The Social life of Music
commodification, space and identity in world music production

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Awarding institution:
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The Social Life of Music: commodification, space, and identity in world music production

PhD Thesis (final), Geography, King's College London

Mr. Aaron Chaim van Klyton

April 24, 2012
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Abstract

This project examines the ways in which commodification and identity work in the particular context of world music production. I trace the path of world music of West African origin as it connects different people, ideas, and objectives in the London world music scene. I look at how commodification occurs in this context and the implications for how identity gets (re)-constructed during the commodification processes to suit a variety of individual needs. The paper empirically examines some theoretical assumptions about space, representation, and commodification by problematizing them as three key aspects of this production/consumption process. Lastly, the thesis shows how performance spaces become spaces of performance through the interactions of various social actors, namely, the musicians, promoters, and DJs and that world music is a site of struggle over representation. Drawing on ethnographic approaches used in the fieldwork, I demonstrate the relationship that relatively small players in the local world music scene maintain with the larger structural forces that control the industry. In doing so they create value for the art and for themselves. The thesis is an effort to understand the ways in which identity can shift and is relational with respect to space and power. It contributes to literature on geography and music, music and identity, and commodification.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

When I first arrived in London from Seoul, South Korea, in 2007 I had never heard of Ossibisa. In fact, my original PhD project was entitled, ‘The economics of Grace Jones: immigrant entertainers in Europe’. It was meant to capture ideas about how the production of music articulates place and belonging. My perception of Grace Jones was that she transcended place, even though she was of Jamaican descent via New York’s Studio 54. Throughout the first stages of the project, it became apparent to me that what I wanted to know was how these cultural actors felt about living and representing blackness to largely non-black audiences. Then there was the need to clearly identify what I mean by ‘blackness’. It turns out that I had little idea. That is not to say that I do not know what it means to be black; rather, I wanted to understand what it meant to perform ethnicity as part of a commodified good.

My interest in West African artists was heightened while living in South Korea. In Seoul, I had the cultural space to think about black identity and my relationship to it. I began to listen to West African artists such as N’Dour, Kidjo, and Ismael Lo, which I accessed online from 2003 to 2007. The music gave, and still gives, me a particular connectedness to a world that I was only privy to through history books. West African music became the tool through which I could begin to have the conversation with myself about representation and identity. It is for these personal reasons that I have set out, in this thesis, to explore the ways in which the production of world music (in all its multiple ways and forms) shapes the identities of world music performers.

The term world music is imbued with contested and contradictory meanings, in addition to social and political connotations. Its exact definition is neither clear
nor standardized across different markets. However, the implied meaning of this term is that this music has been deterritorialised from its original locations and purposes, usually outside of the West (i.e. Europe and North America), and reconstructed with new meanings for new audiences, usually in the West. Music almost always permeates different spaces and provides listeners with the opportunity to experience something that often does not represent their everyday lives (DeNora 2000). However, and as this thesis will explore, world music performs this role to a greater and far more contested extent. This research will show that not only do these processes of creating and performing difference occur by and through audiences; they are also the work and product of a web of cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu 1987). As such, questions of identity, production, consumption and performance are central to this research and all are underpinned by a constellation of actors for whom world music is both a passion and an essential source of income.

World music is dominated by music from countries of West Africa and South Africa and, as such, exhibits from the start an exoticism to Western audiences. The musician Paul Simon’s album and performance of Graceland in the late 80s was probably the first time I saw music in this format on my television set in Chicago. Though it was entertaining, I am not sure if I thought about the politics behind either the music’s presence in the West, the political activity of South Africa’s Apartheid system, that we had experienced our own “apartheid” in the States, or even the questionable means of production; including the fact that it was a white American man who legitimated the music. Middleton (2000, p.75) shows that Simon ‘cleaned up and interpreted his ethnic sources (of world music) so they supported the visions of a white, middle-class American singer-songwriter.’ Although listeners attach different meanings to music, particular threads run through world music production; among them are identity, power, and representation in spaces. These ideas will be explored in this dissertation.
World music as an academic subject received attention in the early 90s and into the mid-00s (Kong 1995; Barrett 1996; Connell & Gibson 2004). Since 2004, however, the flow of academic literature on world music analysis has somewhat subsided. Jo Haynes (2005; 2011) is one scholar still writing on the subject. In Haynes’ 2011 article, she examines the associations that have been made between black ethnicity and jazz music. She uses this approach to understand how particular discourses are constructed about artists in the world music circles. She systematically uses qualitative data from the musicians themselves in constructing her arguments. However, she does not directly look at how commodification of race is performed. Rather, Haynes’ focus is more on how categorization of music yields particular narratives and representations. This is not an indication that the subject is no longer relevant. In fact, one may see the absence of literature on the subject as a testament to the broad popularity (and acceptance) of this music.

For world music, the relative lack of attention in recent years may represent its having fallen out of ‘academic fashion’; however, it may also, and more significantly, represent the extent to which world music is ensconced in post-modern societies and cities and is therefore normalised. However, if one looks at the promotional materials for world music and its performers in the London market, it becomes obvious that the same or similar ideologies that underwrote world music in the 1980s are still present. It is more significant now because these ideologies are in use seemingly unnoticed by scholars writing on the art, with a few caveats. Indeed Hutnyk (2000a) argued some eleven years ago that appropriation, and the levers of control of world music in the hands of a few, marginalizes many artists. This thesis will look at how control has played out in performances at the venues, through adverts, and in the media.
If world music advertisements do not tell a sufficiently convincing story of its relevance, then consider the following: the promoters at the Tabernacle, a music venue in West London, work exclusively with African and Caribbean musicians based here in Britain. They commented on how they struggle to maintain public funding amidst competition from larger organizations that prefer to fly in artists from outside of the EU to perform in Britain. The preference for more ‘authentic’ artists means that, while world music has become more mainstream, local artists must work harder to secure profitable gigs. Also, as this music becomes mainstream the definition of authentic is also changing, but who is determining authenticity? This results in tensions between the smaller promoters and local musicians and the larger institutions as they compete for a reduced state budget for arts production in the UK: even with limited resources, there is still a preference for the more expensive non-national world music artists.

Secondly, there is still a chasm between what these artists are able to achieve with and without the label of world music to represent them. In other words, these musicians may find themselves ‘caught-up’ in a limited market that encases and partitions them away from mainstream Britain. It would appear that such marginalization has been all but accepted by the public and academics alike. Such a situation does not to appear to bring these artists, the musics they perform or the diverse ethnic communities in Britain any closer to mainstream Britain despite the optimistic introductions of the MCs at local world music events. As a matter of fact, the opposite effect has occurred. When world music artists collaborate with Western artists, the world music artist remains in language and advertisement, locked into a world music identity. In contrast, Western artists can be seen as experimental but remaining firmly within a Western construct. For example, the American singer Paul Simon and the British singer Robert Plant
have never been classified under the world music moniker despite having collaborated with musicians and places that were classified as such.¹

In another case, when the Malian singers, Miriam and Amadou, toured the US in 2009 with the British rock band Coldplay, Songlines magazine described the collaboration as Miriam and Amadou’s ‘latest brush with the mainstream’.² This is despite having lived and worked in Paris on and off for over a decade. Coldplay, however, is not mentioned as brushing with world music. This depiction of the cultural interactions through music is erroneously one-sided and emphasizes the role that labels, such as world music and rock, have in privileging and diminishing its wearer in different ways. Jackson (2002) uses examples from clothing choices to show that cultural exchanges are bilateral and affect both the westerner and the ‘non-westerner’. In fact, these exchanges can blur the line that demarcates western and non-western. Taylor also makes the point that Western musicians enjoy particular freedoms over non-Western musicians. In particular he argues that North American and British musicians are free to create whatever music they want; whereas, other musicians are ‘constrained by the western discourse of authenticity to make music that seems to resemble the indigenous music of their place and is cast as a sellout if they make more popular-sounding music, and/or try to make money’ (Taylor 1997, p.22).

1.2 THESIS RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS

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¹ Most notable examples are Simon’s 1986 Graceland album, and Robert Plant’s 1994 album, No Quarter: Jimmy Page and Robert Plant Unledded and 2002 album, Dreamland.
² http://www.songlines.co.uk/world-music-news/2009/02/songlines-10th-anniversary-concert-series-kicks-off-at-london%e2%80%99s-jazz-cafe/
The thesis aims to interrogate a central research question: What are the relationships between the conditions of production of world music performances in London and the construction of musicians’ identities? In order to do so, it aims to fulfill three objectives, each of which feed into the central research question. The thesis thus aims to:

a. Explore how world music is produced and by whom.
b. Examine the role of space and place in world music.
c. Examine how musicians use world music in shaping their identities.

As shown above, the thesis examines the relationships between world music production and the identities of its performers. To do so, the project is situated within and, in turn, speaks to three areas of theoretical inquiry, which are explored, in turn, below.

1.2.1 PRODUCTION AND COMMODIFICATION

The first objective of the research is to explore how world music is produced and by whom. The processes of production and, in turn, of the commodification of world music involve a host of actors and professional roles. Commodification, in this study, is defined as the process by which an object is assigned a monetary value for commercial use. However, the question of how world music is produced goes much further than simply description – rather it calls up issues of the type of commodity world music purports to be, how and why. As such, the title of the project makes reference to Appadurai’s (1986) work on the significance of value in the commodification process. He examines how objects come into being through various stages of commodification as a distance/knowledge construct between the origin and the destination of the product increases. This occurs when knowledge regarding the space and place associations of the music and the musicians are ‘divorced for and by consumers
from the social relations of their production’ (Cook & Crang 1996, p.135).
However, more recent work by geographers, such as Jackson (1999; 2004; 2007), Dwyer (1999), and Leyshon (1998) has added a robustness to the notion that global flows affect how people consume. Additionally, other scholars have examined how identities and representations are produced through colonial and postcolonial flows (Bhabha 2004; Hall 1995; Gilroy 1993).

Appadurai’s (1986) framework suggested that the fluid nature of commodification means that an object does not necessarily have the power to maintain itself as a commodity. Instead, its standing as a commodity is subject to social and political forces of the consuming public. Jackson et al (2004) also discuss the fluidity of commodities against the backdrop of globalization. They argue that the processes known as globalization create subsequently incomplete and uneven processes that redefine ideas in different spatial contexts. If their argument is correct then for a commodity to remain in a commoditized state, it must have a fluidity that can resist the forces that shape its condition as Appadurai suggests.

Music, then, would not qualify as a commodity in the strictest sense. As I will explore in this thesis, the commodity in world music rests with ideas: about how we see ourselves presently; and how we wish to see ourselves in the future. This may denote a switch from object to ideas. However, Hacking (2000, p.31) argues that ideas and objects interact to form a social construction that has ‘obvious social elements and obvious material ones.’ Hence, the discussion of what constitutes a commodity is an important part of this work. It becomes a question of which ideas are being put forth and by whom, how they are applied with respect to whom and with what results.

Within this set of questions emerges a fight for representation between different groups of actors within world music production in London. These are some of the concepts explored in Chapter Four. Commodification involves a constructed system of ideas and beliefs that get attached to the product - in this case music -
infusing it with economic value (Magowan 2005). Once these ideas and beliefs change or shift, other music and/or other forms of expression become ‘commoditized’ and are given life, which lends supports Appadurai’s argument regarding the stages of commodification. However, as will be shown in Chapter Four, such actions were not happenstance and cultural intermediaries act deliberately in shifting the world music spotlight to different places. This can be seen in the way that world music intermediaries, largely based in the UK, created new sources of world music from the West African region by shifting from music from Senegambia to music from Mali. According to data collected for this thesis, the shift was motivated for economic reasons rather than a reflection of societal values, as argued by Appadurai (1986).

This thesis focuses on the production of world music, rather than the consumer. Such a perspective requires an examination of the actions and behaviours of world music’s powerful cultural intermediaries and the effect that this group has on the musicians and minor promoters in London. These social actors measure the pulse of consumer taste and, more often, guide it. Hence, once it is determined that the product’s value is changing (most probably through record sales and performance attendance numbers) then appropriate adjustments are made to marketing frames, the music’s accompanying narratives, and the type of music chosen. These changes also reflect changes in societal values, which lies at the heart of Appadurai’s (1986) argument, namely that the biography or social life of a product means that it passes through various states of commodification. Additionally, geographic distance, often transnational, and consumer preferences constitute the product’s value. The next aim looks at how world music venues provide a space for the parts of the commodification process to occur.

1.2.2 SPACES AND PLACES OF WORLD MUSIC
The second objective of this thesis is to explore the spaces and places of world music. As such, it speaks to an emergent body of geographical work that explores the spatiality of music in general, and world music in particular. The literature on space and music used in this discussion was developed by Cohen (1995), Valentine (1995), among others, and shows how spaces are constituted by the interactions of the music and people that occurs within them. As such, spaces are infused with different values at different times depending on the performance.

At an empirical level, the interplays of space, place and music are explored through small venues operating in and around London rather than world music festivals such as WOMAD or larger London music venues such as The Barbican or South Bank Centre. This choice was purposeful: to facilitate an engagement with the spatial politics that occur in the smaller venues. As Chapter Six argues, smaller venues provide an infrastructure for emerging world music artists that is much more accessible than larger venues. Additionally, almost all of these artists live in London as opposed to the internationally renowned singers that are flown into the UK for performances. Researching the interactions of these musicians with audiences and the spaces where they perform therefore provides a great deal more insight into how the politics of world music develops in different ways. The smaller venues under consideration are neither identical in character or purpose. The politics that go along with world music consumption is different according to the spaces where the performance occurs...and so are the people and the musicians.

The rationale for the choice of case study sites will be further explored in the methods chapter; however, the venues illustrate the ways in which music production is both situated and how this feeds directly into its constructed. This means that different forms of world music and different associated symbols and aesthetics are put forth in different venues in order to market the venue in a
particular way. The chapter evidences how world music has been acted upon to create particular spaces that benefit the objectives of the promoters at a location.

At live performances, the promotion and introductions given for the musicians by MCs who are often the venue’s promoters feature themes such as racial equality, justice, and living in ‘one world’. These and other ideas get packaged in different ways and are then marketed to different types of world music consumers. However, if one visits venues offering world music, a contradiction becomes immediately apparent: audiences tend not to reflect the ethnic or other kinds of diversity in London, the diversity of music being performed, nor the themes expressed in the introductions of the performances. In cities like London, global flows of people and ideas means that world music and other kinds of entertainment are readily available. The production of entertainment spaces in the city also provides a means of self-expression for the consumers and the artists, which will be discussed in the next objective on identity construction and world music.

Spaces are used to create and promote particular perceptions of authenticity. This involves the collective geographical imagines of authentic spaces that are transposed to the place of performance. Zukin (2010, p.3) argues that authenticity has more to do with style than with origins. In this light, a shift in emphasis has occurred from a ‘quality of people to a quality of things, and more recently to a quality of experiences.’ This also characterises world music’s changing valuation. The focus on quality of experiences however is laden with subjectivities that change across places and venues. In this context, I follow Zukin’s (2010, p.21) line of questioning in understanding how to choose which authentic space is right for our authentic self. The system of ‘shared meanings’ (see Hall 1995) and multiple meanings within a production/consumption process contribute to how places and histories are commercialized to different markets through the moniker of world music.
Authenticity in world music is not based on the commodity or object itself. It also works in tandem with and through networks of negotiated meanings and attachments that audiences, musicians, and promoters place on the venue. They are collectively infusing the place with authenticity; an authenticity that is subjective and malleable and is represented differently from venue to venue. In other words, the overlapping discourses of authenticity can be understood as a reflection of how we negotiate aspects of our identity and our relationship to the music as it is played in the performance venue. At this level, the venue comes to represent an amalgamation of audience and musicians’ expectations through negotiated understandings of authenticity in a given venue.

Douglas and Isherwood’s (1979) discussion of consumer behaviour shows the clear linked between consumption practices and identity. While this link also holds for world music, consumption of this good is more the result of a negotiated system of meanings that occur in the production and delivery of world music between the musicians and expectations of audiences, which are facilitated by the promoters. The combination of the spatial politics of smaller venues, the local musicians and the transnational nature of world music create a complexity in understanding the precise commodity within world music. Namely, the music, the imaginary, and the identities of the musicians obscure the boundaries of this commodity and are all used in the production of this good. The next section examines how this process of identity construction is affected by the conditions of the production of world music.

1.2.3 Identity and World Music

At the early stages of this research, I set out to find out how world music performers particularly from West Africa structured their lives around the label of world music. As the project progressed, however, it became apparent that the
commodity was not limited to the music or even the musician. The increasing number of non-African and non-black British people who actively engaged in performing the music underscored the fact that the commodity does not rest solely on ethnicity or even the music. It has become a more complex commodity. One can argue that the increase of white and Caribbean black British musicians performing West African world music further limits the opportunities of local based black Africans. These artists must face competition from the aforementioned groups as well as from the industry’s preference for flying in African performers.

Whereas Gilroy (1993; see also Hutnyk 2000b) might label this as appropriation, something much deeper is at work here. hooks (2001) has termed white involvement with black identities as ‘eating the other’. By this she is referring to the ‘exertion of power and privilege over those whose cultures are consumed’ (Jackson 1999, p.100). In fact, Nexica (1997, p.72) argues that constructions of whiteness privileges white musicians because they are able to ‘unproblematically occupy any cultural position they choose and can perform to a reasonable degree (by standards they establish).’ This suggests a kind of insidiousness in their actions and interactions; however, this study reveals that this is not necessarily the case. Music is a fundamental way of expressing and reinforcing identity (Valentine 1995; Mitchell 1996). In this study identity is operationalized in a few key ways. First, identity formation is a continuous and negotiated process. That is, identity is shaped and reshaped according to interactions with others, which in turn means that identity is socially constructed (Sarup 1996). Second, identity should be thought of as occurring in relation to space and time. This means that identity is situational; spaces shape identity and are shaped by identity. Lastly, identity is reinforced through (musical) practice. Cohen (1995) shows that music is as much tied to identity as place. These ideas are set out in Chapter Six.
World music has changed since the heyday of Ossibisa. Such changes are a reflection of parallel changes in society and a reshaping of our own sense of identity. As a result, there is a clear development of two ‘types’ of world music being marketed in London and the UK. We can think of types as ways of representing world music that coexist and often overlap in the market. The first type of world music is performed with musicians wearing non-Western dress and vocal traditions to mark the performances. These performances were quite prevalent during the early days of world music, from the early 1980 through the mid 1990s (Connell & Gibson 2003). The second type is more contemporary in nature. Artists usually dress in Western clothing and sing in African languages and, occasionally, in Western languages, most often French. This has implications for how identity is performed through music and it also highlights the tensions between the nostalgic invocations of world music largely supported by institutional actors and cultural intermediaries and the more contemporary forms now being pushed largely by the artists themselves. As Nexica (1997, p.72) has argued, significant pressure is exerted ‘by a social order that privileges’ particular identities and marginalises others’. In this line of thought, Chapter Six demonstrates how critical identity is to the production of world music.

1.4 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

The dissertation proceeds in the following way. After this introductory chapter, the literature review explores theories of commodification, spaces, and identity to understand the conditions of production of world music performances in London and the construction of musicians’ identities. The first section of the review looks at commodification theories and situates them in a world music context. There is a good deal of literature on world music commodification; however, some implications of the concepts have changed over time. I seek to illustrate some of
these points. The final section looks at the role of the city and spaces within the city. Cities and spaces with the city work to create value and thereby contribute to the symbolic economy of the city. In this section, I seek to understand how this space is informed by physical spaces of consumption and the interactions that take place within them. The second section of the review examines how spaces are constituted by the activities that occur within them. This is done through an examination of literature on geography and music. It seeks to understand how particular commodities create different meanings for these participants across different spaces. It also looks at how the music industry produced particular narratives about different types of world music performers, particularly from West Africa, that are reinforced in creating local spaces for the world music production. Thirdly, the review examines the identification process at work through the everyday activity of consumption. It explores how different narratives are produced through this art form and then reinforced through various, often artificial, means.

This review positions commodification as a two-stage process. That is, it occurs from an institutional and industry level, which is termed commodification from above, and it occurs from the grassroots efforts of individual actors and localised promoters. The relationship between the two is dialectic, with boundaries that are not always perfectly clear. An important contribution of this thesis is that it examines the perspective of the lesser-known players in world music production and highlights how they interact with and resist the more powerful commodifiers from above. This idea is further developed in Chapter Four. The review also illustrates how spaces contribute to the conditions of production and within this remit, how identities get constructed.

Chapter Three examines the methodologies used in analyzing the qualitative data. It discusses semiotics and the role of interpretative analysis, both of which are used in piecing together an updated story of the evolution of this art in
London. The chapter also discusses why qualitative methodologies are better suited for the study. It outlines the different types of interviews conducted and the means of analysis used in understanding the data they provide. Snowballing, as a key data collection method, is discussed. This technique was beneficial in securing respondents because of the small size of this music scene. Lastly, the methods chapter lays out how computer-mediated communications played an important supporting role in conducting follow-up interviews. This chapter also contains a reflection on some of the ethical considerations of the study. Because there is a small circle of people involved in world music in London, consideration needed to be given to how people discussed other people and themselves in the writing.

Chapter Four focuses on the first objective identified for this thesis through an empirical exploration of how commodification processes in London’s world music scene occurs. The commodification processes were separated into two stages, those that occur from above and those from below. Commodification from above would emanate from industry executives operating in the UK including the State. These key cultural intermediaries, such as Charlie Gillett and Lucy Durran, ‘exposed’ UK audiences to world music and, more importantly, shaped how representation of the commodity occurred and the market’s (i.e. the audience’s) perception of it. This chapter shows the complicity of the musicians in the commodification process. By approaching the analysis in this way, a better examination of the various separate processes at work could be done. It also highlights the overlapping, dependent relationship that exists between these commercial spaces. What results is a dialectical relationship that becomes a determining factor of their continued existence and survival. The research examines this relationship from the perspective of the people commodifying from below. This chapter highlights how representation in world music is still, perhaps even more so, contested and how negotiated meanings get articulated and
integrated into the commodification process and the implications for power within the structure.

Chapter Five examines the second objective of the study (i.e. space and place). It explores how spaces construct different narratives using visual aesthetics and song/musician choices. An analysis of four such venues in London showed how narratives are constructed and the implications of this process. A confluence of site location in the city, performance choices and venue aesthetics created different ideas that have been commodified above and beyond previous academic focus on the music. From this analysis, four narratives are discussed in relation to how they have become articulated as commodities giving further value to the performances at these venues. Together they demonstrate how venue organizers draw upon different knowledge systems in producing particular identities. The result is that the venue itself takes on particular characteristics that are then marketed to different groups of world music consumers.

Chapter Six responds to the third objective: to examine how musicians use world music in shaping their identities. It therefore explores how the core group of actors under consideration in this study, the musicians, use world music as a means to construct and reinforce particular aspects of their identity. In so doing, the chapter speaks back to discussions in Chapter Four of how musicians actively participate in the commodification process. Analysis of interview data reveals interesting aspects of the relationship that these actors have with the UK and world music. This chapter also looks at other principal actors in the London world music scene. In one way or another, world music has provided them with an opportunity to restructure their conceptions of space and place. The core theme of this chapter is that identity in world music is a negotiation for various musicians who are struggling with British society, race, gender, and other aspects of themselves.
Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter in which the central research question is re-visited and interrogated. The question of the relationships between the conditions of world music production and the construction of musicians’ identities is re-explored in light of the research findings. It brings together all of the themes discussed in this project and seeks to draw analytical conclusions regarding how identities that circulate in and around world music consumption have changed in form and scope. The last part of this chapter contains some final reflections on the thesis and highlights key areas for further research in understanding how the label of world music differentiates spaces within London. It argues that there is a need to examine spaces and places outside of the established locations of world music in London to understand how the dynamics and construction of this commodity change according to a non-world music label. In other words, it calls for an attempt to remove particular barriers to music by recontextualizing ‘world music.’

