happening to the term ‘swell’; losing its edgy-status once youth began solely linking it to their parents’ conformism, and became ‘corny’. The appeal of coolness, however, is partly differentiated and “enhanced by the mysteriousness of what cool actually is” (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012, p. 175). Cool has always meant pleasure, but in relating to survival always seems on the edge of something else (ibid).

Using slang words like cool, need self-confidence as they serve affective functions in themselves (Moore, 2004). Using it well carries a presence or authority in the form of an inobtrusive integrity (Dinerstein, 2017). The key being
its linkage to the utterer’s identity through usage; “speakers who utter the term cool suggest that they understand and approve of the attitude”, “that comprises the core meaning of this term” (Moore, 2004, p. 83). Individual’s identity not merely being an act of materialisation, as any surfacory cool-pose also needs a level of performance (Belk, et al., 2010). Speech and physical acts also require an effortlessness and a pride in the body, that transcends clothes (ibid). Outlays on cool-products, similarly require self-conspicuous free-time to prepare cool-looks and integrate them into identity (MKTG555 & Costley, 2012).

3.4.2 Extending the Cool-Self

Cool has encapsulated an aesthetic, which for each new generation has been perceived as positively-valued (Moore, 2004); offering “reliable guidance on how to comport oneself” (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012, p. 176). A contemporary form of identity, where stylishness and cultural-knowledge are expressed through aesthetic-sensibilities (Rahman & Cherrier, 2010). Its alternative value-systems being linked with status or its reversal (Belk, et al., 2010). Requiring sophisticated-consciousness towards the cachet of brands, clothes, media, products, lifestyles and celebrities and their consumption (Belk, et al., 2010; Rahman & Laud, 2016). Belk’s landmark study; Possessions and the Extended Self (1988), links an expanded-self to ‘ownership’ of belongings, which reflects both outwards and inwards towards identity. In ‘Cool Shoes, Cool Self” (2006)24, connecting possessing cool-fashions to a cool-identity; provoking positive validation from others. Being recognised and respected, however, requires constant monitoring of other’s perceptions, as any mishap can tip them negatively (Quartz & Asp, 2015; Solomon, 2003). Stimulating vicarious emotions, where uniqueness denotes the owner as an individual (Runyan, et al., 2013). Venerating and mimicking their preferred brands, means associating with higher-status peers, but avoiding those attributed with lower-status; as they might induce ridicule (Wooten & Mourey, 2013). Any desire to mark social-identity must therefore be constantly adjusted, as difference needs to be counterbalanced across various sets of peer-groups (MKTG555 & Costley, 2012). Requiring a constant and dynamic negotiation between standing-out, going your own way or fitting-in (Belk, et al., 2010; Rahman, 2017; Wooten & Mourey, 2013).

Cool, however, is full of contradictions. For example, Warren & Campbell (2014) discovered consumers with low-preferences towards countercultures were less likely to choose autonomous or cool-brands. Mainstream consumers, however, also use cool-brands to appear cooler (Belk, et al., 2010). Warren, et al. (2014a) also found that; “despite the belief that people become cool by concealing emotion, we found that concealing emotion makes people seem less cool by making them less likable” (p. 730).

24 In 2006, Russell W. Belk contributed a section ‘Coola skor, cool identitet’ to the book ‘Skor Ger Mer: Makt Flard Magi’.
Additionally, while cool may involve standing-alone or free (McCracken, 2009), it is not cool to have few friends (MKTG555 & Costley, 2012).

### 3.4.3 Flow Experience and Voluntary Edgework

Experiencing boredom is part of a contemporary subjects burden (Adorno, 1991), but also a privilege of contemporary societies, strongly associated with having excess leisure-time (Misztal, 2016). Most market-mediated experiences therefore involve what Sianne Ngai (2005) termed ‘stuplimity’. States of repetition and boredom interspersed with moments of high activity and awe (Shinkle, 2013). Experiences that are central to using cool products:

“The absolute center of cool is joy. Joy is our autonomic response to our encounter with the world. Joy is pulled unknowingly and unwillingly from within. It is the most basic of human emotions. Throughout our research we encountered joy over and over, hidden beneath the experience of cool. The experience of cool is compelling because it is tightly connected to the experience of joy and delight.”

(Holtzblatt, 2011, p. 40)

At a physiological level, joy and delight are also central experiences of the sublime (Burke, 1757). The sublime, optimal-flow and voluntary edgework are connected phenomenological experiences (Stranger, 2016). Elevated risk, involvement and motivation being heightened experiences, which cause a highly abstract sense of the ‘flow’ (Celsi et al, 1993). Providing thrills of fear and survival, expanding individual’s capabilities through the transcendental-state of peak-performance, acting as restorative processes; enabling individuals to cope with everyday anxieties (Arnould & Price, 1993; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Celsi, et al., 1993). A “state where self, self-awareness, behavior, and context form a unitized singular experience”; “a state of total involvement where one moment “flows” holistically into the next without “conscious intervention” (Csikszentmihalyi 1974, p. 58). Needing contexts that push individuals towards their mental and physical limits. Unchallenging contexts insufficiently motivating unreserved involvement in the moment; whereas overwhelming experiences can produce excessive-anxiety or break-down (Mitchell, 1983; Celsi, et al., 1993). Flow, therefore, requires “control over the relationship between the individual’s abilities and the demands of the context. Knowledge of each is therefore necessary”25 (Celsi, et al., 1993, p. 12).

Edgework sociologically deals with the motivations that individuals feel to seek these types of experiences. Voluntarily engaging in certain activities that risk physical-harm or require specialized skills to manage them (Lyng, 1990; Scott & Austin, 2016). It places behaviors beyond the individual psychology of such acts, sociologically

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25 Similarly, the requirement of the sublime is that fear be sufficiently distanced to create pleasure, requiring judgement towards what constitutes a safe distance (Kant, 2000; Burke, 1757).
introducing them as an important part of public-identity (Scott & Austin, 2016). Edgework, however, can act beyond potential physical or mental harm and also apply to a subject’s sense of ordered existence (Lyng, 1990). “Best understood as an approach to the boundary between order and disorder, form and” formlessness

Therefore including; financial risk (Smith, 2005) or illegal drug use (Sjoberg, 2005). Edgework can be a response to the mundanity of existence caused by societal constraints, excessive rationality or predictability (Laurendeau, 2006; Scott & Austin, 2016). Empowering participants to take sole responsibility for their well-being (Lyng, 1990); controlling boundaries to hone their skills which are temporally and subjectively fluid (Scott & Austin, 2016). Many actions taken to gain status through experiences which are individually or collectively assembled (Ritzer, 1999). Edgework can mean pure fun, but for the more serious participants can become serious leisure-pursuits requiring higher-levels of devotion, knowledge and more systematic skill-development (Stebbins, 2001). As a result, involving greater rewards and longer-lasting feelings (Scott & Austin, 2016).

While studies of exciting, physically-dangerous and emotionally-intense leisure activities such as surfing, have been connected to the sublime and optimal flow in explaining their attraction (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Stranger, 1999; 2016), it was not in connection to their relative coolness. Other studies that have explored flow-experience and voluntary edgework (Lyng, 1990), through white-water river rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993), skydiving (Celsi, et al., 1993), high-speed motorcycling (Murphy & Patterson, 2011), women’s roller derby skating (Thompson & Üstüner, 2015), or financially-dangerous casino-gambling (Humphreys, 2010) have similarly been from different research perspectives. The connection with cool, however, seems compelling; as cool equally emerged with performances of jazz in eclectic, illicit and dangerous underground environments (Dinerstein, 1998). There remains, however, a lack of connection with these types of frameworks that could help explain cool’s relationships between edge and style. “The roles of stylistic expression and artistic flare in demonstrations of coolness suggests a complex relationship between coolness and expressivity that varies across domains” (Wooten & Mourey, 2013, p. 175). Part of the

26 A boundary between sublime and beauty is expressed in similar terms (Kant, 1914).
27 Individual’s being able to experience flow well below their peak performance level, or when the conditions are not as dangerous (Stranger, 2016).
28 (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Csikszentmihalyi, 1985; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988).
29 In both optimal flow and edgework, nothing else exists, creating a ‘holistic oneness’ of ‘feel good’ that somehow alters individuals towards a transcendent state (Celsi, et al., 1993, p.11). Self-Awareness dissipates; “the voice within, has been silenced. Zen-like, individuals attain and sustain a period of accomplishment that transcends their normal level of efficiency; physical and mental activity are one” (Celsi, et al., 1993, p. 12). Dinerstein (2017) also described cool as sometimes involved a feeling of nirvana, a void, or type of zen-cool. Flow, edgework, and sublime become demonstrations of individual’s true or authentic selves, temporarily unrestricted by customs or self-awareness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Lyng, 1990; Murphy & Patterson, 2011).
enigma being; where “emotional expression undermines coolness perceptions (Majors and Billson 1992), but artistic or stylistic expression enhances it” (Wooten & Mourey, 2013, p. 170).

Consumption experiences are also now often configured to potentiate desire (Kozinets, et al., 2017). Linking these brief moments of transcendence with imagery of the “danger of coolness”, by associating brands “with activities, artefacts, and symbols (e.g., extreme sports, body modification)”, which spark sensations with the promise of exhilarating experiences (Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012, p. 184):

“Mountain Dew executives try to connect with cool kids one person at a time by handing out beverage samples at surfing, skateboard, and snowboard tournaments. A top marketing executive explains, ‘There’s a Pavlovian connection between the brand and the exhilarating experience.’ By this logic, ‘Doing the Dew’ is not a rush just because of the caffeine and sugar. It comes to be associated with the hip places where the soft drink is consumed.”

(Solomon, 2003, p. 84)

Commercial organisations therefore use these difficult-to-master sports as ways of differentiating themselves (Belk, et al., 2010; Quartz & Asp, 2015; Solomon, 2003). There being a unique allure to possessing a dark-magic or exciting identity, which enchants and inspires oneself and others (O’Sullivan, 2016). Stimulating desire by feeding “entertainment with infinite possibilities of intense but trivial transgression, chaos and danger” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 172). “Inspiring and thrilling us with mystery, fear and pleasure” (p. 2). This desire acting unrulyly as an “endlessly exciting emotional, physical, aesthetic and political force” (p. 171). Creating “ambivalence and ambiguity” and “the intensification of the self as the key site of human experience” (p. 2). How they become pleasurable, however, is less understood beyond their cathartic or therapeutic incursions, or as a relief from boredom (Lasch, 1985).

3.4.4 Communitas

Overcoming shared-fear through flow or edgework, creates fun and romance through joint magical encounters, building bonds of community, trust, reliance, unity, empathy, mutual-admiration, personal-growth and self-assurance (Arnould & Price, 1993). They become, enchanted experiences of “a state of the sublime where senses, mind and spirit elevate the world around them as they elevate themselves” (Ford & Brown, 2006, p. 40) and can dramatically change the “patterns off interaction” within groups (Arnould & Price, 1993, p. 38). Members of cultures, however, must contribute to their community to appear authentic (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Shared-flow, though, can build ‘communitas’ through ritualistic experiences; creating higher-bonds and a sense of belonging, transcending the mundanity of everyday life (Celsi, et al., 1993). “Nomis, aesthetics, and language” become more specialized (O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000, p. 15). Creating shared and specific, verbal and non-verbal languages that join members (phatic communion); but are not understood by outsiders as they transcend translated
meanings (ibid). “Instrumentally rational language” would be too restrictive to articulate these experiences (Ford & Brown, 2006, p. 156; Stranger, 1999). Fluid-use and comprehension are therefore esteemed and an authentic sign of club membership (Celsi, et al., 1993, p. 13). Commodification facilitates this sociality. Watching media or photographs brings back memories of the flow, which can be vicariously-experienced repeatedly (Stranger, 2016). Absorbed as “flow is spell-like and has addictive qualities that summon individuals back over and over again” like a drug (Celsi, et al., 1993, p. 12). Mythic, heroic, historical scripts bind with these experiences, creating drama and play (Belk & Costa, 1998). Exotic locations and characters combining with personal accounts and media (Stranger, 2016). Commodification monetizing subjective experience, however, can distort it (Simmel, 1978). The initial motivation of fun, joy or love are altered, becoming objectively rationalizable and as a result more mundane (Scott & Austin, 2016).

3.4.5 Cool Brands?

Research into coolness in brand-design, product or service experiences remains relatively undeveloped (Cowan, et al. 2013; Fitton, et al., 2012; Horton, et al., 2012; Read, et al., 2011). The coolness of products and brands often being viewed as reliant on heavy-marketing efforts, celebrity endorsements or campaigns (Cowan, et al., 2013). A good example of how cool can translate towards product and brand design, however, is Apple’s hugely successful iPad and iPhone product lines. Embodying some useful design principles:

“Whilst coolness is socially bestowed, it is unlikely to be bestowed on things that are extremely complex to use. Products that are easy to use, beautiful, fun and engaging are more likely to be described as cool products. Additionally, for the sake of building a cool brand the design of poorly focused and poorly functioning products is probably not likely to ensure your brand is seen as cool.”

(Cowan, et al., 2013, p. 5)

Techno-cool gadgets such as iPads are perceived as having achieved successful integration of several important attributes; including “innovative fun, mastery, adding value, useful, successful and self-presentation” (Culén & Gasparini, 2012, p. 126). If agreeable to the consumer they produce “arousal, stimulation and/or pleasure” which might convert to desire (Runyan, et al., 2013, p. 325). Ownership and use of these sorts of products help consumers fulfil their “most core human motivations: Accomplishment, Connection, Identity, and Sensation” (Holtzblatt, 2011, p. 40). For manufacturers, there is the added-bonus that once these cool products have been used, users appear unwilling to go back to inferior or previous versions (ibid). High-tech industries are therefore at the forefront of advancing the technological sublime (Costa, 1991; Costa & Caignard, 2010). Apple has similarly managed to maintain its position as a cool corporation by continually creating an aura of excitement around successive
new lines of “magical technologies” (McGuigan, 2016, p. 38). Their image conserved by exclusive means of retail, which avoid the appearance of having overly intensive distribution systems (Olson, et al., 2005). Apple has also managed to maintain an authentic image by being one of the 1970’s originators of personal-computers. Its counter-cultural credentials, being memorably solidified by their renowned 1984 ‘Super Bowl’ advertisement, which created a long-lasting image as an innovator (Burrows & Satariano, 2012). By buying Apple products consumers felt they were ‘striking a blow’ against the staid, corporate capitalism of then dominant IBM and later Microsoft (Belk, et al., 2010; Belk and Tumbat, 2005; Burrows & Satariano, 2012; Kahney, 2004; Kliermouch, 2001). Given Apple’s more recent domination of some computer and mobile technology sectors, this appears a contradiction but is a difficult image to shift (Charles, 2002; McGuigan, 2016). In contrast, Nokia became uncool by failing to innovate radical new products, creating a sluggish image (Ewing, 2006). Target similarly lost its magic, by failing to continuously step-up its quality and style (Berater, 2003).

While attaining a cool brand image can be difficult, there are some obvious mistakes to be avoided. IBM tried too hard to be cool, becoming “fixated on trying to impress the cool kids”, “to make Big Blue cool” (Klein, 2000/2010). It being a basic mistake to try too hard or term yourself cool, as observers need to come to their own conclusions30 (Bird & Tapp, 2008); if products must tell consumers they are cool, then generally they are not (Olson, et al., 2005). This also applies to consumers; “When a person thinks he is cool, he is absolutely uncool” (Solomon, 2003, pp. 83-84). Marketers are also beginning to recognise that consumers do not like products that are too obvious, or ready-made, as part of the appeal is for the consumer to inhabit a space of possibility that the product represents to them (Maschio, 2016). Their creativity fashions the image of the product making it their own, which is also one of the newer paradigms of social-media (ibid). Serazio (2013), however, thinks in the digital-age opportunities for companies to operate surreptitiously may be increasing. The lengthening separation between consumption and production, means an appealing consumer-facing image can easily distract from any invisible or far-flung unsavory aspects of their operations (McGuigan, 2016). By superficially incorporating social-dissent and empathising with counterculture, cool can become a dangerous and cynical façade for profiteering and global-exploitation; for hiding “dirty secrets” (p. 4).

30 Anything intrinsically mundane or representative of authority or good behaviour, however, will always struggle (Bird & Tapp, 2008). This especially applies to politicians, a famous instance being, New Labour’s, ‘Cool Britannia’, which may have been the closest the term has been to being killed off (Pountain & Robins, 2000). The Obama brand, however, was a rare exception causing anti-American sentiment to become uncool for a while (Klein, 2000/2010).
3.5 Ontological Security/Insecurity

I will now discuss ontological security/insecurity; a theoretical concept at the heart of this thesis:

The vast cultural and social developments of the 20th and 21st centuries have altered subjectivity, by creating a dilution and disorientation of feeling, due to a lack or sense of how to position ourselves (Mansfield, 2000). Christopher Lasch [1932-1994] feels the uncertainties towards the boundaries of the self means it has become more difficult to “distinguish reality from fantasy” (1985, p. 19). Leading to a boundless admiration of celebrities and fame, the fear of commitment, a dread of aging and a fixation on youth culture (ibid). Feeding a narcissistic personality structure causing fragile self-concepts; easily fed by consumerism (Lasch, 1979). Survival of the self became a constant concern and its underlying threat required a minimal aesthetic or retraction of the self, in response to possible danger (ibid). These changes in subjectivity combined with fractures in society, point towards an insecurity towards the self and a need to securitise its future (Fensham, 2000; Hall, 2004; McGuigan, 2016; Mansfield, 2000; Moran, 2015). Challenging our separation into distinct-selves and urging us to view our interior-lives as involving other people, always being linked to something outside of ourselves (Mansfield, 2000). Given our inability to view ourselves and others completely, however, we are unsure of what it is we are lacking, or the knowledge they hold over us (Lacan, 1960). It raises the importance to our subjectivity of the need to gain a foothold on how others perceive us (Hall, 2004). Often sensing their moods, which although similar to emotions, like anxiety or dread are concerned with non-specifics (Solomon, 1973).

Anthony Giddens [b. 1938] (2013) instead framed modernity as a condition where subjects expect to be normally consciously and reflexively aware of who they are and how their actions fit into their identity. A sense of ontological security that results from the relatively ordered clusters of habits formed which create a sense of structured lifestyle. Giddens described this state as an especially important form of feelings which emanate from a confidence towards a “continuity of” “self-identity” and “the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action” (p. 92). Ontological security therefore relates to the subject’s sense of who they are and their ability to construct a coherent self-biography (Giddens, 1991). As a concept, however, it does not relate to the body, but the subjective sense of self (Mitzen, 2006). Motivating actions and choices through the view of how this sense of self affects levels of agency, relating how their identities in the future will allow their free actions and choices to be sustainable over time (ibid). This is achieved by “choosing rationally, matching appropriately, or varying a performative act. The application of ontological security to these differing conceptions”, however, remains unclear (pp. 344-345). Ontological security is therefore a process considered by rational actors, who make purposive
choices towards internally consistent ends, by weighing up actions that securitise their agency (Giddens, 1991).

Ontological security is positioned as a basic human need, where actors see uncertainty as an identity threat. Being familiar with objects outside of one’s immediate environment provides a sense of security, but all individuals remain vulnerable to breakdown, stress and the failure of competence (Giddens, 1991). Ontological insecurity is where these securities become threatened and uncertainty makes it difficult to act, by frustrating the “action–identity dynamic” and making it “difficult to sustain a self-conception” (Mitzen, 2006, p. 345).

“Ontological insecurity refers to the deep, incapacitating state of not knowing which dangers to confront and which to ignore, i.e. how to get by in the world. When there is ontological insecurity, the individual’s energy is consumed meeting immediate needs. She cannot relate ends systematically to means in the present, much less plan ahead. In short, she cannot realize a sense of agency. Ontological security, in contrast, is the condition that obtains when an individual has confident expectations, even if probabilistic, about the means–ends relationships that govern her social life. Armed with ontological security, the individual will know how to act and therefore how to be herself”

(Mitzen, 2006, p. 345)

An individual’s understanding of external reality and personal identity means they can foresee opportunities for the expansion of their meditative experiences (Giddens, 1991). Deliberately engaging with ‘fateful encounters’ and taking risks is important for ‘colonising the future’, but the protective cocoon of the home must first be broken-down, and the effects of such risk-taking can be irreversible (ibid). They can cause a sense of fate or dread over distant events the subject has no control over, forming a menacing appearance (ibid). The loss of self or the home means individuals most fear situations where they may lose out socially, more likely in the social and physical dangers of urban milieu, than primitive natural disasters or threats (ibid). While there are threats and dangers in everyday life, the subject must manage these to tolerable levels. This may lead to subjects presenting their selves as less-desirable, particularly when environments seem hostile or threatening. To feel confident in one’s environment, subjects must focus on things that are either presented as hard-threats, either by building trust through socialisation, routinization or minimising them by focussing on the task-in-hand (ibid). Subjects therefore form a cocoon which builds ontological security through levels of certainty, which they take through their various practices, affording them a security of agency. They effectively expect or trust certain conditions of their cognitive world will be reproduced within this cocoon (ibid). This form of protection is important as the inability to determine what represents a threat creates an inability to act. This uncertainty threatens identity as it ruptures and disrupts the basic systems of trust that have been formed to protect the subject from the exhausting possibilities that endless chaos and danger present (ibid).
A sense of the reliability of persons and things is so central to the notion of ontological security that trust is closely, psychologically related to it. It is, however, “an emotional, rather than a cognitive, phenomenon, and it is rooted in the unconscious” (Giddens, 2013, p. 92). These needs can help instigate routines which provide the securities needed, while the ideal self becomes imagined and more of a fantasy, forming part of the picture but unseen by others. Thus, routines that are trusted securitise the self and become the basis of identity. Minimising cognitive uncertainty instigates a sense of stability towards oneself and therefore drives subsequent choices relationally. The effect of disruption on routines and the self are dependent upon their nature. Temporary, or short-term disruptions to their needs, or trauma, can be tolerated if the subject trusts that they are minor, and the individual can soon return to their normal routines or practices. For those, however, who rely on their routines too heavily, they become boundaries beyond which lurk uncertainty and anxiety. This is partly due to those boundaries also having become margins of the self. Anxiety can cause retreation into those routines which bring cognitive order. Routines themselves that are psychologically relaxing and cathartic (Giddens, 2013).

“The meanings of routine activities lie in the general respect or even reverence intrinsic to tradition and in the connection of tradition with ritual. Ritual often has a compulsive aspect to it, but it is also deeply comforting, for it infuses a given set of practices with a sacramental quality. Tradition, in sum, contributes in basic fashion to ontological security in so far as it sustains trust in the continuity of past, present, and future, and connects such trust to routinised social practices”

(Giddens, 2013, p. 105)

While trust and routines are the basis for security and integrity, their opposite is not mistrust but existential angst or dread (Giddens, 2013). Contemporary society, in placing greater uncertainty on individuals means consumer subjects now not only face greater freedom, choice and responsibility towards the meaning of their lives but must solve these dilemmas through their consumption choices (Giddens, 1991). This means that ontological security is increasingly purchased. If allowed, their superficial and fleeting novelty can replace more reflexive and long-term developments of the self, as they are both cognitive and affective phenomena (Giddens 1991; Stone & Sharpley, 2008). Giddens (1991) therefore believed that consumer society has shifted from satisfying basic needs to presenting and fermenting desires. This has had the effect of expanding consumption, its role in self-identity and their aesthetic expansion, through possession and display. A flowing of technology, where material needs are incrementally met, and new needs are continuously thought-up and forcibly presented. In this environment, consumer’s aesthetic desires are gratified by their consumption choices. Ever expanding, often overwhelming and producing identities that are often superficially discarded. Under these conditions consumers welcome friendly-guides who provide instruction on their good-taste. They produce a cognitive order towards the insecurities they feel in making socially hazardous choices (Giddens, 1991; 2013).
3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how cool has become a complex phenomenon. Continuous expansions through new constitutive-interactions and emerging-uses, means it now operates at various levels of discourse. Alvesson & Karreman (2000) clarify how such uses of the same term can function at different levels and statuses; from relatively unique, ‘autonomous, micro-instances’ to more ‘determinant or connected meso, grand or mega meanings’ that are shared and culturally negotiated. While the globalisation of media and consumer cultures, seem to have unified cool’s meanings to some extent (Rahman, 2013), it also appears to be mediated by localised-subjectivities and unique cultural-contexts (Belk, et al., 2010). Creating systems of cultural-knowledge, which change perceptions of cool. The meanings of autonomous, micro-uses of cool can therefore appear bewildering. Reflecting the vagaries of subjectivity or fleeting, temporal or subcultural contexts. Spontaneous, synchronic uses, however, can also be imbued with diachronic cultural-meanings (Williams, 1983). A dialectic, as to survive cool’s culturally shared meanings must also allow each new generational-cycle to interpret it in their own ways. Reflecting their emerging subjectivities, desires, angsts and politics[Sect:2.4.8;2.4.1;3.2]. Allowing them to create new and precariously desirable identities, distanced from hereditary-sin or responding to some impending, inescapable force[Sect:2.4.8-10;3.2;3.3]. Often involving the combining of the edge and expressivity of alien-cultures to their own innate identity. Destabilising the restrictive power-structures that parents, peers or traditional-institutions held over them[Sect:3.2.3]. Their popularity or appeal therefore threatens those fearing loss of control[Sect:2.4.8;3.2]. Each new generational-movement therefore challenges youths to be ‘in-or-out’, signalled through their knowledge or assimilation of the latest cool-causes, subcultures, celebrities or consumption objects.

The peculiarities of youth subjectivity, however, mean trends can be expressed in unpredictable ways; balancing tensions or seeking to be creative, fun or different. For example, the brief cooling of ‘Hush Puppies’ in the mid 1990’s (Gladwell, 2000), may have simply represented frivolous, subversive fun, or a more meaningful desire to realign with past-comforts as a form of reskilling\(^{31}\). The coolness of neoliberal capitalism in the 1980’s (McGuigan, 2016), however, may have represented an opportunity to gain greater personal-autonomy, desirability and wealth, while young enough to enjoy the benefits. New, attractive identities combining the glamorous status of professional-employment with the thrill of acquiring consumption objects and exciting lifestyles (Moran, 2015; Nancarrow, et al., 2001).

Cool seems a socially constructed form of anti-fashion[Section:3.2.4-5]. A cult or continuity of values (Giddens, 1991), which represents progressive force for change and social

\(^{31}\) (Giddens, 1991)
mobility [fashion]. While a progressive concept, historical iconography act as emblems of cool’s core values and aesthetics. Mythologies giving it legitimacy through connection of traditions, longevity and extents of existence (Benjamin, 2008). Preserving those aspects which hold onto their alien-form, edgy-appeal or desirability, while discarding those possessing no further attraction or suitability. Cool therefore seems a constant-negotiation of contemporary subjectivity and their relationships with traditions and their expected future trajectories [Figure 3.2].

![Diagram of Social Mobility and Cool's Continuum]

Figure 3.2: Relationship Model Between Cool’s Continuum and its Cycles of Fashion

Chapter’s 2 & 3 have synthesised numerous matters that were hitherto not clearly understood in the literature. Opening up areas which require further research and discussion. It has also presented how the complexities of contemporary life have placed impositions on consumers who must build and collectivise their identities through various means. Insecurities and apparent-choice mean ‘identity-projects’ often seem fraught-experiences filled with anxieties. Any relationship between cool and ontological security/insecurity, however, requires further empirical investigation to understand connections for consumers. This thesis will therefore now proceed to Chapter 4 to discuss the methods used for exploring cool in these theoretical contexts.
Chapter 4 - Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological framework for the case-study research. Addressing the research objective; ‘2) To develop an appropriate methodological framework for investigating cool within the selected case-studies and through appropriate lenses’. It begins by defending the decision to use an interpretivist approach. The overall research strategy is then introduced, and the methods explained. The rationale for each case-study; a) Skateboarding, b) Surfing and c) Caravanning are each given. The qualitative research methods used across the case-studies are then described, detailing the research locations and participants. The chapter concludes by explaining the method of analysis used for generating themes and their units of analysis.

This structure and order of the chapter is summarised and presented in Figure 4.1 below:

![Figure 4.1: Structure and Order of the Methodology Chapter](image)

Each area is detailed in the following sections.
4.1 Research Perspectives

The Social-sciences are a broad field of the humanities. They involve the study of individuals and groups, theorising human behaviours and structuring their social interactions (Dogan, 2001; Hammersley, 2014; Mallette, 2014; Thomson & Walker, 2010). By considering the complexities of diversity, group organisation and cultural convergences (Eagleton, 2004; Law, 2004), the social-sciences can therefore inform many of the critical interactions that affect business and educational practices (Flyvbjerg, 2001). To be credible, however, social-science research methods must be theoretically consistent (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Law, 2004). A cogent paradigm, therefore, helps create research integrity which informs the nature of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This section therefore articulates the ontological, epistemological and methodological stances for this thesis and pertains to all the research questions, the data collections and their forms of analysis (Shankar, et al., 2001).

4.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology

This research is contained within an interpretivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). One that permits interdisciplinary relationships to be assembled (ibid) but requires transparency, reflexivity and theoretical consistency to provide necessary rigour (Antonacopoulou, 2010). The inherent dangers of self-subjectivism being the Achilles-heel of such interpretivist approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This thesis views a person’s reality as being grounded by their sensibilities as a subject (Foucault, 1983). It recognises consumers having multiple realities, which are socially constructed and culturally learnt (Butler, 1990; Hall, 2004; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1992; Foucault, 1983; Mansfield, 2000; Moran, 2015). A subjectivity that is affected by culture, levels of agency and any processes of subjectivisation or objectification (Butler, 1990; Du Bois, 1989; Foucault, 1971; 1983; Moran 2015). Texts, cultures and social-structures are therefore viewed as being open to alternative perspectives by consumers who interpret them (Barry, et al., 1996). They do not stand for some single-truth but contribute to the discourses in circulation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The social and cultural environments which subjects are exposed to, influences their processes of acculturation, affecting their emotions and aesthetic feelings (Adorno, 2013; Benjamin, 1970; Kant, 2003; Phelps, et al., 2005). They instigate interactions of the senses or states of perception, which can focus or distract attention (Rookes & Willson, 2000). Acting subconsciously, pre-consciously, consciously or imaginatively as mental images or dreams (Benjamin, 1970; Freud, 2005; Lacan, 1977). Higher-reasoning selectively processes these experiences through subjectivity (Hall, 2004; Kant, 2011; Mansfield, 2000) as individuals, strategically present themselves for social
reasons (Goffman, 1959). This causes provoked thoughts, imaginations or feelings to often be repressed by mental force (Freud, 2005).

As imaginations cannot be seen it is how they are expressed and embodied that often allows researchers to interpret their intentions (Seregina, 2014). Such ideas or desires can be materially presented through language, signs, tropes, gestures, performance, lifestyle, fashion and art (Barthes, 1967; 1967a; Benjamin, 1970; 2002; Chandler, 2017; Mauss, 1973; Saussure, 1916/2011; Veblen, 1899). They are sometimes mass-produced and disseminated as creative art and media. Forming representations or simulacra whose mass-spectacles become fetishized and distractedly consumed, together with their imbued politics (Adorno, 2013; Baudrillard, 1972; Benjamin, 2008; Kang, 2014). Such representations often hold commonly held desires, fears, fantasies or represent cultural movements (Heidegger, 1996). Their popular appeal informing something of the temporal subjectivities and paradigms that were dominant or shared (ibid).

4.1.2 Marketing as a Social-Science

While important, the social-sciences have been criticised as not being relevant enough to business practice and society in general (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Academic marketing has also faced similar criticisms. Viewed as not always being critical enough towards marketing’s negative impacts on consumers and societies (Brown, et al., 1998; Quinn & Patterson, 2013; Maclaran, et al., 2007). As a result, the aspirations, future direction and central paradigms of marketing have been heavily contested32. Paradigm wars, which in marketing terms where figure-headed by the positivistic, Shelby D. Hunt, who argued that marketing had to be deterministic to be relevant, versus the more sociologically founded subjective relativism of Paul Anderson (Kavanagh, 1994). Hunt saw postmodernism as nihilistic (ibid), but CCT has helped to address some of the criticisms of interpretive research’s applicability to marketing (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Helping rebrand interpretivist marketing scholarship, giving a structure for research and an organised community of advocates (Arnould & Thompson, 2015). The ongoing success of the CCT research community is testament to a recognition of this discursive nature of knowledge building and cooperation (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2015). This is important, as building a research collective, requires appreciation of other contributions (Antonacopoulou, 2010; 2013).

Multiple marketing paradigms therefore do now coexist, including; quantitative, scientific rationality (Hunt, 1991), business and economics (Kotler, 1991), social constructivism (Anderson, 1983), interpretivist (Brown, 1996; Brown, et al., 1998; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1992; Kavanagh, 1994) as well as critical theorists who strive to hold marketing to account (Maclaran, et al., 2007).

4.1.3 Consumer Research as a Social-Science

The field of consumer research also resides within the social sciences (Belk, 1984; Deighton, 2007; Hirschman, 1986; Kernan, 1995; Macinnes & Folkes, 2009). It has been argued, however, that it might be beneficial for consumer research to be viewed as both independent and interdisciplinary, acting beyond marketing’s boundaries (Jacoby, 1976; Lutz, 1989; Mick, 2003; Wilkie & Moore, 2003). Macinnes & Folkes (2009), however, recommend that expanding the field from its core of understanding consumers, would not be judicious to the fields of consumer behaviour or marketing. Consumer research should be viewed as multi-disciplinary not interdisciplinary (ibid) and principally address marketing theory.

4.1.4 CCT as a Branch of Consumer Research

CCT as a discipline of consumer research seeks to illuminate the socio-cultural complexities of consumers (Graeber, 2011; Joy & Li, 2012). It is rooted towards naturalistic, multi-sited and varied research contexts, which generate broader insights into their behaviours (Anderson, 1986; Belk, 1976; 1986; Belk, et al., 1988; Belk, et al., 1989; Brown, 2009; Joy & Li, 2012).

It investigates their; i) deliberations, feelings, sensibilities, and actions; ii) self-selective behaviours; iii) identity preservation and change; iv) the symbolic uses of possessions; v) the creation of distinctive consumption communities; and vi) the effects of institutional forces and their relationships (Allen, 2002; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2015; Belk, 1992; Dobscha & Ozanne, 2001; Kates, 2002; Macinnes & Folkes, 2009; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). CCT is also interested in forms of cultural and ideological transmission. Through either; vii) their sociality; viii) the instrumentality of the market-place; or ix) mass-mediated systems of meaning (McQuarrie & Mick, 1999; Scott, 1990; Sherry & Camargo, 1987; Stern, 1993). It therefore provides structure for studying consumers empirically, but also through the various forms of cultural and commercial media which influences them (Joy & Li, 2012; Macinnes & Folkes, 2009). The concept of intertextuality importantly allows such diverse texts to be viewed relationally, which adds multiplicity of relevance (Allen, 2011; Joy & Li, 2012; Fitchett & Caruana, 2015).

CCT actively encourages an awareness that marketplaces are awash with cultural mythologies and traditions which are steeped with political ideologies (Zhao & Belk, 2008). They are often, however, not literal in meaning as consumers, advertisers and
the cultural industries use sophisticated emotional content, metaphorical coding or tropes (Adorno, 2013; Brown, 1996; 2005; Brown & Turley, 1997; Chandler, 2017; Kozinets, et al., 2017). Consumers are perceived as absorbing, interpreting and contesting these messages embedded in forms of media and advertising (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). A consumer culture which now criss-crosses national and local boundaries, forming imagined communities whose co-constitutive connections mean marketers can construct messages for them (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Cayla & Eckhardt, 2008; Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). Consumer communities, therefore, become engaged in co-creation activities dispersed through social media (Brown & Patterson, 2009). Such displays of personal authentication or status corroboration, shape public identity and by becoming integrally woven into marketing discourses, affect their consumption choices (Belk, et al., 2010; Brown & Turley, 1997). CCT therefore encourages innovative research methods to decode these multifarious messages, whilst also warning that credibility is paramount in avoiding self-subjectivity (Tracy, 2010).

Theoretical lenses that aid their disassembly can, however, be applied either uniquely or pluralistically to give structures to their analysis (Belk, 2010; Epp & Price, 2010; Epp & Price, 2011; Humphreys, 2010; Joy & Li, 2012; Kozinets, 2001; Moisander & Valtonen, 2006; Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008; Venkatesh, et al., 2010).

### 4.1.5 Case-Study Research

Case-study research allows aspects of a phenomena to be more coherently described or explained, through the systematic inquiry of communities or related events (Bromley, 1990). They tend to be used prospectively to inform research (Zucker, 2009). Case-studies are appropriate when the phenomena under the microscope has histories of meanings or a chronicle that the cases can uniquely help inform (Neale, et al., 2006; Zucker, 2009). This is usually from a range of documents, documentary sources, archives, physical artefacts, participant interviews and researcher observations (Yin, 1994).

Case-study research, however, has been criticised as giving overwhelming quantities of rich data that are so bound to their contexts, they can struggle to provide more generalizable results (Adams & White, 1994; Perry, et al., 1998). They do, however, make valuable contributions if they reveal knowledge that transcends their particular cases (Yin, 1994). It necessitating a discussion of their wider findings, connections and abstractions towards broader themes (Blichfeldt, 2009; Perry, et al., 1998). Such research can, however, give comprehensive and richly developed material, helping to describe the phenomena in new and interesting ways (Neale, et al., 2006, p. 4). Indeed, CCT looks to develop key insights into the abstract and heterogeneous nature of consumers’ lives, informing the contextual, representational, symbolic, heuristic and experiential incidences of consumption, which multiple case-study research can provide (Joy & Li, 2012).
The number and types of case-studies used in a research thesis depends upon the goals of the research (Zucker, 2009). When a broader phenomenon is under the microscope, collective cases can help inquire into that wider meaning, but also enrichen the research as intrinsic cases which help to develop deeper understandings (Stake, 1995). As the unit of analysis can vary in case-study research (Zucker, 2009), rigour and design should allow for the level of sophistication this introduces (Feigin, et al., 1991). The use of collective cases, their relationship to each other and the broader phenomena remains controversial. Yin (1984), however, explained that theoretical generalisation in case research is what statistical generalisation is to scientific experiment. In interpretivist case-study research instead of internal and external validity, attributes of trustworthiness and authenticity must be emphasised (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). It is also important that findings are credible to insiders and others, but critically transferable to other contexts through theoretical conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In collective case-study research which investigates a broader phenomenon, a negative case is recommended as a ‘deviant’ study (Zucker, 2009). It gives critical perspectives, comparisons and contrasts, which increase researcher diligence (ibid). The validity, trustworthiness and credibility of case-research findings, though, are deeply affected by researcher generated bias, through choice of case material, informants and the researcher’s interpretations (Yin, 1994). To limit this effect, Yin (2004) recommended comprehensive data-gathering methods that give multiple perspectives beyond the new-field accounts from informants. These sources should include the prior literature and secondary research data. The danger remains, however, of distortion by processes of entextualization created through selection of these sources and material (Parker, 2003; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2011). Sampling stages are therefore crucial within qualitative case-study research methods (Silverman, 2000; Stake, 1994; Stake, 1995).

4.2 Research Strategy

Cool has been “the most influential contribution American culture has made to global aesthetics and style” (Dinerstein, 2013, p. 109). Culturally and aesthetically, parading something highly influential and distinctly American to the world (McGuigan, 2013). It has also historically reflected the global dominance of American media and brands (Frank, 1997; Stearns, 1994). Cool, though, has transmissive properties (Taylor, 2009) and through successive processes of commodification and co-option has come to mean more than simple derivations of American style, diversifying into many other categories as well (Belk et al, 2010; Dinerstein, 2013; Schor & Ford, 2007). In these continuously emerging circumstances, firms engage in sponsorship and co-creation activities which link their brand to whichever lifestyles or subcultures are temporally considered cool (Gladwell, 1997; 2000; Klein, 2000/2010; Taylor, 2009). This means that risky subcultures such as skateboarding and surfing are sometimes considered
contemporary producers of cool and therefore utilised by commercial brands (Belk, et al., 2010; Quartz & Asp, 2015). Their growth as attractive lifestyles, mirror the kinds of mimicry and shared-affiliations noted in other global consumer communities (Askegaard, et al., 2005; Cayla & Eckhardt, 2008; Frank, 1997; Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006).

Skateboarding and surfing often both necessitate performativity, which clearly demarcates practitioners from those who are more peripheral or outside of the culture. Requiring the successful integration of props. Important as “with regard to cool, there is also a certain performance that a consumption object may demand of us if we are to successfully incorporate the object into our presentation” (Wooten & Mourey, 2013, p. 11). Using skateboarding and surfing as case-studies therefore allows consumer experiences of identity to be explored together with their tensions. Investigating caravanning as a third deviant case-study, more sophisticatedly informs the broader investigation by checking the importance of cool to a wider diaspora of consumers, who in conventional terms are not assumed to be influenced by cool trends or fashions. The lack of use of caravanning by youth-brands in the production of cool, underlines an image-problem at least in terms of coolness. Each case-study therefore provides the opportunity to use illustrative instances of how firms sometimes represent themselves in these contexts. They provide market-systems that allow the exploration of how they relate to individual and shared-identities (Henry, 2005; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Luedicke, et al., 2010; Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

It is recognised this is a progressive type of research, but investigating cool requires multiple sources of subjectivity and environmental contexts to give richer descriptions. This is important when researching phenomena with generalizable appeal or exhibiting cross-use in everyday life (Eisenhart & Johnstone, 2008). Particularly important for understanding individual feelings towards ontological security or their individual insecurities (Giddens, 1991). How they interrelate for subjects and how market systems legitimise or close them off as identity choices.

Each case-study is now introduced:

4.2.1 Case-Study A: Skateboarding

Skateboarding is an extreme, urban sporting activity which acts as a catalyst for street fashion (Dixon, 2016, p. 75). It confers an “elusive cool” and “a perceived authenticity derived from underground youth styles” (p. 75). Companies such as Vans [Global Revenues of over $2B (Borden, 2016), who operate over 585 retail outlets (VF Corporation, 2017)], closely align with skateboarding. Partly to confer the benefits to
its global brand by relying heavily upon collaborations with creative practitioners 33 (Turner, 2016). Remaining “widely recognizable as a sign of (risky) youth” subcultures (Dixon, 2016, p. 76). It often being used by advertisers “to celebrate all things edgy” (p. 76). Skateboarding is valued as it is highly visual, promoting stark aesthetics which appeal to youth through media (ibid). From primitive beginnings, skateboarding has grown into “a global culture” (p. 78). Now “fully integrated with communications networks and digital imaging, inextricably connected to the vast, enveloping operations of the market” (Schaffer, 2016, p. 28):

“From Los Angeles to London, Osaka to Sao Paulo, representations of skateboarding abound, whether in advertising photos, televised competitions, video games, or affiliated with clothes and shoe fashions”

(Dixon, 2016, p. 75)

Physical and cultural developments in skateboarding have reflected social and technological changes (Marcus, 2011). Each urban context has changed modes of social engagement and repression of the practice (Lombard, 2016). The local contexts skateboarding occurs in (Borden, 2001; Lombard, 2016) also moulds specific skateboarding communities (Schaffer, 2016). Skateboarding, therefore offers a highly interesting context which informs many of the areas of interest identified in Chapters 2 and 3.

4.2.2 Case-Study B: Surfing

Surfing stands for something more primeval and soulful than skateboarding, where immersion in the natural power of the sun, sea, wind and surf provokes a primitive mind and body experience which purifies and renews (Canniford & Karababa, 2013; Canniford & Shankar, 2013). Coasts are awash with these natural forces, creating spectacles of bright-sunlight, sunrises and sunsets which produce vivid and contrasting colours that sparkle and please the senses (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Riding Giants, 2004). Pleasures that are linked with “the sublime and romanticism” (Ford & Brown, 2006, p. 3) or sublime beauty (Kant, 2000). The “raw power and energy of the sea” (Ford & Brown, 2006, p. 3) represents a “recurring image of wild nature” (p. 9). That “blend of pleasure, terror, and beauty that nature can inspire (Burke1757/1987)” (Canniford & Shankar, 2013, p. 1052). Many intrepid adventurers have utilised such sublime natural wonders to develop their own self-knowledge, authenticity and expand their ‘edges’ (MacFarlane, 2003). As a result, forms of leisure where risk-taking creates direct communion with the sublime in nature tend to be highly valued (Stranger, 2016).

Surf-culture has often held a distinct place in cool’s natural appeal (Quartz & Asp, 2015). At times affecting popular “fashion, music, literature, films, art, jargon, and

33 Vans has 7.2 million followers on Instagram, Vansskate (1.2m), and over 16 million likes on Facebook.
more” (Neil, 2015, p. 1). It remains a hugely popular, if exclusive, recreational activity for those fortunate to live near good surf (Finney & Houston, 1996). With a reckoned thirty-seven million surfers globally and over two million in the USA alone (Klick, et al., 2016). The practice is not pleasurable for everybody, however, needing a discipline to practice the art in all weathers and often dangerous conditions (Morgan & Coutts, 2016). Surfing’s superficial image can be attractive for an individual’s image by evoking associations with paradisiacal locations. Brands which associate with it can therefore purvey an attractive, youthful and exotic identity (Transworld Business, 2008). Surfing’s image therefore acts well beyond the subculture (ibid). For example, a Consumer Insights Study issued by SIMA\textsuperscript{34}, estimated that 66.5 million American adults had bought or were interested in buying surfing inspired products, despite the clear majority not being surfers (Surfer Today, 2017).

Surfing, therefore, also informs many areas of interest identified in Chapters 2 and 3, but in an entirely different leisure and lifestyle context to urban skateboarding.

4.2.3 Case-Study C: Caravanning

The popular BBC television series’ ‘Top Gear’ and ‘Caravanner of the Year’ have generated criticisms of caravanning and somewhat typecast its practitioners. Tourer caravans particularly catching the ire of other motorists:

\begin{quote}
“Here I am in the enemies’ lair and let me make one thing absolutely clear. We have nothing against the Caravanner per se. If you want to cook a delicious fish finger sandwich here, or wash up there, or get the scrabble out of here, or dry up here, or relax here, or do something with the person from the adjacent caravan over there. That is absolutely fine by us. All we normal people object to is being held up whilst you drive around at 15 mile an hour, moving your mobile house from one location to the next. That’s all”.
\end{quote}

\textit{Top Gear - Inside the Caravan, 2015}

The BBC4 documentary Caravans: A British Love Affair (2009), captured part of the irritation: “Places like Cornwall, the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, places that are rural which were then seen as backwards, a long way from cities they’re kind of undiscovered”, but “you start getting reports in the newspapers about huge traffic jams, all these sort of caravanner’s descend on the Lake District for a bank holiday weekend” causing huge tailbacks.

Caravanning is perceived as provincial\textsuperscript{35}, associated with lower cost holidaying and peripheral, suburban family-oriented lifestyles which allows their garaging (van Heerden, 2011). To many planners and environmentalists, they represent an obstructively uniform cluster of ugly white-boxes which despoil beautiful landscapes (Southerton, et al., 2001). Congregated in one of 100,000 designated commercial

\textsuperscript{34} Surf Industry Manufacturers Association

\textsuperscript{35} The West Midlands region of England, has more caravans per head than any other county.
caravan parks (National Caravan Council, 2017a). Populated, “disproportionately by Caucasian’s in traditional male/female relationships, either with children or empty-nesters” and socialising on sites and with those having “similar characteristics, lifestyles or interests” (Cameron, 2011, p. 436).

The slightly awkward on-site interactions mean that the presence of individuals from other subjectivities sometimes make caravanner’s feel more guarded, particularly in relaxed or humorous social settings, as they often fear inadvertently causing offence or harm (Cameron, 2011, p. 436). In reverse, other isolated, objectified categories can feel and become more submissive, seeking to conform to the subculture in these strained social settings (p. 436).

Despite its peculiar image problems, however, caravanning remains an extremely popular recreational pursuit with over 51 million holiday-nights per year being spent in an estimated 550,000 touring, 205,000 motorhomes and 330,000 static-caravans just in the UK (National Caravan Council, 2017a). Caravanning has therefore evolved into a specialised form of drive-and-park based tourism (McClymont, et al., 2011) as a unique form of leisure and a lifestyle choice (van Heerden, 2011). Despite its stigmatised image, it is estimated to contribute over £6 Billion p.a. to the UK economy through sales of core-products and residual services (National Caravan Council, 2017a):

“Caravanning in its widest context is a major generator of income and employment within the national economy. Visitors boost the local communities, particularly in the summer months, by creating seasonal employment opportunities and by supporting local shops, restaurants and other businesses”

(National Caravan Council, 2017)

Caravanner’s view their lifestyles positively and their caravans with hard-fought love, uniquely providing them with a sense of escape (Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009). Freedom or autonomy have previously been linked to cool (McCracken, 2009; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Warren & Campbell, 2014), but caravanning’s apparent freedom’s also offers the potential for incongruities to be exposed. Caravanning, therefore, enables many of the areas of interest identified in Chapters 2 and 3 to be explored as a deviant case. The identity work of consumers within the structures of this market-place, providing potential contrasts and
convergences to skateboarding and surfing. Also informing searches for ontological security and how anxieties and insecurities are managed by consumers.

4.3 Case-Study Research Methods

To complete the case-study research, various complementary interpretive research techniques were used to gather the data (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). This entextualization and intertextuality of sources, giving a more complete view of the discourses in circulation (Gee, 2005). The methods employed within each case-study are therefore described:

4.3.1 Literature Review

A full literature review was completed for each case-study. Books and journal articles that have discussed them as subcultures, lifestyles or the practice as a unique phenomenon were examined. It considered their socio-cultural and commercial histories and the most contemporary works that discuss them. This allowed an understanding of how each practice has come into being, how they have evolved and how they continue to change (Parker, 2015).

4.3.2 Literary and Textual Analysis

Literary, cultural, market and consumer texts are legitimate sources for research in CCT as they improve understanding of phenomena (Fitchett, et al., 2014; Fitchett & Caruana, 2015; Joy & Lin, 2012; Macinnes & Folkes, 2009). They help reveal the promotion and signification of any prevailing discourses in society, acting as “systems of meaning that channel and reproduce consumers’ thoughts and actions” (Joy & Li, 2012, p. 153). Helping to construct social discourses towards important identity constructs such as ethnicity, gender, and beauty (Berger, et al., 1972). They permit a far greater appreciation of consumer’s expanding mind-sets, desires, and fantasies (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Grayson, 1986; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Such cultural materials also represent esthetic consumption (Mick, 1986), which is one of the drivers and transmitters of cool (Frank, 1997; Hebdige, 2007). Publicly available, cultural information, artefacts and media (Hammersley, & Traianou, 2012, p. 81), were therefore used to enrich the case-study research. They included documentary films, subculturally important movies, audio-visual footage, User-Generated-Content (UGC), social-media, websites and blogs. This, however, was from the perspective of cultural discourses and did not include the investigation of individual subjects or their social-identities.

4.3.2.1 Documentary Film Sources

Documentary films use an “aesthetic of objectivity”, which gives an illusion of unmediated access to the real world while providing a flow between fact and fiction (Denzin, 2004, p. 238). Documentary films, however, can give audio-visual access to
the perspectives and reflections of prominent figures or celebrity practitioners, through performance and recorded interviews. Providing perspectives, accounts and insights unavailable elsewhere. Important sections of them were therefore transcribed to enrich the research. These types of sources were less available for the caravanning study as there are few celebrities famed for their caravanning ability, while documentaries investigating caravanning as a practice are rarely produced. Caravanner’s, however, are increasingly finding a voice to explain their practice through UGC.

4.3.2.2 Subcultural Films

Fictional films are rehearsed and staged but still seek authenticity (Adorno, 2013). They use “framing devices, which mediate, and define reality for the viewer” (Denzin, 2004, p. 240). Films are useful as research materials as they can easily transmit what is difficult to describe (Weigel, 2015). Using extremes, exaggerations, caricatures or highly-condensed material for effect (Belk, et al., 2010; Demiryol, 2012; Schrag, 1970). To produce interest and be retained as desire, however, they must sublimate their passions as a disinterest in their overall effect exerts their artistic purity (Adorno, 2013). Their wisdoms or truth-content being “more relevant the more inconspicuously and intimately it is bound up with” the subject matter (Benjamin, 1970, p. 10). Films, “(and photographs)”, therefore, “speak a language of emotion, and meaning” (Denzin, 2004, p. 240). Able to communicate things that are at the limits of language or are jeopardised by it (Benjamin, 2008; Berger, et al., 1972; Weigel, 2015). They powerfully convey aesthetics, personality, styles of movement and cultural tastes (Benjamin, 2008; Hebdige 2004). Unifying and binding social and cultural meanings while satisfying consumer fantasies (Adorno, 2013; Demiryol, 2012; Schrag, 1970). Capturing in sedimented forms the temporal and collective reactions, sensibilities and styles (Adorno, 2013; Heidegger, 1996) of the subculture or practice. As finished works they demarcate and separate from the empirical world, but can be reified by consumers and have lives of their own (Adorno, 2013). Those that endure keep the striking nature of the subject matter “while the truth content” somehow holds “its original concealment” (Benjamin, 1970, p. 10). Such films and documentaries place idols within the radius of global audiences (Levitt, 1983; Pringle, 2004). Consumers use and interpret films to facilitate how they might approach empirical situations (Baudrillard, 1988; Belk, et al., 2003; Cashmore, 2006; Kerrigan, et al., 2011; McCracken, 2005). Holding a unique authority and being intuitively accepted as common sense (Berger, et al., 1972; Hebdige, 2007). Consumers therefore use them to reconcile their own identity choices (Goffman, 1959; Wilson, 2008). Offering them an ‘imaginarium’ of possibilities (Kerrigan, et al., 2011). Iteratively and imaginatively testing their likely identity outcomes based on a correct-cultivation and presentation of their individuality (Wilson, 2008). Consumer’s, therefore, star-test more than they star-gaze (ibid).
Studying various forms of (subcultural) films therefore claims legitimacy through their roles in cultural learning and identity formation (Baudrillard, 1988; Belk, et al., 2003; Benjamin, 1970; Benjamin, 2008, Cashmore, 2006; Kerrigan, et al., 2011; McCracken, 2005; Wilson, 2008). Often being “a key way of learning about coolness” (Belk, et al., 2010, p. 196). Films and media can therefore be read as visual texts, audio texts, the narratives that link them or through their subjectively held meanings for viewers (Denzin, 2004). The critic, however, must also attempt to find the truth-content or wisdoms, which requires seeing beyond the subject matter (Benjamin, 1970). This is achieved by stripping away normality and breaking apart the material, to disrobe layers of meaning which unveils their politics (ibid).

4.3.2.3 Digital and Social Media

“Contemporary society is marked by the pervasiveness and ubiquity of digital technologies of communication and consequently, by a deluge of digital data that has saturated our everyday lives” (Caliandro & Gandini, 2016)\textsuperscript{36}. “The development of new information and communication technologies and their growth in our life-world have led to the formation of novel interactive situations and forms of communication” (Bergmann & Meier, 2004, p. 247). Bringing, unprecedented innovation and intrinsically becoming part of consumer’s everyday practices (Caliandro & Gandini, 2016). Creating unscripted information collectives in the form of pictures, audio-visual recordings and texts (Bergmann & Meier, 2004). Increasingly based around UGC and focussed towards making connections and social contact (Caliandro & Gandini, 2016). In this new phase of social media, the dichotomy between real and virtual has been transcended as anonymity is eroded (Rogers, 2009). Individuals now experiment with their selves freed from material constraints, as their social relations no longer rely just on face-to-face interactions (Caliandro & Gandini, 2016). Practicing impression management by giving a credible image of themselves while complying with the multiple norms of their various viewers and social-circles (ibid). It is collaborative as their success or failure is largely determined by the direct feedback of those audiences (ibid).

Social-media has brought people into contact who share some common consciousness, traditions, or rituals and often develop feelings of responsibility towards those virtual communities (Caliandro & Gandini, 2016; Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Gusfield, 1978; Muñiz & O’Guinn, 2001). The opportunities created by digital realms and the limitations of devices and individual social media platforms affect the agency of actors who use them, contextualising the opportunities and constraints for social interactivity by configuring available forms of engagement (boyd, 2011; Caliandro & Gandini,

Due to the opportunities that digital-media provides for connecting and viewing public and commercial materials and media, contemporary web-sites, UGC, magazine and journalistic interview sources also informed the research. This, however, was from the perspective of cultural discourses and did not include the investigation of individual subjects or their social-identities.

