

Chapter 4:

Mobility and Connections:

In and Beyond the Dutch Punk Scene

The Dutch punk scene is characterised by connectivity and mobility within and beyond artificial national borders. As we saw in chapter 3, from the moment that punk began Dutch punks have been drawing their influences from elsewhere; the UK, the United States, and Germany in particular. When the Netherlands started to produce its own bands, fanzines, and established its own punk centres, these forms of culture began to feed into the now global flows of punk. This chapter will extend the historical mapping of the Dutch scene (Chapter 3) by situating it spatially.

The legacy of the Dutch punk and squatting scenes' historical connections around the world will be developed in this chapter, as punk participants' mobility is unpicked as a facet and instrument of global cultural flow. Mobility will be discussed in the context of day-to-day travelling for scene activities, of bands' touring practices, and of participants' resettlement both within the country and internationally. The structural factors which both enable and constrain this mobility and the power dynamics at play will be uncovered through these discussions.

The chapter sets out with the understanding that the Dutch scene is 'peripheral' to the 'core' original punk scenes of the UK and the United States. However, it further develops the multiple levels at which core-peripheral relationships work. On a national level a core-periphery hierarchy has developed between the cities in the well connected

central region and the more distant cities of the north. Furthermore, within the 'peripheral' north, a city such as Groningen is positioned as central to other smaller conurbations. On an international level the Dutch scene is situated as part of a privileged North West European scene, which enjoys heightened connectivity in comparison to more 'peripheral' South and Eastern European scenes.

Moreover, the importance of personal relationships in making and maintaining the connections that help to enable mobility will be uncovered, with reference in particular to touring practices between the Netherlands and the United States.

Processes of mobility and connections feed into participants' own spatial conceptualisations of their scene. This chapter uncovers how heightened mobility might erase the idea of a local scene for some Dutch punk participants, whilst for others a core-periphery hierarchy can reinforce a sense of pride in a local scene.

The chapter will begin by discussing theories of cultural flow, particularly in relation to mobility. It suggests a model of rhizomatic connectedness shaped by centre-periphery inequalities. These concepts will be applied to the discussions of mobility highlighted by Dutch punk participants and my own experiences of fieldwork in the scene.

Cultural flow: mobility and connections

In Chapter 2 we saw how subcultural research has focused on interactions between the 'global' and the 'local', and that this has given rise to a number of conceptual frameworks including 'glocal' (Mitchell, 1998; Pilkington, 2004) and 'translocal' (Bennett and Peterson, 2004; Hodkinson, 2004). However, in order to reground approaches to the geographical mapping of a scene, I will instead highlight how

individuals' relationships to mobility and space create a sense of place. This chapter will therefore follow Crossley (2008) and Massey's (1993) lead in highlighting individual instances of mobility and personal connections as important to understanding the transmission of subcultural practices and the construction of the spatial. The flow of culture is, here, embodied (Casey, 1996) by these individuals and their movements, highlighting the way in which culture flows in a rhizomatically connected manner (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987] 2003), but cannot be extricated from hierarchies of power in multi-levelled core-peripheral relationships (Hannerz, 1992; Massey, 1993; O'Connor, 2004).

The importance of mobility to shaping cultural flow in a globalised world was discussed in Chapter 2. Appadurai (1996) highlights the role of migration, whilst Massey (1993) widens this to include everyday instances of mobility. This chapter will discuss both of these aspects in respect to participants' mobility. Kennedy (2010) highlighted the multifaceted way in which local lives function in relation to globalised cultural flows. He argues that globalisation debates have not placed enough emphasis on the role of the local in affecting individuals' interaction with the global, nor how this then impacts global flows. Individuals need to be recognised as micro-actors in both constructing and understanding their place in a local and in a global world. This chapter will therefore embed individuals' 'subcultural' mobility within, and not as distinct from, wider 'mainstream' mobility (Pilkington et al., 2014: 210).

In arguing against the core-periphery idea of global cultural flow, Deleuze and Guattari ([1987] 2003) offer a concept based on connectedness (Smart, 2007, see Chapter 2). They suggest a model of 'rhizomes', which "ceaselessly [establish] connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances

relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles” (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987] 2003: 7). They argue that a rhizomatic model for culture, based on biological rootstocks, ‘exposes’ the hierarchical ‘arborescent’ culture (representing the core-periphery model) for what it is: linear, binary and unidirectional in the manner of a family tree. The rhizome model can instead be understood on varying levels: allowing flow between different cultures, different forms of culture, and different understandings of one form of culture. There may be high levels of interrelatedness, whilst retaining the possibility of multiple individual iterations: “[t]he wisdom of the plants: even when they have roots, there is always an outside where they form a rhizome with something else” (11). A rhizomatic model allows for an in-depth understanding of the complexity of cultural interactions. However, this chapter suggests that breaking completely from the core-periphery model problematically erases inequality in the ‘flow’ and production of culture (Massey, 1993; Pries, 2005). As such this chapter will draw out the rhizomatic connectedness of individuals and explore how this shapes cultural flow, but will also highlight the ways in which core-periphery inequalities remain and are maintained through these processes.

This understanding of cultural flow is particularly pertinent to the ways in which inequalities of mobility contribute to participants’ understandings of their scene as either local, or not. Shields (1991) wrote of how a *sense of place* is constructed by individuals, depending on the ways in which they interact with a location. Myths of place may build up over time through discourses of individualised senses. These discourses then shape the construction of the space and the sense of community. Massey (1993) considers this in the context of mobility. She argues that space is not only moved *through*, but is constructed *by* these movements and each individual’s

relationship to the sense of place. “The uniqueness of a place, or a locality [...] is constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations of social relations, social processes, experiences and understandings. [...] Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” (66). The multiplicity of individuals’ construction of space will be highlighted throughout this chapter.