1.5 CONCLUSION

The research question for this thesis examines the relationship between the conditions of production of world music and the construction of musicians’ identities. Such an approach is important because there is a gap surrounding the theories of music and space and an empirical gap in the data that is used in examining the local production of world music. This chapter has highlighted both my interest in a particular sub-category of world music and the theoretical underpinnings that will be used to examine its production in this thesis. At the heart of the issue are questions of representation and who controls how representation occurs for this music, the people, and ideas that are used in marketing the product. As this thesis will show, the commodification processes that encompass this art tell a particular story about self-empowerment and power over others. At the heart of the research, therefore, are assertions that not only
is world music a contested commodity, but one whose very economic viability is interlaced with symbolic questions of identity and authenticity. In exploring these within the London world music scene, the thesis aims to make a direct contribution to existing empirical studies of music and world music, geographical engagements with the role of space and place in music.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the relationship between the conditions of production of world music performances in London and the construction of musicians’ identities. This chapter will explore the constitution and complexity of the label of world music and discuss how commodification of this music has been affected by the shifting geographies of world music production. This has in turn had implications for the conditions of production of world music performances. Music from different parts of Africa is a particular subset of the larger genre of world music, which will be a focus in this work. This thesis examines how a consideration of this music enables an understanding of the geography of music, spaces and places, and identities of the musicians who perform it.

The London-based record executive Iain Scott commented that the driving engine of the world music phenomenon was ‘African’ music (Denselow 2004). While music from African countries has held a significant presence on the world music market for many years (Feld 2000), Scott’s accolade highlights a number of complications in the construction and definition of world music, which will be explored in this thesis. Connell and Gibson (2004, p.343) argue that world music offers a salient way of examining how geography (global vs. local, for example) becomes ‘articulated and contested’. This chapter sets out to explore the theoretical and social contexts in which the (re)production of many African musical forms as world music occurs in London. Providing this context will help respond to the research question that asks what is the relationship between the conditions of the production of world music performances in London and the construction of musicians’ identities.
Waterman (1991, p.169) argues that the tendency to see African music, 'as an indivisible whole' is grounded in 'Eurocentric conceptions of Black Africa as a geographic and ethnological unit, and of Africans as a people or race'. Waterman’s comment shows how critical the intersection is between geography, beliefs, and the production of music. In order to understand how representations of non-Western music occur it is important to look not ‘so much in the objects (aesthetics) of early observations as in the processes of presenting them--- or, more accurately, (re)presenting them’ (Bohlman 1991, p.136). Here, Bohlman is calling for an examination of the stages of how music is presented and represented. This thesis looks at how the observations of Waterman and Bohlman play out through three objectives: to explores how world music is produced and by whom; to examine the role of space and place in world music; and to identify how musicians, promoters and DJs use world music in shaping their own identities.

Music is socially constructed because it reflects subjectivities that are tied to the places in which it is performed and people who perform (and consume) it. Urquia (2004) explores salsa music production and the types of relationships that people maintain with it in the London salsa scene. He shows how the salsa scene in London became reconstructed and removed ‘privilege’ away from Latin Americans, who brought the trend to London, toward British salsa teachers who dominated at the clubs. In the process, various non-Latin participants in London used the music and the scene to reconstruct their own identities. This was achieved by mixing associations of particular cultural characteristics of Latinos with their own culture. In this context, dance skill and knowledge about the music became ‘translated into social standing’ and a means to construct a particular identity for the participants (ibid 2004, p.99). This ties in with the third objective of identity construction through the use of music.
Music is also part of the social construction of place. Cohen (1995) argues that music can define a sense of place and also a set of relationships and alliances. In her view, music empowers its listeners to ‘travel in an imaginary sense to different times and places’ (ibid 1995, p.439). Therefore, the production of world music, just as with any other music, provides a way to establish and/or reinforce social relationships. However, this is not a straightforward process. Hudson (2006, p.630) shows that place construction through music is a ‘contested process, [that contains] a dynamic interrelationship’. Hence, producing music (re)materializes both place and identities. Berger and Luckman (1991, p.194) show how social processes form identities that are ‘maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations’. In the live production of music, identities are formed through the interplay of ‘organism, individual consciousness and social structure’ (ibid 1991, p.194) that occur in particular spaces, thereby addressing the second objective of the relationship of space and music. In this thesis, I examine how small venues (place) that offer world music in London are produced through the social relations and interactions of the musicians, the producers, and the DJs.

The remainder of this chapter will proceed in the following way: section 2.2 examines how the genre of world music was established and the implications of the label on the commodification process of this music; section 2.3 looks at the commodification of music and the effects of this process which is an important consideration for understanding the first objective.

2.2 EXPLORING WORLD MUSIC AS A CONTESTED TERM

2.2.1 WORLD MUSIC – WHAT IS IT AND WHO PRODUCES IT?
Since the 1950s, West African musicians had been touring in London and throughout the UK. However, the reconstruction of the music they performed as world music created an opportunity to improve the commercial success of the product. It has been argued that music executives developed the genre of ‘world music’ in a London pub in 1987 (Fairley 2001). Brennan (2001, p.45) notes that the meeting was attended by ‘twenty-five British representatives of independent record companies, concert promoters, broadcasters and other individuals active in the propagation of international music’. The term was formalized for use as a marketing tool for primarily non-Western music to reach larger audiences in the West. The resulting negotiations occurring at institutional and individual levels resulted in the creation of an entire infrastructure in the form of world music billboards charts, world music industry magazines Songlines and fRoots, and festivals. Frith’s (1998) work highlights how the naming of world music as a music genre was designed to capture particular Western imaginaries of non-Western music. In this line of thought, the minutes from the 1987 meeting where the genre name was created is quite telling, ‘…whilst not all of these (music) labels are devoted exclusively to World Music, they have united to bring recognition to the many diverse forms of music as yet unclassifiable in Western terms…’ (Frith 1998, p.85). Here, music labels refers to music companies’ executives from different areas of music and their efforts to create a means of receiving non-Western music in Western markets. Labelling any genre of music ‘places music in a value system based on a geographical categorization’ (A. Leyshon et al. 1995, p.425).

The label of world music was the result of efforts of a group of actors who already maintained an infrastructure of ‘world music’ in the UK. For example, British musician, Peter Gabriel co-founded the first World of Music and Dance (WOMAD) festival in 1982. Gabriel says of WOMAD,
Pure enthusiasm for music from around the world led us to the idea of WOMAD in 1980 and thus to the first WOMAD festival in 1982. The festivals have always been wonderful and unique occasions and have succeeded in introducing an international audience to many talented artists.

Equally important, the festivals have also allowed many different audiences to gain an insight into cultures other than their own through the enjoyment of music. Music is a universal language, it draws people together and proves, as well as anything, the stupidity of racism.  

However, Gabriel’s claim appears to ignore or marginalize the commercial interests that surround the production of world music, as they would for any music genre. The claim obfuscates the conditions of production that occur in and around the finished product of world music; a product that involves uneven power relations that are necessarily transnational in nature. Taylor (1997) argues that it is Gabriel who benefits most from the creation of WOMAD because of his position of power. Gabriel’s statement also undermines issues of inclusion and exclusion. Namely, who is invited to partake in the production and consumption of world music and under what conditions? And, perhaps more importantly, who does the inviting? The WOMAD philosophy and its annual festivals constitute part of the conditions of production of world music at the smaller venues under consideration in this thesis. In other words, one cannot ignore the activities (themes, narratives, and so on) of WOMAD, because it provides an overarching framework for the production of world music at the local venues. In other words, understanding WOMAD’s imprint on world music is a necessary tangent for examining the conditions of the production of world music.

World music can and has been defined in different ways. Notice Guilbault’s (2001, p.176) definition:

\[ \text{[It] came from outside ‘normal’ Anglo-American (including Canadian and Australian) sources and mainly from tropical countries [but] because the attraction of world music is seen to lie in its use of rhythm…the term has usually been associated with musics from Africa and the African Diaspora [but] now} \]

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covers American, Asian, and European musics, albeit those of minority groups within these geographical areas.

Guilbault’s explanation of this music highlights particular geographies outside of the West, but also particular marginal groups within the West. In some ways, Guilbault is linking world music to earlier ethnomusicology arguments that position world music as tied to particular ethnicities, and off limits to associations with the West (For example Slobin 1992; Erlmann 1993; T. Miller & Shahriari 2008). In any case, world music can be understood as an ‘ethnicized commodity’ (Dwyer & Crang 2002, p.412) that is subject to migratory and transnational flows, but also to elements of power and identity. Other scholars argue that world music is unique in that, as a market, it exists almost entirely in countries where the music does not originate (Feld 2000; Laing 2009). Connell and Gibson (2004, p.347) argue that the term, ‘world music’, ‘only came into common usage when cultural flows were reversed, when a musician more wholly schooled in western musical traditions sought “exotic” sounds from Africa’. Place and the identities it fosters, then, become highly subjective due to the cross-border (and ‘cross-time’) movements (and ‘appropriation’ (Gilroy 1993)) of world music. Following Guilbault, this thesis defines world music as one that highlights places and the selective nature of how these places (and people) are represented in music.

As will be shown later, the US, the UK, and Europe are the biggest producers and consumer of world music, with a majority of albums recorded in studios in and around London and Paris (Nidel 2005). Inadvertently, however, this production process enables two purposes. First, it allows for the continued use of the term, world music, as a marketing technique. In other words, ‘world music’ would make little marketing sense to immigrant communities who are from the same region as the singer or performance group (Erlmann 1996). Consequently, its label necessarily delineates would-be audiences in particular ways. One could argue that this is changing. As this music genre matures in the
West, it creates a world music reality in non-Western contexts. Hence, local audiences in the non-West can also associate particular musicians as world music performers. Secondly, Taylor (1997) demonstrates that the term’s ambiguity allows industry executives to continually shape and reshape how particular music can be constructed and represent different commercial needs. Using the *Billboard* chart of World Music, he notes that music from the Far East was never listed in the chart between 1990 and 1996, but the music was later included on the chart as world music. In a similar line of reasoning, Laing (2009) shows how Celtic music evolved from being virtually unknown to dominating on the world music charts by 2005. This raises questions as to when music qualifies as ‘world music’ or which geographies define membership. Given that Celtic music is much older than the advent of the 1987 world music label, what factors changed so that this music was now suitable for world music audiences? The next section begins to unravel some of the complexities that underpin this question. The above discusses the shaping the product by the ‘machine’; however, there are also questions of the extent to which the creators are immune to such shaping or also subject to it. This will be addressed in Chapter Six.

Deciding which music fits in this category becomes a contested space based on commercial factors, such as authenticity and marketability. Music executives and other industry insiders decided to create a name for music that they felt did not fit into other categories. This new marketing tool gave particular forms of music greater visibility in the West. Greater visibility would inevitably lead to sales. From the outset, this created commercial incentives that allowed for the expansion of the industry. Traditionally, performers of this category of music almost always originated from non-Western countries, which calls into question the ways in which power is disseminated in this industry. Some respondents have argued that this form of world music is so popular because ‘African music has a raw quality’. They have said that it moves them in ways that other music does not. Nidel (2005, p.2) opens his discussion of the subject with the following
definition: ‘world music includes many forms of music of various cultures that remain closely informed or guided by indigenous music of the regions of their origins.’ His use of ‘indigenous’ necessarily involves the identity and customs of the people living in the region. Increasingly, though, many non-African British musicians are performing in bands that play world music with African roots as discussed in Chapter Six. This complicates identities and perceptions related to world music.

Nidel’s and other similar definitions of world music are necessarily circular. They imply a certain universalism in that they bring together artists from around the world to places primary in the West. The label is also problematic in that it creates boundaries that are less flexible. The production of world music can serve to reshape and, in some ways, reinforce how we view others and ourselves. The genre being named as world music relies on particular characteristics that reflect largely Western ideas of other cultures and their music (Connell & Gibson 2003). If we associate these characteristics with being ‘world music’ then this music’s identity becomes reinforced. However, if musicians evolve in any way that belies Western beliefs or expectations about the music genre’s identity then a conflict arises. This can result in one of two outcomes: either the performers will modify their musical behaviour thereby remaining commercially active in the West or consumers in this market will adapt their perceptions of world music toward perhaps a more current reflection of music from these regions, which is discussed further in Chapter Six. Steinert (2003, p.74) argues that particular understandings about art become ‘ideological as soon as they are used to prevent art from developing’. Consequently such ideologies not only misrepresent that which is real, they also suppress that which is possible. This has repercussions in the development of world music and notions of authenticity. As I show in Chapter Four, ideology connected with the commodification of world music directly affects how authenticity is constructed and in doing so creates conditions of production of world music performances.
that, in some ways, obscure ‘other ways of life and other possible paths for the development of society – whether in the past or present’. This is further strengthened through the constructed knowledge that is developed and marketed along with the music. In this case the industry is shaping and packaging the product, hence they are directly and indirectly influencing the conditions of production of world music.

Bourdieu (1987, p.359) describes cultural intermediaries as becoming the ‘petit bourgeoisie’ and working in the ‘presentation and representation and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services’. This group have eked out a position in society because they possess relatively high cultural capital (Lane 2000, p.158). This group acts as gatekeepers and translators of cultural goods. Additionally, Bourdieu (1987, p.170) has argued that the action of presenting and representing is, in fact, creating the conditions within which presenting and representing occurs: the habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices as the perception of practices, but also a structured structure. In doing so, the resulting social structure both ‘constrains and enables the creative dimension of the habitus’ (Morrison 2005, p.314). Negus (2002, p.504) argues that cultural intermediaries are ‘accorded with pivotal roles in processes of symbolic mediation’, which in turn prioritizes ‘a narrow and reductionist aesthetic definition of culture’. Cultural intermediaries developed the label of world music for commercial purposes in 1987. This group is also connected to the greater network of institutional and state actors involved in the presentation and representation of music and other cultural forms in the UK (Stokes 2004b, p.59). World music became a label that enables and inhibits particular musical narratives in different ways. The ambiguity of the label of world music gives power to its cultural intermediaries in the taxonomy, or laws and principles that cover the classification, of world music. It allowed the intermediaries to decide which singers became ‘world music’ performers in the UK and which ones would remain outside of that marketing scheme. As shown in Chapter Four,
respondents claim that the selection process is subjective and based on factors known only to a small group of about 10 or so industry executives operating in the UK. This is problematic because it assumes that world music is only a UK phenomenon. In reality, the route to world music fame can be had through the US and Europe also. In either market, the same gatekeeping system would, no doubt, be the case (Taylor 2007). However, gatekeepers are only so strong because of what they guard the gates to: a massive distribution machine. The control of this (and the inherent inequalities) is their key. It also means that gatekeepers have the power to shape artists (some of whom would not otherwise find a market). In other words, the artists can come to market on the industry’s terms. This thesis offers a crack at this. It shows how live performances and this construction of music produces tensions between its production and consumption. The thesis, in a way, works at the margins of both—a liminal space of music making.

West African music has maintained a significant presence on the world music scene in the UK. This is shown empirically in Chapter Four (also see the Appendix). However, not all West African music or musicians become part of world music, which underscores the uneven relations of inclusion that are inherent in the industry. For example, Titi, Ma Sane, and Comba Gawlo are three Senegalese female mbalax singers who are renowned in Senegal and Gambia. They are not marketed as world music artists either by themselves or by the industry in the West, or even known in the UK. Ma Sane has been performing in Senegal and Gambia for many years; however, she has not made much headway into Western markets. There could be different reasons that explain this, such as the singer’s choosing or because cultural intermediaries did not perceive her as marketable.
However, its exclusion tells a particular story with regard to the conditions necessary for commodification to occur and also how the construction and dissemination of knowledge about the product can both empower and disempower. By comparison, Angelique Kidjo, a singer from Benin, enjoys a huge following in the West and makes virtually annual appearances at the Barbican in London. In West Africa alone, hundreds of singers entertain locally and regionally without ever making it into the world music market. What delineates the three Senegalese singers from Kidjo? Are they ‘too’ authentic or do stylistic differences translate to non-access to Western markets? Frith (2000, p.309) argues that world music labels ‘are highly informative about the musical sources of their release’ but ‘highly uninformative’ about the processes that go into the (de)selection and commercial processes that go into (re)creating these artists in the UK. Bourdieu (1987, p.172) would argue that this gap in knowledge is due to a habitus that is ‘apprehending differences between conditions, which it grasps in the form of differences between classified, classifying practices’ that are themselves based on perceptions of the cultural intermediaries.

Hesmondhalgh (2007, p.309) defines commodification of culture as ‘the historical process by which cultural objects and services are increasingly made to be bought and sold on capitalist markets extended over time and space’. Commodification is a situated process, however, the relationship between the two groups of actors highlight the contested nature of this commodity. Their relationship will be explored in the next section.
2.2.2 Commodification from Above and Below

Taylor (1997), Miller (2003) and others have shown how goods are produced and managed through institutions by cultural intermediaries. Borrowing from Guanzio and Smith (1998), I am referring to this as ‘commodification from above’ to draw attention to the systematic corporate and state actions that market, promote and/or sanction world music for their own gain. However, as will be shown in Chapter Four, musicians often choose to or are obliged to actively commodify themselves and their music. In doing so, they blur the line between the economic and material processes of world music production. I term this process of self-commodification activity as ‘commodification from below’. These two parallel commodifying processes constitute a ‘dialectical paradigm’ (N. Smith 1979, p.361) being interdependent of each other and not in direct competition. However, they are engaged in a de facto collaboration to share and expand a consumer base. Of concern here is the duality of commodification from above and commodification from below; in other words, how these two spheres of activity compete and complement each other in maintaining their positions in the structure. Within this structure are debates about production, representation, and agency. Consequently, this relationship brings about a complementarity that creates tensions related to the control of resources, which I will explore through an examination of the production of West African world music with respect to the first and second objectives.

‘Commodification from below’ is a term adapted from Guarnizo and Smith (1998, p.8), who argue that a ‘main concern guiding Transnationalism from Below is to discern how this process affects power relations, cultural constructions, economic interactions, and, more generally, social organization at the level of the locality’. Crang et al. (2003) caution against the fixity that these terms can imply. They

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4 Bourdieu (1987, p.359) saw institutions as neither above nor below. He viewed them as ‘conditioned or determined by social and economic lived positions’ of the new petit bourgeoisie. Institutions were enabled by and through the knowledge and cultural capital of these actors.
suggest that an examination of the commodity culture ‘offers a productive lens through which to view transnational spaces – one that can locate accounts of the transnational in the particular movements of things, people, ideas and capitals, yet avoids “fixing” transnational space into overly simplistic and concrete forms’ (ibid 2003, p.441). This thesis examines how commodification occurs from above and from below and how it contributes to the conditions of production of world music. More specifically, the scope of this thesis looks at how the music is given life outside of state and commercial actors from above, such as the Arts Council of England and WOMAD, MBM, among others, and explores how individual actors commodify their talents and, in some cases, themselves, for singing and/or promoting, and maintain a relationship with the organizations that represent ‘the above’. This interrelationship has implications for how musicians construct their identities. In fact, according to many interviews discussed in the empirical chapters of this thesis, many musicians desire to participate in this production-consumption process with the backing of the world music industry in the hope of gaining international recognition.5

With regard to commodification from above, Lovering (1988, p.33) claims that to ‘become a commodity, individual musical constructions must be capable of being parcelled up in ways that allow mass production and mass sale’. He further adds that ‘musical commodity is generally a song (or an instrumental) as performed by an artist, often packaged together with particular visual images’. The transient nature of any individual song obliges the industry to emphasize the singer’s narratives as part of the production process. The resulting ‘embodied performance’ becomes a critical selling point for this music. Chapter Four examines the institutional and commercial forces that ‘parcel up’ songs, people, and ideas for consumption. This understanding of music commodification limits some forms of creativity and constructs new ones for different artists and different audiences. In order to achieve this, music industry leaders need to exercise

5 This was also discussed in Taylor’s (1997, p.29) work.
particular forms of knowledge about the audience in shaping the product. Miller (2003, p.85) argues that ‘the level of a product’s ability to sustain [an industry] gives it an affinity to particular needs’. The next section looks at the important aspects of what goes on in the commodification processes of world music.

As mentioned, ‘from above’ refers to the ways in which transnational corporations and global media are able to exercise power over different processes and assign value to objects. Advertising and marketing strategies can exotify or ‘other’ particular forms of music (Gilroy 1993). However, Erllmann (1996, p.470) calls for a theory of world music that does not ‘heroize otherness’, but at the same time engages in a core-periphery exploration that raises ‘havoc with our settled ways of thinking and conceptualization’. Labelling music can maintain a vital distinction of this music from other mainstream music (Kassabian 2004). The world music industry leaders are influencing, if not outright controlling, the ‘values and meanings people ascribe to specific brands’, which are then tied to their own ‘socio-spatial relations and identities and their perceptions of the brand and branding’s spatial associations and connotations’ (Pike 2009, p.620). Pike’s observations broaden conclusions reached by Appadurai (1986) and Cook and Crang (1996). They have likewise argued that greater distances between the source of production and its destination add to its value. However, the key determinant of whether this process is occurring from above or below, or some combination of the two, is the question of who has control over representation of the music and the musical performance. This can be seen by looking at the proportion of successful world music artists who perform independently of the major world music labels.

An examination of the resulting commodification processes of world music reveals that commodification can occur from many sides and should be understood as an integral part of power. Attali (1985, p.5) describes commodification in music as firstly fetishizing it as a commodity, then
‘deritualizing a social form, repressing an activity of the body, specializing its practice, selling it as a spectacle, generalizing its consumption, then seeing to it that it is stockpiled until it loses its meaning’. Producers, the musicians, and the audiences participate in the process of commodification. These goods are said to have an historical and social trajectory that interacts with consumers and environments (Appadurai 1986). Commodities are articles of commerce that are bought and sold in markets, and to understand them we have to follow the things themselves (ibid 1986, p.5) in an historical context; as their meanings are to be found, or constructed, in places where they are exchanged. ‘Various social arenas’ (ibid 1986, p.15) form a link between the object as a commodity and the potential of it becoming a commodity.

For Appadurai, things move through different stages and have ‘lives’ before and after their commoditized state. He further argues that these economic things are culturally regulated and subject to individual tastes (1986, p.17). These two ideas appear to be at odds, primarily because commodities don’t move through the different stages of their existence but are moved. Appadurai’s depiction of the life of commodities may not allow for changing power roles between the above and the below. An object’s being moved implies that external forces of economic, cultural, and societal values are controlling them. Magowan (2005, p.81) argues a different point of view from Appadurai. He argues that ‘as commodification responds to market values, the meaning of objects is displaced onto alternative systems of regulation, transference and differentiation’. In essence, the commodity value may be assigned to the narratives of world music or onto the singers’ lives rather than simply to the music.

Music challenges Appadurai’s seemingly one-sided relationship between commercial interests and commodities. Attali (1985, p.116) argues that, following the early commodification of music in the 1800s, although the modern musician ‘gives the appearance of being more independent of power and money than his
predecessors, he is, quite the opposite, more tightly tied in with the institutions of power than ever before... he has become the learned minstrel of the multinational apparatus. Hardly profitable economically, he is the producer of a symbolism of power’. This argument highlights the complex position in which the musician finds himself. Notice how Taylor (1997, p.126) explains the problem, ‘these musicians are (temporally) moderns who face constant pressure from westerners to remain musically and otherwise pre-modern – that is, culturally ‘natural’ – because of racism and Western demands for authenticity.’ One should consider the extent to which this may still be the case in world music. If one uses Bourdieu’s conceptualization of the social structure with respect to the work of intermediaries then an argument could be made that the practices of production and reproduction are ‘offset by the agency implicit in structuring structures...that may eventually replace the structured structures’ (Morrison 2005, p.314). This process would lead to new paradigms on which world music is produced that reflect different constructions of authenticity; a process that is centred on the intermediaries rather than on the consumer as Taylor suggests.