4.3.2.4 Method of Analysis

Film and increasingly UGC media has the unique technological capability of capturing and representing life (Holbrook & Grayson, 1986). The individual styles of personal movements or fields of action, however, can often appear at too fast a rate for the naked-eye (Benjamin, 2008). Adorno’s (2013) example of fireworks illustrates how the mind’s-eye cannot capture all the detail but can selectively and retrospectively visualise the overall effects or individual details. This means that certain things are missed by being placed out of cursory focus (Benjamin, 1970). The properties of moving images, however, allows the critic to re-analyse them with microscopic attention (Benjamin, 2008; Denzin, 2004). Repetitive, and forensic examination of film’s imagery and aural effects extends comprehension through an unexpected, emerging field of action (Benjamin, 1999). The aim being to break the distracted viewing state (Adorno, 2013). Freeze-frames and slow-motion, allow the background and periphery, aesthetic constellations and their symbolism, expressions, subtle gestures, etiquettes and motion to be seen (Benjamin, 1999; 2008). Consciously noting things that the unconscious mind might have noticed or was intended to see (Benjamin, 1970; Heidegger, 1996). Human motion can be viewed differently, giving clues to personality and sexuality as mystery is mostly visually delivered[38] (Berger, et al., 1972). Their exploration allows meditative, phenomenological and subjective interpretations of their symbolic meaning (Fennell, 1985). Signs themselves are somewhat imposed as they are formed through associations (ibid). Signs themselves are somewhat imposed as they

4.3.2.5 Semiotics

Semiotics deals with the analysis of such signs (Chandler, 2017). Under Ferdinand de Saussure’s [1857-1913] model, the signifier is represented as the acoustic sign which is interpreted by the subject as the signified (Chandler, 2017). This being some concept formed through associations (ibid). Signs themselves are somewhat imposed as they

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[37] This “bridging of theory” ties in with a wider tendency within contemporary scholarship to “go beyond the philological or historical-critical analysis of Benjamin’s works in their original context” to provide alternative paradigm within disciplinary fields beyond the scope of his life and recognition (Goebel, 2011: p. 489).
have past legacies with resulting connotations (Saussure, 1916/2011). For this reason, they cannot be arbitrarily changed (ibid). Chandler explained that their meaning is usually assigned as denotation or connotation. Denotation being the obvious, literal or common-sense meaning, whereas connotation is more of an implied aesthetic function (Chandler, 2017). Connotation is polysemic and more open to interpretation (ibid). Barthes (1967a) argues there being different orders of signification; while denotation is the first order, connotation is the second. They lead to a chain of other connotations, each containing the signifier and signified:

“A film or a picture can be read as having meaning at two different levels. The first is the literal, or ‘realist’, level. This is a picture of ‘X’. A literal reading takes a visual representation on ‘face value’. It asks, ‘What does this representation say about X?’ The second level of meaning is the one that is below the surface. It is the one that suggests that there is more going on here than just a representation of ‘X’. Readings at this level are called subversive. They challenge, go beneath, and go beyond the surface, literal interpretations of a text”

(Denzin, 2004, p. 240)

What is particularly challenging, is the literal meaning of these combinations is complicated by the use of rhetorical tropes, whether in dialogue or visual signs (Chandler, 2017). A trope being a way that meanings are distorted from meaning one thing to meaning something else (Watt, 1998). There are four basic tropes; metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy and irony (Chandler, 2017). The first three can serve to emphasise certain characteristics and downplay others (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980):

i) **Metaphorical substitution** involves replacing the signifier and the signified concept with a similar but more well-defined and understood concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This is not always verbal, for example in film or photography (Harper, 2004) metaphors can be implied by comparing two shots (Chandler, 2017). Metaphors can be orientational, ontological or structural and vary between cultures (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). ii) **Metonymy** relies on the direct association between two concepts that are grounded in experience (Chandler, 2017). They are widely used in advertising to imply associating with one thing will lead to another (ibid). A iii) **synecdoche** is where a part of something is used to describe the whole (Lanham, 1969). It emphasises the whole as carrying the same manner as the part depicted (Chandler, 2017). iv) **Irony** is the most radical of the tropes, appearing to signify something but actually signifying something very different (ibid). According to Chandler, they can be based on dissimilarity or disjunction, meaning the opposite or an understatement or overstatement as exaggeration. Irony being a double sign, whereas the other tropes represent shifts in meaning (ibid). Being associated with traits of reflexiveness, detachment or scepticism, representing a cynical stance which in sustained use implies nihilism or relativism (ibid).

The principals of critical visual research rely on “looking and feeling” and relating research questions to key scenes, texts, and images through “structured microanalysis” to search for patterns (Denzin, 2004, p. 242). A structured framework was therefore
developed for analysing subcultural visual media and UGC, considering aesthetics, signs, and tropes as well as the process of transcribing texts. It created a repetitive structure that sought to break distraction.

### 4.3.3 Empirical Research

Literature and literary reviews can give valuable insights into the history and discourses prevalent in each subculture. In qualitative, empirical research, however, there is a requirement to suspend this knowledge (Meinefeld, 2004). This is with the aim of reducing preconceptions or theoretical hypothesis, creating an openness in the researcher to find new or alternative discoveries (ibid). There is, however, an inevitable tendency to place observations through the researcher’s schemata. They structure observations (ibid). There is, however, also a recognition of the need to consider the findings and research goals as defined from the literature review (ibid). The “corpus of general theoretical concepts” that have contributed “to the researcher’s basic definition of the object” of research (p. 157). These challenges require the structuring of the research prior to entering the field (Meinefeld, 2004; Wolff, 2004). To provide high-quality, qualitative research it is therefore important that the research process is documented, and the sources of the information and their perspectives are explained (Steinke, 2004).

#### 4.3.3.1 Research Locations

In entering or gaining access to the subculture or lifestyle, the researcher must first “succeed in making contact with the chosen research field” and stimulate “the informants to cooperate” (Wolff, 2004, p. 195). It means the researcher positioning themselves in respect to the field (ibid) to “carry out appropriately planned research, or at least not significantly inhibit relevant freedom of action” (p. 196). Making time for conversations, enduring embarrassment, giving up physical space and limiting their own communication needs in public-places, social-milieu or tribal-groups (ibid). Many of the skateboard research locations were based on regular access and the availability of local sites. In the cases of surfing and caravanning this was more difficult. It relied on the researcher travelling to spaces where the practice and its informants naturally occurred, or by prearranging meetings with them in their home or neutral locations.

#### 4.3.3.2 Selection, Sampling, and Case Construction

Selection decisions in research occur during data collection, interpretation and the presentation of material (Flick, 2002; Merkens, 2004). The research participants were selected through contact within field-locations, creating a supply of new participants, while also developing snowball sampling that expanded “organic social networks” and their “social dynamics” (Noy, 2008, p. 327). The research process therefore enabled informants to suggest new interviewees (Wolff, 2004). It is normal, for this type of research to take on new forms as it develops, but it is also important to describe how
these sample stages are formed, as they establish levels of intersubjectivity (Merkens, 2004). As a result, the research sampling sought diverse forms of practitioners, by travelling to a wide variety of unconnected locations.

**4.3.3.3 Participant Observation in Naturalistic Field-Research**

The research study involved field observation and sometimes personal participation (Lüders, 2004). In these research contexts, the researcher is subordinate to the situation which is driven “by the participating informants, the forms and circumstances of their lives and” its imponderables (p. 226). This means “a flexible use of different methodological approaches in accordance with the particular situation and issue” (p. 226). Conversations being “arranged with naturally occurring groups” in live settings (p. 226). During some participant observations, due to the number of people in attendance and a lack of control over who entered the field, informed-consent was impractical to obtain for every attendee, which is normal (Murphy & Dingwall, p. 342; Murchison, 2010, p. 61). Too much control can be detrimental for naturalistic research as research spaces are often open and public (Arnould, 1998). In these circumstances an ‘ad-hoc’ application of ethical best-practice is recommended (ibid). “Unlike audio-visual recording techniques, which preserve in concrete form what has happened interactively, observation protocols are concerned with the result of a ‘transformational process’, organized “by means of a post hoc typologizing, narrative, and interpretive representation” as “reconstructive preservation” (Lüders, 2004, p. 228). When spontaneous or naturalistic interactions, however, developed to a stage where gaining consent became possible and necessary, it was obtained. Only on the mandatory basis of gaining this formal consent were interviews performed. This enabled the field data to be enriched with semi-structured and narrative interviews; recorded, transcribed or annotated, and then collectively assembled (Wengraf, 2001).

**4.3.3.4 Auto-ethnographical Field-Work**

Auto-ethnography is a research method, which seeks to analyse personal experience to understand cultural experience (Ellis, et al., 2011; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Reed-Danahay, 1997). Useful for recording the researcher’s observations on entering the field, including any unpleasantness or irritation (Steinke, 2004). It deeply affects the researcher’s positioning in the arena. “The ways in which one introduces and presents oneself, and subsequently ‘joins in’ the game, are stages and processes in terms of which the ethnographer’s position in the field of available relationships is negotiated and defined” (Lüders, 2004, p. 226). It develops an empathy with each practice, fostering increased contacts with subcultural informants, which benefits the other qualitative methods used. It also develops familiarity with the self and the pluralistic nature of phenomenological experiences. Arrival in the field is never complete but is often marked by changes in stylization, improved relations, emotional feelings of
arrival or an overturning of perspective (Wolff, 2004). It challenges traditional research methods, however, as it requires reflexivity and introspection:

“The active participation of the researcher in the everyday life of the field, it is characteristic of ethnography that – like no other method of social research – it is based on the subsequent reporting of what has been observed and perceived, or, more precisely, what is still remembered afterwards”

(Lüders, 2004, p. 228).

Field-observations and field-notes are therefore combined with annotated, spontaneous interactions and conversations (Wengraf, 2001). The three case-studies being extended by this approach. The data formulated being represented as field-texts rather than more fulsome autobiographical works (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Chang, 2016).

4.3.3.5 Face-to-Face Interviews

“In social research, qualitative interviews – semi-standardized or open interviews – are very widely used” (Hopf, 2004). Semi-structured interviews are useful in sociological research as they allow an openness towards the exploration of meanings, motives or personal interpretations (ibid). They are particularly useful where there is unlikely to be an opportunity to interview the participant again, so certain trajectories are required (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

It is important to first find a place and a productive environment where interviews can take place (Hermanns, 2004). Here, the nature of the research can be introduced and use of audio-recording equipment agreed (ibid). In live field settings, where subject’s available time is limited, it means establishing the role of the participant, to cultivate a sense of which aspects they are addressing (ibid), while also agreeing the role of the researcher (Wolff, 2004). Trust can be an issue as some interview situations based upon the duration, the location, the relationship or rapport with the researcher develop this more easily (Steinke, 2004). It requires self-observation, reflection and awareness of any personal interference or pre-conditions that the researcher might introduce (ibid). It being important to reflexively consider whether the researcher’s basic recognisable features, “gender, age, ethnic group” are “compatible with local world-views, interests and events” of those being studied (Wolff, 2004, p. 198). Even, under conditions where this process is brief, owing to the nature of the research and the locations, a social-system “comes into being” (p. 198). The researcher must seek to stage the interview as an active discourse, confidently exploring each participant’s various roles (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Hopf, 2004). The interviews therefore began with basic questions regarding the participant(s) first contacts with the practice, before expanding into more free-form narratives (Haigh & Crowther, 2005). Allowing the participant to wander through their own accounts is important (Hopf, 2004), as is occasionally steering them towards life-phases, situations, topics or critical incidents they have mentioned for more detailed investigation (ibid). The interviewer, however, must actively and
reflexively seek to avoid interrupting or disturbing the interviewee’s narrative flow (Haigh & Crowther, 2005), by adopting a role of attentive listener (Hopf, 2004). The methods used, therefore, extracted both typical and unusual discourses as participant descriptions, accounts and their narratives (Wengraf, 2001).

4.3.3.6 Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews are sometimes depicted as less attractive than face-to-face interviews, due to a lack of visual cues, loss of rapport, probing and interpretation (Novick, 2008). They do, however, in some instances help participants feel more relaxed and there is little evidence that they produce lower quality data (ibid). Telephone interviews were therefore used to give access to some suggested participants who otherwise would have been difficult to include in the study. Either through logistics or their preference for the interview to be held in this format.

4.3.3.7 Transcriptions

Transcription is the graphic representation of aspects of behaviour for individuals engaged in conversation (Kowal & O’Connell, 2004). It attempts to represent in written form, features of conversational behaviour (ibid). For example, the duration of certain aspects can be notated by the number of repetitions such as pauses, or audible breathing (ibid). Given the “multiplicity of possible research goals”, standardization of their method, however, is not necessarily desirable between research projects (p. 252).

4.3.3.8 Ethics

Prior to every interview, informed-consent was requested and formally agreed (Hermanns, 2004). To protect privacy, participants were anonymised with pseudonyms (Crang & Cook, 2007; Haigh & Crowther, 2005). None of the research was covert (Hammersley, & Traianou, 2012, p. 81).
4.4 Research Case-Study A: Skateboarding

4.4.1 Literature Review
A literature review of the subculture, lifestyle, practices, and its cultural and commercial contexts was first completed.

4.4.2 Literary and Textual Analysis

4.4.2.1 Documentary and Subcultural Films
Documentary and fictional films which gave insights towards the development of the practices and culture of skateboarding, were systematically studied. Works which gave first-hand accounts by skateboarding celebrities were viewed and sections transcribed. Historically significant films which have influenced the development of skateboarding or helped document its progression were critically examined.

4.4.2.2 Digital and Social Media
Skateboarder’s and organisations create prodigious quantities of video-content. Skate-videos have become highly influential towards the cultural direction and trends of skating communities. This case-study, therefore, used publicly available digital media as supplementary cultural resources, giving a greater blend of insights, but did not involve studying individual consumers or their identity work. It included YouTube channels, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook sites. The commercial or group moderated sites used included; True Skateboarding, Thrasher, Vans, and Nike SB.

4.4.3 Empirical Research

4.4.3.1 Research Locations
The first research sites selected were conveniently located in Liverpool and therefore easily accessible. I procured a skateboard from a specialist, local skate store. Beginning to learn and discover skateboarding increased my understanding and empathy towards the needs of skateboarders, their practices and customs. Skateboarders are a rarity, so interactions tended to involve practicing skating everyday in a variety of locations in the hope of meeting suitable informants. As a result, natural contact with skaters began to increase. Individuals were recruited by first explaining the basis of the research, its value and their potential role in it. Their consent to be interviewed was then requested. If accepted, their formal agreement was obtained and the interview commenced. While the sampling was initially based in-and-around local skate-zones, I soon realised that a wider-array of informants was required. I therefore expanded the field-research to include some of the outlying districts, and then visited London, Manchester and Bristol. I also collected some international data to aid my cultural understandings. Minimal field-research in California and Bilbao, augmented my appreciation of skate-culture in more general terms. Helping enrich my grasp of UK skating, relative to its wider
cultural contexts. The research was therefore performed in a mix of public and commercial skate-spots, which are listed in Table 4.1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Locations</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Otterspool, Liverpool</td>
<td>Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pier Head, Liverpool</td>
<td>Street Spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Campus</td>
<td>Street Spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bird, Liverpool</td>
<td>DIY Skate Spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everton Park, Liverpool</td>
<td>Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsham Park, Liverpool</td>
<td>Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowsley Leisure Centre</td>
<td>Public/Private Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southport Skatepark</td>
<td>Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rampworx Skatepark, Liverpool</td>
<td>Indoor Commercial Skatepark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beast Rampz Skatepark, Manchester</td>
<td>Indoor Commercial Skatepark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projekts MCR Skatepark, Manchester</td>
<td>Indoor Commercial Skatepark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southbank Skatepark, London</td>
<td>Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockwell Skatepark, London</td>
<td>Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of VANS Skatepark, London</td>
<td>Sponsored Indoor Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Lane Skatepark, Bristol</td>
<td>Public Skate Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barria Plaza, Bilbao</td>
<td>Street Spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarcadero, Pier 7, Wallenberg, San Francisco</td>
<td>Street Spots</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 – Skateboarding Case-study: Research Locations

4.4.3.2 Interviews

Forty-seven participants took part in the study. The interviews varied in length, from 5 to 65 minutes. The mean interview duration being 21 minutes. 16:30 hours of research interviews created 11:55 hours of transcriptions. The age range was 18 to 49. Predominately male, reflecting the demographics of the research locations. The details of participants and the interviews are provided in Section 4.7. The interviews were mainly located at skate-parks and skate-spots, but some were also completed at neutral locations.

4.4.3.3 Auto-Ethnography

I very briefly skateboarded as a child in 1979 in Liverpool by borrowing a friends penny-style board. Beginning this research, I purchased a modern 8.25 inch trick board for £80. Self-learning to skateboard created many personal insights and an instinctive empathy with the practice and its culture. This was important, as skateboarding is often described as changing the way you envisage yourself and your environment.
4.5 Research Case-Study B: Surfing

4.5.1 Literature Review

A literature review of the subculture, lifestyle, practices, and its cultural and commercial contexts was first completed.

4.5.2 Literary and Textual Analysis

4.5.2.1 Documentary and Subcultural Films

Documentary and fictional films, which give insights towards the development of the practices and culture of surfing were systematically studied. Works which gave first-hand accounts by surfing celebrities were also viewed and sections transcribed. Historically significant films which have influenced the development of surfing or helped document its progression were critically examined.

4.5.2.2 Digital and Social Media

Surfers and organisations create prodigious quantities of video-content. They have become highly influential in influencing the cultural direction and trends of surfing’s global communities. This case-study, therefore, used publicly available digital media as supplementary cultural resources, giving a greater blend of insights, but did not involve studying individual consumers or their identity work. It included YouTube channels, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook sites. Industry magazines and commercial sites such as Billabong and Quiksilver were also used.

4.5.3 Empirical Research

4.5.3.1 Research Locations

In the UK, surfing is often practiced in the Atlantic-facing coasts of Cornwall, Devon and Wales. Surfers therefore tend to congregate in these places. The research sites were therefore selected on this basis. All participants were recruited by first explaining the basis of the research, its value and their potential role in it. Their consent to be interviewed was then requested. If accepted, their formal agreement was obtained. I first registered for some private surf-lessons to understand the surfing experience. I also contacted a variety of other instructors, with some agreeing to be interviewed. In some cases they kindly recommended other informants. I also subsequently rented boards and practiced rudimentary surfing in some popular, safe surf-spots. The resulting natural interactions led to further participants being recruited. Where possible, this was completed on the beach. As time was often limited, however, a more expedient occasion/location was sometimes agreed. Telephone interviews being used if this was neither convenient or practical. A small number of participants were also found by networking via friends and acquaintances. Contacted and interviewed at home, or if preferred at a more convenient, neutral location. I also collected some international data to aid my cultural understandings. Minor field research in California and the Basque
region of Spain, helped enrich my appreciation of surfing culture and different types of surfing conditions. The main research sites used to conduct the field research are therefore listed in Table 4.2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perren Sands, Cornwall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perranporth, Cornwall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlyn Bay, Cornwall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fistral Beach, Newquay, Cornwall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sennen Cove, Cornwall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullion Cove, Lizard, Cornwall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porth Neigwl (Hell’s Mouth), Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malibu, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sopelana, Meñakoz, Basque</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 – Surfing Case-study: Research Locations

4.5.3.2 Interviews

Thirty-one participants took part in the study. The interviews varied in length, from 5 to 75 minutes. The mean interview duration being 20 minutes. 10:30 hours of research interviews, created 8:30 hours of transcriptions. The age range was 18 to 55. Twenty-three males, and eight females participated in the research. The interviews were mainly located at the beach, with those partaking in or instructing surf-lessons, in neutral locations in coastal towns or at the homes of contacted surfers. The details of participants and the interviews are provided in Section 4.7.

4.5.3.3 Auto-Ethnography

Having always lived in cities, including, Liverpool, London and briefly, Buenos Aires, I have never surfed. I, however, took up the challenge, hiring cumbersome, foam, 9-foot, three or single-fin boards and taking a number of surf-lessons in Cornwall. This met with inevitable frustration, but created opportunities to experience the practice and meet surfers of assorted abilities.
4.6 Research Case-Study C: Caravanning

4.6.1 Literature Review

A literature review of the subculture, lifestyle, practices, and its cultural and commercial contexts was first completed. Encompassing, caravanner’s relationships within the multi-formatted leisure-spaces they occupy and share with static-caravans, motor-homes, camper-vans and tents.

4.6.2 Literary and Textual Analysis

4.6.2.1 Documentary and Subcultural Films

There is a paucity of documentary media available which deals with caravanning. Fictional media is extremely rare and scarcely produced, other than presenting it as mildly humorous. The industry instead relies on the intimacy of shows, clubs, retail spaces and rallies. Commercial magazines inform consumers.

4.6.2.2 Digital and Social Media

This case-study used publicly available digital media (YouTube channels, social media sites and commercial websites) as supplementary cultural resources, giving a greater blend of insights, but did not involve studying individual consumers or their identity work.

4.6.3 Empirical Research

4.6.3.1 Research Locations

The popularity of caravanning in the UK, made informant-access a straightforward process. Informants were recruited by first approaching friends, family and acquaintances who caravan. Explaining to them the basis of the research, its value and their potential role in it. Their consent to be interviewed was then requested. If accepted, their formal agreement was obtained prior to the interview commencing. Couples were often interviewed simultaneously. Participant(s) recommendations expanded the sample to include an increasing assortment of subjectivities. Attending caravan parks, caravan-retailers, industry-shows and exhibitions, also provided fresh informants who were recruited via on-site interactions. The eventual high-levels of inter-subjectivity developed, helped provide insights towards the various tensions acting between subgroups. The main research sites used to conduct this field research are listed in Table 4.3 below:
4.6.3.2 Interviews

Seventy-four participants took part in the study. The interviews varied in length, from 5 to 150 minutes. The mean interview duration being 25 minutes. 26:30 hours of research interviews, created 21:20 hours of transcriptions. The age range was 18 to 72. Many were completed in participant’s homes, although some were also performed on caravan sites or at shows. The views of family members or outsiders who have experienced the practice but do not consider themselves as caravanner’s, was also gathered. Thirty-eight males, and thirty-six females participated in the research. Thirty-seven had experience of touring caravans, twenty-two had experience of tourers and motor-homes, and twelve just motor-homes. Five had owned static caravans at some point. The details of the participants and interviews are provided in Section 4.7.

4.6.3.3 Auto-Ethnography

I have memories of caravanning as a child on family holidays in rented accommodation. I have also caravanned with my own family. I have never towed a caravan but own a large trailer. I have intermittently packed it with camping gear and pulled it on long journeys across England and Wales, resulting in largely disastrous family holidays with small children. I confess to creating snakes of irate drivers in my wake. As part of this research, I stayed in some caravans for short periods, to re-experience the practice and meet informants.

4.7 Case-Studies: Research Participants

The processes of entry into the field, and the resulting interactions, produced informants for the studies. This created new participants, through introduction and recommendation. New settings were sought, however, to refresh the research and to broaden researcher perspectives as they developed, increasing the levels of intersubjectivity. Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 detail the activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Locations</th>
<th>Kirkcudbright, Dunfriesshire</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lytham St Annes, Lancashire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southport, Merseyside</td>
<td>St Austell, Cornwall</td>
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<td>Newton Le Willows, Merseyside</td>
<td>Woodbury Salterton, Devon</td>
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<td>St Helens, Merseyside</td>
<td>East Lulworth, Dorset</td>
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<td>Liverpool, Merseyside</td>
<td>Bognor Regis, West Sussex</td>
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<td>Wigan, Greater Manchester</td>
<td>Rhyl, Cymru</td>
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<td>Chorley, Lancashire</td>
<td>Preslatyn, Cymru</td>
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<td>Preston, Lancashire</td>
<td>Criccieth, Lynn Peninsular, Cymru</td>
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<td>Billinge, Lancashire</td>
<td>Anglesey, Cymru</td>
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<td>Tarporley, Cheshire</td>
<td>Llandrindod Wells, Cymru</td>
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<td>Crosby, Merseyside</td>
<td>Yspytty Cynfyn, Cymru</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caldy, Wirral</td>
<td>Oswestry, Shropshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fylde, Lancashire</td>
<td>NEC, Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria</td>
<td>Liverpool Exhibition Centre</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 4.3 – Caravan Case-study: Research Locations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Subculture/Practice</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Location Context</th>
<th>Recording Method</th>
<th>Estimated Duration</th>
<th>Audio Duration</th>
<th>Contact/Meeting</th>
<th>Principal Research Method</th>
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<td>Jan-2016</td>
<td>Southport Skatepark</td>
<td>Home</td>
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<td>Chorley Home</td>
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<td>C,M Off Site Interview</td>
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<td>London Skatepark</td>
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Table 4.4 – Interview Details (Part 1)

Table Key:
Gender: M = Male, F = Female.
Practice: SK = Skateboarder, SU = Surfer, C = Tourer Caravanner, S = Static Caravanner, M = Motorhomer, T = Tent Camper, O = Outsider, G = Generic.
Recording Method: R = Recorded and Transcribed Audio, A = Immediately Annotated, C = Copied from Text Chat.
Contact/Meeting: E = Ethnography, SS = Semi-Structured Interview, NI = Narrative Interview.
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Table 4.5 – Interview Details (Part 2)

**Table Key:**
- Gender: M = Male, F = Female
- Practice: SK = Skateboarder, SU = Surfer, C = Tourer Caravaner, S = Static Caravaner, M = Motorhomer, T = Tent Camper, O = Outsider, G = Generic
- Recording Method: R = Recorded and Transcribed Audio, A = Immediately Annotated, C = Copied from Text Chat
- Research Method: E = Ethnography, SS = Semi-Structured Interview, NI = Narrative Interview
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Table 4.6 – Interview Details (Part 3)

Table Key:
Gender: M = Male, F = Female.
Practice: SK = Skateboarder; SU = Surfer; C = Tourer Carvaner; S = Static Caravaner; M = Motorhome;
T = Tent Camper; O = Outsider; G = Generic.
Recording Method: R = Recorded and Transcribed Audio, A = Immediately Annotated, C = Copied from Text Chat.
Research Method: E = Ethnography, SS = Semi-Structured Interview, NI = Narrative Interview.
4.8 Analysis

4.8.1 Thematic Analysis

The case-study research generated voluminous qualitative research material. Encompassing literature, literary-reviews, subcultural-media, field-observations, auto-ethnography and semi-structured/narrative interviews (Wengraf, 2001; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Mass-messages combined with fresh consumer texts, both legitimately explored as naturally-occurring information (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2011). In qualitative research the instruments of analysing such texts, however, should be “developed in response to the demands of the material collected” (Schmidt, 2004, p. 253). This “determination of the analytical categories begins with an intensive and repeated reading of the material”, noting how they relate to the research questions (p. 254). Emerging themes being the development of coherent ideas that appear when “stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture” of “collective experience” that resonates in meaningful ways (Aronson, 1995). Structurally compared in terms of their commonalities, patterns and differences through their respective units of analysis (Siedel & Kelle, 1995).

To sort and order the rich variety of secondary material collected, the literature, literary and cultural sources for each case-study were first assembled and repeatedly re-read. They aided the understanding of the broader subcultural, lifestyle or associated market discourses. Texts were then thematically arranged and those which exemplified key-themes or points were highlighted for possible use. Each was then assigned a unique alpha-numeric code-identifier and stored in a supporting document. Enabling supplementary referencing throughout the literature and literary review section of each case-study.

Next, the empirical field-work was assembled. Interview transcriptions and empirical field-notes were compiled in a single document and ordered using their date of collection. Each line-of-text was then allocated a unique serial-number. Links, connections or patterns in the data could then be easily referenced and cross-referenced. The data was then exploratively and repeatedly re-read for themes, trends, and key words (Guest, et al., 2011). Areas of text being colour-coded to visually-identify and highlight them. Significant, repeated themes which appeared across the data were noted, compared and considered. Those which corresponded or conflicted with the literature, literary texts or theoretical lenses were logged and documented. Unique but conjoint alpha-numeric codes(A) were then devised. Providing insertable computer-recognisable markers, which exclusively identified individual texts as instances-of-use, while also linking them with the emerging themes, their relationship with secondary-materials, or some aspect of the theoretical lenses. Whole sections of data could then start to be grouped as themes and considered in relation to their units of analysis. They
were inserted into a new document and assigned a further, unique and simplified alpha-
numeric code\(^{(B)}\). Those texts which most resonated with the overall research findings
were considered for use as verbatim examples. Those not used directly in the presented
case-studies, however, remain referenced through their unique alpha-numeric code
identifier\(^{(B)}\) and stored within an auxiliary document.

Each final case-study presentation is therefore divided into two main sections; i) Literature and Literary Review (Cultural Discourses) and ii) Empirical Research (Findings). Enabling a rich, rigorous and plural dataset to be presented. Uncovered empirical themes which directly replicated secondary-material was placed as a lower priority, having been encompassed in the first section of each case-study. The empirical sections, therefore, focus on freshly uncovered themes and explore their relationships. Each case-study is closed with a summary of the key findings. Blending intertextually (Allen, 2011) the themes developed from both the literature and literary sources, together with the empirical material presented.

This research is qualitative and inductive (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) so there is always the risk that each of the case-study findings might or might not converge (Yin, 1994). The theoretical lenses identified in Chapter 1 and the literature review (Chapter’s 2 & 3), however, help link and structure relationships. Focussed towards the areas of identity-formation, aesthetic, phenomenological or socio-cultural meanings.

### 4.8.2 Units of Analysis

Units of analysis are critical in discursive studies for aligning thematic meanings and structuring them towards theoretical positions (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). The units of analysis used in this research are therefore now identified:

a) Individual consumer subjects.

Those individual consumer subjects who were sampled and formally interviewed\(^{(Sect: 4.7)}\) [micro discourses].

b) Interview texts.

The whole (or a part) of audio-transcribed (verbatim) or annotated-texts used from those interviews [micro discourses].

c) Individual consumption objects and artefacts.

Typical consumption items which appear core to subcultural or lifestyle practices. Typically, repeatedly occurring in each case-study context and holding a key position in participants performances and their individual or

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\(^{38}\) Specific social texts from the empirical material and their individual or micro-contexts (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000)
shared-identities [micro & meso\textsuperscript{39} discourses]. For instance; skateboards, surfboards, caravans, or motorhomes, etc. Including items which help communicate identity; including clothes, fashion, a variety of accessories and their paraphernalia. Encompassing technologies, art, artefacts, artforms and their presentation as cultural media [Grand\textsuperscript{40} & Mega\textsuperscript{41} Discourses].

d) Aesthetic judgments.

The aesthetic judgements of interviewees towards other individuals, objects, artefacts, imagery, performances, media or shared-attributes [micro & meso discourses].

e) Autonomous uses and meanings.

Spontaneous, pre-discursive verbalisations of the term ‘cool’, similar phrases or synonyms by interviewees. Forming patterns or contexts of use, as well as describing certain objects or phenomenological experiences [micro & meso discourses].

f) The researcher’s observations as texts

Remembered, meaningful auto-ethnographical experiences transcribed as field notes [micro & meso discourses].

g) Subcultural celebrity insights; transcribed as texts

Insights from celebrity practitioners, transcribed from video-interviews, documentaries, social or subcultural-media. Informing the types of discourses in circulation, and their implications for important subcultural brands [Grand Discourses]. Not, however, including the investigation of them or their identities as individual consumers.

h) Single firms or brands.

Single firms or brands which have come to represent important subcultural identities or their narratives. Including brands cited by interviewees [micro & meso discourses] or their more widespread use in terms of subcultural or mainstream media [Grand & Mega Discourses].

i) Culturally negotiated meanings.

\textsuperscript{39} Linked social texts from the empirical material which create broader patterns of meaning and generalise to other similar local contexts (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000)

\textsuperscript{40} Assembled from various discourses including empirical and cultural materials which form larger-scale orders, organised as dominating language (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000)

\textsuperscript{41} Universal understandings constituting standardised forms of meaning (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000)
Individual interviewee’s understanding of shared cultural meanings [micro discourses], their perceived significance for others in their social circles [meso discourses] or the wider subcultural community [Grand Discourses]

j) Entire subcultural fields; A) Skateboarding, B) Surfing, C) Caravanning.

The assembled sets of practices, manifestations of shared-identity, constellations, or image-gestalt that together form a subcultural-field or shared-lifestyle [Grand & Mega Discourses].

k) Individual transcribed texts or scenes from fictional films or videos.

Texts which help evidence cultural discourses or subcultural narratives. Informing the politics of consumption, brand-placements and encircling market-systems [Grand & Mega Discourses]. Not, however, including investigations of individual social-identity.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has set out a methodology for investigating the research problem and questions raised in Section 1.2. Providing a means of addressing the theoretical gaps identified. The research thesis can, therefore, now proceed to presenting the findings of the case-studies in Chapters 5, 6 & 7.
Chapter 5 – Findings: Case-Study A: Skateboarding

This chapter presents the skateboarding case-study using the methodologies described in Chapter 4. Addressing the research objective; ‘3) To explore cool, in relation to the stresses, and ontological insecurities, that contemporary society exacts upon consumers’. The chapter starts with an exploration of the subculture, lifestyle and practice of skateboarding using literature, documentary and literary sources. It is then empirically explored through research interactions in a sample of urban-spaces mainly in the UK.

The main themes that emerged from the Literature and Literary Review and Empirical Research are presented in Figure 5.1 below. Section 5.1 provides an analysis of skateboarding’s cultural discourses. Section 5.2 then presents fresh themes which emerged from the empirical research.

Each area is now discussed. The overall case-study findings are then [Section 5.3] summarised, before the chapter is [Section 5.4] concluded.
5.1 Skateboarding Culture [Literature and Literary Review] 42

5.1.1 Origins

Skateboarding was first devised in California in the 1950’s, but its exact origins remain disputed. The principal narratives being; surfer’s i) coasting to the beach hands-free while carrying their surfboards, ii) emulating surfing on flat-wave-days (Borden, 2001; Jeffries, et al., 2016; Marcus, 2011), or iii) the inland-kids in the valley who had no access to surf[SK39] (Hill Street, 2012):

Whatever the origins, skateboarding became increasingly popular as it thrilled while giving a sense of empowerment and freedom (Pereira, 2015). A DIY philosophy developed involving hacking apart roller-skate-wheels and nailing them to wooden-planks (Brooke, 1999). The urban-pedestrianisation of America in the 20th-Century, meant youths could exploit the terrain and grind-turns on their local roads and pavements (Brooke, 1999; Marcus, 2011). Skateboarding quickly became a street-craze spreading across America; booming around 1963 (Pereira, 2015). Replicating earlier fads like roller-skates[SK40], scooters[SK41] and hula-hoops (Brooke, 1999; Marcus, 2011). Quickly losing its connection with the carefree image of surfing and developing a more urban-image (Marcus, 2011); a missile or ‘comet with a voodoo trailing it’ (ibid). A dangerous weapon in the hands of recalcitrant youth; viewed as a plague (The Devil's Toy, 1966). The shock, novelty and daring attracted young males and admiring girls (Skater Dater, 1965). Forming traditional relationships, however, was a form of gang-betrayal (ibid).

The popularity meant that a nascent skateboarding industry emerged; initially small-scale and local (Jeffries, et al., 2016). Disparate companies such as Humco[SK42], Sport Flite, Roller Derby, Zephyr, Skee Skate and Santa Cruz began promoting rudimentary boards through the best local skaters (Lords of Dogtown, 2005; Marcus, 2011; Patti McGee Skateboard Champion TV, 1965). Riding barefoot was necessary to grip the slippery wooden-deck (Skater Dater, 1965; The Devil's Toy, 1966; Turner, 2016), but skateboards were difficult to control and manoeuvre. Steel-wheels were superseded in 1963 by clay-wheels; greatly improving traction, but remained difficult to turn without sliding (Skateboarding Magazine, 2012). Rudimentary skateboarding competitions were held in two main formats; i) downhill slalom races (American

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42 [SK39 to 78] are skateboarding literary research data-code identification numbers.
Technical developments and burgeoning difficulty meant specialised shoes and protective-clothing were needed (Lorr, 2016). *Vans*, “established in 1965 by Paul Van Doren in Anaheim” California became closely related to skateboarding (Turner, 2016, p. 188). Van Doren wanted his small shoewear company to have a twist, allowing each-shoe to be ordered one-at-a-time, appealing to hard-up young skaters (Marcus, 2011; Turner, 2016). Sports-shoes were generally becoming associated with self-sufficient boyhood, but *Vans* offered an authenticity that skateboarders liked (Marcus, 2011; Turner, 2016). Their local convenience, affordability, exclusive colour-combinations and highly-durable, thick, flat-vulcanised soles proving popular. Urban-wear and skate-shoes dovetailed with skateboarding as self-expressive technologies (Lorr, 2016). Skateboarding’s rapid-proliferation, however, was too disruptive, noisy or threatening for many (Skater Dater, 1965). Serious accidents and injuries involving vehicles or pedestrians rapidly escalated concerns and stirred parents to blame skateboarding in general (Pereira, 2015). Many schools banned it, while anti-noise laws were invoked to obstruct and limit the practice in public areas (Marcus, 2011). Skateboarder’s began to view themselves as the underdog, while regarded by the general-public with animosity and intolerance (The Devil's Toy, 1966). The combination of bad-publicity and institutional-restrictions causing the market to collapse in 1965 (Marcus; 2011; Turner, 2016). Skateboarding was too peripheral to contest mainstream-attacks. Manufacturers bailed and hard-core skaters had to continue underground, deprived of commercial-equipment (Marcus, 2011; Jeffries, et al., 2016; Turner, 2016). Skateboarding’s boom-bust cycle had been established (Marcus, 2011).

### 5.1.2 Vertical Transition [Vert-Skating]

Skateboarding became unpopular as a result of the downturn, stigmatised as a useless-toy and seriously uncool. Being a skateboarder risked social-exclusion (Lorr, 2016).

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43 Tony Alva wore Vans as the shop was close to his school, were long-wearing, grippy and available in assorted colour combinations (Turner, 2016). Vans first dedicated skate-shoe, however, was not manufactured until 1975 (ibid). It was produced for Tony Alva, who wanted to “create a more distinctive style for skateboarders” (p.190). Requesting a little more padding and “some cool colours, that’s all” (p.190). “The usual ‘Van Doren’ heel label was replaced with a new skateboard logo”, “‘Off The Wall’, a phrase Stacy Peralta and Alva used” (p. 190). The shoe demonstrating the importance of producer-practitioner collaboration (ibid).
Hard-core skaters, however, had the breathing-space to innovate (Tscharn, 2013). Boards were modified to include; *kick-tail* brakes for emergency-stops [1969], sand-resin for foot-grip [1972/73], softer *urethane*-wheels and more adjustable, smoother *trucks* for turning [1973] (Skateboarding Magazine, 2012; Tscharn, 2013). Safer-boards allowed fresh progression of the sport and around 1973 the craze was rediscovered (Brooke, 1999). Repeated Californian-droughts meant dried-out concrete storm-ditches were rideable as limitless-waves, but the severe-drought of 1976 mandated all swimming-pools in California be emptied. Skaters therefore illicitly trespassed, cleaned and rode them (Lords of Dogtown, 2005). Aiming to reach the pool-lights, but eventually advancing to grind the coping. In 1977 in Santa Monica, Tony Alva created skateboarding history, performing the first aerial; a *Front-Side Air*, hand-grabbing the board and soaring out of the pool like an eagle[^46;47] (Hill Street, 2012). Alva and the Zephyr skate-team had broken the mould; being more aggressive and less-contrived than earlier skate-styles (Marcus, 2011). Other skate-gangs followed, combing properties, intruding, priming and skating private-pools right-away before the police arrive. Creating an urban-form of guerrilla-warfare; highly pleasurable, as for youth everything that's fun is dangerous (ibid). The thrill of appropriating property and constant run-ins with police, created an illicit and lawless subculture[^48] (Dogtown & Z-Boys: Beginnings of the skateboard pool riding, 2012).

Skaters borrowed motifs and behaviours from LA/Chicago gang-cultures; creating fearsome imagery which drew-in unruly punk-youth (Jeffries, et al., 2016). Oppositional to other youth-masculinities; ‘jocks’, ‘preppies’ or more aspirational identity-choices[^49] (Giesler, 2014; Lorr, 2016). Stereotyped as rebellious, victimised white-males, while achieving legitimacy as outsiders (Atencio & Beal, 2011; Brayton, 2005; Malot & Peña, 2004; O’ Connor, 2016). Skateboarding was instantly “thrilling, shocking, delightful and painful”, needing bravery to overcome adversity (O’ Connor, 2016). Affording them legitimate coolness through a powerful, masculine, outlaw
image and their symbolic rejection of mass-society (Atencio, et al., 2009; Borden, 2001; Dixon, 2016; Hall, 1991). Their powerful manoeuvres resulting in frequent, painful slams (The Freestyle Conspiracy, 2015). The raw physical power and pain of Vertical or transition skating, made it congruent with hard, radical, authentic punk-styles as personified by Steve Olson, Ollie Gelfand, Lance Mountain, Steve Caballero, ‘Gator’ Mark Rogowski, and Christian Hosoi. This form of skating required fearlessness; as dropping-in to pools and the ensuing, ferociously fast-lines, meant skaters had to rip, grind, punch-through and defy gravity (Jeff Grosso; “that’s why skateboarding’s good, cos you can fucking die and get hurt” (The Freestyle Conspiracy, 2015).

Concrete or timber half-pipes allowed skaters to construct new challenges and move skateboarding into more neighbourhoods. The booming scene attracted more skateboard-companies who recruited teams and began touring (Hill Street, 2012; Lords of Dogtown, 2005). Special demonstrations drew large crowds, loud-music, yelling and disruptive behaviour (Stoked: The Rise and Fall of Gator, 2003). Each skater strove to create their own distinctive personality. Something that had to be exciting to attract a following necessary (ibid). Representing a company, sharing-tricks, while also pushing and surpassing each other (Marcus, 2011). Accumulating tricks, or desirable styles and personas, depicted through spectacular-photography which clearly displayed sponsor’s logos (Snyder, 2011). Distorted or warped fish-eye aesthetics added to the drama, giving a vivid sense of motion and an alien-effect (Jeffries, et al., 2016). Each team therefore fashioned a style and attitude (The Bones Brigade Video Show, 1984; Dogtown and Z-Boys, 2001). Movies, magazines, TV and promotional-showcase-videos pumped up the sport (Marcus, 2011), to an extent that when teams appeared outside of America they were amazed by the frenzy (Hill Street, 2012). Skateboard and clothing-brands started paying top, young pro-skaters thousands-of-dollars in endorsements (Mortimer, 2008).
5.1.3 Freestyle/Flatground

Not all skateboarders, however, liked the confrontational image or sexist-overtones, preferring a more inclusive perspective. The split being characterised by two main magazines; *Thrasher* [Skate and Destroy] and *Transworld* [Skate and Create]. Pressing skate-fans to take sides by adorning their boards and skate-zones with stickers, specially designed to appropriate the other (Lombard, 2016). A process repeated through truck-wars [Indy vs Tracker] and serial personal-battles between skate-stars. Each representing temporal, attitudinal, stylistic or cultural differences [i.e. Hawk vs Hosoi] and extending to geographical tribes [i.e. North Cal v So Cal] (Truck Wars: Part 1, 2016). Flatground or freestyle-formats of skateboarding remained largely in the background, relying on trick-sets more akin to dancing or figure-skating, choreographed to music. Freestyler Primo Desidero even skated with his wife (Psycho Skate Freestyle Footage, 1986). In the 1980’s, though, freestyle-skating became highly-progressive and sophisticated. Largely due to the imagination and creativity of Rodney Mullen. Despite ridicule by vert-skaters, team-touring meant they mixed-closely (Rodney Mullen sits down with Tony Hawk - Dissent Part 1 of 2, 2012).

In late 1977, vert-skater Alan ‘Ollie’ Gelfand scooped the board into the air ‘no-handed’ on vertical-ramps (The First Ollie In The World Alan”Ollie”Gelfand, 1978). By 1981, an inspired 15-year-old Rodney Mullen had rearranged and retranslated it with an old freestyle-hop or shift-trick, by popping the board up into the air on flatground (Rodney Mullen: Pop an ollie and innovate!, 2015; Rodney Mullen sits down with Tony Hawk - Dissent Part 1 of 2, 2012). Mullen believes pure mental-will does not work as tricks are too-fast for conscious-control (Schaffer, 2016). Instead needing deconstruction into component parts, reorganised-mentally and repetitively practiced till each movement becomes automated, minimalised and blended smoothly into the next (ibid). Creating new-spaces for trick-expansions, greater-complexity or further opportunity to improvise (ibid). Changing contexts and new environments, creating further unexpected improvisational outcomes (Rodney Mullen on Innovation, 2012). In contrast, attempts to commercialise and standardise skate-park terrain inherently endangered vert-skating. Constricting difficulty and creativity; thereby limiting progression and skating’s allure (Marcus, 2011). Reducing it to a leisure-activity with social-interaction, but too spatially-restricted (Lorr, 2016; Orpana, 2016; Pereira, 2015). Replicating coalesced uniformity in these enclosed-formats, meant they quickly became out-moded (Brooke, 1999; Turner, 2016). Skateboarding needs improvisation, to allow skaters to respond to changes in their “external and inner worlds” (Turner, 2016, p. 182).
5.1.4 Street-Style

Tricks therefore began to allow skaters to express themselves and expand their practices beyond these restrictive limits. Trick-inventions, however, quickly become common-property through new interpretations; reproduced in individualised-styles and environmental-contexts (Orpana, 2016, p. 156). For example, the flatground _ollie_ combined with speed-rolling, allowed street-obstacles like benches, steps, gaps and ledges to be overcome. In 1986, Mark Gonzales (and Natas Kaupas, later on the same day), became the first skateboarders to _ollie_ down a set of handrails; creating a new kind of skater-identity, 100% at home on the street ([59-61; 62; 63]). "Street skating became the hot thing to do, vert-skating was virtually out" overnight (Stoked: The Rise and Fall of Gator, 2003).

Commercial rhetoric that street-skating origins emerged from freestyle, killed vert and its legacy; the commercial drive switching immediately from vert to street, which had the advantage of being available within every city ([64; 65]). Many, however, found the transition from vert to street technically impossible, and were mocked by the new-breed of younger street-skaters. 80’s brands became instantly out-moded alongside them; for example, ‘Gator’ Mark Rogowski changed his name to ‘Gator’ Mark Anthony, but a continued bloated commercial-association with the now unfashionable early-80’s _Vision urban-wear_, tipped his brand ([66-68]). "When he changed so dramatically everyone was repelled, it was now someone who was fake, has a front and has an image" (Stoked: The Rise and Fall of Gator, 2003). It was better to be the underdog; "you were a lot more cooler if you went to the thrift store and grabbed a two-dollar pair of shorts, and a T-shirt that cost a quarter" (ibid). Both forms of skateboarding influenced street-skating, but a commercially-preached narrative that Mullen’s inventions sparked its genesis causes irritation amongst vert-skaters ([68-69]).

_Equating freestyle and street-style ignored their different levels of risk-taking_ (Atencio, et al., 2009), so male-skateboarders aligned “themselves with an ‘authentic’ urban or street” image, “to gain currency in their social domains” (Atencio & Beal, 2016, p. 111). Providing mobility, freedom and agency, requiring creativity to overcome structures originally designed to inhibit “rather than enable” their “social pleasures” (Orpana, 2016, p. 161). Constantly moving around to find new ‘sick-spots’,
used in contradiction to their planned use, allowing moves alien to the builder’s intentions\(^{45}\) (Borden, 2016; Lorr, 2016).

The new generation of street-skaters produced their own brands [such as Blind and Plan B], reflecting their own aesthetic sensibilities and in opposition to the old-ones\(^{45}\). Their street-video’s and edits were exciting and highly-influential (Blind Video Days - Documentary, 2003; Classics: Mark Gonzales in Video Days, 2011). Promoting skateboarding as an underground, cohesive subculture; running the gauntlet of tough-neighbourhoods to skate the best spots\(^{46}\). The omni-availability of street-skating brought influxes of new skaters (Brooke, 1999; Lorr, 2016), but repeated altercations, entrenched and hardened their image as disruptive, resistant outsiders (Brooke, 1999; Lombard, 2016). Being in opposition to the mainstream, however, fostered solidarity (Orpana, 2016). Where despite differences, these new-skaters empathised, needing each other for protection\(^{46}\) (Winston Whitter; Rollin’ through the decades, 2005; Skate World: England, 2010; Synamatix, 2015). Being perceived as dangerous or destructive was part of the thrill (Pereira, 2015); a brotherhood, conferring the benefits of being within a larger cooperative group, while also being a distinct individual (O’Connor, 2016; Yochim, 2009).

5.1.5 Extreme Sports

In the 1990’s, skateboarding became connected to, and revolutionised by the upsurge of other exotic, “heavily promoted and mediated youth-oriented ‘action’ sports” such as snowboarding (Dixon, 2016, p. 75). In 1995, ESPN therefore launched ‘Extreme Games’ (later renamed ‘X-Games), with skateboarding as the flagship-event, with televised-adverts “for Mountain Dew and Doritos” (pp. 75-76). Attracting advertisers who wanted “to celebrate” “the newest, edgiest, most urban thing happening” (p. 75). Skateboarding risked becoming a mainstream sporting-activity; marketing itself as more professional and respectable (Brooke, 1999; Lombard, 2016; Lorr, 2016). Street League\(^{46}\) followed, seeking to promote the authenticity of ‘street skating’ (Atencio, Beal, & Wilson 2009). Intense commercialisation, however, drew skepticism\(^{46}\)

(Rant and Rave, 2015). Skateboarding’s spectacular social and cultural media, however, readily crossed national and linguistic boundaries and became globalised (Dixon, 2016).

\(^{45}\) Skateboarding alters perceptions of terrain (Turner, 2016), so skater’s became space-hackers who found unexpected relationships in these designed environments (Schaffer, 2016).

\(^{46}\) “The Street League is a competitive tour similar to the X Games, but focused more upon street-style skateboarding with an easy-to-follow scoring format” (Atencio & Beal, 2016, p. 111).
Despite intense commercialisation, many traditional-images of skateboarding remain (O’ Connor, 2016). Skaters are perceived as disrespectful and less-valued than other members of society (Pereira, 2015). Like other “undesirables”; drinking alcohol, doing drugs or acting “in an unruly manner” (Orpana, 2016, p. 160). Skateboarders therefore have an ambiguous identity; positioned as elite-sports-people, but also vandals to property and perceived as a nuisance or committing a crime (Chiu, 2009; Lorr, 2016; Willing & Shearer, 2016). Masculine-subcultures like skateboarding also reproduce dominant-values under the guise of rebelling against them (Hebdige, 1979; Orpana, 2016). Males symbolising their coolness and legitimacy as the most highly desirable characteristics (Atencio, et al., 2009; Atencio & Beal, 2016). Negative subcurrents therefore still exist; sexism, homophobia, class or ethnic demarcations (Atencio, et al., 2009; Borden, 2001; Dixon, 2016; Jeffries, et al., 2016; Jenson, et al., 2012; Petrone, 2010). Inclusion being guised as participant-control through expected conformance with values and norms (O’ Connor, 2016). Abundant imagery of male-youth or elder-statesmen in social-media, documentaries, fictional-films and magazines, reinforces these impressions and further marginalises (Nolan, 2003; Willing & Shearer, 2016), gaining specific importance for subdivisions, who fetishize and reframe them (Brooke, 1999; Dixon, 2016). A lack of any serious female-legacy means women and girls remain ideologically-peripheral to core-skate culture (Atencio & Beal, 2016; O’ Connor, 2016). Trivialised as outsiders and sexualised even more so than in mainstream-media; lacking role-models and their own space (MacKay, 2016). Feminine characteristics being devalued and suppressed by male-hierarchies; perceived as indications of an aversion to authenticity or risk-taking (Beal, 1996; Orpana, 2016).

Many skaters, however, are not attracted to these fixed and resistant male-identities and act outside of them (Lombard, 2010; Willing & Shearer, 2016). A progressive element in contemporary skating (Yochim, 2009), means the identity is continuously contested (Lombard, 2016). Some females preferring “to actively challenge oppressive, male-dominated milieus” “by getting on their boards and skateboarding” (p. 129). Others wearing androgenic styles, baseball caps and loose clothing, which makes gender-identification difficult to establish (MacKay, 2016). Some girls, however, remain afraid to go to skate-parks (ibid) and prefer female-only events (Atencio & Beal, 2016). These undercurrents become increasingly problematic, as companies like Nike invest in skateboarding for the cool-image, but undesirable tendencies undermine the attractive mainstream impression they are looking for (Jeffries, et al., 2016). Commercial-skaters must therefore adhere to the prevailing mores of both skateboarding and mainstream acceptability, without undermining the subculture (Dixon, 2016). Preserving rituals and traditions, while recognising dialogue with mainstream hegemones is critical for survival (O’ Connor, 2016).
5.1.6 Neoliberal Cities

Skateboarding is increasingly seen as a way of changing a cities image and projecting them as more liberal and welcoming spaces. When encouraged, more inclusive skaters can help “free the city and make it accessible for all types of pleasure” (O’ Connor, 2016, pp. 35-36). Blending a youthful and mythological-image physically with the city, which enhances and enlivens it with a “cool aura” (Dixon, 2016, p. 85). Riding longboards and skateboards as transport (Lorr, 2016) giving “wondrous plasticity of a fluid lifestyle” un-reliant on being in America (Dixon, 2016, p. 79). In these less-constrained terms, skating has been advocated as being creative, socially-cohesive, empowering and educational (Friedel, 2015). A positive force for personal-freedom, creativity, experimentation, innovation, philanthropy, activism; while also having progressive and emerging contributions towards civic-pride⁴⁷ (Lombard, 2016; O’ Connor, 2016). Viewing skaters as artists boosts theirs and the city’s cultural-capital; bringing friendship, camaraderie and mutual-bonds (O’ Connor, 2016; Orpana, 2016; Yochim, 2009). Cultivating “responsible, entrepreneurial, and self-reliant youth” (O’ Connor, 2016, p. 38); while offering new possibilities to progress their unique identities (Lorr, 2016).

Skateboarders, however, are ‘flawed-consumers’ (Bauman, 2007); occupying, damaging, rejecting ownership and rules-of-use, while not economically-consuming (O’ Connor, 2016, p. 35). Overcoming boredom comes at a high-price in capitalism, so subcultures often bricolage or create disorder to destabilise them (Hebdige, 1979). Skateboarding’s critique or disruption resting-on its ambiguity, neither open-protest, nor silent-conformism (Borden, 1998); game-or-sport, public-or-private, adult-or-childish; therefore capable of disorder without hostile argument (Lombard, 2016). Skateboarding destroys [literally] the symbols of capitalism, but also subverts the high-cost of fun as it is free (Lorr, 2016). Creating affinities by intentionally dramatizing the inauthenticity of corporate existence and the spatial poverty of the dispossessed (O’ Connor, 2016; Orpana, 2016; Roediger, 1998). Neoliberalism, however, permissively legitimises these pleasures by “selectively encouraging” them “in ways that reinforce competitive market values” (Orpana, 2016, p. 161); selectively using skate-stopper/skate-proofing technologies on benches, ledges or paving to limit them (Schaffer, 2016; Willing & Shearer, 2016). Skaters get sick of finding good skate-spots skate-proofed or ruined by redevelopment, having little power in these conflicts

⁴⁷ Skaters covert presence may help reduce certain types of crime, making some people feel safer and the city a better place to live (Jeffries, 2015; Jenson, et al., 2012). Willing to frequent-areas others “might feel uncomfortable” in (Orpana, 2016, p. 160). Shock-troops who shift drug-dealers and the homeless (Howell, 2005), making them more desirable to the professionals and artists needed to convert blighted-industrial-zones into bohemian spaces (Orpana, 2016).
(Atencio & Beal, 2016; Pereira, 2015). Reaching and persuading beyond the core of the subculture is therefore important, as non-skaters have the all-important decision-making powers (Willing & Shearer, 2016). Skateboarding easily becomes disenfranchised; localised, driven-underground, extinguished or domesticated, so needs interventionist strategies (Lombard, 2016). For many authorities, publicly designated skate-parks are the most convenient solution, but their enclosed and confined format risks further domestication; being less-threatening and less-exciting (Orpana, 2016). Street-spots therefore need protecting as distinctive and less policed spaces, as skaters consider them as superior to skate-parks (Atencio & Beal, 2016).

Skate-parks do, however, offer respite from unpleasant street confrontations; safe-havens to socialise, practice-expressivity and develop self-esteem (Lorr, 2016; Willing & Shearer, 2016). Park-designs therefore need to be inspiring and appropriatable; avoiding the stigma of being purpose-built (Borden, 2016). Skate-parks, however, also attract other users such as children and their parents seeking safe, recreational spaces (Willing & Shearer, 2016). Communities of parents provide “a policing function”; increasing “the number of eyes that monitor the park” while giving it a ‘lived-in-feel’ (Orpana, 2016, p. 160). Changing the vibe and reducing vandalism (Atencio & Beal, 2016). Commercial skate-parks offer extra facilities but also force skateboarding into the anvil of neoliberalism (Lorr, 2016). Sharing space with similar, commercially-legitimate leisure-activities (ibid), including small “children on scooters and bikes” (Orpana, 2016, p. 158). Subverting typical cultural-demands that skaters be unafraid of getting hurt (Willing & Shearer, 2016). DIY-parks therefore represent escapism and attempts at “indigenous governance” (Lombard, 2016, p. 177); where skate-communities fill in cracks, create new-inclines and decorate areas with mural-art and grafitti (Orpana, 2016, p. 162).

5.1.7 Skate Brands

Skateboarding’s commercialisation creates tensions. A need to commercialise oneself to cope with financial-responsibilities, means professional skateboarder’s risk being perceived as selling-out by expanding their products to non-skaters: Tony Hawk; “You know, you get called a sell-out, when your stuff finally sells. That’s it and is that bad? Like do you think that I’ve changed my tune or my motivation because I make money?” (Tony Hawk - Who You Callin’ A Sellout?, 2015). Respect, however, seems gained by giving back in a way that edifies the entire community. This extends to

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48 For example, ‘the undercroft’ at London’s South Bank, represented UK skateboarding history, tradition, and folklore, achieving mythic status (Borden, 2016; Skate World: England, 2010). It had represented, “an extraordinary expression of youthful energy and joy….for nigh on forty years” (Borden, 2016, p. 92). UK Skateboarding’s hallowed ground, a place of pilgrimage (p. 94). When threatened with redevelopment, it led to skate-activism, where skaters attempted to preserve their skate-heritage (Willing & Shearer, 2016; Skate World: England, 2010).
creativity; Rodney Mullen: “respect is earned ‘by the degree to which you make yourself different’, but also allowing others to mutate what you do” (Schaffer, 2016, p. 24). Being an elder-statesmen or a lifelong-skater can be redeeming (Willing & Shearer, 2016), however, as skate-history can also be cool (Lorr, 2016). Skaters perceived as having crossed too deeply into the mainstream, therefore often do philanthropic work; for example, the Tony Hawk Foundation helps low-income communities to skateboard by building public skate-parks; giving time and equipment to less fortunate skaters (O’Connor, 2016).

The global intemmingling of skate-scenes and urban-street-wear, means sports and fashion brands seek to stay connected with skateboarding\(^{SK77}\). The skate-brand Vans relies on skateboarding for its image, but must also protect skate-culture by giving back to skating communities\(^{SK78}\). Vans therefore represents a contemporary, hybrid-economy of commercial gain seamlessly mixed with community-goodwill (Lessig, 2008). Deliberately shunning being perceived as merely ‘slapping-a-logo’ on skateboarding, by continuing to support grassroot-initiatives well below mainstream-levels; thereby avoiding accusations of exploiting skate-culture (Borden, 2016). Its ‘House of Vans’ free-access, participatory events contribute to skating’s creative-arts (ibid), being reminiscent of night-clubs (ibid). Using convergent collaborations with cool, lowbrow graffiti-artists to decorate and endorse their products (ibid). Vans once allowed skaters to identify each other (Lorr, 2016; Rollin’ through the decades, 2005). Their continued presence, however, provides continuity. Preventing dissipation and avoiding the need for new-sets of intergenerational consumers to continually reinvent or rediscover skateboarding (Lorr, 2016). Supporting skateboarding allows Vans to remain imagined as “the underdog, the smaller company that scrapped harder” (Borden, 2016, p.102). Suspicion remains, however, whether they are simply seeking to co-opt skateboarding for its authenticity and cultural-capital (O’Connor, 2016). Nike SB being more openly vilified as a sub-brand of an alien, non-skateboarding multinational (Beal, 2013).