An important element of subcultural mobility, especially in regard to touring practices (see below), is that of individual personal connections and relationships. Crossley (2008) has done some important work connecting this to mobility and the transmission of cultural practice. He attributed the development of the ‘post/punk’ scene in Manchester to connections formed between individuals in London and Manchester. The first important moment came when Howard Devoto and Peter McNeish decided to travel from Manchester to London to check out a band (the Sex Pistols) that they had read about in the *New Musical Express* paper. In London they met Malcolm McLaren and promised to organise a trip to Manchester for the Sex Pistols. The resulting two gigs at the Lesser Free Trade Hall have a place in Manchester’s punk folklore for being where a ‘critical mass’ of interested parties met, leading to the formation of the Manchester post-punk scene. Bands such as the Buzzcocks, Joy Division, and The Fall formed soon after these events. Crossley’s work highlights the importance of personal connections within a scene, demonstrating that these can be formed between localities and that individuals’ mobility can be key in the transmission and development of culture.

Crossley suggested that both of his network analyses of British punk (2008, 2009) provide crucial sociological understandings of the development of subcultural

practices. He argued that networks of individuals are the basis on which the mechanisms which resulted in punk (and post-punk) operated (2008). Whilst this is valuable work towards grounding the production of culture in human interaction, the formulation of relationships into network analysis oversimplified what are inherently messy and individual instances of connection. His reliance on a limited selection of histories of the scene, with an overrepresentation of books centred on either the Sex Pistols (Sabin, 1999) or The Clash results in a perpetuation of these histories and the erasure of other key players in early punk¹ (Namaste, 2000). Whilst Crossley's work does illustrate cultural flow based on individuals' movements and social relations, it doesn't interrogate the power relations in place/created by these processes, and moreover reinforces these power narratives within academia, unchecked. I therefore shall not adopt a network analysis, but instead draw attention to the moments at which personal relationships have had particularly important effects on participants' mobility and the global flow of culture.

Mobility and locality in the Dutch punk scene

Structural aspects of mobility

Before discussing specific examples of how scene participants' mobility may affect the spread and development of punk, it is pertinent to consider the wider societal structures that enable this mobility. A specific location can greatly affect the scene that grows around it, as shown in work on Bristol trip hop (Webb, 2007) and also in S. Cohen's (2007) discussion of the production of place through music (and music through place) in Liverpool. This section will highlight a number of factors that have had an

effect on Dutch punk, but it does by no means constitute an exhaustive list. Instead it represents factors which have been raised as important by participants.

The Netherlands' punk scene has been affected by the geography of the country. Its small size and the short distances between neighbouring cities enable easy overlap between punks and bands from different locales. This is particularly true of the densely populated '*Randstad*' central-western area of the country where the 'big four' cities (Amsterdam, Utrecht, the Hague and Rotterdam) all lie around (or under) one hour's travel from each other. Gregor commented that this increased the regularity with which bands would meet up with each other: "any band who also play reasonably often and who are on tour a lot you're bound to know because you always bump into each other [...] but of course The Netherlands is really small" (Gregor). This feeds into other structural factors, which leads to a blurring of the boundaries of the 'local'.

The Netherlands is an affluent Western European country. At a state-level this has allowed for a well-integrated public transport system. Also of note is the country's exceptionally flat landscape and excellent national network of cycle paths. In other words, the day-to-day possibilities for participants to be geographically mobile are high in the Netherlands. The ease of mobility around the country was a common theme among participants. Comments included the regularity of travelling by trains between large cities (facilitated by trains running throughout the night), in addition to which participants would often cycle long distances or drive to gigs elsewhere. Utrecht, already in a central position, is a major rail network hub. The ease of travelling elsewhere from Utrecht is one reason Gregor chose to live there. Similarly, Bart chose Nijmegen as a home because it is only 45 minutes by train from Eindhoven, and under 90 minutes from Amsterdam.

The mobility of the Dutch punk scene further extends beyond the borders of the Netherlands. This is facilitated by the country's membership of the European Union, and its participation in the Schengen Agreement. Residents of countries in the Schengen Area are able to travel freely across national boundaries, as there are no passport controls at their common borders. This enables much less complication for bands' touring, as well as for scene participants to attend gigs and experience punk outside the Netherlands.

In the late twentieth century the Netherlands was a popular destination for migrant workers and their families, and for asylum seekers. The 1950s onwards saw successive waves of immigration particularly from former Dutch colonies, Mediterranean countries and former Socialist states (Siegel and de Neubourg, 2011). As will be highlighted below, this has resulted in a number of punk participants with backgrounds and scene connections in other countries. This affects their own experiences of punk but has also shaped punk itself both in the Netherlands and abroad (Lohman, 2013).

These various geographical and socio-political structures inform the way in which participants relate to the spatial, thereby affecting the manner in which they create a sense of space, or myth of place (Shields, 1991). Most notably this can be seen in how different locations in the Netherlands have different levels of access to processes of mobility, affecting the way in which participants understand the existence of a *local* punk scene. In the hyper-connected 'core' cities the ease of mobility has led to a breaking down of local boundaries as participants understand the space of their scene to be wide and porous. In the more distant north participants' lower levels of mobility

create a local identity in which they understand themselves as peripheral to the rest of the country. These findings will be further elaborated below.

Travelling participants

The structural factors outlined above shape not only participants' sense of place, but also the very nature of the 'Dutch' punk scene. The ease of mobility in a small and well-connected country has resulted in a great deal of movement between various locations for 'scene interactions' which will be outlined below.

A number of participants talk of travelling regularly in order to attend gigs. On the Saturday prior to being interviewed, Theo had travelled from his home in Amsterdam to see TSOL play in Eindhoven. Sander also lives in Amsterdam, but will go to, "Nijmegen, Utrecht, Tilburg, if it's a really big band, then we'll hop in the car or on the train, no problem". Lotte also says that she will regularly travel for a gig. Indeed this was a practice in which I participated during fieldwork.