Appadurai’s (1986) discussion of the commoditization process revolves around objects. He examines a four-stage model of commodification and argues that commodities gain and lose value based on social, political, and economic factors that emerge largely in the destination country. His analysis alludes to commodity chains. This method of production and consumption is characterized by ways in which ‘distant producers and consumers are connected by particular commodities that travel the globe from their origins as “raw materials” to consumption in the final destinations’ (Coe et al. 2007, p.88). However, changes in technology have shifted this process of circulation, and as a result have created different conditions of production. As discussed elsewhere in this review, the global network of world music production is now centred on key cities in Europe and the States. For Appadurai, the values of consumers are the principal determinants of the value, and hence the need for the commodity. As for the
producers, Miles et al. (2002, p.3) show that producers of the commodity have 'little or no control over how the commodity is deployed or used'. However, world music is a peculiarity of Appadurai’s discussion of commodification theory. Notice his discussion of demand:

> Demand, that is, emerges as a function of social practices and classifications, rather than a mysterious emanation of human needs, a mechanical response to social manipulation (as in one model of the effects of advertising in our own society), or the narrowing down of a universal and voracious desire for objects to whatever happens to be available (Appadurai 1986, p.29).

Using his argument, one can begin to think about how demand for world music, as monitored by cultural intermediaries, has affected the conditions of world music production. The intermediaries’ efforts are further underscored by academic research that has served to objectify world music. Feld (2000) and others (Guilbault 2001; Miller & Shahriari 2008) show that ethnomusicologists in the 1950s originally labelled music that was ‘constructed by default as the cultural and contextual study of music of non-Europeans, European peasants, and marginalized ethnic or racial minorities’ (Feld 2000, p.147). The result was a de facto partitioning of world music from music based on perceived and historicized ethnic and cultural differences. Feld (2000, p.147) continues, ‘the relationship of the colonizing and the colonized thus remained generally intact in distinguishing music from world music’.

Feld (2000) argues that while the label of world music can be seen as a commercial triumph, it also placed a veil over differences among musical forms, countries and individuals. It is a totalizing and reductionist category. Labelling musical genres occurred by ethnomusicologists long before the 1987 meeting to formalize the world music label. Academics as cultural intermediaries often distorted places, culture, and people from outside of their domain. However, labelling the genre also provided a different purpose: it gave this music a reach
beyond (ethno)musicology experts and reconfigured the way music was recorded, curated and promoted’ (Brandellero & Pfeffer 2011, p.496).

Guilbault (1997, p.32) argues that ‘from the moment phenomena or people are categorised, the very categories that are used to refer to them become the signal of a new presence’. Labelling world music was a key component of commodification. The classification of this music accomplishes the ‘presencing’ of the music, but for whom? Labels only work if they are made to stick, which is accomplished through repetition and reinforcement, and sometimes through the power of legal redress. Becker (1997, pp.179–181) argues the point that labels position an actor ‘in circumstances which make it harder for him or her to continue the normal routines of everyday life’; however, he further argues that labels present a means to look at a ‘general area of human activity; a perspective whose value will appear in increased understanding of things formerly obscure’. This highlights particular benefits in labelling world music, but these benefits (ultimately financial ones) are not evenly shared.

Moncrieffe (2007, p.4) shows how the labelling process can have potentially damaging effects for different groups within the structure in that labelling involves ‘relationships of power… that reveal subjective perceptions of how people fit into different spaces in the social order and of the terms on which society should engage with them in varying contexts and at different points in time’. The labelling of world music as a genre was the active result of a recognition that this type of commodity was unrepresented in contemporary Western societies (Frith 2000). Before the genre was formalized, these artists’ albums were integrated alphabetically into the wider assortment of music; though sometimes they were labelled under ‘international artists’. This obliged customers to search through general sections of music stores to find a particular musician or discover new ones. Thus, as a marketing tool, world music provided opportunities for lesser-
known artists to access wider audiences. Notice the words of American singer, Paul Simon, on the subject:

I know all the arguments concerning appropriation, but at the end of the day, providing you try to balance the exchange and allow for the promotion of the collaborating artist and their own music, rather than just taking, I feel very comfortable with this idea of dialogue...so, given these parameters, more is gained than is lost...it is possible now for artists from different cultures and countries to reach a limited audience worldwide, making a living from it, and there is much more focus now than there was ten years ago.

(Frith 2000)

Labelling musicians as world music performers creates a further subcategory within their migrant status. In world music performance venues, artists are offering a commodity that emphasizes aspects of a non-Western identity, making the music and musicians integral parts of the production. The labeling process is how intermediaries shape and construct music and make that particular commodity form of the market place. Baudrillard (2008, p.118) argues that the 'work of art...should work to deconstruct its own traditional aura, its authority and power of illusion, in order to shine resplendent in the pure obscenity of the commodity'. The label of world music begins a process of deconstruction that musicians, migrants and locals alike engage with as a means of livelihood; it also serves to frame their identity and life in a particular way. This idea is further developed in the identities section of this chapter. In other cases, different music forms are produced and commodified entirely in the UK but share the label of world music. For example, it acts as a means of cultural empowerment thus a potentially positive outcome for a displaced community of British Asians. The construction of Bhangra music highlights the artificiality of a world music label by creating a translocal musical space. In its creation, a music scene was formed in quite a different locale (in Newcastle, England rather than in Punjab, India) which 'can be shaped to fit specific local sensibilities' (Peterson and Bennett 2004, p.4). Banerji writes that Bhangra music provided young British South Asians with:
A voice with which to tell their white compatriots who they were and what they were; not the shy, insular and conservative creatures they had hitherto been stereotyped as, but ordinary fun loving young people . . . the new generation of British South Asians has finally found its voice; a vibrant, youthful and modern voice which acknowledges the two polarities of their cultures and reconciles them.

(Banerji 1988, p.112)

Erlmann (1996, p.476) argues that music such as Bhangra, Zimbabwean chimurenga or Nigerian fuji were ‘all constructed around the shock and dislocation an individual from a local, non-Western tradition might experience who suddenly finds his or her life-world more or less violently juxtaposed with the world of industrial capitalism’. This suggests that music can be used as a means of expressing a condition of cultural inbetweenness and an acknowledgement of, and in some instances, a rebellion against the condition. Hesmondhalgh (2007, p.56) shows how commodification processes bring with them ownership and reconstruct property as belonging to particular groups where ‘labour goes unrecognized and systematically under-rewarded’ (see also Frow 1997). This partition creates different power structures and inequalities that usually remain in place long after the classification has been created. What is different about cultural commodification is that the production of the good is also tied to the producer. Hence, this implies, in some ways, a more complex structure for musicians, producers, and audience. However, in The Social Life of Things (1988), Appadurai does not consider how commodification processes lay bare the exploitation to which Hesmondhalgh is alluding. Chapter Six of this thesis shows how exploitative practices have occurred in world music production. This is important because it is part of the conditions of the production and also has a direct bearing on how musicians construct their identity.

Commodification of world music plays upon and reinforces ideas and beliefs about the other (Connell & Gibson 2003, p.145). The resulting product is a
totalizing experience that can be used for various purposes including city-sponsored festivals with traditional, non-modern, non-Western foods and crafts (Regis & Walton 2008). In this case, musicians and traditional non-Western foods and crafts become subject to a context that Appadurai (1986, p.15) argues occurs within and across societies and provides the ‘link between the social environment of the commodity and its temporal and symbolic state’. The musicians become (re)commodified as part of cities’ efforts to become cosmopolitan and/or cutting-edge. As such, cities strive for a particular image creating, or at minimum encouraging, a demand for world music. The case of Liverpool as 2008 European Capital of Culture further underscores the state’s complex influence in this respect. It offered ‘world class performances from world class acts’ in the city’s biggest festival, the 16th annual Africa Oye Festival. The city’s web page describes the festival stating:

And if this wasn’t (enough) there will also be fun activities for children, arts and craft traders, and food cooked and served to you from around the world (the African world in particular). (http://africaoye.com/; accessed June 2009)

There are several issues at work in this quote. Festivals such as these represent transformations of space, objects, people (Mitchell 2003) and, as a consequence, power relations. Additionally, there is a clear binary (Hall 1999) being made between the Liverpudlian and African worlds. During the festival, public spaces of Liverpool are transformed into contested spaces with commodified difference as a focal point. Inhabitants of Liverpool and nearby locations are able to consume city government-sponsored creations of difference (Abbinnett 2003) in a reconstruction of place and narratives through world music.

Brennan (2001, p.46) argues that world music ‘characterizes a longing in metropolitan centres of Europe and North America for what is not Europe or North America: a general, usually positive, interest in the cultural life of other
parts of the world…’. Hage (1997) suggests that a robust market for international goods in cities in the West is not based upon the presence or flows of migrants; rather, such demand is a consequence of international tourism and represents a ‘multicultural urbanity that is experienced through the consumption of other places and peoples’ (ibid: 137). For Appadurai (1986, p.38), the intensification of demand for these products increases as distances between them increase and knowledge regarding the commodities becomes ‘differentiated’. Differentiation of commodities contributes to conceptual spaces that form a necessary part of world music’s strength. The next section looks at how fetishization works into the commodification process.

2.2.2.1 Fetishization

The process of commodifying music involves fetishizing (Attali 1985); therefore a consideration of how world music is commodified needs to also examine how ‘musical difference has been represented, exalted and fetishized… how it has been traded, merged, and cashed out’ (Feld 2000, p.151), and in this thesis, used to (re)construct identities for the musicians. Fetishization thus ‘radically revalues the normative knowledge’ (Bhabha 2004, p.90) surrounding cultural production, such as world music. Fetishization of goods is an intricate part of the commodification process. Notice Cook and Crang’s (1996, p.135) argument that, ‘consumed commodities and their valuations are divorced for and by consumers from the social relations’ that produce them. In other words, this would imply that, through a cooperative process, the consumer does not know the conditions that produce this music and supply the West with a continued stream of artists. Instead, knowledge about products has been recontextualized and often plays upon (British) historical and contemporary associations with particular places of production. This depiction does not entirely apply to world music consumption; namely because many consumers of world music tend to have some historical, geographic, and/or social knowledge about the origin of the good. However, the
discourse that develops around this knowledge, and the knowledge itself, ‘serve as a channeling, controlling force in itself’ (Luckmann & Berger 1991, p.84) that become subjective reality and a convenient means of fetishizing world music.

Watts (2005, p.541) argues that three complexities mark commodity fetishism. Firstly, that the ‘social character’ of a thing is ‘somehow seen as a natural attribute intrinsic to the thing itself’. This suggests a non-transferability of value of the good. This also leads the way for arguments from early ethnomusicologists who ascribed particular characteristics onto West African and other non-Western forms of music (Waterman 1991). Secondly, the commodities appear as an ‘independent and uncontrolled reality apart from the producers who fashioned them’; I interpret this as the processes of reification of the characteristics of, in this case, world music artists. Erlmann (1996, p.475) argues that the ‘forces and processes of cultural production are dispersed and cut loose from any particular time and place’. Hence, commodification of world music (and any music) creates an emotional and/or geographic distance between the present social and economic conditions that produced the product for consumption in the West and the role of the West in creating the conditions in the first place (Sidaway 2002). Thirdly, Watts argues that ‘events and process are represented as timeless or without history’. However, Crang (1996, p.52) further argues that it is important to consider ‘how much consumers know about the commodities that they are involved with, what kind of knowledges consumers have, and where are such knowledges produced?’ Examining who produces the knowledge offers a way of understanding how power flows through the analysis. Guilbault (2001, p.176) argues that world music should be approached by understanding ‘its place within the complex and constantly changing dynamics of a world which is historically, socially, and spatially interconnected’. This approach, however, presents particular challenges for earlier commodifications of world music, where discrete place associations and ‘constructed knowledge’ (Cook & Crang 1996) about places were a critical part of its marketability.
Fetishization is also said to go beyond empowerment (and disempowerment) to include the ‘deification of the industrial artifact, not only submission to and before it, but also reverent worship’ (Gilloch 1997, p.119). This depiction of fetish seems to support Cook and Crang’s argument in that reverent worship and submission connotes an associated level of ignorance. Additionally, Aldridge (2003, p.79) outlines three ideological consequences of fetishization: First, ‘a fetishistic focus on commodities obscures the social relations of production that produced them’. While one might be tempted to think of the political, social, and economic realities of the developing world, which produced most of world music, it is important to consider these same realities at the points of local production and consumption. This becomes increasingly relevant as music executives recenter world music production from the origin sources to well-equipped recording studios in the West (Taylor 2007). The second consequence is that ‘societies become fragmented’. This fragmentation might compel world music producers to find a ‘freshness’ to the music they play by hybridizing some elements of it. However, one could argue that the increasing fragmentation creates a particular fetishization, in particular of cultural products. Third, the dominant nature of commodities creates the illusion that ‘human culture’ is natural and inevitable. But as particular commodifications get contested, different groups such as the two leading magazines of world music, fRoots and Songlines, seek to fill in the gaps with different meanings, as discussed further in Chapter Four. Taylor and Jackson (1996, p.361) argue that the ‘audience’s culturally constructed knowledge plays an active role’ in decoding messaging, which, in turn facilitates consumption. Secondly they argue in common with Harvey (1990) and Urry and Lash (1993) that, in some consumption systems, consumers are gaining knowledge about the production processes. In fact this creates an increased commodification value. This is important because the very act of fetishization ‘illustrates the evolution of the entire society’ and provides a ‘rough sketch of the society under construction’ (Attali 1985, p.5). This means that the value of music is found in how it is
fetishized, but this also directly influences how musicians will shape their identities with respect to this condition of production.

2.2.2.2 AUTHENTICITY

By definition, authenticity has to be based on some contested meanings between the subject and the object (Negus 1992). How does the meaning get articulated to musicians? Western promoters and audiences directly and indirectly control how authenticity in world music gets defined through the flow of power. The commercial exchange for a musical performance determines more than just authenticity; it also influences identity and articulates power. Hence, the baseline measure of how authenticity is constructed also lies with particular perceptions of how non-Western, and in many cases transnational music should sound (Cook & Crang 1996; Hernandez 1998). This is not to say that the non-Western musicians are not complicit in shaping constructions of authenticity. However, if musicians come from farther away, they may be perceived to have a higher commodity value, perhaps are more fetishized and therefore better able to construct their identities. In this case, real and imagined notions about the other within conceptual spaces are shaped, in part, through cultural, historical, and political processes of the host country. Perceptions of authenticity are also part of the expectations of world music’s network of participants, particularly those of audiences. This explains why musicians would need to maintain an identity that fits in with the goals of producing world music. That is to say, the more authentic the music remains or appears to be, the more valued the musical performances become, and the more successful the musician (Taylor 2004).

Certain types of authenticity increase the appeal of world music because it provides a ‘selective endorsement for the premium’ (Gilroy 1993, p.99) that some users place on cultural commodities. Its success is also as contingent upon societal values and tastes as any other commodity. The dynamics of world music
production and consumption meant that it was a good that largely originated from outside the West for the consumption by audiences in the West, however, this music is increasingly produced and consumed locally by cultural intermediaries. This thesis looks at how this process occurs in live music production and the tensions that arise as a result. For example, the intermediaries in the West have become the force that constructs a preferred reading of authenticity. However, this notion of authenticity brings with it salient questions about the limits of its being defined by intermediaries. This issue is also why commodification from above and from below are important considerations and are addressed in Chapters Four and Six from the perspectives of the musicians and the promoters.

Jackson (1999, p.104) argues that authenticity in world music is a ‘condition of production, while seeking to make the “product” commercially available for consumption by audiences who may be located in very different conditions, but who at the same time are drawn by the music’s (actively promoted) claims of “authenticity”. Gilroy echoes this sentiment; ‘Authenticity enhances the appeal of selected cultural commodities and has become an important element in the mechanism of the mode of racialization necessary to making non-European and non-American musics acceptable items in an expanded pop market’ (Gilroy 1993, p.99). In this case, Gilroy is referring to ‘representations of racial authenticity’ where purity of sound is tied to a black (American) identity. He uses the European reinvention of Jimi Hendrix as ‘wild, sexual, hedonistic and dangerous’. Such a depiction of black music and the musicians who performed it played into European constructions of blackness. This thesis examines how broad (black, black African, and European white) participation in West African world music challenges earlier constructions of authenticity and the aspect of colour (and race) as a component of this music because it presents a key argument for understanding how difference through fetishization of world music has changed in the production of world music in London and the implications of this change for the construction of musicians identities. This is addressed in Chapter Six.
Part of the implications mentioned above challenge Taylor’s (1997, p.23) argument that it was important for world music performers to resist the temptations of ‘selling out’. The author suggests that if musicians lose a version of authenticity in their musical form they will risk becoming popular and, consequently, losing their livelihood. In his later work, Taylor (2007) amends this argument by introducing hybridity as an accepted re-commodification of world music. Bourdieu (1992, pp.39–40) calls this situation a ‘generalised game of “loser wins” in which success is often considered a “sign of compromise”’. However, Finn (2008, p.193) argues that the creative and commercial are necessary conditions for music and that the ‘commodification of cultural expressions leads artists to profit in such a way that would otherwise be very difficult, if not impossible’. Therefore, authenticity need not necessarily occlude financial rewards for the artist as demonstrated by the success of such West African artists as Cesaria Evora. Hirsch (2010, p.360) argues that ‘authenticity and commercialism are both complex “social constructions” that function to define a “now” that contrasts with an imaginary, innocent, more desirable “back then”’. In earlier productions of world music, the commercial processes of production often required an intermediary who was responsible for delivering the product to markets in the West.

Taylor (1997, p.28) argues that such ‘curatorial aspects’ involved Westerners getting involved with ‘recording remote music, [an activity that] taps into the explorer narrative: they are heading off to mysterious places looking for mysterious music’. This is a value-added process, which is articulated through knowledge, which gets incorporated into the marketing of world music. Notice how Cluley (2011, p.382) describes promoters, as ‘not only social producers who work on their personal brand but also manufacturers of products containing specific aesthetic values’. Hence, the production of live music or DJ’d music is a reflection of how promoters (and DJs) view the function of the commodity. Hennion (1989, p.402) argues that promoters are essential in ‘introducing the
public to the singer’. In this sense, the promoters ‘force, tear out, knit together; they have tools and techniques for isolating, measuring, and testing’. Therefore, the promoters in world music are a key part of the production of world music. They are able, in part, to construct the conditions of production in world music performances and are able to shape the musicians’ identities in the production process. The promoters are often based at venues and use the aesthetics of the space to create particular brands of world music for different audiences. This will be further discussed in the second part of this literature review on spaces and places of world music and also in Chapter Five of the thesis. With the commercial aspects come struggles for control over money, recognition, and most importantly, representation. This next section looks at space and place as an expansion on the conditions of world music production.

2.4 THE ROLE OF SPACE AND PLACE IN WORLD MUSIC PRODUCTION IN THE CITY

An area of research has examined the soundscapes and material production of music. This includes Wood et al.’s (2007) work on sound and space, and others (Kong 1995; Gibson & Kong 2005; Connell & Gibson 2003); while a second area looks at the political economy of the music industry as a cultural industry. Authors who have contributed to this work include Pratt (2000; 2007), Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005), and Pratt (2008) and Leyshon (1998). This thesis contributes primarily to this body of research by creating a framework for understanding the localised and contested nature of its production processes. Places and spaces are key ingredients in understanding the conditions of production of world music and in understanding how music contributes to the shaping of world music identities. De Certeau (2002, p.37) defines place as ‘belonging to the forces of the powerful and providing a locale from which the powerful can perform controlling “strategies”’ and space as the ‘location of the weak, a temporary shelter from which the residents perform resistant “tactics”’. 
Space, therefore, is also constituted by the activities and people (residents) contained in it. In fact, Leyshon et al. (1995, p.425) argue that space and place should not be thought of as simply ‘sites where or about which music happens to be made’, but rather ‘different spatialities’ that are formative of the ‘sounding and resounding of music’. There are a few ways in which this occurs in world music, which will be discussed in this section of the literature review.

Watson et al. (2009, p.873) argue that ‘the urban spaces in which music is simultaneously produced (and consumed) are then crucial to creative processes that do not reside exclusively within isolated individuals’; rather they are constituted by a newness through interactions between people and between people and their physical environment. This way of thinking about geography and music is one of three main categories of scholarship on the subject identified by Watson et al. (2009, p.859). The first is concerned with music in the ‘social and cultural construction of place, space and identity’. Valentine (1995, p.478) argues that spaces can take on particular characteristics that are ‘culturally produced through the meanings given to the music’ being performed in the space and that the production of space is ‘dependent on those present’. Although her primary focus is on audience, she notes that music is ‘mediated through the bodies of the performers’.

Watson et al. (2009) further show how the local infrastructure of music production and market forces in cities help to produce spaces of music production. Production of music necessarily passes through urban spaces where a collection of ‘musicians and skilled professionals’ meet to create music in small venues in particular (ibid 2009, p.864). Watson et al.’s work looks at how studio spaces of music production involve the collaboration of various actors, including intermediaries such as agents and producers, but also engineers. Music production is the result of a series of relationships in addition to the raw materials involved in making music. In their view, spaces for music production often occur
organically, as the result of people interacting. Sarup (1996, p.4) echoes this point by showing that places become socially constructed symbolic resources. However, the social interactions that constitute musical spaces are linked to commercial interests.

The rise of world music recording studios in the West has served to reconstruct music from its origins to new centres of production and distribution. Brandellero and Pfeffer (2011, p.495) use the European world music charts to examine how a changing geography of world music production has occurred, where the ‘valorisation of commodified musical content has traditionally been removed from its place of origin and centred on metropolitan areas in Western Europe and the US’. Production in places in the West (London, Paris, New York, Berlin, and Munich) reflects the ‘growing processes of cultural globalisation’, but also ‘translocal nexuses of mediation and diffusion’ of world music with the end result being that these places of music production become central in ‘setting standards for and granting recognition to cultural products’ (ibid 2011, p.496). Their study shows how the European centres of production reflect these cities’ abilities to ‘draw upon and combine the multiple scales and networks of cultural production’ (2011, p.504). It also highlights how the conditions of world music production are very much influenced by technological resources. The shift in the production processes of world music described above alter what different places and place itself, such as the venue, country of origin and city, lend to world music performers and indeed to the genre.

Cohen (1995, p.438) notes that musical practices and interactions help to define the ‘particular geographical and material space within the city’ and, at the same time, they invest that space with ‘meaning and a sense of identity and place, thus distinguishing it from other places within the city’. This process not only transforms the spaces into sites of music production, it is also producing and reifying the identities of the people who interact with the space. In addition to
Cohen’s examination of the process of giving meaning to musical places, of interest is also where world music performance spaces are located in London. Pratt and Kirby (2007, p.26) argue that the physical location of the performance within the city is ‘key to the construction of the venue’ in particular ways. This means that the performance space is constituted by the musical practices and interactions, but also by the location of the venue. In fact, as the performance moves to different sites it produces a different set of receptions and meanings (ibid 2003, p.27). Thus, this activity creates different production conditions that require particular selections of world music and types of artists to represent the music. This has implications for how musicians emphasize, or even create or shape, aspects of their identity in order to be part of the live music production. This is explored in Chapter Six in relation to the third objective. Also, at smaller venues, such decisions regarding the production are made, not by the power cultural intermediaries (from above), but rather by local (up and coming) promoters.