5.2 Skateboarding; Alien Subjectivity & Progression [Empirical Research]\(^{49}\)

5.2.1 Realizing a New-Edge; Disrupting the Self

Skateboarding has audacious appeal, making the spectacular possible\(^{SK79}\). Allowing individuals to feel different and stand-out from the crowd; while hopefully sharing in a creative-community\(^{SK80}\). Skateboarder’s also need to accept, however, that it carries questionable connotations:

49 [SK79 to 450] are skateboarding empirical research data-code identification numbers.
“I felt that it made me different. Skating, or the process of learning skating is amazing and it’s fun, but when you get all the lads playing football or the more popular sports then they see you as a bit of a weirdo. I think there’s also a bit of jealousy in that, though, as you can now do something they can’t. Skateboarding makes you stand out from the crowd, so it takes bottle. Even if I am standing with a group of friends and they’re all standing talking and I’m standing there with a skateboard in my hand, then instantly I am going to look different to them. So it kind of makes you different. … I think you have to really believe in skateboarding to do that. You have to be into it. I think watching a good skateboarder is great and is definitely cool for me. But whether everything that goes around skateboarding is cool or not, I’m not sure”

[Bennie: Male; Age 28]

Skateboarding can look cool, but the absurdity of it being based on a children’s-toy stigmatises it, generating insecurities. Simply carrying a skateboard in public feels awkward. Even standing on the board for the first-time is frightening and feels unfamiliar. Slight imbalances create violent, shocking or humbling falls. Aside from the frequent physical-blows, the board embarrassingly careers towards others or slams into their property. Requiring personal-commitment and a doggedness to overcome. Surmounting embarrassment, pain and shame is therefore a ubiquitous rite-of-passage, but many never try a second-time. Surviving falls is therefore the first trick of skateboarding.

“You’ve got to fall over to learn stuff to be honest, the first trick you’ll learn is how to fall, without breaking things. But you learn quickly”. “Skating is a difficult thing to learn. Some people may pick it up faster than others, but I am sure if you asked them they would say it was still difficult and took a lot of practice and tenacity”.

[Riley: Male; Age 31]

Learning to skateboard is challenging, but perseverance brings profound, life-changing experiences. As with many dangerous-activities, arousing repetitive cycles of compound relationships between the sublime, optimal-flow and voluntary-edgework. Skateboarding differs, however, as the edge is a remorseless and unforgiving teacher. A bodily-regime giving a sense of achievement and empowerment (Giddens, 1991). Frequent falls are therefore needed to augment understanding of edge-conditions. Each compelling ingenious approaches for overcoming them. Skaters therefore voluntarily create fateful encounters which repeatedly disorders them, allowing them to develop an edge which stands in sharp-relief with ordinariness (Giddens, 1991). The reward for adventuring outside the comfort-zone is personal growth and the development of coping mechanisms. Skateboarding therefore disturbs and exaggerates flaws so they can be reformed. A failure to try is more self-defeating.

“(Committing is important) because it’s the only way to learn.. how can you learn if you don’t go for it and trust yourself? You aren’t going to get better if you lean back and don’t even try.. you aren’t going to expand what you can do”.

[Lenny: Male; Age 22]
While these experiences are filled with anxiety, change can be flexibly-approached\cite{98}. Boundaries pushed in small-envelopes if so desired\cite{99}. As the edge is expanded, however, there remains a disturbing awareness of being slightly out-of-control. A need for further embellishments also driving a desire to constantly develop and progress to new challenges\cite{100}. The reward for completing encounters being ‘getting stoked’; a euphoric feeling of adrenolytic-joy of survival combined with a sense of accomplishment\cite{101}

(Slams, 2012). Extremely addictive, as skateboarding can never be mastered and repetitive-practice is highly-pleasurable. Skateboarding fulfils something inside individuals they previously lacked, while giving access or a sense of belonging to an extreme, exciting lifestyle or identity. Liberating them from previous constraints or helping them to escape problems\cite{111-113}. Arousing a zen-like quality, where life’s anxieties dissipate, feeling care-free. Having fun therefore creates feelings of happiness\cite{114-121}. Cathartic as negative-emotions are released, replaced by freedom and renewal\cite{122}. The skateboard becomes a simple, highly-portable and refreshing outdoor remedy for anxiety\cite{123-127}. Skateboarder’s are not excessively encumbered by equipment. Travelling-freely therefore provides a means to explore and break-free from previous mental-constraints\cite{128-132}. Conditions which thwart the practice therefore cause frustration and longer lay-offs can even trigger unhappiness\cite{133,134}

5.2.2 Alien-Paradigm

Skater’s needs to focus deeply on the terrain but from new and alien perspectives, allows them to acquire a paradigm-shift\cite{135-137}. Taken-for-granted anomalies such as textured-surfaces and small-obstacles become gratifying-hazards\cite{138}.

“The thing about skating is that it changes the way you look at the world. So you don’t look at things like how you normally would you look at them, but at how you might skate them. It sounds simple but it completely changes how you relate to things. You have to actually skate to understand that. Once you start skating you are looking through a different lens at the world, you are even when you are not on a board, or don’t have one on you, you begin to look at it as if you are”

[Mik: Male; Age 25]

Skating, though, also alters awareness of others. Recurrent unreceptive-glances, ironic-comments or mild-derision creates increasing resentment. Constantly being viewed as strange produces frustration, antipathy and erodes trust. Non-skaters seem aloof, rigid, obstructive and unimaginative; seeming out to nullify pleasure. Misunderstanding skateboarder’s simple desire to enjoy the freedoms of skating and the joy of self-expression. Instead seeing it as ludicrous, destructive, regressive, out-moded and threatening\cite{139-142}. The act of skateboarding therefore exaggerates non-skater’s mundanity and symbolises physical-supremacy and joy. Provoking feelings of envy, incompleteness or loss in those too old or too constrained in their thinking to
While marginalising the practice, however, it also preserves skateboarding for avant-garde, fun-loving youth.

“Everyone rides a bike, even old people, but you don’t see many riding a skateboard, cos they’ll probably kill themselves...”. “I think it’ll always be a minority thing, because it’s painful, so the only way it would be mainstream would be if it was made safe, but then it would attract a completely different set of people, so it wouldn’t be skateboarding. Skateboarding is all about getting stoked... and that makes me satisfied, so I can skate away happy then...”. “It’s definitely still a subculture, but more accepted in some places than in others. In the UK it’s more, grungy and dirty, probably not as glamorous. It’s not what normal people do. It’s always going to be underground. I think people assume you don’t pay taxes, so you have no right to be there, so there’s that aspect as well”.

[Jamie: Male; Age 19]

Non-skater’s antipathy, though, remains a source of dread; where a lack of respect in handling conflicts can easily lead to serious escalations. Skating’s radicalism therefore opposes conformism, traditional forms of status, wealth and systems of social-responsibility. Being part of an extreme community, however, jeopardises broader popularity. Skaters must disregard any negativity, however, as skating draws positive-interest which they must also be open to.

5.2.3 Flight from Indignity; Sources of Ontological Insecurity

While skateboarding is associated with youth, failing to lose its image as a toy means the practice struggles to overcome a trivial or childish-image. Adorno (2013) explained childish-artforms as holding some innate desire to please; placing them in contrast with the sublime (which connotes autonomy of spirit). The presence of childishness in artforms is therefore problematic; “inexorably” contaminating its “whole existence” (p. 127). To be considered sublime they must subjugate this childish-sensibility (ibid). Radically spiritualising its art so others become viewed childish in comparison (ibid). Skateboarding can therefore briefly become sublime if it produces radical-aesthetics; overwhelming the childishness inherent in its image. It means excluding or subjugating those practices that undermine or restrict it; for example; children’s scooters, BMX-riders, or parental-restrictions. A process heightened in youth as the embarrassment of recent childish-phases feels more proximate. The main targets are scooters; perceived as too feminine, orthodox or involving lower-levels of risk-taking. Trivialising skateboarding through contiguity and simulation. While handles allow complex scooter-spins, they seem contrived. Scooters being inherently easier to control mid-air, balance-on, land and stop than skateboards. They also cause unwanted-interactions; having different velocities, turning-rhythms, stopping-momentums, awareness-levels and therefore etiquettes. Creating potential embarrassment through heavy-collisions with smaller-children. Scary as it will inevitably be seen as the skater’s fault.
BMX-bikes pose a more severe anatomical-threat to skaters, but also endanger their identity; being viewed as too recreational and orthodox. Stylistically similar to scooters due to the presence of handles, they often mirror scooter-tricks. DIY and street-spots therefore can act as deterrent spaces. Seeking to ward off these undesirable practices; being less-recreational and adorned with foreboding skater-graffiti. Skaters, paradoxically, feel less inhibited and more creative in these spaces\footnote{Younis; Male; Age 20}. Actions by skateboarder’s tempting invasions by undesirables such as scooters or bikes, however, are resisted. Style inferences legitimising scooters are therefore strictly taboo\footnote{Younis164-166}. For example, a big offence in skate-culture is front-foot-pushing; a.k.a pushing mongo. Looking awkward/ugly and reminiscent of the trademark scooter-push\footnote{Younis167}. Remindful also of twee, old-fashioned bare-footed-skaters and their one-directional boards. It also restricts trick-performance by introducing extra foot-readjustments or realignments in the approach or set-up for tricks, and therefore is not purposive to skateboarding\footnote{Younis168}.

“(Skaters should) never push mongo, I don’t want to see that. That’s the worst fail…” “I don’t know why, all I know is that now it’s just not allowed. I personally don’t like it because it takes longer to set up for tricks. Well it is impossible for me. There is always a foot shifting, but it needs a lot more with mongo. I think switch is different, because that makes you a better skater, but mongo makes you worse”.

Skateboarders pride themselves on accepting ‘everybody’ into the practice, but this does not extend to longboarding. Indicating an adherence or sympathy with mainstream-objections to skateboarding. Denoting excessive anxiety towards the social and physical risks of urban-skating, such as excessive-noise or danger. Longboards use larger and softer-wheels, which reduce sound-levels; the larger-board and wheel-base also making balance easier and aerals, grinds or vert-skating impossible. Their softer, smoother-carving-styles being more reminiscent of surfing than skateboarding. Making skating possible on the coarser-terrains of suburban and rural-environments, which challenges skateboarding’s urban-aesthetic\footnote{Younis170}.
“A lot of people don’t consider longboards as skateboarding, because it is seen as too easy... and they can’t ollie... or do flip tricks...” “I can see the physical connection and the similarity, but it is not part of the culture to me. It is not the same because skateboarding is basically about tricks... whereas, longboarding is about cruising... Skateboarder’s don’t like to pick the board up if at all possible, it’s a sign of failure... whereas that’s inevitable on a longboard”. “Skateboarding is supposed to accept everyone, but I think as a culture there is a dislike of weakness... so signs of that are hit-on. A lot of the language isn’t always very PC”

Glen Male; Age 34

True-skateboards are therefore referenced against those similar practices deemed most undesirable, while seeking to conserve or develop those practices which are highly-esteemed.

The dominant-style of ‘true’ trick or street-skateboards has remained relatively unchanged for around twenty-years. Indicating some intergenerational-continuity and stability towards these cultural-values, practices and the tensions placed around its boundaries or limits. True-skateboards are therefore instantly recognisable. Contemporary skateboards being perfected for ollies and multi-directional switch-tricks; central and foundational to core skate-cultures. Ollies allowing sophisticated and advanced-tricks. A precondition or rite of passage for progression, therefore maintaining their broad-appeal.

“Ollies are always cool, because you’re overcoming gravity, in a way that people can’t tell how it’s done... “Because it’s counter intuitive... The untrained eye would think that you are jumping and the board is following, but it is not that, it is the fast impact of the back on the ground rebounding and then pushing the front foot forwards and upwards, so it is hard to understand”. “But if someone keeps ollying the same big thing, even that gets boring, we get it, you can do it. I used to do nightmare flips and hospital flips because I thought they were cool, but don’t really give a shit now, so I don’t do them anymore”.

Lenny; Male; Age 22

Ollies are difficult to learn, but once mastered feel-owned and part of the individual’s identity. A vital piece of their expanding repertoire that can be progressed in a multitude of contexts. A failure to learn to ollie, however, places a ceiling on progression. Individuals are consigned to the indignity of less-impressive forms of skating. The ollie is therefore a cultural-marker of a bone-fide, contemporary skateboarder, having full-access to the sub-culture and its image-benefits.

Skaters seem fearful of breaking subcultural norms. For example, wearing helmets or pads on streets is inappropriate. Physically and socially-restricting, while indicating a concern for safety that is too conspicuous. The ontological security of conforming with the subculture being placed before physical-wellbeing. While more accepted in skate-parks, they can still signify an over-dependence on parental-safety-advice or create image concerns. Adding radical motifs or symbols of danger designed to shock can ameliorate their aesthetics; graphics depicting illicitness, violence, a death-wish or its heroic survival.
“Parents want kids to wear all the safety gear, but there comes a point where that’s not cool anymore, especially when people start getting their own hairstyles and stuff, and nice, stylish clothes, when it gets like that you start to feel the pressure, you don’t want to be skating around in a dorky helmet anymore”  
[Mik: Male; Age 25]

5.2.4 Urban-Shock; Disrupting Others

Danger comes in many forms. For example, the dreaded, devastating falls caused by catching small-loose-stones under wheels, can generate immediate and unexpected wheel-locks, halting the board and flinging the skater forward head-first[SK181]. Skaters therefore intentionally sweep their lines before attempting dangerous-sets. Slams, though, can have a beauty of their own if they are survived without serious injury[SK182]. Confronting these anxieties is important, however, as avoiding dangers reduces chances for progression[SK183].

“You can see who will ride a board even when the street is really gnarly, and those that pick it up and carry it. That’s a good sign! See, well not many, but you see some people who tend to walk around with the skateboard but don’t seem to do much riding.. much, you know, man, why aren’t you skating? How you going to get better if you’re too scared?”
[Olak: Male; Age 24]

Street-skating allows ‘getting-stoked’ to become available to less-privileged, urban-youth. Requiring only a board and some ingenuity. Urban city-centres or business-districts often have superior-paving materials or coping-details which are purposive to skateboarding; creating pleasurable sensations, faster speed-rolling, while conserving-momentum. They often generate greater-scale, but are busier, inviting confrontation, but also produce more diverse audiences. Spaces in city-centres paradoxically feel more limitless, having a distinctive, exciting, urban and cosmopolitan feel[SK184]. Creating an edgy-vibe and exciting opportunities for new interactions[SK185]. This potential for confrontation creates anxiety but also adds to their glamour[SK186]. Sick [insane-crazy-cool] city spots tend to be “harder, tougher, … more appealing” [Jamie: Male; Age 19][SK187]. Appropriateable, sketchy [dangerous], gnarly [extremely-dangerous] or dope [extremely-cool] spots, provoke trepidation and excitement where their daunting nature is part of the attraction and coolness[SK188-192]. “People like the attitude and edge of urban things and skateboarding is part of that” [Terri: Female; Age 30].

“A cool spot would be industrial, graffitti, scratched rails, sort of gnarly, or the reverse, pristine, exotic places right in the best parts of town. You know, either rough or really smooth. In a rough place or by the best buildings. Every spot has its own feel, history, little things that make it different interesting. Even the exit, you know if that’s tight or there is a busy street, it all adds to the danger”.
[Izaak: Male; Age 21]

Contemporary city-developments expansive use-of-space and design-materials, creates opportunities for skaters to expand themselves through new, thrilling adventures[SK197]. These urban-environments can also become more exciting and sublime as night-time
The sense of adventure intensifies with the *phantasmagoria*\(^\text{\textsuperscript{[Sect:2.3.4]}}\) of urban night-scenes, making the terrain more shadowy and obscured. Unexpected jolts add to the thrill and allure\(^{\text{[SK186-197]}}\). Skaters appear more sinister and anonymous; feeling less-watched intensifies their sense of freedom, as many commercial properties close and become vulnerable to appropriation\(^{\text{[SK198]}}\). Skate-scenes therefore come alive with organised music-nights and group meet-ups. It also allowing mixing with skater-influxes from suburbs or outside of the city, who are seeking to avoid the domesticity of skate-parks\(^{\text{[SK199]}}\).

“I like both, they’re different night and day …..just being out in the city at different times has different vibes, and then... the skateboarding aspects then it just intensifies, like everything intensifies on a skateboard. Your whole attention, everything, what you feel and take in”. “Skating at night is definitely more exciting. I just get that vibe, that feel, plus, if the streets quite dark it harder to see where you’re going you know you hit the bumps before you see them, I think also I don’t feel as watched or overlooked. I can do stuff that isn’t watched by the whole world and these streets are a lot quieter, so I can skate and do things more freely”.

[Joe: Male; Age 23]

While highly-impressive skateboarding can be cool, it creates personal-insecurities by lacking status or glamour, which intensifies with age\(^{\text{[SK200-201]}}\). Adults being expected to own cars or homes and not skateboards\(^{\text{[SK202]}}\). Skateboarding’s association with spatial privation and poverty of assets, therefore means it must subvert symbols of wealth through emblematic identity-contests\(^{\text{[SK203]}}\). Skateboarder’s rarity is a weapon, meaning their presence is often unexpected. The speed of the board, its trademark-clatters and sudden-appearance of the skater create shock for pedestrians\(^{\text{[SK204-206]}}\).

“I like that if people get that shocked look when they see me…”, “that’s quite a weird feeling..”. “… sort of speechless and wide eyed.. it’s like you got them.. you know what I mean? Like they are totally fazed..”.

[Jamie: Male; Age 19]

Skating also shocks by defiling handrails, tables, benches or ledges intended for eating or sitting-on. Overpowering revered, public urban-artifices violates, but also venerates them by blending their semblances through ‘re-appropriation’ (Giddens, 1991).

### 5.2.5 Radical Art and Creativity; Seeking Ontological Security

Skating overcomes boredom by inducing temporary, heightened psychological-states\(^{\text{[Sect:3.4.3]}}\), but to provide more complete cultural experiences needs creativity\(^{\text{[SK210-213]}}\). Maintaining a radical or *rad* image, means rejecting any signs of conformity by being continuously disruptive, disturbing and eye-catchingly different\(^{\text{[SK213-216]}}\).

(The Underlying Philosophy of Skateboarding, 2016). Skateboarding must produce constant-change while protecting the acceptable limits of the subculture\(^{\text{[SK216-219]}}\). Attractive to those seeking to constantly reinvent their surroundings and themselves.
(Legendary Rodney Mullen Interview, 2012). While skateboarding has become more tolerated by the mainstream, this seditiousness makes skateboarding too radical or subversive for most to embrace[^216]-[^218]. Skateboarding, though, should be fun, so trivial or playful activities encouraging trick-progression are permitted[^219]. A free-spirited DIY mentality which is reminiscent of the creativity apparent in those poorer urban-neighbourhoods famed for generating fashion (Klein, 2000/2010; Solomon, 2003). Trying-out new things often leading to exciting and unexpected forms of personal-growth[^220].

“It’s exciting. There’s always new things to try, new places to skate. New people to meet.... Basically, every next moments going to be the best moment skateboarding, that’s probably the best answer. Apart from that I would say every time that I get to travel with my friends that’s what it’s about, you know, you getting out on the road, you taking the van, piling everybody in, you go skate all day, get sweaty and smelly. I mean, that’s the best feeling, I think from skateboarding... I guess it’s your little useless tool to be free and happy and independent... It sets you free, it’s like a key that unlocks many doors”.

[Zack: Male; Age 19]

Skateboarding’s limitless creativity gives it a progressive, forward-looking quality that preserves its youthful feel[^217]-[^224]. “It never gets old to me, I don’t get tired because there’s always something new, or there are always new possibilities... to do with it.” [Glen: Male; Age 34]. Creating board-artwork with radical, youth-coded-graffiti, illicit-substances, subversively flaunting copyright-law or appropriating corporate-symbols is enjoyable as it displays a disregard for other’s rules[^225]. Being creative, however, is an uncertain process, as art is critiqueable. Requiring courage as it firmly states perspectives of subjectivity and identity (Danesi, 1994). Producing art judged cool is therefore pleasurable, as it dispels those anxieties and fulfils a desire to be respected and admired[^226]. A culture which values this creativity therefore creates trust; a communal-creativity and sharing of ideas which is most perceptible in trick-generation and performance. Video, being the primary tool or resource for skaters to cultivate and enrich each other’s creativity[^227]. Skateboarding is improvisational, so tricks are implicitly individualised via the idiosyncrasies of the moment and local trick-contexts.

“Skating is really about tricks, in terms of the culture, because that’s how everyone feeds off each other. Copying and creating are different. Being creative is a different process. But sometimes random things happen when you are copying, so in a way, that can be creative as well. It’s impossible to copy something exactly in skating, so everything is a personal attempt or take on it. People are using other people’s creativity and then building on it, but it is only worth something if you share it back, so that someone else can use it somehow”. “Well,.... So, creating new takes on tricks feels good. I guess it’s sort of like creating art. The lucky ones who create tricks or trends are the ones that really take off, because it gives them familiarity, they become known in some way. The really good tricks are sometimes named after people of course”...“but there’s loads and loads of tricks and they come and go... some stick, some are kind of legendary or classics, some are cool... but some disappear fast”

[Jamie: Male; Age 19]
Effort expended on another’s work through mastering and its expansion displays veneration. Making a trick that was initially incomprehensible or difficult appear smooth in the classic cool-style, therefore signifies high-levels of effort, but also its mastery.

5.2.6 Trick-Trends

Viewing skateboard-tricks as collective artistic-movements, gives insights into how trends expand creativity cooperatively. By developing a trick or style, personalising it and then sharing their innovation back to the community, each individual skateboarder is contributing to its expansion and progression. Benefitting individuals, the wider subculture and therefore everyone’s identity. “We feed off each other all the time, so the standard keeps getting better and better, for everybody” [Malak: Male; Age 23]. Temporary flaws like hand-grabs or foot-plants are accepted if they allow the movement to progress onwards. Interim-steps that with further progressive development will be eliminated, eventually allowing the trick to become ‘flawless’[SK229].

“With videos. I can see what everyone else is doing”. “Just things that become popular. Like some people do something that’s different and from then on you start seeing other people doing the variations on it or taking it to another level… or doing it in a slightly different way….. and then it just seems all of a sudden everybody’s trying to do it and put them up (on social media)”. “I think skateboarders are generally creative so if they see something and think hold on….. if I can put this together and introduce something that I’ve seen on that video or something they’ve seen someone else do, then they will try and put them together into something that is somehow overall better than what they’ve already seen… but in a way that helps them…. but also helps everybody. It’s like hand grabs and foot plants were out for a long time, but they came back suddenly, because they allowed something different and more impressive to be done…. Like more rotations or overcoming different and bigger obstacles. They have worked out how to do completely new things with it. Let’s say you can jump so many steps just ollying, but by grabbing the board or with a little foot-plant..you can double that, or do something else a bit more crazy in the middle… then you see you’re kind of taking it to the next level. But then what will happen is that.. before long you will see somebody do it without a hand grab, or a foot-plant which is better”.

[Zeck: Male; Age 19]

Each trend will eventually break, however, once progression stops or it becomes too pervasive, ordinary, predictable or monotonous. The movement might also become corrupted or start benefitting outsider’s identities. Skaters therefore see no-value in expending more effort in them[SK229]. If a fully developed trick or style remains untouchable in its own form, generating awe and reverence, however, it can remain timelessly-cool[SK229] (Trends, 2013). Most trends, however, are constantly renewing, protecting skateboarding from becoming tired or stale. Repetitive novelty, though, can cause drift and alter the aesthetics or gestalt of the subculture, making it unpopular with mainstreamers[SK229]. This can be a source of both ontological security in being dangerously different, but also insecurity in fearing being unpopular. To survive,
though, new skaters must be attracted, allowing new-generations to interpret and develop skating in their own ways, while taking it to new-levels (Hill Street, 2012). Youth, often rebels against patronised states while viewing earlier eras as new (Frank 1997). Forgotten or older styles can therefore make comebacks if having returned to their alien-form, holding some purposive role in new, unfolding generational movements.[SK230].

5.2.7 The Meaning of Style; Ontological Security

Skating with an elusive, attractive style is a major-challenge for most skaters. The accompanying feeling of inadequacy is most pronounced in early-stages of learning, where pushing the board feels unnatural and awkward. There being an awareness of being off-balance and lacking-rhythm, where movements seem formless. Insecurities which make skaters feel unworthy.[SK231]. Such bodily movements and their control are important as they are representative of what cannot be said in words (Giddens, 1991). Skateboarding, however, provides a unique medium to freely explore personal-style in un-prescribed ways. Involving independently and creatively figuring-out how to master it. Developed style is formed, however, through the board and the terrain-characteristics learned-on.[SK234,235]. Skating as many types of terrain as possible is therefore recommended; building activities into daily-routines, speeding-up progression and building a more rounded style (while also learning from others).[SK236-240].

“To grow at skateboarding, you have to skate lots of things, so it challenges you. Being creative really means figuring out a way of doing it yourself, to your own line, abilities or style. It makes you feel like a kid again in some respects. I think you have to get back into that mind-set so it becomes routine and playful… but I would always recommend skating with people better than you because that pushes you to get better and you will learn things from them… if you can”. [Glen: Male; Age 34]

Pushing and skating on uneven-pavements is noisy, producing sudden jolts. Many modern skate-parks instead use specialist, ultra-smooth-materials having sound-absorbency. Street-skating therefore builds the anticipation necessary to minimise uncoordinated, off-balance reactions to imperfections, intermingled with an ability to deal with broader types of social-interactions. Giving greater fluidity of motion, enhanced spatial-awareness and cat-like balance.[SK241]. Street-skating expands and hones flânerie,[Sect:2.3.3]; building physical confidence on and off the board, improving self-esteem. “I enjoy it and it makes me feel good about myself….”. [Dilan: Male; Age 21].

Personal-style slowly emerges, reflecting a mastery of the selected-terrain and styles chosen to overcome them. Representing “regularised action”, critical to creating routines which forms a protective cocoon (Giddens, 1991, p. 127). Style therefore reflects personality, attitudes, moods and the previous types of environments mastered. “The ground and the city changes how you skate”. “I think skating really accentuates your style of movement, it’s pretty noticeable in some people how you can tell them a
mile off” [Mik: Male; Age 25]. Personal style is highly-distinctive and a subjectively remembered characteristic of identity (Hebdige, 1979). Not only differentiating people but giving clues to their inner-selves (Giddens, 1991). Skate-styles therefore allow visual-arbitrations towards individuals or their perceived inner-identities (Style, 2012). Having a strikingly attractive, repulsive or insignificant style, is therefore a major insecurity for skaters trying to progress, while at the same time become more attractive and popular. As style is the product of habitual-practice and evolves with expanding skate-contexts, however, it is difficult to fake.[SK242-245] “You develop your usual style, but if you go somewhere else, it forces you to change your style” [Mik: Male; Age 25]. Style therefore reveals whether the environment is alien for the skater, or whether they feel at home in it. Reflecting the types of skate-scenes and contexts they have encountered before. In more challenging circumstances, weak-style could indicate a lack of comfort, due to deficient experiences of these harder-environments[SK247] and be a source of ontological insecurity. Natural-style develops more rapidly in youth, being usually innately formed and less-contrived. The result of free-play and creativity[SK248-253]. Major changes once style has formed, however, introduces alien-techniques that challenge older-skaters. Struggling to adapt, they look unnatural and awkward.

“Younger styles are more amazing to me, because they are more natural. I think style is one of the things that goes with age, things become a bit more creaky, and rigid. You might still shred, but I doubt you’ll do it stylishly. Obviously there are exceptions to that but I think as a general rule. If you start something younger then it just flows more naturally for you, because you not as frightened by it and you think your movements are more natural then. Maybe not worrying as much about how you look. I think that the younger you start the better. I think that comes across when people try and switch styles later on as well. Like Tony Hawk has never looked natural pushing to me because I presume he learned on ramps…and on different boards”.

[Comi: Male; Age 49]

Change therefore endangers identities in subcultures like skateboarding, by signalling obsolescence of certain learned practices. ‘Fateful moments’ which threaten the individual’s protective cocoon (Giddens, 1991). Being out of style means immediate social-embarrassment, loss of confidence and potential isolation[SK249]. New styles therefore disrupt pecking-orders and generate status-flips. Stopping older-skater’s progression and hastening their deterioration, as re-learning new tricks can take more time. The new style may even be impossible for them to learn[SK251]. Style-relapses will indicate a retraction inside their old-comforts, but are not purposive towards keeping-pace with the new direction of the subculture. Changes in skate-style therefore not only signpost changes in the environment, but also disrupt local power-structures[SK256]
5.2.8 Thrashing or Steez?

A contradiction in the phenomenon of cool is why edginess, or the impending threat/menace of danger seem important, but its signature-style gives an easier laid-back feel. In board-cultures, the most similar term is ‘style and ease’ or steez.

“Steez, for me is an easy style” // [Interviewer] “But how do people get steez do you think?” // [Interviewee] “That’s a harder question. I think it is obviously practice, but more than that .. because for me steez is about economy of motion, doing things that are difficult … with almost invisible motion.. so the component movements that I know are needed are hardly there..” “The opposite of exageration..”. “I think there is something more.. about personality… Some people have steez, but some people try to have it and that’s different, you know? They skate too slow, or exaggerate movements.. which seems fake. Steez is more style but it’s like that thing were somebody learns something difficult and then they just get to that point where they can do it and make it look easy, although it still not easy. It’s like they have mastered it, (but) it is not like showing off, it is just that they are completely in control. In fact, they are so good at it it’s gone beyond that.” “If it’s too easy then it’s not the same. It’s like they have mastered something difficult and if it’s also dangerous, then that’s even better. Because it is much more impressive, … but then the worst thing is when someone lands something nice and clean and then adds steez at the end in the easy bit… once it’s done… so that’s… I find that weird.. I don’t like that. that’s fake to me.” // [Interviewer] “So can someone have steez on a really dangerous slope or obstacle?” // [Interviewee] “It would be extremely difficult, I think….. it might be foolish… I think it pays to have a healthy respect..”.

[Ollie: Male; Age 20]

In skateboarding, however, both aggressive, edgy or radical styles and steez can be judged cool[SK257-259]. Skating in fearful contexts reveals mastery and courage authentically, without affectation. Aggressive-styles towards the terrain, however, can reflect the level of challenge. Treacherous conditions and the authentic courage needed to overcome them can overwhelm preconceptions towards identity, personality or gender[SK230-261]. Jerks being a necessary, natural part of ripping or shredding difficult-terrain at high-speed in heavier, thrashing styles. Pushing boundaries radically as the skater is outside their comfort-zone, progressing the limits of theirs or other’s perceptions of skateboarding[SK262-264]. Repetition in these contexts develops smoothness, eliminating miscalculations and unnecessary movements; creating greater simplicity, efficiency, stability and therefore repeatability. Allowing smoother leverages of core-areas through remembered body-shapes. Freeing up rapid movements of peripheral areas (particularly the shoulders and arms) to immediately correct balance[SK265]. Peculiarly, even after lengthy absences, mastered accomplishments seem retained, implying they are committed to memory[SK266]. Difficult tricks or contexts require concerted-effort, are time-consuming and painful; but the sense of accomplishment also reflects those personal investments[SK267-268]. Repetitive smoothness and the satisfaction of completing them with clean-landings [in expanding-contexts] means they begin to feel-owned and part of a personal-repertoire; committed to individual-style and part of identity. Performing with perfect style also creates feelings of immunity from critique, as absence of affectation thwarts any parody[SK270,271]. A smooth
or cool-style (steez), however, implies the learning phase for that set has been realised. Signifying mastery of oneself in that context\cite{ibid}. A formed and flawless beauty emerging, harmonising internal and external worlds (Adorno, 2013; Dessoir, 1970; Kant, 1987). The context of danger communicates the sublime aesthetic to the skater’s identity, but the formation of a beautiful smooth style also enables the observer to absorb, harmonise and memorise the desirable image\cite{ibid}. Skating with steez makes the challenge desirable to others, but conceals some key components that made it possible. In the wrong context, however, steez characterises retrograde movements, particularly if seen as representing an unnecessary retraction inside routines or a safety-cocoon. Risking being viewed an uncool pose\cite{ibid}. Affectation also risks being viewed as a poser. Someone making lines, sets or tricks appear more challenging or skilful than they really are for effect\cite{Trends, 2013}.

New tricks astonish or perplex through complexity or by being too fast for the eye\cite{ibid}. For shock, this progression is best presented as highly-visible or obvious step-changes. Like sprezzatura\cite{Sect:2.2.6}, creating the illusion of effortless, natural-ability through concealed back-stage practice\cite{ibid}. Progression, however, is not always linear. For example, performing some tricks slowly, or faster-ones more efficiently and smoothly can introduce extra-difficulty; therefore, being more impressive. Speed aids balance for some tricks such as rail-slides; so slowing down movements or increasing economy-of-motion can actually represent further progression. Steez can also shock through its audacity if representative of skill-advancement. Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) flow-model and Lyng’s (1990) concept of voluntary edgework, inform that overlearning in high-skill-level-contexts creates relaxed pleasure through retraction from an edge. Practitioners feel mild-forms of ecstasy in these more controlled, relaxed states, despite not being wholly-absorbed by the task\cite{ibid}. A retraction inside the safety of a comfortable, protective cocoon, allowing the practitioner to feel safe\cite{ibid}. Steez also embodies and signifies spare-capacity; to casually process other tasks or maintain greater awareness of the environment\cite{ibid}. Mastery, in this sense indicates successful morality and the ability to colonise the future (Giddens, 1991). An irony being that steez quickly becomes a show only enjoyable by new audiences. To progress and avoid the boredom\cite{ibid} of stagnation, skaters must seek-out new challenges\cite{ibid}. A return to more aggressive and exciting styles is required. Pushing and mastering new frontiers, so the cycle can begin again\cite{ibid}. Ontological anxiety in this sense linking to the ability to think ahead and to counterfactually anticipate and master future possibilities (ibid).

\footnote{Boredom becomes a resource for seeking out new opportunities, change and expressing creativity (Misztal, 2016, p. 111). Representing a feeling which emanates from the need to reconstitute old habits (ibid).}
“This thing you are doing or where you are doing it is within your ability. You can do it well. Because you… it’s like your mind can... can be doing other things. So, when you’re skating you have the presence of mind to be doing or thinking about other things. It’s like it’s not that the end at the edge of your ability, it’s a bit within that or maybe even a lot within that. I have in my mind this video I saw on Instagram, where a guy ollies down some steps while he was reading a book. I thought it was really cool, because it was different… and it showed how natural it had become for him. Not easy!”

[Bryn: Male; Age 35]

Social anxieties jeopardise skaters, making them aware of others watching or filming, destroying their confidence or focus[SK286]. “I just get uptight when being videoed. Same if a girl is watching” [Aran: Male; Age 19]. Steez therefore indicates impressive awareness and mastery of these anxieties. Involving mastery of one’s own morality (Giddens, 1991).

5.2.9 Standard Boards?

Skateboard’s similarity produces a level-playing-field as the skateboard’s physical-properties are culturally-delimited for fairness, democratising the practice. Each individual-board, however, is also highly-nuanced[SK287]. Personal choices in contours, sizes, components and colours create a multitude of options. The pre-eminent, crafted and authentic adult-decks being made from seven-layers of Canadian pressed maple-veneers which provides the right-flex. Resembling diminutive-surfboards but adorned with paintings by trendy, street or skater-artists; galleried in shops as works-of-art[SK288]. Selecting a deck for a beginner is purely an aesthetic choice, but an experienced skateboarder requires the functionality and fit to feel right for their preferred stance and style[SK289,290]. Skaters conform to what they like and know, trusting only what feels comfortable to them[SK291].

“It’s not even about the artwork, the more you skate, the more you know what you like. They’re all completely different, different shapes, wheel-bases, nose-length, nose-steeppness, curve-length, curve-type, concave-base, a lot going on”. “An experienced skater knows what they like and can tell by just looking at the board”

[Mik: Male; Age 25]

They are produced in differing sizes and contours, changing the weight-and-feel and the spin-dynamics. Smaller-boards tend to be recommended for females and larger for males. Vert-skaters normally prefer wider-boards for stability at high speeds. Children, however, are often advised to start with an adult-board to get used to the feel early[SK292].

“I like to skate this, it’s an 8.375 (inch). I skate an 8.375. That just feels right for me” [James: Male; Age 21]. “It just feels right for me. Not too big not too small, the right shape, I feel confident with it” [Dilan: Male; Age 21]. “I ride an 8.25” // “Did you start off at that size?” // “Yes” [Lenny: Male; Age 22].

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Coarse, black, industrial grip-tape is fitted to the top-side of the deck. An essential functional requirement and brusquely fitted. The beautifully smooth, painted upper wooden-deck, grotesquely transformed into a dirty, industrial-object and necessarily fatigued. Beautiful art must be pristine. The skateboard, however, is intended to be used.

The grip tape is there for a reason and it’s so that you can keep contact with the board... and when you’re doing tricks you can get the friction that you need. So I think that if you try to make it look too good then it kind of shows that you are more interested in how you look than the skating. It’s going to get scuffed anyway, so what’s the point? It looks like you aren’t really into skating”, “It shows that you’re not really doing it for the right reasons. It’s got nothing to do with how good you are skating. Somebody can be a beginner but really put everything they have into it. A poser has nothing to do with skating ability, it’s somebody who shows off or brags about it, but doesn’t even skate... that’s why people get pissed off when see people walking around in the really hard-core skating clothes when they don’t even skate”.

While new, original boards are pristine-objects, skating and falling immediately gouges and scratches the artwork on the underside. The pain of its first marring is cursory, however, as the application of grip-tape has already somewhat blemished its image. Scuffs produce pleasure representing battle-scars, while grinding scores the truck’s shiny axle-casings. Producing ontological security as they are signs of authenticity, visually indicating styles of skating or tricks worked-on. Skaters have distinct identities and personalise objects discrete to themselves. Those aspects considered uniform and shared with wider skater-identities, however, must conform to certain sacred standards. Not respecting them means being judged a poser who does not esteem skateboarding’s core-attributes. “Skateboarder’s don’t allow ego, it’s about loving skating, not how good you are” (Zack; Male; Age 21). Meaning skaters look for the microscopic-details that are ‘tell-tale’ signs of interlopers or phonies. Those seeking to acquire the benefits of skateboarding’s hard-image without incurring the pain, endanger the integrity of the collective-image and cannot be trusted. For example, grip-tape should remain black and unmodified. “It needs to look like grip-tape” [Neil; Male; Age 20].

“Well it’s just grip tape, it’s the business end, it’s there because you need it”. “Most people don’t do anything with the grip, you’d be a bit of a poser. I’ve seen stickers or doing something with markers. Clear grip tape looks cool, but that’s about it”.

[Comi: Male; Age 49]

[SK293]

[SK294]

[SK295]

[SK296]

[SK297]
Skateboarding is dirty; the grip-tape binds mud, dog-faeces and any ground-material that has been trodden-in. It is impossible to clean. The underside of the deck and truck-housings become sprayed by material raised by the wheels, mixed with grease from the bearing-mechanism. Meaning there are right and wrong ways to pick up or hold the board. The most efficient and effortless method is to quickly snap the foot down hard on the rear kicktail so that the entire board rebounds and rotates, allowing the front-nose of the deck to appear effortlessly into the clasping-hand. Avoiding holding by the trucks (the ‘mall-grab’) or the poser-effect of holding the grip-tape out-facing to protect clothes.

“One of the ones is how people hold the board. it’s really important that you hold the board by the edges of the deck, you never hold it by the trucks, that’s a massive no, no. You only understand why if you are a skateboarder and you have used the board. The trucks, well that whole area gets seriously fucked with dirt, grease, wax and shit, it’s nasty, of course, it’s going to go all over your hands. Yeah, it’s really unpleasant. Even bird and dog shit. Anyway, that’s basically something, that a real skateboarder doesn’t hold their board that way. Of course the grip tape picks up a lot of stuff as well, and is really hard to clean, but it’s generally not as bad a feeling” // [Interviewer] “Is being cool…. in the sense of being cool to other skaters about conforming in that way?” // [Interviewee] “Yes, because you need their respect and they need yours. It is what makes you a skater.. If you don’t have that you are not probably considered a skater”.

[Olak: Male; Age 24]

Helmets and kneepads are entirely justifiable on daredevil-sets, but wearing them pretentiously to signpost-danger is also a sign of a poser. “Wearing a helmet is a personal choice, but I’d fasten it. Don’t leave the straps dangling”….“Because it’s unsafe and you look stupid” [Dilan: Male; Age 21]. Skateboarding is therefore a difficult subculture to comfortably enter due to these endless rules. The knowledge required to understand, and name trick-terminology and combinations also becomes a source of anxiety. The jargon even extending to falls and injuries; for example, being ‘credit-carded’ means landing the groin area on the upstanding board’s edge. The insecurity of not being ‘au fait’ with these tacit nuances of the culture is foreboding. Creating feelings of inferiority and the dread of subordination, rejection or isolation. It could mean exclusion from skate-spaces and rejection by the small locally supportive groups vital for performing the practice enjoyably. Risking inadvertently being viewed as a poser, resulting in slowed-learning and progression via isolation or vacating the practice altogether. Peripheral or new-skaters, though, can spoil its pleasures for hard-core, highly-skilled skaters through poor etiquette. “Some people just continually get in the way, you have to stay in control, and know what you’re doing, and get out of everyone’s way, it riles me” [Zack: Male; Age 19]. A lack of understanding of local-spots can also ruin them; for example, over waxing and making them too slippery to perform tricks.

One way to feel more comfortable is to gain knowledge and understanding of the board’s workings. Below the board’s deck is precision-engineering. Utilising latest
technologies that act within the acceptable cultural constraints allows experimentation. “Car-enthusiasts, or that culture, is similar to skate-culture.

There is that same experimentation, in terms of getting to the next-level, loads of trial and error” [Bennie: Male; Age 28]. Trucks, bearings and wheels use standard-fittings which means they can be interchanged with each-other or exchanged between decks.

“I like messing with my board, changing trucks, wheels, being creative, experimenting with things. It makes me feel more connected and in control of the board I love that I get a lot of pleasure from the ordering different wheels and things on the Internet then experimenting with them, when they arrive”, “I ... feel more in tune with the board, knowing how it works and it’s movements... makes me feel more confident... because I understand it,... I also feel more knowledgeable about skateboarding which makes me feel more confident talking about the board and skating in general.....”.

[Reese: Male; Age 21]

The wheels come in different sizes and use durometer-hardness-ratings which impact on durability, recoil, spring, sound and speed. The quality of bearings greatly enhances wheel-spin and therefore momentum into and out of tricks. The trucks are vital for balance and turning, and the available level and accuracy of adjustment for fine-tuning is critical. Their importance to progression and a need to trust the board in dangerous conditions, stokes fascination with their engineering and becomes a source of ontological security. It feels creative and more like a hobby, where individuals can try things out for themselves. Creating a fascination towards nuanced outcomes; compelling constant re-positioning and corrections. “You’ll know, and feel them, just tighten this nut on the trucks, only a bit at a time” [Kris: Male; Age 32]. The adjustment of trucks is important when expanding trick complexity and at higher-speeds. Trucks being too loose can cause instability in vert-skating; “your trucks should be tight, so tighten them if you need to go fast, you have to get used to it” [Aran: Male; Age 19]. The board set-up is culturally important, as excessively large or wide-wheels look-odd and make cruising too easy. Many skaters even stipulate the wheels should be white to limit or standardise their visible presence. Trucks too broad for the deck have a similar effect; wheels that protrude beyond the deck-footprint, exaggerates their presence and make complex tricks unviable, interfering with board-leans and spins. The board edges towards looking and feeling like a longboard. Trusting the board’s performance means having responsive-trucks, smooth bearings and round-wheels free from flat-spots. Purposive technologies need to be maintained and necessarily replaced to protect progression. “You need to maintain the board, don’t ride in the rain, keep checking the bearings are not clogged with dirt” [Kris: Male; Age 32]. Rain is a particular anathema to skating, as it rusts bearings, makes artwork bleed, warps the deck and makes most terrain too slippery, unpredictable and treacherous. Sustained progression, growth and its defence, therefore gives feelings of ontological security within the practice.
The relationship with the board intensifies as skating progresses, but gradually replacing each of the component parts raises the ‘ship of Theseus’ paradox, as the skateboard becomes more a figment of imagination. The desire to quickly progress and the frustration of not doing so, can drive consumption towards seeking that elusive, perfected performance. A fascination that can lead to frustration at a lack of progression or the pain of a fall. The board’s life can be ceremonially terminated; venting angst by snapping the deck with a swift stamp to the mid-section. Useful parts such as trucks and bearings, however, might be salvaged.

5.2.10 Function or Artifice?

A need for skateboards to function-well is mirrored by the clothes used in skating. Skateboarding’s principal-art is its practice, so clothes must not impede. Thereby affording movement and the flex essential for skating and tricks.

“Most the time, I just wear stuff that I can skate in. It’s not about looking really stylish it’s more about being able to skate-freely so, I don’t want my clothes to get in the way of skating. I don’t want to be too restricted. If I’m too tight then obviously that’s going to stop me doing tricks and be uncomfortable”.

[Sam; Male; Age 20]

Authentic practice therefore means individual preference is driven by personal-performance and the security of comfort. Most obvious in shoes; driving board motions through friction with the grip-tape. Routine-use being signified and verified through wear-marks, tears and their positions on the top or sides of the grip-tape or shoe; “they are functional so, you want them to feel good, more so than just look good” [Mik; Male; Age 25]. “Knowing what suits you.. what works what doesn’t I think it is about.. finding the right fit….” [Hamdan: Male; Age 21].

Shoes inevitably wear, so making erudite choices and getting value-for-money is important. Clothes should facilitate the individual style of skating and the environmental context. Artifice best saved for those social-events that do not involve skating, or as with the boards do not affect it negatively. Visual in impact and augmented by wear-and-tear. Pushing the board around the city, on the flat and uphill is physically strenuous and requires ventilation. Being excessively baggy, however, creates air and wind-resistance which obstructs speed; creating imbalance and therefore counterproductive effort. Cutting slits in jeans can therefore be a happy compromise, but clothing also needs to protect skaters from the elements, the ground and the board. Areas most likely to be struck by the hard-edge of the skateboard need additional protection; the most frequent and repetitive injury being the board hitting the ankle or shin-bones. Long socks are highly beneficial and relatively inconspicuous. Being conspicuously inconspicuous towards these forms of physical-safety or pain therefore affords compliance with the core-subcultural values.
The anxiety or insecurities skating imposes means some prefer the protection of anonymity. Hoodies, caps, and androgynous styles mask faces, hair, gender, ethnicity and age or subvert divisive categories. Wearing strong, masculine styles can be attractive for females in rougher areas, by creating a harder look. Contemporary urban-themes looking more natural and at home in the city. “I like strong male styles, I think they are just what I prefer, sort of makes them unisex, which is what I like”. “I just have always liked brands that are strong… and not been that interested in brands that I think are too weak or fancy” [A’ishah: Female; Age 30]. Skate style and clothes-style should match. “The important thing is to get the look that suits the way that you skate, otherwise you look ridiculous” [Lenny: Male; Age 22]. Skateboarding therefore provides a hardened environment that exercises the function and fit of clothing and its comfort in these settings. An acid-test of their social acceptability as street-wise styles, honed and confirmed in manifold cities and often hostile street environments.

5.2.11 Cultural Affinity and Appropriation

Skateboarding relies on empathy between skaters, who share a love of the practice. Often describing an emotional-high of affinity when seeing other skaters; feeling they have a special bond. “I always get a buzz when I see another skater, it gives me a lift.. a bit of a high… makes me feel good” [Malak: Male; Age 23]. Sharing-flow, mutual-pain and feelings of alienation, combined with their bitter refusal to give-up, produces and pervades mutuality of survival. A sense of communitas and deep-solidarity. They respect each other, having paid in blood, sweat and tears towards a common cause. Hostility from property-owners and domiciled-cultures means sticking together for their mutual-safety. Filming, supporting, being look-outs and safe-guarding builds strong bonds of trust. Creating long-standing friendships and a spirit of brotherhood. Being part of a small, but wider-connected set of skate-scenes therefore creates a greater sense of participation in each other’s individual feats. Everyday skating benefits from a lack of formal, personal-competition, meaning skaters reward and inspire each other. Expanding the shared-benefits for all members and their individual-identities. Their across-the-board cohesiveness, however, can make skaters look menacing and ‘ganged-up’ to a more dispersed and less unified mainstream. Having friends allows skaters to be more comfortable when venturing farther afield. Affording the benefits of unattached social-lives, while avoiding over-dependence, emotionally-heavy or restrictive relationships. Reflecting broader concepts of a pure-relationship rather than co-dependency (Giddens, 1991). Being afforded the privileges of these shared characteristics and the affiliated protection is reliant, however, on being in the group for the right reasons and respecting the culture.
“Community is really important. Skateboarding can’t survive without it. It’s like you feed off each other all the time, so the standard keeps getting better and better for everybody... so skating is as much about sharing them as anything else. That’s probably why there’s so much now on Instagram and Facebook and everything else. Because we like watching each other do cool stuff. We want to impress our own community... I want to say that skateboarding needs competition, but it has to be inclusive and there needs to be respect between skaters”. “Because, these are confined spaces, and spots are rare, and it needs... to survive, it needs to accept newcomers...”.

[Malak: Male; Age 23]

Being a member of a skateboarding community, contributing and sharing its identity, is different to being an outsider who simply copies without giving back. Perceived as cheating, leading to accusations of appropriating the culture. While explicit admiration or deference might appeal to the originator’s narcissism, an unacknowledged copy poses a challenge to their identity. Disrespectful as it implies a relationship which does not exist and therefore is rejected as undesired intimacy (Giddens, 1991); not being a true two-way relationship. Copying is a fast-track to social-benefits, however, when used at sufficient-distance and unconnected social-spheres. It, however, can also signify a lack of creativity or community-values, when its superficiality is exposed by those having more authenticity. Placing the appropriator in a subservient position, indicating less direct-access to usable, contemporary cultural-resources. Being first provides superior-claims to certain rights and privileges. Creative change can therefore be a useful tactic as it increases the chances of claiming originality. Developing movements as styles, however, also means they stay around long enough to be honed and remembered as some shared aspect of that community’s identity.

Sharing recreational spaces with other similar practices inevitably means interactions and crossovers. There is a belief, however, that skateboarders tend to be more creative due to the freedom, dynamics and efficiency the smaller skateboard provides, as well as attracting edgy, urban artists. A consensus that BMX riders, scooters, snowboarders and even surfers, have a natural tendency to follow skateboarders faster-rate and greater-array of trick-innovations. Skateboarders feeling their identity is endangered by these other groups, together with their own identity insecurities, means antipathy develops towards innovations being copied outside of the subculture. Posing issues for brands seeking to anchor themselves in skateboarding due to its edgy urban-appeal, while also seeking to develop traction in other sports such as snowboarding and surfing. A good example being Vans, though they do sensibly avoid the scooter industry. A view towards the crossover being attractive or repulsive partially reliant on whether the other culture is seen as cool or not. For example, skateboarders themselves do utilise crossovers from music-styles to create diversity within their own identities.

Similarly, non-skaters use skateboarding as a way of creating and blending a look. “A lot of customers like the style of skateboarding or the image, and how they imagine the
lifestyle would be, rather than the actual sport itself” [Laycie: Female; Age 24], which they consider too dangerous. Used appropriately, a deference to skateboarding can be flattering as while they may not wish to skate, it shows they are interested in it and admire it. A source of ontological security for skaters and those they deem being desirable, skate-friendly consumers.

“I don’t think that when many people are buying skate brands that they are thinking that they are skaters actually, I think they are just buying that little bit of cool, that they can blend-in with other things”. “If you buy all skate products and have a board, you should be a skater, if you are not you are going to look fairly silly, obviously. But wearing a T-shirt or a hat with other things that complement it... that create a unique personal style, that’s kind of cool, because it says or no, it hints that I may be a skater, I may not be, you have to work it out, plus it also says that if I am then I’m not too obsessive about it, because that wouldn’t be cool in my opinion. So, it’s not a uniform in my opinion, it’s a way of saying that I like skating, or I like that kind of thing. It does not mean I skate. People wear music T-shirts but don’t play an instrument, it just shows that they are interested....”.

[Paige: Female; Age 29]

The problem is more if these consumers pose a more serious identity-threat to skaters. Non-skaters wearing or using skater-products or symbols in ways that imply they skate, is perceived as contrived. Creating anger or revulsion at posers who selfishly disrespect the pain and authentic struggle of the lifestyle, defiling their achievements. Unfortunately, outsiders are often ignorant to these codes. These non-skaters, however, are supporting an unprofitable industry by buying products such as Vans, who then re-invest in skateboarding (Castro, 2016). Skateboarders understand and accept this need, but will vehemently defend their most sacred symbols of hard-core-skating. Most noticeably with Thrasher, perceived as having a pure-history of serving skating. Holding trusted-status as a virtuous skater-brand and being beyond suspicion.

Unlike Vans who openly operate in the mainstream, or Supreme who have flirted with it. Appealing to mainstream consumers means growth, but also selling-out. Clemency requires recompense to the subculture by sharing in the spoils. For outsiders such as Nike SB who are seeking traction in skateboarding, small errors become magnified as they provoke mistrust. For example, suspicions are raised by using photographs, which can look inauthentically staged. Sketchy street-parts committed to video are preferred by Thrasher as they are more reputable and tend to be built from the ground-up. Avoiding skate-park footage, post-production techniques or flimsy use of slow-motion.

Skateboarding’s radical-image, sits uneasily with neoliberalism’s need to secure legitimacy for all consumers willing to spend. One way to imagine skirting this system, is to purchase from independent, skater-owned shops who are integral to local skate-scenes. Key to maintaining a cohesive local subculture, by becoming hubs for dispersed skaters to meet-up. To survive, however, these shops must work with large, commercial producers to sell their clothing products. It being forbidden to sell inferior
products such as scooters, whose broader popularity could buffer them from fiscal-difficulty during skateboarding’s slow-periods\textsuperscript{[395,396]} . The larger brands credibility, however, partly relies on endorsements by influential local-skaters. Sometimes therefore providing exclusive-versions for skater-stores, offering something attractive and unique. “In skating at least.. they (the brands) are talking to that community, so it has to have the respect of that community..” [Neel: Male; Age 20]. In this sense, creating connections which foster ontological security for both parties. The big producers, however, are also guilty of offering these exclusive-versions to other mainstream-outlets who can under-cut their prices. It creates mistrust and can make skater-store owners feel they are being used\textsuperscript{[397]}. Retail-configurations tend to reflect local-cultures and practices, signalling skateboarding’s legitimacy or undesirability in the area\textsuperscript{[398]}. For example, retail-zones which sell skater-inspired fashion often prohibit skating and do not sell skateboards; seeing it as anti-social and likely to put-off other shoppers. Sometimes skater-shops can be pushed underground, caught between mainstream skate-clothing incursions and the undesirability of the practice. Limiting their location within some of the best spaces to skate and promote skateboarding\textsuperscript{[399]}.

5.2.12 Double-Consciousness and Ontological-Security

Skateboards tend to see themselves as outsiders and therefore unpopular. Skateboarding can be cool, but other more popular activities can be viewed as more desirable. Fluctuating interest from mainstream perspectives, therefore problematizes its coolness\textsuperscript{[400]} (Hill Street, 2012). For skateboarding to appeal to the mainstream, it must conform to mainstream tastes, while also giving mainstreamers the dangerous-imagery they desire to make them cooler. Skateboarding, however, also needs to reject being subordinate to the mainstream by keeping its cohesive, radical-image and sense of alienation. Cool things need an element of danger, but need to be popular or have some physical or emotional connection for people\textsuperscript{[401]}.

“Football is cool, because it has so many fans, whereas If you have a handball team, there is such a smaller number of fans, so you’re not going to have that feeling of cool with it. You have to feel related to the sport to get that feeling, if you don’t follow the sport at all, you’re not going to feel anything towards it. Skateboarding definitely can be cool as you have to be a bit of a daredevil to do it. So, I think in these cases, if the people doing the sport seem cool, then that can make the sport cool for a while”.

[Neil: Male, Age 18]

Many people would prefer popularity to being cool\textsuperscript{[402]}; “There is that difference. Being cool means that you have this style to you”, but “I think being popular is more important than being cool. I’d rather be popular than cool” [Harry: Male; Age 18]. Being unpopular, is a good sign others are taking little pleasure from you and are probably therefore not cool. Making judgements towards others relative coolness is an easier task of subjectivity, but most lack insight towards themselves. Extending to shared-characteristics closely held towards individual identity. Reflecting a difficulty in seeing
one’s own aura or the aura of things we know well\[^{\text{Sect.3.3.6}}\]. Judging whether skateboarding is cool, is therefore often a tricky question for skateboarders to answer\[^{\text{SK.402-404}}\]. While they have obsessed about and therefore love skating, there is insecurity for how others view it\[^{\text{SK.405-408}}\].

“It’s more than that because for me cool is sort of an image or impression of something else, so for me skateboarding is a major part of my life so it’s too much a part of me to say it’s cool. You would have to ask me if something else was cool or not.”

[Ryan: Male; Age 21]

This uncertainty means individuals must question their uniqueness or desirability when the subculture appears stagnant or popularity is declining\[^{\text{SK.407-409}}\]. When skating is in a low or unpopular period, skaters may trigger changes to make it more popular and desirable to attract newcomers. Ironically, falling popularity might be indicated by the decline in sales of brands which connect the subculture to the mainstream. A reduction in the quantity of posers and interlopers seeking to benefit from the image. The lack of admiration may trigger ontological insecurity. Skaters of course want to be influential, to feel special, noticed and be individually memorable\[^{\text{SK.409}}\]. Not being remembered is alarming as it signifies a lack of interest or desirability\[^{\text{SK.409}}\]. Causing feelings of inadequacy that risks being subservient to other’s judgements. Actively looking for other’s responses, however, awkwardly transmits narcissistic insecurity.