Just as participants are willing to travel beyond their local area in order to attend a show, they will also on occasion travel to another country to see bands play. Although, "then it has to be something quite special, sometimes we'll go to Antwerp, or Oberhausen or something" (Sander). Jasper was at the time considering a gig trip to Hamburg, and Bart an overnight trip to Berlin to follow a favourite band on tour.

Travelling outside one's local town in order to attend a gig is something which seems commonplace. However, it holds significance for theorisation on the nature of subcultural development. Traditional, locally bounded studies tend either to ignore this phenomenon or play it down, but such frequent gig trips play an active part in affecting

the development of the scene, and furthermore contribute to the disintegration of the 'local'.

The role of travelling is discussed by Hodkinson (2002) with regard to UK goth. Travel to other places in the UK² happened primarily for big club nights. Goth gigs are a less frequent occurrence than is the case within punk, although when they do occur they also attract 'translocal' crowds. The culmination of this is the twice-annual Whitby Gothic Weekend: an event which is a key meeting place for goths from all over the UK (and abroad). These translocal goths are mobile in a different way to the Dutch punks for whom travel is more part of their regular subcultural activity. "Regular club nights [...] tended to attract a minority of travelling goths, but mostly from within their region. [...] More goths travelled greater distance for less-frequent events" (101-2). By contrast, even the smallest Dutch punk events may draw their audience from a variety of locations.

The mobility of the Dutch punk scene can further be seen in the way that some bands are able to draw members from across the Netherlands, or, indeed, beyond. When Planet Eyelash were formed, they were initially based in Groningen: three of the four members lived there, with one travelling to rehearsals from nearby Leeuwarden. But the members of the band all left Groningen and by the time they sought a fifth member, being from Groningen no longer mattered. All members would travel by train from their separate cities to meet in Zwolle once a week to practice.

Bart and Gregor's bands have similarly been 'national' groups. Bart travelled an hour from Nijmegen to Diemen for his band practices. When Gregor's band began all of the members were based in Wageningen; they then spread out to Nijmegen, Utrecht and Amersfoort, before finally all settling in Utrecht together. Vitamin X, considered one of

the bigger and more successful 'Dutch' hardcore bands of the moment, has members who live in both the Netherlands and Germany. Whereas bands are often understood to be 'from' the town/city in which members live, these bands highlight how the link between band and place can be more complex.

Mobility changes the makeup of the audience at a gig, which brings into question the very notion of what constitutes the 'local'. Bart talks of the overlap in people who attend gigs in Eindhoven and Nijmegen: "[in Eindhoven] you actually bump into the same people as you meet in Nijmegen, well, the Netherlands are small, aren't they?" When asked about the scene in Utrecht, Gregor questioned the very notion of an *Utrecht* punk scene; "oh well, there are of course a few places where there is the occasional gig but in any case, you always get the same people coming and often [...] people from Nijmegen turn up and from Amsterdam and there is a sort of a solid base of people coming to the shows" (Gregor). For these participants it does not make much sense to talk of a *local* scene beyond the physical venues in which participation may take place.

The internal connectivity of the Dutch punk scene manifests itself, therefore, in a lack of identification with ideas of the 'local'. The lack of 'local' scenes creates a greater homogeneity in punk on a national level. This puts the Dutch scene in contrast with the way in which punk has developed in larger, less well-connected countries such as the United States or Russia. In these places, there is much greater diversity between punk from different regions or even cities. The United States has, historically, produced many variations of punk, with very distinct forms of hardcore emerging in California (a first wave of stripped down, political, masculine music), in the (white) suburbs of Washington D.C. (where collective and DIY approaches were foregrounded and straight edge first emerged), and in New York (where Washington D.C.'s brand of straight edge

hardcore was combined with metal) (Thompson, 2004). In Russia far flung cities have bred very different scenes. Vorkuta (an ex-Gulag mining city in the Arctic north with rapid deindustrialisation and depopulation) has a small scene notable for the high levels of crossover between alternative subcultures. St. Petersburg (the economically strong ex-capital) has many vibrant 'subscenes' where various genres and activisms intersect. Krasnodar (a city in the south with a strong agricultural and tourism based economy) has a large alternative scene which has been strongly influenced by punk (Pilkington, 2014b).

There is recognition amongst participants that this mobility is not always a positive feature of the scene. Mobility, coupled with highly active promoters, produces a number of drawbacks: "if you want to there's more than enough shows to go to, I just can't make all of them—unfortunately—[...] every night that you go out you spend money on the entrance and then after that you spend money on drinks and I can't afford it" (Theo). I regularly heard the complaint (coupled with the recognition of this as an inherently privileged 'problem') of there being 'too many gigs'. "[S]ometimes there is a [gig] in Amsterdam and in Nijmegen, [and one in] Utrecht and then [...] all those people who normally go to everything then have to choose and you'll end up having a lot of gigs with twenty [people] watching" (Gregor). The 'too many gigs' phenomenon is particularly problematic during a scene's 'lull' (see Chapter 3). More of those involved with punk at such a time are running and playing at the gigs themselves, leaving attendance scarce: particularly when attendees have so many options of gigs within travelling distance. This sets the scene in the geographically compact and well connected Netherlands as rather different to many other places where there is a greater tendency towards local shows attended by local punks (Thompson, 2004).

Peripheral locality

As noted by Massey (1993) and Pries (2005) mobility is not evenly distributed. Instead mobility privileges the most connected cities, such as those in the centre of the Netherlands. This creates a phenomenon by which, there still exist 'core' and 'peripheral' cities within an ostensibly rhizomatic Dutch scene. It was notable that in Groningen, which is two to three hours' travel from many other 'core' Dutch cities, there was a distinct feeling of isolation from the rest of the Netherlands. Whilst Groningen may be 'peripheral' to other Dutch cities, it also held a 'core' position within the northern region of the Netherlands, with punks from nearby Leeuwarden citing Groningen as their centre.