2.4.1 Space, Power, and Resistance in World Music

As has been discussed in this review, the spaces of world music performances are created by and through social practices. These practices are linked to social relations that are being shaped and reshaped. Kohl (1997, p.15) argues that although ‘controlling concerns’ use music for hegemonic purposes, it should by no means be considered as an absolute formulation of the participants’ motives. Gramsci (1971, p.106) defines hegemony as the desire to ‘dominate’ rather than lead. He claims that a controlling group wants its interests to dominate and that hegemony will be exercised ‘by a part of the social group over the entire group…giving power to a movement, radicalizing it’. It is necessary to consider the ways that hegemony works in (world) music production because the process of ‘encoding and decoding’ (Hall 1992) messages in the music is necessarily political (Negus 1996, p.192). That is, the meanings that are infused and diffused
through both the music and spaces of music production engage with various forms of power that contribute to identity-building of the musicians (and audiences). Hegemonic power can also be thought of as a power that ‘actively produces and reproduces difference between individuals and social groups’ and serves to ‘universalize and contain difference in both real and imagined spaces’ (Soja 1996, p.87). Hebdige (2001, p.204) adds to Soja’s understanding of hegemony by arguing that it is ‘a situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert “total social control” over other subordinate groups’. While Hall argues (1977, p.332) that hegemony cannot be ‘won in the productive and economic sphere alone’; rather it is organized throughout multiple structures within society. He further shows that various agencies of the superstructure including those found in cultural institutions work to maintain hegemonic order. Hegemony is effective because it presumes that anyone who enters into the production of (world) music will hold the same belief system or a certain set of ideas already established by the genre (Thwaites et al. 2002).

Gramsci’s framework of hegemony is based on the exercise of power of a dominant group. There are a number of ways in which this could play out in world music. One way is through dominant discourses in society that can become a collective hegemonic power; homogenizing and controlling difference across spaces (Soja 1996). Slobin (1992, p.14) gives a broader interpretation of how hegemony operates within music production and consumption. He argues that hegemony ‘is embodied in the daily musical life of particular populations’. Accordingly, societies have an ‘overarching, dominating mainstream which is *internalized* in the consciousness as ideology’ (ibid 1992, p.13).

Hegemony can be seen in a couple of ways with respect to world music production. Slobin (1992, p.18) argues that complexity of hegemony means that it is not a uniform voice; rather, it is ‘often contradictory and perhaps paradoxical’. He then ties this argument to the existence of a superculture that captures three
areas: an industry, the state and its institutionalized rules and venues, and the ‘everyday’ involved in music production, which includes established modes of behaviour for musicians. Part of this behaviour is a set of ideas that accompany the commodification of the music (Taylor 1997). Musicians are obliged to preserve and nurture elements of geographic imaginary that are tied to conceptual space by performing narratives that reinforce particular ideas about world music. This may imply that musicians face some degree of conflict in balancing their different identities. Musicians and audiences, to different degrees participate in supporting a (re)constructed space that is constituted by a different hegemony.

However, not all musicians are participating in world music as a form of resistance. Erlmann (1993, p.67) shows that dichotomies such as hegemony and resistance give way to ‘global musical productions’ that have a series of overlapping ‘highly changeable “border-zone relations” that allow performers to constantly evaluate their position within the system’. This more flexible view of hegemony and resistance within the ‘musical practices and interactions’ (Cohen 1995, p.438) of world music is echoed by Guilbault (2001, p.176). She argues that this commodity should not be seen as ‘simply oppositional or emancipatory’; rather it should be positioned as part of the ‘complex and constantly changing dynamics of a world that is historically, socially and spatially interconnected’. Such a view, however, makes the production of world music even more precarious.

As was shown in the section on authenticity, the commercialistic aspects of music production has meant that the world music industry has had a direct hand in creating a product that supports an institution and global power structure that privileges Western interests (Finn 2008). Finn (2008, p.192) further shows that music can be a contested terrain between ‘the cultural property of its creator and as the business interest of the capitalist’. This tension can result in a form of
‘artist alienation’ (Bradshaw et al. 2006, p.113) from the industry, even as their art is supporting the industry because it has direct implications on how control is exercised over representation within the production. The tensions can result in conflict between the artist and the cultural intermediary. This will be further discussed in the commodification section of this chapter.

The second application of hegemony can be seen through Chambers’ (1992, p.141) argument that world music ‘offers a space for musical and cultural differences to emerge in such a manner that any obvious identification with the hegemonic order, or assumed monolithic market logic, is weakened’. He is positioning world music as a site of resistance to a hegemony derived in and through Western music and ideology. However, this view is contested by Erlmann (1996, p.470) who feels that an aesthetic theory of world music should look at the ‘production of social differences through the “building of audiences around particular coalitions of musical forms”’. As in fashion, world music is said to operate as an institution that both challenges and reproduces discourses that facilitate a ‘flight from the Euro-self at the very moment of that self’s suffocating hegemony, as though people were driven away by the image stalking them in the mirror’ (Brennan 2001, p.46). This force works in maintaining divisions that are different for different participants. It creates a particular agency that provides a means of resistance to hegemonic pressures outside of the venue and/or listening experience. Participants of West African world music who are exercising resistance could be remonstrating against constructions of ‘white public space’ (Page 1997, p.560) that represent a ‘pervasiveness of the values, standards, and aesthetic norms of consumption, interpersonal relations, and lifestyle that are designated as emblems of whiteness’. Glick Schiller (1997, p.455) argues that celebrations of culturally diverse products (such as world music) ‘are a form of black masks that create a semblance of blackness on representations that are fundamentally white, reading white as those representations that maintain corporate power and the privileges of sectors of the population who
have struggled for and been allocated the gloss of whiteness’. This kind of hegemony is the result of the globalization of a ‘learned and behaviorally enacted cultural assertion about the naturalness and rightness of European hegemony’ (Page 1997, p.561). In reality, it is not as simple as black versus white or Euro versus non-Euro and, for this reason, this thesis seeks to challenge such totemic discourses of power through grounded stories of resistance and the use of agency within world music.

Madrid (2003, p.273) argues that ‘human agency has to be understood as a tool that allows individuals to reestablish a balance with the hegemonic forces that surround them’ and that ‘agency is a complex process of equilibrium that permits individuals to claim a position of identity and in the end provides the foundation to reproduce ideology and power, and to reevaluate hegemony’. This feature is prevalent in any music genre and is necessary for its commercial sustainability. Agency over one’s own identity within the venue’s physical and conceptual spaces is part of the venue’s marketing power. Cohen (1995, p.439), for example, shows how music can be used to edify one’s identity by connecting people from the same ethnicities located in different geographic places and with different ethnicities who share a similar historical or social experience. However, all world music performers do not share the same experience. Cohen’s argument sets up a discussion on how the social construction of place is a necessary component for place and identity building to occur. Identity building will be discussed in the next section.

2.5 THE CASE FOR IDENTITY IN (WORLD) MUSIC PRODUCTION

This thesis examines the ways in which world music, as a commodity, is used to edify and alter the identities of musicians, promoters and others involved in its production. Baily and Collyer (2006, p.175) show that music is not only a ‘ready means for the identification of different ethnic or social groups, it has potent
emotional connotations and can be used to assert and negotiate identity in a particularly powerful manner’. Such characteristics of music make it appealing to many people as a tool for identity negotiation. Cohen (1995, p.434) argues that music is produced, that is, defined, represented, and transformed, through musical practice and that the production is a ‘contested and ideological process’. Her observation points to several key areas of music and identity. The practice of engaging with music defines it in terms that are suitable to those participating in it. That is to say that the meanings assigned to the music are adaptable and subjective. Production as an identity-building process then is interactive between subject and object. Hence, we can argue that production is occurring from both the musicians and other factors. Cohen is also making the point that representation is a fought over process and that neither the music nor its meaning is fixed. As it is used in identity-building the musicians studied in this thesis battle for control over representation of the music because they are in essence fighting for control over their own identity, which is tied to the music. However, the commercial activities of the producers and the music industry elite means that they also have a keen interest in how people engage with the music. This is similar to Frith’s (1996, p.110) argument that music is ‘key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective and the collective’. Frith (1996) further shows that subjective and collective identities are necessary in the experience and consumption of music. In this case, all participants in this process are reliant upon each other.

World music performances can also constitute a form of resistance against shared and competing systems of norms and beliefs that are concentrated in cities; in a sense, opting out, at least temporarily, of a mainstream cultural structure. Different scholars have constructed mainstream in different ways depending on how subjectivities are perceived. For example, Hebdige (1979) suggests that mainstream is the bourgeoisie, while the subculture is youth. He argues that subcultures exist by and through consumption; however, in its
commodity form ‘meanings attached are purposefully distorted or overthrown’. In
the process commercial exploitation and creativity become fused and then
diffused to a larger market. Hudson (2006) however argues that the marketing of
world music and its consumption was based around a backpacker subculture.
This links to Hebdige’s construction in that world music marketing played up to a
‘sself-constructed otherness’. It can also represent a means of resisting the
internalization processes of hegemony that Bartky (1988) lays out. In many ways,
world music participants, musicians in particular, are merely exchanging one form
of subjectivity, such as their position in a British identity discourse, for another;
one that potentially reflects different value systems and hierarchies. This
happens as they leave the societal norms of cities to enter performance venues
by lifting and unmasking and remasking individuals and ideas. Musicians are
ready to experience a particular freedom from the expectations that occur outside
of these venues while ‘inscribing on themselves the power relations’ of
performance venues (ibid 1988, p.99). This they do in a willing transfer of control
over to musicians (Grossberg 2006). Music offers its listeners the advantage of
self-expression. In this sense, audiences are also exercising autonomy in that
they can ‘display and validate’ their own sense of individuality and realities
beyond rubrics that language alone offers (Finnegan 1997, p.137).

There is a relationship between identity construction and power. Firstly, the
processes of identity construction involve having particular powers over oneself.
Hall (1996, p.2) shows how the decentring process involving identification is not
so much the subjectification of the self or others. Rather, it is a
reconceptualization of the self in a ‘new, displaced, or decentred position within
the paradigm’ (Hall & du Gay 1996, p.2). In some ways this oversimplifies the
interdependent nature of identification building. It captures a repositioning of
oneself in the broader societal structure, however, in world music a necessary
co-dependence between musicians and audiences must be maintained and
negotiated in order for identity-building processes to take place. This highlights
the connections between identity building and its relation to power/agency and politics.

Negus (1996, p.107) argues that music is part of a ‘more discontinuous process in which cultural traditions are continually remade and new “hybrid” identities are created’. Power and identity construction within this process can be understood in terms of its relationality to all subjects in performance spaces or in the production/consumption process. Taylor (2007) acknowledges that changes in consumer tastes means that authenticity has become secondary to hybridity; in some ways, this contradicts the constructivist position argued so far. However, Taylor’s argument works in well with consumption in cities such as London where musicians are surrounded by musical and cultural influences that can corrode or reshape beliefs about authenticity. It occurs directly and indirectly in the sense that a multicultural, global city would articulate a different basis for understanding authenticity by and through the very fabric of the city. The resulting hybridity would logically further obfuscate knowledge about the performers. Cities, in effect, encourage the convergence of the old and the new, traditional/modern and us/them binaries. The resulting conditions of production of world music become constituted on what Hall and du Gay (1996, p.2) argue as being ‘a rearticulation of the relationships between subjects and discursive practices that is a necessary part of the question of identification’.

Hall shows that identification ‘is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation’ (1996, p.2). In world music production, the community results from ‘a shared sense of a valued otherness and an appreciation of a culture apparently outside of or at odds with the aesthetics of mass popular music developed in the Western metropolis’ (Featherstone 2005, p.40). This is a key part of the exchange of subjectivities discussed in Bartky’s work. All who participate in the
production of world music experience this ‘shared sense’ to different degrees but it is socially constructed (and reified) by and through their interactions in the music venues. While there may be some degree of disaffection with Western culture as evidenced in the constant pursuit of culturally external forms of self-expression, participants approach world music with different ideas, goals, and understandings of how they fit into and benefit from so-called shared values (Cohen 1991). Musicians are able to contribute to and benefit from the shared values in order to further shape their identities.

The proliferation of world music in London as well as other cities represents global connectivities that contribute to individual identities through the production process. These individual identities are reinforced through ‘cultural practices’ (Page 1997), among other ways, that are reflexive and facilitated through personalized biographies of consumers (Beck 1992, p.131). The relationality that occurs in global cities in particular is laden with ‘an intensive everyday negotiation of diversity’ (Ash 2004, p.38) that allows for varying processes of identity construction. This is also latent with human migration (Baily & Collyer 2006) and other transnational processes (Crang et al. 2003), particularly in cities, that inject change and redefine structures rather than merely reproduce old ideas. Musicians have and/or create multiple and multi-scalar identities that contribute to an imagined space that can represent not only experiences outside of the everyday, but also new opportunities for identity construction for many members of the audience. Hence, world music is an interesting case for exploring identities because of such expectations regarding performances that involve the musicians’ identity. Many of the musicians are living a transnational existence by having connections to more than one nation; in Chapter Six, it is shown how some of these connections are shown to be quite artificial. However, Guilbault (1997, p.41) argues that the ‘multiple allegiances the musicians of many world musics have exhibited through their music practices and the various positionings they have adopted in various international markets all point to the
fact that cultures or people's identities are not “lodged” somewhere or in something but rather, as I have argued, emerge from points of articulation’.

Authenticity increases the appeal of these particular cultural commodities and offers Western audiences a mode of differentiation in defining themselves (Gilroy 1993). Their success is also as contingent upon societal values and tastes as any other commodity. The dynamics of world music production and consumption means that it is a good that largely originates from outside the West for consumption by audiences in the West. Commercial interests in the West become the force that constructs a preferred reading of authenticity. However this notion of authenticity brings with it salient questions about who defines authenticity and how? Equally important questions are, towards whom does authenticity get applied? And, by whom? These questions will be answered in the discussion on the commodification of world music in Chapter Four.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The empirical research for this thesis centres on the research question—what are the relationships between the conditions of production of world music performances in London and the construction of musician identities. Waterman (1991, p.179) says that ‘to understand the growth of a discipline we need to know what has gone unsaid’. There is a body of literature that focuses on place in music (Brandellero & Pfeffer 2011; Hudson 2006; Stokes 2004a; A. L. Leyshon et al. 1998; Lovering 1988), identity in music (Haynes 2005; Thornton 1996; Cohen 1995; Valentine 1995; Cohen 1991) and other aspects of what it is essentially a fetishized commodity (Finn 2008; Gilroy 1990), but little research has looked at the lives of the musicians, producers, and DJs involved in the local scene of world music. This thesis examines this important issue because it speaks to the most basic component of the production process of ideas and values associated
with this commodity. These actors are also affected by and through this production process.

The first section of this chapter discussed how world music is produced and by whom. Within this section, commodification, the conditions of production, and the presence and function of cultural intermediaries were discussed. Particular representations and narratives were used to commodify the music and served to empower and disempower various actors. Access to the UK market is also carefully controlled by cultural intermediaries and is used to include more important various musical traditions. The discourses surrounding the term of world music have created uncertainties in knowledge and have created use-value for the promoters of the music. At the same time, the processes that constitute changes in inclusion and exclusion of artists and the musical forms from different parts of Africa remain obscured in the world music market. This is further explored in Chapter Four of this thesis.

The second section of the review examined the role of space and place in world music. This section described how spaces are created through interactions and are infused with life based on shared systems of beliefs. It also showed how types of power, hegemony and resistance get articulated and act as governing forces over the production (and consumption) of world music. This will be further examined in Chapter Five of this thesis. Finally, the literature review addressed the key issue of identity construction that occurs by and through world music. It is developed around the notion that places of music production are also places of identity (re)construction. This is looked at in detail in Chapter Six.

In understanding the relationship between the conditions of production of world music in London and the construction of musicians’ identities, attention must be given to the complex and multilateral relationship that musicians and producers maintain with world music. Places and spaces, commodification processes, and
identity construction constitute world music, particularly from West Africa, as a commodity that can be used by all who need to (re)connect with some aspect of their identity that they perceive as absent or (re)construct their identities. This thesis shows that this usage occurs without respect to race, and that instead of appropriation and othering, there is a regularization of production of world music that creates a perception of it as local rather than world. Indeed Alison James describes cross-cultural consumption as a “delimiting of the boundaries” of what can be consumed within a particular culture’ (1996, p.79). This determination is made locally by promoters, but also musicians, and, on a larger scale by industry executives. The next chapter examines the conceptual framework of the thesis and the methods used to carry out the study.
Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research question for this project: what is the relationship between the conditions of production of world music in London and the construction of musicians’ identities? This chapter will reflect upon the methodologies used in answering this question. The thesis’s goal is to understand how world music production contributes to the identities of its participants. Most studies of world music are generally qualitative in nature (Kong 1995; Connell & Gibson 2003; Haynes 2011) and so too is this one. As Robinson (1998, p.409) argues, qualitative techniques are descriptive in nature and show ‘people’s representations and constructions of what is occurring in their world.’ This is because generating thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) of the major themes in the research of commodification, place, and identity lend themselves to qualitative methods, which in this study were in-depth interviewing and participant observation.

These themes are reflected in the three key objectives of the project. They are: to explore how world music is produced and by whom. This objective looks at how the process of commodification occurs ‘from above’ and ‘from below’. This objective was operationalised primarily through the participation observation and secondary data. To examine the role of space and place in world music, this objective represents an important transitional section between the conditions of production and the facilitation of identity construction. The third objective is to examine how musicians use world music in shaping their identities. The majority of interviewees are musicians but these are further supported through interviews with promoters and DJs who are also key actors in this production process, and have different interests in the promotion of particular narratives or themes in
world music. Identify, Commodification, place, and identity emanated from the research question as themes to consider the critical aspects of the power structures inherent in the production of music as a cultural good (Smith 1997).

The empirical focus of this PhD thesis is then divided into these three core themes of place, identity and commodification each of which has been operationalised through selected methodological approaches rooted in qualitative methods that will be fully elucidated in this chapter. The qualitative methods adopted for exploring this question assist in constructing a contemporary story of how different people narrate their realities in different ways through the production of world music. The central research question breaks down into three key overlapping analyses; each forming the basis for the three empirical chapters in this project.

The chapter will be organized in the following manner: the first part will have a discussion of the framework used and how the combination of interviews, participant observation contributes to answering the research question. The primary data will be discussed within this section as they are generated through the interviews and participant observations done in the project. This part will be followed by an analysis of the methods employed, the role of ethics in research and reflections.

3.2 RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.2.1 ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is where the researcher participates, ‘either overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through formal and informal interviews’ (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p.3). Going by this description, this
work can be considered as ethnography ‘lite’ in the sense that the researcher participation involved their ‘world music life’ in a compressed time-space context. The other elements of the definition of ethnography, namely interviewing and participant observation were employed in the work. This modified approach to ethnography provides a sound basis for both data collection and analysis. For example, ethnography uses particular areas of social life, which entails how the actors in this project see themselves and are perceived by others in specific situations that are not constructed by the researcher. This is an important contribution of this method because the production of world music and its subsequent consumption are means of self-expression.

Therefore, ethnographic approaches are a necessary part of this research because they help to capture, interpret and explain how a particular group lives, experiences, and negotiates multiple identities in consumption practices and everyday life (Colin 2002: 331). The study also explores how world music performers, when conceptualized as ‘embodied commodities’, situate themselves and are situated in discourses of the other and the extent to which their art form influences local identities. This approach relates to the research question in some significant ways: It provides a basis for rethinking how the notion of commodification gets operationalised in the literature; and, for understanding the materiality of identity and place. The methods chosen allow for an examination of how, through performance, production and identity interact across space. Marcus (1998, p.39) shows that ethnographic approaches allow for the ‘representation of larger systems in human terms by revealing intersubjective processes or multiple centers of activity that constitute the systems.’ The role of representation is an explicit part of this research. In fact, world music is a site of struggle for and against various types of representation, which will be more fully explored in Chapters Five and Six.

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Ethnographic approaches have proved useful in this regard (see, for example DeNora 1999; Hancock 2005; Gaytán 2008) as they allow for an incorporation of social and cultural theories and place emphasis on particular social phenomena such as power and identity, rather than simply testing hypotheses (Crang & Cook 2007a; Flick 2009). However, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) show that ethnography as an approach is limited in its ability to contribute to practice, in particular policy oriented questions. An adherence to this methodological approach, though, allows for the development of a small number of in-depth case studies. The nature of this project is based around individual experiences in the production of a cultural good; hence, observation and interviewing as forms of ethnography would seem appropriate for this project. Interviews, participant observation, and archival data were used to deepen an understanding of the interactions and effects of different actors in the production of world music. These artists and other participants are a segment of local populations, however, their livelihoods are based upon performing an identity that is outside of dominant cultural discourses in which they live their daily lives; they negotiate the boundaries of different life-worlds. These approaches are necessary because very few musicians are formally identified as such in government databases, such as immigration data; thereby making quantitative sources a less useful and effective avenue of research. Quantitative methods can be and are often used as part of cultural studies; however, they rely on a statistical average as a basis for analysis of relations and relationships. This method often does not capture the layers of meanings that ethnography and other qualitative methods can offer (Alasuutari 1995, p.11).

3.2.1.1 THICK DESCRIPTION

A critical part of the research process lies in generating what Geetz (1973) termed ‘thick description’. He argued that researching cultural relationships is complicated by ‘a multiplicity of complex contextual structures many of them
superimposed upon and knotted into one another’ (ibid 1973, p.10). How meaning gets interpreted is already, in some ways, biased by the meanings with which researchers approach the project. This study of world music production in London proved to be a double challenge in this regard. Being an American gave me particular beliefs about how British people and audiences conceptualized their colonial pasts and their post-colonial presents, if at all.

Despite reading the some post-colonial literature (Bhabha 1990; Gilroy 1993; Solomos 2003; Gilroy 2006, among others), understanding race relations in Britain, and London in particular, and the extent to which any of this played a part in world music production and consumption processes proved difficult as an outsider. Compounding these issues was my being a black American. In practice, my ethnicity proved to be an advantage in the research as the majority of musicians were black Africans; they were immediately open to assisting me in the project. This was, no doubt, due to particular feelings of racial camaraderie, reinforced sometimes by their use of terms of endearment such as ‘brother’.

Despite this, the resulting position of being on the outside looking in provided a few handicaps in understanding some of the nuanced meaning attached to certain ways of communicating amongst those more deeply involved in world music and its communities. However, participants did advance their own interpretive explanations to accompany my observations. These interpretations carry analytical value of their own, but they would have been more difficult for me to arrive at if I was identified as an exceptional outsider – if I was white – and not privy to the kinds of conversations, performances, gestures, symbolism, and overall community life that through the generosity of participants I was fortunate enough to experience. Following Geertz (1973, p.167) I took the approach that that interpretive analysis involves understanding ‘what institutions, actions, images, customs… mean to those whose institutions, actions, customs and so on are affected’ by interactions between the actors.
As a (black) American, I had different historical and social references than the context of this research. One way that I chose to overcome this gap in understanding was to really start to listen to what was and what was not said in the respondents’ answers to my questions (McCormack 2004; Back 2007). I listened to how race and belonging were constructed from different vantage points; particularly racial ones. This is not to say that all white respondents felt this way and all black respondents felt that way (Crang & Cook 2007a, p.10) rather it was, to a large part, the context within which each respondent answered questions that linked to race that told a different story. For example, almost all white female respondents had some romantic involvement not only with the music but also with black African men who were also musicians. So, as they discussed their relationships with the music and its musicians, I had to discern the different contexts within which their discourse occurred rather than imposing my own view of their relations.

I was also able to effectively use thick description in understanding how to operationalise place in my research. I was able to better see a range of world music representations and their underlying politics. However, Geertz’s approach is not without its critics. Shankman (1984), for example, argues that this interpretative approach can lack sufficient criteria by which to evaluate validity. However, the combination of approaches, such as the ones undertaken in this study, offset this deficiency.

3.2.1.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation is a qualitative exercise that emphasizes 'meanings that people give to their actions' (Gray 2004: 239). It is an opportunity to observe non-verbal behaviour of participants in world music production. As a member of the audience, I reported my own experiences, feelings, and social meanings while engaging with the other participants. Colin (2002: 189) shows that participant observation on social interactions should be used when the resulting data is
superior to ‘retrospective accounts or the participants’ ability to verbalize and reconstruct a version of what happened’ (ibid). So, the roles that participants perform in world music production can be better observed in its praxis more than interviewing or historical research alone. Participant observation will assist my understanding of how performance contributes to the production and reproduction of spaces, power, and identities. As a member of the audience, I reflected on my own engagement with live music performances to music from DJs. This technique requires that I move in and around ‘various’ types of audiences to get a well-balanced sample.