Skateboarding at the edge, or in optimal-flow conditions, means awareness of others should be blanked-out\[^{\text{SK.411}}\]. If social-conditions form part of the edge condition, however, the skater may need those resources for those social challenges\[^{\text{SK.412}}\]. Being affected by them or appearing narcissistic, however, is uncool\[^{\text{SK.411}}\]. Self-congratulatory behaviours or attention-seeking are signs of being a poser. Being nonchalant allows others to form their own conclusions. Stating personality in ways congruent with the time-tested styles or core-values of cool\[^{\text{SK.413}}\]. Privately conferring someone as cool acknowledges their superiority, so to be pleasurable must also in some way be purposive to self-identity\[^{\text{SK.415-416}}\]. It may also, however, indicate a purposive movement towards the other.

“I just think was aware that you think and don’t use. it’s a bit of an awkward word to use whereas trendy is a bit easier to understand because it’s not as kind of emotional. Like when you say something or somebody is cool you kind of killing yourself a bit. You putting too much of yourself onto it as a judgement. it’s like you’re putting yourself below it. Whereas I said something as trendy and I’m saying like it and think in and it’s got the right features for now but I’m not saying that I’m attached to it. I’m saying that I like it almost like I am looking at it from above. So trendy is, erm, like being unique and staying ahead, a bit of a game, whereas, cool is more what’s inside. And I don’t want to reveal that. I like to keep people guessing”. // [Interviewer] “So saying cool is uncool?” // [Interviewee] “I do kind of think that. I think it’s okay to say if it spontaneous and you felt it but if you try and say to impress somebody and flatter them then that’s kind of uncool. I don’t think I’ve ever heard somebody go up to someone and say you’re cool. You might think that but you wouldn’t say it that would be stupid”.

[A’ishah: Female; Age 30]
People often start skateboarding to fulfil a void which then pushes and develops them in new directions. This constantly changes their personal trajectory, boundary conditions and their perceptions of cool. Things once perceived as cool can therefore modify.

“I think the hard core stuff is (cool), but I think that . . . the less it is of that, or the more fake it is, then that is just bullshit, so that is not cool to me. But I can see how that it might still be cool to other people”, “Because if you know too much, it stops things being cool. It spoils the effect”.

[Jamie: Male; Age 19]

Cool therefore involves a continuous movement of ideas towards feelings towards otherness and the progression of the subject. Either relating to things not yet achieved, felt lacking, or an inspiring standard which challenges the individual to change.

[Interviewer] “What makes a trick cool to you?” // [Interviewee] “I would say one that I can’t do yet.” // [Interviewer] “So if you can do it it’s not cool!” // [Interviewee] “No, they can be cool, but they have to be better than I can do them.. or at least a different take on them.”.

[James: Male; Age 21]

Things that are too threatening or different, however, might create a dread of exclusion and therefore avoidance. The individual fearing an expanding future and their impending isolation. Skateboarding provides the comfort of another ‘home’ where anxieties fade and are replaced by a sense of camaraderie, freedom, thrill and the joys of self-discovery; where there is a sense of security in feeling comfortable inside the subculture. Friendships creating trust and a creative outlet from restrictive or stifling concerns for their safety.

Competitive structures threaten skating as winning or possessing records can stop individual’s progressing. A fear of making mistakes or losing, producing a cautious mind-set. A state where individuals react to other’s moves, rather than creating new things for themselves.

(Tony Hawk: Why winning wasn’t fun, 2016). Similarly, having status, property or assets generate anxieties which cause a domiciled state and a reluctance to take risks. Turning a desire to win and the hunger of having nothing to lose, into a fear of separation from comfortable lifestyles. Seeking to protect reputations, jobs, nuptial relationships or children. Being older does not preclude skating, but being part of younger generation’s free-moving skate-scenes is socially awkward; they being a “distinct kinship cohort or order” (Giddens, 1991, p. 146). Older skaters become aware that their legacies and personal narratives have passed into the hands of younger peers and their subjective viewpoints. The illicitness and radical nature of skateboarding could also isolate mature skaters from other mainstreamers, who they are reliant on for support. They themselves dreading future targeting by troublesome skateboarders.
With age, there is less time to plan, practice and progress at trivialities like skateboarding\cite{438,439,445,446,448}. Individuals do not like sharing their skating-identity with those they feel dissimilar to or find stylistically repulsive\cite{440,442}. Skaters, though, fear becoming isolated as their friends quit through a need to cater for adult commitments and responsibilities\cite{440,444,446}. Domestic spaces such as skate-parks, however, provide the means for families to introduce the young to skateboarding and therefore preserve some continuity with their past. Also providing a level of comfort for beginners or those seeking to interact with new friends. Despite their image problems, they are therefore essential for the survival of the practice\cite{445}. Skaters must therefore defend them as they are their nurturing grounds\cite{446,448}. Colonisations by scooters and bikes must be resisted to preserve the future integrity of the culture\cite{449}. Skaters, however, must also break-free from these comfort-zones, by pushing themselves in more challenging social and physical environments\cite{448}. An overreliance on the domesticity of skate-parks, or a defensive cultural-mind-set, seriously hinders theirs, as well as the creative expansion of the culture.

5.3 Summary

Skateboarding can excite and shock, while evoking a sense of artistic-freedom. Astonishing through its daring, audacity and vast-array of tricks. The personal-dangers of skateboarding and the thrill of overcoming challenging-obstacles can therefore be cool as can its urban-vibe and youthful association with music and the latest street fashions. Skateboarding, however, has deep-rooted image-problems. Tainted by being viewed as a children’s toy, lacking glamour and being associated with privations such as a scarcity of assets, property or wealth. Skateboarding’s association with juvenility requires radical-aesthetics to stress autonomy. Invoking negative sentiments for those who feel threatened by it, feel they are its victims, or perceive it as anti-social. Skating therefore gets pushed underground as even cities wishing to exploit its cool-aura, must tone-it-down by controlling the more radical elements. The hostility and negativity skaters feel, means they must form together as a unified ontological presence for personal security. To more diffused mainstreamers they can present a menacing appearance, often imagined as causing or escalating trouble, by defending each other when confronted. Avoiding being too disruptive or threatening, however, is also important to avoid triggering institutional attacks that limit their practice. Skateboarders are therefore seeking the ontological security of belonging to peer groups and gaining acceptance by conforming with the core-culture, whilst also seeking to be disruptive and provoke ontological insecurity in non-skaters. This is a paradox, however, as they are also seeking the ontological security of being valued and appearing desirable to mainstreamers. A lack of subjectivity towards oneself, however, makes self-judgments of coolness difficult, facing the ontological insecurity of not knowing others true opinions or their relative desirability. There remaining a sense of
an undercurrent of unpopularity or disapproval by non-skaters. Skaters therefore need home-spaces to nurture and cultivate their practice, developing routines that serve as protective cocoons they can take with them in less predictable surroundings. Skate-styles are naturally formed from them; expressing the types of skating an individual feels at home in. A basis for visual judgements towards personality, personal-attributes, predilections, cultural-affinity and vices. Poor-style in new environments, conveying inexperience or naivety in that setting.

Skateboarding suffers from frequent low-periods; creating conflicts between a need to protect the integrity of the subculture, while accepting change is essential for survival and to attract newcomers. Tensioned, as skaters need to ensure the benefits of the shared-identity are pooled towards a trusted, composite group. Keeping mainstreamers at a sufficient distance to enable them to view and admire the subculture and its aura, while continuing to reject those practices which undermine its image or encourage undesirable colonisations. Skateboarders must therefore trust new-members to have authentic love of the practice and its culture. Signs indicating posers must be shamed or excluded. While the main joy is getting stoked, each skater has faced pain in mastering a dangerous activity and grown personally; not wishing these gains to be undermined. Skateboarder's growth and progression relies on continuously overcoming fears and anxieties in expanding boundaries of the self, mainly through the development of new-tricks, combinations, or performing them in exciting new contexts while also conforming with the subculture. Taking control of self-identity means ontological crises are more likely to occur and will be more pressing (Giddens, 1991). Cool in skateboarding therefore revolves around finding new ways to create excitement through mutual-progression and growth. Progression relying on cooperative forms of creativity, where members contribute and share in their collective development. Performances are individualised and shared back, normally through video-footage, meaning personal narcissism, selfish or divisive forces that harm skateboarding communities are rejected. Brands wishing to leverage skateboarding must therefore respect and comply with the sub-culture’s core values or risk being viewed as inauthentic. Skating relies on mainstream commercial interest for support, but skater’s dislike the culture being appropriated if not involving deference or reinvestment. Brands need to either remain true to skateboarding or recompense it for forays into the mainstream. Many non-skating consumers simply like the edgy-image or ambiguity that wearing skate-brands introduces to their identity. Skateboarding brands, however, also need to ensure they also are trusted in protecting skater’s identities.

Skateboarding needs forms of progression to survive, but major generational changes obsolete older-skaters as their skate-styles are too embedded and therefore resist change. Creating regression and a difficulty in remaining at the forefront of the practice. Radical styles or breakthroughs often being required to overcome challenging contexts.
New, aggressive-styles can help break the mould and tear up the old-order, rendering old-styles obsolete. Less-dangerous practices can also overtake if their rate of progression is more rapid. Being invested in diminishing styles risks the dread of obsolescence. Not wishing to be left-behind or isolated, indicative of an inability to ‘colonise the future’ (Giddens, 1991). Steezy or cool-styles while revealing moral-mastery, are only fleetingly impressive, requiring further expansion or can quickly tire. Smooth integration as simplified movements, however, means further energy and resources are freed towards them. Classic styles, however, act as reminders of core-values while intergenerational stability in certain areas allows the practice to remain recognisable and maintain needed boundaries. The nature of these continuities or changes, reflecting the state of the practice and the broader environment. Boards, clothes and accessories, however, must facilitate and not impede skating, while conforming to the acceptable boundaries of the subculture and its desired image. Equipment conveying excessive fear or a lack of autonomy is often supressed or made inconspicuous; as securitising social-status is often placed before physical well-being.

5.4 Conclusion

This case-study has exploratively investigated and presented skateboarding as an individual case-study, to draw out major themes which help the understanding of the complex phenomena of cool and its relationships with ontological security/insecurity. The thesis can therefore proceed to the surfing case-study which is presented in Chapter 6. Offering different environmental, social contexts and alternative perspectives for furthering this explorative study of cool.
Figure 5.2: Collage; Skateboarding Research Experiences
Chapter 6 - Findings: Case-study B: Surfing

This chapter presents the surfing case-study, using the methodologies described in Chapter 4. Addressing the research objective; ‘3) To explore cool, in relation to the stresses, and ontological insecurities, that contemporary society exacts upon consumers’. The chapter starts with an exploration of the subculture, lifestyle and practice of surfing using literature, documentary and literary sources. It is then empirically explored through research interactions in a sample of surfing spaces mainly in the UK.

The main themes that emerged from the Literature and Literary Review and Empirical Research are presented in Figure 6.1 below. Section 6.1 provides an analysis of surfing’s cultural discourses. Section 6.2 then presents fresh themes which emerged from the empirical research.

![Figure 6.1: Surfing Findings - Main Themes](image)

Each area is now discussed. The overall case-study findings are then [Section 6.3] summarised, before the chapter is [Section 6.4] concluded.
6.1 Surfing Culture [Literature and Literary Review]31

6.1.1 Surfing’s Lineages

6.1.1.1 Hawaiian Heritage

The art of riding surf originated in Polynesia32333435 (Canniford & Karababa, 2013; Finney & Houston, 1996; Warshaw, 2010; Young, et al., 1994). While predominately a children’s activity in the Western South-Pacific, it was more widespread and communal in the eastern-fringes of Hawai‘i, the Marquenas, Tahiti and the Cook Islands (Warshaw, 2010). Only in Hawai‘i, however, did it achieve major cultural significance363738 (Clark, 2011; Warshaw, 2010). Surfing was an important ritual for the peace-time of ‘Makahiki’ [October, through February] and enjoyed by both sexes (King, 2015). A ritual acknowledging the Polynesian deity Lono for the recent harvest; seeking his goodwill for the essential, seasonal rains vital to survival on this remote and easily-exhaustible outpost (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Ellis, 1826; King, 2015). During this phase of the year, the unifying spirit of ‘aloha’ brought people together, meaning war and human-sacrifice were temporarily tabooed (King, 2015). Makahiki coincided with the heaviest swells, so in these strict-resting-months Hawaiian’s “love of surfing, took precedence” (Clark, 2011, p. 16). It therefore became a social and political custom involving competitive pride/prestige and high-stake wagering394041 (Colburn, et al., 2002; Ellis, 1826; King, 2015; Nogelmeier, The Epic Tale; cited in Clark, 2011; Warshaw, 2010). People often came to attract a mate for the night or longer which stoked rivalries. It was believed, however, that surfing always revealed who was the most-attractive and best-looking424344 (Clark, 2011; Colburn, et al., 2002; Kamakau, 1992; cited in Clark, 2011).

Wave-riding was first witnessed by Europeans at Tahiti in Matavai Bay [1769], during British explorer Captain James Cook’s first voyage of the Pacific454647. Botanist Joseph Banks logged his and the crew’s astonishment at beholding the practice; holding them both transfixed and aghast484950 (Banks, 1784; 1997; Colburn, et al., 2002; Warshaw, 2010). Cook would eventually encounter the Hawaiian Archipelago in January 17785152, taking anchorage in Waimea Bay off Kauai; an outlying western island in the chain. After sailing north and then west, charting the Western coastline of the American continent and passing through the Bearing straits, they returned south and warily circled the islands, charting them for eight weeks (King, 2015). The Hawaiian Islands are lonely and foreboding outcrops, punctuated by appallingly vast, “sublime”, fiery, volcanic abysses whose voids startle and rivet535455 (Ellis, 1826, pp. 206-207). Cook’s two-ships eventually anchored off the largest Hawaiian Island at Kealakekua Bay in

31 [SU451 to 531] are surfing literary research data-code identification numbers.
January 1779; surprisingly greeted with friendly-warmth and generous hospitality\textsuperscript{465-466} (King, 2015; Warshaw, 2010).

Hawaiian surfers had far greater skill and dexterity than other Polynesian wave-riders they had encountered. The visitors were impressed and enthralled by the spectacle, but also appalled by the vast waves, the young age of some surfers and the alarming, perilous obstacles that jagged reefs and rocks presented (Banks, 1784; Beaglehole, 1784; Colburn, et al., 2002; Cook & King, 2009; King, 2015; Neil, 2015; Warshaw, 2010). The islanders, however, were fearless swimmers and at home in the surf, having played in them from an early age\textsuperscript{465} (King, 2015; Wilkes, 1845). Britain’s wintry or stormy seas had traditionally been sources of terror, viewed as untamed wildernesses and beyond-reason (Warshaw, 2010). The Hawaiians, however, as expert surfers perceived the ocean entirely differently (Neil, 2015; Stranger, 1999), giving them a sense of control through intuitive understanding of wave-dynamics, tides, currents; while having concise-terminologies for them\textsuperscript{468-470} (Chasing Mavericks, 2012; Neil, 2015)\textsuperscript{52}. Surfing seemed mysterious and natural, beautifully free from the grotesque exaggerations commonplace in European culture\textsuperscript{471,472} (King, 2015). Kant’s (2000) dynamical sublime\textsuperscript{473} sought to explain experiencing this type of natural-beauty, while still fearful or apprehensive of it; noting the importance of cultural rationale in forming internal-powers to resist or conquer them (Kant, 1790; 1914; 1951; 2000; 2016; Korner, 1955; Stranger, 2016).

Over the next century, increasing contact with foreign traders and American-Christian missionaries brought more exchange, but also conflicts and alien-diseases. Low-immunity and a lack of effective cures provoked widespread fear, which facilitated the missionary’s efforts to ‘civilise’ the islands (Laderman, 2014; Warshaw, 2010). In the 1800’s, Europeans considered sea-bathing uncivilised, believing it spread epidemics\textsuperscript{474} (Colburn, et al., 2002; Young, et al., 1994). To the Hawaiians, the missionary’s stories of an all-powerful god who guaranteed immortal-life seemed astonishing and sublime\textsuperscript{475,476} (Ellis, 1826). The volcanoes had always played on their minds, cementing many of their beliefs, idolatries and tabu (ibid). Subsequent conversions, however, did not result in punishment as the \textit{Kahunas} had portended, resulting in their denunciation (ibid). While surfing was somewhat admired as wildly exciting and dangerous\textsuperscript{53}, missionaries could not embrace wave-frolicking by naked-men and women (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Canniford & Karababa, 2013). By not partaking in the activity, however, they could not understand either its genius or

\textsuperscript{52} The Hawaiian’s complex surf culture and glossaries were regrettably eradicated by colonialism, so surfing’s contemporary global vernacular is based on Southern Californian (Clark, 2011; Neil, 2015).

\textsuperscript{53} (Reverend Henry T. Cheever, \textit{Life in the Sandwich Islands, the heart of the Pacific, As it Was and Is}, 1851)
sources of gratification; endangering themselves to self-dissatisfaction (Kant, 2011a). Hawaiians were clothed, banned from surfing and put to work in American plantations (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011). By the late 19th-Century, diseases had decimated the indigenous population\(^{54}\); to the point where Hawaiian culture was virtually extinguished. A large Asian-workforce being supplanted to sustain the plantation system (Colburn, et al., 2002; Hawaiian Encyclopedia, 2002; Laderman, 2014). In 1893 the Hawaiian monarchy\(^{55}\) was formally overthrown and 5 years later the territory annexed to the USA (Kenvin, 2014; Warshaw, 2010).

Such colonial discourses and Hawaiian genealogies remain important as like many historical narratives they remain bound to contemporary power struggles, stoking oppositional views towards American colonisation (Ballantyne & Burton, 2009, p. 192). For instance, ‘haole’ remains the ambiguously derogatory term for foreigner or white-mainlander (Ulukau, 2017). It uniquely recalls the painful history of Hawai‘i (Schaefer, 2008). Despite meanings changing through contexts and inflections (Grace & Lum, 2001), its use and the “mystique of local culture” obfuscates a particular disgust for this form of “other” (Grace & Lum, 2001, p. 446). To Hawaiian’s, surfing’s spiritual connections similarly symbolises a subversion of European and American ideals (Duane, 1997; Laderman, 2014; Riding Giants, 2004). For many therefore, surfing remains deeply spiritual and an individual act of joyful, non-violent defiance\(^{56}\) (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Kenvin, 2014).

The subjugation and domestication of Hawai‘i made the islands accessible to wealthy American tourists, highly attracted by the exciting potential of free-mingling hedonism (Warshaw, 2010). By the early 20th-Century, a budding tourist industry was creating a market for native Waikiki-beach-boys to befriend and mix with rich tourists as surfing instructors, lifeguards, babysitters and serenade’s (Davis, 2015; Walker, 2008; Warshaw, 2010). Entrepreneurial and commercially savvy, they defied and subverted the boundaries constructed by colonial discourses, being “physically aggressive” but also distinctive and charming, musical, humorous and “sexually alluring” (Canniford & Karababa, 2013, p. 129). The most accomplished surfers such as George Freeth\(^{57}\) [1883-1919] and his protégé Duke Kahanamoku [1890-1968] became Waikiki icons (Davis, 2015). Kahanamoku was beautifully muscled, taking rich and available female-tourists for tandem-rides, holding them close and up-high over and beyond the substantial wave-breaks\(^{58}\) (Warshaw, 2010). A highly subversive act which prompted novelist Jack London in 1907 to describe in detail his paradoxical sentiments on seeing Kahanamoku conquering this tumult. A disconcerting, shrinking sensation which challenged, but also inspired him\(^{59}\) (London, 2004). The desire to emulate was far

\(^{54}\) To around 10%-20% of the 1770’s levels (Hawaiian Encyclopaedia, 2002).

\(^{55}\) Of part-Hawaiian and part-Irish ancestry.
more intoxicating than retreating the threat; generating affinity and respect[481-483] (London, 2004; Warshaw, 2010).

“Why, they are a mile long, these bull-mouthed monsters, and they weigh a thousand tons”; “No chance at all, is the verdict of the shrinking ego”; “And suddenly, out there where a big smoker lifts skyward, rising like a sea-god from out of the welter of spume and churning white, on the giddy, toppling, overhanging and downfalling, man, erect, full-statured, not struggling frantically in that wild movement, not buried and crushed and buffeted by those mighty monsters, but standing above them all, calm and superb, poised on the giddy summit”; “flying through the air, flying forward, flying fast as the surge on which he stands”; “he is riding the sea that roars and bellows and cannot shake him from its back. But no frantic outreaching and balancing is his. He is impassive, motionless as a statue carved suddenly by some miracle out of the sea’s depth from which he rose. And straight on toward shore he flies on his winged heels and the white crest of the breaker. There is a wild burst of foam, a long tumultuous rushing sound as the breaker falls futile and spent on the beach at your feet”; “He has “bitten the bull-mouthed breaker” and ridden it in, and the pride in the feat shows in the carriage of his magnificent body as he glances for a moment carelessly at you who sit in the shade of the shore. He is a Kanaka—and more, he is a man, a member of the kingly species that has mastered matter and the brutes and lorded it over creation”.

(London, 2004, pp. 64-67)

Tourist’s growing eagerness to ride the waves themselves added thrill to Hawaii’s allure[484] (A vintage Hawaiian movie about "surfboarding", 1930s). Being suddenly en-vogue and the epicentre of a cultural and economic revolution (ibid), meant increasing numbers of Mainland-American visitors could establish their own colonial surf-club in 1908; ‘The Outrigger Canoe Club’ (Outrigger Canoe Club Sports, 2017). An appropriation rivalled by Waikiki beach-boys who founded their own ‘Hui Nalu Club’, to contest the surf with menace and edgier appeal (Canniford & Karababa, 2013; Walker, 2008).

6.1.1.2 Californian Style/Australian Sovereignty

The popularity of surfing in Waikiki, caused visiting wealthy industrialists to envisage the potential effects on Californian tourism. In 1907, Henry Huntingdon asked Freeth to publicly demonstrate surfing at Redondo Beach to help promote his new railway[485] (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Warshaw, 2010). Kahanamoku won greater notoriety through his towering swimming achievements, surprisingly qualifying for the USA Olympic swimming-team and winning 100m-freestyle gold in Stockholm [1912] and two more at Antwerp [1920][486-487] (Warshaw, 2010). His renown promoted the lifestyle[488] and coincided with Hollywood glamorising youthful, athletically formed bodies as sensuous and erotic[56] (Booth, 2001; Davis, 2015; Duke Kahanamoku surfing with Douglas Fairbanks, 1931; Kern, 1975; Lisanti, 2005; Thoms, 2000a; Thoms, 2000b; Walker, 2008). Kahanamoku’s fame resulted in an invitation to demonstrate

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56 Tanned-skin became fashionable in Australia and California as excessively white-bodies were now perceived as unhealthy, but remained considered entirely different to perceptions of race (Warshaw, 2010).
surfing and life-saving at Sydney’s Freshwater Beach in 1914\textsuperscript{(Kampion, 2003; Warshaw, 2010). It was a total success and the seminal moment for inserting surfing within Australia’s burgeoning beach-industry. Australian life-saving, however, became institutionally concerned with policing the beach and ocean, restricting free-play with the use of “flags, lines and whistles” (Stranger, 2016, p. 150). Australian’s emerging surfing subcultures, however, would progressively push these boundaries, allowing “the sublime” to flourish by revolting against this “repression” (p. 150).

Surfboards until the 1930’s, remained hewn from long pieces of hardwood and therefore extremely heavy, restricting access (35-90kg). They required immense strength to carry, while being flat and finless meant they had little drag in the water. Surfers therefore assumed a forward-facing, orthodox-skiing-stance to follow the wave’s course (Encyclopedia of Surfing, 2017c). Maintaining control of these heavy-projectiles in the water was difficult and dangerous. This trajectory would change, however, after in-lander Tom Blake briefly met Kahanamoku at a cinema in Detroit in 1920. Immediately feeling transformed, Blake travelled independently to California and Hawai‘i and began surfing\textsuperscript{(Warshaw, 2010). Initially struggling but by meticulously studying traditional boards in museums, devised more hydrodynamically complex shapes using much lighter and flexible hollow-wooden-frames (360 Guide, 2012; Encyclopedia of Surfing, 2017b; Warshaw, 2010). Blake had staggering success, riding waves far longer than previously possible. Hawaiian surfers who had dominated competitions resented it, though, feeling his board offered unfair advantages (360 Guide, 2012). This negativity towards his inventions caused Blake to stop competing and instead focus on innovation. His next ingenious step being to salvage a keel-fin or ‘skeg’ from a speedboat [1935]. Attaching it to his board’s underside-tail produced impressive steering-control (McCagh, 2013; Warshaw, 2010). Many Hawaiians including Kahanamoku\textsuperscript{57} disliked the concept. John Kelly, a malihini\textsuperscript{58} who had moved to Hawai‘i when he was four, instead shortened the tail and hacked a ‘V’ profile in the underside [1937: hot-curts], creating enhanced turns without the immoderation of a fin (ibid). The increasing options for improving manoeuvrability, while upsetting traditionalists, permitted the progression to more impressive forms of wave riding. In Waikiki, Rabbit Kekai reinterpreted traditional Hawaiian surfing, using the finless hot-curl to arch-back inside the waves-tube (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Encyclopaedia of Surfing, 2017d). Advanced aviation technologies developed during WWII\textsuperscript{59} aided post-war board-designs (Laderman, 2014). Californian Joe Quigg sought to emulate Kekai in the tube, using balsawood and fibre-glass-resins to create a more curved, shorter and lighter-board [1947 - ‘Malibu-chip’] (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011). Bob Simmons improved

\textsuperscript{57} Kahanamoku disliked the feel as the skeg made it too unstable and tricky (Clark, 2011).

\textsuperscript{58} Newcomer to the islands.
the concept by planing a *spoon* convexity in the nose/underside and creating greater wing-lift in the *rails* (Kenvin, 2014).

As many Californian beaches opened to the public, Malibu\(^{59}\) became a surfing Mecca due to its perfect-wave peeling just close enough to the beach and at the right-speed to invite showmanship (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011). In this environment, *Matt Kivlin\(^{59,61}\)* perfected an asymmetrical-stance, firmly-rooting himself on the board while giving smooth sideways balance (Encyclopedia of Surfing, 2017c; Joe Quigg, Tom Zahn, Darilyn Zanuck, Buzzy Trent, Matt Kivlin, Bob Simmon, 1947; Warshaw, 2010). Easy-on-the-eyes\(^{59,60,61}\), he attracted an ample female following, making his ‘*Malibu-style*’ the defacto standard (Warshaw, 2010).

“Williams was hot, Kivlin was cool – so cool, in fact, that he became modern longboarding’s sui generis stylist. One Malibu surfer described Kivlin’s method as “performance cruising”, which perhaps had a double meaning. As Joe Quigg explained, Kivlin surfed the way he did mostly to impress a beauchful of female admirers. “Matt had quite a following” Quigg said. “And when you bring women into the picture, it affects riding style”; “Turns were a big deal to Kivlin, but he never changed directions on a wave with attacking glee the way Williams did. Kivlin was a dancer – knees bent, shoulders loose, left arm dropped below the waist, right hand extended smoothly to hip level or above as a balancing mechanism”.

(Warshaw, 2010, p. 108)

Improving boards or creating progressive surf-styles advanced surfing’s limits, drawing admiring glances from onlookers. Enhancements, however, remained parleyed to surfing’s values and traditions. Innovations could overcome them if they progressed the technical capabilities in ways that allowed increasingly difficult conditions to be surfed or in greater style. For example, Victoria’s Bell’s Beach was ridden [1956] when it was previously thought unsurfable (Laderman, 2014).

Surfing’s cool, however, was seriously endangered in 1959 when the motion-picture *Gidget*\(^{60}\) propelled it into international consciousness\(^{60,61}\) (Colburn, et al., 2002; Engle, 2015). The ‘*Malibu-scene*’ exploded and the ‘Malibu-chip’ was mass-produced using new lightweight foam-cores (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Colburn, et al., 2002). A stream of sub-standard B-Movie imitations followed, making surfing appear increasingly regressive and adolescent. The domain of phony, mainstream-squares (Colburn, et al., 2002; Marcus, 2011). In reaction, hard-core surfers began producing independent films that depicted surfing in a more authentic light\(^{61}\). Many fled the

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\(^{59}\) In 1926, Tom Blake had discovered the virgin private, crescent beach which would become the surfing Mecca of Malibu. It was part of May Rindges’s private-ranch, patrolled by guards and protected by steep-bluffs and canyons (Nelson, 2010). The state enforced (in 1929) Pacific Coast Highway, however, forced the sale of plots, opening it up for surfing (ibid).

\(^{60}\) [Filmed in Malibu]

\(^{61}\) (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Chasing Mavericks, 2012; Maverick’s: A documentary film, 2005; Riding Giants; 2004; Step into Liquid, 2003; The Endless Summer, 1966).
crowded line-ups and ventured north to the remote Hollister Ranch, setting up a members-only club (Nelson, 2010). Californian waters, however, cooled rapidly northwards\(^{62}\), intensifying danger by reducing the feel for the environment (Chasing Mavericks, 2012; Warshaw, 2003; Wiersma, 2014). MIT physicist Hugh Bradner had produced the first neoprene-wetsuit in 1951, but early versions were too rigid and produced too little warmth for surfing cold-water zones (Nelson, 2010). Technologies that place the surfer too far below or above the limits of technical progression tending to make them undesirable (Stranger, 2016). In 1971, Californian Pat O’Neill invented the foot-leash, but were dismissed as ‘kook-cords’; only accepted once realised they allowed surfers to achieve greater heights by taking and surviving bigger risks (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011). The introduction of Twin-fins produced greater-speed in small-surf but were quickly superseded by the tri-fin [1981], adding superior carving power in big-surf (ibid). Four-fins [2000], however, were not as popular as their excessive drive could cause surfers to slide-off the board, which waxing struggled to prevent (ibid).

Since the 1960’s, the ability to cut and shape foam has given individual surfers the opportunity to create an edge\(^{591}\) (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011). Shaper-surfers have expanded surfing by creatively exploring the boundaries, initiating more radical and vertical turns that would eventually go all over the wave. Finally going aerial and riding waves once thought impossible or the realm of fantasy (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; King Surf Hawai‘i, 2012; Riding Giants, 2004)\(^{63}\). Each generation has therefore produced icons, recognised for taking surfing to new heights\(^{591}\) (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Riding Giants, 2004). Their legacies constantly reinterpreted towards surfing’s ancestry, which gives some surfers or forms of surfing a guiltless identity that other’s desire\(^{591}\) (Canniford & Karababa, 2013).

### 6.1.2 Colonial Tourism and Localism

Being contained within the warm-water surf-zones of Hawaii, California and Australia meant surfing was aligned to some shared ethos while affording each an individual identity (Colburn, et al., 2002; Warshaw, 2010; Young, et al., 1994). The image of surfing, however, was dominated by surfer-films that depicted western-men’s personal odysseys. Travelling and exploring constantly exotic, undiscovered lands with high-levels of personal-freedom; while never working and worshiping their oneness with nature (Beaumont & Brown, 2015; Booth, 1996; Desmond, 1999; Neil, 2015; West,

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\(^{62}\)“Unlike most other big wave locations where the water is regularly above 80°F, the water off the coast of the Pacific Ocean in Northern California is regularly in the low 50s. Such water requires the use of 5mm neoprene wetsuits, which restrict movement, reduce tactile information between the board and the feet, makes breathing difficult, and causes numbness” (Wiersma, 2014, p. 152).

\(^{63}\)Produced the first neoprene wetsuits, which restrict movement, reduce tactile information between the board and the feet, making breathing difficult, and causes numbness.” (Wiersma, 2014, p. 152).
2014). Becoming a driver of tourism for those seeking to explore themselves through distanced, independent travel to places such as Bali (Booth, 1996; Brisick, 2004; Canniford & Karababa, 2013). Surfing, however, costs time that could have been spent on careers, rather than a lifestyle normally involving casual, low-paid work (Beaumont & Brown, 2015; Ford & Brown, 2006; Partington, et al., 2009; Renneker, 1987). Surfing has therefore been viewed as a hedonistic pleasure to be fulfilled before embarking on work-life routines and adult responsibilities (Canniford & Karababa, 2013). Popular-media tends to exaggerate the positives of this exotic consumption and downplay any anxieties (Torgovnick, 1990). There is increasing recognition, however, that surfers can cause physical and cultural harm in unspoilt destinations where it is seen as a pathway to economic growth (Towner & Orams, 2016). Intensive tourism physically damages the marine/coastal environment (Towner, 2016), but also makes sustainable cultures economically dependent on it, and forces locals to mimic traveller’s forms of consumption (Gossling, 2002; Woosnam, et al., 2009). For example, in the long-isolated and untouched Mentawai Islands, local males can now be seen wearing the “latest brands like Billabong or Quiksilver” (Towner & Orams, 2016, p. 1269).

Surfing can instigate flow for beginners as first-time wave-riding is thrilling and each small victory meaningful (Stranger, 2016). A lack of ability or local knowledge, however, is often perceived as causing poor decision-making; so local-customs are expected to take precedence (Neil, 2015). Failures to observe local-rules creates conflict, particularly with those who believe their superior-surfing gives them priority (ibid). Retribution or acts of surf-rage are commonplace; an ugly-side of surfing that is rarely spoken about (Colburn, et al., 2002; Neil, 2015). In defending their surf-zones, large gangs sometimes form. An infamous example being the Black shorted Da Hui, established in 1976 to defend Oahu’s North Shore and Banzai pipeline from mainly Australian and South African surfers, using intimidation and violent beatings towards any signs of disrespect (Harrison, 2012). In the 1990’s the Wolfpak partly took their mantle, but others such as Sydney’s Maroubra Beach Bra-Boys and California’s Palos Verdes gangs also exist (ibid). Venturing to isolated wave-spots can therefore mean running the gauntlet of local antipathy or even political unrest (Laderman, 2014).

6.1.3 Transcendent Mysticism and Littoral Consummation

Surfing’s aesthetics are complex and multi-sided, but often focus on the waves and wave-riding, connecting to the sublime through their “danger, power, fear, ecstasy, beauty and pain” (Stranger, 2016, p. 146). Beautifully formed and rolling waves merge the surfer with knowledge of the ocean’s vast power (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Kant, 2000; 2011a; Stranger, 2016). Riding waves, therefore, coalesces experiences of flow or edgework necessary for survival, mingled with transfixing visions of
sublime nature which momentarily occupy the motions of the soul (Burke, 1757; Stranger, 2016; Wiersma, 2014). Wild natural coastlines and oceanic environments, however, also create a sense of unease, instigating deeper contemplations towards the psyche (Canniford & Karababa, 2013; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Ford & Brown, 2006; Stranger, 2016; Wiersma, 2014). For example, being outside the surf-breaks creates pleasant wobbles, but also an awareness of dangling precariously above the ocean’s abyss (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011; Chasing Mavericks, 2012). Aesthetic theories, however, struggle to describe subjective variances, temporal-states or such mixed/transitional experiences (Freud, 1919; Spuybroek, 2012; Stranger, 2016). Anxieties towards things outside knowledge or control require alternative control mechanisms (Stranger, 2016). Possible dangers lurking below, such as reefs, rocks, sharks or crocodiles perturb, and need to be psychologically negotiated (Bergeson 2013; Stranger, 2016; The Inertia, 2015; The Shallows, 2016). Philosophies and rituals which cocoon the individual and therefore allow greater serenity help (Helgoe, 2013). Surfing becomes a devotion/faith where concepts chiming with, or helping promote the soul’s eternity; unity with nature and life’s simplicity become popular [or connect to surfing’s countercultural mantra/surf-militancy] (Ford & Brown, 2006; Helgoe, 2013; Morning of the Earth, 1971; Pacific Vibrations, 1970; Riding Giants, 2004; The Innermost Limits of Pure Fun, 1969).

Wave-riding experiences counteract the anxieties that surfing practices and lifestyles create (A Deeper Shade of Blue, 2011). A resolution which leaves the individual exhilarated, satisfied and cathartic (Bammel & Burris-Bammel, 1982). Creating mixed feelings of happiness which help break the anxiety for a while (Neil, 2015). Fleeting, as distinctions between heightened pleasure, pain, sublime, flow, heaven or hell are difficult to maintain; resolvable only through the experience’s climax and recognized as anxieties dissipate (Celsi, et al., 1993; Elias & Dunning, 1986; Stranger, 2016).

Mastery of environment provides authentic-agency and control, permitting growth and assurance through witnessed presentations of the self (Arnould & Price, 1993; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Celsi, et al., 1993; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Lyng, 1990; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). Affording more assured understanding of shared experiences and cultural language, while building unity, trust and mutual-admiration

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64 (such as yogi or the spirit of akasha).
(Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi, et al., 1993); an ease at being stoked and saying it with conviction (Duane, 1997). Over time incremental challenges build comfort-zones which retreating from can “feel playful”, allowing expansion of style in lesser conditions (Wiersma, 2014, p. 155). In these fluid environments, practice builds physical-ability, knowledge and certainty; to points where improvisational decision-making becomes possible (Celsi, et al., 1993). A rehearsed script or routine enabling ad-libbing while avoiding “sustained anxiety” (p. 12). Surfing, however, requires patience to wait for precisely the right moment to act. An ability to wait for and act when ‘fateful moments’ are presented (Giddens, 1991).

6.1.4 Physical and Mental Prowess

Surfing’s combinations of intense activity and slow, restful movements provide plenty of time for thinking and contemplation (Farley, et al., 2016). Fast-paddling (8%) and wave-riding (3%) only account for small periods of surfer’s time in the water (Watsford, 2006). Successfully surfing these waves, however, requires the development of immense-strength, fitness and courage (Chasing Mavericks, 2012). Paddling, wave-riding, breath-holding and recovering “the surfboard in the waves” develop upper-body-strength, high-cardio respiratory-fitness, muscular-endurance and anaerobic-power (Farley, et al., 2016, p. 260). Lower-body-strength and jump-performance being decisive factors in the pop-up (Secomb, et al., 2016). Thoracic mobility and rotation of the trunk is also essential, helping to form a classic V-shaped torso (Furness, et al., 2015; Warshaw, 2010). The mental-side of surfing is also overcome in stages, progressed in small increments through years of training (Laird Hamilton Interview with Inside Quest, 2016). This experience creates an intuitive sense of timings and a feel for the conditions, where doubts must prevail over mishap-inducing over-eagerness, brashness or thoughtless complacency (Wiersma, 2014).
Hamilton appears to be describing *anxious readiness* to face specific threats, different to the crippling effects of unplaceable anxieties (Giddens, 1991). Important as big-wave zones such as *Mavericks* have cost top surfers their lives, but continue to attract as they provide opportunities to belong to an elite group of survivors (Wiersma, 2014). Being delivered from the waves clutches means submitting to its overwhelming force, part of the skill being not panicking to conserve breath and energy (Wiersma, 2014; Chasing Mavericks, 2012). Some traumatised surfers need to get back on the waves at once, not letting the fear settle before it subsumes them further (Riding Giants, 2004; Wiersma, 2014). Others, however, feel too physically/emotionally overcome or distressed to continue (Wiersma, 2014).

### 6.1.5 Commercial Identity Narratives

The postmodern-sublime condition (Lyotard, 1984) of “equivocal” combinations of “pleasure and pain” appear central to the attraction of surfer’s identities (Stranger, 2016, p. 151). Subjective fantasies, drama and play binding personal-experiences with imagined exotic locations, spectacular surf-media and personally resonant historical, cultural narratives (Belk & Costa, 1998; Stranger, 2016). Consumption of surf-related-clothing and their implicit cross-overs with beach/water-attire, however, also makes these images available for non-surfers. The only product unequivocally exclusive to surfing being the surfboard (and arguably surf-wax). “Surfers and surf-friendly consumers” not only procure these products to practice their identity, but also express “group solidarity” (Anderson, 2016, pp. 214-215). Surfers self-authenticate though via legitimate first-hand knowledge and “verifiability” of their water-skills through astute brand choices (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010, p. 849).

> “Lesson and experience is the most authentic thing of all that you carry with you. And it is good, you know, in knowing what you are about and making choices even with surf brands— I mean why buy Quiksilver or Volcom or RipCurl just because it is the brand of today that supposedly carries the cool factor, buy it because you reckon it’s good for you, maybe because it helps to be better in the water”

(Beverland & Farrelly, 2010, p. 842)

Surf-brands such as Quiksilver, Billabong, O’Neill, RipCurl, C-Skins, Patagonia, and Finisterre (Anderson, 2016; Maffesoli, 1996), similarly view themselves as authentic and authoritative due to long-involvements, direct-contact with practitioners and their science-based performance (Anderson, 2010; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Their advertising strongly influences the culture (Stranger, 2016), but popularity is reliant on consumer’s own cultural contexts, knowledge and particular-alignments (Anderson, 2016).

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65 A big wave break a half mile off the coast at Half Moon Bay, California (Neil, 2015), 25 miles south of San Francisco.
“The role of surf companies’ marketing in influencing and defining surf culture openly invites the surfer to be part of this continual co-evolution, connecting the dots between the past, present, and future”; “By experiencing the stoke of surfing itself, and enhancing this experience through wearing and being seen in their product, surfers are offered a sense of belonging not simply to a (perhaps cynical) short-lived marketing campaign, but also to something that started before many of them were born, and may outlive them, in the culture, and on the waves”.

(Anderson, 2016, p. 231)

Surfing’s “fascination with youthfulness” (Wheaton, 2017, p. 96), means some brands blatantly create fictional or aspirational associations to attract mainstream consumers. For example, the Hollister brand, launched in 2000 by Abercrombie & Fitch (Columbus-Ohio), who at that time were struggling to gain traction with young consumers, successfully capitalised upon mainstreamer’s indistinguishability between surfing and Californian beach-life imagery (Transworld Business, 2008). Hollister’s inauthenticity, however, is reliant upon individual consumer’s cultural-knowledge and their alignments to surfing:

A vulnerability to surf-companies being if Hollister’s style becomes more glamourous or aspirational than their core surf-brands, being tied to functional performance. Brands like Hollister can be perceived, however, as contributing to the overall eco-system:

Brands such as Hollister might become less cool to consumers, though, if they realise they have been duped:
This concern, however, is undermined by surf-brand’s confusing imagery which places high-importance on projecting themselves to non-surfing consumers of their products.

A point reflected by 34% of surf-inspired products being procured in American malls and department stores, but only 4% in dedicated surf shops (Surfer Today, 2017). Stranger (2016) argues that surfing’s commercialisation has broadly managed to stay in tune with its carefree aesthetic. Inexperienced youth [grommets] or non-surfers may be fooled, but fully-informed surfers either know the difference or perhaps just do not care (ibid).

### 6.1.6 British Surfing’s Background

Surfing was first observed in Britain [1929/1930], when Londoner Lewis Rosenberg felt inspired enough by newsreel-footage of Australian surfers to build a wooden longboard and travel to Cornwall to test it out (The First Wave, 2013). UK beach-holidays, however, only really boomed in the 1950’s, making life-guarding a vocation. Australian’s and South African’s were well-suited and attracted to the work, bringing their surf-cultures with them (ibid). Their widespread use of shorter boards, however, restricted new entrants as they were tricky to learn on. A small number of British pioneers though, were sufficiently influenced to take on similar identities as surfers (Museum of British Surfing, 2017; The First Wave, 2013). As board’s shortened, surfing became increasingly closed-off to outsiders, causing perceptions of them as an elite, but wild set of disreputables who occupied themselves raving and raising hell in towns such as Newquay (Blue Juice, 1995; The First Wave, 2013; Wade, 2008). Surf-related technologies and neoprene-wetsuits have since become more advanced, meaning hard-core, cold-water surfers can escape overcrowded summer line-ups and seek new-challenges in the hostile seasons or the Northern fringes (Nelson, 2010). It has made UK surfing more credible and dangerous and associated

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67 Such as Vancouver Island, Nova Scotia, North East USA, Iceland, Scotland, North East England and Hokkaido (Nelson, 2010).
with remoter, more spectacular and foreboding coast-lines such as Scotland and Ireland (Harvey, 2002; Nelson, 2010; Wade, 2008). It, however, remains most visible in the Celtic fringes of South West Britain and particularly its cultural epicentre of Cornwall (Beaumont & Brown, 2015; Harvey, 2002; Wade, 2008). Here, Celtic-culture and surfing intertwine as marks of ethnic affiliation (Harvey, 2002). A resurgence in use of the, for a long-time unfashionable long-board, has enabled surf-schools to pop-up and give legitimate access to the waves for beginners (Museum of British Surfing, 2017; The First Wave, 2013). Surfing has therefore become increasingly popular, and it is estimated that there are now around 500,000 surfers in the UK (Beaumont & Brown, 2015). Surfers can also travel to accessible destinations in Europe such as Brittany, Biarritz, San Sebastien, Mundaka, Galicia and Penniche (Jones, 2016). Artificial-wave-technologies are also emerging, promoting surfing to new consumers. For example, a 300m long fresh-water-lagoon opened in North Wales’ Conwy Valley in 2015 (Surf Snowdonia, 2017).

6.2 A Surfing Odyssey; Entitlement & Retraction [Empirical Research]68

6.2.1 Tenure and Cultural Identity

During the past half-century, surfing’s emergence in Cornish culture has coincided with it [Kernow] undergoing a revival of its Celtic identity. Outsiders though tend to view Cornwall as a beautiful and wild maritime coast, dotted with tourist towns and quaint fishing villages. A penurious backwater of England heavily reliant on the economic-altruism of tourism. Surfing has therefore become entwined with aggrandizements of local culture, feelings of tenure towards the landscape and the localised surfer-identity. There is an equivocal sense that some anti-English or tourist sentiment might therefore subsist in some quarters. Cornwall’s strong association with surfing is principally due to it being the most exposed south-western facing Atlantic coastline of England and its connected cultural-history. Frequent changes of shore-direction mean offshore-winds, tides and shore-topography can generate swells of surf under certain conditions. The most famous being the Cribba at the northern end of Newquay’s Fistral beach. The unpredictable variability, however, can mean daily and unplanned movements are required to discrete and unconnected beaches.

Surfing in Britain can offer peaceful experiences of nature, but there is an undertone of disappointment. Surf-spots are often juxtaposed by drab small towns, which are not the most exciting or exotic locations. While Cornwall can be an attractive and popular destination to escape to, travelling between beaches can be time-consuming as some areas are barren or sparsely populated. Access often restricted by narrow country lanes or insufficient car-parking spaces. Surfing is therefore less reachable for those

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68 [SU532 to 688] are surfing empirical research data-code identification numbers.
unable to live close-by, or temporarily base themselves near the waves. Moving impulsively to surf requires the indulgence of free-time, financial independence or some role in the industry. Surfing alone is dangerous so lifestyles which facilitate the accompaniment of friends are preferable. Summer waves, however, are often underwhelming or messy, reflecting dull, overcast skies. The biggest waves tending to coincide with the winter months or late autumn storms; failing to correspond with the peak-tourist spell. They can be too-ferocious, however, or the weather too frigidly-cold.

Between the tourist peak of May to September, many popular public and private beaches are policed by the RNLI. British coasts have negligible reports of dangerous marine-life, but considerable tidal-ranges cause strong-currents, rip-tides; forging irregular sandbanks and channels which are major safety concerns. The RNLI therefore assess and allocate suitable flagged-areas holding bathers and boogie-boarders together. Surfers, however, are separated whenever possible as they present a greater hazard for other users and have different needs. Each zone persistently monitored and altered as the tides and rip-currents shift. Occasional, distant circling by Sea King rescue helicopters pose a dramatic warning of becoming swept or blown out to sea. Outsiders or city-dwellers are perhaps rightly perceived as having misconceptions by locals; being naïve or prone to misreading the dangers and therefore more likely to succumb to changing conditions. While expertise in more freely available water-sports such as wind-surfing can give basic water knowledge and skills, stiff-winds, steep-cliffs and fast-moving tides can still generate unexpectedly treacherous conditions, easily trapping or casting individuals into the cold, choppy seas.

While surfing remains most strongly associated with Cornwall, places such as Northumbria are also easily accessible for Northerners and surfable in winter. Surfing also propagates smaller pockets of the Western Celtic-fringe including South-West Wales and the Lynn Peninsular. Although having less discernible historical, cultural connections to surfing, they threaten to dilute Cornish associations and its unique identity. Other European or North African regions similarly facing prevailing Atlantic swells such as Brittany, the Basque region, Galicia, Portugal and now Morocco are also increasingly popular. Having a surf-culture, however, allows the sharing of knowledge, wisdoms and core-values through the community. Where surfing is more culturally ingrained, opportunities to learn the practice and lifestyle at younger ages become possible. Either through parental supervision, family get-togethers, beach parties or more institutional coaching. It gives surfing an air of normality, while preserving its inherent independence and sense of empowerment. Enabling the formation of a congruent self-biography which frees later choices and is a source of ontological security (Giddens, 1991). Surfers who started young describe

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69 RNLI – Royal National Lifeboat Institution.
learning fast in their youth by growing with the practice and feeling at home in the culture. Impatient, however, as they also struggled to progress beyond ceilings due to a lack of size, strength and independence. The dangerous environment and importance of self-reliance, however, made it feel implicitly adult; learning to surf-upright representing a form of physical and social independence and an opportunity to feel excited about themselves. A clear step-change from the family-oriented play of sea-bathing or boogie-boarding. The euphoria of finally succeeding and riding that first-wave, foreshadowing a mounting competitiveness to represent their ability and identity.

“I began, because I had the opportunity… the beaches were within reach and my dad helped me get into it on holidays and at the weekends… so it was that support…but as I got a bit older……well it partly became… it grew……because there was all the cool things that go with it.” “…. After I left school at 16….. I got really fit because I was doing labouring work… and started surfing more. So, I got even fitter. I went out and bought a really nice board.. because I was earning…”. “so in my spare time I became a surfer and got into the whole surf scene…….” “But surfing changed me as a person… I just felt more chilled generally, more patient.. with myself and others.. calmer.. Once things start happening,… because I lacked confidence when I was very young…. you kind of get in a roll and you begin to develop more confidence… I felt awkward at first… but as I got better at surfing I began to become more comfortable.. I felt that I deserved (things).. because I had earned them…..so I was able to begin to develop my own sense of style…..”. “It all stemmed from riding my first wave…. It took a lot of effort…” “but of course, eventually, I got one….. indescribable…. I felt smoked, like I had achieved something… incredible.. and it.. and…..was now completely different to how I had expected it would have been. I felt incredible, and was hooked from that moment on…. “.

Growing up in isolated spots like Cornwall, makes surfing a scarce but legitimate route to coolness. The oceanic environment means surfing is non-invasive; its aura therefore being relatively unambiguous and dominated by the excitement of natural danger and a clear sense of otherness in confronting the oceanic wilderness ‘out-there’. Superimposed by romantic ideals of a oneness with nature and future possibilities of exotic, autonomous and carefree lifestyle experiences. Offering the potential to romanticise identity with quixotic ideals of vulnerability, imagined in combatting waves, oneself and the pain of loneliness in travelling. An identity augmented by altruistic ecological concerns towards the ocean, coastal environments and dangerous marine wildlife. Surfing therefore appears a pathway towards a dreamed of lifestyle, breaking away from domiciled-monotony and expandable as independence grows.

Breeding inner-confidence, self-esteem and lessening inadequacy; where the individual feels more comfortable and in tune with themselves. Sharing experiences makes them feel more meaningful, helping to cultivate new, exciting friendships and bonds. Missing opportunities for good-waves and good-times, partly frustrating as it threatens to regress or close-out these relationships. Risking the individual to concerns they might regress or be supplanted. A looming threat individuals often face of feeling personally meaningless (Giddens, 1991).
6.2.2 (Commercial) Infiltration; Sources of Ontological Insecurity

The presence of a local surf-culture can produce alien-characteristics which daunt outsiders\textsuperscript{180} as progression at surfing requires regular access\textsuperscript{571}. The availability of local, commercial surf-instructors therefore helps create safer-environments for outsiders to initiate and continue accessing local physical-resources or cultural-expertise. Representing the sequestration of both nature and culture (Giddens, 1991). Cushioning consumer’s initial anxieties or misgivings, while avoiding the need to procure expensive and undeterminable surf-equipment. Organising groups into similar abilities\textsuperscript{71} and ages, creates some social-comfort. Circumnavigating a need to find collectives willing to share and relate their experience to\textsuperscript{574}. Individuals feel less self-conscious, paying to be set achievable targets and identity outcomes which suit them. Before accessing the throng, however, beginners are drilled on safety and instructed to remain closest to the shore. Comforting as more proficient surfers appear likelier targets for any hidden threats resident in the deeper-water and therefore present a safety-net. Natural bands of abilities form, but those advancing quickly, soon seek to push boundaries by advancing deeper. Their incursions impinging on each outside group; creating liminal areas that are contested between beginners, intermediates and enthusiasts\textsuperscript{71}.

The most formed incoming surf usually indicates underwater obstacles such as sandbanks, reefs or rocks. On reaching the shore, typically returning out through oblique deeper-channels (rip-currents). Recognisable as the surf is usually lower. On the busiest beaches that are supervised by lifeguards, these are mandatorily closed for bathers and surfers. Vigorously policed by noisy and malodourous water-bikes. The life-guards and instructors pay attention to those failing to observe frequent movements of flags (signalling changing rips) or venturing too deep. Prompt enforcement, while necessary, frustrates as it limits fun. Artificial boundaries therefore heighten concertinaed congestions and interactions between surfers. Paddling-out therefore requires battling out through the highest incoming waves while prone and low in the water, confronted by highly-kinetic and erect, incoming surfers\textsuperscript{71}. An alternating cycle reversed through each’s series of turns. Getting in the way causes problematic encounters or collisions\textsuperscript{981}. Instigating disgusted glances which can escalate into intimidating behaviours, verbal criticism or in extreme cases deliberate spearing. The harder and sharper short-boards posing a much greater threat than beginner’s rounded, soft-foam boards; more constraining and having less aggressive or sharp fins. Being stuck in shallower, messier-surf therefore inhibits access to more exciting challenges\textsuperscript{180}. Limits which must be subverted or overturned to advance\textsuperscript{180}.572.
Surf-localism does not appear to exist in any overt, organised or publicised form in Cornwall or other areas of the UK. So, while the Cornish have some local surf-terms, Kook\textsuperscript{70} is globally recognised to describe unknowledgeable beginners. They might initially revere or feel subordinate to better surfers, but interactions begin to erode goodwill. Generating a disinclination to desist and help them ride their waves unadulterated. Procuring local-instructors emboldens them, giving a commercial-legitimacy towards the waves and a sense of having back-up. Instructors, however, have their own needs and try to diffuse problems. Respecting other surfers so their presence does not instigate wider problems, as they need to commercially coexist\textsuperscript{[SU584-586]}. Local knowledge of cultural preferences and wave movements, however, are needed for the line-up to operate smoothly\textsuperscript{[SU587-589]}. Kook also derogatorily describing those more proficient surfers who have poor-etiquette, technique or style.

Surfing-protocol requires those nearest the curl have priority in the line-up. Dropping-in, snaking or burning another’s wave is a cardinal-sin as it steals waves. Wave-sets and conditions change quickly, so good waves might not always coincide with an individual’s turn. Driving a desire to grasp opportunities when presented. A lack of patience or over-excitement can therefore lead to a failure to observe order of turns\textsuperscript{[SU590]}. Buzz-killers, jeopardising the safety of other surfers, while disrupting the efficient utilisation of waves for everyone\textsuperscript{[SU591-593]}. Rash choices, however, can also be self-defeating, resulting in wasted-time and effort expended paddling through better-waves later in the set\textsuperscript{[SU594-597]}. Good-choices are therefore important to not only maximise pleasure and progression, but also limit wasted energies expended in frustration or tiredness. Conserving momentum is critical in the water due to the waves-impact and water-drag\textsuperscript{[SU596]}. Moments are therefore often spent contemplating wave-patterns and orders to pick the best waves\textsuperscript{[SU597]}. To an outsider, surfer’s claiming ownership of waves

\textsuperscript{70} Of unknown origin and ostensibly, ironically unrelated to ‘Captain James Cook’.

[Max: Male; Age 24]
may seem a little insecure, defensive, churlish or too self-absorbed\textsuperscript{598-603}, but the competition for rare-good-waves is so important these key sites need to be managed and secret-spots cherished. An intricacy of surfing is that every wave is different, creating a distinction from most other land-based board-sports with their fixed terrain and repeatability\textsuperscript{513,604}. Becoming expert at surfing is therefore difficult. Surfing requires greater, but less obvious complexity of technique, where balance and timing come to the fore. Limiting the elaborations of style or intricate techniques that can astonish spectators.

The rarity of good waves means many commercial organisations are now investing in and pushing artificial-wave-pool technologies that provide this repeatability. Wave-pools providing standard-waves and safer, controlled environments might benefit learners and make competition formats seem fairer. Allowing greater developments of tricks, styles and showmanship, together with closer and more varied angles for spectators. Standardisation in sponsored, artificial-wave-based professional competitions, however, also risks mundanity by eliminating the mystery of wave-riding\textsuperscript{514,515,604}. Fundamentally altering the wild-appeal and glamour of surfing, purging it of the mystique which Hawaiians instinctively understood as a spiritual connection which the presence of marine-life legitimately adds. Surfing in natural habitats, however, does not easily lend itself to commercialisation or advertising due to the scale and uncontrollability of those settings. The board and surfer often being too distant or obscured by the wave, or the organising committee's fearing the negative publicity of shark-attack\textsuperscript{516,607}. Surfing, however, needs danger as observing performers can quickly become repetitive\textsuperscript{516,604}. More involved spectators, however, seem more able to generate pleasure via their greater appreciation of technical intricac\textsuperscript{514,610}.