Lisa had lived in and participated in the punk scenes of both Nijmegen and Groningen and was able to compare how their locations within the country affected the scene. "Groningen is a bit more ... isolated. [...] I have the impression that for instance during the week there are not so many bands playing, just in the weekend. Here in Nijmegen there are a lot more, that's because you can travel here so easily from Arnhem or Utrecht or wherever" (Lisa).

This isolation has had a complex impact on Groningen; indeed, there is evidence that its peripherality has bred a greater sense of locality. It was the only place where I conducted fieldwork that participants felt there was a distinctly different scene from the rest of the country. Ruben, Lotte and Kosta all mentioned a distinct 'Northern'³, or '*Groningense*' scene, with Bram commenting "I think everyone here will tell you the same, [the] Groningen punk scene is nothing like the rest of Holland" (Bram).

Whilst it did not seem that participants based in Groningen were any *less* connected than those based elsewhere, their connections tended to be with others beyond—rather than within—the Netherlands (see below). Moreover it was the only place where there seemed to be a much stronger day-to-day punk community. This was based around the punk and rock bar Crowbar (the crowd had only recently settled here, having moved from Simplon in the 1980s-1990s, to Café Vera and then to Crowbar), where punks would meet many times a week. Participation seemed higher here than elsewhere in the Netherlands. In Groningen, a number of punks discussed the importance of supporting their *local* scene. In Groningen, therefore, there was a distinct *sense of place* (Shields, 1991) in which locality—and pride in that locality—was emphasised.

Mobility therefore creates rhizomatic networks nationally across the country. However, hierarchies between ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ locations remain. Moreover, mobility affects participants’ constructions of ‘locally’ bounded scenes, actively erasing the sense of the local where mobility is high, and contributing to a stronger ‘local’ scene where it is not.

Touring and the building of relationships

The mobility of punks is reflected in the touring practices of Dutch bands. This form of mobility is often founded upon personal translocal or transnational connections with other punks around the country, continent, or globe. These practices form wider rhizomatic connections through which particular cultural practices may be intersubjectively developed. Hodkinson (2002) suggests that “travelling participants [(of UK goth)] were all liable to influence and be influenced by their counterparts in

other areas of the country. [...] The national and sometimes international tours of even small goth bands provided further translocal influence” (106-7). Touring is therefore a key facet to cultural flow.

This section will describe international touring practices of Dutch bands. It will first highlight how structural similarities between scenes in North West Europe foster greater connectivity and mobility. It then unpicks how this feeds into and perpetuates a core-periphery hierarchy that extends *across* Europe. A discussion of how touring practices extend *beyond* Europe will focus on the crucial aspect of personal global relationships between punks in order to facilitate tours, and consider the implications for a *Dutch* scene that has such a globally connected position.

Touring in Europe

Touring bands in the Netherlands often find themselves playing outside the country very rapidly. This is partly due to the small nature of both the scene and the country; “Holland is too small [to do shows every weekend]” (Theo). Larry charts the rapidity with which his band played further and further afield: “[a]fter the first demo we started playing outside of our own town. And then after our first album we started playing all over the country and eventually we went to other countries”; “our first gig abroad was in Belgium in Oostende and we really did a lot of gigs in Belgium”; “we went to England, well we had some shows in France, [...] But we also went to Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, Romania [for] one gig, Slovakia, Norway and Sweden” (Larry). Larry’s band started off playing a few ‘nearby’ international gigs before very quickly expanding to play gigs across a large portion of Europe.

The historical connections and communication between punks, rooted in the squatting scene's networks (see Chapter 3) mean that it is easy for punks to travel and for a 'young' band to get gigs abroad: "we had an attitude of 'yeah lets first focus on where we already have a base', mainly Benelux and Germany" (Sander). The sharing of international connections means that an overwhelming majority of the bands that feature in this project have toured—at the very least—in North West Europe. Even a small, short-lived band such as Jolanda's first group, who never recorded their music, toured "once five days in the Netherlands and Belgium, and once we went to Germany for two days" (Jolanda). For some bands, dates played abroad were such a regular occurrence that they weren't seen as anything special. "We do odd days here and there too, but I don't really count those!" (Gregor).

Whilst Groningen is somewhat disconnected in the Dutch punk context, it is not disconnected from international networks. The scene in Groningen maintains especially close ties with Oldenburg in Germany, due both to historical connections and its proximity⁴. This foothold in Germany affects Groningen bands' touring opportunities. Compared to other Dutch bands, Groningen punks tend to tour internationally in Germany before they have toured much in the Netherlands itself: "you can compare [Groningen] a lot more with the German punk scene, which is not that weird because we're more or less on the border. [...] None of our bands played a lot in Holland either, we always went over the border straight away" (Bram). Not only does Bram note how proximity affects touring chances, but also how this affects Groningen punks' sense of place: as closer in identity as well as in distance to Germany's punks. Local identity and transnational connections both affect the rhizomatic network. Bram's observation was backed up by the regularity with which participants discussed touring in Germany and

other neighbouring countries; Suzanne, Maarten, Jacob, Ruben, Jaap, Henk, Bram, Wim all discussed this.

Andre pointed out the importance of structural factors that help support punk and which also work to facilitate communication and homogeneity. He identifies a number of countries in North West Europe with similar traditions in regards to culture and live music: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium. These countries, all of which Andre and his band have toured extensively, share similar traditions of government-subsidised art, culture, and youth centres. These youth centres are often run by young volunteers who regularly put on shows, giving new generations the skills needed to run events well. Moreover, the countries also share similar models of large cultural squats that are central to the punk scene in terms of providing living space and gig venues, and enabling the mobility and connectivity that comes with touring.

The centrality of squats for live music and culture has also played a role in driving up the quality of non-squat facilities, which need to provide similar amenities in order to compete. Andre explains that: “Most venues [in Germany] also have somewhere to sleep, they have a backstage and they make sure you have free beer backstage and there is a kitchen” (Andre). This means that it is relatively easy for promoters to run events cheaply, something that is important in a subculture that has a complicated relationship with commercialism (O’Hara, 1999) and where high ticket prices are frowned upon. Andre describes the squat history and state sponsored youth centres as the ‘two legs’ which hold up the scene. The mobility of participants and bands throughout the Benelux and Germanic countries of North West Europe, coupled with

some structural similarities has led to a well-integrated and well-connected scene in which new bands are able to very quickly become 'international touring bands'.