The London world music scene is concentrated and small. Preliminary fieldwork for this project uncovered approximately 20 venues (shown in the appendix) that either regularly or occasionally present world music. This is probably not an exhaustive list because new spaces are being used for world music all the time. Hence, visiting 20 of them does not necessarily constitute a ‘random sample’, per se. For example, some venues presented world music that was not from West Africa, while other venues presented Latin music through world music networks (this presents an interesting discussion regarding how the label of world music is used and the fight for representation, see chapter four), and still others had ‘one-off’ world music performances. I conducted repeat visits over the period of about 2.5 years (from March 2008 to December 2010) and during this time, some venues either changed in nature of the music played or shut down altogether. They are not included in the selected venues. The list of venues used in the fieldwork of this project was formulated based on advice from insiders (primarily, promoters and DJs) during the early stages of data collection. These venues do offer a robust insight because many of the participants appeared at many of the venues. So, even though not every venue was visited and analysed, the same people were circulating among them.
Participant observation is a key part of ethnographic research (Cloke et al. 2004, p.170). I conducted participant observation at more than 70 events in and around London. The spaces of live world music production had an influence on how people behaved. The only way to actually see the effects was to visit different localities that offered the same or similar goods. Although I visited nearly 20 venues around London that offered world music, I decided to conduct repeat visits to four of them because they offered a representative sample of the larger list and they ran very regular performances in their series. They are The Tabernacle (Notting Hill), Darbucka World Music Lounge (Clerkenwell), Passing Clouds (Dalston), and St. Ethelburgas’ Church (Liverpool Street). The spaces themselves, however, could not be properly analyzed without the people who empower it. Participants draw on their ‘spatial context to sustain’ different forms of human agency, including identity (Duncan & Savage 1989, p.187). The basic use of agency means ‘the ability of people to make choices or decisions which shape their own lives’ (Aitken & Valentine 2006, p.338). However, as Barnett (2006, p.154) shows, agency implies a ‘set of relations of delegations and authorization’ that links strongly to how representation occurs. This technique is when the observer immerses himself into the ‘social and symbolic world’ of the observed. The aim is to develop an understanding of their use of language and non-verbal communication (Robson 2002, p.194). With music research, participant observation is almost necessary to gain an insight into the social meanings that are attached to music (Dibben 2003). Participant observation was used to understand the context of interactions that occurred during performances. Brief notes were taken at the site. Then additional notes were taken later in the evening or early the next morning as performances often went late into the night (Flick 2009). This technique was also useful in understanding how particular narratives were articulated through the venue spaces (See Chapter Five).
Informal interviews were used in conjunction with participant observation to understand the perspectives of the members of the audience. These interviews are open-ended and flexible, where an interviewee ‘may not know the interview is taking place’ (Gray 2004: 217). This technique should be used early during participant observation in order to help researchers become more comfortable in collecting data from audiences (Bertrand 2002). For this project, it was better to use this technique during or after the performance, if at all, because the alcoholic drinks that are a necessary economic base of this activity made attendees more receptive to lively conversations about the performances. On the other hand, my own restraint from having (too much) alcohol during the research had just the opposite effect on me: I was still a bit hesitant to approach people.

Upon reflection, I define my role as a mix between a marginal participant and a complete participant. Marginal participation is where one maintains a ‘lower degree of participation’ than the others (Robson 2002, p.198). In a music performance, this meant that I would rarely dance with the audience (unless it became too obvious). The problem encountered in this circumstance was that if I danced – thereby becoming a complete participant (Robson 2002, p.196), I became too distracted to actually observe the interactions around me. Although, dancing facilitated speaking with some people as we danced together. If I remained immobile, then it would become more difficult to approach people who were dancing. So, I solved the problem in the following way: I spoke with people who were sitting near me or as I was waiting to be served at the bar. These participant observations helped to maximize my interactions with audiences and helped in my understanding of how they respond to this cultural commodity, and how they felt they were affected by the performance. This form of data collection could be affected by the researcher’s presence (Colin 2002: 311); however, the lively, social atmosphere facilitates the researcher’s ability to mingle with audiences.
3.2.1.3 Data from Participant Observation

Patterns of interaction produce particular dynamics. Such patterns could have emanated from among audiences, and/or between the musicians and the audience. It was important to look at the level of engagement between audiences and artists to understand what ‘constructions of ignorance’ surrounding world music production really meant in practice (Cook and Crang 1996: 135). For example, the extent of the introductions given to a song could have served to authenticate and draw the audience into the performance. I looked for indications of audience’s relationships with this form of production and the extent to which reproductions of social relationships in city spaces manifested themselves in verbal and non-verbal devices of performance spaces (Lefebvre 1974).

3.2.2 Interviews

The flexibility of semi-structured interviews is vital for this research because the interviewees’ experiences will vary; therefore different follow-up questions may be required (Crang & Cook 2007b, p.37). The interviews were designed to hit a few key objectives of the research project; namely, the commodification processes, the identity construction, and place. In particular, the interviews were a means of drawing out contextual data in relation to how some participants used world music for different means. Secondly, the interviews provided insight into the extent to which commodification occurs, from above and from below, and what these processes contribute to our understanding about the politics of representation. So, veteran, retired, and active musicians were targeted for interviewing who were performing before and after 1987 (the year that the genre, world music, was created). The full list of interviewees is shown in the Appendix. These particular musicians add two vital components to the study: they provide key material on the industry changes they have witnessed over the last two decades and they can show how their relationship to these music venues has
changed as performers. This is important because it helps to highlight how their involvement in the production of world music has contributed to their identity. These musicians also provided a sense of the extent to which transnational linkages have been maintained for the industry and for themselves and what form these take. This speaks to Taylor’s (2004) argument that particular forms of authenticity are key ingredients for this industry. It is also looks at how the context of world music production influences the commodification process.

Language also plays a part in the musicians’ experience. Musicians who spoke little or no English upon arrival will have had a different set of experiences than other musicians. Many of the artists who perform West African world music come from Senegal, Mali, Cameroun, the Congo, and Guinea; all French-speaking countries. So, a French and Wolof speaking Senegalese musician living and performing in London will have different interactions and challenges with an English speaking society in their professional and everyday experiences than would a musician from Ghana; where English is an official language. What I found was that half of the African musicians were not from English speaking countries. From a logistical point of view, there were four French-speaking musicians whom I interviewed where expressing themselves in English during the interview was a problem. In such case, they were encouraged to speak in French and their answers were later transcribed and translated.

A few of the questions that I was trying to understand better include the following: what factors do musicians use to assess or determine audience’s willingness to engage? This assessment influences what aspects of their identity they emphasize during production. It also plays into how the music is performed in a particular venue. Do the musicians modify their performance based on their assessments, by way of song choice, instrumentation, clothing or body language? Visual aspects of the performance are an important part of the production process. However, caution must be exercised when inferring in this
way; for example, in a pilot observation, two veteran black African musicians performed in a band, one wore traditional African-influenced attire while the other wore more ‘Westernised’ attire. Outfit choices may have been random or they made have been made to meet particular kinds of expectations of the audience or it may be a means of identity expression of the musicians themselves. One female artist, discussed in Chapter Six, said that her particular hairstyle and clothing choice during performances was a reflection of her feelings toward her relationship to the UK. In other cases, musicians may be responding to pressures by promoters or consumers to be more or less experimental in costume and/or music choices. This addresses the conflicting role of authenticity addressed by Haynes and others (Connell and Gibson 2004; Haynes 2005). So, the extent to which musicians are tied to particular representations while in the performance space is linked to a number of factors.

Another question was whether the musicians changed music, musical styles and performance styles at different venues. This speaks to how particular representations of world music become embodied and commodified at different spaces and times. Since these performers are part of a small entertainment circuit, they often play across different venues. Hence, I was interested in asking, but also observing first hand, how different spaces influence the performances and the performers.

One particular question deserves further scrutiny: How do the musicians describe their lives in the urban spaces? This examines the extent to which the musicians feel differences from being in the performance venue to their everyday experiences in the city spaces. I found that musicians were quite hesitant, in many cases to speak about their lives outside of music. I was not sure if this was because they ashamed or wanted to protect their own sense of privacy and/or power within our engagement. Thapar-Bjorkert and Henry (2004, p.371) argue that because power shifts and fluctuates between the researcher and the
observed, we should be aware of ‘the interconnections that we make through our social and cultural locations and positions’. This also brings complications in how and what questions are asked. Crang and Cook (2007b, p.36) point out that it is important to know what questions and information is the ‘business of the researcher’. So, in some cases, I concede with a bit of regret that I did not press certain issues that were, on a surface, a curiosity to me. In the end, they could have been valuable pieces of information. For example, only one respondent was fairly open about her personal life, the successes that she had while dating West African men and her trips to Senegal, West Africa. Other interviewees were quite reluctant to talk about anything that was not directly related to music. Hence, questions about other connections to this career choice or hardships they faced along the way were left with half-answers and, in some cases, defensiveness. I avoided pushing the interviewee out of their comfort for fear that effect may have been a shutdown from the interviewee. However, Sheftel and Zembrzycki (2010, p.200) show that such a reaction could also happen as a ‘reflection of [the interviewees’] understanding of what was supposed to happen in an interview.’

French-speaking African performers interviewed expressed a clear preference for working in the UK market rather than France. This preference was not based on entry visa requirements; rather it was based on British people ‘being more open’, than the French particularly in terms of race relations and cultural differences. Alternatively, it might be due to other aspects of the organization of the French world music system they may have been trying to avoid. This might have highlighted a two-fold uniqueness in being a French-speaking, West African performer that is marketable to British audiences. Choosing to live and work in London rather than Paris might indicate better audience reception, better living circumstances, or a reflection of a preference for a multiculturalist approach over an integrationist one, and so on (Sveinsson 2007).
Perceived authenticity, discussed in Chapter Two, is a factor in the production of world music (Haynes 2011). Given that these musicians felt it important to maintain a sense of authenticity in their performances, they should logically be employing some strategies to help sell the performance. Different musicians define authenticity and approach the task of representing authenticity in different ways. These efforts have implications for how they construct their own identities, but also how all the participants in this study must work together to produce a good that offers the believability in music discussed by Attali (1985). Therefore, I wanted to know how transnational interactions with West Africa (via travels to the region or friendships with West African communities in London) directly linked to their craft and to their identities. For West African performers, the potential success that the world music label provides in the West also would suggest that his or her popularity in the home country increases. To what extent has their identity altered, been reconstructed, or even stagnated because of their participation in this work. Given that an increasing number of white, British musicians are playing West African music, it was interesting to see which strategies were being used to generate use-value and how these strategies influenced their own sense of identity.

3.2.3 Snapshots of Participants

The categories of respondents below were the result of the researchers initial observations later confirmed through fieldwork. Hence, the categories were imposed at the initial stages of the project and further shaped as participants gave particular insights. The initial interview time was suggested to the interviewee at 45 minutes. In most cases, however, the interviews went on for much longer ending at a natural stopping point rather than abruptly at 45 minutes. On average then most interviews lasted 90 minutes. These participants were chosen based on their involvement with world music in London. They perform and organize the production of world music in particular venues. The
small venues use a grassroots approach that requires the active involvement of the musicians, DJs, and promoters in producing world music. Hence, they were a logical choice to interview. The musicians provided insight into how their work has influenced them in different ways. Although they had different perspectives and interests depending on how they perceived their position in British society. The DJs offered an insight into the underlying politics that were incorporated into the representation of world music. Many of them were involved in various political causes and were quite open about it. Their purpose in participating in world music seemed more unified than the musicians. The promoters spoke of politics of the commodification processes and the conflicts that arise among the various commodifiers. These three groups are not only responsible for the (re)presentation of world music in an immediate way to consumers, they also are representing and reconstructing themselves. Lastly, the two members of the audience helped me to understand some of the ways in which world music production and representation are received locally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musicians</td>
<td>While a majority of them are black Africans born outside of the UK, any musician representing this musical form will be considered. This includes Black British, Caribbean, and British and European musicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJs</td>
<td>A small number of mostly white British.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoters</td>
<td>This group is based in the UK, but recruit from within and without UK and EU borders. This is often in conjunction with larger venue circuit dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>For this project, I conducted serial interviews with two audience members after and during many performances over the research period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Interviews and participant observation are part of ethnographic research (Limb & Dwyer 2001). Throughout the fieldwork/data collection stage of the project, 45 interviews were conducted with different actors in the London world music scene. These included two group interviews, one telephone interview, and two Skype interviews. This included twenty-seven local musicians, eleven promoters, four DJs, two members of the audience.

The participant categories for interviewing were identified a priori through pilot data collection and literature review research (Negus 2002; Hesmondhalgh 2007). However, the proportion of the groups was decided upon as their relevance and availability became clear. The proportion of each group also roughly corresponds to their representation in the industry. In other words, most of the people producing the music are musicians; hence, they constituted the
largest group of respondents. The promoters and DJs constitute a smaller part of the group. Audiences were not a direct part of the study, however, input received from them was useful throughout the course of the study. Having said that, strict classification of the interviewees is not entirely possible because many of them wore several hats, in keeping with the fluidity that so often characterizes world music. For example, some musicians also work as promoters; DJs also worked as promoters though rarely as musicians, and so on. To avoid double counting I used their primary activity as a means of classification. One benefit to their having more than one role in the industry was that they were able to give insights from different perspectives. They themselves also benefitted from having a greater understanding of various challenges faced in one aspect or another of their work.

The interview strategies were a bit different according to the respondent's position. The strategy was to conduct semi-structured interviews with musicians, as they would assist my understanding of how musicians perceive their role within world music. They can highlight the extent to which they attempt to maintain or develop transnational identities through their activities. I also tried to know how respondents related to city spaces outside performance venues, and the ways in which they use performance to express themselves. African respondents were far more open about this line of questioning than their white counterparts. A few conclusions can be drawn from this; one is that white musicians who shape their identity around African music may be a bit more defensive of their selection of African music as a means of self-expression. This could relate to their wanting to be more counter-hegemonic rather than to being Western. In contrast, I deduced that African musicians felt little need to ‘defend’ the choice, possibly for many reasons; for example, many of the African musicians I spoke with were trained in their art from childhood and tended to have less formal education than their white counterparts. Alternatively, they might
have felt greater comfort with me because we shared similar ethnic background. Finally, the interviews provided deep insight into the musicians’ views on audiences. The strength of semi-structured interviews is that the questions used are more general in frame and allow for variation from interview to interview (Bryman 2008). This also provides flexibility and an iterative approach that better suits the specific locales and contexts within which informants were interviewed.

3.2.1 GAINING ACCESS TO MUSICIANS

Through pilot interviews, it became apparent that a few key industry players control the world music scene. Negus (2002) applies Bourdieu’s term of cultural intermediaries to music industry players. Hence, gaining access to musicians, DJs, and promoters was relatively easy in most cases once I gained acceptance by the small circle of the scene. My first point of contact was made through attending a birthday party of a fellow PhD colleague at a world music venue. The day before the event, I contacted the DJ, Jamie Renton, and explained the purpose of my research to him. He was delighted to help and from his initial few contacts I received other contacts. Hence, I can attribute at least 30 of the interviews to his generosity and kindness. Snowballing7 is where one ‘uses one contact to help recruit other contacts’ (Martin 1997; 2005: 117) and is a common technique of qualitative research. Robinson (1998, p.383) shows that this technique can be used when there is a ‘relatively small group possessing certain characteristics.’ The ‘snowball’ effect also worked well because the community is based on informal networks of people who know each other as friends and colleagues through music, therefore ingratiating myself to these networks was important not only in terms of recruiting research participants but in the finer work

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7 I did not restrict interviews solely to actors connected to the venues under observation. Snowballing inevitably led to musicians and other potential research participants not connected to these places. Additionally, I reached people associated with world music who are not categorized within the main groups for study, such as journalists, composers, and musicians. For example, I came into contact with an African artist performing ‘world music’ as a busker at Waterloo Station in central London. He agreed to participate in my research project. These incidental people served to enrich the study and provide additional data.
of participant observation. If I had approached participants formally, as though I were conducting a survey, it would in turn have shaped the data and I would not have been access nor would the interview have taken on an informal, conversational style capable of capturing cultural norms and nuances.

Although the community of musicians who perform West African world music is large with respect to other communities of world music, it is still a relatively small group of people in the London scene. Hence, after making initial contact with artists at music venues subsequent conversations provided me with suggestions of other musicians and promoters working in the industry. Snowballing also induced musicians to cooperate because a friend or acquaintance had recommended them. This diffused the hesitance that they might feel when being approach directly by an interviewer (Sixsmith et al. 2003). Noy (2007, p.3) argues that snowballing has the added benefit of creating ‘natural and organic social networks’ and offers ‘an invaluable type of knowledge’ to the research. This was certainly my experience because it extended the sample frame to people not in the four main participant groups, but nonetheless had a significant relationship and knowledge of the industry, such as journalists and spouses of musicians. These peripheral conversations with people interested and involved to some degree in the West African music scene were an invaluable part of the research, and while I do not quote them directly, their knowledge added shape to the context of the research.

There are some concerns related to employing snowballing. To start, there is the potential to relinquish control of the sampling process to informants, which can lead to biasing the results. For example, musicians could recommend other musicians who have similar perspectives about their experiences in the countries where they live and perform. Hoggart et al (2002, p.185) argue that snowballing can help to identify ‘relevant’ people for the study. However, there is then the question of how relevance is determined, and for whom. In other words, ones
follow particular networks rather than defining them according to theoretical imperatives. Hoggart et al (2002, p.185) further showed that snowballing could lead to ‘unknown and unwanted social concentrations’. However, they show that one can avoid this by seeking out various ‘entry channels’ into the social circles.

A second drawback is that referents may have different hierarchical positions within social networks (Noy 2007). The musicians contacted through other participants may be less enthusiastic as participants than musicians with whom I make an initial contact. On the first point Noy is making, one could argue that a similar set of perspectives was noticeable. Given the small circle of performers in the London area, this is hardly surprising. However, the extent to which it biased the research is not certain. In other words, although people had similar politics, their experiences still seemed to vary significantly. Another explanation for this could be because the limited amount of funding, both public and private, necessarily dictates a particular kind of unity among world music participants. Computer-mediated communications (CMC), or social networking was used to make contact with musicians. Though many musicians maintain web sites on MySpace, this was less successful than snowballing. It may be because it is better/easier to subject oneself to being interviewed through mutual contacts rather than random means. Skype and the telephone were used for follow-up interviews. This was highly successful because scheduling a second interview was often problematic. CMC was a good choice for follow-up interviews because it offered flexibility to schedule the conversation and because their speaking style are already familiar, it is often easier to understand their written texts (in their voice). It is certainly of limited value as an initial interview strategy because people are more uncomfortable in discussing their lives and experiences to a ‘total’ stranger.

3.3.2 Music Promoters
In the context of this research, music promoters are a valuable resource because they have first hand knowledge of audiences’ preferences and the lives of musicians. For this group, structured interviews were undertaken with predetermined open-response questions with fixed wording (Colin 2002: 270). The goal behind this strategy is to be able to aggregate responses in forming a collective picture of their role (Bryman 2004: 110). Their responses offered perspectives on how the London music scene responds to various types of performers and performances. This ties into the research questions on the commodification processes involved in marketing musicians. Promoters, for example, know whether markets are more/less receptive to world music performers who are more/less political or whose musical style is more/less traditional, and so on.

Promoters are involved with introducing musicians to markets, which suggests that the promoter could have had some involvement in bringing musicians from source regions. Therefore, they maintain an intimate relationship with musicians and can give an indication of their lives as migrants in the city, as promoters often have to facilitate some everyday situations on the musicians’ behalf, especially recent arrivals. These points taken together will create a picture of how power is exercised by this group of participants over performances and over musicians’ lives more broadly.

More successful promoters have transnational contacts in and between source regions and London. They thus provide insight into how world music is conceptualized in London and, consequently, the varying audience dynamics and marketing strategies involved in creating and feeding demand for this consumption good. Structured interviews should therefore reveal marketing strategies targeted to different demographics and the promoter’s relationship with different types of singers. In the course of this part of the research, several problems were encountered. These include the fact that promoters have an
interest in protecting musicians. Hence, they might not want to expose them to perceived intrusions by a researcher, nor would they want to publicly criticize powerful social actors such as the state, audiences, other musicians, or world music industry leaders for economic or other reprisals. I overcame this by applying listening techniques that include assessing the interactions between the interviewee and his or her words (Piles 1991, p.467). This gave me insights into when I could press for further information and when to accept an answer full stop. This highlights the amount and balance of power between this type of interviewee and myself. For example, the interviewee’s body language or facial expression might indicate that they were giving a ‘final answer’ to the question. This would be followed by a quick change in topic or an offer of tea or some other distraction.

3.3.3 Disc Jockeys

The disc jockeys (DJs) compose a small group when compared to audiences and musicians. They were mostly white British practitioners who were fairly localized and play in the same venue or set of venues. This is reasonable because they would need to know their base audiences extremely well in order to be successful. I would also argue that it is reasonable because world music appreciation is based on particular political and social orientations that are geographically and historically bounded (for more on this, see literature review). I employed non-directive interviews because they allowed for free expression around the subject of world music (Gray 2004: 217). This strategy is useful because DJs, as practitioners, have greater depths of knowledge about world music than I would have and, potentially, would offer a windfall of data. In particular, their observations assisted in my knowing how world music is constructed in different markets. Non-directive interviewing also gave them latitude to fully describe their experiences and observations of audiences and the industry as a whole in their respective markets. It lets them tell the story rather than my imposing my own assumptions (which were often erroneous) onto the
situation. This is line with McCormack’s (2004, p.220) argument where ‘analysis of narrative’ means that researchers seek stories as “data” and then ‘analyse those stories for themes that hold across stories’. Through reconstructions, knowledge become ‘situated, transient, and partial’ (ibid 2004, p.220).

DJs offer insights on different audience interactions with performers and with various types of world music. In addition to their own interactions with audiences, they have a vantage point that provides them with an acute sense of audience-musician interactions. More experienced DJs can also provide information and analysis on changes in the industry since the world music marketing strategy began. In particular I want to know how DJs view their role in venues. Many hold other jobs and DJ on weekends and evenings without monetary compensation. This suggests that they have reasons other than profit for participating in world music events. The DJs were very cooperative and eager to participate in the study. Interviews with them highlighted aspects of power relations and their relations with audiences. For example, how they viewed their role in the performance and the extent to which they felt that audiences perceived them differently than musicians.

3.3.4 TWO MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE

Initially, I set out to gain insight into audience experiences. However, this quickly proved to be a rather ambitious goal. I had planned to distribute questionnaires before and after the performance and conduct short interviews with members of the audience on the night. This was problematic for three reasons: my own hesitance to approach people in this context and the infinite number of experiences that members of audiences can have. Additionally, I was going for a different type of understanding about world music. Much has been written on how listening experiences and interactions of audiences vary greatly (Cohen 1991; Shuker 1994; Finnegan 2003; Longhurst 2007) making research undertaken in this area particularly problematic. Instead I chose an alternative
approach; I conducted serial interviews with two members of the audience. This approach provided many benefits: it allowed the respondents and me to become very familiar with each other and it occurs over a period of several months and more than ten performances. This last point means that the participants can reflect critically and compare their experiences, observations, and the like.