\textbf{6.2.3 Insecurities, Self-Irony and Lacking}

In the UK, low sea-temperatures, wind-chill and patchily warm sunshine usually force surfers into long or short-wetsuits. Mass-produced or hireable suits tending to be untailored and ill-fitting. A tacit-nudity revealing and accentuating vigorous, athletic-forms and muscle-tone, but amplifying bony, withered frames or the sagging-bulges of sedentary-lifestyles, aging or the ravages of parenthood\textsuperscript{508,611}. Their physical, psychological and pathological discomforts produce awkward, alien body-movements, feeling excessively loose, misshapen or stiff. Disconcerting when in close proximity with others\textsuperscript{508,612}. Ill-made or ill-fitting wetsuits therefore waste valuable physical and mental energies, producing discomfort and self-doubt which is problematic. This is because surfing can be a slog, starting with the arduous labour of traversing dunes and tidal-sands with heavy, beginner long-boards. A lack of comfort and fitness can therefore quickly break the initial sense of excitement and optimism\textsuperscript{508,613}. From a distance, the power and weight of even smaller waves is misleading. Surfing becomes miserable if negative attitudes or moods set in, requiring a vitality and the maintenance
of energy levels to overcome inevitable tumbles, frustration and setbacks, which if
overwhelming can cause an unwillingness to persevere and progress. Overcoming
these trials triggers pride but succumbing to them, self-consciousness, shame,
frustration and feelings of weakness. Balanced rhythm of transitions is needed,
which if slightly out cause painful nose-dives or wipe-outs. Immersive tumbles in clean
salt-water can be invigorating, however, providing the cold is bearable, or painful
contact with the sea-bottom or the board is avoided, or the wave not too large.
Confidence in remaining comfortable and maintaining composure while immersed and
disoriented, or swimming to recover the board is critical.

Progressing and entering the deeper-water and surf, immerses and blends the individual
with more spectacular natural forces. The attendance of the ankle-leashed and buoyant
surfboard while burdening in the shallows, once trusted offers greater security. With
endurance and tenacity most should ride a wave on their first day. The pure joy of
standing aloft is a surprisingly transcendental moment. Entirely absorbed by being
connected to the wave, but maintaining a tranced or peripheral grasp of motion and the
surrounding environment. A confused state of thrill, mixed with anxiety towards
wasting the achievement of the encounter prior to its perfect accomplishment. There
also being a sense of doubt as to whether the salient moment was seen by, or looked as
memorably impressive or stylish to others. If these self-doubts distract the surfer, they
cause a failure to take active control of the wave. Nervousness forcing errors by
paralysing the necessary rapid-movements. Feared as they might cause imbalance, look
unnatural or unstylish. Surfing is therefore aided by relaxing and letting go, focussing
the head and gaze proudly and comfortably forwards towards the shore. The
pleasure of surfing particularly overtakes physical insecurities during moments of flow
or the joy of clearly felt progression. A natural elation and less inhibited appearance
come with these sensations and enliven the person. Having fun and remaining
playful are therefore essential to constantly reviving and maintaining a positive outlook
and mood. When relaxed or combined with free-play, feeling less dissected. “I don’t
think people are focussing on what I look like, because they are also focused on the
sea…and what is out there… and what they are doing, so I feel more comfortable in
myself...” [Sasha: Female; Age 21]. Surfing representing an opportunity to forget
oneself, but also contemplate and resolve problems in peaceful and inspiring
environments.

For most ordinary consumers surfing expertly will always be something of a pipe
dream. Representing a timeless fantasy or ideal they would like to have been or might
in the future be. Preserving coveted, imagined-identities, however, is important as its
ridicule, mimicry or appropriation fundamentally alters its value and accessibility.
Preventing them legitimately inhabiting some aspect of this identity or sharing in its
after-glow. Important to surfers as their romanticised identities could be
undermined by incongruities. Things that interrupt positive moods therefore become problematic. For example, natural and unsoiled water is essential to the experience, driving many surfer’s concerns towards water-quality, untreated-sewage, discarded-plastics and beach-waste. These environmental concerns can seem insincere and privileged, however, when appraised against the carbon-footprint their hedonistic travel creates. Their soulful feelings of personal growth and motivation to generate a more exciting identity could instead be interpreted as pretentious. The UK soul-surfer identity has also traditionally claimed its primary-lineage from Australian archetypes. Once realised, however, that both lack indisputable originality and could be construed as appropriations or be contrived, the identity feels less comfortable or assured. Willing ignorance or focussing on nobler goals, cocoons individuals from this irony. Enabling ongoing belief and trust in the validity of this desired exotic-identity for them.

Being isolated in rural areas also creates insecurities towards a disconnection with the more vibrant, popular, dangerous or trendy big-cities where cultural boundaries are constantly pushing and modifying due to greater cultural mixing. Anxieties towards missing-out or being ‘behind-the-curve’ when pastorally-isolated or culturally-disenfranchised can therefore foment. A fear of appearing ridiculous in proximity to visitors who seem more in touch with the latest, progressive styles and glamorous city lifestyles. A lack of cultural knowledge, however, can make balancing or blending urban-styles hazardous. Surfing, though, reverses this relationship, making outsiders feel unworthy imposters amongst local, proficient surfers and their legitimate access to surf-cultures and their traditions.

“Everyone is a bit insecure, to me.. I think that if most people were to be entirely honest with you they would admit that”. “...I mean, for me cool is kind of about being worldly-wise, so you need to cover all of your angles, so if you haven’t ever lived in a big city, then that doesn’t make you uncool, but if you’re with someone that has, then it kind of does, because for me coolness is relative”. “something comes along that is cooler than you. I would probably have to react to that... (It) takes something away to some degree. So if a new guy comes along and is a good surfer, and is from New York and been to Brazil and so on, then you, if you have lived here all your life.. you can see why he would get all the attention... because he is more impressive than you (in) comparison”. “Like cool is only cool for a while until someone or something better shows up”. “It happens all the time, this place is touristy, so you always get people from London or wherever coming in…”.

[Caden: Male; Age 29]

Being cosmopolitan means drawing strength from being at home in a wide variety of contexts but risks fragmentation, as ontological security becomes based on other’s perceptions (Giddens, 1991). Hedonistic tourist-spending similarly exaggerates wealth; fuelling fragmentation of the self. Creating paradoxes between desiring freedom to explore life’s pleasures with the glamorous status that financially productive careers seem to afford.
“Surfing is cool but there is a frustration that for the average person there’s not much money in it so the downside of tourism is obviously the amount of casual work bars, hospitality restaurants. You can really only make any money if you own these things in my opinion”. “There does become the point where you want to be doing different things with your life… moving on.. and I can see the attraction and… in a steady income. Obviously when you’re looking for a mortgage you need that kind of evidence, which casual work is not good for”.

[Sasha: Female; Age 21]

Fears of being left-behind loom, concerns moving towards mortgages and pensions. Countervailed by a wariness at becoming trapped in disappointing, monotonous or undesirably ordinary lifestyles.

6.2.4 Comfort, Possessions and Theft

Surfers must prioritise surf-equipment which functions well as poor choices limits their progression, also signifying a lack of understanding of the practice, the culture or local nuances. Owning appropriate equipment helps individuals feel more participatory and embedded in subcultures (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), but it also remains important to be positively noticed individually. Visual clues reveal personal narratives, aspects of personality or displayed values. Impractical forms of glamour that seek attention, however, places limits on progression and unlimited participation in the culture. For example, commercial images of women surfing in bikinis influences attitudes towards the types of waves they can or should surf. Cool choices should ideally be comfortable and purposive to the practice, while looking stylish or edgy. Making cultural references that mix-well and generate positive attention by not looking contrived. Adding personally-crafted items can also make individuals appear more sincere, interesting and endearing.

“It’s not like.. oh am only going to wear surf brands, it’s really about finding other influences as well and putting them together...”. “I like to look feminine as well, so there is that slant, it can be difficult to find things”. “I Like Roxy. I like urban-chic as well. So, I like to mix it together. “ (It) is not really just surfing stuff it’s like natural beach stuff. I like jewellery that’s natural feathers, shells anything. Things are important to me, places that are important to me too.. cute stuff. I still… things I pick up, so I like making my own jewellery. Even nice stones”. “Sometimes I like caps and things that are a bit urban and edgy, hip hop. I quite like the gypsy look as well there’s probably quite a lot of the gypsy in surfing if you know what I mean, moving from place to place feeling free.. not getting too stuck in one place. So, it just depends on how I feel, day to day, I like to mix it up”.

[Freya: Female; Age 21]

The creative investments involved in making such choices, mixing-styles or expending effort in understanding difficult-cultures makes their imitation feel like theft. Board-shaping, furnishing and coating, however, connects individuals with the waves and helps tie the local-community to the practice, legitimising its culture. Embodying first-hand experiences of local wave-dynamics, equipped board-balance and stylistic or cultural preferences. Sharing these forms of knowledge can be sources of income, bring status or foster goodwill. A way of giving back to other members of the local surfing
community or creating worthwhile bonds with like-minded tourists. Ownership providing abstract connections with respected individuals[674-675]. Beginner boards, however, are devoid of these personal fingerprints, intentionally unrefined and unresponsive for easier balancing[672-673]. Often garish or childlike, intended for the rental market, making their coveting or theft inadvisable or undesirable. Culturally valuable or cool-items, such as highly-crafted surfboards can instigate tension, as others might crave them[670-671]. Surfing highlights the anxiety of owning personal-items or socially meaningful objects. Only the board, or small-items stowed safely in discrete waterproof pouches can be carried into the water. Property left in vehicles or on the beach, tempt theft. Cars, vans, house/car-keys, bank-cards, jewellery, mobile-phones and other larger electronic items storing personal data, therefore provoke quandaries[672-673].

Greater personal simplicity therefore frees the mind, allowing increased relaxation in and out of the water and reduces anxiety towards their loss[674]. Shabby or worn items; even vehicles, clothing or simple accessories feel less vulnerable to theft or targets for vandalism. Their coolness partly deriving from this attribute. Being chic still stokes positive interest[675-676], but avoids advertising wealth which makes individuals feel like obvious targets[676]. When travelling, being perceived as invading en-masse can also pose a threat or challenge to locals[677-678]. Using unconnected identities can therefore provide greater security[679-680].

6.2.5 Fruition and Retraction; The Need for Ontological Security

Surfing for life appears desirable, but age-maturity means other adult-responsibilities begin to complicate or disrupt lifestyles. Life-planning becomes part of self-actualisation and the search for intimacy (Giddens, 1991). Commitment placing “restrictions on the opportunities the individual has to sample the many experiences demanded in the search for self” (p. 170). It being increasingly difficult to commit to surfing when pursuing a conventional working-life or serious-relationship[670-671,674]. Individuals who begin to fear the future, however, tend to securitise themselves through material-possessions, marital-relationships and property (Giddens, 1991). These major life-stage turns or rituals, providing alternative sources of anxiety and its refocussing (ibid). For example; work, finances, forming-relationships, catering for and entertaining small-children. The deprivations of newparenthood, also producing striking drops in energies preserved for surfing. Eventually, issues such as school-choices may become more absorbing, driving disconnection from youth-cultures or locating near the waves. Coordinating free-time becomes increasingly complex as conflicting commitments can disorder frequency of practice and begin to check progression. New friendships which are more compatible with work/family lives can make meeting other surfers with comparable lifestyles difficult[678].
“It becomes quite complex and quite often partners don’t always get on”. “It’s important to have people that are similar ability or ride similar styles of boards, otherwise you need different types of wave breaks and conditions that are better suited. So that can be a problem as you get older and your friend options dwindle. That’s an added problem because if you are friends and you are a lot younger then you are probably learning together but as you get older you have different physical abilities.. you might even be a few years different in age, have different experiences and have different equipment that you built up”.

[Dom: Male; Age 35]

Individuals seeking to reflexively negotiate and preserve their committed, intimate, ‘pure-relationships’ must rely on mutual-trust (Giddens, 1991). Residing in featureless, safe towns or suburbs, therefore provides home-comforts which endure them well beyond desires, anxieties and energies once expended in striving to be cool. Advancing age also brings greater cautiousness towards injuries, due to their profound physical, psychological or financial repercussions. A depressingly mortal consideration, unlikely to have been as seriously considered in more carefree, ‘eternal’ youth. Free-time seems increasingly spent working, planning or recuperating in home-comforts. Maturation and fruition therefore can intensify a need to cocoon inside the comfort of status-symbols, which provide an outlet and help individuals feel they remain desirable. A surfer’s youth, however, can also provide later comforts in feeling desires were satiated and life was lived to its fullest extent.

“If I really think about it.. it has given me a lot. But different ways.. when I was younger it gave me an outlet… and a way to forget about myself and my teenage woes… all the bad worries that I had about myself at that time and the future.. and then it gave me opportunities to meet people and make connections and travel more… but then as I got older it has made me more able to handle that.. because I don’t have to worry as much about getting older?”. “Because I feel more fulfilled than I think I would if I hadn’t had those experiences…”.

[Carter: Male; Age 45]

A true and committed, intimate relationship, relies upon individuals having achieved security towards their own self-identity and therefore having few narcissistic needs that can only be satisfied outside of it (Giddens, 1991). Surfing away from the family, without it becoming an intrinsic part of the family’s pastimes could therefore appear selfish. Surfing can, however, stay recreational, limited to mutually agreed personal-time or coordinated family activities and holidays. For youth, though, the older can only seem ‘cool’ if they do not limit or inhibit their youthful identities. Sharing interesting knowledge freely while remaining outside of their social lives; not inhibiting or socially competing with them.
“Walking back to the carpark, and perusing the countless shops selling tat and surf tat, I am reminded of once pleasant childhood holidays in Welsh and Cornish towns, but how their novelty long eroded with subsequent foreign travel. Quite simply, there are more impressive options available, provided you can afford them. It seems that we will put up with a lot for a few moments of stoke, or holiday excitement. Jobs, careers, endless toil, saving and scrimping, all part of the neo-liberal dream, to achieve what those Polynesians had already found on their most remote islands, only for it to be spoilt by intruders seeking adventures and their epic tales. The carrying of a surfboard past the idle on the beach and in the town makes you feel superior, to an extent, but also a little of a fraud. I enquire in a shop and see a product spray called ‘piss-off’. I was immediately grateful that I had brought my own wetsuit. You don’t really feel that good until you have made it home and had a long, hot shower”.

[Auto ethnographical Field notes; July 2016]

6.3 Summary

Surfing’s origins and importance to Hawaiian culture, means those seeking a surfer’s-identity, should ideally respect, or be knowledgeable towards these cultural meanings. Such identity-politics, however, could open the individual to sources of shame, which has replaced guilt at the centre-stage of self-identity (Giddens, 1991). Risking inhabiting a contrived or disrespectful identity. Exposing awkward, colonial-narratives, would restrict consumer choices. Consuming products from other cultures can usually help individuals conveniently overcome these issues (Patterson & Brown, 2007). Thereby showing their cultural allegiance, understanding, empathy, or avoiding being provocative. Hawaiian’s lack of influence in contemporary surf-culture or as its main consumers, however, means such traditions are often ignored or selectively utilised by commercial-operations or the industry in general. Traditions become reinvented (Giddens, 1991), as the contemporary domination by Australian and American [Californian] brands and professional surfers, means a high number of consumers most strongly associate with these identities and surf-cultures. Able, therefore to guiltlessly or shamelessly feel a sense of ownership in the subcultural traditions. Feeling ontologically secure in their identities by constructing a coherent biography (ibid). Having ‘original’, legitimate identities to identify with, draw upon and inhabit; at home in surf-culture and able to progress their lifestyles uninhibited. In more serious cases, these types of issues can cause rejection of some aspects of consumers own innate, cultural-identity. New purposive-identities which enable them to ‘colonise the future’ (ibid), can therefore seem desirable and exciting. Identity-politics[Sect:2.4] are therefore a semi-dormant subtext of surfing’s cool.

The coolness of surfing, does partly rely on historical discourses, but they often seem romanticised versions. Early-footage of surfers reveals the scale of advancement in terms of wave-size, speed, surf-styles and techniques afforded by innovations in board-materials and shaping-technologies. Often instigated by new generations of global-surfers, in opposition or tension with surfing’s sanctified traditions. Some surfers initially resist such advances if they are perceived as diminishing their tenure in the
cultural-identity or the attractiveness of the image. Only embracing them once proven to progress the practice in appealing ways, so their adoption becomes inevitable.

The infrequency of good, natural waves and their lack of repeatability, combined with the size of board’s and their physics, means transitions in style, are less frequent than other board-sports such as skateboarding. Surfing instead relies on its stable, romanticised image of the conquest of exotic, naturally-occurring, powerful environmental-forces for its cool. An easily discernible and attractive aura of identity: formed from the psychological and attitudinal benefits of confronting wild-oceanic environments and the impressive physical-forms its frequent practice creates. The clean, fresh mineral oceans and sunlight, also cleansing the mind, body and hair. An identity, however, whose full blossoming requires adult-strength and the independent-lifestyle needed to travel to and with the waves. Inhabiting a surfer’s identity, however, creates incongruences which can shape further choices. For instance, a concern for ocean-ecology may also reflect a need to feel greater spiritual-trust and connection towards an oceanic environment giving captivating pleasure, but also introducing anxiety through unknown dangers. Embracing alternative, mystic-philosophies provides greater ontological security through a cocoon that ‘brackets-out’ these fears (Giddens, 1991). Travel, or finding oneself is part of becoming true to yourself; seeking to experience the body and self as a coherent whole (ibid). Leading hedonistic or privileged travelling lifestyles, however, subjugates other cultures and is a source of shame. Therefore compelling greater affinity towards their local traditions to seek higher-levels of trust. Indigenous identities may seem less critiqueable than their own, but fleeting engagements also create a sense of lacking in economically disadvantaged locals. Surfer’s greater simplicity also eases tensions towards leaving expensive or coveted items on the beach, in vehicles or while travelling alone. Anxiety towards losing property or valuables, sitting uncomfortably with a practice requiring being at-ease in the water for it to be enjoyable. Items, therefore, having subtle charm and attractive to identity, but having little resale-value can therefore be purposive to surfing and cool.

Surfing has the power to transform internal anxieties by selecting and riding waves to their satisfactory completion. The ambiguity of how breaking anxiety relates to transitions between the sublime and the beautiful[Sect.2.3.6], however, remain problematic areas. The continuous ebbing and flowing of unstable boundaries, or edges, means fears or anxieties build and dissipate. Having a hold or magnetism over the individual which pleases when the anxiety breaks or harmonises within them. Experiencing these tremendous forces as dangerously close recent-experiences or at safe physical distances become profound memories, feeling exhilarating and cool. A transient state, however, as their possibility of being further cool experiences, requires returning to the edge of anxiety. Potentiating awe or astonishment. Successfully meeting these
transformational, fateful encounters creates a sense of cathartic, joyful achievement. Also, challenging and fragmenting others, creating feelings of lacking in those unable to rise to the challenge. Felt as moral defeats as they are less able to remain embedded inside the main surfer group. Therefore, less able to ‘colonise the future’ and a source of ontological insecurity.

Many such experiences of nature, however, have become less profound, sequestrated as more ordinary settings through institutional repressions and commodification practices (Giddens, 1991). Complexities and inconsistencies in waves limit the development of technique, making surfing appear to the uninstructed, disappointingly repetitive. While recent advances in artificial-wave-pool production endangers the raw, natural and powerful, mysterious spirituality of surfing, standardisation of waves does allow greater mastery of them. It changes the image of surfing by bringing the surfer to the fore and provides a stage to practice and demonstrate greater and faster elaborations of tricks and style. They can seem cool despite the diminished scale of the challenge. There is, however, something missing by excluding marine-life and the complex, irregularity of natural-forces. Artificial-wave-pools provoke many new tensions within surfing, placing it potentially at the centre of a battle for its heart and soul. At the forefront of new commodification practices seeking to locate it inland and within easy access of cities. This may fundamentally change the surf-industry, as rurally-isolated surfers have often felt disconnected from culturally-diverse, urban centres. A lacking which can mean less-comfort in utilising new fashions or styles emanating from them. A process reversed, when inexperienced city-dwellers attempt surfing. Wave-pools potentially, will therefore provide more opportunities for cross-fertilisation than previously seen.

Commodification practices in surfing have reflected the lifestyle and context; mingling surfing, lifesaving and beach-cultures to aggregate consumption. Surf-brands leveraging their superior-performance. They risk losing certain non-essential market-sectors, however, if this means producing stylistically dour products when compared to more eye-catching and aspirational styles that work well out of the water. Consumers have other identity needs which need balancing. For example, in surfing [like Sprezzatura{Sect:2.2.6}], the influence of female’s preferred tastes can drive those styles males perceive as attractive or to be shunned. The cool quality of being ‘easy-on-the-eye’{Sect:6.1.1.2}, however, remains mysteriously desirable. Symbolic of some detached, non-threatening mastery or comfort in one-self and the environment. Balancing comfort and poise with an element of danger. Female professional surfers, however, appear to be treated differently. Often pushed out of wetsuits or more robust clothing and into unfunctional swimwear. Limiting their surfing performance and progression, presumably based upon perceived needs of both male and female consumers.
Surfing’s ugly side is driven by the compulsive desire to ride better waves which are rare. Surfer’s unwanted presence or their failing to observe local-rules can upset social-equilibriums. Instigating defensive attitudes that seek to limit their access. These tensions can be modified by inexperienced tourists creating a required industry to safely-police beaches. Causing congestion and less ‘free’ places to surf. Behaviours which are too internally competitive create anxiety. Leading to greater protectionism, which stifles wider progression and efficient utilisation of the waves. Frustrated, excluded beginners add to the melee by inadvertently or surreptitiously impeding better surfers. Surfers who selfishly enlarge the boundaries of their own practice cause irritation if they impinge on the hierarchy or increase constraints. Those expanding the whole-space, however, create greater freedoms and pleasure for everyone and are more likely to be considered cool. Patience and awareness to coolly take opportunities as they are presented are therefore attributes. Adolescent or childish behaviours, on the contrary make individuals appear regressive, puerile or phony.

Cool paradoxically requires vigour and energy, which often diminishes with aging. An increasing desire to enjoy home-comforts and avoid risk can mean disconnecting with new advancements or changes in surfing. Perhaps representing a desire to be less competitive. Work and new family responsibilities also slow progression, while reducing opportunities to surf and the time to remain immersive in the culture. Most visible around the intense commitments necessary with new-parenthood. An insight for why individuals often seem less cool around this period. A danger being becoming trapped by important domestic duties and routines that can lead to co-dependency.

**6.4 Conclusion**

This case-study has exploratively investigated and presented surfing as an individual case-study, to draw out major themes which help the understanding of the complex phenomena of cool and its relationships with ontological security/insecurity. The thesis can therefore proceed to the caravanning case-study which is presented in Chapter 7. Offering different environmental, social contexts and alternative perspectives for furthering this explorative study of cool.
Figure 6.2: Collage; Surfing Research Experiences
Chapter 7 – Findings: Case-study C: Caravanning

This chapter presents the caravanning case-study, using the methodologies described in Chapter 4. Addressing the research objective; ‘3) To explore cool, in relation to the stresses, and ontological insecurities, that contemporary society exacts upon consumers’. The chapter starts with an exploration of the culture, lifestyle and practice of caravanning using literature, documentary and literary sources. It is then empirically explored via the findings from the research undertaken in a sample of caravanning spaces in the UK.

The main themes that emerged from the Literature and Literary Review and Empirical Research are presented in Figure 7.1 below. Section 7.1 provides an analysis of surfing’s cultural discourses. Section 7.2 then presents fresh themes which emerged from the empirical research.

Figure 7.1: Caravanning Findings - Main Themes

Each area is now discussed. The overall case-study findings are then [Section 7.3] summarised, before the chapter is [Section 7.4] concluded.

7.1 Caravanning Cultures [Literature and Literary Review] 71

7.1.1 Romani Nomads

Caravanning derives from ancient-travelling or nomadic trading lifestyles. Usually grouped together for safety in numbers and moving in single-file. The English term

71 [CA689 to 702] are caravanning literary research data-code identification numbers.
deriving from; Latin [caravana], Persian [kārwān] and Sanskrit [karabhah] (OED, 2017). The most famous European nomads were the ‘Romani(y)’, believed to have left Northern-India\textsuperscript{72} at some indeterminate point before migrating west through Persia, Armenia, Greece and the Balkans [11th-12th century]. Inhabiting most of Europe by the 15\textsuperscript{th}-Century (Fraser, 1995; Kalaydjieva, et al., 2001). In the UK, these nomadic Gypsy-carts had historically fulfilled seasonal farm-work, but after World-War-II increased mechanisation reduced the need for their labour (Evans, 2004). Becoming unwanted and perceived as a problem (ibid), they were constantly moved on, forced to sell their labours and wares elsewhere (Wellner, 2015). The Police tended to side with local-residents in any disputes (ibid). Beginning a process of stigmatisation and exclusion where authorities gave them various official names or classifications [Roma, gypsies or travellers] and locals used disparaging tones or slang versions (Maestri, 2017). ‘Gypsies’ and their nomadic-lifestyles have therefore been viewed as alien-cultures, stereotyped, discriminated against and often despised (Nord, 2006; Wellner, 2015). In the UK, the 1968 ‘Caravan Sites Act’ sought to protect and regulate their communities (UK Legislature, 1968). Local-Government managed sites were created to meet their requirements but resembled slums (Evans, 2004). Since 1998, however, due to their “long shared history, cultural traditions, common geographical-origins, literature, language and religion, as well as being a minority within a dominant community”, the Romani have been officially recognised as an ethnic-minority and legally protected from discrimination (p. 155). Preventing maltreatment, but also allowing bureaucratic instruments to process disputes and give standard-means for removing them from sites (Tickner, 2000). While often ostracised by mainstream society, the Romani have also been romanticised as wild, mystical and exotic (Nord, 2006). Caricatured as having unfettered sensuality, a closeness to nature and naturally opposed to institutional structures (ibid).\textsuperscript{72}

\textbf{7.1.2 Gentlemen Bohemians}

Country gentlemen and urbane British flâneur’s flirted with these ethnic tensions in the early 1900’s, creating romantic, unknowable and idealistic identities\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{CA690-691}}.

“A photograph of Augustus John, taken in 1909, shows him bearded and striking in calf-length boots beside a caravan, playing the role of a Romany Rye, an English gentleman who adopted the image of the Gypsy to make himself appear alluringly idle, vagabond and unknowable. A citizen of the Open Road”

(De Abaitua, 2011)

Pastoral ‘tramping’ became vogue combined with unconventional sexuality, self-conscious personal styles and bohemian analogue\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{CA691}} (Nord, 2006). \textit{Dr Gordon Stables} with his horse-drawn outfit, the land-yacht ‘wanderer’, popularised the lifestyle into a leisure-pursuit (Jenkinson, 2003). Affluent bohemians started commissioning

\textsuperscript{72} Based upon language resemblances with Sanskrit idioms (Fraser, 1995; Kalaydjieva, et al., 2001).

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wooden-caravans built to order by wagon or coach-builders (ibid). Made from solidwood, they were heavy, slow and expensive. This highly desirable caravanning craze afforded a free-wandering existence\cite{694}, but unlike the Romani were un-harassed \cite{Tickner, 2000}. The original popularity of the caravan therefore stemmed from horse-drawn gypsy carts and the romantic, intimate freedom they stood for \cite{Evans, 2004}.

This highly fashionable form of holidaying became more organised in 1907, when privileged, like-minded enthusiasts formed the Caravan Club of Great Britain \cite{Jenkinson, 2003}. Enjoying shared outdoor-settings and group-activities \cite{Jenkinson, 2003; van Heerden, 2011}. Technological innovations from the First-World-War advanced caravan-building, while the revolutionary but still exclusive automobile replaced horses \cite{Jenkinson, 2003}. Hitching up and heading out to the countryside, however, was not yet a pastime affordable to ordinary families\cite{695} \cite{Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009}.

### 7.1.3 Mass Availability

Following the Second-World-War in 1948, the caravan industry was completely revolutionised by British pioneer Sam Alper \cite{Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009}. Caravanning became less eccentric, privileged and less of a minority pursuit (ibid). Alper’s famous ‘Sprite’ caravan used materials available in post-war austerity, their lightweight nature\cite{696} meant towing by ordinary saloon-cars was possible (ibid). Although cheap, they were highly innovative, developing space-saving features and utilising the latest furnishing materials (ibid). Focussing on cost/value and mass-production necessitated homogeneity of materials, balancing spatial/weight-constraints and streamlining which created standardised designs\cite{697, 698} \cite{Jenkinson, 2003; Southerton, et al., 2001}. Alper, though, brought caravanning’s pleasures to the masses at a price they could afford \cite{Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009}. Many consumers and retailers, however, still needed convincing that they were not too flimsy\cite{699}. Alper’s solution was to take the Sprite on a 10,000 mile road-trip around Europe and North Africa; a publicity-stunt which created a sensation (ibid). Generating lots of media as well as local interest wherever it went (ibid) \cite{700; 701}.

### 7.1.4 International Growth

Caravanning was not only limited to the UK and Europe, having independent lineages in countries that also developed national-highways \cite{van Heerden, 2011}. In the USA
caravans dated back to the 1800’s as the horse-and-wagon. Immortalised in western-movies that portrayed epic-trails, westward expansions and the perils of transporting families along expanding frontiers while providing entrenchment (Billington & Ridge, 2001; Timothy, 2011). In South-Africa, the Voortrekkers used heavy-wagons pulled by Oxen to carry their families and belongings with them in organised defensive formations (Etherington, 2014). In Australia, this now extremely popular form of holidaying began in the 1920’s but has since expanded as it allows access to great-reaches of the continent (McClymont, et al., 2011). In comparison to these expansive and dangerous voyages, the British countryside and its traditions are viewed as gentle, enclosed and conservative (Crouch, 2010). In the USA the spectacular aspects of natural-wonders, combined with specially designated heritage-trails, or important routes from American history, form a popular drive-tourism-industry, mythologised as road-trips (Timothy, 2011). In South Africa, the remoteness of many popular scenic-areas and game-parks contribute to its popularity (van Heerden, 2011). A temperate-climate and good roads mean it can be a year-round activity (ibid). In certain American cultural contexts, however, there is also a blurring between leisure-uses and their deployment as permanent homes (Newton, 2014). Despite positive choices underpinning their use, matching homes with seasonal or transient work (ibid), stereotypes have caricatured them as an underclass of low-income, white ‘trailer-trash’ (Harry, 2004; Morris, 2005). Similar associations have appeared in South-Africa, where middle-class blacks are perplexed by the white recreational activity of caravanning or camping, having always associated it with poverty (Hlatshwayo, 2016).

### 7.1.5 Mass-Drive Tourism

In the 1950’s, UK road-systems together with car and caravan ownership expanded (Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009). While opening previously inaccessible beauty-spots, the sudden mass use also introduced long traffic-jams and bottlenecks (ibid). Caravanning’s immediate popularity for family-holidays meant school-holidays and bank-holiday weekends became the most popular and busiest times (van Heerden, 2011). Caravanner’s were therefore blamed for causing disruptions or slowing down traffic (Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009; Top Gear - Inside the Caravan, 2015). While sometimes problematic, these caravan journeys also created a keen sense of belonging for families by producing reminders of home and place (Crouch, 2010). Passing judgement on others from their confines helped create self-images of being more adventurous; more capable and outgoingly social than other people, who were considered too incapable or overly domesticated for caravanning (Southerton, et al., 2001). Absorbed by their sense of self-sufficiency,

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73 Some people fear open spaces (Crouch, 2010).
valuing freedom, privacy, familiarity and routine, but also the novelty of being in extraordinary, temporary or unfamiliar places (ibid).

The overwhelming popularity of the recreational caravan, however, necessitated some licensing legislation, introduced in the ‘Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act’ of 1960 (Mann, 1961). Caravan-sites would be regulated to protect the public, caravanners and site-owners (ibid). The Act abolished free or wild-parking of caravans, leading to the establishment of many more caravan sites to accommodate them safely in holiday-parks with the requisite amenities (Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009). The economic impact of the act, however, was not measured as the value of those free-wandering holidays were difficult to separate from other forms of tourism (Timothy, 2011).

Caravan-parks have therefore expanded and diversified to meet the wider needs of drive-tourism, including; i) permanently-sited static-caravans or lodges; ii) tourer-caravans that are semi-permanently stored in parks; iii) tourer-caravans towed behind a vehicle from home; iv) various-classes of hybrid, recreational vehicles (RV’s); and v) fully integrated and dedicated motor-homes (McClymont, et al., 2011). The reasons caravanning is performed, and the types of vehicle used creates alignments with other holiday-makers who are present, which is reflected in the sites themselves (Southerton et al., 1998; 2001). Southerton, et al. (1998) therefore identify four broad-types of caravan participants in the UK; i) family-fun-seekers74; ii) activity-seeking-tourists75; iii) private-relaxers76; and iv) enthusiasts77 (Southerton, et al., 1998; van Heerden, 2011). Sites therefore broadly-distinguish along these lines; v) holiday-camping-sites with wide-ranges of family-entertainment; vi) dedicated-caravan-parks acting as bases for viewing other tourist attractions but providing some conveniences; vii) national, or country-parks offering more variety of accommodation and less-linear, regimented positions; viii) field, bush and wilderness camps78 with unmarked sites and basic washing facilities (van Heerden, 2011). The management style, park appearance,}

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74 Seeking high levels of entertainment, caravan is a neutral backdrop favouring familiar surroundings, security and sociability (Southerton, et al.1998; van Heerden, 2011)
75 A secondary holiday, neutral backdrop, focus on self-determined activities, like walking, favour novelty, self-sufficiency, sociability and privacy (Southerton, et al.1998; van Heerden, 2011).
76 Do not seek high levels of entertainment, sociability or leisure activities, value safety, security and privacy that it offers (Southerton, et al.1998; van Heerden, 2011).
77 Deeply immersed in the culture, attend rallies, socialise extensively with other enthusiasts, is an important activity in its own right, like familiarity of caravan practices and novelty compared to domestic routines (Southerton, et al.1998; van Heerden, 2011).
78 More popular with four wheel drive vehicle owners (van Heerden, 2011).
landscaping, security, type of, and cleanliness of amenities reflect tastes (McClymont, et al., 2011). Some caravanner’s therefore prefer strict-rules of conduct, while others favour fewer restrictions (ibid).

In the UK, larger enterprises such as Hoseasons and Haven cater for a more holiday-camp type atmosphere by providing on-site entertainment and facilities. Many smaller caravan-parks and farms, however, lack the capital necessary to perform the major upgrades or maintenance of facilities. It leading to more aspiring clients believing the practice is unable to meet their demands for upmarket facilities and high-standards of cleanliness (McClymont, et al., 2011). Members clubs such as the ‘Caravanning and Camping Club’ [The Friendly Club] and the ‘Caravan and Motorhome Club’ [Formerly ‘The Caravan Club’] therefore offer a level of assurance by certifying and vetting many small-sites for their club members as well as managing their own larger ones. Traditional distinctions between ‘the friendly club’ and the stricter Caravan Club therefore cater for these alternative values and their independent outlooks. Motor-home ownership is low in very low-income groups, so owners usually have higher-incomes (Wellner, 2015). The classic and traditional image of the tourer-caravan, however, still tends to define the industry (Southerton, et al., 2001). Now more than bedrooms, they incorporate a modern kitchen, bathroom, small lounge and dining facilities as well as entertainment conveniences such as televisions (McClymont, et al., 2011). Focus has therefore shifted from outdoor-activities to the comfort of the living-space itself, being much alike in exterior and interior-design and the features they provide (ibid). While caravanning can seem a low-status or low-quality holiday, many newer parks have mixed more luxurious lodge accommodation onto their sites (Page, et al., 2001; van Heerden, 2011). In times of austerity or high-anxiety over personal security, they provide safe and affordable options compared to air travel (Timothy, 2011). These high-end tourists do not want a ‘rough’ experience, but also seem not overly concerned by luxury or private ablutions (van Heerden, 2010). The caravan-park instead becomes a safe and social place to rediscover their confidence (Crouch, 2010).

7.1.6 Idling?

Caravanner’s have been described as exhibiting a fear of flexibility (Southerton, et al., 2001). Tethered to their status-symbol, their family and their dog (De Abaitua, 2011). Pulling a tourer-caravan, however, is difficult, dangerous and stressful, due to problems caused by narrow-roads, oncoming-traffic and low-bridges (ibid). The ‘snake’ or ‘jackknife’, however, is most feared (ibid). Navigational tools that avoid unfit roads have eased some of the burden (Timothy, 2011). The stress of mishaps while unpleasant and embarrassing, however, do disrupt everyday mundanity (Crouch, 2010). Subsequent caravanning therapy therefore transforms these experiences as anxieties are replaced with calmer and happier moods (De Abaitua, 2011). Rural localities are seen as backward, allowing suburban people to reconnect with pastoral-life (Caravans: A
British Love Affair, 2009). The pleasant natural surroundings on sites legitimise idling and slowing-down the pace, excusing oppressive guilt which affords more time for profound moments (Crouch, 2010). Bringing a mini-home packed with home-comforts therefore frees up holiday-time (Holloway & Holloway, 2011; Southerton, et al., 1998). Transporting enough for every eventuality, however, is also a process of colonisation requiring compression, prioritisation, frustration and anger (De Abaitua, 2011).

“Preparation is the opposite of cool. It smacks of the military, and Scouts. Making it up as you go along, improvisation, youthful spontaneity, these are the values of the hip. Nature demands preparation. The city hates it. The city rewards improvisation. Plans made and dropped. If you are bored, hail a cab and move on. You can’t hail a cab in a field, you can’t pull that ripcord and wake up in your own bed, although Lord knows enough angry people have thrown a sodden, torn tent into the boot of a car at three in the morning and then driven home” (De Abaitua, 2011, p. 10)

Holidays always involve a liminality between seeking out the new and everyday-routines that link individuals with home (Holloway & Holloway, 2011). Caravanning, instead of transcending the mundane, gives a welcome comfort and familiarity from stressful demands of sightseeing, also having the added benefit of sleeping in one’s own bed (ibid). Creating social-contexts anchored around the everyday, private-worlds of adult intra-spousal relationships, but configured in less stable forms and layouts (ibid). The allocation of domestic tasks, however, strongly imitates year-round habits and duties (Southerton, et al., 2001). Mealtimes become more relaxed and memorable, as cooking is simplified and revolves around the nostalgia of tinned-stocks, one-pot, one-grill or one-hob (Ray, 2015; Southerton, et al., 2001). The diminished scale, lack of space or miniaturisation makes such normally laborious tasks seem playful (De Abaitua, 2011; Holloway & Holloway, 2011; Southerton, et al., 1998; Southerton et al., 2001). Sharing outside-barbeques creates greater sociability (Southerton, et al., 2001), where local-availabilities or seasonality of ingredients becomes an engaging, soluble problem for occupying and contributing by fetching things (Crouch, 2010; De Abaitua, 2011).

Ontological security and feelings of tenure can be enhanced by having stable domestic environments (Freilich, et al., 2014) and essential parts of these are domestication practices and routines (Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2016). A lack of a stable home can undermine people's sense of ontological security, and therefore their ability to sustain mental well-being and health (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998). Relationships between ontological security and home-life are therefore well considered, but travelling also involves more than just escaping or creating extraordinary experiences (Larsen, et al., 2007). They often being built on creating abstractions or real ‘home from homes’ (ibid). Caravanning allows freedom, transformative or unexpected encounters, but built upon the ontological security this platform provides (Larsen, 2008; Haldrup & Larsen, 2003; Mikkelsen & Cohen, 2015). Indeed, caravanner’s seem to care more for their freedom
of choice than agility (Mikkelsen & Cohen, 2015). Defining what constitutes a home, however, is difficult (Severinsen, 2010). A desire to maximise comfort through normal routines or cultural conformance, in travel contexts makes distinctions based around ownership unclear (Edensor, 2007). For example, camping under canvas is more painful and purgative due to a lack of domestic comforts (De Abaitua, 2011). Instigating a forgetfulness of home that is more difficult to escape with caravanning (ibid).

“Caravanning is definitely not real camping. Caravanning and camping are very different pursuits, and lumping them together on one field is like pitting a cricket team against a football team. The equipment is different. The rules are different. The state of mind is profoundly different. The art of caravanning is miniaturization; instead of leaving the domestic” (De Abaitua, 2011, p. 144)

Campers dream about whether they can survive with less stuff, while caravanner’s seek more (ibid). Caravanning and camping can become divorced, meaning those who would wish to pitch together are routinely kept-apart (van Heerden, 2010). Despite their apparent conformity, however, caravanning is culturally highly-nuanced, marked by fine-tuned forms of differentiation (Southerton, et al., 2001). Property encroachment and use of shared-facilities (McClymont, et al., 2011), create a flirting with space and forms of gentle politics (Crouch, 2010). Mainstream clubs which originally formed to organise sites, rallies and tours for groups of similar interests, however, are changing as broader culture becomes increasingly diverse (van Heerden, 2011). For example, some LGBT societies try to destabilise caravanning’s traditional hetero-normative image (ibid). Now more straightforward to enter as caravans, camper-vans or motor-homes can be rented (ibid), while fledgling Airbnb services for them are also beginning to appear. While caravanning romanticises the attractiveness of ‘gypsy-life’ (Caravans: A British Love Affair, 2009), recreational caravanning has a difficult relationship with travellers. Caravans are frequently stolen and ‘Romany travellers’ are often blamed (Daily Mail, 2010; The Travellers’ Times, 2010). Their tracking-down or repossession can be difficult and protracted, though, as human-rights-laws must not be breached (Chapman, 2013).

7.1.7 Cool Icons?

Cool, iconic vehicles are a rarity in camping, caravanning or motor-homing sectors, but some cool classics do exist such as the Volkswagen (VW) [T1, T2 and Westfalia] camper-vans (Field-Lewis & Haddon, 2011), or the Airstream caravan (Foster, 2016). This is despite them being quite different vehicles. The VW camper-van was conceived immediately following WW2, quickly becoming a stock-choice for many seeking cheap camping-holidays (Harding, 2013). Subsequently immortalised in the 1960’s and 70’s by Californian hippies, Australian surf-bums or European bohemians pursuing enlightenment and good-karma in Northern-India (ibid). Their production, however,
ceased when more stringent European safety legislation meant they were replaced by modern, but less appealing versions that had far less charm. The last production facility [in Brazil] closed in 2013. Old models are viewed romantically, highly prized, lovingly restored and cherished. The American classic-icon of the silver Airstream caravan was first built in the 1930’s (Foster, 2016). Initially small and stylish, they were produced in California (ibid). Their futuristic designs provoked the imagination; being similar to aviation-concepts of that time (ibid). Their curved and highly-reflective exterior aluminium-sheet-panels created a stunning-luminosity which does not tarnish with age (ibid). While still produced and internally updated, they are now more synonymous with the ‘good old days’, but remain highly unique and noticeable (ibid). Airstreams and VW-campers provoke an interesting paradox. While Airstreams have always been a luxury, high-end product using high-quality materials, VW-campers were cheap and born from austerity. Loved not only for their aesthetics but their practicality and ingenuity. Unlike Airstreams, VW-campers rust notoriously quickly and must be cared for. Their ownership though affords membership of elite communities where they can be proudly displayed at rallies and meets (Field-Lewis & Haddon, 2011), whereas in the UK, Airstreams seem less popular.

7.2 Caravanning; Supplanting Anxieties [Empirical Research]79

7.2.1 Ontological Security; Transposition of Anxieties

Caravanning can be an attractive, relaxing family holiday when compared to other more frenetic choices. Airline-travel is particularly stressful due to in-built safety-concerns and a lack of control. A marshalled experience where threats of missed waypoints or flights looms constantly. Shepherded submissively and forced to dutifully accept delays while trapped in secure-areas or queues. Airport-security also creates intimidating line-ups which are invasive. The restricted and restrained environment is often inharmonious with young children’s pressing needs(CA709). The confinement of planes is particularly intolerable especially when travelling with them(CA709). Becoming cranky when in desperate need of feeding, drinks or the toilet. Even when on holiday, meals are interrupted and more stressful. While some expensive hotels can be lavish and luxurious, most affordable rooms are cramped, dingy or not well-configured for family entertainment. Children cannot be cooped-up and get bored, forcing the abandonment of the hotel-room to find other forms of entertainment and diversions for them(CA709). Holidays therefore generally become more expensive as extra plane-seats, meals, larger-rooms and children’s entertainment need to be factored-in. A problem exacerbated by one-parent often cutting-back their working-hours to provide childcare. Meaning disposable income can fall just as costs are rising. While it is anticipated school might ease this burden, long school-holidays often means full-time, or fully-

79 [CA705 to 1012] are caravanning empirical research data-code identification numbers.
committed employment is impractical until they can be legally left-alone or trusted to look after themselves. The spiralling costs and a lack of comfort or personal-freedom can therefore make caravanning an attractive break. Allowing transporting essential-comforts which help give continuity of routines, but stringent airport-security limits. Travelling at one's own speed and without intrusion therefore helps relieve the stress, giving greater autonomy and flexibility. A less traumatic form of escapism which feels like an elopement.

“But the nice thing......, apart from it being a fraction of what it is to go to a restaurant, every flipping night, is it you can have it anytime you want. If you want it a four o clock in the afternoon, you can do, if you want to do it at eight o clock in the evening you can, because the choice is yours. To do what you want, again you come back to that word freedom, that’s the big word, isn’t it?”

[Peter: Male; Age 45]

Giving the ability to forget problems [such as health-concerns, difficult-neighbours or work-life] that have become linked to the main-home, while still providing needed self-sufficiency\(^{[71]}\), security and comfort\(^{[71]}\). An ability to take holidays when they like and use time as they wish in peaceful and pastoral settings, avoiding the inauthenticity or tackiness of package holidays\(^{[71]}\). Caravans therefore afford a change of scene and alternative social-life, while also having some accordance as a private retreat.

Kevin: “it’s just....we get a lot of pleasure don’t we.....? ....We have freedom... that’s what we like....” // Janet: “Yes we like our freedom... we like our own space.... And this way we can be sociable.... but retreat into our own space as well... which is how we like it...”

[Kevin: Male; Age 56 & Janet: Female; Age 56]

This flexibility and freedom of choice is a fantastic way to fill the school-holiday periods. Providing difficult to entertain children with access to safe, wide-open-spaces and the freedom to play with others\(^{[72]}\). For some this stokes the nostalgia of their own childhoods that are remembered as care-free. A continuity with the past which acknowledges and cherishes their parent’s roles\(^{[71]}\). Caravanning can therefore bring families back together. Grandparents often delighting in helping their children caravan or taking the grandchildren away to alleviate the pressure. Valuable if not invasive to the main parent-child relationship\(^{[72]}\).

The constant needs of young children at home can make the parent taking on primary child-care duties feel isolated or economically insignificant. On a caravan-site, domestic chores, however, become more novel, playful and therefore valued. The diminished scale means they feel less laborious or mundane. Spouses or children are therefore more willing to volunteer to join-in or help, which teaches good-habits\(^{[73,74]}\). Having a community of friends and family who get on well can also help share the burden of parenting and provide some light-relief. More helping-hands and shared-resources, therefore increases personal-freedom and an ability to explore parent-to-parent relationships, which can be exciting.
“Kenny: “I like the fact that we can go together away as a family or a group of families, and take our dogs and just enjoy each other’s company and have a good time, a good laugh. The kids play together and look after each other. They enjoy taking the dogs for walks and it’s safe for them to do that because there are very few cars moving around and there are speed limits like 5mph. And most of the people if not all of the people are the same, groups of people who are families, they know each other, and they have kids normally as well.” // Simon: “Yeah, I’d agree with that. I think it’s also nice that the wives can get together and have a laugh as well, and a chat. Our wives, mine and Kenny’s are sisters, so they get to see each other as well, which is great, and fortimately we get on really well as well. So, we can have a beer or go for a hike or whatever.” // Colin: “It’s nice to go away with your mates, it’s just less stressful, you’re less of the focus of the frustrations that can happen in a relationship. I feel like they all behave better. I certainly don’t get nagged as much. I get more freedom than I would if I was on my own”.

[Kenny: Male; Age 63, Colin: Male; Age 44 & Simon: Male; Age 42]

Of course, tensions do appear, and the rapport can become too restrictive. Caravanning, however, also produces fun memories through mishaps which despite their temporal trauma, give interesting and humorous stories that are rich in self-irony. Sharing them socialises people and brings further closeness. A lack of camaraderie, however, also weakens relationships with those who do not partake in caravanning or understand it.

Caravanning’s genius is also in its flexibility. Affording selective escape from these relationships, by returning to the core family-unit and exploring unfamiliar places and experiences together. For example, traditional family-events such as Christmas and Easter can be simplified and spent in the caravan by just the family-unit if so desired. Helping to build trust through ‘shared-histories’ (Giddens, 1991). Over-maximising use can, however, arouse suspicions that caravanning has become an obsession which needs constant justification. Many insist, however, that they enjoy winter caravanning providing the road-conditions are not too treacherous. These brave souls do risk, though, becoming stuck on-site if the weather worsens. Heavily reliant on Electric-Hook-Ups [EHU] as leisure batteries might struggle or portable gas-stores rapidly deplete. Any equipment breakdowns will therefore have greater impact.

Some caravanner’s appear surprisingly unsure how their electrics work. Caravan systems typically have two-circuits. A 12V DC circuit running from the leisure-battery which ensures essentials like lighting and water-pumps continue to work during power-outages. When connected to the sites mains-electricity-supply, a 240V AC circuit powers sockets for portable or plug-in devices. The caravan battery must therefore be pre-charged or topped up on site to ensure the 12V DC essential devices work. Highly-efficient solar-panels are beginning to allow greater freedom in charging batteries off-grid, but there still is a reliance on EHU to fulfil their energy needs. Even when connected to the mains, over-drawing current can cause the caravan’s or the site’s circuits-breakers to trip. Caravan parks often specify maximum allowable ratings for appliances. Many caravanner’s therefore use lower-power appliances as it gives...
flexibility to cope with site-variances and prevent embarrassing problems. Electricity from sites is typically part of the pitch-fee so some do become adroit at using low-levels constantly to heat or dry areas.

There is also a certain DIY buzz about caravans; working inside them can be enjoyable. Providing a place of relaxation even when parked on the drive or stored in the garden. Trivial things become more amplified, interesting and fun. “I like being in the outdoors, and the simple pleasures it brings me, like the feel of rain on the roof and the windows, the simple pleasures, I feel safe” [Yvonne: Female; Age 61]. By easing tensions and refreshing the mind, many therefore refer to their caravan as their “happy-place”. Being enclosed in a caravan can feel particularly warm, snug and cosy. Therefore, feeling like both an escape and a luxury.

“To be honest, I’ve always felt different in a caravan, even when it was at home, I’d like to sit in it, I’d feel like I was in holiday, even when we cleaned it.. can’t explain why I just feel good.” // Interviewer: “Do you ever do that?” // Geoff: “What sit in it at home?” // Interviewer: “yes .....” // Geoff: “Sometimes, like if there is a job to do on it, and I want a rest, I will go inside. it’s nice because I can think of other things than the day today. I become, it’s like meditating, I just feel different, my mind wanders.”. “I think about the future, or memories, the good times we have had”.

[Geoff: Male; Age 53]

Caravanning affords pleasure and therefore good memories within the everyday constraints of spousal relationships. It is, however, an agreed decision that both parties must buy into. Purchasing a caravan is a life-style amending decision for both partners in a relationship. The fiscal impact varies, however, as large price-differentials exist between new, ‘new-to-us’, second-hand, old or worn-out models. Most new British tourers [i.e. Bailey and Eldis] costing between £15,000 and £35,000. Some of the best German models [Hymer and Hobby] can be priced at over £40,000. American Airstreams can be a mouth-watering £80,000. Larger-static caravans can also be expensive if located on attractive sites.

New-models have the advantage of being supported by the manufacturer, smell-fresh, while beds, toilets, appliances and surfaces are pristine and unsoiled. Protecting their resale value by keeping the caravan clean, damp-free and in good condition is important, while also keeping a documented service-history. A lack of trust in their condition can make second-hand tourer-caravans subject to large price variances. Ranging from scrap-value, to less than £1,000 for an old-one, or reaching the £7,500-£15,000 range for attractive-ones in good condition. Site-fees, however, are typically low. Between £10 to £35 per night although they are subject to add-ones and can rise during school-holidays. Caravanning can therefore be affordable if a second-hand bargain is spotted. These used caravans, however, are usually ‘projects’, needing joint-effort to clean and renovate. Scrubbing away or renewing items with evidence of biological-contact from earlier owners or are deemed too-worn. Stripping the
caravan of any lingering and repulsive alien-smells. Generated by their domestic practices; cooking, cleaning-products, toilets, children or dogs[CA752,753]. Interior furnishings can also be redecorated or reupholstered. Pulling back wall or floor panels is sometimes necessary to check whether any problems lurk there. A big dread being damp which rots frames and boards, undermining the caravan’s entire structural integrity. It can mean the caravan is worthless and scrap[CA752,753]. A metered-damp-test is therefore recommended prior to purchase. Other visual-signs can, however, be giveaways. For example, condensation inside windows, bulging or uneven floors or tiny break-outs in external-paintwork. Ensuring the safety of the structure is therefore essential before travel. Services must also work as faulty-electrics, water-pumps or lighting will be harder to fix while away from home. Identification and location of parts can be difficult, requiring visits to breakers-yards in desperate searches for replacements.

7.2.2 Insecurities of Towing

Caravanning is often viewed as a safe, ambling-pastime for families. Towing a caravan, however, is onerous on vehicles and extremely dangerous. Legislature protecting road-users is therefore in place and enforced with random police-checks. The biggest concerns being weight and visibility. ‘Pre-1997 driving-license-holders with a B-license’ [which automatically includes a +E element] can tow a combined fully-loaded train-weight of 8,250kg. For ‘post-1997 UK B-licence holders, the combined train-weight of car and caravan (fully-loaded) must not exceed 3,500kg. ‘Post-2013 B-license’ holders can pass a test which brings them into a new B+E category which enables them to pull a combined load of 7,000 kg. This can be increased to 12,000kg by obtaining a C1E license[CA754]. The set-up between the car and the caravan must also be correctly balanced to prevent the ‘dog wagging the tail’. Guidelines therefore recommend that fully-loaded, braked-trailers should not exceed 85% of the pulling-vehicles unloaded kerb-weight. Further limited, however, by the towing-vehicle-manufacturer’s specified maximum-towing-weight. Caravan types and sizes vary between countries, but UK and EU versions specify the caravan nose-weight/down-force acting on the tow-ball should not surpass 7% of the caravan’s fully-loaded-weight. Again, limited by the towing-vehicle-manufacturer’s maximum-tow-bar-nose-weight. Typically, between 70 and 150kg. Caravans therefore face weight and size restrictions which are decided by the driver’s qualifications but also skill-levels and confidence.

Providing more space for the family means towing a longer and heavier caravan, which will be more difficult and often need the extra stability and weight of twin-axles. Having a larger and heavier towing-vehicle is less of a problem for B+E or CE1-license-holders, but for those with only a post-1997 B-license, the vehicle could exhaust the caravan’s permitted weight. Not all vehicles, however, make good towing-cars. Tow-ball heights need to be raised and aligned to the caravan to accommodate
clearances. Furthermore, to follow UK-law, the driver must have no blind-spots along either side of the caravan. If the towing-vehicle is wider than the caravan, however, extended-towing-mirrors are not needed. Complicated and confusing rules for weights and mirrors are frequent sources of worry, misunderstanding and disagreement between even experienced caravanner’s. The choice and matching of vehicles is also a source of insecurity. For example, an under-powered set-up means sluggish performance, especially up-hills. A sporty [low-trim] would look odd and risk damage. Having an expensive and heavy caravan such as an Airstream might mean standing-out too much[CA755-757]. Selecting an untried or risky set-up therefore involves gauging other’s knowledge and experience.

Hitching is physically and mentally demanding, but limiting the risk of accidents or mishaps needs all aspects of the set-up to be checked prior to travel[CA758]. Loose, fragile or heavy-items which can move, fall, break or damage surfaces, must be securely-stowed. Smaller objects such as cutlery must be locked in drawers to prevent them flying-around. Easy to forget details like removing the microwave-glass-plates or locking internal-doors [to prevent their swinging] are important if damage is to be avoided. Heavier-items such as wall-mounted-televisions may need to be packed-away. Fluids which add-weight or slosh-around also need emptying. Those things that can be miniaturized, folded, made lightweight or compressed are therefore extremely useful. Meaning a plethora of foldable or deflatable/reinflatable extras such as dinghies, airbeds, couches, deck-chairs, etc., are usually procured. Ensuring most of the weight is low and laterally placed over the central wheel-axle(s) gives much greater stability and manouevrability for the caravan. The heaviest items such as tent-awnings and their steel poles must therefore be placed here. It also allows the fine-adjustment or tilting of the nose-weight. Most importantly, however, it prevents back-loading the caravan which is extremely dangerous. Caravan design is therefore also limited by a requirement to place the heaviest fittings [such as kitchen appliances] over the axles. Lighter lounges being positioned at the front and [fixed] bedrooms are at the rear[CA759]. To be safe and thoroughly enjoy the holiday, it is therefore important to remember all these checks, while also packing every creature-comfort that was intended to be taken away. There is a lot to remember, so caravanning necessitates check-lists[CA760].
“...Friends give you lists... and then you start making your own... Even after all these years, it’s important, it’s so easy to forget things, and they can damage the caravan, so, it’s important, because they can ruin your holiday or the caravan itself. You have to lock things away because things move around... or fall off so... You know like draws and cupboard doors so...... you know... lock draws and things... there’s also the security aspect. Remembering the tow bar lock and the wheel locks, because these things get stolen or broken into. there’s loads to remember when you are planning a caravan trip... So we tend to have lists. Caravaner’s are famous for it. Lists for everything, but you see people do stupid things and forgetting something... people get in a flap and do stupid things or get forgetful.. I don’t know maybe it’s complacency sometimes as well... could just end in a nightmare.. so we have lists, and lots of them, it sounds stupid, but it is really important. ..... I’ve even seen people drive off still attached to the electricity! You also need to plan the journey more, because fuel consumption is critical, so you get a bit fixated on that. I keep records of that so I know how far I can go and whether I am using more than usual”.

[Geoff: Male; Age 53]

While generic check-lists are easily obtained, caravaner’s prefer to cater to their own idiosyncrasies and lessons-learned from earlier holidays. For example, whether integrated-blinds are best fixed in the up or down position while moving, and incorporating their preferred orders of tasks. These are usually ‘pre-produced’ and ‘pre-agreed’ by couples to prevent arguments if anything should go wrong[CA761;762]. The better the family becomes at caravanning, the less time and effort is needed, and greater are the feelings of ontological security. Maximising the instances available to enjoy being on-site with them[CA763;764] and allowing their more frequent-use[CA765].