Andre notes the differences between the structures available to promoters in North West Europe compared with elsewhere in the continent. A less developed squatting movement, along with fewer subsidies to support culture, affects the punk scene. In France or Italy it is common for a small punk band to play in a bar as tailored venues are too expensive. The use of bars often means that whilst the promoter doesn't always have to pay for the gig space, the lack of extra facilities (such as bedrooms and kitchen space) leads to other costs for running events. This increases the financial risk of promoting punk events, ultimately impacting on the scene.

A number of research participants discussed their experiences of touring beyond the affluent North West of Europe. Andre noted the marked difference between gigs in Northern and Southern Italy in similar terms to the way a few participants (Gregor, Larry) talked about Eastern Europe: as the area was poorer, it was harder for a promoter to make money enough to pay bands to cover their travel cost. As a result, Dutch bands don't tour there as often.

This inequality does not just affect North Western bands' touring prospects, but also impacts the bands which come out of these scenes. For bands from Eastern Europe, where the average income and cost of living is significantly lower than in the Netherlands, it is harder to cover the costs of touring even in North West Europe. During fieldwork I did not see a single band from Eastern Europe. Conversely, I saw a number of bands from other Benelux and Germanic countries, as well as from Scandinavia.

These structural inequalities set up another hierarchical relationship between an affluent 'core' in North Western Europe which has a good infrastructure to support the scene, and the 'peripheral' rest of Europe whose scenes do not have access to these resources. "For it does seem that mobility and control over mobility both reflect and reinforce power. It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people move more than others, some have more control than others. It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people" (Massey, 1993: 62). Uneven cultural flow actively affects both 'core' and 'peripheral' countries.

Conversely Dutch bands who *did* tour Eastern Europe tended to enjoy these gigs above others. The lower instance of gigs (especially featuring touring bands) meant that attendees were more likely to make a particular effort to enjoy their evening. Bands often received warm responses from the crowd; Maxim described the audience in Russia as 'wild' and 'enthusiastic'. For some participants this was reason enough to tour further afield, despite the financial losses. Larry commented, "you'll make a loss but you will really have a great time. People also really appreciate you take the trouble to come" (Larry).

Menno describes two illegal gigs with The Ex in Socialist Eastern Europe in the 1980s (at a time when punk was banned) as the best in his life; the energy surpassed anything he had ever experienced before or since. The crowd's enjoyment and his experience of meeting people living in the Communist Bloc was perhaps particularly influential for Menno, who had previously labelled the Rondos' politics as 'communist' (see Lohman, 2013). We see therefore how cultural flow affects not just subculture but also other facets of life, such as political engagement (see Chapter 6).

Touring beyond Europe

Touring beyond mainland Europe is more complicated due to the necessary extra preparations and travel costs. Although bands tour more distant countries less frequently, this still forms an important moment in the life of a band. The United States, in particular, is a draw for many of those involved in the Dutch punk scene. This may be due to the way that American punk has dominated the global scene for many years with various waves of hardcore and their dominance of pop punk. With such a mythological status, the United States becomes a highly desirable place to tour, therefore reinforcing its status as a 'core' punk scene.

The Groningen scene has well-established links with the Americas. Connections have been made, particularly with the United States, by Groningen-based individuals. One particular relationship has shaped both the touring opportunities for later generations of punks, and particular musical forms that punk has taken in Groningen.

A connection with Portland's Dead Moon originated when those who worked at Groningen's Café Vera decided to bring them over for a special gig. In order to celebrate the city's 925th Anniversary, money had been provided for cultural endeavours, giving those at Café Vera the freedom to indulge themselves with gigs that they would ordinarily not be able to afford to put on.

We flew in Dead Moon, our most favourite unknown band, from Portland, Oregon [for the release gig]. They came to Europe for one gig only, and that was here. And since then they played about twenty times. [...] They always started the[ir] tour[s] in the cellar bar with like [a] free secret gig, but of course all the people... knew [about] it. It was always packed and sweaty and they [would] play for two and a half hours. And the last gig of the tour was [always] in the main hall. [...] They

played like thirteen times in the main hall and about maybe nine times in the downstairs (Jaap).

It was this musical connection that resulted in a transatlantic friendship between members of Dead Moon, the rest of Portland's "punk hearted" 'rock and roll' scene (Jaap), and individuals in Groningen. It facilitated visits and tours in both directions; and thereby enabled the creation of yet further networks of contacts.

In 1992 Jacob and Jaap travelled to America to play at their friends' (Fred and Toody from Dead Moon) 25th Wedding Anniversary party. They then toured the USA's West Coast. Wim and Bram also discussed American connections stemming from a joint tour undertaken by Fleas and Lice and the Boycot in 1998. They started in Canada and travelled down America's East Coast before finishing the tour in Mexico.

The personal relationships that have flourished with these connections have further shaped the Groningen punk scene. The interest in Dead Moon's style of punk rock 'n' roll in Groningen meant that Café Vera also booked bands such as The Gun Club, who are mentioned by three participants as particularly influential to both their tastes and those in the wider local scene (Lotte). This heightened interest in rock 'n' roll influenced punk was something that was particular to the Groningen scene when compared to the rest of the Netherlands. Indeed, this musical differentiation from the rest of the country was one of the markers by which Kosta noted the Groningen scene as particularly local. Its embeddedness in global cultural flows and the specificity of important personal relationships helps to define Groningen's sense of locality. Moreover, we see an instance of how punk's meaning can shift by intersubjective sharing through different communication interlocks (see Chapter 2).

