

**SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY COURSEWORK SUBMISSION
COVERSHEET 17/18**

Please complete the following table in full

Student number (9 digits):		
Module code and title:	GEG7120 Geographical Thought and Practice	
Submission deadline date:	Wednesday 27 th March 2019	
Coursework title:	Research Proposal: Suburban Nightlife: The Youth Geographies of UK Garage.	
Total number of words:	2494 words	
I declare that this coursework is entirely my own work and contains no instances of plagiarism	x	Put 'x' in box (left) to confirm

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Research Proposal:

Suburban Nightlife: The Youth Geographies of UK Garage

Introduction:

Influenced by the US, UK Garage (UKG) developed in the early 90s. Singalong choruses, 'diva vocals' and live MCs created 'chart pop in exile' (Reynolds, 2013:559). In the late 90s, UKG reached the height of its popularity. Vocal, upbeat tenacity and branded displays of wealth and glamour reflected end-of-the-century optimism, during interesting social and cultural contexts, including residual hopefulness of New Labour, emergence of reality TV, and rising internet and mobile phone ownership and usage (Boughton, 2018). While its influence on successor genre, Grime, is widely discussed, only limited academic consideration of UKG exists. Its popularity coincided with coinage of term 'chav'. While pathologization of working classes usually relates to production and labour, 'chav' is oriented toward spheres of consumption (Haywood & Yar, 2006:9). UKG became subsumed into this derogatory subculture.

Renewed interest in the genre, evident in TV, theatre and fashion means preservation of UKG heritage is essential to ensure everyday, individual specificities are not forgotten, neglected, or substituted by 'a few sounds, items of fashion and some lingo' (Skinner, 2013, Beswick et al., 2019). The scene is linked to inner-city estates and nightclubs, and transcended national boundaries through its holiday homeland, Aya Napa. However, the suburbs scaffolded UKG's popularity, through pirate radio, record shops, tape packs, and club-nights held in repurposed spaces (Jenkins, 2018). Distinctively British music 'concerned with (sub) urban life in the UK' (Knox, 2009:145, Boakye, 2017), UKG found home in 'cultural backwaters' (Hesmondhalgh, 1998:236). This research aims to explore, preserve and reclaim UKG histories from derogatory chav subculture, and contribute to studies of suburban youth nightlife practices. The research provides opportunities to explore understudied areas of suburban, night-time and youth geographies. A focus on Essex, an area often misunderstood through limited stereotypes which precede it, allows for additional exploration of pathologization of place (May, 2012).

Literature review

Youth geographies

Emerging as a subfield of human geography in the 1990s, formative work by Valentine & Skelton (1998) catalysed a focus on youth, rather than children's geographies (Smith & Mills, 2018). Moving from biological to social approaches, an interdisciplinary focus drew from anthropology and sociology, where children and youth were seen as adults in progress, rather than having distinct, valuable experiences (Holloway, 2014, Brannen & O'Brien, 1997). Interdisciplinary engagement is criticised as creating an ethnographic focus on children's micro-worlds (Ansell, 2009), neglecting transitional positions of young teenagers situated between childhood, youth and adulthood (Holloway, 2014, Evans, 2008, Weller, 2006). This did little to further youth geographies in and of themselves (Smith & Mills, 2018). Taking stock of the last two decades, there has been arguably little recent or systematic writing on youth cultures (Krafft & Horton, 2019).

Youth remains understudied, blurring into boundaries of children's and family geographies. Children's geographies are typically more interdisciplinary, supported by targeted research funding and focused journal, *Children's Geographies*, while youth has remained an ambiguous category, absorbed into wider framings of geographies of age or of family life (Valentine, 2019). Youth studies remain to be socially and culturally important - though distinct experiences of teenagers and young people are often overlooked (Valentine, Skelton & Chambers, 1998). Young people are 'everyday-present', while remaining notable by their 'apparent absence within geographical knowledge production' (Skelton, 2019:26). This suggests a focus on youth as creators of place and identity is beneficial, instead of merely reinforcing socially produced identities (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005, van Blerk, 2019).