“It does become an important part of your life..... because you get so much pleasure out of it, but also because they are a big purchase in terms of money and size. But, the more you put in, the more you get out of it, so the rewards are greater, you know?.... The better you get at caravanning the more you can use it, because weekends away become possible. If you do it well, then you are set up faster than you can really enjoy the first afternoon or evening and it’s not a struggle. So that becomes an incentive.”

[Geoff: Male; Age 53]

Taking pride in the cleanliness of the caravan is also important as many do not wish to travel or turn up on-site looking shoddy[CA766]. Indoor-storage may help longevity, but the ‘van’ will still need to be brought out of storage for a few days to clean, pack and charge the battery. Spontaneous travel is not as easy with caravans as camper-vans. Some owners, however, do store them at home and keep them charged to shorten preparation times if the weather suddenly opens-up[CA767]. Bringing the caravan up to pristine-levels, however, must use gentle methods to avoid doing more harm than good. Short-cuts like power-washing or standing on the roof can be serious ‘own-goals’. Risking damaging seals or panel joins, Causing fluid-ingress and therefore damp[CA768]. Caravans are not as robust as motor-vehicles, having fewer paint-layers so owners must use specialised, low-abrasion cleaning and polishing products. The benefits of caravan-covers or front-towing-covers are debatable. While limiting chips, they risk abrasion caused by vibration. Also collecting dirt and trapping moisture[CA769]. Touch-up is difficult, as T-Cut can expose primer, while large flat-surfaces make matching and resprays difficult.
The money, time, effort or emotions invested in caravans therefore makes any unintentional damage or shock, heart-breaking.

“Yes, I’ve not had anything major, but I’ve dented ones, or scratched them, normally moving them at home, or on site...” “I felt sick at first, it’s terrible, all sorts of things go through your head”. “Partly (the cost of repair), but it’s more.... The feeling of being angry at yourself,... and the embarrassment.”. “I don’t know, it just is really one of the worst things”. “It’s just, you know, you’ve put so much bloody effort into the thing and then it’s ruined”.

[Geoff: Male; Age 53]

Holding caravans for even short periods at home can be stressful. Their need for high-visibility for safety on roads also makes them stand-out and vulnerable to theft. Physical security-devices can be overcome, so blocking caravans behind locked-gates, strategically parked cars or concealed in back-gardens can give added protection. Secure-storage, while an other expense, reduces concerns of being observed. The caravan’s presence or removal signalling when the family is about to leave or away for burglars. Anti-theft devices such as trackers can be pointless as thieves will try to find them and cause more damage. Placing labels which advise their presence can therefore be counterproductive, as losing a caravan represents more than insurance cost, but also the effort expended in the now destroyed personalisation’s inside.

The fear of pulling a large-trailer for the first time means some ‘newbies’ take towing lessons or have test-runs. Wisely picking sites which are close-by, simple to find or within easy range of access. If venturing further afield, a change of driving approach is needed. On national-speed-limit [NSL] single-carriageway-roads, vehicles towing caravans must not exceed 50mph. Increasing to 60mph on NSL dual-carriageways and motorways, but not allowed to enter the third overtaking-lane. This places caravans in conflict with other slower moving vehicles trapped in these inside-lanes. Most notably Heavy-Goods-Vehicles [HGV’s]. Caravans frustrate HGV-drivers as their different handling considerations disrupts their need to conserve momentum. HGV speed-limiters [often set below 60mph], means overtaking caravans is difficult due to small speed-differentials. It is therefore important for caravan drivers to understand optimum-speeds. Knowing when to keep speed and when to yield and let them overtake safely.

“I used to be a long distance truck driver, but I still get nervous pulling the caravan. You just have to relax, obey the rules, don’t overload and keep to the speed limit. I understand what it is that grates them, a lot of them are limited, so you need to keep your speed from dropping below 56mph. A lot of people are frightened of pulling a caravan and jacknifing, but for me it’s more second nature, because of my job really”.

[Jim: Male; Age 65]

Dangerous weather or heavy-traffic though, sometimes means caravans must slow down. Passing lorries create wind-shears that can easily sway the lighter caravan. This or any interaction caused by side-winds, excessive-speed, erratic-steering or avoidance...
manoeuvres can cause the caravan to ‘yaw’ or snake. A violent lateral-shear that if not at once catastrophic can build into side-swinging which is difficult to pacify or escape. Some driving heavier and more powerful vehicles consider accelerating a legitimate approach. There is far greater consensus, however, that this is foolish bravado, most likely to result in complete loss of control. Regaining governance being best achieved by not panicking and reducing speed sensibly. While the hitch must be resilient and stop the caravan being lost, it must also disconnect in these extreme conditions, averting the towing-vehicle overturning with the caravan.

Seeing other caravanner’s break-rules, commit-folly, disregard good-practices or drive-erratically produces anxiety and anger. Exasperated also by those showing little concern towards other drivers, feeling it reflects badly on them in general and increases their sense of ontological insecurity. Those who do not fit extended-side-mirrors, even if their width of vehicle means they are not legally needed, cause consternation. Some of those affected feel there is an undertone of jealousy due to the size of their vehicle. Those illegally not fitting mirrors, however, leave blind-spots which make drivers less aware of clearances or developing problems such as tail-backs. Fostering yet more bad-will towards caravanner’s. The most aggressive, irritated or offended cutting-in and slowing down after overtaking. A tactic ‘some idiots’ perform indiscriminately to show their contempt for caravans. Anxiety-levels therefore rise while towing, so keeping calm and cool is vital while anticipating danger. Thinking ahead and driving sensibly, not being pushed around or increasing speed unnecessarily as braking-distances are enlarged\textsuperscript{[CA771]}\textsuperscript{[CA771]}. Never committing to manoeuvres unless certain and always leaving or creating enough space to allow for unexpected outcomes. Cornering requires greater clearances, but corrective reversing is difficult and not always possible. Tight-spots, dead-ends or oncoming traffic on single-lane roads will therefore result in fraught or embarrassing stand-offs, sometimes resulting in the caravan becoming completely stuck. The only solution being unhitching\textsuperscript{[CA771]}. Ensuring all routes are well-planned is key to avoiding these dreaded scenarios. Expanded to include steep-hills, narrow, rough or uneven roads. Big-jolts causing doubt and distraction through concern the hitch might be compromised; or the caravan or its tyres damaged.

Towing significantly lengthens journey-duration, so drivers being in a state of edge for long-periods increases driver-fatigue. Passengers also get bored, tense and irritable\textsuperscript{[CA771]}. The reduced fuel-economy caused by the caravan means frequent stops for refuelling are needed. Frustrating as they further extend journey-time. They are, however, useful for comfort-breaks\textsuperscript{[CA771]}, checking the hitch, tyre-conditions and the position of the jockey-wheel\textsuperscript{[CA771]}. Knowing where best to stop and pre-scheduling these waypoints is important as some refuelling-bays and parking-spaces are unsuitable. Unscheduled stops therefore encourage mishaps. If left unattended for periods, taking the time to fasten physical security-devices such as tow-bar and wheel-locks is prudent as it is
known for caravans to be stolen from motorway service-stations\(^{[CA783]}\). Further delaying
breaks and increasing the work-load, while adding more complexity; increasing the
quantity of keys to be remembered and carried. While this slowness can make travelling
further afield difficult, the ability to stop overnight on sites makes travelling abroad
possible. Provided routes are well-planned and enough time off-work can be
booked\(^{[CA784]}\), Many feeling caravanning is more tolerated within other parts of Europe,
benefitting with higher-quality multi-use sites\(^{[CA785,786]}\). Completion of journeys engenders
relief and a pride in accomplishment, but the tension involved in towing, the trauma of
near-misses or damage can put others off. Eliminating the need by housing the caravan
permanently on a site or minimising the load by renting seasonal-pitches as a base to
explore new areas\(^{[CA787]}\).

7.2.3 The Site Set-Up

Commercial sites usually require tourer-caravans to be reversed into a [hard or soft]
pitch. This leaving the hitch front-facing for quick removal, while aligning with utility-
points\(^{[CA788]}\). Caravan entrance-doors are therefore located on opposite sides and do not
face each other. Aiding privacy and reducing trivial interactions when coming and
going. This reversing manoeuvre\(^{[CA789]}\), however, is testing and needs a lot of nerve and
skill\(^{80}\). Often a cause of family disputes, it is highly amusing for those already having
completed this transition successfully\(^{[CA789]}\).

“Reversing... You have to do it on site and people like watching you.. because they find it
amusing.. and they can tell how skilled you are at it”. “You have to use your mirrors.. make
sure you understand the route and the lie of the land and any obstacles first. Get out and have
a good look at the ground and how you need to do it, so that you have a clear plan in your head.
Get your initial angles right, turn in and have a little kink, so that caravan begins its turn and
then it’s really about letting the caravan lead you, because it will go where it wants to go, and
you have to follow it to some extent. You can’t force it, so you have to take your time and
relax, look over your shoulder as well”.

[Lewis: Male; Age 64]

Once the caravan is eventually positioned to everyone’s satisfaction, lists resume for
the unhitching and unpacking. Unwinding stands, spirit-levelling the caravan,
connecting electrics and the battery, fetching water, filling tanks, starting the pumps
and the hot-water. Tuning the television to local settings and connecting Wi-Fi for
children’s entertainment devices\(^{[CA791]}\). While there are exceptions, tasks are often split
along traditional gender-lines\(^{[CA792,793]}\). Males preferring heavier and technical jobs which
involves organising the outside\(^{[CA794]}\).

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\(^{80}\) Motor-moving-devices that allow caravans to be positioned via remote-control are therefore becoming
increasingly popular but can be viewed as excessive.
“What we tend to do what we found most people do is, the woman looks after the inside and the man looks after the outside. So the fella empties the toilet and washes, flushes that out. He’ll make sure that it’s disconnected, he’ll check and make sure that the windows are shut, so in other words, anything outside, the bloke does, but the woman looks after the inside to make sure the fridge and everything is sorted....”

[Peter: Male; Age 59]

Achieving intimacy, relies on giving a level of privacy for each partner; some autonomy combined with sharing feelings and experiences that avoids excessive co-dependency (Giddens, 1991). Females often arranging the insides, feeling their anxieties towards the family’s welfare is stronger and they are more likely to do a better job[CA795;796]. Often an imposition, being frustrated that their spouses do not know about these jobs, listen or care enough to follow their explicit instructions. Meaning many of the vital tasks, which often relate to the children, are preferred to be completed themselves, as any problems are likely to fall on them to solve anyway[CA797]. Those things which publicly present the family, however, are more negotiated with neither having complete autonomy. Important stylistic decisions related to the outside must therefore be agreed and often involve compromises. As couples often select caravans together, being gender-indeterminate or neutral is an advantage[CA798;799].

“So do you feel that the insides are yours and the outsides are your partners?” // Jackie: “To an extent, that’s probably true to say. That’s more, the inside is mine to do as I please, and the outside is more negotiated. Because that reflects on him as well. I painted some little flowers near the top, but he won’t let me do anymore. I do need him you see, especially for the heavy stuff, like fetching the water, or opening my wine, he does have his uses!”

[Jackie: Female; Age 37]

Being too masculine or feminine would feel incongruent with each’s identity. The views of children must also be factored into final choices and may depend upon their gender composition. Separated roles and routines, however, cease when it is time for the awning to be erected [a.k.a the ‘divorce-in-a-bag’[CA800]] as it usually needs two adults. Like the most complex tents, ill-fitting poles and convoluted assembly procedures cause mistakes and back-tracking[CA801]. Time and effort each would prefer to be spending elsewhere. Impasses often lead to huge rows[CA802]. Anxieties and moods become complicated, building and feeding off each other in such close-family confrontations[CA803;804].

Valerie: “We’ve seen some huge rows, it’s always the awnings. You laugh about it later, but you know, it’s not funny at the time. It happens to everybody” // Peter: “Of course, we’ve always had an awning, so that when you get on site you just get your awning out and you have to put, if your only on the site for a couple of nights, or if you’re abroad, see we would never take an awning, you know like an awning that’s like an extra room, we would never take that abroad, because it’s too hot. But, in the UK, they become like an outside room”.

[Peter: Male; Age 59 & Valerie: Female; Age 58]

Awnings give much needed extra-space to porch wet, muddy shoes and clothes. Storing camping accessories which protects the caravan from being too cluttered. A drizzle-
proof lounge-area to sit, eat and drink in. Enclosable at dusk when voracious insects descend. Awnings therefore provide a form of outdoor experience, abandonable to the redoubt of the caravan in the worst weather[^CA805]. Also offering excitement for children, who often aspire to sleep in them as an exciting outside adventure[^CA807].

Despite the pain of their erection, many seem unwilling to embrace recent technologies that ease the task. Air-awnings take a fraction of the time and owners often recommend them. Others, however, view them as cheating and functionally inferior[^CA808]. Air-awnings partly irritate as they do not look as tight, strong or rigid enough, when compared to those using steel-poles. Some sensing they might not be strong enough to be left unattended on seasonal-pitches[^CA812]. Creating an antipathy which is vindicated by seeing rain-water pool and buckle them, or high winds buffeting their more flexible frames. Innovative technologies such as air-awnings sparks interest, but if considered too expensive can trigger negative sentiments by being perceived as pretentious[^CA813]. Fracturing the community by making individuals less willing to help. Sharing painfully similar experiences seems to bring people closer together.

As with the set-up, the clear down is equally ordered, strained and laborious. The awning never quite fitting back in the bag. Pipes must be cleared of water and waste. The caravan will also need cleaning prior to storage which can be completed on-site or at home. Ensuring traces of food are removed to avoid infestations[^CA814]. All pipes must be fully clear to ensure freezing does not cause bursts. Removing absorbent-materials also reduces the risk of damp[^CA815].

“They need storing after you have finished your holiday, or before they go into storage, so all the water and waste systems need to be drained and cleaned to stop any unpleasant smells, or frost damage. So, things like the toilets need their seals to be left open and clean so that they will work freely next year. Also, any food remnants need to be cleaned, so that you don’t attract any unwanted guests!”, “You get used to it and you learn ways of controlling the mess. And staying clean. You do get more used to the smell”.

[Lewis: Male; Age 64]

Performing these tasks well frees the mind of any nagging doubts, so the caravan can be forgotten about until the next cycle[^CA816].

### 7.2.4 Motor-Homes

The pain and hard-work of towing, set-up and clear-down, can bring masochistic, restorative pleasure, or at least distraction from other problems. For some, however, it is too much to live with[^CA817;818]. Instead preferring homogenous ‘caravan-like’ recreational vehicles [RV’s] or motor-homes. Achieving equivalent results but with greater simplicity and ease, mostly by eliminating towing[^CA819].
Motor-homes can simplify or automate some of the arduous tasks. Automatic levelling, sun-canopy/awning deployment, satellite-TV-tracking, while also having sophisticated navigation-systems. Luxuries that mean returning to caravanning would represent a retrograde step.

While older motor-homes can look shabby, the latest and newest versions are expensive vehicles. Fully integrated and reliable automobiles which conform to the latest safety, emissions, performance and reliability standards. European companies such as the German manufacturer Hymer, produce high-quality conversions using commercial van chassis and engines mass-produced by Peugeot, Fiat, Citroen and Mercedes. They are a comfortable drive. Allowing more speed and manoeuvrability and are therefore capable of touring further afield. Sturdily built for all seasons; beach-holidays, lakeside, cycling, hiking or even snowboarding and skiing. New motor-homes are more accepted in town-centres and supermarket car-parks, giving greater freedom for rest-stops and resupplies. They are a luxury-purchase, however, as they are impractical for everyday use. Unlike caravans which are coupled and uncoupled from the family’s utility-vehicle which is then usable. Motor-homes are therefore an added expense, needing MOT’s and services, where maintenance costs rise with age and wear-and-tear.

“The driving is a lot easier… towing a caravan is incredibly stressfull, and having the motor home takes a lot of that away. But they are more expensive… so I understand that you have to be able to afford one.”

B-license drivers must be careful that the motor-home’s fully-loaded Maximum-Authorised-Mass [MAM] does not break the 3,500kg weight-limit. They are therefore available in a range of lengths, chassis formats and weights to accommodate their needs and those who hold a C1E license. These size and weight constraints can make practical and affordable motor-homes feel a little cramped. They each involve compromises, so some consumers admit to focussing too much on avoiding what bugged them most last-time, when making a new purchase. Sticking though with admired and trusted brands as they accept that perfect solutions do not exist. Affordable vehicles are rarely spacious enough to accommodate families and children in comfort or have enough seats for travel. Their high-cost and spatial constraints make them popular with empty-nesters or retirees, ideal for their reduced spatial-needs. Also having releasable assets for their purchase. In contrast, caravanning becomes more stressful with ill-health or
old age. Reaching 70 requires CIE license renewal and medical-recertification\[(CAS04-443]\], which mean some feel it is the right time to switch.

The downside with motor-homes is the greater inconvenience once set-up. When leaving the camp-site for short day-trips or shopping-runs, items need to be repacked. There is also greater insecurity in leaving them parked and unattended off camp-sites. Some therefore tow another small vehicle behind (such as a Smart Car). Some sites add incremental charges or insist second vehicles be parked in the main car park\[(CAS44-441]\]. Motor-homers sometimes describe feeling unwelcome on sites dominated by caravans\[(CAS44]\]. Dismissed as peripheral members who cannot win. New and expensive vehicles are eschewed for a lack of modesty while older, untidy ones are too scruffy and lower the tone. This is despite motor-homes mostly conforming with the ‘caravan-aesthetic’ by being boxy, plain white or silver. Standardisation and spatial constraints may be factors in the conformity, but there also seems a desire to minimise other’s misgivings on-site\[(CAS47]\]. Caravans symbolise or advertise domestication through masculine-feminine equivalence\[(CAS40]\], while motorhomes veer a little towards the masculine. While, according to the theory, this should be cooler, owners being sometimes stereotyped as older disorders this image. A tensioned desire to personalise them with professional graphics, however, also appears greater as their high-cost but unglamorous façades can irk their owners\[(CAS40]\].

7.2.5 Freedom to Roam; Familial Needs for Ontological Security

The pain of towing, set-up and the subsequent outpouring of relief means caravanner’s [and less deserving motor-homers] can settle-down and relax with a guiltless alcoholic drink\[(CAS05-452]\]. Moods lift, and they begin to feel rejuvenated. Parents find safety and comfort in congregating with those having similar interests or complementary lifestyles\[(CAS05]\]. Holidays providing one of the few occasions they can legitimately pick their types of neighbours. It often motivatng travelling to similar places at similar-times every year\[(CAS45]\]. Sites populated with other caravanner’s perceived as having analogous needs or values increases feelings of safety and protection\[(CAS45]\]. Based on perhaps flawed beliefs, it is a state awoken from by sensing or noticing danger, or any suspicion there are interlopers\[(CAS45]\]. This feeling of security is vital if children are to be ‘let-off-the-leash’ and allowed to play uninhibited\[(CAS17]\]. Trusting children are safe means they can be forgotten about to some extent, provided they do not venture too-far, are ‘too long out of sight’ or are with trusted friends\[(CAS51]\). A rest from constantly worrying sick about them\[(CAS51]\]. Enabling parents much needed time to feel ontologically secure and engage in carefree relaxation by lounging, eating, drinking and conversing\[(CAS60-852]\]. Representing a win-win for both parents and children\[(CAS03-904]\]. Caravanning can therefore make people feel they can switch-off or disappear\[(CAS61]\].
Children having more freedom to play also reduces parent’s anxiety that they have become disconnected from them, giving comfort that priceless memories are being shared.

“The memories are priceless.. with the kids.. they were so happy… and we were because of that.. I was happy if my children were happy.. I still am I feel anxious when we are not all together..”

[Deborah: Female; Age 43]

Normal chores such as meal-times become more fluid and relaxed, partly due to the constraints of power consumption.

Joanne: “Yes we very often do the BBQ when we are abroad, don’t we? And like you say, we use the griddle.” // Stephen: “I like, I bought one of these big electric griddles, the thing you’ve got to watch with camping is, that you buy stuff, I don’t know anything about electricity, so I don’t know what I’m talking about, but is it watts? Or something? The lower the wattage is it the less power it uses?” // Interviewer: “Yes, watt is power.” // Stephen: “Well, right I, you wouldn’t use one that you would use in your house, a kettle, you would use a house kettle. Because it’s too many of them so…., So you buy a camping kettle which is a lot lower, now it might take a couple more minutes to boil the kettle, but that’s all. Now, the griddle for instance, I’ve got one for home, which we can use outside. But this is a camping one, which has got a lower power, but you still get, it still cooks our food, perfectly, I mean it’s about that big, I chuck the onions on one side, chuck the tomatoes on the other and I chuck the chicken in the middle. And I just sit there and let it cook, and Joanne makes the salad and then we just sit outside then” // Joanne: “And then we have a glass of wine and then… its lovely.”

[Stephen: Male; Age 45 & Joanne: Female; Age 45]

As with other domestic duties, meal-times become more joint-efforts than at home. Bringing the family back together after a morning or day’s play, volunteering for contributory tasks might seem noble, but also strategically avoids less favoured ones. For parents, such jobs or routines give opportunities to contribute while also sanctioning some personal freedom. For example, standing at a BBQ or griddle is a necessary but not particularly taxing role, especially with a wine or beer. Conversely, washing-up in communal areas socialises what usually feels like a deserted and tiresome task. Onerous and disgusting tasks like emptying the bins, or evacuating and rinsing the toilet-cassette, can even afford a guiltless, pleasant stroll. While ‘volunteering’ sole-responsibility for the toilet-cassette can have spin-off pleasures, it needs strict ground-rules. ‘Number-two’s’ are usually banned from
caravans due to the hideous task of their removal. A rule which gains quick traction as caravan toilets are uncomfortably close to eating and sleeping areas. The proximity and poor sound-insulation filling the small-space with unpleasant noises and smells. Embarrassing and undesirable for older children or guests. Female-only public bathrooms can also provide free-time away from the spouse or kids. Dependent upon the mood and clientele as their sociality can be enjoyable but also intrusive and annoying. The small space in caravans means irritating sounds of water-pumps operating flushes or running-taps should be particularly disruptive at night-time. Most, however, inexplicably describe sleeping better in the caravan [the ‘wobble-box’] than at home. If well-fitted, window-blinds and curtains close-out morning-light and give privacy in the evenings. The bedroom can be locked, while small wardrobes and drawers give some privacy. Clothes, pills and make-up can be kept hygienically clean and dry. It feeling safer to leave belongings on-site in lockable-caravans than in tents.

### 7.2.6 Camping Grounds

Caravanning is tensioned by its proximity to camping. While there are similarities, camping involves poverty of comforts. Leaving holiday-makers exposed to unpredictable, chilly and wet British weather. Bracing and enlivening, but also gruelling and entailing sleep-deprivation. The lack of a viable home means being cold, unclean, ungroomed and unrefreshed, which cumulatively saps energy-levels. Making people look and feel tired which is more discomforting as one ages. Eventually degenerating into a wild-man or woman who feels they can take no more. Many camp when young, as they cannot easily afford other options or see it as a fun way to spend time with friends. For those who grow into families, caravanning can therefore be a natural transition or luxurious upgrade from canvas or trailer-tents. Others are fearful of towing and see camping as a cheap and convenient way of taking low-risk, supplementary family holidays often with friends. Deliberately socially-grounding themselves to experience closeness to other families, so their children can play together and form positive relationships. A novel experience that teaches them sociability and surviving with less. Increasingly difficult with the pervasive nature of Wi-Fi and mobile-broadband. While caravanning is technically superior to camping and more luxurious, their social relationship is more complex. While some campers feel jealous of caravanner’s, others see it as too obsessive or constraining. Encumbering them with extra costs, worries and chores.
Vanessa: “Yes of course when you were a child they are there as a kind of magic about them I totally get that and I think you would wish that you or your parents had one definitely. I remember…. when I was a child, we went away with Auntsies and Uncles, and at the time they had more money than us, and they were on a caravan on the next field and we were in a tent, and as a child, I was super jealous of their caravan….” // Interviewer: “So why do you prefer camping to caravanning?” // Vanessa: “I just think that it is more, is not, it doesn't become as big a part of your life. It's like you can take it or leave it. You can have a tent and you can throw it in the garage or in the loft and it’s there. If you just want to go away it’s not the be all and end all. But if you get a caravan then you're kind of encumbered with it. It's always going to be there in your mind’s eye, even if it’s not on your drive it might be stored somewhere but it’s going to be nagging at you because it's it’s a big thing in your life I imagine. But I don’t walk around thinking about my tent.”

[Vanessa: Female; Age 46]

Camping often is a short-lived activity to be endured but cast-aside as soon as children are too old and are no longer willing to come. An exciting life-stage adventure, which involves the thrill of spending vast sums of money on camping paraphernalia. Imagined to make the experience more palatable and pleasurable. Some campers are therefore perplexed as to why caravanner’s appear to feel sorry for them, or look down on them\[CA891\]. Camping only being undertaken for its enriching and alternative experiences to their main holiday\[CA892\]. It is important to note, however, that caravanning also does not prevent taking other types of holidays as well if desired [and many do]\[CA893\].

The trials of camping and poverty of facilities means more toing and froing around the sites amenities. There also being greater need to stay outside and socialise, partly due to the misery of remaining confined in a tent for long-periods. Some camp-sites allow fires for their much needed spiritual-therapy. Fires are usually cool\[CA894\], but their close-proximity with caravans is a fire-risk. In the evenings camp-fires [if allowed] can become more boisterous\[CA895\]. Which if in proximity to caravans can prompt the ‘fire or noise police’ to throw cold-water on the proceedings. Consumption of alcohol will also mean disruptive treks to the shared facilities. Camping fields therefore seem wilder, noisier and less settled. Campers can therefore be annoying to caravanner’s, while campers often resent caravanner’s, believing they have it too easy\[CA896\]. Camping, however, appears to have a more adventurous and romantic image than caravanning. A bit cooler as it is imagined as a wild-adventure, younger and less-inhibited\[CA897\]. The tent must not become so large, however, that it appears to have become an obsession or indicative of an inability to cope\[CA898\]. The kudos of having a smaller tent can break in low-points or severe weather causing tent-envy. The hardships of being slightly cooler become questioned.

“I imagine some people would think camping might be cooler, because it is different… young people in groups and if it was wild camping… caravanning though is more fun .. I think… and comfortable.. so is being cool a good thing? Is camping actually fun?”

[Anne: Female; Age 43]
Shared holidays by caravanner’s and campers can be awkward as they are commonly separated in different fields. Families who have travelled together therefore become alienated, disappointing for children wanting to play freely together. A potential blessing for the caravan owner, however, as the children are less likely to descend on the caravan in bad weather [which is unlikely to be reciprocated].

7.2.7 Site Politics; Causes of Ontological Insecurity

Caravanner’s like their friendly and un-pushy image, but the practice does encourage forms of colonisation. Pushing plot-boundaries with large-awnings, careless-parking, or fencing-off areas with wind-breaks to be used as dog-pens; avoiding the expense and distress of kennels. Some dislike others walking across their pitch or staring into their caravan while walking past. Some dog walkers try to colonise shared areas where children want to play. Fouling a major annoyance as children or adults unwittingly tread dog-poo into their awning carpets or caravans. Free-running children, strewn-toys, chairs and other paraphernalia cause further conflicts. Parents stating personal or cultural dominance with noise and loud-music. Claiming vistas or air-space using rhythmic light-poles, neon-light or tall flag-poles with fiercely-defended emblems, depicting deeply-held but socially-divisive symbols. The insignia of nations, provinces, military-regalia or football-teams. Intended to rally like-minded souls and be easy-to-find by their children. Some perceive such indulgences as legitimate parts of relaxing on holiday. ‘Harmless-freedoms’ needed to unwind, have fun and be social.

Those who find these types of behaviours personally-invasive and aggravating, see a lack of respect for others personal space. Garish affronts that indicate a lack of manners; ‘chavish-ness’, or show a lack of ‘class’. Acknowledging it unsettles them is discomorting, however, as complaining would risk confrontation or create a bad atmosphere. Being on edge builds mistrust, suspicion or even paranoia towards potential dirty-tricks [i.e. bread or chips being tossed onto the van’s roof to attract seagulls. Landing and waking those inside or pecking holes in their awnings]. Most therefore bottle their private-anger as disapproving looks. Some people appear to enjoy provoking their discomfort. Feeling that exposing these ‘stuck-up’ ‘snob’s’ alienates and isolates them. Stiff, uptight, grumpy kill-joys who put themselves before their children’s needs. Also, being far too concerned with other people’s business. Moving pitch or site is always possible, but awkward and physically-demanding. It feels like a defeat which can trigger a stubbornness to give-in and move. This is easier for motor-homers who already feel more isolated. The permanency of statics however, can mean investments are ruined.
Being in a large group or feeling part of a dominant majority gives people a feeling of safety. They sensing they have moral-authority or control of the main narratives. For some this is the comfort and camaraderie of bawdier environments. Enjoying busy-bars, social-clubs or pubs. Pitching as close as possible to them. Others preferring quieter or more rustic corners. Private places to unwind, able to keep an eye on children in more open surroundings. While caravanning may not be perceived as cool, it does offer children new and exciting experiences that spark their imagination through greater appreciation of wild and mysterious nature.

“Do you think that caravanning is cool?” // Lewis: “I think it is not meant to be. It is a base, a home from home. I could go fishing and they could go surfing. Everyone is happy. People say fishing isn’t cool, but my kids got thrilled by it when they were young. They loved it. They.. thought catching a big fish was cool” “Oh.. loads of times, they would see a big fish come out and say “woah… cool”, it’s only natural” // Interviewer: “Was there any other things that they thought were cool…” // Lewis: Just anything that excited them, or captured their imagination… something out of the ordinary.”

[Fishing, bike-riding, playing on the beach, boogie-boarding or surfing are all fun and offer potentially cool experiences. For teenagers, however, the British countryside can begin to seem inconsequential or boring. Being more focussed on their individuality and social relations outside of the family. As they grow up, however, activities that are less supervised, or urban, feel cooler. Seeking fateful encounters which expand themselves (Giddens, 1991). This is more ominous for parents and a source of anxiety. Tensioned between letting them have fun and trying to be inclusive, while also safeguarding their welfare. Preferring them to be engaged in more natural and supervised pursuits.

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81 The Caravan and Motorhome Club are an official partner of Surf England (https://www.surfingengland.org/)
“Do you think that things like skateboarding and surfing can be cool?” // Barry: “I think they can be, especially for younger people. I think that I would worry about skateboarding because it seems dangerous and I think kids could get into trouble. Surfing is probably more dangerous actually, but if there’s supervision, or the weather is too dangerous, you wouldn’t let them go. So I think, for me that surfing, although the sea can be very dangerous with rip tides and things, I would feel that there would be more supervision and control. Whereas, with skateboarding it would be too out of my control, I wouldn’t be comfortable letting them skate for the day in a city, because there are too many dangers”.

[Barry: Male; Age 54]

Inevitably, boundaries will be pushed. Activities and friendships that have an element of mystery or danger can be exciting for children. Having a trusted community, however, helps ease parent’s tensions and stops problems escalating. These states can be disturbed though by the presence of more independent and confident ‘cool-kids’ who are less easy to control. To other children they provide excitement and novelty by pushing boundaries. Learning new tricks and independence from them, which they can show off when they get home. When children are too young, however, their competitive nature or sinister presence disrupts the innocent free-play that parents desire for them. Threatening to lead their children astray. Playing mischief by upsetting, teasing or excluding the weaker, well-behaved, younger or more sensitive members they target. A source of trouble and upset.

Sally: “It’s a different feeling for them. it’s an adventure and it’s a lot of fun, and I think they get a lot of joy from it. They are really happy. But I think cool means something else, something different. I think they are too young for that. I think cool is about who you are for me, so I think they are just trying to play, whereas I think it would be sad if cool became part of it, because they would have lost their innocence then, and there’s sort of a nastiness that goes with it, you know, like I’m cooler than you, or you can’t be in the group because you are not cool enough or you have the wrong trainers and so on. So I don’t like that aspect to it.” // David: “Yes, I think, it cause a lot of children to question themselves and they try and do things that are not natural to them to try and fit in. I think it is sad when your children feel excluded. I sometimes feel like there is one person, who acts older and tougher and unfortunately most of the other kids seem to fall in line. It always causes tears, because it creates divisions and like Sally said, some children feel that they can’t be like that, because they aren’t mature or old enough or can’t wear those things, or they feel like they don’t want to get in trouble, because they are basically nice kids… and they don’t want to upset people or are worried they might get hurt”.

[David: Male; Age 48 & Sally: Female; Age 43]

This ominous presence is also an anxiety for those proud of their property, but less capable of defending it. The physically frail or elderly worry about being their next victim. Members clubs are therefore valuable as they provide trusted institutions and affiliations which explicitly state the types of anti or social behaviours encouraged or not-tolerated; therefore providing a level of ontological security. Trust in site-owner’s rules, convictions and ability to enforce them becomes important. Many wardens do, however, seem proficient at enforcing rules and moving people on if necessary without too much trouble. In the worst cases having caravans positioned out-facing, means they could as a last resort be ejected with a tractor. Social-media forums are also helping to confer preferences and find good-sites or like-minded
people. They are also used to challenge or re-educate others\textsuperscript{[CA932-933]}. One of the attractions of rallies is they allow more self-governing behaviours, based upon a theme or shared cultural interest. Allowing children more freedom or enabling adults to indulge in the playful fun of their social peccadillos. Catching-up with old-acquaintances and absorbing newcomers into their way of thinking.

There are, however, other less obvious and unsettling political subtexts on commercial sites which stay guarded. For example, British caravans being right-hand-drive have entrance doors on opposing side to left-hand-drive European or German models. Some sites-owners therefore find them inconvenient, disrupting the sites preference for doors to be on opposite sides\textsuperscript{[CA934]}. Furthermore, some colloquially associate the German-manufacturer \textit{Hobby}, as popular with traveller-communities. Being heavier and sturdier for residing in. Some caravanner’s or site-owners controversially view them with suspicion. Being on the look-out for travellers and not wishing an invasion. Perceiving their needs as incongruent with the site’s commercial interests and the needs of tourists\textsuperscript{[CA935]}. Some caravanner’s also see \textit{Hobby}’s as undesirable, contentiously viewing them as vulnerable to theft.

“British doors are on one side and foreign, or at least German ones are on the other, so if they want the doors facing the same way, and they often do, then it can mean that they won’t accept a foreign caravan because it means pushing it with the tow bar the wrong way so it can’t be pulled out.. quickly. That is one of the reasons most people like British caravans, not just because they are lighter, but the German ones like Hobby’s tend to be a lot heavier, better built, but heavier, so it is difficult to tow and needs a bigger and more powerful car. There is also the aspect, though, that they are probably the best, the German ones, so they are the ones that get stolen the most. Having a really top caravan is risky because it means it could get stolen, and they tend to be the ones the gypsies look for because they live in them, or can get the best price for them. That is a big deal in the community because with sites they are also worried that you are not a caravaner, but a traveller. So I think you can lose a lot on resale, because although they are a better van, they can get targeted and so not many people want them”

[Nolene: Female; Age 58]

These sorts of views mean that while caravanning is a pleasurable contemporary past-time, there remains some sense that it has become stuck in the past. Sometimes perceived as an obsolete or nostalgic attachment.

\textbf{7.2.8 Image Problems?}

Although caravans are an entirely justifiable purchase for families who want the flexibility to spend more quality time away together, they do seem to irk some people. Many state it is their effect on roads or they are too bland, unglamorous, sedate or unrefined for their tastes\textsuperscript{[CA936-938]}. There is also a suspicion, however, that it is based on their colonising properties or an indirect association with travellers. Part of the dislike is the visual imposition they place on neighbours. One of the reasons local bye-laws or tenancy agreements sometimes prevent their storage on drives. Their dominance
meaning, they stand-out too much. An ugly aesthetic, or eyesore, if dirty and tired. Affecting the saleability and value of their neighbours main-home\(^{[\text{CA939-941}]}\).

“I don’t want to be in a caravan, I don’t like the image of it, I wouldn’t want one on my drive. I cringe when I see caravans on drives. I don’t like them. They very quickly start to look shabby and they kind of lower the tone, ha ha! I wouldn’t want to live next door to one. I wouldn’t subject someone living next door to me to mine. I just, I do think they are a bit naff”.

\[\text{Jess: Female; Age 44}\]

Caravanner’s, however, perceive them as harmless fun\(^{[\text{CA942}]}\), many having learned caravanning from their parents and therefore feel completely at home in the culture. Reflecting a need to protect and secure their families well-being through a stable and fun home\(^{[\text{CA943;944}]}\). Parents have more pressing needs and are focussed on securing nurturing environments for themselves and their children\(^{[\text{CA945-951}]}\).

“What do you think when you see someone with a caravan outside their house.” // Kalif: “I think they’re probably very nice people”. “... I don’t think they are showing off, they’re just doing something they enjoy, I mean obviously they might not be nice people, it’s just an assumption, a first impression or appearance. …… you look nicer, more humble, possibly down to earth. I do think that skateboarders in hoodies, don’t look very appealing, but can be viewed as a threat, compared to someone with a caravan on their drive, then I think it’s fairly obvious that it’s not as menacing”.

\[\text{Kalif: Male; Age 19}\]

“Do you or have you ever though that caravanning was cool?” // Frank: “No.” // Interviewer: “Has that mattered to you?” // Frank: “Not really, I mean we did it together, so it wasn’t like we were trying to impress anyone else. We were settled and we just wanted our kids to have a nice time, and we really valued being close to them and having lovely times, where they could be safe and happy.”

\[\text{Frank: Male; Age 61}\]

Newcomers wishing to share its pleasures, however, must overcome any trepidation caused by its image. TV-shows often joyfully exaggerate caravanner’s peculiar forms of domesticity for effect which can be cringe-worthy\(^{[\text{CA943}]}\). While being cool is still desirable, its practicality wanes with age and fading desire. Individuals are forced to be aspirational in terms of status\(^{[\text{CA946}]}\), or their image as a couple or homogenous family-unit, which reflects on their own worth. Otherness becoming more focussed towards other families or homes. A subjectivity alien to youth who are looking to make connections and not create boundaries. The domesticity of caravanning is not yet an identity they aspire to\(^{[\text{CA944;947}]}\). Associating it with their parent’s generation\(^{[\text{CA946}]}\), Tourer-caravanning is also financially problematic for the young as a car, main home and a drive are usually needed, and they have other priorities. This form of caravanning is also physically and emotionally difficult to practice alone or with friends. It would be culturally less acceptable for single-persons or group parties to disrupt family-oriented sites\(^{[\text{CA957}]}\). An odd presence for those parent’s hopeful of letting children run wild. If caravanning was cool it might therefore attract the wrong sorts of people and create mistrust\(^{[\text{CA945}]}\).
While caravanning could be broadened in appeal for parents and families, towing still is a fearsome barrier. Caravanning being arduous work is too much for many exhausted working parents, not being the break they desire, creating even more chores and clutter. Preferring to escape mundanity with status-symbols or glamorous-holidays.

7.2.9 Uniformity and Ontological Security

Caravan’s relative uniformity reflects towing characteristics and cost-control, but white or silver are also good high-visibility colours for day and night. Also reflecting heat in summers when caravans can get extremely hot inside. Rectangular or box shapes maximise floor and head-space while front-facing curves give good aerodynamic performance. Windows at the front provide lounge views, while the back is more private. There is also, however, a cultural need to not stand-out too much or fundamentally change the concept. Sparking superficial interest could also draw negative attention from site-owners or other caravanner’s. Signs of eccentricity or more radical motifs would also represent trouble. Uniformity is therefore a positive for building trust and higher-levels of shared ontological security. Signalling a desire to conform with the culture and its family values. Being too different or ostentatious risks suspicion, private criticism or even isolation. The set-up of the ‘car & caravan’, ‘caravan & awning’ or selected position on site give instead a degree of scope for expressing aesthetic sensibilities, personality or cultural expertise.
caravan internal-layouts have standard parameters some such as *Adria* can have some nuances or quirks to their layout. They are important for the caravan feeling right for the person or family, but can spark interest from passers who annoyingly look in through windows to investigate them.

The caravan’s condition demonstrates the family’s standards, particularly their cleanliness. Being mainly white highlights any signs of tardiness, making problems visible early in the process. Important to clean and repair before bigger problems develop. Personalisation can put buyers off. Unlikely to match their tastes or risking being out-of-fashion. Costs to rectify forming part of their budget, reducing the selling-price. Labelling external surfaces such as polymer windows or paintwork risks marks that are difficult to remove. Making them personal, however, can be pleasurable and a source of pride. They can be perceived as excesses of subjectivity, however, if too cute, parochial or make jokes that quickly age. Personalisation also endangers anonymity and therefore privacy. Risking being too memorable and creating ontological insecurity. It also risks the discomfort of copying. Turning up in precisely the same highly-personalised caravan or motor-home is akin to wearing the exact same dress at a party. Embarrassing and a form of self-parody.

Joanne: “It can be flattering for someone to copy you, but it can also be a bit awkward can’t it?” // Stephen: “Yeah, “ // Joanne: “Because we were on a camp site and somebody passed remarks on our graphics didn’t they, they were really impressed by them?” “And they came over and they wanted to know where we had got them from. He gave them the name of the graphics company, ‘laughs’, I wasn’t very happy about that”. “Yeah, I was worried he would copy us.” “You gave him the details… I wasn’t pleased about that..” // Stephen: “Yes, but to be fair, I did ….. he didn’t copy us, you know exactly, please I said, because you would have hated that. I sensed I would be in trouble…” // Joanne: “Yeah, it felt like he was cheating me, stealing, I didn’t want that because it felt like they were ours.” // Stephen: “Yeah, yeah, because once they are made they’re all just stick on graphics, so the hard part is designing them. Anyone can get them printed.” // Joanne: “Because to me it was a personal thing, it belonged to me because I had chosen it and he had helped design it. I felt a bit threatened”. “But I know there’s nothing worse than a woman turning up, going out in a frock dress with somebody else has the same colour or worse the same one”.

[Stephen: Male; Age 45 & Joanne: Female; Age 45]

Unwitting irony is also common in the odd brand name choices that permeate the industry. For instance, *Swift or Marauder*, despite caravans being anything but. While new radical concepts for caravans sometimes appear, they never gain traction, reflecting the functional, cultural and cost constraints described. A status-quo that may not progress until new, affordable technologies are able to revolutionise the practice while still obeying cultural rubrics.
Successful innovations tend to be restricted to space or energy saving cool or clever gadgets and mechanisms, which are only visible once inside.

“Those are the things that can have cool things inside them, the sort of miniaturisation that they have, the little space savers, you know, all the little gadgets, they are kind of cool, it just depends how you look at them, what you, how you frame your mind towards it. They aren’t obvious you only find them when you go inside and use them. I would say that those little knobs that push in on cupboards so you don’t catch yourself are cool. When you press them, they have that nice feel, give you a sort of satisfaction..... especially if they are different and well produced.”

[Jonathan: Male; Age 47]

Static-caravans can be a luxury if used for exciting or desirable recreational-pursuits or located in romantic wild-spots. They, however, tend to be expensive and require selling back to site-owners at term-end for peppercorn fees. Likely as they become monotonous once the local area has been fully explored or the caravan exhausted, although fondly remembered. Statics do not disrupt traffic, but often are populated with older users no longer wishing to tour, creating an ambiguous image. Some younger people feel being stationary makes them uncool.

7.2.10 Cool Vehicles?

Standard tourer caravans are not generally viewed as cool and still represent the main image of the industry. Some vehicles which operate on the periphery, however, sometimes are. For example, VW-camper vans or Airstream caravans despite not being the most popular choices both have distinct and eye-catching images. VW-camper vans were born out of austerity but are often considered a fun and unpretentious vehicle. They are no longer, however, considered a safe or practical drive. Slow and lacking important safety features such as airbags and compression-zones. While their simplicity made them easy to fix, obsolescence of parts now makes this precarious. Their edginess now therefore partly stems from their unsafeness and unreliability. They, however, also have a novelty and charm that can still turn heads. Few might want to own one, but sharing in their romantic history and associations with the youthful excitement of group camping adventures, hippy-trysts or surfing expeditions is desirable. For young people, their romantic image helps create an artistic, carefree or edgy identity. People like to comment and socialise around
them as their unique histories become talking-points\textsuperscript{[CA1003]}. VW-camper’s gestalt principles also allow personalisation without corrupting form or making them unrecognisable\textsuperscript{[CA1004,1005]}. Letting the eye take in the whole-form prior to noticing the individual details\textsuperscript{[CA1006]}. Exampled at rallies where no two will be the same\textsuperscript{[CA1007]}. Being fun, highly noticeable and edgy makes their owners proud, creating an eager sense of community in which drivers appear genuinely delighted to see each other. Acknowledged by their famous VW hand signal [closely resembling the surfer's shaka sign]\textsuperscript{[CA1008]}. Some caravanner’s have tried to replicate this sense of solidarity by promoting the Toot-Toot-Wave [TTW]. Most, however, puzzlingly report that no-one ever waves back. While the TTW might seem a little naff, some view it unsafe while towing or preposterous that simply because they own a caravan they would want to wave to others. It being something that camper-vans or motor-homers are more likely to do. While caravanner’s may appear a homogenous or friendly group, beyond their familial or friend-circles they do not appear to be as cohesive a culture. Airstream’s present a different problem as they are not popular in the UK, partly due to their vast-cost and immense-weight. They are feared more than loved, seen as impractical, uncompromising, ostentatious and excessively flashy.

VW-campers and Airstreams do, however, stoke wider interest to outsiders. Exampled by their use as vibrant and unusual food-stalls. Some caravanner’s, however, do not like them on site, being noisy due to their sliding doors [VW-Campers] or too different and considered ugly [Airstreams]\textsuperscript{[CA1009,1010]}. Despite being a small portion of the industry, they also are disproportionately highly represented in publications and magazines\textsuperscript{[CA1011]}. Being fabulous or cool sparks interest and admiration. Producing pleasure, interest and contemplation. It not meaning, however, there is an automatic desire to integrate it within their identity. “It’s a label more than anything… that’s cool... but I don’t necessarily want it” [Julian: Male; Age 44]. Personalisation, coolness or fabulousness also produce complex dilemmas towards theft. It could discourage thieves through being more noticeable and traceable, but also encourage them by their attractiveness\textsuperscript{[CA1012]}.

7.3 Summary

Caravanning practices reveal many behaviours that illustrate searches for ‘ontological security’ (Giddens, 1991). It demonstrating how routines seek to reduce anxiety, preserve community trust and secure familial intimacy (ibid). Caravanning, however, was once viewed as ‘trendy’, bohemian and exclusive. A free-spirited adult adventure which pushed social boundaries. Since being constrained by institutional-legislation and mass-production, however, changes have slowed and become more measured. Caravanning has been domesticated by UK legislation introduced to protect travelling communities\textsuperscript{[Sect:7.1.1]} and limit detrimental side-effects of caravan-tourism\textsuperscript{[Sect:7.1.5]}. Caravan’s requirement to be enclosed in safe caravan-parks, parked on drives or held
in storage, means these locations combined with their sluggish appearance on roads form the dominant image. Most caravan-sites tending to be in picturesque but benign environments. While the British countryside can be pleasant, it is less exciting than vast, lonely frontier backdrops that are associated with the USA, South-Africa or Australia. More sublime[Sec:2.3.6] landscapes which are imagined as accompanied by hazardous wildlife and weather. Other parts of Europe such as Scandinavia or the Alps are also viewed as more spectacular and concomitant with exciting activities. Caravans imagery can therefore be altered somewhat by where and how they are used. In the UK, tending to be envisaged as representing public displays of domestication and links with the past through their pastoral settings.

The beauty of caravans, however, is the great flexibility and freedom of choice they give. With children, other forms of holidays can be more constraining and stressful. They particularly disliking being cooped up or not having enough freedom to play. Caravan’s main touristic purpose is therefore dominated by the need to provide safe-holidays for families. Allowing more options to fill the difficult periods when children can get bored including school-holidays. Providing a welcome escape from the mundanity of home-life, while giving the ontological security and continuity of a home-from-home. Caravans though involve arduous work, particularly during the towing, set-up and clear-down phases. Towing is inherently unsafe, needing an ability to stay cool and remain in control. Those who break rules are therefore seen as foolish and detract from the image of other responsible caravanners. The occupation of complex tasks, however, also forms part of the break or distraction from problems. A form of flow or edgework[Sec:3.4.3] which involves intense preparation, organisation and vigilance. A type of recreation that contributes to the intimacy of domestic relationships, whose completion permits satisfaction and the relief of guiltless idling. They, however, relying on the avoidance of fateful encounters (Giddens, 1991).

Caravanning allows parents to relax and recharge somewhat freed from the exhaustion of parenting and its constant worries, offering scope for recuperation. Sociability with others helps share the burden and offers relief from spousal-relationships. The children gain-time for important social-lessons, while also enjoying creating wild and exciting adventures within a relatively safe environment. Experiencing cool things, while their parents feel relatively ontologically secure that this ecosystem increases the number of vigilant-eyes and puts off interlopers. To enjoy caravanning on-site, anxieties need to be tempered by trusting others share a concern towards the children's welfare. Odd behaviours can create alarm and mistrust. Sensing danger means children would need to be reined in, spoiling their enjoyment. If caravanning was cool it therefore might detract from the practice, by attracting individuals or groups with incongruent needs. Thereby creating unwanted levels of ontological insecurity. Camping offers similar benefits to caravanning but is more edgy. Lacking a viable or secure home illustrating
how energy-levels can be rapidly depleted and make such activities less sustainable for longer periods away. Some campers, however, feel caravanner’s have it too easy or use their superior-equipment to colonise spaces.

Subtle variances in routines helps bring the family closer together and ease rising tensions. The issue of chores, however is a divisive issue. Some parents are put-off by the extra load they imagine caravanning will represent for them. Caravanning needs the buy-in of both partners, so believing most chores will fall on a sole-individual can make it unattractive. Potentially adding to their drudge, which is the very-thing they are desperate to escape from. If one partner feels this strongly about caravanning, it is difficult to practice. Caravanning needs agreement, commitment and individual levels of autonomy. For parents whose personal-identity has become diffused, gender-neutral aesthetics help as they allow both to feel comfortable with the choice while respecting their sovereignty. This can also extend to not offending the children’s tastes or causing them peer-embarrassment. Caravans designs therefore need to placate tensions and variances within families while also fostering trust. Conformity is also vital for gaining the trust of site owners and other caravanners, signalling standards and motivations to caravan. It creates feelings of trepidation when deviating from these norms as even small-variances can create unwanted interest. Caravans and motor-homes risk being perceived as too tardy or pretentious. People are either too ‘stuck up’ or ‘chavish’, open and friendly, anxious and oppressive towards fun. Divisions which are remindful of a lingering British class-system. It stops caravanning being a homogenous culture and creates needs to colonise sites to gain an upper-hand. Engaging in defensive behaviours and looking to impose their value-systems through dominance. Caravanner’s love their caravans, but many are not as invested in them in terms of their personal identity. Not seeing themselves individually like other caravanner’s, but as a homogenous family who happen to love caravanning. This lack of community-bond being illustrated by the lack of interest or traction of the TTW. These domesticated site-contexts can make caravans less appealing for older teenagers or young-adults. Repulsed by the close proximity and excessive intimacy; focussed more on their free-mingling peer-sociality, but also lacking the finances, property, storage-space and vehicle necessary to participate independently if they so desired.

Caravans need to be affordable and lightweight, which can make them appear flimsy. Incongruent brand-names are common-place; ‘Marauder’, ‘Elite”, “Swift”, “Crusader”, “Supreme”, “Buccaneer; Clipper” therefore risk self-parody when applied to innocuous, trundling caravans. Heavier-duty models, however, also look cumbersome and a strain. The need for a sturdy, affordable and reliable tow-car typically restricts the family to a safe, bulky and middle of-the-road vehicle. Although new, radical or innovative concept models [generating luxurious or futuristic shapes] have appeared, they have failed to redefine caravanning. Manufacturers sticking to
traditional formats which consumers know and trust. Tourer-caravans still dominate the industry’s image and their towing physics, spatial constraints and functional needs do limit caravan design and create restrictive parameters. Innovations therefore tend to focus on nuances in layout, detailing, freeing up space, miniaturisation or advances in power-use and conservation. Cultural conformances pervade throughout the industry as they are vital to others acceptance and feelings of ontological security. While the image of caravanning is permeated by negative connotations contained within US media linking trailers to poverty, in the UK this most difficult question pertains to travellers. There is a fairly closed relationship between tourists and travellers, as travellers are often treated with mistrust. To some representing a form of otherness which must be repulsed. One irony, however, is some tourists see commercial sites as too limiting, liking the freedom of rallies, precisely the types of freedoms gypsy gatherings also generate. It is unclear how much of a connection the general public make between tourist and traveller-caravans. Many recreational users, however, are keen to keep their caravans clean and make them appear not too ‘lived-in’.

While other vehicles such as VW-campers are often more unique than caravans, they are usually a personal purchase. They feeling more belonging to the individual rather than to the family group. VW-campers and Airstreams can be stylish, but part of what makes them cooler is their edginess. Luxurious caravans like Airstreams, however, are too pretentious for many caravanner’s tastes. VW-campers links with austerity makes them a more guiltless drive and draws more positive attention. They, however, are not always popular in ownership terms. Although cool objects can spark pleasurable interest, they are not always practical. Unaffordable, or unable to match the family’s collective lifestyle needs.

7.4 Conclusion

This case-study has exploratively investigated and presented caravanning as an individual case-study, to draw out major themes which help the understanding of the complex phenomena of cool and its relationships with ontological security/insecurity. The thesis can therefore proceed to the Discussion (Chapter 8). Discursively pulling together the theory and findings from the case studies to offer further insights towards the phenomena of cool.
Figure 7.2: Collage; Caravanning Research Experiences
Chapter 8 – Discussion

This research thesis has offered an alternative approach to researching and understanding cool. This chapter now provides the opportunity to discuss the findings. It addresses the objective; ‘4) To consider these insecurities, towards the discourses of each of the case-studies, and how they affect consumer choices’. Answering the research questions set out in Chapter 1. The explorative nature of the case-studies has, however, unlocked further issues which also require discussion. Where relevant, I will work across the breadth of the entire thesis, compiling insights and discussing the general themes, highlighting points of similarity or contention with the literature.

8.1 Introduction

Disassembling cool in chapter’s 2 & 3, emphasised how the concept has been socially constructed. Its historical discourses exposing how cool arrived at its present meanings and how it is often assembled for contemporary consumers. The methodology set-out in Chapter 4, has also allowed a broad array of consumer viewpoints to be empirically-gathered. Generating a collection of pre-discursive and more rationalised perspectives towards cool. The three case-studies; skateboarding [Chapter 5], surfing [Chapter 6] and the anti-case caravanning [Chapter 7], have uncovered multifarious tensions and insecurities, while underscoring the heterogeneous nature and complexity of consumers. The notion of cool or coolness, appears a complex phenomenon. Some aspects being commonly understood, while others are highly circumstantial for consumers. Cool, however, also seems to capture some expression of their sociological drives, which evolves with their subjectivity or identity needs. It often, however, is subjugated by more pressing identity concerns, or manifold day-to-day problems.

The inherent characteristics of the case-studies has clearly affected the age range and locations of each’s internal-sampling. Revealing differences between younger/maturing skateboarders/surfers and older family-oriented caravanners. Juxtaposing also, urban-skateboarders with rural/coastal or small-town surfers, as well as largely suburban caravanners. The generalisability of any theoretical relationships discussed here, therefore, will always be contextually-bound to the unique subjective conditions faced by those individually sampled consumers. It does, however, also offer

82 i) ‘How do consumers perceive cool?’, ii) ‘How do they incorporate it into their identity?’, iii) What impact does it have on their lifestyles?’, iv) ‘How do prevalent discourses affect their perceptions?’, v) ‘How do ontological threats to their identity affect their behaviours?’, vi) ‘What do consumer’s narrative accounts reveal about the types of tensions they face?’, vii) ‘How do they affect their consumption choices?’, viii) ‘How do organisations create, maintain or even exploit the opportunities that ontological insecurity provides in these sorts of environments?’

83 ix) the meaning of cool in everyday settings; x) why individuals seek cool-identities; xi) the roles of localised and subcultural identity-politics in arbitrations of coolness; xii) how cool interacts with their shared insecurities based around communal identities; xiii) those areas found, where cool is not automatically desirable.
new, abstractive insights into the phenomena of cool and its role in their variegated subjectivities.

My interpretations, combined with in-depth studies of the types of practices uncovered in each of the case-studies, has helped me form and categorise some major themes which impact on our understandings of cool. To help explain these findings, I introduce a new theoretical model; [Figure 8.1: A Thematic Model of Cool]. It highlights four principal areas of interest; 1. Everyday Experiences of Cool; 2. Cool Communities; 3. The Threat of Cool; and 4. The Search for Ontological Security. In this model, cool is symbolically represented using the ancient Chinese symbol for ‘yin and yang’; a philosophical idea illustrating how opposite or conflicting forces often interact in complementary ways; giving rise to each other like night and day, while also having ethical dimensions (Latener & Leon, 2005).

![Figure 8.1: A Thematic Model of Cool](image)

The breadth and depth of the three case-studies have revealed a myriad of tensions around cool-experiences. When structured as varieties of discoursé and allied with the theoretical-lenses, they illustrate how autonomous on-site uses and more connected

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(Alvesson & Karreman, 2000)
accounts interrelate. Using the skateboarding case-study as an introductory example, will illustrate how the model connects these discourses and consumer’s identity-work:

(1) *Everyday Experiences of Cool* can be unexpected. Appearing as autonomous or distinct events. Nevertheless, they usually signify a need to notice threats. Proximity to danger, might produce shock-experience or the pleasure of the sublime; [i.e. the cool of watching a skater perform an awe-inspiring or death-defying feat, and its pleasurable aftermath of joy and relief]. More subtle disruptions which threaten identity, however, can also disturb an individual’s sense of ontological security; [i.e. a skateboarder observing tricks beyond their knowledge or skill levels, or a new board which advances the practice]. Pleasurably cool, if they offer some hope to expand the desirability of their own social-identity. Sometimes suddenly appearing as expansive, diverse or diversional forms of ‘utopian’ wish-images. Encompassing multifarious types of subjective meanings, connotations, symbolism or signification. Often experienced as embodied performances, forms of objectification, materialisation or materialism.