The contested importance of locality within globalized musical practices, and the relationship between a city and the production of and promotion of its 'sound', has been discussed in depth by S. Cohen in relation to Liverpool (2007). These themes have been further explored in Lashua et al.'s (2014) book, *Sounds and the City* which recognises that these localities affect global practice just as globality affects the local: "the increasing mobility of individuals, cultural practice, and ideas, and the emergence of global networks such as the Internet, made popular music places more common and yet more diverse. In this century, popular music has become a leisure form that seems to transcend borders and it has reshaped the postmodern city" (Lashua et al., 2014: 5).

Touring mobility becomes a form of rhizomatic cultural flow in which Groningen's local punk is shared globally, and punk from elsewhere shapes the Groningen scene in turn. Moreover, these historical connections impact later generations' touring opportunities. Whereas non-Groningen based Andre commented that, "America is really hard to go to for a tour" (Andre), Jolanda reports that (for the Groningen bands that she knows), "there are very many bands who go on tour to America really quickly" (Jolanda). This difference highlights how trans-national friendships can affect the touring opportunities in different locations.

Practices of touring are based on the intersection of structural factors that constrain and allow touring, and the personal connections between individuals. As highlighted by the example of Groningen and the United States, opportunities to play abroad are often based on contacts that the scene has. These build up over time. Menno describes how, when he played with the Rondos in the 1970s the Dutch scene was relatively isolated from the rest of the world, mediated only by the (punk) travellers that did pass through, letters to foreign bands, and imported LPs and fanzines. The

Rondos played the majority of their gigs in the Netherlands. By the time Menno played with The Ex between 1985 and 1987, however, he only performed *outside* the Netherlands. He describes how the punk scene had become better connected throughout the world. This 'community' came into its own through looking after bands and putting on performances for bands worldwide. It seems therefore that global punk touring practices emerged after the 'first' wave of punk was over, and as punk became more rooted in squatting culture and DIY practices.

Processes of reciprocation feed into touring practices and the personal relationships and connections that develop. Many of the participants of this research not only are in bands that have toured abroad, but also have acted as promoters who have brought foreign bands to play in the Netherlands. "I think there are also a lot of bands [...] from Nijmegen who tour abroad, so in that way they also make contacts. And then they set up a gig for a foreign band in the hope they can play somewhere else through [that connection]" (Lisa). Erik similarly took a very pragmatic approach to this:

If people help me out then I'll help them out even if they aren't friends of mine. So if they do a show for [my band] Kensington Arms, I do a show for them, that's my policy. And of course when you are on tour with bands and you come back home you get a lot of emails from bands that you met on tour [...] and then it depends if I see the value in it. [If] they can do shows for me then I'll do it [...] but I have to get something from that too cos I want to have cos I want to let my own band grow too, that's the that's why I do it (Erik).

Processes of reciprocation are therefore important in the punk scene, particularly amongst DIY networks. This can also be seen in Ventsel's (2008) work on reciprocation in the alternative punk economy in Germany.

Whilst accounts from my participants focused largely on the normality of travelling to events such as gigs, the travelling process of bands touring is more embedded in subcultural and social practices of affect. Hollows and Milestone (1998) discuss the way in which the Northern Soul scene in the UK is based around travel, with participants gathering infrequently for events at particular locations. This constructs the process of travelling as part of subcultural practice and the building of affective bonds between members.

This is further reflected in the number of participants who would spend extra time on tour with *other* bands, usually friends' bands, going along in any capacity in which they could. Gregor and Bart have gone on other bands' tours to help with the driving. Lotte toured for 10 years with Zeke and Motörhead selling merchandise and acting as band manager: "yeah, it's a good life" (Lotte). And Jeroen will fulfil whatever a touring band needs: "It depends; tour manager, driver, merch. It really depends on which band, that's maybe my 'thing' in punk [rather than playing in a band]. [...] MDC or GBH are bands with whom I have toured as well [...] you get to see all aspects of it" (Jeroen).

Some, such as Jeroen, enjoyed touring in order to see as many sides of punk and as many places as possible. Indeed, many participants, when asked about where they had toured, would reel off a list of countries they had 'collected', "I think I've had every country [in Europe], except Ireland" (Jeroen).

Primarily however, respondents remarked upon the sociability of touring, of touring as being about building relationships. Jacob, for example, noted touring as an opportunity to spend time with other "like-minded people" (Jacob). Mark noted how much he enjoyed getting to the bottom of how 'punk' can be understood differently and

why this was (see Chapter 5). Lotte described how important it was for her to have friends all over the world, borne out of connections from the Groningen punk scene.

That's the nice thing about the punk scene here, there are a lot of connections with England, Ireland, Scotland, a lot of people who know each other. [...] Many friends and from all over the place, also America and Germany. That's the nice thing about the punk scene; if someone drops by like "I am a friend of such and such and I need somewhere to stay", yeah it's a really nice scene (Lotte).

Certainly these experiences suggest that in this sense the Dutch scene is similar to those in Russia where "[f]riendship is central to punk belonging; arguably it is the primary affective bond on scenes" (Pilkington et al., 2014: 200). Moreover, there's the *potential* of all the bonds that you have not yet made: the knowledge that punks you have not yet met are also your friends.

Touring and travelling for gigs, both nationally and internationally, forms an important part of subcultural activity for those involved in punk in the Netherlands. High levels of mobility are supported by a variety of factors, including the size and wealth of the country and its good transport connections. This feeds into the connections that are made on a personal level between participants in various locations. These relationships help aid further mobility, and thus affect the manner in which cultural practices spread and are shared across distances. Influences are drawn from an ever wider array of people and places, altering the nature of punk. Differences between 'centres' and 'peripheries' in some instances become less pronounced through the connectivity and mobility of the participants; however, structural inequalities can also foster greater divides.