Existing research on youth nightlife is urban-centric, inferring a universal representation of British youth lifestyles, while non-urban locales are ignored (Watt & Stenson, 1998, Malbon, 1998, Berzins & Macrury, 2014). Studies focusing elsewhere tend to explore industrialised towns, rarely the suburban South-East (Watt & Stenson, 1998). Exploring belonging in suburban locales, Watt & Stenson (1998) found most young people deemed their area boring, with belonging focused on suburban landmarks like parks, pubs, fast-food outlets, and the churchyard, but not places linked to music scenes. Everyday practices of youth are often

neglected unless they are constructed as problematic (for example, gang or drug culture) (Evans, 2008, Valentine, 2019). There is a need for a focus on suburban youth which considers the everyday, separate to preconceptions about suburban locales, recognising that familiar people, places, cultures and exclusion can be central to geographic research (Kraftl & Horton, 2019).

Club-night attendance marks adolescent independence in spaces 'relatively their own' allowing experimentation with cultural forms (like music and clothes) and conferring 'autonomous and distinct identities' (Thornton, 1996:16). Youth experiences of place vary from adult experiences, and can transcend physical barriers of space (Evans, 2008, Abbot-Chapman, 2009), though there is little work exploring experiences of ageing participants after the liminal stage of youth (Bennett, 2006). Distinction between states of childhood and adulthood is not clear-cut, and transitions are not linear processes (Valentine, 2003). There is a need to understand youth as a process with ongoing influence on life-courses, bound with wider structures and socially constructed categories, away from problematic conceptualisation of youth as a static phase which people grow into and out of (Valentine, 2003). While people create and resist age identities through their use of space and place, they also have different access to and experiences of places because of their age (Bennett, 2006). Spaces associated with certain age groups influence who uses them and how (Hopkins & Pain, 2007). Exploring youth with hindsight is valuable, examining the complexity of its impact at different temporal stages.

Suburban geographies

While urban and rural studies independently thrive, suburbia is considered as dependent on the city. Academic studies focused on urban specificities. The 'magic and aestheticised city' frames suburbia as 'grey, dull and disreputable' (Savage, 2015:2012). Suburban studies convey residential enclave as incongruous to the complexity of the central city, 'a privilege of the urban centre' (Keil, 2018:43, Dwyer, Gilbert & Shah, 2013). However, urbanity has been considered as a continuum, rather than a binary and there is increasing recognition of the diversity of suburbs (Nayak, 2010, Huq, 2013, Vaughan, 2015, Dwyer, 2017, Mace, 2018), though typically suburbia is seen as home to older, white, middle class residents, with little consideration of suburban youth practices.

The South-East of England, and the suburbs which surround London are most frequently ignored, instead viewed as an 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992). Essex, specifically, has experienced waves of urban migration, including a 'post-war Cockney diaspora' from the East End (Watt, Millington & Huq, 2014). East London was and remains a well-trodden research focus (Young & Willmott, 1957), though there is little on the experiences of similar populations once they spread into suburbia (Watt, Millington & Huq, 2014).

Suburban relationships with place have been conveyed as being private, or alien. Neighbouring areas in the suburbs can be unfamiliar, even if reachable on foot, and place and identity can be established through contrasts with somewhere people 'feel is very different from them' (Rose, 1995:92). Suburban place can also be viewed as instrumental, invested with little meaning, and merely constituting a lifestyle of convenience (Savage, 2015). This narrowly represents suburban residents as functional, dull and insular. This research will conceptualise suburban youth as creating varied spatial identities, depending on places which

hold meaning for them. Lacking focus on people's own experiences risks assumption of homogenous experiences (Valentine, 2019, van Blerk, 2019).

The suburbs are frequently despised and patronised (Vaughan, 2015). Like 'chav', the term 'Essex girl' is used as a condensed signifier of white working-class identity (Skeggs, 2003:112). 'Spatio-class' hatred demonstrates moralization of place dependent on 'dominant London worldview' (Savage, 2015:263). The city conveys civility, while suburbia remains metaphorically outside the wall (Tuan, 1974). There is a risk that individuals can view non-fixed characteristics of places as part of their own 'self' (Back, 1996:112). Geographers are obliged to undertake work which demonstrates place-based actions and understandings make no sense without acknowledging that all these things impinge on place from the outside (Castree, 2009:169).