Gomez and Jones (2010, p.199) argue that interviews are a good choice if the researcher anticipates an ongoing relationship/conversation with the respondent over an extended period of time with multiple visits. While, Cook and Crang (2007a, p.46) show that this method of interviewing can be beneficial in that interactions become more informal and thus ‘both parties feel more able both to reveal their often undecided, ambiguous, and contradictory feelings about the matter in hand and to challenge each other about these in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust’. There are, however, drawbacks to this method; namely, participants are also ‘interviewing’ the researcher. When and if this happens, data manipulation might shift the balance of power and control over the project. Objectivity could be lost and so on.

My conversations with the two members of the audience occurred during the performance or immediately after it. I would argue that these meetings developed organically as conversations at the outset. However, the questions became more systematized over the series. The two participants were quite eager not only to know about the progress of the research but also give their impressions of their experiences on the night. They also had time to reflect on, usually more recent performances we attended and give further insights.

There are examples of serial interviews (Piles 1991; Oakley 1981). Piles argues that interpretive approaches such as this one allows for ‘a relationship in which both interviewer and interviewed try to come to an understanding of what is
taking place around them’ (1991, p.459). Underpinning this relationship is a mutual trust that helps to create an atmosphere for both parties. However, one of the biggest and obvious concerns with this approach is generalizability of the data (Robson 2002, p.72). This is defined as the extent to which the lessons gleaned from the experiment can be applied to similar contexts. In practical terms, it is improbable that the experiences of these two attendees represent experiences of all world music audiences, or audiences of any kind.

The small sample size that an ethnographic approach provides also means that thick description can, to some degree, mitigate the problems with a lack of generalizability. The other point worth mentioning is that audiences were not under consideration for this study, precisely because of the difficulty in measurement (see Abercrombie & Longhurst 1998). Having said that, the insights that these two members of the audience offered were invaluable in highlighting some of the ways in which world music gets consumed. So, the usefulness of these interviews was to round out the other approaches taken and challenge some of the suppositions that the other one-off interviews could not answer. Most of the data collected from them was applied indirectly to different chapters; in particular, the chapters on identity and the background of world music.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Baudrillard (2005, p.178) argues that an analysis of ‘system of objects’ must imply an analysis of the ‘discourse about the objects.’ Hence, promotional efforts and marketing that accompany the music contain critical information that can help to deconstruct and answer the research question. The relationship between discourse and knowledge can be described in the following manner:
discourses are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon 1997, p.108).

Constructed knowledge of world music has been shown to be a selling point for this good (Erlmann 1996; Nexica 1997). The discourses and social practices that infuse the knowledge in turn govern how the world music is produced, positioned in the market, and subsequently, consumed. Appadurai (1986, p.54) places importance on knowledge that surrounds the good by arguing that ‘knowledge about commodities is itself increasingly commoditized’ and that this process is part of the larger part of ‘political economy of culture.’ To undercover these concepts, interpretative analysis and semiotics were used based on the themes that resulted as the data developed. Interpretative analysis requires taking a broad approach to the data, such that patterns develop as data come in. This is key in interviewing because participants make sense of their reality in different, sometimes conflicting ways. Lees (2004, p.102) argues that this methodology requires ‘close semantic scrutiny of rhetoric and turns of phrase to discover particular narrative structures, issue framings and how story lines close off certain lines of thought and action at the expense of others.’ A primary advantage in collecting and analyzing data in this way is to examine its ‘relevance to the research problem’, rather than number of texts analysed (Tonkiss 2004, p.376). Analysis of this nature requires the use of narratives as well as theming and coding (Corbin & Strauss 2007; Bryant & Goodman 2004; Piles 1991). It is concerned with an ‘examination of meaning, and often complex processes through which social meaning is produced’ (Tonkiss 2004, p.380) and analyzes discursive uses of language that accompany issues.

This approach is not without problems. Antaki (1994) identifies problems of under-analysis in this technique due to three errors made by researchers: summarizing, taking-sides, and over/misquotations. The author shows that
summarizing is itself not analysis and runs the risk of losing important subtleties in data, such as laughter or different vocal tones to convey feelings. In addition to English, some interviews were conducted partly in French. Although I have fluency in French, it was important to pay special attention to my interpretive abilities in not missing linguistic cues that occur in English spoken by non-native speakers or in French. During the interviews were French was used, I often repeated to the interviewee what I understood their points to be with as little leading as possible. I also worked with an interpreter on certain passages of the transcripts to verify meanings and nuances. A second problem with the technique is in taking sides. This could result from a researcher’s desire to position him or herself in the research. The problem can present itself in both the interviewing and analysis stages and runs the risk of biasing data. This was not a major problem for me because I found that I had a different ideological orientation regarding world music than many of the interviewees. This contrast provided an objectivity and fairness that helped avoid taking sides.

Discourses that surround production of world music in the West have multiple and overlapping meanings to different participants. Therefore, it was important to understand how particular discourses of identity, place, and commodification are articulated in world music production and act as a persuasive force. Language used in discourse enables or empowers social actors in different ways, as does labeling. This called for an examination of the language used by promoters and musicians to communicate acceptance of particular forms of music as ‘world’ music to existing and potential consumers. To that end, press releases, news articles, and record company websites were examined to see how these subtle, and not so subtle, discourses operate. This was achieved through an analysis of words used in promotional literature that served to position audiences and musicians in a particular way. For example, for decades Charlie Gillett was a dominant force in the industry; in fact he was a ‘cultural intermediary’ (Bourdieu 1987, p.358), imbued with powers of presentation and re-presentation, for much
of the music that entered the UK market under the moniker of world music. He often short essays to accompany albums of artists he was ‘promoting’ and authenticating. His participation in the production of world music was critically examined in order to see how particular narratives were used in silencing some voices while validating others. The analysis addresses a key issue: commodification does not merely reflect social values, but can also lead them.

Baudrillard (2005, p.179) warns that the supplying of information often gives way to persuasion. Persuasion in this context would entail a language involved in the marketing that plays upon the value systems of the places where it is consumed, hence it is situated; but also, commodification, which includes language aspects, produces consumers by creating and constructing a particular experience (Frith 1996, p.109).

At the start of this section, it was indicated that certain analytical techniques were used as the data developed; however, occasions also arose where key themes were pre-chosen for analysis from the research question. For example, the extent to which identity construction has occurred through the production of world music was under examination. As such, I was looking at how cultural and artistic production (Bourdieu 1987, p.153) offered the opportunity for certain participants to redefine themselves in world music production in London. The invention of the world music genre in 1987 created an ‘ill-defined and unstructured occupation’ (ibid 1987, p.151), in its newness, that benefited some participants, but disadvantaged others. The data resulting from interviews was then examined to see how the experiences of respondents either contradicted or echoed this idea. Taking a post-structuralist approach helped to show how meanings and signifiers are manifested in ‘relations of difference’ (Seidman 1998, p.217) but also the extent to which messages and discourses produced in live music performances fit or not within the institutions ‘designed to promote them’ (Butler 2002, p.92).

Lees (2004, p.102) argues that this is the dominant approach to discourse analysis because it examines the processes by which ‘things and identities get
constructed'. The processes became evident in interactions between audiences and musicians, and between the venues and performances. This is because actors contextualize meanings with respect to each other and the spaces within which the interaction occurs.

In this respect, I examined where and how the local production of this cultural commodity is positioned within broader discourses of the city and social relations. This ties to an interpretation of discourse that focuses on ‘social macro-levels of power/knowledge relations or the articulation of collective identities’ (Keller 2005, p.2). Online adverts and reviews of performances were examined to know if patterns of association and/or disassociation from so-called mainstream forms of entertainment production were occurring. In addition, the venue web pages and the musicians’ MySpace pages offered a wealth of secondary data that an understanding of contemporary media representations of world music. Shuker (1994, p.165) points out that magazines and other paraphernalia of the industry can be analysed through the aesthetics (layout and design), reviews, and letters to the editor (very common in fROOTs magazine, for example). Such an analysis provides a profile of the relationship of the magazine to its market. Discourse can then be understood as a ‘symbolic resource put to use in various settings’ with a focus on knowledge-building and identity performance, among other uses (Macgilchrist & van Hout 2011, p.5). Discourses are also contextualized through a specific time and place; therefore, we can expect to see different discourses on world music in different markets.

It was also important to understand the implications of how a key organization for world music, WOMAD, marketing itself to six other locations around the world. Their approach was linked back to how particular discourses were constructed around the definition of world music. This part of the research also looked at how control was maintained and who benefits from such discourses.
Visual data that accompanied world music production was analyzed through semiotics. Semiotics, the study of signs, as a tool of analysis is useful because it helps to unpeel the layers of visual data (Nelson 2005). Signs and symbols represent a set of properties that ‘are defined in terms of their relation to what is represented’ (Johansen & Larsen 2002, p.25). My research on London venues showed that meanings contained in images and aesthetics are very much part of the identity construction, place making, and commodification of world music. Images related to world music were analysed in conjunction with analyses of other types of narratives. The images reinforced and reified sets of ideas directly related to the commodification and production of world music. Using Shuker (1994) as a guide, I looked at the ways in which WOMAD packaged, publicized and promoted different commodity bundles to different locations. One significant and telling outlier presented itself, that of the Abu Dhabi location. The pictures showed a predominantly non-white crowd and, not a coincidence, the performers were almost all non-white. Semiotics in this context helped me examine the kinds of associations made with regard to race and music and how power is produced and maintained.

This potpourri of approaches comes together to give the study a robustness that helps to answer the research question. Many of the methods that I considered in this chapter arose from the different types of data that availed itself for the project. Qualitative methods were a strong point for this research because it brings together experiences regarding representation, commodification and place that are not readily apparent through quantitative methods.

3.6 ETHICS

Researching a small circle of participants such as the London world music scene presents particular challenges regarding ethics. I will briefly describe some of the difficulties faced during the research and how I overcame them. King’s College
London requires compliance with a fairly rigid code of ethics while conducting fieldwork, which I observed. The major ethical concerns in this project were related to maintaining anonymity. The research examined, among other things, the power structure in the production of world music in London. As I showed elsewhere in the thesis, the dissemination of this product is controlled by a limited number of actors; hence, the majority of the respondents were either direct colleagues or had maintained business relationships with each other. Anonymity in this case would have reduced the effectiveness of the interviews and in fact the entire project; however, caution must be employed when deciding which data to quote directly and which data to paraphrase to protect the reputation of either the respondent or a person being discussed. Baez (2002) discusses the role of confidentiality in his research on minorities in academia. He argues that the transformative role of qualitative research requires that the researcher challenge the monolithic role of confidentiality. Rather than discarding it completely, it ‘should be theorized for what it permits and forecloses’ (ibid 2002, p.36). I will illustrate this through an excerpt from my interviews. This was my interchange with a local promoter who discussed the role of a senior member of the UK world music scene:

Respondent: but within the industry she is not respected really - outside to the wider public people think she is god!

Aaron: Really? Why not?

Respondent: because she has produced so many album/worked with so many artists and has had this [programme] for years and teaches at SOAS

Aaron: But why is not really respected?

Respondent: just the way she operates - and talking from my own personal experiences she is very dismissive of people if she has no need for you.

Respondent: because she is a cow to put it bluntly!

Respondent: but because she has such ‘power’ that she gets away with murder
The promoter was considered a less significant figure on London scene. The respondent was, in fact, characterizing his or her experiences of feeling marginalized within the industry. Although the raw honesty of the respondent illustrates how power relations can produce feelings of anger or rancor, this presents a number of ethical issues. Even though permission was given to use the material, I needed to carefully reflect on my purpose in using it verbatim. Some key questions become relevant:

- What am I seeking to achieve by revealing the name(s) of the people involved? Is it merely sensationalism or are there other ways in which I can show the intensity of these relations?
- Does revealing the name(s) strengthen the project or diminish the quality of the work?

Altering the data could diminish the integrity/accuracy of the research. Were I to name the respondent or the subject of the criticism, I would risk compromising the reputations of either person. However, to exclude the data entire would clearly weaken the project in terms of relevancy and how the project contributes to our understandings of power structures within the commodification process. Winchester (1996, p.122) argues that the use of proper ethics performs a ‘significant gate-keeping function, which has attempted to reduce the survey burden on potentially vulnerable groups, such as children and pregnant women.’ However, this can easily be applied to minor members of the world music structure. Representation, a theme discussed in project in reference to world music, can also be applied to the choice of using direct quotes or paraphrasing. Part of the challenge in using direct quotes when writing up research is to find the balance between a ‘crisis of representation’ (Winchester 1996, p.125) and the researcher’s interpretative analysis.

Punch (1994, p.89) argues that interviewees are ‘respondents, participants, and stakeholders in a constructivist paradigm that is based on avoidance of harm, fully informed consent, and the need for privacy and confidentiality.’ This
highlights the responsibility for researchers to protect respondents from particular forms of vulnerability. On the other hand, the respondents were also well aware that their interviews would be part of a new, grounded academic work on world music. Therefore, it could be that some respondents saw this as an opportunity to express their frustrations and anger toward the various institutional forces that they perceived as hindering their own progress in the industry. Hence, the best way forward was to paraphrase and completely anonymize responses that were deemed harmful to anyone affected by the study. In doing so, I used my interpretative abilities in capturing the flavour of the message without diminishing the voice of the interviewee or (further) damaging existing relations.

3.6 REFLECTIONS ON POSITIONALITY AND POWER

One aspect of the fieldwork that I had not fully anticipated was my relationship to this consumption good. The production and diffusion of world music in London is a tightly contained structure. Therefore, a new attendee (especially at smaller places with a regular crowd), such as a journalist or an academic researcher becomes immediately noticeable. Mullings (1999) argues that insider status for researchers can be achieved through a number of ways, not least of these is racial or gender similarities, but also through showing competence in a particular area. Her discussion is quite useful in certain situations but potentially harmful to the research in others. Using Mohammad’s (2001) fieldwork experience, race and colour gave her a perhaps undeserved authority and access to researching South Asians in the UK. This also manifested itself in a number of ways in my research, which will follow.

First, it became apparent that I was being viewed with a particular reverence when I met musicians and promoters. In four distinct situations I was asked to become an activist for some Ugandan musicians, an agent for two singers, a critic for a music series (I did, in fact, write the review at the promoter’s request),
and co-coordinator of a London-based study on the economic contributions of world music by another promoter. I opted to defer the study on the economic impact of world music on London until after completing the PhD. My reaction to these invitations led to a variety of responses from them. In the first two cases, the reaction was of disappointment from the interviewees. I declined the first two projects because the different ‘hats’ that they required would be a distraction from the PhD project. In retrospect, they may have felt that I was holding back or not fully engaging with the scene, even though these new responsibilities would have fallen outside of my purpose. It could also have been the case that they did not fully understand my purpose and expertise. I accepted and completed the invitation to write the review of the performance. The exercise was beneficial because it gave me a different perspective on what I was trying to do in the research project. In many ways, I was able to better appreciate the task of producing this art and what world music means to these enthusiasts. I was also reminded of how I had changed throughout the project. Crang (2003, p.497) discusses the complexities involved in reflexivity with qualitative research. In particular, he argues that the interwoven nature of a system of ‘understandings’ can result in what I am terming a ‘bounded stagnation’. This is where ‘exhortations to reflexivity and disclosure then depend upon and reproduce problematic notions of a stable, tightly defined, unchanging research project conducted by a singular researcher’, whose identity remains fixed over time and space. By extension particular constructions of the phenomenon or people being researched also tend remain fixed by the researcher.

This brings up the question of how much I am contributing to world music understanding and/or appreciation as a researcher or even as a participant. In other words, what am I offering that is benefitting world music, its actors and/or participants? Cook and Crang (2007a, p.7) argue that such detachment is often situated in particular knowledge/power relations that can influence how a researcher engages with respondents in different social contexts (see also Gray
2009; Latham 1999). Such social relations transcend the walls of the Academy and hence have a key role in how the researcher perceives and is perceived in the field. This also implies that much of the insider/outsider debate on the role of the researcher becomes eroded through everyday practices such as consumption. In turn, the separation of researcher and subjects becomes differentiated because of place and the social context in which the research is occurring.

The second reflection on positionality, power, and race is that I was often associated with the band because of my ethnicity. When I first entered one of the four main venues for observation, there was often a particular excitement in the eyes of some white audience members, possibly, hoping that I was a musician. This is not just an assumption that I am making; on three separate occasions white attendees asked me. At first, I thought it was flattering, however, on reflection I was a bit insulted because it seemed that I too, by virtue of being black, had been objectified and/or commodified as part of the production process. This relates back to the insider/outsider dilemma discussed earlier in the chapter. It also relates to power and clearly my own desire to be seen as distinct from African performers.

3.8 LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to discuss the methodology used in answering the research question: what is the relationship between the conditions of production of world music in London and the construction of musicians’ identities? Within the scope of this question, qualitative methods of interviewing, semiotics, and participant observation were employed. However, there were some limitations that had to be compensated for in order to produce a quality work. This study’s focus was on the perspective of musicians and minor world music promoters. However, I also
had scheduled an interview with one key intermediary of world music, Charlie Gillett. Sadly, he died before our scheduled interview. This potentially created a gap in data, which I sought to fill through other high-ranking members of this community. I also used the well-defined Album of the Month archives that he produced in an effort to understand how constructions of world music were created. Another limitation was in the venue schedules. Because the venues do not follow a standardized season, some venues offered more performances throughout the season than others. This had the potential to create an imbalance in the participant observations conducted in the venues. Also, venues offered other forms of world music than West African. If the data collection period had not been extended this would have limited the number of visits that could be made at a given. Lastly, a few proposed interviews did not happen because of the immigration status of the musicians. Living in legal marginality in the UK caused four musicians to refuse to participate in the study for fear of (imagined) repercussions from the UK Border Agency.

Notwithstanding, the methods employed in this thesis provided key insights and data that helped to answer the research question. The changing face of ethnographic research requires a multi-stranded methodological approach. I employed a variety of tools that allowed me to understand some of the identity and social politics that occur in production and consumption of world music. The use of primary data, such as various types of interviews and participant observations, offered an insight into how people feel about different aspects of world music and the degree to which they were using this good as a means of self-identification and distinction (Bourdieu 1987). Because the industry is a relatively small one compared to other music forms, access to participants, in particular to musicians, was gained quite easily. Somewhat contrary to the problems some authors discussed regarding snowballing from within such a small circle, I found a great deal of diverse ideas and thoughts among the participants of this study. I attribute this to the expressiveness of music itself.
Discussing and measuring social relations can be messy; however, the identification of cultural patterns and ideas that surround production requires a particular flexibility that a multi-tiered approach can offer.

Secondary data, advertisements, music reviews, and press releases, were useful in understanding the language used in creating value of world music at different periods. How musicians were ‘produced’ was just as important as the music they played. The transnational nature of this commodity also became part of its selling point. Stories from the ‘third world’ from whence many musicians and/or music originated often accompanied press releases and other adverts announcing performance dates. These strategies constituted a commodification process that subsumed the identities, histories, and experiences of performers, which was then offered as an opportunity for musicians to (re)construct or reinforce their aspects of their identities. As with all qualitative research approaches, flexibility and a variety of methods are absolutely necessary. The next chapters look at the data in detail in an attempt to explore how theories laid out in the literature review and introduction of the thesis materialized in practice.
Chapter 4 Commodification of world music

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the processes and materiality of the commodification of world music. The commodification processes bring together ‘power relations, cultural constructions, economic interactions, and social organizations’ that connect capitalism to the development of this music genre (M. P. Smith & Guarnizo 1999, p.8). Commodification processes have a direct bearing on the relationship between the conditions of production of world music in London and the construction of musicians’ identities. This chapter will primarily examine the first objective identified in Chapter One: to explore how world music is produced and by whom.

Commodification in world music occurs when particular representations are achieved that support the commercial objectives of the performances. So, it is critical to determine what representations occur with respect to this commodity. Additionally, how representation occurs can serve to obfuscate particular realities that enshroud the production process, such as the day-to-day economic struggles that many musicians face. Hesmondhalgh argues that inequalities are inherent in the commodification process and that ‘labour goes unrecognised and is systematically under-rewarded’ (Hesmondhalgh 2007, p.56). More precisely, commodification begins when a second group, outside of the musicians, become interested in the commercial aspects of the art rather than in the art itself.

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8 I will illustrate this with an example: At a performance at Inn on the Green, a small community-centre cum world music venue in West London, the mc apologizing for the late start of the performance. The reason for the lateness was that the band ‘were forced to wait until after six pm to cross the congestion zone charges in central London.’ On the one hand, this could be seen as a political statement; however, the mc later explained to me that the band came in three vehicles. With the congestion charge at eight pounds per vehicle, £24 is a considerable sum to be deducted from the night’s revenues plus other overhead costs such as petrol, babysitters and the like.
A host of promoters, DJs, and organizations constitute the ‘second group’ and the materialities of their interests affect the production of this good in different ways. This chapter will examine the role of these key players who are involved in the local production of world music. It is divided into three major sections: commodification from above, commodification from below, and the interrelationship between the two forms of commodification.

Taylor (1997), Miller (2003), and Hesmondhalgh (2007) have shown how goods are produced and managed through institutions. ‘Commodification from above’ is the term used in this study to mean the systematic corporate and state actions that market, promote and/or sanction world music for their own gain. These include actors such as the Arts Council of England and WOMAD, MBM, among others. However, as will be shown in this chapter, musicians often choose to or are forced to commodify themselves and their music. In doing so, they are exercising agency that blurs the line between the economic and material processes of world music production. This activity will be referred to as ‘commodification from below’. These two circles of commodifying processes constitute a ‘dialectical paradigm’ (N. Smith 1979, p.361) that are interdependent of each other, not in direct competition and unequal in power. However, the two groups are engaged in a de facto collaboration to share and expand a consumer base. Of concern in this chapter is the duality of commodification from above and commodification from below; however, within this structure there are debates about production, representation, and agency. As a result of this duality, tensions regarding the control of resources are brought to light.

Commodification from below is a term adapted from Guarnizo et al (1999, p.8). They argue that a ‘main concern guiding transnationalism from below is to discern how this process affects power relations, cultural constructions, economic interactions, and, more generally, social organization at the level of the locality.’ Like Guarnizo, this thesis examines how this commodification occurs on an
individual level in world music production. More specifically, it is important to see how these variables are given life outside of state and commercial actors. Even as individuals commodify their talents and, in some cases, themselves, for singing and/or promoting, they still must maintain a relationship with the organizations that represent ‘the above’. In fact, according to many musicians interviewed, the desire is to participate in this production process with the backing of one the big promoters of world music. The limited resources/revenues available in connection with this commodity creates even greater tensions, which has implications for how musicians compete for the limited performance gigs available. Currently little research has been conducted on the impact of value and the level and intensity of commodification. This chapter addresses this division. It therefore develops an argument that explores (a) how commodification of world music occurs ‘from above’ and ‘from below’; and (b) how these processes overlap and create different realities for different actors in live world music production.

The next section looks at the important aspects of what goes on in the commodification processes of world music. A particular focus here is on selling a vision of culture or bringing things that are valorized in particular ways to the UK music market. The first section looks at how companies and the State are involved in the production of this good. It starts with a discussion of WOMAD and examines the ways in which different commodifiers and the music scenes they create are interrelated. The second part examines how individuals have commodified from above. I will use media sources, visual materials and primary interview data to develop these ideas.

4.2 THE ‘START’ OF COMMODIFYING WORLD MUSIC FROM ABOVE: FROM WOMAD TO LONDON
The visibility and success of WOMAD provides a broader commercial framework that facilitates the operations of large-scale world music promoters and smaller players in the London world music scene. WOMAD legitimizes the operations at the local level by creating a superstructure in the form of an annual festival that ‘interconnects several local scenes’ and offer participants a chance to ‘enact the ways of life idealized within the scene free of the usual supports of urban life and away from other people and from the agents of social control’ (Bennett & Peterson 2004, p.10). Hence, no discussion of world music at the local level would be complete without a consideration of the broader commercial structure of WOMAD, the annual music festival that has become a mainstay of British summer festivals.