Resettlement

An important part of mobility in a globalised world, beyond more mundane or everyday travelling practices, are processes of—and opportunities for—migration and resettlement. As discussed in Chapter 2, for Appadurai (1996) this was a key aspect to modern forms of globalisation. Whereas people's migration and the role of this in transporting and spreading cultural forms was nothing new, Appadurai argued that the level of it was. Much has been written on the effects of immigration on culture (Hall, 1990; Hannerz, 1992; Appadurai, 1996), however this has often focused on music (or other cultural forms) that reinforce migrant or diasporic identities, particularly in a new locale. For example, Hebdige (1979) discusses Rastafarian culture in the UK, and Dudrah (2002) focuses on British Bhangra.

Little research focuses on migrants who *don't* participate in cultural forms related to their heritage. However, a few exceptions show that this is a crucial area for further research. Miller (2010) studied migrants' adoption of blue jeans as a marker of a 'post-identity' expression of ordinariness rather than a staking out of their difference. Hall (1990) noted that cultural identity is rooted in past, present, *and* future. Shared cultural roots may form one aspect of cultural identity (in the case of his study, that of the black diaspora), but crucial intersections with new positions and future possibilities place these migrant identities as open to change. Hall and Miller offer the opportunity to understand migrants' cultural identity as in flux and thereby open up the possibility of the adoption or adaptation of new cultural markers—or non-markers—after resettling. Migrants need not participate in cultural forms related to their heritage in order to bring new cultural understandings to bear on their new social worlds.

In further unpicking the role of migration and other forms of movement, it is crucial to understand the importance of the individual and their body to cultural formation. “To be located, culture also has to be *embodied*” (Casey, 1996: 34). Culture is thus located as inextricably linked to the body. We therefore need to interrogate how these bodies move and carry culture between locations, shaping those locations as they enter them. An individual who was involved in punk in one country and relocates will bring with them alternative understandings of what punk can be, shifting and broadening the possibilities for punk intersubjectively with their new punk contacts. Moreover, if the individual in question retains links and relationships with those still residing in their former locations, that cultural flow may move in more than one direction (Lohman, 2013). This section will uncover how processes of international and national resettlement have affected the Dutch punk scene.

Within the Netherlands

One of the most common reasons for resettlement amongst participants was in order to study. Discussion of this was especially prevalent amongst those participants who were in their mid-to-late twenties. The majority of participants of this age group had either been to–or were currently studying at–university. This reserves this form of mobility for those who tend to be from a more privileged background. For most this involved moving to their chosen university city. Indeed, many of the key locations for this research were also university towns. Andre discussed the impact of the university on Nijmegen’s punk scene: “one way or another, because there is a university, lots of young people come here and that’s good for a scene and a reason that people remain settled here” (Andre). The importance of the punk scene in their university town was

mentioned by a few of the research participants. Some, as Andre predicts, get involved and remain in the city for the scene. For others it is the scene itself that affects university choice.

Lisa had applied for her PhD study in three cities, but said “I *did* think beforehand, ‘Nijmegen, that has a lot of cool punk bands’, and also because Nijmegen is politically far left I thought, ‘that’s surely a town where I will feel at home’” (Lisa). This was even more of an important factor in Lotte’s decision; “I really came to Groningen for the music scene, for the *city*. Twenty years ago [...] I really wanted to study journalism but you couldn't [study that] in Groningen. But I really wanted to go to Groningen so I came to university here and studied Dutch language and linguistics [instead]” (Lotte). Andre, after studying in Maastricht, moved to Nijmegen due to band commitments. Basing these choices on punk highlights the commitment on the part of the participant to the scene, contributing to their authenticity, according to the markers developed by Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1990) (see Chapter 2). These decisions would impact the scene due to the new relationships and connections that would be created after each resettlement.

Those participants who were or had been part of the squatting scene were also particularly mobile. Squatting comes with a low level of housing security; even when squatting was legal in the Netherlands squats often had a short life span. The more permanent squats had revolving doors in terms of residents. As a result of this instability, squatters would relocate regularly. Whilst this was often within the same city, a lack of ties rooted in their choice to squat afforded individuals many more opportunities to relocate nationally or internationally. Luka, Wouter and Sander have lived in squats across the Netherlands. Marieke talks of the ease of moving to

Amsterdam when she was already connected to the squat scene in Arnhem: “I just [hitchhiked] to the biggest squat in Amsterdam [...] and asked ‘have you got room?’ Haha! I knew people indirectly; someone had said ‘well if you ask if so-and-so is at home then it’ll be okay’” (Marieke). Similarly to Lotte, above, Marieke was able to rely on an extended friendship network of squatters and punks.

For Johan and Mark, their experiences of living abroad were tied up with their positions in the squat scenes. Johan had spent most of his adult life moving between squats, both throughout the Netherlands, and beyond. Initially he was involved in the hippy counter culture, before becoming a ‘freak’ in the 1970s. Just before discovering punk he was living in an artists’ commune in Italy, keeping in contact with the Dutch cultural world via radio, newspapers and books. Mark also spent most of his life moving between squats, within the Netherlands, across Europe and also in America. In the early 1990s he spent two and a half years living in New York. During this time he was able to form many new connections, keen to learn from other participants how squatting and punk were differently interpreted in different places. “[It’s always intrigued me that] all these things happen but they’re all slightly different and people go about them differently. The codes in punk rock were slightly different [in different places] – and the aesthetics. In some places it’s perfectly fine for the goths to hang out with the punks and in other cities that’s unthinkable” (Mark). Punk had emerged differently within these different communication interlocks. However, in being mobile and able to resettle, these punks are able to forge embodied (Casey, 1996) connections between scenes, becoming an added node through which intersubjective subcultural understandings emerge. They influence the cultural contexts in each new location they go to as new experiences interact with the old.

International resettlement

The ease of migration within the European Union, as well as a welcoming immigration policies for much of the twentieth century, meant that a number of participants had experiences of living in other countries for extended periods of time. Some, such as Johan and Mark, were Dutch citizens living abroad; others moved to the Netherlands. Each of these participants have had their experience and understanding of (punk) culture altered by these new influences, bringing new dimensions to their participation in the Netherlands.