Research questions:

1. Why does UKG remain understudied?
2. To what extent can exploring UKG provide a lens to contribute to the study of suburban youth practices?
 - a. What are the specificities of nightlife spaces and practices in the suburbs?
 - b. Does participation in suburban underage discos impact adult nightlife experiences, after transitional stages of youth?
3. What is the impact of a pathologization of place on individual and place identity?

Methodology

There is a tendency to see youth as a static category, with little consideration of what happens after liminal stages of adolescence (Valentine, 2019). This research works with older participants, who are no longer 'youth' to capture a forgotten scene, and to understand the impact which individual youth geographies can have beyond distinct temporal boundaries (Valentine, 2003).

Data collection:

Oral history interviews:

Oral history interviews will be conducted with participants who were engaged with UKG as teenagers (including participation in underage club-nights), and are specifically important for studying hidden geographies (George & Stratford, 2016). Interviewing older people on their youth experiences can provide insights into impacts of these experiences on later life experiences. Reflexivity and acknowledgement of complexity of memory is essential, rather than a passive depository of facts, memory will be treated as 'an active process of creation of meanings' (Roberts, 2002, Portelli, 2006:37).

Visual methods and artefacts

Participants' photographs, objects or clothing from engagement in UKG could provide prompts for memory and discussion. Photo elicitation provides insights into particular times, and interpretations of 'subjective worlds' through content and production of images, encouraging participants' dynamism in the research (Rose, 2012, Mannay, 2016:23). Objects enable discussions of individual expression as selective signs of cultural identities, tastes and

internalised societal structures, exploring discarded fashions as reminders of 'forgotten sensations' (Spencer, 2011:99).

Driving ethnographies:

Walking ethnography enables observation and experience of everyday practices and experiences (Bates & Rhys-Taylor, 2017). Driving might hold lesser benefits than walking ethnographies, but suburban movement can depend on cars. It offers possibilities to interview people while moving through environments relevant to their experiences, making links between each 'sensuous lived encounter' and other representations (Back, 2017:35, Holgersson, 2017). This method would explore participants' maps of 'getting ready' and 'going out' processes, and may potentially include shopping centres or markets, specific addresses, or spaces repurposed for club-nights such as Civic Halls.

Semi-structured interviews:

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with other key stakeholders in the UKG scene, including DJs, MCs, and promoters. While they may not have relevant experiences as younger teenagers, they may provide insights into UKG suburban infrastructure, and why it remains undocumented. This enables a range of different voices to be heard (Cloke et al., 2004).

Archival research:

Limited archival research will be undertaken. The recentness of the genre means this will mostly be online, for example, using local newspaper archives (Healey & Healey, 2016).

Participant recruitment:

The research will be based around the oral histories of 6-10 participants, each of whom will have been engaged in the UKG scene in the late 90s or early 00s. They will be recruited through personal contacts, snowball sampling, and through advertising on online social media groups linked to specific club-nights.

It will also include some semi-structured interviews with other stakeholders in the UKG scene, including DJs, MCs and promoters, identified by archive research. They will be contacted directly through existing contacts, or through online channels such as Instagram or email.

Analysis of Data:

Interview data will be recorded on a voice recorder, and transcribed verbatim. Participants will be offered a copy of their transcript before analysis to ensure it reflects their views and to clarify any possible miscommunication. The data will be coded using grounded theory within NVivo (Kitchin & Tate, 2000).

Researcher Positionality:

It is important to recognise positionality of the researcher in this work, as having existing contacts engaged with UKG. This can be beneficial in building rapport and ensuring understandings of the nuances and specificities of the scene, but it remains essential to account for any biases, to ensure preconceptions do not shape interpretation of collected data. Reflexive awareness ensures that familiarity does not become a barrier, with opportunities for discovery swallowed by conventions of acquaintance (Geer, 1964, Mannay, 2016).