The first festival was held in Britain in 1982. It has sufficiently developed in the UK and, is now exported to Spain, Australia, New Zealand and Abu Dhabi. In this context, WOMAD, the commodity, has become greater than the musical experience it offers (Bramlett & Sloan 2000). This raises key issues regarding how the shaping of production occurs, how new markets are created and the role of media in constructing desires. Developing from Peter Gabriel’s vision of WOMAD. The exportation of this commodity is reminiscent of what Mitchell (1996) terms as raw talent from former colonial countries being ‘pressed and packaged then exported back as the “refined” product…’ The fluidity of music and musical styles tend to complicate such a reductionist view. A comparison was made of two of the five locations, Abu Dhabi and New Zealand, for the 2010 festival series to show how different notions of world music are articulated in different contexts (Hernandez 1998).

Table 4.1 Abu Dhabi WOMAD line-up 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performers</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABDULLAH CHHADEH &amp; SYRIANA</td>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the exception of Robert Plant’s guest appearance with a mixed group of UK and African performers, no western performers are listed. Undoubtedly, a vast majority of the audience at the Abu Dhabi performances is of Arab descent. The promotional pictures, from the 2009 Abu Dhabi WOMAD concert also the first WOMAD held there, show thousands of
Arabs in attendance.⁹

Frith (in Hall & du Gay 1996) argues that musical performances ‘produce’ the people listening to them rather than reflecting audiences. In his view, performances create and construct particular experiences that involve understanding ourselves in a different context. This may have been what Peter Gabriel meant. However, what is apparent in the Abu Dhabi case is that almost none of the performers are white nor originate from Western Europe. They are performing for an audience that is also predominantly non-white. These points taken together highlight the extent to which the interactive processes of music are being constructed in particular ways for different audiences.

Commercial demands suggests that promoters at WOMAD must decide what music will be acceptable to different audiences within the world music genre. Hence, the construction of the musical experiences in Abu Dhabi highlights the ‘entanglements between the sounds of music and their material constitution’ (Wood et al. 2007, p.869). The selection of non-white performers for a non-white audience would also appear to reinforce particular boundaries and notions about the world rather than serving to breakdown boundaries. Without an understanding of the multitude of reasons that people consume live world music, it is difficult to say the extent to which a different set of musicians would have been embodied and, in fact, reflective of cultural and social relations of the audience. WOMAD have also created a social space that, as Lefebvre (1992, p.73) argues, ‘subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity.’

⁹http://www.womadabudhabi.ae/home.html
The different narratives reflected and articulated during a performance are determinants of the kinds of audiences that will attend and how the production of space and world music will occur, and in fact, what encompasses the 'world' in world music (Shepherd 1977). This 'representational space' becomes a visual perspective that represents the interplay between commercial and social forces that in turn produce the spaces of WOMAD (Lefebvre 1992, p.79). People consume based on how they see themselves as becoming rather than filling a particular need (Bocock 1993). Who is performing may matter less than the ideas that are being sold--a set of packaged identity-building commodities that offers 'participation in imagined communities' of unity, nostalgia, and/or resistance, among others (Frith 1996, p.125). Bocock (1993) further argues that people consume items that they feel help build and sustain who they see themselves as being. This would in many ways complicate Frith’s (1996) assertion that performances produce audiences rather than reflect them. However, do audiences have no control over what they consume when they choose to attend WOMAD? The social practice that is very much part of music consumption involves a negotiation ‘between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility’ (Appadurai 1993, p.274). This concert series is an international buffet of artists with inherent identity-building symbols and signs that is brought to a predominantly Middle Eastern audience in the Middle East.

These concerts, like all concerts and playlists, are a pre-selected fixed roster determined and created by industry elite. This roster is linked to particular places and tells narratives about place and positionality in a global context for both the musicians and listeners alike. This serves not only to create discourses and knowledge ‘but also the very reality they appear to describe’ (Said 1979, p.94; see also Valentine 1995). Moreover, the selection limits the performances of largely non-Western artists to non-Western audiences. In order for the Abu Dhabi performances to be economically profitable, it is important for WOMAD to
tap into the appropriate set of identity-building symbols and tastes for this audience. If the value of such symbols is the result of social, cultural, and economic processes, then how do WOMAD producers assess which value products would be appreciated best for local consumption? Bourdieu (1987, p.231) speaks to this point by showing that cultural products are ‘constituted tastes’ created from ‘vague semi-existence of half-formulated or unformulated experiences’. He further argues that it is industry professionals then who present a ‘finished product’ to consumers through the process of objectification. It is interesting to see the extent to which the Abu Dhabi finished product compares to the New Zealand and Australian ones. I have listed the artists scheduled to perform at the 2010 New Zealand WOMAD below:

Table 4.2: New Zealand WOMAD line-up 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performer Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Hypnotic Brass Ensemble</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal Murkus</td>
<td>Palestine/Israel</td>
<td>Iva Lamkum</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Kamel el Haraachi La Mitchell</td>
<td>Algeria/France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon Circus</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Ladi 6</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bellbirds</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Lepisto &amp; Lehti Mairtin O’Connor</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue King Brown</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calexico</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Trio</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Stijle</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Mariem Hassan</td>
<td>Sahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dub Colossus</td>
<td>Ethiopia/UK</td>
<td>Nickodemus</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 shows that 26 out of 31 acts originate in OECD countries with a few caveats. Some of the groups are of mixed origin but are based in the West, for example Dub Colossus is an Ethiopian group but are based out of the UK. Kamel el Haraachi is an Algerian singer based in France but sings in an Algerian style. Identity constructions of the artists themselves become increasingly murky, as does the broader construction of ‘Western’. This will be explored in another chapter. The charts show that a significantly greater proportion of the performers with direct links to Western countries are chosen to perform in New Zealand and Australia than in Abu Dhabi. The classifications of performers have inherent complications for defining authenticity for different audiences. Take, for example, the New Zealand performers, Te Whanau-a-Apanui, a Maori tribal group shows one cultural facet of the country. In contrast, NZTrio, a classical ensemble, and Anna Coddington, a contemporary songstress, give a very different representation not only of New Zealand culture, but also of what can be classified as world music more broadly.

At the time of this writing, the 2009 UK WOMAD artist list shows a very diverse range similar to the Australian and New Zealand 2010 performances. The UK list
shows many UK-based artists, although quite a few of them draw on musical traditions from outside of the UK. Examples of these include the UK DJ Dubious Biography. He uses musical traditions from 'five continents representing modern roots traditions, fusion, glocalisation and even out-right bastardisation'. This appears to present the UK, New Zealand, and Australia WOMADs as platforms for experimentation and fusion of different cultural forms of music. While the Abu Dhabi WOMAD doesn't seem to lend itself to much fusion or collaboration with European artists. This makes definitive statements about the approach to world music by the cultural intermediaries. It says that participation in world music is not happenstance. It is directed at different groups in very particular ways.

Notice the minutes from the 1987 meeting of 'world music' leaders in the UK:

It was agreed that we should create a generic name under which our type of catalogue could be labelled in order to focus attention on what we do. We discussed various names for our type of music(s) and on a show of hands 'World Music' was agreed as the 'banner' under which we would work. Other suggestions were 'World Beat', 'Hot...', 'Tropical...' and various others. It was suggested that all of the labels present would use 'World Music' on their record sleeves (to give a clear indication of the 'File Under...' destination) and also on all publicity material etc.

This proclamation by industry executives set off what would become a complex set of contested spaces of creativity, power and recognition. Lovering (1988) explains that commodities are things that are exchanged for money on a systematic basis. However, it is worth noting that this industry is much smaller than other genres of music, such as pop music. According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), the global recorded music sales for 2009 totalled $17B USD. Using data from 2006, Laing’s (2009) estimates that world music occupies a mere 1.8% of total spending for the music industry.

11 http://www.frootsmag.com/content/features/world_music_history/minutes/page03.html
12 http://www.ifpi.org/
If we use this proportion as a reference then world music would constitute US $306M of the $17B worldwide sales in 2009. The point is that even the term commodification from above in relative terms belies the scale of revenues; in other words, these social actors are not controlling vast sums of revenue.

With this scale in view, the next section examines a few cases of how commodification occurs from above and explains the significance their affect on a West African artist using relevant theoretical perspectives. Notice the differences in the two advertisements below.

4.2.1 Two tales of the same artist

**Financial Times- May 27, 2007 (Commodification From Above)**

"The crowd were treated to Muntu Valdo’s guitar magic. Sauntering on stage with a springy step, softly picking at his guitar and blowing in his harmonica, he resembled a youthful, latter-day Bob Dylan. But his music is from a different stream. Using a box of tricks to double-track his guitar and voice live, he added layers of sound to create full-textured, soft songs about peace, love and Cameroonian witchcraft and charmed the audience."

**Muntu’s Myspace Ad- May 31, 2010 (Commodification From Below)**

Harmonica, guitar, balafon, bass, Percussion, ngombi, velvety vocals.

A solitary figure lit up on stage,
The sounds of a ten-man band teasing your ears.

Above loops, pedals, effects and harmonies,

His passionate voice weaves enchanting melodies.

Blues, jazz, soulful beats: good music travels fast.

The left panel is a review of Muntu’s performance at Queen Elizabeth Hall at Southbank Center in London. The programme was part of the Fifth African Music Festival at Southbank, a large music and arts venue on the Thames River in central London. The review portrays Muntu as a familiar yet unfamiliar musician by comparing him to the American singer Bob Dylan. The reviewer adds a dose of mystique to Month and the performance through the following descriptions of the performance: ‘box of tricks’ and ‘Cameroonian witchcraft’. Such expressions
position difference in a way that is unattainable or impenetrable for Western audiences. The use of the term sauntering, which is defined as a ‘careless, leisurely gait with no apparent aim’, also suggests an indifferent, casual attitude toward the (Western) audience and, by extension, toward the West. The result is a polarizing distinction between West and non-West. This, coupled with the so-called mysticism of his music, serves to limit the interactions with audiences rather than encourage it. This contradicts Born and Hesmondhalgh’s (2000, p.19) argument that ‘hybrid aesthetics and movements are free of the earlier hierarchical consciousness and practice, that there are no significant “core-periphery” structures at work…’ The Financial Times’ music reviewer reinvigorates discourses of the other through its framing of Muntu Valdo.

Hence, for the reviewer to recognize Muntu without Cameroonian witchcraft but rather say with American or English witchcraft would probably not synch with existing ideas about the Other. Alternatively, to review Muntu’s performance without any reference to witchcraft could devalue, and consequently, decommodify the artist and the performance. Stokes (2000, p.215) argues that their voices are ‘silent, marginalised, and ultimately irrelevant to questions of analytical significance’. In doing so, representation is wrested from the individual actor and maintained by actors from above and the binaries created when discussing non-Western music relegate the Other outside of the framework altogether.

A second observation is the context within which the performance occurred. As part of an African Festival the performances are already positioned outside of mainstream British consumption. This contributes to practices that build distinction through consumption (Bourdieu 1987). At the same time, the festival themes expose these artists to geographic imaginaries that ‘help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and differences’ (Said

13 http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=saunter
1979, p.55), which could be applied to the musicians as well as to the audience. This process is reinforced by The Financial Times review.

By contrast, the right panel was taken from a promotional flyer for a smaller performance at the Vortex Jazz Club in East London. Muntu performed alone and used some of the same material. The advertisement for the gig made no mention of witchcraft or any supernatural phenomenon. Negus (1996, p.50) shows that disputes arise not only with regard to creativity and commerce, but also between ‘what is creative and what is to be made commercial.’ Hence, the amount of control that one has over a creative process and how this process is to be represented changes the language used in its representation. There is no doubt that Muntu benefited financially from such high level exposure through the Financial Times write-up regardless of whatever visual imageries were packaged with it.

Also, notice that the Financial Times review places much more emphasis on the singer’s identity; commodifying him right along with the music he plays. hooks (2001, p.425) argues that when ‘race and ethnicity become commodified as resources for pleasure, the culture of the specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals, can be seen as constituting an alternative playground where members of dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relations with the Other.’ Given hooks’ argument, two questions come to mind regarding this event: Which culture is the reviewer assessing? The assessment could be highlighting what ‘western’ music is lacking, or emphasizing some perceived difference between the two musical traditions. Secondly, how does the context of the performance, that is, Muntu’s being part of an ‘African’ festival, his singing about Cameroonian witchcraft, and his being almost like Bob Dylan, function within the processes of commodification? The accompanying narratives and the construction of self/other work toward shaping identity as a commodity. Clifford (1988, p.273) argues that we should think of culture as
‘negotiated present, processes’ rather than organically unified or traditionally continuous. Hence, commodifying culture in the way that hooks suggests would require particular ‘human qualities and the sensual dimension of experience to be objectified or abstracted or detached’ (Willis 2001, p.339) from Muntu to become commodities in their own right. The Financial Times review serves to reify or aestheticize his presence on stage and connect his body language, performance and identity to a particular place somewhere outside of a British cultural space. This in turn can be given a prestige or novelty value for the British audiences at the Southbank performance. The reviewer’s depiction of Muntu also gives him an exclusive space of ownership or agency over his talent. It enables him to self-commodify for his own benefit. The seemingly resulting ‘othered’ figure performing music about Cameroonian witchcraft and, in fact, embodying Cameroon, is a double commodification. That is to say, he is able to increase his use value by differentiating his product and himself. He is able to occupy an interstitial space that is neither completely Western nor completely non-Western. This raises the question of who constitutes the ‘above’. The next section begins to break down what is meant in this case.

4.2.2 Landscape: Who are the ‘above’ in the UK world music scene?

A landscape is a form of representation that encompasses ‘the social relations that go into its meaning’ (Mitchell 2005, p.49). Understanding the landscape in world music helps in understanding how power gets maintained and redistributed. As the following discussion will show, this landscape is constituted by a tight network of cultural intermediaries who control world music’s existence in the UK from above. As such, they impart a great deal of power and meaning into the production of world music through advertising methods and artists selections. Several respondents were asked to identify who they felt were the most influential people in the UK world music market. Commodification as a process does not occur without human actors. Even when organizations are
orchestrating the commodification, individuals within the organizations are responsible for how the process occurs. Hence, I have compiled a list of the key ten or so people or organizations that control the market for the entire country. The list was constructed using the data/responses from interviews conducted in this project. Not surprisingly, the DJs and the minor promoters were able to contribute more to this list than the musicians. The names are not in any particular order. Providing a rank ordering would have required a different line of questioning to the respondents, and is not the focus of this study. The list below is more than a set of individual actors with impressive careers; it is also a materialization of overlapping power relations that serve to create a landscape for world music in the UK. I presented a detailed list of functions and roles of some of the actors to illustrate the connections and flows within the industry.
**Table 4.3: London World Music Scene**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Gillett (deceased)</td>
<td>BBC Radio 3 DJ; the sound of the world archive; author; publisher; introduced ‘world music’ to Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Durran</td>
<td>BBC Radio 3 Presenter; Record producer of many African musicians; ethnomusicologist at SOAS; former curator of the National Sound Archive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real World Records</td>
<td>Peter Gabriel; WOMAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Large-scale organization. Produces world music, often in association with the South Bank Arts Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBM (Music Beyond Mainstream)</td>
<td>A network that works through large-scale venues (1,100+ seats) throughout the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Reinhardt</td>
<td>Guest presenter on BBC Radio 3; Musical director for Oily Cart Theatre Company; associated with the Shrine UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Anderson</td>
<td>Editor of fRoots magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee Jay Ritu</td>
<td>Local DJ on the world music scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita Ray</td>
<td>Local DJ on the world music scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stern’s Music Store</td>
<td>The main distributor of world music in London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songlines Magazine</td>
<td>One of the key magazines for world music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fRoots Magazine</td>
<td>One of the key magazines for world music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Council of England</td>
<td>The main state funding body of music and cultural events in England</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2006, Laing estimates that 57% of the revenues of the $1.4 billion (USD) industry is generated through live music performances with another 39% from the recording industry. A few key actors of world music operate in the UK market, aside from the organizers of WOMAD, the annual festival of world music. Bunge (1973) argued that African music and dance forms were likely to be the dominant worldwide forms. This has certainly come to pass in the world music scene. As such Stern’s have been in the centre of the world music scene for the past 30
years. African music has been described as the engine of creating the world music label.\footnote{http://www.frootsmag.com/content/features/world_music_history/minutes/} Although many record shops have a world music section, one shop in particular offers African music almost exclusively. Stern’s Records Shop was located in Central London. They have recently moved their entire sales operations online. They claim to have one of the largest collections of African music outside Paris.\footnote{http://www.sternsmusic.com/about.php} Two major world music magazines are produced and distributed in the UK. They are Songlines and fRoots. fRoots has been in publication since 1979 and its editor of fRoots is Ian Anderson, a Scottish musician who was connected to the rock band, Jethro Tull. In line with these actors are a large group of ethnomusicologists in academic research (for example, Kunst, 1950, Bohlman, 2002) and a few key crossover figures, such as Lucy Durran, who is a researcher at SOAS and also works with BBC3.

In addition to Ian Anderson, there is a smallish core of industry people who are directly involved in the UK world music scene. They include Charlie Gillett, Andy Kershaw, who was a broadcaster that predated Gillett, and the producers at Real World Records, most notably Peter Gabriel. All have been involved in WOMAD. Three respondents identified Charlie Gillett as being the most important figure in the development of world music in the UK. Many tribute parties in London were held in his honour after his death in March 2010. Hence, the next section will look at this key cultural intermediary and the role that he has played in popularizing world music in the UK.

4.2.2.1 Charlie Gillett’s Albums of the Month and the Local World Music Scene

The recently departed Gillett is an icon in the UK world music scene. He has been mentioned as one of the most influential people in this market in many of the interviews that I conducted during my fieldwork. As explained in the Methodology Chapter, I am using his archive to show how different music...
because commodified in the UK primarily, and the implications that this had for the conditions of production of the music. Gillett was a BBC3 broadcaster and held a weekly radio show from 2001-2008. Additionally, Gillett has archived weekly playlists of his BBC3 World Music broadcast from 2001 to 2006. Gillett’s weekly radio broadcast shapes individual listeners and consequently the market in particular ways. I have not catalogued the weekly playlist because of space considerations; however, it gives the British listener an important perceived connection to global music and people. It creates an imagined community by connecting listeners, from Bristol to Newcastle to Margate, to an idea or set of ideas put forth each week. In this case it is a virtual scene where ‘coalitions and alliances’ (Straw 1991) are actively engaged and reinforced.

During this period Gillett also generated an ‘Album of the Month that is must-be-heard music for his listeners. His selection of albums of the month represented an introduction to various artists from around the world for many UK world music listeners in and outside of London. He also writes a 350-word accompanying commentary that gives the listener some background and context for the selection. From January 2001- December 2008, 95 albums were the exception of January 2006. Examining this relatively overlooked data source on world music will shed light on the materiality of the everyday consumption of this good. Of particular interest are the sources of the musicians and the implications of this on how world music has been represented to the British public. The entire list has been included in the Appendix.

Of the directly identifiable source countries/regions of the albums 59% are from direct African sources. Over the eight-year period only five albums originate from UK artists. Some of these are performing in musical styles that do not originate in the UK. For example, Susheela Raman is based in the UK. She sings many songs in English but uses distinctively Eastern rhythms. Fusions such as these blur the place identity component that underpins much of world music. However,
a key component of this selection appears to be distance between the products origin and the audience receiving it (Appadurai 1986). Maintaining a perceived geographical distance keeps the value of the artist high: keeping her Eastern in some ways makes her and her music sufficiently differentiated from her UK upbringing. This presents a key problem for West African artists already living and working in the UK. They also have to find ways to create a sense of newness or difference that reflects audiences’ expectations of representations of, in most cases, other places.

Taylor (1996) terms this as ‘strategic inauthenticity’ (discussed in Chapter Six). Earlier essays on his albums of the month included particular discourses of ‘discovery’ and place a heavy emphasis on the artist’s origins and musical traditions. Note the following excerpt from Gillett’s introduction to the October 2002 album by Malian singer, Salif Keita:

The power and the glory of that record dispelled all doubts that an African record could match Western rock and its most dramatic and anthemic, with Salif soaring to vocal heights no singer in the West could hope to emulate, framed in arrangements that broke new ground. Western and African rhythms and instruments made room for each other, while the backing vocalists tipped the balance towards the sound of the Sahara. Gillett creates a conceptual space that in many ways educates listeners. It also serves to differentiate Keita from the West in ways that complicate Peter Gabriel’s assertions of ‘drawing people together’. Descriptions such as these also create boundaries that are linked to the embodiment of music. Frith (1996, p.116) refers to this as ‘discursive practice’ in that it attempts to grasp ‘an experience through a particular evaluative framework’. The Gillett quote is particularly salient in that it constructs this African artist’s voice, his music, and his identity, for all listeners, as being re-

16 http://www.charliegillett.com/rotm.php?date=october02
localised outside of the West. Music is said to be special because it ‘defines space without boundaries’ (Frith 1996, p.125). However, the discourses that surround music broadly, and world music specifically, can and do work to connect particular sites of production of world music with its consumption in the West.

Data for this research show that many of the members of the audience at the smaller venues in London also attend the larger festival of WOMAD. Some of them often ‘educate’ themselves on their preferred world music by reading industry magazines and participating in world music tours. Gillett’s radio programme was still active in the world music industry up until his death in the year 2010. Such overlapping spaces of consumption are accompanied by descriptions and marketing that continue to differentiate world music from other music experiences in many ways.

Large-scale organizations, such as the ones listed in the table above, are key components of any production process. These organizations have linkages with the state’s main arts funding body, The Arts Council of England. As a consequence, they are sanctioned in ways that individual actors are not. The next section examines the relationships with and impact of three such entities: Serious, Music Beyond Mainstream, and The Arts Desk. After this, I look at two particular cases to highlight two aspects of commodification from above. The first of these cases shows how commodification and objectification can go hand-in-hand in world music. The second case explores the diminished presence of Nigerian music in world music.

4.2.2.2 LARGE-SCALE ORGANIZATIONS AND WORLD MUSIC

The state has an interest in accumulating cultural capital. Artistic creativity that can systematically valued and marketed contributes to the cultural economy of
cities and is often supported by the state (Scott 2001). Hence, the associations that state and city institutions make with arts organizations are also the result of strategies to remake or market cities and spaces as cultural centers in an effort to attract ‘mobile investment capital’ (Gibson & Kong 2005, p.547). The Arts Council England (ACE) is one such branch of the state that distributes funding and promotes art throughout England. The ACE announced that they invest:

Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and a further £0.85 billion from the National Lottery to create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.\(^{17}\)

Much art and music production activity has been funded by this organization. Notice the following case. An industry insider confirmed the key status of various organizations in the local scene:

Respondent: On the PR side - again a few people have control of the main acts that would reach across to mainstream/wider audiences; SERIOUS have a real hold on the market; then there is MBM - Music Beyond Mainstream - which is a consortium of national venues.

The industry insider’s comments highlights particular struggles for power that can arise between the groups. Serious’ ‘having a hold on the market’ denotes a particular level of control over artistic resources. Negus (2002, p.508) points out that cultural intermediaries, such as Serious and MBM, produce and circulate information and symbolic materials, but they are also involved in the ‘concealment of knowledge, deception and manipulation’ of the conditions and practices that are linked to producing the art. Both groups are regularly funded clients of the ACE and must compete against each other for access to the best and new talent. However, this can lead to what one promoter suggested was ‘deceptive and manipulative’ practices in particular in relation to other (often less powerful) organizations. The example he referred to was the case of The African

\(^{17}\) http://www.artsclouncil.org.uk/about-us/ ; Accessed May 3, 2010
and Caribbean Music Circuit; an organization founded in 1989. Its stated purpose was to introduce ‘non-native Africans, Caribbeans and Latin Americans… to beautiful sounds and melodies that they may not have had the opportunity to hear otherwise.’\(^{18}\) The organization was also funded by the ACE but with the restriction of not being able to promote commercial acts. The group was responsible for bringing many big name acts from West Africa to stages throughout the UK. For example, they brought Benin singer Angélique Kidjo to the UK in 1993. Other artists include Malian singer Daby Balde, and Senegambian singers, Moussa Nboob and Nuru Kane. Serious was also around at the time and were given the right by the Council to bring in commercial acts. According to the promoter, after ACMC returned the artists to their countries of origin, ‘[Serious] would go there to find these same artists and promote them in the UK for profit. Because Serious were based at Southbank Center they had a ready platform for these artists.’ He continued, ‘The connections that Serious had with the [ACE] allowed them to become commercial’. I asked the promoter why the Council allowed Serious to bring commercial acts in and the ACMC were not. He responded, ‘because [Serious] were a white organization and we were not.’ There are the usual difficulties of substantiating charges of racism; but more importantly is the materialisation of Negus’ (2002) argument of contested spaces of power that enshroud any economic activity. Though the ends and means of the Art Council and its vision of art and culture, the State exerts its power over the production process.