For a couple of participants, the opportunity to live abroad was as part of their university studies. Lisa resided in Ghent, Belgium for six months, marking the occasion by organising her first punk gig as a leaving party. Daan talks about his study trip to Russia in 1991-1992 in terms of the way in which he felt his straight edge identity and politics were challenged (Lohman, 2013). He returned home and told his bandmate (of the straight edge, communist band, Man Lifting Banner) that “straight edge is dead”. Daan felt that such identity politics were fruitless in the face of real poverty and need in the former Soviet Union. Thus the shape of punk in the Netherlands was subtly altered by Daan’s experience abroad.

Lotte’s experience of living abroad came through her involvement in punk. After booking a tour for English punk band The X-Rays, she fell in love, and began a relationship with a member of the band, moving to Nottingham as a result. During this time she got involved in the UK punk scene and solidified some of the links between Groningen and the UK.

Lisa, Daan, Lotte, Johan and Mark all talk of their time living abroad as having important influences on their lives. By reconnecting with the scene in the Netherlands on their return, these international influences permeate the Dutch scene.

There are also examples of individuals who have relocated *to* the Netherlands whose life trajectories have influenced their punk participation. As highlighted earlier, much has been written on the effects of immigration on culture, but little attention has been focused on subcultural participation.

Maxim's formative experiences were in Russia, but he moved at the age of thirteen and his teenage years were spent in Amsterdam. He attended a school for the children of migrants from all over the world to learn Dutch, and it was through this international group of friends that Maxim first discovered punk. As a group they became involved with the local Amsterdam scene.

Luka moved to Amsterdam during the break-up of Yugoslavia. He was nineteen when he moved, and had first discovered and become involved with punk seven years earlier in his home town of Belgrade. Thus, when he became involved in Dutch punk, he was drawing on years of experience in participating, organising gigs and making fanzines. He talks of being disappointed to discover that when he first moved to Amsterdam there was relatively little going on compared both to Belgrade and to his expectations.

I kind of thought "oo Amsterdam, BGK and all those old bands were from here and with all the squats it must be like a lot of things happening, a lot of shows, a lot of people going on in this music". When I moved here there was like nothing going on, there was a few people doing a few things, a few people from the older generations you know. Very few younger kids (Luka).

However, within a few years he was part of a young and highly active punk scene in Amsterdam. Vitamin X, the band he formed with Maxim, has become one of the Netherlands' foremost straight edge hardcore bands.

Kosta, like Luka, was a little older when he left Serbia in 1991. He had been involved in punk in Serbia for twelve years before he left for a short stay in Berlin, followed by ten years in Groningen. He had been in Amsterdam for almost ten years again when this research was conducted. He also described encountering very different forms of punk upon moving to the Netherlands. The scene in Serbia in the 1980s was characterized by a wider state socialist context in which openly displaying a 'punk identity' (or indeed any subcultural affiliation) carried with it a heightened risk that was not part of the Western punk scene. The threat of trouble with the authorities required a greater dedication on the part of those who were involved.

Nico first got involved with punk in Portugal. He moved to the Netherlands at the age of twenty-eight, ten years prior to the interview. He continues to apply a punk ethic to every aspect of his life (see Chapter 6).

For these participants, punk played a significant role in helping them integrate into their new community. For Maxim it was through his identity as a migrant learning the local language that he discovered punk, and through punk that he got to know others with similar experiences, along with many others of all backgrounds. For Luka, Kosta and Nico punk formed a constant in a time of upheaval, although all talk of marked differences between their experiences of punk in their countries of origin and their experiences of punk in the Netherlands. Having already acquired knowledge of 'how to be a punk', and therefore already possessing subcultural capital, they were quickly accepted into new social groups. These participants all became involved in the

Dutch punk scene, bringing to it their own understanding of what punk is. This illustrates Deleuze and Guattari's ([1987] 2003) argument that cultural rhizomes allow for individually specific iterations of punk whilst drawing on a common 'root structure'.

The continued contact that participants maintained with people who remained in Russia, Serbia and Portugal adds yet another level of cultural connectedness. These contacts enabled Vitamin X's tours in Russia. Meanwhile, Kosta now regularly organises cultural exchanges between Serbia and the Netherlands, and has used his connections to promote transnational music and art events for the Anti War Action Foundation for Former Yugoslavia.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued for a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which cultural influence may 'flow' in a subculture such as punk. By drawing both on Hannerz's (1992) understanding of a centre/periphery, and Deleuze and Guattari's ([1987] 2003) 'rhizome' model we are able to gain a better understanding of the complexity by which cultural practices are intersubjectively shared, whilst maintaining a view of the inherent inequality of the system.

The Dutch punk scene is situated as part of a global subculture in which mobility, connections and relationships are important to the communication and spread of punk ideas and influences. Mobility has been discussed in various formats, from the day-to-day movements of participants for scene interactions, to the more exceptional experiences of touring, to practices of resettlement. It has argued that the mobility of participants is a particular characteristic of the Dutch punk scene due to its geographical position, and that historical connections developed through squatting as

well as punk networks have further aided this mobility. All elements of mobility have been investigated in terms of the structures that allow or constrain them as well as the impacts that movement has on the Dutch punk scene.

The chapter also investigated how this mobility works to shape participants' understanding of the space that is 'their' punk scene: whether that is a porous, nationally connected core scene, or a local, northern peripheral scene. It has further placed the Dutch scene as a whole in a 'central', privileged position in comparison to southern and eastern European countries. However, it maintains that whilst core-peripheral relationships are inherently unequal and power imbalances are consistently reinforced, these are far from one-way relationships and that culture may also flow from periphery to core.

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¹ Particularly women, queer people and people of colour.

² Hodkinson (2002) does not discuss international travel, although he does mention British goth nights that are popular with visitors from abroad.

³ For a discussion of Northern peripherality affecting locality in punk, see Pilkington (2014c) in relation to punks in Vorkuta, Russia.

⁴ 130km from Groningen to Oldenburg, compared to 180km between Groningen and Amsterdam.