Ethics Statement

The research does not involve work with vulnerable adults or children. Institutional ethical approval will be obtained before fieldwork commences. Participants will be provided with information sheets before interviews to ensure they are fully informed, have opportunities to ask questions, and to confirm or decline participation. This sheet will include an overview of research aims and objectives, an outline the extent of participation, confidentiality, and storage of participant data. It will detail anonymity measures, including the use of pseudonyms and will inform participants of their right to withdraw from research at any time, without disadvantage. Researcher contact information and details on how to contact the researcher's supervisor, should participants prefer, will be included. Data will be stored securely, on an encrypted, password-protected drive, in line with GDPR guidelines. Participants will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm their understanding of, and participation in the research. Before each interview, the researcher will ensure that interviewees are happy to be audio-recorded.

Ethics surrounding visual methods can be problematic. Ongoing visibility challenges anonymity and requires researchers to be especially sensitive to affective impacts of their work (Mannay, 2016). Discussions with participants about inclusion of images will be ongoing, ensuring they remain happy for images to be features, and recognising participants as possessing competencies to seek, define and manage the ways they might become visible to others (Warr et al., 2016, Dickens & Butcher, 2016). Participants can waive anonymity should they wish, if they choose to include photos in the project. Should participants decide against including images, alternative written representations of the image (using a participatory approach) could be included (Mannay, 2016). This may not be as visually interesting, but it is ethically essential that participants are comfortable and in control of the use of their data. Any photographs or artefacts contributed by the participant would be photographed and returned immediately to the participant (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015)

Driving ethnographies will be discussed in detail with the participant and outlined in an 'add-on' information sheet.

Participants will not receive anything materially valuable for research engagement, but it is important they benefit in some way. This involves ensuring that participants feel valued, their contributions are appreciated and they maintain shared ownership of the research, with access to the completed project (Trainor & Bouchard, 2013).

Research timetable

April	Ethical approval Risk assessment
April to May	Literature review

April to May	Archival research
May	Development of recruitment and consent documents Recruitment of first phase of interviewees (using existing contacts, social media groups, and the list of participants created above)
May	Development of interview schedule (for semi-structured interviews) and less rigid guide for oral history interviews. Schedule interviews with participants
May to June	Interviewing (oral histories) Completion of walks/drives Interviewing (semi-structured)
July	Transcription
July	Coding and analysing transcripts and notes
July	Correspond emerging findings to interviewees
August	Writing up methodology section
August	Writing up discussion section
August	Completion of writing up final document Proofing
August	Submission

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Research Ethics Checklist:

QMUL Ethics Filter – for research involving human participants

Complete this form electronically and submit to the ethics coordinator h.covill@qmul.ac.uk. You will receive an automated response upon submission; your supervisor will also receive a copy of your submission and may need to talk to you if they have concerns. You will receive an initial decision on the outcome of your application within 15 working days the possible outcomes are: a. Automatic approval b. Your application needs to be discussed with your head of department or supervisor or c. A full ethics application is required.

If you already know your research will require a full ethics application please complete the form found at: <http://connect.qmul.ac.uk/research/ethicscommittee/index.html>

All questions with * must be completed.

Failure to complete this form accurately or falsify any information will result in the research not being indemnified by QMUL.

Any research involving NHS patients, human tissue, staff or premises should be submitted to <http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk> for ethical review via their online application form.

*Name	
Student Number if appropriate	
*Email address	
Programme of Study (e.g. Undergraduate Geography Programme, Taught Education Masters)	Postgraduate Taught (MRes Geography)
*Department	Geography
*Title of study	Suburban Nightlife: Youth Geographies of UK Garage
*300 word minimum summary of the research:	
This research aims to explore, preserve and reclaim oral histories linked to the suburban UK Garage (UKG) music scene in the late 90s to early 00s. It aims to contribute to studies of suburban youth nightlife practices, including the recording of experiences of underage discos. The research provides opportunities to explore understudied areas of suburban, night-time and youth geographies. It will do so by undertaking oral history interviews and a modified	

'walking' ethnographies, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and some archival research.