(2) *Membership of Cool Communities* can also help individuals grow. Building cultural-legitimacy and therefore enabling them to progress or enhance their identity. [For example, individuals tenaciously overcoming skateboarding’s numerous physical and social obstacles. Achieving mastery and an authentic identity via edgework]. Belonging to advanced, desirably-edgy or trending communities offers hope of satiating desires. Annulling sources of incompetency or shame. Individuals must, however, first master a community’s expert physical, cultural and social systems. Creating, curating or aligning themselves with the most desirable forms of the identity. Often involving complex practices or etiquettes; [i.e. holding a skateboard correctly, or using the latest skating-styles as markers of their expertise or cultural-knowledge]. Faith in each member’s commitment to the shared-identity, builds trust. Inspiring creative-agency and reciprocal collaborations; [i.e. sharing in trick-innovations advances shared-practices and therefore the shared-identity more rapidly]. Alignment with trending style trajectories and values is therefore critical, as becoming disconnected imperils identity within these communities. New generations will push constant-change, however, disrupting identities or power-structures. Meaning incumbents must adapt to protect their cultural-legitimacy and legacies.

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85 (Benjamin, 2008)  
86 (Burke, 1757)  
87 (Benjamin, 2008)  
88 (Giddens, 1991)
(3) **The Threat of Cool**[^89]. To be cool, or avoid being uncool, individuals must consider and navigate a range of looming ontological threats[^89]. The complexity and unintelligibility of self-subjectivity[^89] and shared-identity make this problematic. Individuals must discriminate between the relative desirability of alternative futures and their identity’s correspondence with them. ‘Identity-politics’[^89], therefore, come to the fore, where margins are discursively settled. Valued-traditions become tensioned with those characteristics perceived as undesirable/regressive, as well as their correspondence with the ability to secure future agency. These tensions or insecurities, however, are influenced by those unique stresses which inhabit a shared-identity. Meaning individuals who jeopardise the desirability of the communal-identity or the cohesiveness of the community, must be shamed or expelled. [For instance, skateboarders stigmatise/repulse regressive or childish practices, instead highlighting the importance of autonomy and risk-taking]. Some infiltrations or appropriations[^89], however, can have positive effects. [i.e. skateboarders also rely on appropriating symbols of mainstream power as a ‘fantasy of domination’[^90]].

(4) **The Quest for Ontological Security**[^89]. Exclusion from cool or trending communities creates ontological insecurity for those who feel left-behind. Jeopardising their ability to successfully ‘populate futures’[^89], which risks social-undesirability or isolation. It also portends a ‘loss of self’[^89], as needed changes will disrupt the continuity of their identity. Inhibiting their progression by imposing a need to realise new forms of moral-mastery[^90]. With age, they can become unsustainable; [for example, if a skateboarder’s practiced style becomes unfashionable, they must learn new techniques (which might prove impossible), to avoid appearing regressive]. They must also safeguard the relevance of their identity[^89]. Securing agency and well-being by sustaining a legacy which is desirable or revered from the perspective of later generation’s subjectivities.

The major points highlighted in the model will now be discussed in more detail. More comprehensive explanations of each of the four themes, are then provided in the succeeding sections of this chapter.

### 8.2 Synopsis: A Thematic Model of Cool

The three case-studies reveal that individuals are balancing a number of concerns, where cool is one part of that complexity. It also often relates, however, to their acceptance and hierarchical position within their chosen lifestyles. Therefore affecting the identities they wish to or are able to inhabit. This also being affected by any felt

[^89]: Giddens, 1991
[^90]: Giddens, 1991
incongruence with their chosen life-stage. These can manifest as localised concerns, but are also continuously balanced towards ontological threats that imperil their sense of identity. In contemporary, globalised contexts, individuals are unable to live their lives disengaged or solely in reference to their immediate localities or family-groups (Giddens, 1991). Identity, “‘self and ‘society’” being “interrelated in a global milieu”, which often creates frequent psychological crises (p. 32).

Facing a number of identity-threats or variegated forms of moral-crisis, nevertheless, are normal parts of the search for ontological security (Giddens, 1991). Part of the complexity, however, is that these disruptions can be instigated through a vast-diversity of forms. Including; imagery, media, others, cultures, natural and manufactured objects, or more counterfactual ontological threats. Ranging from fleeting moments of pleasurable-danger and its harmonisation, to their resulting in more profound forms of identity-work. Where disturbances to subjectivity represents objectification of fear, it might produce the shock or noticeability of the sublime, where harmonisation brings pleasurable relief (Burke, 1757). Cool, however, becomes more complex when fears are abstracted. Linked with unspecific anxiety or dread that is connected towards a fear of losing their future-agency (Kierkegaard, 1944). It can also represent wish images that unite the past and the future as utopian ideals which lay claim to eternity (Benjamin, 1999). A cool mastery in these senses, however, seems ‘the ability to think ahead and to counterfactually anticipate future possibilities’ (Giddens, 1991). Some individuals appear to feel a need to expose or subject themselves to forms of ontological insecurity. Sensing a requirement to alienate themselves, unite with forms of otherness or symbolise identity-transitions. Representing imagined desires or fantasies that disrupt themselves or others. Seeking greater ontological security by provoking or forming new types of relationships that securitise their future agency. Adaptively conforming with progressive, cool communities, seeking the ontological security that belonging to them affords.

Chosen life-stage has a significant impact on subjectivity towards coolness. This is most apparent in those still young who are seeking to break-free from the parental home, feeling ‘held-back’ as they reach maturity (Giddens, 1991). Emotional and social growth requires that they seek out greater challenges by taking risks, which is closely-tied to a need for personal-freedom (Moxnes, 1989). Lifestyles or subcultures such as skateboarding and surfing therefore provide environments where they can knowingly seek out disruption. Deliberately creating fateful encounters that thrill and disorder their ordinary routines, feelings of excessive dependency or domestication (Giddens, 1991). Searches for these personal freedoms, however, can also be constrained by familial-lineages, which is a source of ontological insecurity (Moxnes, 1989). Many individuals must therefore search for ontological security, by finding new meanings from the incongruities that inhibit the expansion of their identity (Breivik, 2007). This
forming of a congruent self-biography is an important source of ontological security as it frees-up later choices (Giddens, 1991). Being radical, might alienate their family or parts of their childhood, but also attracts as it showcases their autonomy (Adorno, 2013) and therefore their ability to colonise the future (Giddens, 1991). Individuals who are conforming with cool-subcultures, lifestyles or consumer-tribes, therefore, appear to be tensioning feelings of insecurity, incongruity, exclusivity, desirability or popularity towards their readings of relevant, purposive futures. Striving to feel they remain aligned with an identity that is typically perceived as desirable, or at least not undesirable. Able to freely participate in emerging social-contexts. Helping them create future ‘shared-histories’ with their emerging peer-groups (Giddens, 1991). Their constructed identities are subjectively adapted towards membership of multifarious forms of cool communities which are purposive to their identity. Coolness, therefore, becomes parleyed towards its distinct cultural meanings within them.

To gain entry and maintain tenure within these communities, individuals must seek the trust or ontological security of others in these groups. Ongoing legitimacy and acceptance relying on reflexive conformance with their traditions and adaptive norms, while resisting those historical or emerging forces seen as undesirable. For example, cool in each case-study context, clearly had its own complex language, lexicon of terminology, rituals, rites-of-passage and specialisations of practices. To be considered cool, they had to become so absorbed by participants, they became completely natural. “Routine control of the body” being “integral to the very nature both of agency and of being accepted (trusted) by others as competent” (Giddens, 1991, p. 57). These expert systems, however, were abstracted and “oriented towards continual internal improvement or effectiveness” (p. 31). Aligned towards the current trajectory of the purposiveness of the lifestyle, and perceptions towards the unique desirability of the shared-identity. If not familiar with these expert systems (ibid), individuals could never become fully integrated or part of the tribe (Cova, et al., 2012). For instance, skateboarders must master the latest skateboarding tricks, whereas surfers need to shape-boards or venture farther afield. Even caravanning, has intricacies which makes some caravanner’s cooler than others; their ability to understand the vast-array of technical-complexities and expert-practices needed to travel successfully, efficiently, sophisticatedly and therefore further. Overcoming these types of challenges can involve optimal flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) or edgework (Lyng, 1990). Their successful overpowering being felt as cool experiences. Mastery, in this sense, however, more indicates a successful morality in these cultures and the ability to efficaciously colonise their collectivised futures (Giddens, 1991). A key difference being, that skateboarders and surfers are often actively seeking fateful encounters, while caravanner’s usually wish to avoid them.
Communities that are disruptive, like skateboarding and to a lesser extent surfing therefore tend to be progressive, adept at communalising creative processes or resources. Appearing more visibly disruptive than lifestyles like caravanning, where changes are slower or barely noticeable. Any changes within each of these lifestyles, subcultures or the wider environment, however, create a variety of ontological threats for individuals and the traditions held within the subculture. They must respond, if they are to remain ontologically secure. If not, individuals’ risk-stagnation or becoming out-of-touch with the multifarious ontological threats that peer groups, consumer cultures or societies continuously impose on them. Losing cultural connections exposes their inability to intelligently and counterfactually realign themselves. Endangering the preservation of their desirability, popularity or peer-status. Balancing these multifarious, immediate or more remotely acting concerns requires constant reflexivity. Whereas Benjamin described the consummate dandy as needing the protection of continually aspiring to be sublime; living and sleeping “in front of the mirror” (1999, p. 429), those seeking coolness must now seek to perpetually refer themselves to a range of ‘ontological-mirrors’, while placing themselves under the ‘ontological-microscope’.

Cool, however, seems far more than visible; hedonistic, narcissistic self-absorption or narcissistic vulnerability, which imply a narrow level of consciousness. Instead requiring a profound and broader-consciousness towards the future and understandings of communities. The cool individual; must “not only” have “a developed self-understanding”, but be “able to harmonise present concerns and future projects with a psychological inheritance from the past” (Giddens, 1991, p. 180). “Narcissism” instead being “a preoccupation with the self which prevents the individual from establishing valid boundaries between self and external worlds”, “A constant search for self-identity”, “which remains frustrated”, as “an expression of narcissistic absorption rather than a realisable quest”. Standing “in opposition to the commitment required to sustain intimate relationships” (p. 170). Remaining narcissistic therefore prevents the fulfilment of ontological security and treats the body as “an instrument of sensual gratification, rather than relating sensuality to communication with others” (p. 170). Resisting intimacy (ibid) is simply not cool. Coolness within subcultures relies more on mutual-trust and creativity to produce mutual-benefits for core-members. Subcultures like skateboarding specifically seek to expose these narcissisms. The ‘posers’ who cannot be trusted to share the identity or its creative benefits.

To be cool, though, also requires a degree of individualisation to preserve interest in the gestalt. Being progressive therefore means presenting creative, individualised aesthetics that can disturb other member’s ontological security, but in ways that

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91 (Pountain & Robins, 2000)
92 (O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000)
inspires and attracts them. It, however, must also respect their autonomy and free-choice. Radical realignments, though, are sometimes needed to stay cutting-edge or relevant. Status-flips (Belk, et al., 2010) can necessarily disrupt the status-quo, direction of progress, hierarchies or identities that are endangered with obsolescence. Exposing those too invested in old, obsolete styles who compromise the shared-identity. Subversion, ridicule or irony not only creates ontological insecurity, but can signal the end of their epoch. The change placing a critical juncture on individuals who must decide whether they have the desire or energy to adapt. Some practices such as caravanning, however, rely on high levels of ontological security and can seek to repel these types of incursions. Cool or radical intrusions can break the crucial trust that is desired and essential for their continued enjoyment of the practice, disrupting their thinking, routines or protective cocoons which normally seek to ‘bracket-out’ danger (Giddens, 1991). Other needs than coolness can therefore take precedence.

Lifestyles, cultural identities and life-stages or even passing moods can affect feelings towards what is cool. For example, ontological security seems especially important to individuals as they get older (Freilich, et al., 2014) or as the caravanning case study reveals, have young families. Being less personally-invested in needing to ‘colonise the future’, instead means becoming more fearful of it (Giddens, 1991). Having more to lose and becoming preoccupied by anxieties at work, or towards their property, children or grandchildren. Ontological security is especially needed during these nurturing-stages. Establishing basic-levels of safety which are built-up through home-life, creating meanings and roots (Breivik, 2007). The case-studies reveal these life-stage transitions can introduce tensions, causing individuals to feel less congruent with a particular lifestyle, due to advancing age or other commitments.

Parts 1 to 4 of the model presented in Figure 8.1, are now covered in more depth in the following sections. Each addressing subgroups of the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, alongside the new areas of interest which emerged.

8.3 [1] Everyday Experiences of Cool

This section proposes insights to the following research questions and areas of interest; i) ‘how do consumers perceive cool?’; and ix) the meaning of cool in everyday settings. It deals with fleeting, micro-discourses and aesthetics of cool, often tied to similar phenomenological experiences. Providing insights, therefore, for how cool can be stimulated. Cool experiences often motivating disturbances to ontological security or harmonising them.

8.3.1 Cool Experiences (Disruptions to Ontological Security)

The case-study research has revealed that cool typically signifies; i) a subjective aesthetic judgement towards otherness; including nature, persons, populaces,
subcultures, consumption-objects or lifestyles; ii) a phenomenological state usually felt or pronounced immediately following a unique experience. Typically encompassing; iii) pleasurable surprise, shock or thrill of exciting new encounters; iv) the admiration/thrill of seeing others looking or performing impressive acts or feats; v) the spontaneous joy or delight in encountering novel products; vi) Immediate recall of an emotional high-point of a (consumption-)experience; vii) The joy of completing personally difficult or challenging activities, and the unique emotional feeling produced with their accomplishment; or viii) the relief and escape felt after overcoming painful tasks. In some subcultures like skateboarding, synonyms for cool such as ‘stoked’, ‘sick’, ‘dope’, ‘gnarly’ or ‘steez’, do not just prevent overuse of cool (Belk, et al., 2010) but also reflect a greater need to distinguish nuances of experience, when describing and relating them\[Sect:5.2.4\]. A form of *phatic-communion* built through *communitas*, where fluid-use signals their authenticity (Celsi, et al., 1993). Cool, however, presents a statement of subjectivity which gives it a peculiar awkwardness in some social-settings. For example, when used in first or second person contexts, being instead thought or imagined. It is more often used in the third person as either trivial or profound statements of approval towards objects, people, encounters or the invigorating states they induced.

Cool can therefore be applied to all kinds of consumption experiences, ranging from vicarious fantasies to more immersive physical encounters. Observing objects or performances which elevate or expand imagination or subjectivity can feel cool, even if they are abstractly distanced (including media). Cool might feel superficially pleasurable, but it never seems too far from pain or insecurity. Often fomented by anxiety, self-doubt or fears, and therefore felt as part joy and part relief. Ranging from subtle, fleeting or barely noticed everyday experiences, to more profound events. For example; the want of observing a cool new skateboard trick; the pain involved in its intense practice; and the intense relief, joy and pride when it is finally landed\[Sect:5.1.1;5.2.8\]. The excitement of cool therefore requires a flirtation with some form of physical, anthropological, social or cultural danger, edge-condition or boundary. Like skateboarding and surfing, other pursuits separately linked to cool such as acts of rebellion, hip-hop, reggae, motor-cycles, sports-cars, drug-use, graffiti or gambling\[Sect:3.4.3\], have all had some sense of dread, edgy-appeal or involved risk-taking.

Approaching challenges, seeking desirable objects or outcomes can be fraught. Charged with self-doubt and insecurity, and usually requiring a ‘leap of faith’\[Sect:2.3.7\]. A break-through beyond some contextual pain or threat which once seemed foreboding. Proximity to this danger for the self or identity creates excitement and anxiety, whether it is entering a new subculture, a progressive moment of growth, or buying a cool, edgy or novel item of clothing or hairstyle. Cool experiences are therefore usually preluded
by some form of anxiety or excitable state, but can be barely noticed or difficult to interpret. The extreme danger in practices such as skateboarding, however, reveals them more openly and opaquely. For example, skating a tough-neighbourhood, or a gnarly spot, or one with tight-security are typically the coolest experiences\textsuperscript{[Sect:5.2.4]}. Cool experiences, however, can come in the most unexpected forms. For example, the cool of the VW-Westfalia Campervan (The Story of Cool, 2018) is not just their edgy, cultural iconography and identity connotations, but as they are a fun and dangerous drive. Having a lack of safety features and being notoriously unreliable\textsuperscript{[Sect:7.1.7;7.2.10]}. Cool can also involve overcoming performance pressure or standing-out. Social experiences which are filled with anxiety towards other’s reactions or acceptance. The types of processes involved in wearing an item of edgy clothing or hat well, is often taken for granted. Practices like skateboarding or surfing, however, illustrate how such virtuosity demands intense practice and ‘reskilling’\textsuperscript{93}. To display things with impressive, natural mastery or artistry. Echoing the hidden-practice which is the underlying principle of sprezzatura\textsuperscript{[Sect:2.2.6]}. For skateboarders and surfers, this progressive practice is experienced as edgework (Lyng, 1990; 2016)\textsuperscript{[Sect:3.4.3]}. The need for survival instigates a level of absorption comparable to optimal flow-experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). A heightened state of fear which elevates themselves and their surroundings (Ford & Brown, 2006). Bringing pleasure, thrill and a forgetfulness towards other more abstracted anxieties\textsuperscript{[Sect:6.1.3]}. When complete, producing a stoked-high and relief of survival, mingled with an immense sense of accomplishment, which is highly addictive\textsuperscript{[Sect:5.2.1]}. Producing a cathartic sense of happiness and a feeling of cool [See Figure 8.2].

\textsuperscript{93} (Giddens, 1991)

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure_8_2.png}
\caption{The ‘Leap of Faith’ of Cool}
\end{figure}
This feeling of harmony, however, is short-lived as new challenges are required to achieve heightened levels of excitement once more. The by-product being growth in status, a sense of self-completion and that hoped for projected aura. Those who the task defeats, however, are often left feeling isolated or diminished. Individuals must therefore calculate the perceived merits of their actions and the effect on their desirability and popularity for others versus physical or social risks (Giddens, 1991). Creativity is risky as it is often driven by a fear of loss, but also requires a basic level of trust as things might go wrong (ibid). A person may instead decide to “take refuge in a traditional or pre-established style of life” (p. 189). Taking risks, however, is vital to create futures and then ‘colonise’ them (p. 114). “Fear produces the thrill, but it is fear that is redirected”, into a “form of mastery”, representing “the courage to be”, as well as demonstrating integrity (p. 133).

Performing edgy or dangerous tasks, however, is not enough to make someone cool, as image is also critical. For example, towing caravans is dangerous, involves skill and is usually felt as flow-experience, but is typically not perceived as cool. Drivers and their passengers are usually too on ‘edge’ and preoccupied to enjoy the experience. With cool, it is important to create the time and space to enjoy the encounter and socialise it[7.2.8,7.2.10]. What Giddens (1991) termed, the ability to be in control and establish that others have seen it; a part of the identity’s protective cocoon. To be cool, an attractive or desirable image must also be projected outwards as aura. Missing the opportunity to manage this image can lead to misperceptions by outsiders. For example caravanning being viewed as too safe, ambling or domesticated, means it is unlikely to be considered cool. While cool experiences do occur within caravanning, they are usually hidden or not strong enough to pervade beyond the dominant imagery of the lifestyle or practice. Caravanning more reflects a desire to colonise the past rather than the future. Its privations disrupting the “disembedding mechanisms” which free time and space from specific locations (p. 2). All practices, however, are subject to these sorts of tensions. Unimpressive looking or repetitive skateboarding in claustrophobic, overly domesticated, or childish skate-parks is not cool. Neither is surfing small-waves badly in dull or uninteresting conditions.

Skaters and surfers are also seeking to safeguard their identities through appearing exciting and desirable; often placed before physical safety (Giddens, 1991). Skateboarders therefore often discard safety items such as helmets or pads for the image benefits. Signalling they are unfazed by fear and have the autonomy to escape parental rules or domesticity. If they must be worn, often being adorned with edgy, dangerous, subversive or illicit symbols which ameliorate their aesthetics[6.2.3]. Helping deflect or distract inadequacies in their identities. Symbols used in skateboarding therefore often reflect themes such as commercial appropriation, death, defiance, courage, illicitness, irony and pain [Figure 8.3]. Indicating authenticity, but also mingled with a
tendency for individuals to self-imagine or self-fantasise being spectators in their own death (ibid).

8.3.2 Cool, Sublime Nature

Practices like skateboarding and surfing amplify danger and make it omnipresent. Moments of feeling cool are therefore felt in instances where pleasure confounds them. A negative form of gratification producing delight or joy. Previous sociological or consumer research studies which have investigated cool, however, have inexplicably failed to connect it with the aesthetic concept of the sublime [Sect:2.3.6]. While the sublime is a difficult, complicated and abstract theory, this means that this long-established treatise has not been directly utilised when discussing cool. The sublime is often thought to be the strongest of the passions and like cool is linked to survival. Principally due to a pervasive need to notice danger (Burke, 1757). Its sensation causing a momentary checking of the vital powers, producing excitement, pleasure or delight on
realisation the danger has passed or is too distant to harm (ibid). While any relationships between cool and the sublime are complex and culturally mediated, it is most conspicuous on the many empirical occasions cool is expressed by individuals encountering vast or powerful natural objects from safe-distances. Uttered as a wow of cool, communicating awe and astonishment. Agitating an excited pleasure in them through their subjective or culturally conveyed, degrees of exceptionality or menace. A broader search of social media reveals many instances where photographs or videos of; lightning; erupting volcanoes or flowing lava; large, formed breaking oceanic-waves; high, perilous, irregular mountains; even cool icebergs; or intriguing, autonomous wildlife, are tagged as cool!

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Figure 8.4: Examples of Sublime or Cool Nature

Surfing’s image is obviously connected to natural forces; palpably dangerous and requiring elevated levels of strength and fitness[6.1.4.6.1.1]. Meaning surfers powering their way through the fear and pain of big waves is a congruent image with the sublime; blending them with an impressive, exotic otherness that natural and powerful waves bring (Stranger, 2016). Cool advertising has often relied on this mythology of overcoming sublime wildernesses. Famously personified by the ‘Marlboro Man’. A powerful image only overcome by even edgier protest movements, directly confronting companies like Phillip Morris on their doorstep (The Story of Cool, 2018). Rebellions which seemed more immediately dangerous and exciting than the corporate advertising imagery that was being promoted.
8.3.3 The Sublime City

Skateboarders and other city-dwellers must cope without this exotic imagery and the irregular forces which nature brings, producing their own forms of pleasure, danger or illicit excitement to entertain themselves or attract other thrill-seekers\[\text{Sect:2.3.3}\]. Skaters find man-made objects to appropriate and make irregular, allowing them to appear as death-defying super-humans who ‘soar like eagles’\[\text{Sect:5.1.2}\]. Skateboarding therefore exaggerates the shock-experience of the city\[\text{Sect:5.2.4}\], through a switch in perspective. For example, street-furniture designed to make obstacles safe to traverse, such as handrails and steps, are reconfigured as dangerous. Taken for granted terrain, objects or spaces once ordinary, become gnarly, sketchy or cool. Overcoming them also makes the skater cool. In skateboarding, proximity with other skaters or non-skaters, can make entering spaces foreboding. Spots which possess graffiti can be cool and ominous, marking unruly colonisation by those who might be like-minded others. Destroying the value held in other’s assembled assets, traditions or values. The heterogeneous shocks and threats which metropolises expose individuals to, means learning to survive and being street-wise is an imperative. Looking and feeling at home in a variety of urban, public, work, social or night-life contexts.

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Figure 8.5a: A Cool Spot/The Sublime City
As discussed, skateboarding is highly unusual as it has a remarkable power to alter subjectivity. Remindful of how others see things entirely differently\textsuperscript{(Sect.5.2.2)}. Understanding cool from other's perspectives can lead to surprising finds. For example, skateboarders often describe public-objects manufactured from old skate-trucks or decks cool, if they are useful. Objects such as benches or light-fittings expand the idea of the practice. Overcoming a tension they often feel, as skateboarding is frequently perceived as useless or not worthwhile by outsiders. To highlight the generalisability of this point, changes in subjectivity are often experienced through the immersive and exciting fantasy of consumption experiences. For example, on-line gaming platforms such as \textit{Grand Theft Auto}. Where the gamer temporarily takes on an immersive alternative identity\textsuperscript{(TR013)}.
“Are there any games that you think are cool?” // “GTA” // “It’s edgy, it’s dangerous, a bit naughty, got well developed characters, and it’s got the open world format so it gives you freedom, it’s not restricted” // “I mean GTA is definitely cooler than Watchdogs. Watchdogs is like GTA, but not as bad, so it’s not as cool in comparison. But it’s not as good a game.” // “Lots of reasons. I mean Watchdogs 2 is going to be a lot better” // “The characters are just awful… I don’t care about the story basically. I just don’t like the character in any way.” // “Well, it’s all about this revenge story, with like someone has died, but you don’t see that, so you are just told about it, it just has no character to it… talks in this deep, fake voice. Has no charisma. He’s just a crap character basically”. “And the story is just going nowhere. It’s not fun, it’s not exciting… and the open world is just city, there’s nowhere else to just go, there’s no aircraft you can get into, so there’s, you’re just limited to cars and boats. And the police are broken, the AI for them is crap, because you get in a boat, they don’t follow you. The police don’t have a boat force.” “In GTA you get chased by the police… If you do something like a crime, yeah”. “I don’t know, it just feels, it’s like in watchdogs, if you press the LT button, then you get your gun out, then the police are on you so you have to get on a boat. Like in GTA, if that does happen, it’s not like all hell breaks loose, so if you do it by accident, it doesn’t ruin the fun… it’s fun to have the police on you, but only when you want them. Sometimes you just want to go somewhere and then you get them on you. And you have to divert and try and escape them,… if you want to take a car, then that’s your choice.” // “Imagine you are just going somewhere and there is something that you want to get and the police are suddenly on you for no reason. Like you’ve done absolutely nothing, it would be quite annoying because, it’s not like you have a past record or problem, it’s just, if you lose them you’ve lost them, they’re not going to come back.” // “It’s if you’ve got a car, then you can escape. You know, when you go the airport, when they are on you, you can fly away before they block the road.”

[Leroy: Male; Age 18]

### 8.3.4 Cool Fascination

While cool sometimes requires danger or an illicit quality, it can equally appear as obscure fascination or astonishment towards alien forms. Cool begins to enter the domain of non-specific fear or anxieties. Ulla Haselstein (2013) sociologically used Edgar Allen Poe’s (1840) poem, ‘The Man of the Crowd’, to illustrate how it represented “a chain of metaphoric substitutions” for “the meaning of the term “cool”” (p. 64)[Sect:2.3.3], but we could equally describe them as a combination of the sublime, anxiety or dread. Many art forms that have been linked with cool, similarly stage obscure or shadowy figures who foment fear and intrigue [i.e. Film Noir][Sect:2.4.5]. Small non-threatening objects can also surprise, captivate or have some exotic or cloaked quality. Reflected in the progressive and momentary thrill of experiencing the mysterious superiority of new, high-quality tech. A useful metaphor for this cryptic joy, surprise and fascination, occurred when tangentially discussing the relative coolness of bird-watching and seeing the magical-flight of a humming-bird for the first time.[Kierkegaard, 1944]

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94 (Kierkegaard, 1944)
“A golden eagle is way more cooler, they’re very majestic, their size, and the way that they are quite rare, a humming bird is interesting, but it’s not as OMG, I guess.. yes, golden eagles are more threatening, but the colours the mishmash of interesting and non-interesting, and that it’s a bird of prey, much cooler. I think very impressive, things are cool and little things are cool because they are interesting, or provoke thought, …… but it’s different.”

[Kalif: Male; age 19]

Skateboarders similarly astonish through their tricks, being too-fast for the eye. Fascinating and compelling further interest\[Sect:5.2.8]. Having some momentary *aura*, the power to resist intervention by the observer and free from their ideological control. Retaining some startling magical, detached authority over them (Benjamin, 2008). Such alien effects are also popular when producing cool aesthetics, one example being the use of fish-eye camera lenses in skateboarding\[Sect:5.1.2].

Figure 8.6: Fish-Eye Lens

Cool can also be produced by other means. For example, the use of intricate patterns, or the integration of alternative cultures can provide contrast, that shocks or overwhelms the senses (Berger, et al., 1972). Complicated patterns and details mesmerise and draw intrigue, by pulling-the-eye-in and producing astonishment or fascination [Figure 8.7].
Figure 8.7: Fascinating and Overwhelming Details: Cool

8.3.5 Conclusion

This section has provided important insights into; i) ‘how consumers perceive cool?’; and ix) the meaning of cool in everyday settings. Cool is produced fleetingly and often within the pleasures and multifarious dangers that occur haphazardly in everyday life. Coming from a need to notice danger or acting as disturbances to ontological security. Often contained in the symbolism of consumption objects or experiences. Cool often is the feeling that realises or overcomes them.

8.4 [2] Cool Communities

This section proposes answers to the following research questions; ii) ‘how (consumers) incorporate (cool) into their identity?’; iii) ‘what impact it has on their lifestyles?’; iv) ‘how prevalent discourses affect their perceptions?’; v) ‘how do ontological threats to their identity affect their behaviours?’; vi) ‘What do consumer’s narrative accounts reveal about the types of tensions they face?’; vii) ‘how do they affect their consumption choices?’; viii) ‘how organisations create, maintain or even exploit the opportunities that ontological insecurity provides in these sorts of environments?’. It provides mesa-level insights into consumers experiences of cool, particularly how they relate to systems and styles that form within peer communities. Those seeking to be part of cool communities are often seeking ontological security by conforming with expert, cultural systems. Skaters, surfers and caravanners are,
however, all also seeking the ontological security of peer-relationships, where trust is fundamental to their presence inside the subculture and their ability to operate effectively within it.

8.4.1 Progression of the Self

Undertaking precarious activities such as skateboarding or surfing, signals autonomy of spirit, which while physically jeopardising also seems desirable, attractive and exciting. Being exposed to danger or ontological threats, or undertaking new challenges can lead to personal growth (Breivik, 2007). Helping to develop more sophisticated nervous-systems. With greater exposure, these alien environments gradually become more normalised and natural. Travel from the safety of home bringing deliberate privations and pain/loneliness, which paradoxically makes individuals feel more desirable. Mastery of oneself bringing greater independence and confidence, while developing authentic individual style and personality. Urban-spaces and surf-zones are highly competitive, so a lack of comfort or expertise discloses the individual to potential problems or break-downs. Expanding capabilities and experience, however, makes them less affected and less of a target, appearing more expert, cosmopolitan and ontologically secure (Giddens, 1991). In skateboarding and surfing, fear and anxieties are managed through repetitive practice in a variety of challenging contexts. The edge (Lyng, 1990; 2016) can always be progressed or refocused, forming small advances which individually feel cool. If hidden, a sudden recognisable or astonishing progression will seem cool to others. Appearing as impressive, natural expansions, creating ontological insecurity for the observer, but also a desire to correspond with them. Particularly if more difficult or stylish than the observer can complete themselves.

The cool style allows greater awareness towards the surroundings, avoiding mistakes or problematic interactions, while indicating being at home in this strange environment. Travelling to new contexts is valuable as it increases the opportunity for accidental outcomes, which is part of the creative or learning process. Simplifying movements and backing off from the edge conserves valuable energy but also frees fresh resources to introduce formed styles, embellishments, new innovations or improvisations. The availability of extra energy, skill or creative resources signifies further progression or greater challenges are possible. Adding ambiguity towards the performers limits, which is slightly disturbing in competitive environments as the observer is opened to imagine further greater possibilities. For as Miles Davis revealed, the notes not played, create the suspense vital for the cool tempo. Cool adverts also offer consumers the possibility to fill in the gaps themselves, by sparkling their imagination towards more interesting possibilities (Frank, 1997).
Progressing through unavoidably daunting contexts, such as dropping-in on vertical-skateboard-ramps or waves on big-surf-days, however, requires full-blooded commitment\(^{[\text{Sect:5.2.8;6.1.4}]}\). Hot, fast and aggressive styles can help push the individual through the edge in these environments. Despite not signifying the traditional cool, easy style, they can, however, still look or feel awesome and cool. In the same context, the easy-cool style, however, indicates greater mastery providing the risk is authentic and there are no signs of affectation. A much more impressive feat, as the individual can perform the same task while appearing natural and well-within themselves. Reaching this stage takes even greater practice than performing aggressively and signifies a higher-level or rate of progression\(^{[\text{Sect:5.2.8}]}\). Possessing a strikingly formed beauty which easily and stylishly smooths over the danger. Highly compelling and pleasurable as it is graceful and ‘easy on the eye’\(^{[\text{Sect:5.1.2;6.1.1.2}]}\). Having a natural or noble quality which is free from affectation, critique or parody. The individual fleetingly feeling cool and more ontologically secure. Being cool requires energy, so strategies which maximise and economise it are therefore important. Extra-resources might be needed to monitor unfamiliar or dangerous surroundings, which depletes
energy more rapidly. These practices can therefore help form a cocoon or ‘home from home’ which stabilises levels of ontological security.

8.4.2 Style Limits

Achieving the much sought after and admired cool style, therefore indicates stylish mastery of context. An end limit of progression has been reached\[^{\text{Sect:5.2.7;5.2.8}}\]. One of the reasons minimalist styles can be cool is they appear exclusive and refined to a degree which seems unsurpassable; shocking due to their simplicity and audacity. A good recent example being the Tesla surfboard, described as the ‘World’s hottest surfboard’; “Asking price? A cool $1,500. Only 200 of the boards were slated for production and they sold out in hours” (Housman, 2018) [Figure 8.9]. For surfers, however, question-marks remain for how cool it is to ride?

Figure 8.9: The World’s Hottest Surfboard (Housman, 2018)

Although reaching an unsurpassable point can lead to classic forms of cool, further challenges are needed if stagnation is to be avoided. For activities like skateboarding and surfing to continue to be cool, endless varieties of new contexts and challenges are therefore needed to fire new progression and growth. In surfing, the unique vagaries of each wave and the unpredictability of natural forces mean conditions are never entirely predictable or the same\[^{\text{Sect:6.2.2}}\]. Skateboarding’s fixed objects and terrain, however,
compels the skater to constantly seek out new spots or things to appropriate. New, radical or aggressive styles might be required to disrupt blockages around context limits. Reenergising the practice if progress or interest falters. Retrograde steps are disliked, but old or forgotten styles can aid the creative process, if reformulated to help expand new movements. In practices like skateboarding, cool, radical and retro styles are therefore entwined resources for inventive progression. Progress is not linear, however, and tensioned by cultural constraints, often requiring reflexive reconfiguring or reskilling. Important innovations are sometimes rejected, if felt they disrupt the practice or its desirability. Only catching-on if shown to allow greater feats or challenges to be completed.

8.4.3 Generational Supercedence

While individual actions overcome boredom or personal stagnation, the emergence of new, pervasive radical-styles or fast-growing trends, can also signal the arrival of a new generational cohort. Breaking apart old-orders is vital for practices like skateboarding to survive and attract younger members. What is cool must therefore be defined by youth subjectivity and not the old-order. If out-moded, new, autonomous subjectivities must reject previous subcultural practices and their worn-out hierarchies. To keep pace with the changed environmental, social or cultural landscape, transformations are often needed to compete with other threats. These changes, however, cause disruption to the sense of continuity of identity (Giddens, 1991). Those invested in the old style become strangers in a world where they once felt at home. In performative cultures such as skateboarding and surfing, radical changes means those whose styles were habitually formed around older practices, struggle to adapt. Their personal style often being learned from their youth and is a sign of their temporality and cohort. Hindering them and causing regression and loss of status in this new context. Powerless as they seem outnumbered and no longer as impressive, relevant, popular, desirable, or appearing ridiculous through style incongruities. A fear of isolation due to being left behind, can mean those trends which grow faster can achieve predominance, by appearing cooler than even more dangerous forms of the practice. Individuals higher on the hierarchy can therefore come down hard on younger individuals or groups of groms. Their initial appearance on the scene is perceived as a threat and in future might jeopardise their status or spoil their fun. Old styles of boards, though, will no longer be socially or culturally accepted as they inhibit the contemporary style or context. Only of interest when offering some progressive use or having returned to their alien form. No longer as linked to previous generations who can use them effectively or compete socially. Objects remaining stable in key functional areas between generations, can therefore signal stability or points of agreement in some areas of the practice.
8.4.4 Materialisation of Style

The case-studies indicate that while outsiders' often view subcultural objects as aesthetic choices, practitioners are more interested in their perfected functional requisites. Distinctive styles of skateboarding and surfing have unique needs, due to the type of terrain and the fine-balances needed. Autonomy of design, artifice or free artistic expression, must therefore not inhibit the physical relationship between the board, body-movements and the environment, as they inhibit the practice[5.2.9-11]. Fresh styles will therefore be rejected if their features do not aid performance. Auxiliary items such as skate or surf-wear must also not inhibit the individual’s progression or repetitive enjoyment of the performance. The position of female surfers in the culture, offers a good example of how restrictive clothing guised as freedom undermines functional performance and therefore free progression. Wearing bikinis hinders the size and types of waves that can be realistically surfed. Female’s position in the subculture is regulated as a result, due to constraining the limits, challenges and contexts they are perceived capable of undertaking. Their imagined future progression is therefore repressed, impeding their ability to appear radical, autonomous or cool[6.2.4]. Core-objects which are unique and definitional to the subculture, must therefore embody the most desirable contemporary forms of the practice. Subcultural objects like skateboards, must also be finely tuned to avoid inferences that legitimise undesirable contiguous cultural practices or their stylistic cross-overs[5.2.9]. True skateboards are built around the ollie, but are also perfected for street, vert and flatground tricks. They must therefore avoid a gestalt or individual features, which evoke scooters or longboards, as they threaten the identity. Appearing either excessively childish, old or fearful of falling. Autonomy of design in the wrong context can therefore jeopardise perceived coolness of objects within subcultures; if departing from key functions, approaching, crossing or even making inferences towards tabooed cultural limits. Risking making the practice less recognisable or desirable to their key audiences [Figure 8.10].

Possession of these objects therefore signifies an individual's finely tuned levels of cultural knowledge. Progression within the subculture and its practices, shifts how object’s characteristics are perceived. More sophisticated understanding of their peculiarities, technologies and cultural practices alters boundaries of what is sensed or recognised as cool. Usually representing advancement and not regression. For example, brands appear less cool once the individual has progressed beyond their functional or cultural value.
8.4.5 Creative Trust: Community Values

Communal identity (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), can be progressed rapidly in subcultures such as skateboarding. Skateboarding’s rapid development of tricks, illustrates how creative movements rely on continually mutating, individualising and developing each other’s contributions. Sharing them back freely to allow others to progress them further[Sect:5.1.3], Community-based innovations which are reliant on trust. Allowing each member as an accepted insider, to enjoy the mutual benefits spontaneously and unreservedly. Coolness is partially about being part of these peer-communities, who share creativity and resources. If new forms of creativity such as skateboard-tricks take-hold or gain wider desirability, they can form artistic movements or trends inside the subculture. Their benefits, however, must remain associated with the communal identity. This relies on trusting other’s motivations; love of the practice, the shared-identity and the community. Minute signs of affectation could expose individuals as interlopers or posers. Those who are using the identity insincerely for their own vanity or social gains. It creates mistrust, a loss of respect and can lead to forms of isolation[Sect:5.2.8-12]. Subcultural trends can therefore fade not only if progression stalls, but if signs of affectation are apparent within them. Signifying identity benefits are capable of or are starting to be cultivated by outsiders. Individuals
no longer see much benefit in investing further energy or creativity in them, so interest falls. Outsiders are less likely to invest creatively in them as they are non-practitioners. Copying, rather than individualising these inventions in imaginative ways. Neither adding to them or giving back any fresh innovations to the originating community.

Copying exactly is socially unacceptable in such groups. An act of disrespect, destroying the unique attractive power of their personal aura. Reverence is desired, but facsimile opens them to potential ridicule. To insiders, the creativity of individualisation overcomes this problem. Protecting the image from outsiders, however, requires innovating, concealing practices or politicising identity. Personalisation helps maintain individual uniqueness, autonomy and conceptual distance which conserves their aura, while also safeguarding the gestalt of the subcultural lifestyle. The VW campervan, is another example of how individual creativity within a formed community, is crucial to the coolness of a consumer tribe, as no two vehicles are quite the same. They individually and collectively, however, still manage to respect the vehicles recognisable form and traditions and therefore the gestalt. The individualisation of shoes in the skateboarding brand Vans footwear ranges, also exhibits this quality. It preventing jeopardising personal-identities, without sacrificing the group-aesthetic.
Figure 8.11a: Individualisation and Shared Form – VW Camper Communities

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Dispersed subcultures, or consumer tribes, like skateboarding and VW campervan enthusiasts subsequently form deep bonds through pride in their mutual creativity. Their rarity meaning there is unbridled joy when encountering others who share the identity. Illustrated by the joyful reactions of VW-Camper drivers using the VW-hand-signal[Sect:7.2.10]. Surfers also use the shaka hand-signal, but it can seem more contrived; ‘indicating false performance or a lack of integrity’ (Giddens, 1991). Surfing can seem a more selfish pursuit as wave-resources are scarce and are protected.
8.4.6 Continuity, Longitudinal-Progression

Surfing can sometimes appear to progress more slowly in certain areas of innovation, as it is more bound by its traditions. Respecting certain traditions and retaining the practice in a recognisable form is important, as it preserves its legitimate value as a unique and revered category. “Tradition orders time in a manner which restricts the openness of counterfactual futures” (Giddens, 1991, p. 48). Retaining stable boundaries also excludes those practices persisting to represent undesirable threats towards the identity. Preserving legacies can create powerful iconographies, where subcultural traditions and feats are often aggrandised as part of their image or lore. “Where traditional modes of practice are dominant, the past inserts a wide band of ‘authenticated practice’ into the future” which can also include “moral elements” (p. 48). New generations will therefore respect and retain those aspects of practices like skateboarding and surfing, which they still see as desirable in contemporaneous contexts. Remaining culturally relevant and attractive to their identities. Pooled creativity can generate longitudinal progression, but gains are easily forgotten as growth is nonlinear. Footage reveals, however, how far each generation has advanced practices such as skateboarding and surfing. Each building on previous legacies in overcoming more difficult and dangerous obstacles. Using more complex tricks, spins and stylistic embellishments. For example, despite eulogising its historical icons, surfing has evolved to a point where terrifyingly large and fast waves can be ridden, dwarfing the temporally impressive feats of icons such as George Freeth, Duke Kahanamoku and Matt Kivlin [Figure 8.12].

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Figure 8.12: Longitudinal Progression, Legendary Status
8.4.7 Protecting Cool Legacies

Expanding space, can increase pleasure for all members of the community, by easing internal tensions and restrictions. Those who constrict the subculture, lifestyle or practice by engaging in excessively competitive behaviours, however, risk social exclusion and tend not to be viewed as cool. Part of being perceived as cool by younger generations is recognising the inevitability of the natural, cyclical order. Allowing youthful subjectivity, the time and space to adapt autonomously. Defensive or resistant behaviours aimed at retaining status will not work, as they restrict creativity and limit progression. Attempts to control or limit youth will be rebelled against, avoided or shunned. Having had an exciting youth oneself, should provide the comfort of having few regrets. Passing knowledge on and not seeking to compete directly with them in their social spheres, is more likely to gain their respect. It can mean taking on more philanthropic roles\textsuperscript{(Sect:5.1.7;6.2.5)}. Preserving legacy and remaining positively remembered is important, as it retains some influence towards new identities, created by each new cycle of youth through their subjectivity. Illustrated by the emergence of street-skating, which partly unified vert-skating and flatground into a higher-union\textsuperscript{(Sect:5.1.2-4)}. Albeit creating much controversy towards each’s relative legitimacy and influence in its emergence.

8.4.8 Conclusion

This section has provided important insights into; ii) ‘how (consumers) incorporate (cool) into their identity?’; iii) ‘what impact it has on their lifestyles?’; iv) ‘how prevalent discourses affect their perceptions?’; v) ‘how do ontological threats to their identity affect their behaviours?’; vi) ‘What do consumer’s narrative accounts reveal about the types of tensions they face?’; vii) ‘how do they affect their consumption choices?’; viii) ‘how organisations create, maintain or even exploit the opportunities that ontological insecurity provides in these sorts of environments?’. Cool moments are often progressive events which when considered together create bigger changes and growth. The cool style is important as it signifies stages of mastery. More disruptive and radical aesthetics, however, are sometimes needed to break through barriers to growth. Cool is also strongly influenced by cultural-memberships and how they can help advance identity. This acts beyond the gestalt they project, however, as it affects relationships to how traditions and legacies are perceived and their expected trajectory. Either complementing the identity or restricting its advancement, therefore becoming contested. Tradition and counterfactual futures become locked in a tension. Subcultural members appear to be seeking moral accomplishment within them, while signalling their ability to ‘colonise’ the identity or its shared futures, while holding true to its most valued traditions (Giddens, 1991). Warren & Campbell’s (2014) finding that autonomy from the mainstream is a most important trait of cool is shown to be too simple a model. Even when applied to countercultural subcultures such as skateboarding. Coolness is
as bounded by the mores and confines of the culture (Danesi, 1994; O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000). Objects or styles which are autonomous but negatively affect functionality, performance or permit undesirable cross-overs are not perceived as cool. Cool is also culturally mediated by etiquettes which must supersede autonomous behaviours in the interests of social cohesion. An example being how surfing a dangerous wave stylishly is not cool, if involving dropping-in on another surfer’s wave. The subjectivity of outsiders might miss this point, not understanding the importance of waiting for turns, to the cohesiveness of (and levels of trust) within ‘cooler’, surfing communities.

8.5 [3] The Threat of Cool

This section proposes insights and answers to the following research questions and areas of interest; vi) ‘What do consumer’s narrative accounts reveal about the types of tensions they face?’; xi) the roles of localised and subcultural identity-politics in arbitrations of coolness; xii) how cool interacts with their shared insecurities based around communal identities. Demonstrating higher cultural-consciousness or a more progressive subjectivity through art, can make individuals and their communal-identities [or shared-archetypes] appear more desirable\(^{(\text{Sect:2.4.7})}\). This, combined with the athletic-prowess which impressive skateboarding or surfing requires and signifies, can form a potent combination\(^{(\text{Sect:5.1.2})}\). Even in these contexts, however, insecurities towards identity exist. To remain cool, individuals must reflexively adapt towards threats to their ontological security, that their continued status within these peer-groups provides.

8.5.1 An ‘Iceberg of Cool’

A pinnacle of cool, might be to appear desirable from all subjective perspectives, i.e. including gender and ethnicity\(^{(\text{Sect:2.4.10})}\). Akin to a mountain or iceberg which looks equally impressive from every viewpoint. This allegory could be diversified or substituted into various forms of cool experiences or encounters. For example, initially beholding the latest and most impressive version of an iPhone, a strikingly cool person, or the more muddled experience of the unexpected, menacing approach of a skateboarder\(^{(\text{Sect:5.1.2})}\). Not possessing or being associated with desirable objects, attributes, characteristics or communal-identities, however, can create feelings of insecurity or lacking. For example, a surfer with a new, highly-desirable surfboard, provides a feeling of shock at potential subordination. Cool is therefore fraught with insecurities (Klein, 2000/2010). Pountain & Robins (2000), envisage it being a product of personal narcissism, while O’Donnell & Wardlow (2000) theorise its source as a discrepancy between ideal and actual-selves; mostly felt in adolescence and involving narcissistic vulnerability (Bleiberg, 1988). Connor’s (1995) view of it being a coping mechanism necessary for persisting in difficult environments, however, seems more
aligned to avoiding shame in the self. These lines are blurred, but cool does seem riddled with self-doubts, insecurities and anxieties. Giddens’ concepts however, demonstrate how they can also act towards ontological insecurities based on ‘personal-biographies, shared-identities, looming futures and their heterogeneous counterfactual possibilities’ (Giddens, 1991). Remaining cool, seems to require ‘broader-levels of consciousness than introspective narcissisms’ (ibid). As discussed in section 8.4, cool also submerges practice. ‘Natural’ mastery, when combined with a cool, nonchalant pose, plays on other’s insecurities, where a lack of interest rejects their desirability. For a narcissist, this could instigate feelings of lacking. A dread of being unremarkable, ordinary, indistinguishable and unmemorable.[Sect:6.2.3] While the allure of cool may appear as a menacing apparition, its presence also indicates a need to alter course to avoid looming ontological threats.

Jack London’s evocative accounts at being awestruck by Duke Kahanamoku’s surfing, illustrate this point. It provoked and inspired him, by eliciting a dread of being superseded[Sect:6.1.1]. Attracting his interest and the acceptance of a need to change in order to secure and expand his ‘future-agency’ (Giddens, 1991). Rising to such challenges creates the hope of mutual-respect and greater unity-of-spirit, but also risks subservience. Acquiescing to a higher-union, also holds the potential to compromise agency or repress subjectivity (Hall, 2004; Mansfield, 2000). Particularly when such change is incongruent with identity; where actions of equal-empathetic-depth, may instead be required (Bleiberg, 1988; 1994; Mollon, 1986).

Figure 8.13 [An Iceberg of Cool], illustrates how individuals must consider a variety of threats to their identity. Including the astonishing appearance of others, aspects of themselves, shared-identity or any looming ontological danger. While their spectres might seem strangely alluring or inspire awe, individuals must also consider the threat they pose. To protect themselves, they may need to face or submit to the threat the ‘iceberg’ presents. Foreseeing it as an opportunity to shore-up their identity, thereby securing agency and avoiding becoming undesirable. Grasping these intricacies can be aided by forms of double-subjectivity; a term coined by W.E.B. Du Bois (1989). Explaining the ability to perceive self-image from other’s perspectives, forged through painful alienation. Requiring intense-strength to bind subjectivity (ibid) and resist fragmentation of the self (Giddens, 1991). Compelling anticipation of hidden fears, anxieties, insecurities and incongruities that reside within the self and other’s identities. Thereby constructing a self-image or identity which veils weaknesses and overcomes internal pain, while fooling or fragmenting ‘the other’ instead.
This model can be illustrated through a case-study example; i.e. surfing lifestyles can parade individuality and involve awe-inspiring feats, but also produce identity-tensions. Overcoming the obvious physical-hazards will not be enough to produce a desirably cool identity. Individuals must also navigate those threats arising from their bearing on other’s perceived subjectivity. [For example, observing etiquette avoids the disgust of other surfers and hence potential isolation]. A surfing lifestyle could also appear privileged. Where colonisations damage pristine-nature, native-cultures or appropriate the enduring Hawaiian surfing ethos. Surfer’s must therefore avoid these incongruities by; simplifying their lifestyles, showing concern towards natural-environments, acquiescing to local-cultures, or paying homage to the customs they are appropriating. An individual’s ability to form a congruent identity in the face of these threats, may prove impossibly complex and instead involve ‘bracketing them out’\textsuperscript{95}. A failure to notice or address these threats, however, risks individuals to derision. Particularly by those identifying with or occupying surfing’s most legitimate cultural-traditions, or outsiders troubled by their negative-impact, their pretentiousness or obsequious hypocrisy.

\textsuperscript{95} (Giddens, 1991)
8.5.2 Variances in Self-Subjectivity

Cool means concealing or suppressing complex emotions which act individually and pluraly. They can therefore be difficult to interpret. Often being taken for granted, guarded or redirected. Relating to temporal, environmental contexts, moods and how the presence of various communal-identities interact. Consumer’s identities are now seen as multifarious and complicated by various cultural allegiances, which may be driving paradoxical behaviours and are difficult to interpret. How they might interrelate and mediate boundaries of the self, their fears, anxieties, desires, or pleasure therefore affects perceptions of coolness. It therefore remains unclear how such subjects form an aura around other individuals or various forms of consumption objects. Perceptions of coolness, however, are also interceded by how individuals perceive themselves. A difficulty they face is seeing their own image, identity or aura. While making judgements towards others should be an easier task, it becomes complicated, when required to consider characteristics they feel they share

Anxiety can also “threaten awareness of self-identity” (Giddens, 1991, p. 45). This can lead to a nagging mistrust or self-doubt which can be difficult to precisely locate. Those sensing they “may lack a consistent feeling of biographical continuity” (p. 53), feel “morally ‘empty’”, shameful or lacking “the warmth of a loving self-regard”, subjecting themselves “to constant scrutiny” (p. 54) and are often ontologically insecure (ibid). As some examples; ‘soul-surfer’ ideals look incongruent when superimposed with other’s projections of surfers as leading frivolous or privileged lives. Lacking the kinship networks that exist in grassroot, proletarian lives (ibid). An immoral decadence when contrasted with poor cultural or economic surroundings they colonise, contributing to the destruction of hitherto pristine natural environments. This is too awkward a thought for many to contemplate rationally. These felt, but not well understood insecurities, can lead to paradoxical or deflecting behaviours that ‘bracket-out’ these threats to identity (ibid). Too vague to prevent them expressing their highly-prized hedonistic pleasure and freedom. An interest in ecology or faith in routines and rituals, therefore can help individuals feel more at home in these environments. At one with nature and the ocean or seeking the good-will of those native cultures they temporarily inhabit. Representing however, the generation of a ‘false self’, an undesirable form of identity which “expresses existential anxieties impinging directly upon self-identity” (p. 59). Another example, being skateboarder’s desired image of freedom often being an experience of confinement. Sparking reactionary behaviours. Lacking glamour and being associated with poverty of resources or space, combined with the frustrating impossibility of breaking completely free from its childish image. Driving a need to express themselves through greater autonomy or radical behaviours. Also generating antipathy towards those individuals, practices or objects which manifest their identity concerns or exaggerate their insecurities.
8.5.3 Appropriation

Those achieving biographical integrity without shame and are able to communicate it, reduce threats to their identity and its integrity, thereby feeling more natural and ontologically secure (Giddens, 1991). Insecurities based on powerlessness are therefore linked to appropriation, which often accompanies a fear of engulfment (ibid). Appropriation provides postures of ontological security, becoming a fantasy of dominance (ibid). For example, the types of spatial-poverty or lack of agency that skateboarders can identify with, leads to oppositional behaviours or identity contests with outsiders. Producing a pleasure in reconfiguring symbols of power, property or wealth that represent otherness. Creatively altering how they are relationally viewed [see Figures 8.14a & 8.14b]. Appropriating symbols of wealth or mainstream authority, is therefore dangerously cool as it creates a visually arresting image that provokes ontological insecurity for outsiders, while also disrupting their sense of future agency. Presenting, in subversive or representational form, a fantasy of domination (Giddens, 1991).

Figure 8.14a: Leticia Bufoni (True Skateboarding, 2017)
Being edgy or associating with the latest forms of exciting, urban street-cultures, fashion and street-art, means skateboarding can appear street-wise, desirable, creative, exciting, meaningful, assertive, passionate, cohesive and progressive. Legitimately associating with these dispersed, but strongly-bonded identities that have high-levels of affinity is highly valuable. For example, skateboarding communities need the back-up of mutual-security to operate in hostile or alien environments, where they are perceived as instigators of trouble\[Sect:5.1.6\]. Their zealous tight-unions form a menacing ontological presence for outsiders\[Sect:5.1.1\]. Their accelerated creative processes founded on mutual-trust, helps progress their identities rapidly and often in unexpected ways\[Sect:8.4\]. This can be threatening to more stifled outsiders. Feeling disconnected beyond their small family-units or friend-groups\[Sect:7.2.7-8\]. Reacting to audacious appropriation of their property risks exposing irate mainstreamers as isolated, joyless neurotics who are opposed to fun. Partly, informing Fitchett, et al.’s (2014) query for why larger mainstream groups often struggle to resist incursions when threatened.

Subversive or ambiguous forms of aggression, however, are often needed, as being too direct risks open conflict. “Potential spirals of anxiety and hostility are avoided”, by partially “taking over of traits or patterns of behaviour of the other which are relevant to the resolution or diminishing of anxiety-creating patterns”. “Mechanisms of projection” are involved, and is “fundamentally a defensive reaction to potential anxiety” (Giddens, 1991, p. 46). Individuals or subcultural members such as
skateboarders might wish to generate insecurity in outsiders, but do not wish to instigate concerted mainstream attacks which may frustrate or limit their further progress\footnote{Sect:5.1.1}. Subcultures like skateboarding rely on mainstream audiences for their cool-esteem and financial-resources, which they must liberate. Cool therefore requires forging a level of alliance for survival\footnote{Sect:3.2.2;3.4.2}. These relationships must, however, respect their autonomy and be non-constraining as members of subcultures do not wish to lose their elusive appeal. To remain cool, the support of their core subcultural communities must be conserved. Risking being perceived as a sell-out, however, endangers their identity by not appearing to have the best interests of the shared-identity at heart\footnote{Sect:5.1.7}. It only legitimate to flirt with the mainstream, if they are capable of proving they remain true to the subculture’s values and its politicised agendas; usually by sharing some of their gains back within the community.

In contrast, mainstream appropriation of subcultures like skateboarding, often fails to impress by seeming like a defensive response. Lacking an edge, or employing unsophisticated cultural knowledge. Unable to utilise subversive creativity or irony due to a biographical shame in the self. Desirable non-skaters wearing skate-brands in ways that do not infer they are a skater can be flattering, as they are merely signalling that they are ‘skate-friendly’. Indicating the practice remains desirable, providing it represents obsequiousness towards the subculture. Wearing products core to the subculture, however, activates fears of identity encroachment. Offending, devaluing or challenging its exclusivity. Core skateboard brands like \textit{Thrasher} must therefore only be worn by true-skateboarders, who have shared the pain and therefore deserve the identity rewards\footnote{Sect:5.2.12}.