Though often discussed in relation to successive music genre, Grime, there is little academic work which explores UKG as a distinct scene. 'Chav' culture, used to vilify working class identity, emerged in the early 2000s, and as a result, UKG was subsumed into this categorisation. Consequently, it is often viewed as an inauthentic, and undesirable scene.

The research is based around the oral histories of 6-10 participants, each of whom will have been engaged in the UK Garage scene in the late 90s to early 00s. They will be recruited through personal contacts, snowball sampling, and through advertising on online social media groups linked to specific club-nights.

Participants' photographs, objects or clothing from UKG engagement will be sought to provide memory, and discussion prompts. Walking ethnographies enable observation and experience of everyday practices and experiences but as suburban movement can depend on cars, driving offers possibilities to interview people while moving through environments relevant to their experiences. This method would be used to would explore participants' maps of 'getting ready' and 'going out' processes, potentially including shopping centres or markets, specific addresses, or spaces repurposed for club-nights such as Civic Halls.

The research also includes some semi-structured interviews with other stakeholders in the UKG scene, including DJs, MCs and promoters. These contacts will be contacted directly, through links through existing contacts, and through online platforms. It will also include some archival research, though because of the relatively recent nature of the scene, meaning it is unlikely to be held in official archives, this is most likely to include mainly local newspaper archives.

Outputs from the project will be a written dissertation and transcribed interviews, and if possible, records of images and artefacts from the studied period.

*Supervisor's (Principal Investigator) Name	
*Supervisor's email address	
<p>*I confirm that Queen Mary University London is responsible for this study and that I am not receiving any funding for this project (other than that provided by myself or through my course)</p> <p>If in receipt of funding – who is the funding body</p> <p>Level of funding</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

If the answer is Yes to any of questions 1-13 an application to the full ethics committee will be required, the form can be found at <http://connect.qmul.ac.uk/research/ethicscommittee/index.html>

	Principle	Yes	N o	Comments
	Are the participants under 16		x	
2.	Could the participants be classified as vulnerable adults		x	
3.	Do the participants have learning difficulties		x	
4.	Does the research involve using or collecting human tissue		x	
5.	Could this research uncover illegal activities (drug use, immigration etc.)		x	
6.	Could this research cause stress or anxiety in the participant		x	
7.	Will you be asking questions relating to issues of a personal sensitive nature		x	
8.	Could this research bring the University into disrepute		x	
9.	Does the research involve the person taking a drug of any description – even over the counter medicines		x	
10.	Does the research involve an intervention e.g. exercise, hypnotherapy		x	
11.	Does the research rely on covert observation of the participants		x	
12.	Will this research be conducted in the participants home		x	
13.	Will the participant be paid – not just expenses		x	
14.	Will the data collected be sent or used overseas		x	

Appendix 4 - Risk Assessment Form:

**GEOGRAPHY RISK ASSESSMENT FORM
FIELD / LOCATION WORK**



School of Geography **SAFETY HANDBOOK** should be referred to when completing this form

Form must be completed electronically and forwarded to the authorised person (Students - Supervisor / Research Staff - Project Leader / Academic Staff - Head of School) who must check and sign. Completed form must be e-mailed to the School Safety Advisor michelle.day@qmul.ac.uk 5 days before the date of travel.

PERSON FILLING IN RISK ASSESSMENT

[Redacted]

PERSONS COVERED BY RISK ASSESSMENT

(no more than 5 persons can be listed on this form)

[Redacted]

ADDRESS & MOBILE

(one line per individual)

[Redacted]

Staff UG PGT PGR

DATES

01.04.19-24.08.19

LOCATION(S)

UK (specifically London and Essex)

OVERNIGHT STAY

YES NO N/A

TRANSPORT

(e.g. car, flight information, eligibility to drive checked)

Car (I will drive to interview locations)

ACCOMMODATION

N/A

ENVIRONMENT

(e.g. urban, mountainous, lowland river)

Suburban/urban environments.

NATURE OF WORK
(e.g. conference, survey, sediment sampling)

Qualitative data collection (semi-structured and oral history interviews, ethnography).

PERMISSION OBTAINED
(on-site documentation)

YES NO N/A

ON-SITE CONTACT (names, address, mobile)

IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARD

Hazards categories:

Natural Physical (e.g. extreme weather, mountains, cliffs, marshes, water)

YES NO

Assess all hazard

categories to the left and if you have selected yes, identify and fill out the hazards below.

Biological (e.g. plants, animals, soil, water micro-organisms)

YES NO

Risk - hazard severity (low, medium, high) and likelihood

Chemical (e.g. pesticides, contaminated soils, chemicals)

YES NO

Control Measures - specify steps taken to minimise risk

Societal and other hazards affecting personal safety (e.g. equipment, buildings, transport hazards (DVT), traffic, crime, health, public order)

YES NO

Hazard Category

Societal

Risk:

Low

Hazard

Transport:
As I will be driving to and from interviews, and as part of undertaking ethnographic study, there is some risk from transport (including injury, or delay).

Control Measure

Driving will only be undertaken in a maintained vehicle (serviced and MOT), by an experienced driver with appropriate insurance and licence.
Wherever possible, journeys will be undertaken at quieter times to avoid delay.
Weather conditions will be reviewed on the day, with necessary adjustments made.
Journeys will be local and short in duration, though breaks will be taken if necessary.

Hazard Category	Societal	Risk:	Low
Hazard	Slips and trips: Interviews will take place in a public place, and there is a risk of slips and trips.		
Control Measure	I will ensure that interviews take place in locations I have visited prior to informally assess and address risk, and that they are locations which are accessible and safe (i.e. with adequate lighting and general good housekeeping).		

Hazard Category	Natural Physical	Risk:	Low
Hazard	Fire: As anywhere, there is a risk of fire in places used to conduct interviews.		
Control Measure	Data collection will take place in locations with fire risk assessments and evacuation policies.		

Hazard Category	Societal	Risk:	Low
Hazard	Lone working/ risk of theft, assault or other crime: Working individually presents risk of injury or ill-health while out of the department, and includes possible vulnerability to crime.		
Control Measure	I will log all of my visits, and ensure that I advise two trusted people of my whereabouts for each visit, as well as the expected time of completion of the visit. I will contact them after each visit to 'check-in'. I will also ensure that I do not create any additional risks by meeting in safe, public spaces. I will ensure I have emergency numbers to hand at all times.		

Hazard Category	Other	Risk:	Low
Hazard	Display Screen Equipment: Risk of posture problems or pain, headaches and sore eyes.		
Control Measure	I will assess my own workstation before use to ensure it is in line with standard DSE training I have undertaken with my employer, and will include regular breaks and changes in activity.		

Hazard Category	Societal	Risk:	Low
Hazard	Stress: There is a risk of stress from lone working, and the pressures of working to tight deadlines.		
Control Measures	I have an understanding of the work I need to do in line with specified timelines, and am aware of how to seek support from QMUL should I require it.		
Optional additional information (e.g. you have been to this site before and assessed the risks)	Before undertaking any interviews, I will visit agreed interview sites to assess any specific risks and implement necessary controls.		

EMERGENCIES

Specify any relevant medical/health information

(e.g. allergies, medication, details of nearest hospital emergency room)

Nearest A & E:
Queen's Hospital,
Rom Valley Way,
Romford,
RM7 0AG.

Next of kin contact details
for all persons listed on this form (address, mobile)

*one line per individual

[Redacted contact details]

International Travel Insurance - For Staff and Students who require Travel Insurance whilst travelling on university business you are required to complete the online application form for single and multi-trips which can be accessed through the QMUL Insurance webpage. Completed N/A

Full name [Redacted]

Signature [Redacted]

Full name [Redacted]

Countersignature [Redacted]

Digital Signature Required

Liability policy

Any person who is not associated with the QMUL will not be covered under the Liability policies. Queen Mary University of London will not cover any losses/damages sustained whilst assisting staff or students on QMUL related field activities. As the individual filling out this form you are required to inform these persons to arrange adequate insurance cover whilst assisting you.

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