### 8.5.4 Idiosyncratic Identity-politics

Individuals are not always free to enjoy identities unrestricted, due to historical tensions which pervade and are peculiar to each subculture. For example, Hawaiian claims their surf-culture was stolen, still resonates and creates incongruities for other identities that are associated with its subordination. Authentic lineages which are held by skateboarding brands like \textit{Vans}, can therefore be highly-valued, affording a guiltless or shame-free legitimacy and some free-agency\footnote{Sect:5.1.1}. Legacies being critical to the validity of claims towards infinite future possibilities (Benjamin, 2008). Cool compels imagining boundless future possibilities, so false limits\footnote{Sect:8.4.1} or a lack legitimacy can therefore present obstructions. Making certain characteristics peripheral or forbidden inside the culture\footnote{Sect:5.1.5}. For example, a lack of historical female icons in skateboarding and surfing delegitimises and trivialises their identity within them\footnote{Sect:5.1.5;6.2.4}. Claiming cultural-lineage and ownership of inventions, genres or styles, can therefore afford greater autonomy to explore the identity with fewer restrictions. Accusations of cultural-appropriation also limits creativity, places boundaries around identity and prohibits free-access to cultural resources. Having
tenure in subcultures like surfing is therefore important, as offspring can learn and grow from an early age, socialising its traditions and practices\footnote{Sect:6.2.1}. Allowing them unimpeded progress and the formation of natural and authentic, innate styles. Highly valued if the edgy image of the subculture is attractive and desirable to outsiders. Accepted outsiders may feel cooler, but it as a subservient imposition, where privileges can always be withdrawn. The mobility and flexibility that commodification and commercial practices provide, however, can make the culture difficult to protect. The market legitimising a degree of access to cultural and physical resources, which can tempt insiders to cash-in\footnote{Sect:6.2.2}.

### 8.5.5 Conclusion

This section has provided important insights into; vi) ‘What do consumer’s narrative accounts reveal about the types of tensions they face?’; xi) the roles of localised and subcultural identity-politics in arbitrations of coolness; xii) how cool interacts with their shared insecurities based around communal identities. Cool is steeped with personal and shared-insecurities, but their multifarious nature makes them complicated and difficult to interpret. If the individual’s identity is excessively threatened, things can be rejected (Anik et al., 2017). Part of the genius of cool is therefore balancing these tensions. Ethical questions are raised by the idea that marketers should tap-into insecurities to use the power and inducement of cool. Not only is this potentially damaging individually, but could instigate tensions between communities. It is therefore important that these sorts of practices are further understood so they can be scrutinised and any concerns highlighted. For example, O’Donnell & Wardlow (2000), recommended marketer’s look at the sources of pain and turmoil in teens, as drivers of cool. Particularly how they help them overcome narcissistic vulnerability. While insightful, and in some cases could be helpful to them, it also raises a potential danger if used to sell products that seem cool to them, but are somehow detrimental (The Story of Cool, 2018). Marketers using the cool effect simply to draw attention without consideration of the long-term effects is a concern. Researching contexts like skateboarding, surfing and caravanning, reveals how even for adults, such anxieties or insecurities are complex. The positive, however, is that cool seems to require greater and farther-reaching consciousness. If attempts to sell cool are to be successful in the longer term, community cohesion, moral accomplishment and philanthropy are also needed.

### 8.6 [4] The Search for Ontological Security

This section proposes insights into the following areas of interest; x) why individuals seek cool-identities; and xiii) those areas found, where cool is not automatically desirable. Part of the puzzle of cool is why individuals often desire what they fear? Often appearing more manifest at certain life-stages such as adolescence (Danesi, 1994;
O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000; Milner Jr, 2004). I could also personally speculate that these incongruities might reappear during mid-life crises. Breivik (2007) offered the possibility that risk-taking around youth-stages is due to a need for social and emotional growth. Coinciding with a time when there is the strongest need to be cool (Bird & Tapp, 2008; Danesi, 1994; Dar-Nimrod, et al., 2012; Klein, 2000/2010; Milner Jr, 2004; O’Donnell & Wardlow, 2000; Solomon, 2003; Thurlow, 2002; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). This section therefore connects cool with a search for ontological security, although it is often expressed inversely within different life-stages.

8.6.1 Populating the Future

Things that are beyond an individual’s perception or some feared boundary of their identity, often represent a form of otherness which cannot be rationalisably controlled. Kierkegaard (2013), however, offered the possibility that succumbing to them could be pleasurable if they offer hope[Sec:2.3.7]. A higher-unity which forecloses hereditary-sin, while preserving their legacy (Hegel, 1977; McDonald, 2017). A hope towards non-violent equal-status, which can become a focus for change (Kierkegaard, 2013). Securing future status, agency and desirability, therefore requires a leap of faith.

Compound with anxiety as they must leave behind some aspects of their old identity. Risking the isolation of becoming an outsider, by taking on new or alien-identity tensions and conflicts, that could equally mean they become less popular or desirable[Sec:5.1.2]. Youth needs to overcome boredom and grow, as risk taking is important for colonising the future[Sec:3.5]. Therefore, taking pleasure in flirting with these tensions, as for them fun and danger are linked[Sec:5.1.2]. Legitimate danger is thrillingly attractive, as it creates an image of a person capable of fulfilling their desires and worthy of others having relationships with. Thereby, securitising their own desirability and future agency outside of the home. A process, however, which is fraught with anxieties towards their felt and given identities. If feeling held back by their familial lineages (Moxnes, 1989)[Sec:7.1.6], there may be a need to secure greater freedoms towards their identity. Finding ontological security from new meanings, that are held somewhere within the incongruities that inhabit but also inhibit their identities (Breivik, 2007). Cool things therefore help build new identities that go beyond hereditary. Crucial for peer-survival but can also mean unravelling ties with parent-cultures. Breaking trust between the past, present and future, however, creates shock and disrupts a person’s learned ontological security, which they have grown with since early childhood[Sec:3.5]. Parents might come to represent constriction of their futures, or manifestations of their hereditary undesirability and therefore seem uncool. Being peer-popular appears to be more important than being cool, but cool seems a good-guide for attaining broader-popularity in these stages[Sec:5.2.12].
8.6.2 Loss of Self

Cool is unusual as it seems a form of alternative status (Belk, et al., 2010) that is desirable for most forms of youth, whether they are from wealthy or deprived backgrounds. Wealthy upbringings or privilege can make individuals feel they lack angst, feeling less contradictory, creative, interesting or be a source of shame. An inadequacy that creates a desire for a harder, more authentic urban-image. Living outside of cities or suburbs can also mean fearing being out of touch with other youth-cultures or missing-out on exciting opportunities.

While cities offer excitement, experiences can be fraught, as cultures perceived as embodying cool have often been victims of injustice, social or economic deprivation. Those well-practiced in inhabiting them, however, feel naturally composed and safer in their own habitat, which for interlopers feels menacing. A heightened or exciting experience Individuals, however, might engage in avoidance if feeling too threatened. Instead achieving a level of coolness through the knowledge towards and consumption of goods displayed within their own more rural or suburban peer-environments, playing on the subjectivity of peers. Owning expensive and desirable items might be cool, but leading hedonistic or privileged lifestyles produces insecurity if juxtaposed with poverty. Discomforting due to the tensions of having a critiqueable identity or fearing being relieved of assets. For example, wearing a Rolex watch or driving an expensive sports-car can have big social benefits, but also attracts greater possibilities of being targeted for theft. To be cool, individuals must therefore be assured and ontologically secure of personally warding off these threats. Objects must signify their social-mobility.

Desiring greater ontological popularity and ontological desirability can heighten tensions if it means taking on an illicitness or attracting unwanted attention. Cool’s dialectic, is that owning luxury-items can invite scorn or shame. A lack of wealth, opportunities, status and their advertisement of desirability, however, also taunts those less-advantaged (McGuigan, 2016). Desiring cornucopia to escape life’s injustices and frustrations. Directly copying the culture of wealthy oppressors, however, would lose the respect of their communities. Appropriating symbols of power or wealth as acts of

“If I saw a 50 year old man get out of a Lamborghini, then I wouldn’t think that person was cool... because age is a massive factor in these things, if they were 30 then yes, because you can see how they’ve., it depends because it’s not cool if the person has got the money from their family, or their parents, but if they’ve earned it themselves and they’ve saved enough to buy it themselves then that’s well, incredibly cool... if they were 40, they could still possibly be cool, but the younger the better, although if they are too young, then you might doubt where they got the money from...I think before 25, it seems impossible to have earned, it your first impression would be this it is inherited, or you’d think they were cocky, which is incredibly uncool.”

[Kalif; Male; Age 19]
defiance, though, shamelessly claims them as their own. Coolness being a mastery of liberating such symbols, effortlessly and attractively into their own identities. The coolness of items is therefore entirely contextual. For example, in surfing, possessions are an encumbrance as they cannot be taken into the water[^6.2.4]. Items that are attractive and stoke positive interest but are unlikely to be stolen can therefore be cool, enabling the wearer to relax. Being well-made or impressive does not necessarily mean expensive. Cool objects and symbols can also promote the pleasure of social-cohesion, but should avoid appearing conceited or pretentious. Things that are self-made or handcrafted can be venerated, by appearing heartfelt, artistic and interesting[^6.2.4]. Items which are shabby, can evoke moral mastery of context; i.e. in skateboarding, authentic wear-and-tear signals the pain of experience and are proudly worn as ‘badges of honour’[^5.2.9].

8.6.3 Age and Ontological Security

Individuals tend to become more aware of their mortality as they age. Needs for ontological security being most apparent in later life (Breivik, 2007). Physical decline and operating in more constrained social-contexts, means they have less time and energy to cultivate free-wheeling relationships. Becoming more difficult to find like-minded souls whose leisure-time corresponds outside of each’s spousal relationships and work commitments. Anxiety and insecurity evolve towards significant relationships, jobs, property or children, if or when they arrive[^7.2.1]. The exhaustion of new-parenting means energy-levels available for self-image or identity-projects drop significantly. A noted important juncture in their ability, or desire to be cool. Values change and things which jeopardise income or are detrimental to relationships or young children become irresponsible or selfish[^8.2.5]. Parenting is demanding work and practices like caravanning, can therefore reduce anxiety by bringing the family closer together, providing higher-levels of ontological security and safer environments for children to play freely[^7.2.5].

Protecting the family means greater awareness of safety needs. For example, family caravanner’s must yield to more carefree drivers and avoid unnecessarily provoking them. Lists and routines help, as they ensure elevated levels of safety and build trust. Caravans allow families to have fun for longer periods away, by helping to conserve and replenish energies. Desiring the comfort and protection of one’s own home while seeking autonomy and escape from the stresses of their lives. Safe, social or pastoral environments give space to slow-down their lifestyles, unwind and relax. Guiltless pleasures, however, must be earned through hard-work, that demonstrates their care or benefits the whole family. With age, status symbols offer greater opportunity to be considered desirable than coolness, which is often seen as trivial or unattainable. They may still furtively desire to be cool, but more practical concerns take precedence. Anxieties begin to shift from personal-image towards seeking growth through assets,
wealth and status, to protect the family’s and children’s welfare and futures. Identity becomes more shared with the rest of the family and therefore negotiated. Parental identities must be toned down to protect children’s sensibilities and safeguard their peer-image\cite{sect:7.2.8}. Parents often being forced to inhabit naff style-zones, to allow their children free-choice and the first-priority on style. Anxieties also become focussed towards preventing or resolving embarrassing public intra-familial disputes. Such public displays of domesticity (such as emptying caravan toilet-cassettes) do not look or feel cool. An intimacy which becomes increasingly uncomfortable as children get older. Desiring more exciting and expansive social-relationships which broaden their horizons, not wishing to be cooped up in a caravan with their parents.

For caravanner’s, the safety of caravan-parks is a key source of their desirability. Parents or property owners become highly-tuned to noticing danger towards their children or prized-assets. To relax, they need the security of like-minded people, where avoiding ambiguity limits feelings of mistrust. Caravans which do not conform to standard design formats, display excessive individuality or radical aesthetics can be too disruptive. Being too unique, different, or ostentatious can result in social isolation. In these environments, cool could represent a sinister presence, meaning children will need to be reined in or require extra supervision. The introduction of coolness can therefore upset families or be divisive. Parents therefore seek safety in numbers via colonisation, using symbols of their home cultures to display and reinforce their values. Seeking to attract those with similar perspectives, while repelling incompatible others. Parents, though, are torn towards trying to be inclusive for the sake of their children’s popularity. Appearing obsessive, could reveal stiffness and inflexibility, that obstructs care-free fun. Indicate an inability or unwillingness to react to changes in the environment. Caravanning publicly displays these signs of domesticity. High-levels of pristine cleanliness being marks of status or class. Cool, class and status are therefore in constant tension, where divergent tastes towards other types of family-identities can overtake a desire to be cool.

\textbf{8.7 Conclusion}

This chapter has discussed the major themes which help the understanding of the complex phenomena of cool and its relationships with ontological security/insecurity. The thesis can therefore proceed to the final conclusions chapter.
Chapter 9 – Conclusions

This final chapter now provides the opportunity to offer some conclusions. Addressing the research objective; ‘5) To contribute to the academic debate on cool and its role in consumer behaviour, outlining implications for management’.

The structure and order of the chapter is presented in Figure 9.1 below:

![Figure 9.1: Chapter 9 – Composition of the Conclusions Chapter](image_url)

Each area is now explained in the following sections.

### 9.1 Contribution to the Understanding of Cool in CCT Identity Projects

Since its inception as a branch of consumer research, CCT has viewed identity projects as central to how consumers structure themselves and consume market resources (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2015; 2018). Tending to investigate the subtleties of local consumer actions and their symbolic meaning (Arnould & Thompson, 2018). The use of three case-studies in this thesis has also concentrated on uncovering the secret details of consumer practices and their cultural meanings. CCT studies view such identities as intentional, acting across a variety of life-stages; but residing in the imagination, where consumption is its manifestation (Schau, 2000; 2018). Possessions help form self-
perceptions and express collective-identities (Belk, 1988). Favourite objects become imbued with meanings representing their social-ties and experiences (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; 1991). Consumers, however, also derive a sense of being from ‘things’ they do not have, lack or are in denial about (Lury, 1996; Schau, 2018; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). The self therefore becomes symbolised and reconfigured towards their own and other’s gazes (Patterson & Schroeder, 2010). Self-image, boundaries or personal aura become partly visible through possessions, consumption objects, lifestyles, but also their voids.

9.1.1 Boundaries of the Self

This research thesis has similarly sought to understand the multifarious tensions which motivate skateboarder’s, surfer’s and caravanner’s to produce their identities. Seeking to interrelate with their respective communities and available market resources. Anthony Giddens’s (1991) concept of ontological security/insecurity has been a valuable sociological lens, for interpreting their subjectivities and identity projects. Contributing new theoretical insights towards cool. Cool, seems to relate to forms of overcoming once-impassable doubts at the limits of a subject’s conceptual powers of self-realisation, which can serve to antagonise subjectivity or identity. As CCT studies inform us, however, these boundaries are often imagined and can extend as frontiers of the inner or outer self (Giddens, 1991), the extended-self (Belk, 1988), or more shared or consumption-selves, communal-selves or cultural-selves. This research and other CCT studies reveal how complex these types of margins or relationships can be, while also acting ontologically. Cool is therefore similarly heterogeneous. These fresh theoretical connections, however, have allowed newly uncovered relationships between cool and important theories that describe various types of perceptual limits; the sublime (Burke, 1757), shock-experience, wish images (Benjamin, 1999), optimal-flow-experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), voluntary-edgework (Lyng, 1990), communitas and phatic-communion (Celsi, et al., 1993). They offering richer understandings of the meaning of cool encounters. For consumers, identity change, while preluded by anxiety, can also be exciting or enlightening experiences. Seeking-out new fateful encounters which helps them progress and grow. Processes that act to securitise their identity and agency through social mastery. Acting towards a variety of ontological threats or impending futures (Giddens, 1991). Youth, unsurprisingly often have greater desire or need to be cool, as they are more socially-invested in creating future possibilities and colonising them. Therefore, seeking higher-levels of ontological security through membership of attractive peer-groups. Preserving their ontological-popularity, or exclusive ontological-desirability, as portents of their moral accomplishments.
9.1.2 Trust and Contested Boundaries

Brand communities or subcultures, however, are also complex (Kawamura, 2016; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Often communicating or referenced towards what is normal [mainstream-identity] and what is normative [aspirational-identity] (Weinberger & Crocket, 2018). Consumption patterns not only facilitate social-differentiation, as transformations in modes of consumption can also inspire felt changes in identity (Schau, 2018; Weinberger & Crocket, 2018). When markets are not configured towards their own identity needs, however, consumers must agitate and seek to alter the institutional logic of the market for their own gains (Scarabato & Fischer, 2013). Membership, of these desirable groups, however, requires constructing a coherent and harmonised biography which embeds individuals acceptably with in them. Indicating another form of moral mastery (Giddens, 1991) which secures the trust of other members. An ability to share in its cachet and preserve or grow the shared-identity’s desirability. It, however, opens-up multifarious tensions based around relative popularity. Certain identities become perceived as the most desirable. Usually legitimatised and free from shame. Often affected by glocalized (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) issues, pertinent to each unique subcultural or lifestyle context. Individuals therefore need to consider how they relate to these local and wider acting expert-systems. Signifying their own moral accomplishment in these unique cultural or lifestyle contexts (Giddens, 1991).

9.1.3 Expert Systems

Knowledge of these expert-systems, alters subjectivity towards the relative coolness of ‘things’. Relational to the self, but also those aspects of the self which have become shared. Tending therefore to also symbolise levels of advancement towards some communally desired and frequently negotiated series of trajectories. Coolness is therefore constantly, reflexively mediated by wider-forms of narrative judgements, navigated against the values held in shared cultural meanings and traditions. Individual’s through their practices, must avoid encouraging infiltration by undesirables, or harm the shared-identity by disintegrating the value held in its aura. Complex as some aspects are held through carefully constructed traditions built by previous generations of practitioners. A process which is fraught, as it also requires monitoring external forces which could equally harm the individual or group identity. Exposing the self to new forms of ontological insecurity or fateful encounters is therefore critical for remaining in-touch, and able to repeatedly master any new turns in subjectivity. Cool will inevitably be reproduced by each cycle of youth, seeking social mobility. Tensioned against the previous cohort, who must also face the dread of impending cultural-isolation, fading-desirability or dependency outside of the group. Their imagery, icons and materialisations will in-time encircle them as historical representations of ontological desirability for that group’s epoch.
9.1.4 Brand Communities

Changing innate or nurtured identity or crossing some divide, however, is fraught, involving a leap of faith across an abyss of self-doubt or constrained future possibilities (Kierkegaard, 1944). Commodification practices seeking to legitimise these crossovers can offer an easier solution for consumers. Representing a short-lived, manifestation of desire playacted through consumption. Imagining looking and feeling more positively-noticed, memorable and desirable. The pleasures of being part of progressive brand-communities, however, can also give feelings of exclussivity. Benefitting from the progressive-creativity and leaps-in-subjectivity they can generate by sharing in and socialising new-features, services or applications\[1016]. Falling behind, or not being trendy, means individuals are threatened by isolation, provoking ontological insecurity. Cool brands therefore offer the ontological security of social-cohesion and social-mobility for their users. Brands such as Apple in creating enclosed eco-systems, where their devices work better within it [or exclude other brand-users entirely], however, can cause harm by making individuals feel socially-excluded from their peer-groups. Individuals “engulfed by such anxieties may seek to ‘blend with the environment’ so as to escape being the target of the dangers which haunt them” (Giddens, 1991, p. 54):

“I had a very cheap windows phone, but one of the main reasons I switched, was that a lot of apps just wouldn’t be available or be compatible with it, also, most people by far have iPhones”. “I wanted to fit in in a way, but that was only a bit, not the whole thing, I think I just, the Windows one wasn’t restricting, but I just felt that developers would do more for Apple or Android, I don’t think it’s always cooler, I would prefer a PC to a Mac, as I personally prefer them, but with phones I prefer an iPhone, which is what I have, as well I think it looks nice.. the whole brand is sleek”. “You want to do the same stuff, and if like I had a Windows phone, I couldn’t so I was instantly excluded”. “So, I felt that wasn’t something that I would have to worry about.. so, having an iPhone wasn’t about being cool, it was about not having that worry”. “It just meant that I felt happier”. “It was more about the functionality, having a phone that was quicker and.. just better all around.. not having to wait for things”. “For a phone, it has to work well and look good”. “I think cool is a feeling you get when you look at something that kind of you admire, maybe you desire it, because it makes you popular.. Maybe it threatens you a bit as well. So, it’s like I need it”. “It brings out the competitive instinct in me.. I want one as well.. not to be like them.. but to not be any worse than them.” “Whereas trendy is what’s in, what’s happening like on the streets and in fashion, because the world is always changing, so you have to change with it. It’s like knowing what the next set of people are into. There’s obviously crossover. I think people are threatened by not being in the in-crowd, or looking stupid, like the target of people because they wear the wrong brands, so I think being cool is not being threatened”. “I only think Apple is cooler, because everyone else seems to. It’s like if no one else had one then it wouldn’t matter. But it’s like it matters because it is social, if it wasn’t social then I would probably like to be different, or at least I wouldn’t care as much”. “But, if I get something that people don’t care about so much, then, I can be different, and it can be cool” [Tom: Male; Age 18]
9.1.5 Annulment of Subjectivity

Those who have stopped being perceived as cool or are associated with old styles by succeeding generations, often seek to defend their practices. Changing styles or new youth-movements, however, endangers their identities and risks rendering them ridiculously uncool. Radical-changes, not only are a potential source of isolation but signal obsolescence and the end of their epoch. Even destroying their legacies, which represent an annulment of their subjectivity. Those in more advanced life-stages may therefore see new forms of cool as threats to their status and lifestyle. They, however, are probably no longer able to commit the resources to what is currently seen as popular or desirable by youth. Prioritising other forms of ontological security (Giddens, 1991). More aligned with securitising their status through the comforts of true, intimate relationships, domesticity or home-life. Skateboarding, surfing and caravanning, however, have similarities by acting cathartic for their practitioners and reducing anxieties. They, however, reflect quite different life-stages and different needs for ontological security.

9.1.6 Implications for Consumer Research on Cool

The overall research findings presented in this thesis partly build on Lauren Gurrieri’s conference paper; Cool brands: a discursive identity approach published in 2009, which noted cool’s progressive nature. A preliminary finding which unfortunately was not subsequently developed or elaborated on. It also connects with O’Donnell & Wardlow’s (2000); A Theory on the Origins of Coolness, which conceptualised how a discrepancy between actual and ideal-selves in adolescence, might drive their consumption behaviours. Cool is presented in this thesis, however, as acting well beyond narcissism, relating to survival of individual and shared-identity, by negotiating various ontological threats. Requiring a broader-level of consciousness and based around concerns for the self and community relationships.

Warren & Campbell’s (2014) much-lauded quantitative study, concluded that autonomy from norms makes things cool. This conclusion, however, is both challenged and extended by the findings of this research thesis. My research outcomes differ, by instead linking the coolness of objects, a person’s aura, subcultural-practices or their gestalt/imagery, to disruptions in ontological security. Relating to an individual’s subjectivity and distinct or shared aspects of their identity. What Warren & Campbell framed as deviations from the norm, are instead explained as the triggering of survival-responses. Needed for noticing difference, possible danger or threats to identity. Fascinating, as they demand interest via the possibility of learning or growing through exposure to them. The prospect of harmonisation towards the self, or fully integrated accomplishments help securitise ‘future-agency’. Building ontological security via a

96 (Giddens, 1991)
series of identity progressions. Conforming with these threats instead secures future agency and feels cool. For instance, those wishing to incorporate themselves within cool-communities must build knowledge and conformance with norms and expert-systems for survival. They, however, must also balance threat-levels and areas of correspondence with the mainstream to establish ontological desirability. ‘Autonomy from norms’\(^97\) does not always, therefore, make things cooler. The complexities around these boundaries is illustrated by the caravanning case-study. One example, where consumers value their autonomy highly but are not typically perceived as cool. Holding an ambiguous position of neither being considered mainstream or a subculture. Caravanners crucially, however, do not produce widespread ontological insecurity in others, appearing regressive and excessively domesticated. The prospect of harmonisation, therefore, does not represent the hope of desirability, or the ability to ‘colonise futures’\(^98\) for outsiders.

The paradoxes involved in disrupting or harmonising levels of ontological security, provide further insights towards Belk, et al. (2010), Warren & Campbell (2014) and Wooton & Mourey’s (2013) unresolved interest in why individuals seek to stand-out from peer-groups, but at other times fit-in with them. ‘Standing-out’ seems driven by a need to deliberately reorder the self. Producing ‘fateful encounters’\(^99\) to instigate growth or alter levels of agency. Thereby destabilising identities and power-relations through progressively new-experiences, which disturb other’s ontological security and therefore elicit their responses. ‘Fitting-in’, however, appears related to a need to progress-identity by aligning with cool-communities, recognising the social-value associated with their shared-identities. Mastering their ‘expert systems’\(^100\) gives free and legitimate access to their shared-creative-systems. Fashioning exciting, future ‘shared-histories’\(^101\), which builds ontological security through communal-trust and annuls old sources of shame. This membership of cool-communities symbolises mastery of the self, expert-systems and cultural-relationships. Exhibiting an ability to take risks\(^102\), secure future agency and colonise the future.

Each new generation’s sense of inherited or looming ontological threats, will inform the development of their newly felt values, or how they are embodied in their expert cultural-systems. To remain cool, individuals must therefore perpetually and reflexively adapt to environmental-changes, and any new, emerging sources of ontological insecurity. Mastering cultural-systems which surface, means obsoleting outmoded practices, their embodiment as style or signs of their materiality. This,

\(^{97}\) (Warren & Campbell, 2014)  
\(^{98}\) (Giddens, 1991)  
\(^{99}\) (Giddens, 1991)  
\(^{100}\) (Giddens, 1991)  
\(^{101}\) (Giddens, 1991)  
\(^{102}\) (Breivik, 2007)
however, sometimes involves reincorporating rediscovered values or practices which are useful and have returned to their alien-form [i.e. retro or old-skool]. Cool is therefore ephemeral and constantly evolving. Helping explain why it is considered exciting and vital for \textit{fashionable desirability} (Rahman, 2013) and why trend-setter’s constantly seek to create distinction (Heath & Potter, 2004).

Belk, et al. (2010) framed cool as a desirable, but undefinable positive quality. Concluding that “mainstream consumers now look for cool in the marketplace more than within themselves”. The result being “a continuous race to offer the next cool thing” (p. 183). A view, which reflects consumers having fewer-choices to develop their identity, other than through restrictive market-systems (Giddens 1991; Lasch, 1960; McGuigan. 2016). The market, therefore, is the main-vehicle to display or achieve desirability and agency for them. Successful integration of cool consumption-objects, however, also requires a level of performance to display ‘moral-mastery’\(^{103}\). Important as “with regard to cool, there is also a certain performance that a consumption object may demand of us if we are to successfully incorporate the object into our presentation” (Wooton & Mourey, 2013, p. 11). Securing ontological security via perceived competency is important, to remain trusted as an insider. Coolness, however, also requires inconspicuously and unpretentiously establishing identity-progressions have been recognised. They, fomenting insecurities for competitors or outsiders.

Another conundrum is why emotive expression jeopardises cool but artistic style and expressivity appear part of its desirability (Warren, et al., 2014; Wooton & Mourey, 2013). Insights from skateboarders and surfers, however, have helped explain many of the complexities of meaning. Revealing its significance to practitioners; i.e. how cool is performed, displayed and communicates transmissive meanings. For instance, creative, artistic expressivity is needed to form new, distinctive styles that are edgy, exciting and desirable. A natural cool-style indicates mastery and harmonisation within identity. When combined with concealed practice it produces astonishment, which by being free from affection avoids displaying negative traits such as narcissism or ‘false-identity’\(^{104}\). Signifying, also, the individual’s internal state. As a style, it therefore becomes a highly-sensitive marker for whether individuals or practices remain advanced. Cool-performances must be free from pretention or corruption, so ‘tipping-points’\(^{105}\) become highly-distinguishable. Practices or displays will feel or look affected or undesirably safe, when environmental-contexts change, progression stalls or

\(^{103}\) (Giddens, 1991)
\(^{104}\) (Giddens, 1991)
\(^{105}\) (Gladwell, 2000)
expectations increase. Hot or radical approaches might therefore be needed to overcome more difficult obstacles, boredom or to activate new trajectories.

Cool and its trademark style therefore interacts with a drive to progress identity. The key relationships discussed in this section are now summarily conceptualised in a theoretical framework [Figure 9.2]. It illustrates the theoretical contribution of this thesis. Emphasising relationships between individual and communal forms of identity, expert-systems and forms of moral accomplishment:

![Figure 9.2: Cool: Progressing Identity](image)

Drives to be cool are represented in this model, as a normal part of the search for ontological security. Social-growth or identity-progressions are initiated by disruptive forces, which cause ontological insecurity. Individuals sense an inability to secure future agency and therefore feel they lack some form of competency to colonise futures. Individuals must therefore secure status and desirability, by demonstrating an ability to adapt identity through self-mastery, or by naturalising themselves within trending cultural-systems. Displaying their moral-mastery through cultural knowledge, expertise, legitimacy and by possessing exceptional cultural-objects. These cool-
subcultures tend to have their own mores, norms and forms of social-capital\(^{106}\). To protect the exclusivity, desirability or trajectory of the shared-identity, outsider’s attempts to integrate themselves must be first qualified or if necessary defended against. (G)localised identity politics therefore emerge, reflecting any unique, encircling identity-tensions. Meaning individuals must modify their identity reflexively, based on their own contexts. Being too reliant on home-comforts or out-moded practices, however, risks a retraction of the self through excessive domiciliation. Being coooned from emerging ontological threats, risks no longer being as adroit at noticing and adapting to the latest trends and fashions (and their links with social desirability or social-survival).

This model, therefore, helps explain why cool has become a dominant, aspirational ideology, connected to personal identity and now consumerism (Gurrieri, 2009; McGuigan, 2013; Nancarrow, et al., 2001) and why individuals, lifestyles and brands are judged by their coolness (Belk, et al., 2010; Gladwell, 2000; Klein, 2000/2010; Olson, et al., 2005; Solomon, 2003; Southgate 2003; Taylor, 2009; Warren & Campbell, 2014; Wooten & Mourey, 2013). The market being one of the few legitimate resources consumers can use to adapt their identity (McGuigan, 2016).

### 9.2 Implications for Management

The central finding of this thesis is that cool strongly relates to a search for ontological security; to securitise personal-identity and future-agency through progressiveness, desirability and popularity. Disordered and confounded through conflicts between generational, subcultural, life-stage, lifestyle and subjective representations, as well as their operationalisation at various levels of discourse. Social and cultural settings mediate how identities [and their materialisation through cultural or consumption objects] are negotiated. Cool plays roles in these processes, helping instigate change but also preserving a desire for social-mobility and cohesion. Paths which once appeared progressive, however, frequently need modification or become dead-ends as contexts change. An inherent problem, therefore, is the need to notice immediate or ontological danger being part of cool’s appeal. Requiring constant reflexive balancing of pleasure and fear, while seeking to be noticeable and exciting. Coolness therefore requires relentless change, tensioned against the maintenance of any value amassed in the recognisability, traditions or mythologies of brands. A conflict, as while constantly changing, cool brands, must also seek to remain transcendent within their category.

Danger, being part of cool’s appeal, means unscrupulous marketers could play on consumer’s insecurities or the tensions that lie between groups. Manipulating behaviours by representing products and services as capable of fulfilling fantasies of

\(^{106}\) (Nancarrow, et al., 2000)
self-completion; desirability, popularity and hope for social-inclusion. Brands seeking to remain cool in the long-term, however, usually treat their core-customers well (Gladwell, 2000). Cool brands like Vans and Apple need the long-term respect of subcultural, creative users to achieve cool legitimacy with the mainstream. Strategies, therefore, need to consider whether resources are available to constantly reinvent or reconfigure products, or reinvest in relationships with cool communities. It is also necessary to consider whether a touch of menace or danger is productive in every market context? Cool in the wrong setting, could create undesirable ambiguity. For example, Apple is often considered cooler than Microsoft, but has low market share in some major product-sectors. Core business areas remain dominated by Microsoft, currently retaining 88% of Operating-Systems on all desktops. The rapid change or individuality that are part of coolness, can mean serious decisions founded on trusted, solid, reliable platforms, are more based on risk avoidance. This means that while cool sparks interest, it might be difficult to gain further traction. For example, many products such as caravans, rely on buyers trusting their uniformity and conformity will achieve a desired level of acceptance within the culture, and a requisite standard-of-safety. Failing to appear progressive, or able to ‘colonise the future’, however, can also have serious repercussions. Examped by Microsoft’s inability to gain traction in the personal smart phone market. Partly due to becoming out-of-touch with young consumers and missing key trends. Young consumers see little future in investing in those products, as other brands offer more expansive, social categories or outlets. A cool image or brand therefore creates excitement, interest and influence, acting well beyond the immediate confines of the market. Microsoft therefore endangered their future by appearing too uncool for new generations of consumers. Leaving them vulnerable to change, especially if their core-markets start to disappear.

Young consumers particularly want to feel that their preferences are purposive to their identities and will not restrict their future choices. Expansive encounters can therefore feel cool and exciting. Positive interactions with brand-new technologies, fashions, ideas, groups or cultures can therefore overcome their anxieties towards being ‘left-behind’. If such experiences are managed constructively, they can empower individuals towards positive change. Providing therapeutic rewards by increasing their feelings of agency and satiating a desire for greater ontological security. The sublime, flow or edgework as forms of consumption, might therefore bring personal victories. Enabling a forgetfulness towards everyday-problems or life’s constraints. Conflicted individuals might, therefore, use cool consumption experiences to feel happier. Relying also on peer/community recognition, to feel valued, trusted and socially accepted. The prevalence of commodification-practices and ‘consumer-tribes’ [and their roles in

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107 https://www.netmarketshare.com/operating-system-market-share
108 (Cova, et al., 2012)
identity formation], however, risks restricting securing agency to the ability to successfully intersect with market-systems and their cultural discourses. Ways of gaining capital, either legitimately or through illicit means, therefore, become central to cool, as they secure the ability to consume cool things.

Companies, brands and entertainment-media’s hold over these social discourses, means ethics are central concerns. Deliberately instigating insecurities, so consumer’s feel their future agency is threatened, could disturb them. Disrupting their ontological security without offering any realistic hope of harmonisation, could leave them feeling ontologically anxious. Managers should therefore consider how their actions interact with various subjectivities. For example, marketing-campaigns sometimes traverse ethical-tightropes or are deliberately divisive, compelling consumers to choose between alternative identity trajectories. Illustrated by the recent, high-profile Nike campaign endorsing ‘unemployable’ NFL player and civil-rights activist Colin Kaepernick [see Figure 9.3]. The reasons behind such campaigns might seem on the surface well-intentioned, by seeking to endorse progressive-values or social-change. They, however, could also be construed as opportunist, due to the commercial imperative. While social-change and progression in values are important, there is something amiss in commercial organisations constructing and framing identity choices; i.e. they might lack sincerity or their motives may not be altruistic.

A concern is that in competitive, neoliberal market-systems, consumers risk being overwhelmed by conflicting counterfactual messages. Constantly disturbing their ontological security, by each campaign seeking to be cooler than the rest. Risking

Figure 9.3: Colin Kaepernick/Nike Campaign

(Used for Figurative Purposes Only)
Removed as Includes Pictures Held Under 3rd Party Copyright
harming consumer’s mental well-being, by instigating prolonged states of ontological insecurity. Concerning, as ontological insecurity/security was originally conceived by Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing in ‘The Divided Self’ (1960). A landmark-work which explored subjective experiences of mental-illness and alienation, and how they often were linked to negative environmental or social factors. Caused by individuals having to develop feelings or drives which derive from a sense of ‘being’, where personal identity principally resides inside the minds of others. The resulting outcome of unrestrained and excessive levels of ontological insecurity, being the creation of a ‘divided self’. Two tensioned personas, eventually causing exhaustion and states where the individual describes feeling ‘dead’ inside. Cool, therefore, rewards those able to cope and successfully harmonise themselves in the face of these threats, but alienates those who cannot. i.e. Giddens’ (1991) holistic and sociological theories, show how states of ontological insecurity can also awaken individuals to identity threats or looming ontological dangers. The case studies have also highlighted how such challenges can make individuals feel alive. Experiencing the danger and pleasure of cool as immersive, thrilling encounters which achieve harmonisation with identity. Those less-able to change or as Nike propose ‘sacrifice everything’, however, may instead feel tensioned and ‘divided’. Trapped in a state where they feel ontologically undesirable, lack agency or feel culturally subservient.

As a result, consumers who are unable to maintain a relevant identity-trajectory via cycles-of-growth or through belonging to cool communities, endanger themselves. Particularly if presenting themselves inauthentically, by superficially following other’s trends. An ideal identity, instead being one where an authentic private-identity matches a natural, public-persona (Giddens, 1991). A false-identity is undesirable, as the person is less able to overcome barriers or make needed transitions in advance of the threat (ibid). While feeling somewhat cocooned by cool-consumption or by belonging to cool consumer tribes may give a façade of ontological security, they could also restrict more congruent identity choices. For example, caravanning shows how therapeutic and harmless some ‘uncool’ activities can be. It is only when these practices exclude forms of otherness that they become tensioned. Endangering individuals if they appear against cultural integration or modernisation. Lifestyles or brands which associate with them, will also risk becoming uncool, by associating with values or behaviours seen as regressive. Bracketing out these concerns will provide ontological security for some (Giddens, 1991). Others, however, may feel lost or isolated in a changing world (ibid), too removed from other cultures that appear more progressive and appealing.

9.3 Research Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This research has importance, not only as cool is a principal value-system for consumers and marketers, but as ontological security/insecurity is underused in consumer research. Previous applications have tended to be limited to sociology or
political-science. For example, how disruptions in home-environments can negatively-affect physical and mental well-being (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Freilich, et al., 2014; Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2016), or how ontological insecurities change political views (Mitzen, 2006). Linking individual and collective states of ontological insecurity/security with cool, has greatly expanded the use of the theory. The research and its findings, however, are limited by the scope and nature of the case-studies selected. While they have offered rich-contexts to explore consumer behaviours, the needs for ontological insecurity/security and their relationships to cool, they have also provided restrictions owing to their nature and scope. For instance, the empirical research was primarily performed in the UK. Skateboarding and surfing also tend to be male-dominated practices, while caravanning is a lifestyle typified by hetero-normative couples. The findings, however, will be of interest for other researchers who may seek to develop them. The conclusions having implications towards the understanding of; a) cool, b) consumer identity-projects, c) consumer-behaviour, d) management-practices, and e) cool’s roles in market-systems.

Cool is a far-reaching and global phenomenon. Delving further into a greater-array of subjectivities, cultural-discourses or consumption-contexts is therefore essential to build more insights. This will involve investigating heterogenous and nuanced forms of; 1) subjectivities, 2) discrete or communal identities, 3) lifestyles, 4) subcultures, 5) products, 6) consumer-tribes, 7) brands, 8) organisations, 9) service-experiences, and 10) consumption-contexts.

The suggested areas for new research are, therefore, structured to include probing these new theoretical-insights through other; i) forms of subjectivity, identities, lifestyles and subcultural contexts; or ii) products, services, brands or types of consumption experiences. The theoretical-insights could also benefit other areas; iii) acting beyond the confines of consumer-research, or be further extended to help develop; iv) some of the subsidiary theoretical-connections uncovered.

Each is now explored in more detail:

i) Other forms of subjectivity, identity or subcultural lifestyles.

As discussed, the skateboarding, surfing and caravanning case-studies involved a limited sample of cultural experiences. Investigating how cool and ontological security/insecurity relate in a wider-array of subjectivities, would therefore enrich the findings and expose other areas of contention. Cultural settings which differ from the three case-studies would provide useful comparisons or contrasts. For instance, cultural or ethnic variations might alter the types of ontological threats envisaged or manifested. Meaning cool is perceived differently. Exploring a greater array of female-oriented subcultures, lifestyles or consumption-perspectives would be of significant interest. A variety of LGBT perspectives could also provide important new insights, points of
similarity and difference. Subjective variances might alter the types of values, practices or objects identified as being cool. Ontological security might be established quite differently. Helping reveal how disruptions or distinct insecurities drive behaviours. The three case-studies having uncovered how complex and unique they can be.

**ii) Other products, services, brands or consumption experiences.**

The case-studies are leisure-based. There therefore remains a need to explore other aspects of individual lifestyles or consumption contexts. For instance, including types of family-oriented, work-related, utility, luxury or lifestyle purchases. How they relate to the complexity of ontological insecurities or needs for security, but also any need to be cool. It would inform research into consumer behaviour through a wider range of settings, multiplicity of products, brands or service experiences. Providing further evidence for how specific insecurities relate to distinctive forms of consumption, and the related ontological desirability/popularity of certain brands. Developing these relationships between ontological insecurity and consumer adoption should help explain why certain cool-fashions appear, trend or proliferate.

How consumers manage the complexity of identity-threats they are exposed to, and relate them to their identity needs further understanding. Different social-circles, environmental contexts or cultural pressures, acting across a variety of contradictory situations may be causing them to feel fragmented or ‘divided’? These insecurities might, therefore, be driving increasing varieties and forms of consumption? Consumers may be using them to acquire higher-levels of ontological security in a multiplicity of social or cultural settings? If consumers feel less conflicted, however, their consumption might also decrease, or stabilise within their comfortable shopping habits or routines? Understanding how encircling neoliberal-systems foment these states of ontological insecurity is therefore needed. This is important as cool and neoliberal-systems are in danger of becoming symbiotically converged (McGuigan, 2016). Marketing campaigns may be deliberately disrupting individuals against these backdrops? We therefore need to fathom whether the consequences are calculated, part of their intuitive practices, or unintended? A more composite understanding of how commercial operations forge their tactics based upon emerging ontological threats would therefore be most helpful. Allowing practices or campaigns to be critiqued and held to account if found to be harmful, cynical or intentionally divisive.

**iii) Applying the theoretical-insights beyond consumer-research**

The relationships between cool and ontological insecurity/security has implications that act beyond consumer research. Cool is important to young people’s identity, their social-desirability and self-esteem (Danesi, 1994; Milner Jr, 2004). Researchers interested in their mental well-being, therefore ought to investigate whether market-
systems, the ‘commodification of cool’\textsuperscript{109} and its socialisation, are generating harmful levels of ontological insecurity for them? The added complication and adoption of social-media, might be altering their subjectivities and fomenting anxieties/insecurities in new ways? ‘Moral-mastery’\textsuperscript{110} of these digital-systems and community-relationships via their online-identities, might not create greater ontological security in expected ways? An inability to physically harmonise experiences could leave individuals feeling unfulfilled? Risking producing ‘divided-selves’\textsuperscript{111} through irreconcilable discrepancies between ‘public and online digital identities’ and their ‘private-self’. Is is therefore entirely possible that such social-media platforms could be detrimental to mental-health in the long-term? These forces may be acting well-beyond youth, however, and could also be affecting other life-stages and groups.

iv) Extending the subsidiary theoretical-connections uncovered.

A number of theoretical connections have been exposed during the development of this thesis. They go-beyond linking cool to concepts of ontological insecurity/security. Further explaining cool in relation to theories of; a) the sublime and its harmonisation; b) phenomenological experiences involving optimal-flow; c) voluntary-edgework and its social-implications; d) cultural-routines and traditions which build identity boundaries, embodied, materialised and represented as personal-styles, e) cultural, subcultural, lifestyle and identity discourses as (g)localised identity politics, and; f) how anxieties and life-stages alter perspectives towards forms of coolness.

I will now progress three fields which have collective implications. Guiding some possible areas for new research:

\textit{a) Sublime, b) Flow & c) Edgework}

Cool experiences normally involve overcoming some aesthetic or phenomenologically experienced form of pain, fear, anxiety or dread. They, however, can quickly become pleasurable if they are imagined or materially expressed as moral victories. Those, however, unable to approach the challenge or complete the transition successfully, risk feeling constrained, defeated or isolated. Failing to secure their desirability and future-agency. Missing-out on the opportunity to experience the positive feeling which accompanies progressive growth. Cumulative victories or defeats are therefore likely to have implications for mental well-being. Indeed, optimal-flow and voluntary edgework have previously been linked with absorbing and transformative experiences (Celsi, et al., 1993; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Thompson & Üstüner, 2015). Cool experiences might also provide therapeutic benefits. With controlled management, and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[109] (Belk, et al., 2010)
\item[110] (Giddens, 1991)
\item[111] (Laing, 1960)
\end{itemize}
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appropriate levels of community support, mutual-trust and the building of ‘communitas’\(^{112}\), they could help change mental-health outcomes for individuals and communities. In the process, successfully interrupting and superseding prevailing anxieties and a lack of empowerment. Providing greater optimism, and sense of future agency.

If access to these types of empowering, cool-experiences are enclosed by market-systems, however, those lacking the financial-resources might become disenfranchised. Risking prolonged states of ontological insecurity, and therefore becoming conflicted. Individuals are at risk if their future happiness and agency is linked to their ability to work and consume. Trapped in unremitting states where the sublime is commodified, and every brand purchase must be more sublime than the last. Short-lived experiences of ‘stoke’, which like skateboarding could be addictive. Becoming interminable progressions of tastes, social-values and cultural-identities; performed through the consumption and display of brands, goods, service-experiences and lifestyles. It raises the question of whether combined experiences of the sublime, flow and edgework through the consumption of marketing-messages, products and services produce addictions to consumption? Further, does observing others enjoy these commercial experiences, become part of the transmissive process?

\(d)\) Cultural-Systems & \(e)\) Identity-Politics

There becomes a risk that consumption of cool things becomes a form of moral-mastery in itself. Those not proficient at understanding the nuances of brands become excluded. Embroiled in cultural and brand politics. Such doctrines often involve claims of appropriation which essentially involves processes of exclusion (Giddens, 1991). Those feeling too uncool or unknowledgeable in the use of the coolest brands, might as a result be assuming subservient positions and limiting their future agency? Their brand choices and identity might be restricted to less-desirable areas? Exclusion, causing feelings of being ontologically anxious, by lacking ontological popularity or desirability. Denouncing processes of exclusion as regressive or divisive, might benefit those who value inclusivity and social healing. It is likely, however, they will also cause ontological insecurity for those who feel the exclusivity of their identity is being threatened. Healing social-divisions and offering new discursive ideals of cool, however, could be transformative. We have learned through this thesis how there remains the opportunity to alter the discourses around what is cool. Achievable by creating shame around certain destructive social or commercial behaviours. Altering the values represented as signifying desirability and likely sources of future agency. Thereby presenting different cool ideals for the types of identities most likely to successfully colonise futures. This may lead to surprising turns. For example, if

\(^{112}\) (Celsi, et al., 1993)
narcissistic behaviours involved in social-media are shamed and their ‘bubbles-burst’, even taking up relaxing, humble and grounded activities like caravanning, might actually become cool and bohemian once more?

f) Anxieties & Life-Stages

An area where tensions seem surprisingly unexplored is how consumers cope with their cool-fading. There are many research questions which could help inform the complexities of consumer behaviours. For example, can parents and adolescent children share the same fashion-brands or must parents assume style-subservience? Thereby, creating space for their children’s burgeoning social identities? Do they cyclically create distinctive markets or are there instances where generational homogeneity is possible? How they each relate to their respective states of ontological insecurity/security, could provide new insights into cool. Investigating whether commercial organisations help drive these fractures would provide new ethical perspectives. Indeed, commercial organisations seem trapped between using cool to drive new demand, while also confining themselves within narrow market boundaries. The need for exclusive use, restricting their ability to gain unlimited access to adjacent markets. Young people must also balance forms of ontological security conferred through peer-desirability with their future agency. They must choose career-steps. Not easy as while some professions might seem cooler, they could also be less impressively lucrative in the long-term. For instance, high-reward but ideologically conflicted roles (i.e. investment bankers) are tallied against careers that are more physically impressive, dangerous, or instil public empathy due to their altruistic nature (i.e. Firemen or Nurses). These struggles for desirability and agency are central to coolness. Forming partly around the conservation or breaking apart of traditional class-systems.

9.4 Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis was to explore cool through the insecurities residing in consumer’s identities and their needs for ontological security. I will therefore briefly outline and reemphasise the theoretical contributions:

a) Cool is a longitudinal-style that values change and social-mobility.

A model is presented in Figure 3.1, helping explain the relationship between cool as a continuum of style [anti-fashion] and generational ontological insecurities which drive cyclical-change. Conceptualising how cool as a series of social-movements has retained some characteristics, while discarding others. Constantly morphing or regenerating new-meanings and associations as temporal action through progressive moments in collective subjectivities. Sometimes using cool’s mythologies or icons for legitimacy, reimagined towards contemporary, purposive futures.
b) Cool requires reflexive harmonisation of ontological insecurities through repeated fateful encounters, to gain a higher-level of moral accomplishment.

Cool involves successive ‘leaps of faith’, requiring harmonisation of physical or ontological threats to identity. Conceptualised in Figure 8.2: The ‘Leap of Faith’ of Cool. Practice and self-mastery mean progressively more challenging contexts become possible. The roles of the sublime (Burke, 1757), optimal-flow-experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) voluntary-edgework (Lyng, 1990) in these processes is expounded; where their avoidance signals defeats. Successful progressions become joyful, fateful encounters, and represent moral accomplishments (Giddens, 1991). They expand rather than limit the consumer. How aggressive, radical or cool styles signify states of progression for the self but also projected meanings for others is explained.

c) Being cool is a reflexive process which requires constant monitoring of changing ontological threats to ensure future agency is secured.

Signalling a desirable ability to ‘colonise the future’.

A model, Figure 8.1: A Thematic Model of Cool provides a new abstractive overview of cool. Helping categorise how these micro-practices, anxieties, insecurities or ontological threats can disrupt, disturb or foment inadequacies within consumer identities. They provide imagined opportunities to grow subjectivity as self-mastered moral accomplishments. Needed to secure future agency and ‘colonise the future’ (Giddens, 1991). Cool is therefore presented as continuously driving change for individuals and communities who must react to unremitting ontological threats.

d) Cool requires mastery of expert-systems. Generating the trust of key peer communities and providing higher-levels of ontological security.

Individuals need to maintain their important peer-relationships to benefit from any cool lifestyles they inhabit. They are therefore seeking ontological security through conformance and trust with other members. Their shared values and mutual-trust being markers of each’s successful moral accomplishment in the subculture or lifestyle. This study highlights how belonging to certain cool communities creates opportunities to deliberately provoke fateful encounters. Sharing knowledge and developing together in collaborative innovations. Cool is often therefore manifested in forms of communal creativity. Forming interesting connections with Joel Dinerstein’s (1998; 2013; 2017) archival works describing African-American Jazz, and Robert Farris Thompson’s (1973) West-African Aesthetic of the Cool. Communities such as skateboarders also use collaborative artistic efforts to create, progress and enhance trick-trends which fashions longitudinal growth. The levels of ‘trust’ built-up in these communities engenders artistic freedom provided the deeply guarded mores are respected. Allowing their communal-identity, formed through deliberately disruptive creative, cultural
practices to outpace other competing groups, Progressing some key areas which help them maintain an impressive or edgy identity. Encounters between members can create further progression through creative interchanges, but can equally generate insecurities for individuals who feel out-paced, less-legitimate or perceived as outsiders; visually presented in Figure 8.13: An Iceberg of Cool.

e) Belonging to cool-communities brings mutual-benefits, but are subject to glocalized identity politics. Individuals must reflexively pursue the maintenance of trust within the community, while repulsing ‘undesirables’. Cool therefore requires balancing personal insecurities with wider concerns towards communal desires.

Constituted narratives of legitimacy, authenticity and coolness rely on individual’s signifying themselves being ‘fully-at-home’ with the inherent expert-systems formed by these communities. The growth in desirability through creative progression of these shared-identities, however, means they become embroiled in glocalized (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) identity-politics. Acting competitively, where individuals feel under constant threat and must reconstitute themselves accordingly to protect and maintain the desirability of themselves and the community. Companies hoping to tap into cool communities must also therefore remain loyal, provide long-service and retain their trust. Compensating them and helping their practices grow, while respecting their autonomy by engaging in creative, collaborative or philanthropic work.

f) Choice of consumption objects symbolises and materialises coolness, indicating cultural knowledge, attitude and mastery of expert systems.

The study highlights how materials, fashion, and semiotics symbolise these identity tensions and incorporate the knowledge of expert systems, having both individual and shared cultural meanings that have specific, tacit importance. Objects, symbols and styles are therefore used to promote desirable characteristics, while repulsing those which lean towards undesirable traits. Insecurities are ameliorated through diversion, subversion or by creatively appropriating the powerful symbols of desirability they lack, important for colonising futures.

g) How these various concepts interact with a drive to progress identity are linked and conceptually modelled.

A model [Figure 9.2], helps highlight and reinforce the relationships between these individual, shared and communal forms of identity projects.

The linking of cool with wide-acting issues of ontological security and insecurity in this thesis, offers important rejoinders towards Warren & Campbell’s (2014) interest into the mystery, ‘ubiquity’ and pervasiveness of cool. The need many feel to securitise individual futures, and the legitimate means the market provides to fulfil their
connected identity projects, means cool is a pervasive, if provocative and sometimes divisive part of neoliberal societies and their systems. The insincerity and profiteering neoliberalism encourages (McGuigan. 2016), however, could mean that companies are playing on individual’s insecurities to create cool trends or deliberately foster tensions by distancing forms of difference. Offering market solutions as the legitimate means of their harmonisation.

9.5 Reflexivity

Finally, I would like to address my PhD journey. I first became interested in this area through my experience that cool or coolness often held greater sway and lustre than other marketing concepts, despite its apparent superficiality or paradoxes. A view developed from many years leading and managing new product developments and their accompanying marketing efforts. There often seemed a pervading sense that products would be more desirable if they were cool, although why and what this entailed was a matter of disagreement and conjecture. Cool was something consumers or managers struggled to explain, but by not having its essence, something intrinsically important to the product or service seemed to be missing. I didn’t feel that I understood consumer mind-sets well-enough to establish what this entailed. Consequently, some product-releases were successful and others failed, although the reasons were not always understood. My initial motivation for entering the PhD process was therefore to get a better handle on consumer’s deeper-level thinking, identity needs and desires. While reading consumer research studies, psychological and sociological theories inspired me, the literature on cool did not give me adequate answers. The question remained; why was cool or coolness so central to marketing and what was the source of its power? Looking for a suitable theoretical lens was not an easy process. I spent significant time investigating psychological and aesthetic theories to gain insights. They did not appear, however, to offer the depth of understanding I needed. I really wanted to explore consumer subjectivities and behaviours and the rationale behind their identity projects. After a number of disappointing theoretical ‘dead-ends’, I was guided by my supervisors towards the concept of ontological security/insecurity. Reading these theories seemed to give greater insights into some of the historical discourses of cool. It also appeared to illuminate some of the consumer behaviours I was witnessing. Placing cool as a manifestation of something more important, which was what I had originally sensed. This led to the development of the research problem.

The selection of the case-studies was also not straightforward. A lifestyle or subculture draws differing opinions. I have never felt that skateboarding was that cool, but enough people did for me to consider it. I did, however, feel surfing was cool. The anti-case was more difficult as I have always quite liked caravanning but the prevailing discourse, at least in the UK, was that they were pretty uncool. Being of advancing years, skateboarding particularly concerned me. How would I ever get access to
informants? Surfing also, living a long distance from any credible surf-zones? I was less concerned towards caravanning, as I knew a number of caravanner’s and people seemed accessible and willing to help, so these were the first interviews conducted and they quickly snowballed. Skateboarding, however, was my saviour. I swallowed my pride and bought a skateboard, which was a fraught experience in itself. I knew it would be difficult but I had no idea how hard and painful even the basics would be. The biggest surprise, however, was that I actually enjoyed it. Pretty soon, I would be dropping the kids off at school and gleefully dropping my board on a path or pavement and getting myself stoked. It made it feel natural. Skateboarding is beautiful and probably the best thing I have ever done. Yes, I love skateboarding, I just wish I was better at it and had an identity congruent with it.

Surfing, however, caused me more difficulty. Accessing surf culture was inherently more challenging and if I am truly honest, while I felt like a skateboarder for a while (perhaps slightly delusional and to much merriment and ridicule), when it comes to surfing, I always retained the perspective of an outsider. This was not altogether a bad thing, however, as I was able to maintain a more critical perspective.

This PhD journey, has been an extremely challenging four years; a prolonged and deeply fraught process. While I have had to complete some large, high-risk and expensive projects in the past, this has been my biggest challenge. The most testing and demanding being the empirical research, which involved much travelling and was often nerve-wracking. Closely followed by the lonely and laborious analysis and writing up phases. I have gathered a lot of data. Perhaps I kept going too long and missed the point of saturation, as very few new items seemed to be emerging. I have found the quantity of data subsequently a hindrance. For future research, I would certainly not seek out as many informants, but be much more selective and focussed, concentrating on narrower areas of interest. My main concern being that I have through the sampling and analysing processes (repetitive reading) and subsequent presentation of the findings of the case-studies, lost some of the detail. I have also potentially affected the analysis processes by looking to bring out the big themes rather than some of the nuanced facets. I would also imagine to the reader, my emerging fondness for skateboarding and caravanning comes through, whereas my slight antipathy towards surf-culture is a subtext.

My theoretical perspective on cool, now, is that it is a social construction. Relying on both competing and complementary micro and macro actions which cause and seek to resolve conflicts. One that relates to some sociological need for social survival. Changes in subjectivity and the mass availability of information, opinions, future projections and uses of historical discourses as politics, mean this is increasingly acting at ontological levels. My perspective, towards cool at the start of this journey was more related to everyday experiences of things, people and cultural artefacts rather than more profound philosophical connections. The coolness of things revolving around their superficial features rather than the deeper laying meanings that they represent to the
consumer’s subjectivity as some projected aura. I, therefore, believe my theoretical contribution is to lift the current consumer research theoretical conversation on cool from factor-analysis (i.e. ‘autonomy’, ‘fashionable desirability’, or ‘narcissism’) to a more profound level of meaning. Cool might often seem mingled with hazards, but if used positively offers hope for progressive change. While I accept some of the concepts presented in this thesis are stronger than others, I have always believed that the enjoyable thing about marketing is having ideas, which hopefully sparks others to develop them further. Perhaps some of mine will trigger other scholars to develop them beyond my capabilities or the scope of this thesis. Forming the basis of future research and publications.

In terms of what’s next? I am not sure, I think I would like to research live business contexts with consumers. Whether this straddles academic research and consultancy I am not sure. I have missed the business world terribly as well. I have realised that I need both.
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