However, Bourdieu (1987, p.151) offers another perspective by showing that ‘job redefinition resulting from a change in the scholastic properties is likely to be more or less extensive depending on the elasticity of the technical and social definition of the position and on the social origin of the new occupants, since the higher the origin, the less inclined they will be to accept the limited ambitions for

the petit-bourgeois agents looking for modest, predictable progress over a lifetime.’ Serious’ greater professional experience and access to resources could have outweighed those of the ACMC thereby justifying the ACE’s funding of commercial activity by Serious. One can take this analysis further and ask why the ACE would not assist the underdog, ACMC? Bourdieu argues that the reliance on informal networks reinforces particular class divides in the arts industry. This is further substantiated in Negus’ work (2002) on senior management. His research shows that almost all senior executives in the music industry are ‘middle class, white males who have received a privately funded education at “public school”, or attended state grammar schools, completed studies at university’ (ibid 2002, p.512). As we will see from the next case, it also explains, in part, why world music is marketed toward particular audiences in the UK. We can also see this in the case of Music Beyond Mainstream.

4.2.2.2 THE CHANGING SAME—MUSIC BEYOND MAINSTREAM

Music Beyond Mainstream (MBM) came about organically than other organizations. Six music programmers from various venues around London formed the group in 2001 as a result of informal discussions during the intermissions of performances. With the support of the Arts Council, MBM became a formal entity with a board of directors and so on. From their website, MBM describe the process of becoming the organization that it is today:

Working together the first tour was produced in the autumn 2002. The inaugural tour was Orchestra Baobab and was followed in the spring of 2003 by Gotan Project. To start with it was an informal collaboration. It was formalised in 2005 as a not-for-profit company. In 2008 Arts Council England (ACE) asked MBM to consider applying to become a regularly funded organisation (RFO) of ACE. This has enabled MBM to develop our capacity to deliver tours more efficiently and effectively.¹⁹

¹⁹http://musicbeyondmainstream.org.uk/site/mbm/background/
After receiving RFI status MBM's activities were sanctioned by the state. This facilitated their efforts to control the sources of production. It also highlights the State's ability to exercise control over how this commodity is represented. The Frequency Asked Questions (FAQ) section on their website reveals how the process of valuation and commodification of musical acts that are allowed within their very powerful realm. Below are the frequently asked questions from MBM’s website:

**How does MBM consider what to tour?**
We receive proposals. Sometimes proposals come from member venues in MBM, sometimes from artists and their representatives or from other producers/promoters. *Member venues look at the artistic, audience and financial considerations of proposals at member's meetings held four times a year. Members will either give a commitment to tour a proposal, express an interest but need more development/information or turn a proposal down.* (Italics added)

This illustrates how commodities can be moulded to fit various purposes. The italicised text above illustrates attempts by cultural intermediary to assess the market; but also they are reinforcing particular artistic and musical boundaries. This is based in part on constructed knowledge of a perceived audience need. Slater (1998, p.148) argues that consumption is the ‘cultural reproductions of social relations… that is inevitably conformist as well as an agent for ensuring social conformity.’ The excerpt also illustrates how the commodity can at once be the genre, the band/artist, and/or the song choice. Notice the next FAQ.

**Who decides what MBM tours?**
The eleven member venues that make up MBM decide what to tour because they know their audiences and potential audiences best and want to provide interesting artistic opportunities for their communities.

This highlights what Bourdieu (1987, p.468) claims are social agents who implement ‘internalized, embodied social structures’ in their practical knowledge of the social world. In doing so, MBM members take on the role of deciding who gets commodified for which audiences. It is also a direct application of
Appadurai’s (1988, p.7) notion of particular strategies that ‘make the creation of value a politically meditated process’.

**How do I make a proposal for an MBM tour?**
You can make a proposal on our form and send it to our General Manager. The General Manager co-ordinates proposals ready for discussion at our quarterly member venues’ meeting.

As mentioned earlier, this organisational network is constituted by and through large-scale venues throughout the UK. By having such a network, MBM is ensuring not only its own continued existence but also a standardized commodity spread throughout the country.

**What criteria do you assess project ideas by?**
There are many different things to consider and in the end artistically things boil down to the *opinion and judgment of the collective of member venues*. However, there are some key things we consider:

- **Artistic**: Innovation; quality; contribution; cultural heritage in relation to MBM’s previous tours; profile and potential profile in the UK; potential audience size (MBM venues are large scale UK concert halls); potential to attract new audiences.
- **Financial**: Fees needed by artist and clarification of what they cover; size of touring party (and therefore cost); any record label support.
- **Practical**: Planned release of recordings/timing; production/technical requirements.

The question on criteria offers more insight into the valuation process. Notice the ‘cultural heritage in relation to MBM’s previous tours’. Performances that follow must be in relation to the cultural heritage of the performances that came before it. What are some implications of this? MBM can be said to be representing themselves in particular ways by creating a brand or narratives. This necessarily means rejecting particular forms of world music that do not ‘fit in’ with a perceived agenda.

**Why are those venues members of MBM?**
They are members because they are committed to contributing to the collaborative ethos of MBM, are passionate about enabling people to experience and explore music, give time & expertise, are large in
scale which affords a significant local and sub regional profile, take tours that they are prepared to invest significant subsidy into and are geographically well distributed around the UK in terms of population.

**Can my venue become a member of MBM?**

MBM is currently exploring options for additional Scottish venues. In terms of population coverage we are also considering the gap in the Yorkshire region. If you wish to register your interest then please contact Alistair Wilkinson alistair@musicbeyondmainstream.org.uk. Occasionally tours also go to venues outside of the MBM members so do let us know if you are interested in the kind of tours MBM produces.

MBM management use their opinion and judgement of the member venues to determine which acts are presented for consumption. It does not necessarily suggest *how* the member venues will decide. A considerable factor lies in the ‘social potential’ (Appadurai 1988, p.6) of the commodity in conjunction with local ambitions. For example, if a city with a member venue is trying to reinvent itself as being ultra cosmopolitan, then the venue might choose groups that they believe embody those characteristics in the minds of its audiences. Hence, whose knowledge do venue members share when they speak of their world music experience (Shepherd 1977)? The next section looks at The Arts Desk; an organization that is many ways redefining how world music gets disseminated in the UK.

4.2.2.3 **The Arts Desk**

The linkage of this commodity to economic realities complicates the reach that world music can have even in the established markets. Lovering (1988, p.33) argues that ‘the development of music has been profoundly linked to the development of capitalism.’ The commercial aspects are never very far from creativity. Notice another public relations respondent’s comments regarding the current status of world music dissemination affected by the recent (2008-present) recession.
Respondent: you also have to take into account now that many publications are cutting back so reviews etc in magazines n newspapers are being cut, so that’s a big negative.

She continues, ‘because it means world music is being taken away from mainstream in that respect so it’s harder to reach a wider audience.’

Respondent: only real publications in the UK dedicated to WM - fRoots and Songlines - Are you aware of the Arts Desk? It is set up by ex journalist type(s) who no longer have jobs in the regular media. So social / new media has a big part to play in reaching new audiences…

The promoter is also alluding to a reciprocal relationship between the commodity and the media, who contribute to the commodification process. Media play a significant role in determining use value of commodities. The website also does not distinguish between world music and music. This could represent an ideological shift of how world music should be marketed; or, it could be a matter of the emergent Art Desk’s not having sufficient resources to commodify world music outside of a general music category. Either way, this inclusion of world music performances is another ‘redrawing of the boundaries’ between world music’s production and consumption (Goggin 2008, p.243). It is uncertain whether this will have major implications for how world music will be represented or marketed. Former representatives of global and national media relocated themselves to alternative media-related jobs. These cultural intermediaries have left or been forced out of mainstream media and have established an alternative, counter hegemonic commodity. Notice their webpage introduction:

Every day theartsdesk.com brings you arts writing and visuals of highest quality with the speed and scope of the net to reach out widely and dig down deeply. We aim to satisfy a new range of taste and interests not possible in newspapers, more personal, more individual, to include everyone with an Internet connection in enjoyment of the arts, however remote they may be. Our coverage includes international culture and major regional arts, as well as all that London can offer.20

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20 www.theartsdesk.com
Negus (1996, p.171) points out that power struggles resulting from the flows of capital serve to actively transform music. The reduction of arts writing budgets in the major newspapers may then result in world music reaching that broader audience that my interviewee discussed through the online forum. Ironically, it would do so without the world music label. The point in mentioning this is to show the small number of people/actors who determine how representation of this music can and should occur to a potential market of millions of people in the UK. In other words, this small group controls the production and distribution processes that govern this commodity system. It is likely that world music is not being normalised in the way that my PR interviewee is expecting because of the recession. In other words, the reduction in arts budgets for cultural commodities, which would have included world music, would have otherwise pushed world music into mainstream venues and press. However, a broader question to examine is whether that is really the goal of the industry. Miller (2003, p.81) argues that advertising, a key component in the commodification process, operates ‘within a capital realism, not based on the veracity to the outside world, rather it is constituted by the long-term role of advertising in constructing a genre within which commodities are part of a ‘hyper-real idealized world of consumption’. Therefore, we can deduce that regularization of this music is unlikely. Miller shows that whatever the ‘outside world’ is, it will never be fully reflected in production-consumption processes.

Another explanation, however, might be found in how commodification operates. Spooner (1986, p.218), discussing the production processes of carpets, showed that societal changes can lead to a reinterpretation of how various intermediaries ‘modify the motifs they happen to know in ways they calculate will please people who are buying for [different markets].’ This implies that consumer choices and production processes are interrelated and responsive to each other without unilateral power being exercised. In this case, commodification itself does not
change; rather, the internal processes shift and adapt to various social and economic changes in the market.

4.2.3.1 The Notion of Discovery

Earlier work on commodifications of world music discussed exotification and discovery as part of its (re)production in the West (Slobin 1992). The acclaimed Malian female singer Rokia Traore is an example of a ‘successful’ West African performer. She was awarded the 1997 Radio International France prize of ‘African Discovery’. However, in 2010, this notion of discovery, either directly mentioned or implied, is still very much an integral part in the commodification of world music._ First, note the description of a Congolese group, Staff Benda Bilili, ahead of their WOMAD UK 2010 appearance:

Staff Benda Bilili are like nothing you have ever seen or heard before. A group of paraplegic street musicians who live around the grounds of the zoo in Kinshasa, Congo, they make music of astonishing power and beauty…

The description attributed to Staff Benda Bilili plays upon their living conditions in the Congo. This description further adds to the listening experience in that it invokes a form of exoticism by highlighting their inhumane existence. Locke (2009, p.47) describes exoticism in music as the ability to evoke ‘a place, people, or social milieu that is not entirely imaginary and that differs profoundly (especially in its perception and reception) from the home

country or culture in attitudes, customs, and morals.’ Commodifying the Congolese group in this way also creates value for this good. More alarming or marketable is the fact that they still live on the grounds of a zoo… even though they have completed a tour of the UK recently. A question that therefore emerges is whether the group would have the same appeal if they did not live with animals and could walk? Diamond (1995, p.4) argues that ‘the demand for authenticity necessitates that the ethnic groups essentialize and spectacularize themselves in order to attract customers. ‘Ethnic' proprietors tend to decorate their restaurant and act as is expected of them; it is necessary to cater to the [audience’s] wants (and those of the reviewers) for monetary reasons’.

The narratives that accompany the music in its marketing and production are key elements in shaping audience perceptions of what music is at a given point in time. The selling of this African urban story can thus be linked to broader commodification processes. In fact, it links a quest for consumer self-realization with ‘meaningful’ practices of consumption (Bryant & Goodman 2004). In many ways, the reconstruction of Staff Benda Bilili for potential audiences provides a new opportunity for consumers to reshape and/or reaffirm parts of their identity. Their music alone may not be able to achieve such power and the producers of WOMAD are well aware of this. Negus and du Gay (2002, p.507) point out that cultural intermediaries play a critical role in shaping the product and thereby ‘feed the practices of the public back into the design and marketing process as a form of social knowledge’. Hence the marketability of these performers to western audiences is critical in decisions about who is placed in world music contexts.

4.2.3.2 A COUNTEREXAMPLE: THE NIGERIAN OUTLIER

Nigerian Juju music has a very limited presence on the world music scene. Generally, in the wake of the famous Nigerian singers, Fela Kuti and King Sunny Ade, precious little music from Nigeria is ever performed as world music in
venues in and around London. Gillett’s Album of the Month archives never mentioned a musician from Nigeria although many other West African countries are represented on the list. WOMAD Spain 2010 describe Nigeria in the following way:

one of the most musical nations on the planet, a country where expressing yourself through song is just a part of everyday life, a country that has music in its very DNA, where the influence of giants like Afrobeat revolutionary Fela Kuti is never far away…

This description is given as part of the introduction to the mixed-race Nigerian-German female singer, Nneka, who is one of two ‘Nigerian’ acts performing. However, WOMAD are commodifying only a sanitized component of ‘Nigerian music’. The other act is Seun Kuti, son of Fela Kuti. Both acts are a few degrees removed from Nigerian Juju music. The absence of Nigerian music in the world music scene could be because much of the music that developed in Nigeria in the wake of the times of Fela Kuti tended to be quite modern in nature. If Western audiences perceive this as mirroring the West too closely or not ‘authentic’ enough then music from these people could lose their appeal (Taylor 1997). In Nigeria, the music scene today is dominated by jazz, hip-hop and R&B, all from local artists.

In London, the traditional Nigerian music, Juju, is mainly performed within the Nigerian Yoruba communities in ceremonies, such as weddings, baby christenings, and the like. A London-based world music promoter who works with local African musicians explained why he felt that Nigerian music is not regularly featured on the world music scene. He said that Nigerian musicians, whether based in London or flown in to perform, prefer to stay within the ‘very supportive’ Nigerian community than work in the world music sector. He continued, ‘a talented Nigerian performer can earn as much as £10,000 for a single wedding performance in London.’ Hence, financial incentives that normally attract

http://womad.org/festivals/caceres/lineup/; Accessed April 12, 2010
musicians to the world music scene proved insufficient. This fee estimate probably includes the West African custom of giving money to performers while they are singing (observed in fieldwork). In contrast, other respondents said that smaller venues that feature world music, such as the ones studied in this project, pay about £50 to £80 for a gig; while other interviewees estimate a ‘good’ night to pay as much as £200 for a gig. Nigerian musicians can many times more money playing for the local Nigerian community. This raises issues about migration and privilege. The sheer numbers of Nigerians (estimated at 800,000-3,000,000 by the British Foreign Office23) living in the UK empower Nigerian musicians in ways that are not as readily available to other West African musicians who do not have a large group of compatriots. These musicians have more choices as to where and how to perform than would other West African performers. This represents a different form of agency within commodification; one where the music develops without much interference from (white) western promoters. In other words, this music does not need to conform to the expectations of mainstream world music audiences.

The other point of interest about the lack of Nigerian ‘world music’ comes from a different perspective. One promoter claimed that culturally Nigerians ‘were far less malleable than musicians other parts of Africa’. Hence, the commerciality of Nigerian musicians is less desirable than in other parts of West Africa. He continued to say that ‘they (industry people) moved around West Africa to various countries that were more vulnerable.’ As these countries’ musicians became wiser to ‘exploitative practices’ and more resistant, western world music executives moved on to countries where musicians are more impoverished. So, in the promoter’s view, Nigeria was quite popular during the days of Fela Kuti; Even though as he argues, ‘Fela was quite oppositional to the West’. However, after that period, executives moved on to Gambia and Senegal. When these

musicians ‘caught on’ to how they were being commercialized (he used the term ‘exploited’), executives moved on to Mali. He further noted that Mali continues to be a ‘preferred’ location from which to draw talent and with high illiteracy and poverty, Malian performers would be quite keen to work with the world music circuit in the UK for lower wages or other demands.

This suggests that world music production is just as critical as world music consumption, namely, the people who are presented to western audiences as the current or new face of African music depends, in part, on the extent to which profit can be made rather than changing consumer tastes. How the production occurs, then, is not as innocent as the ‘pure enthusiasm for music’ suggested by the musician and promoter Peter Gabriel in chapter two. Gibson (2006, p.280) argues that uneven power relationships result between musicians and various gatekeepers. Such relationships enable some artists to access the market and inhibit others from doing so. What follows next is an example of how particular artists and music is commodified from above as world music and the implications this process creates. Now, we turn our attention to a discussion of the second phase of the dialectic discussed at the outset, commodification from below.

4.3 Commodification from Below

The musicians that I examine in this study are based in the UK. As such, they should have a distinct advantage over musicians who are brought in the UK for performances. They should be better able to shape themselves and their music to meet the needs of the market in which they live. Whereas, musicians who come from outside of the UK to perform would have to rely on music executives and promoter based in the UK for interpretations of audiences’ needs.

Notice the following comments of Cook and Crang:
… if we accept that geographical knowledges through which commodity systems are imagined and acted upon from within are fragmentary, multiple, contradictory, inconsistent and, often, downright hypocritical, then the power of a text which deals with these knowledges comes not from smoothing them out, but through juxtaposing and montaging them … so that audiences can work their way through them and, along the way, inject and make their own critical knowledges out of them.  

This highlights the ways in which commodification from below can be a departure from the traditional ways of thinking about the commodity’s becoming as a result of external forces acting upon it (Appadurai 1988). I am arguing that this process also occurs by and through the efforts of the actors themselves. Whatever the motivation, commercial or identity-construction, as I explored in the cases of Helen and Alicia in Chapter Six, all musicians find ways to commodify themselves as part of the process of ‘making it big’. This type of music and the commodification it requires are different in that they need particular ideas about race, gender, and sexuality, among others to be in place in order to be a success. However, what is not unique is the role of agency. The right and power to self-represent or to represent others is a hotly contested concept.

Appadurai’s configuration of commodification does not engage with agency of the commodity. Rather, his focus is on the structure as an ‘external force’ (Pile 1993, p.123). Embedded in this notion of agency is the positionality of the self in space. It is also in this context that identity and representation become mitigating factors. For Helen and Alicia, the ability to negotiate their identities through world music is very much tied to the agency, either real or imagined, that they perceive themselves to possess. Ley (1982, p.220) argues that space, like any other commodity, is ‘engaged not only as a brute fact, but also as a product of symbolic meaning.’

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Appadurai (1986) argues that external social and economic forces act upon commodities. He argues that an objects becoming a commodity and the length of time something is commodified can occur in different ways and are not reversible. In this vein, one of my interviewees observed that music and musicians from Senegambia (Senegal and the Gambia) were no longer seen as fashionable to world music audiences in the West. What is interesting is that the audiences’ tastes might not have changed at all during that key year, 2003, when Malian singers became the West African artists of choice. According to my respondent, the movement of Senegambian singers out of a prioritized commodity state was a matter of commercial exploitability rather than changing consumer tastes. It should be noted that Senegambian artists are still very much apart of the world music scene. Steinart (2003, p.72) suggests that everything depends ‘on who is using the concept and whom or what they are trying to define, for it is this that creates the framework within which that person or thing will be dealt with.’ This, in many ways describes the relationships that exist within all production processes. But this also can describe the struggle that many artists face when it comes to determining the extent to which they can and do represent themselves or are represented by others.

This struggle that some artists face for self-representation is often played out through particular acts of artistry. These acts could be acts of resistance, identity construction, or other such motives (Thrift 1997; Willis 2001; hooks 1990; Crang et al. 2003). However, this strategy of self-commodification; or more plainly, an individual’s taking ownership for how he or she is adding value to their performance, is especially important for lesser known musicians. These artists are less likely to have access to record labels and established promoters who possess valuable resources and networks. The flipside of this initiative is that musicians in particular are left in a more vulnerable position for particular forms of exploitation. In the examples that follow, I would like to illustrate some of the ways in which I have witnessed this taking place.
The high level of music piracy that occurs in African countries is a push factor that causes musicians to seek success in Western countries. van Gelder notes that following regarding the African music market, ‘Piracy is the most visible barrier to success. In some West African countries, pirated music dominates as much as 90% of the market. No African country has restricted pirated music to less than a destructive 25% of the market.’ He goes on the note that the ‘Senegalese musician is even poorer than the average Senegalese on less than US$800 a year’. Some of the implications of this are that there is a ready production source for these musicians in the West where the creative sectors account for about 11% of the GDP. The trick then is for these artists to find their way to the UK by almost any means necessary in order to practice their craft and receive better compensation. On the other side of the equation, some people in the UK had taken to managing these musicians as a means of making a living. In some ways this could represent a reciprocal exchange. This production process, then, involves two parties both working together to create use value for the music. The next case shows how promoters can also find themselves operating ‘from below’, but it also looks at the question of agency.

4.3.1 Agency gone awry

Artists can and do construct themselves as desirable entertainment options to promoters who either have connections in the industry or work on the musicians’ behalf to develop them with the hope of materializing economic wealth. As the next interview shows, this has led to some cases of sexual exploitation of young black male musicians by white British women.

Kim Sowe, 52, is an Englishwoman who is the promoter and wife of the Senegalese singer Laye Sowe, 46. Laye is also the cousin of Baaba Maal. They

25 http://www.ifpi.org/content/section_views/view33.html
disclosed some of the unsavoury aspects of this production process that happens on a local level. My interview revealed much of the ‘concealment of knowledge, deception and manipulation’ that Negus (2002, p.508) discusses.

Notice after my surprise at how young he looked for his age:

Laye: I look young. Yeah, most people think that I am her toy boy; because most people think that I look 35, 36.

Kim: Yeah, do you remember that time you were playing at Christmas and this woman comes up to me and said, ‘I have got one like you…yeah, I found him in the Gambia.’ I responded, oh yeah, mine costs me £500 the first night but now it’s fine…(she laughs) You know, I have to play along you know…

This highlights the fine line that exists between commodification and exploitation. It is also not dissimilar to the description that McClintock offers with regards to Arthur Munby’s historical depictions of black men and predominantly working-class white women. She argues that the fear of white women and black men breeding in the colonies created a harsh response at the time. In fact, its foundations can be found in the ‘economic underpinnings of the industrial revolution’ (McClintock 1995, p.113). Fanon depicts particular realities of distorted power relations among races. He writes,

I am given no chance. I am over determined from without. I am the slave not of the ‘idea’ that others have of me but of my own appearance…already I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am fixed…they objectively cut away slices from my reality. (Fanon 2008, p.116)

This highlights the subjectivity of agency. In one respect, Fanon is speaking of the reaction of others to his personal appearance rather than of him. However, this also shows how the positionality of the self as a means to (re)gain agency can lead to the distortion of the agency in dealing with others.
Notice as Laye continues his description of the situation:

Laye: you know the thing of this matter of the white woman going down to Africa and getting some black people. I have seen it a lot in Africa. I was working in Gambia in the hotels for 12 years playing every night. These English people saw me playing and signed me to come to England. You can see a lady like 60 years old and she is with a boy 20 years old. And you know they are looking for something (from each other).

Kim: A lot of the managers bringing over black young musicians, they have an interest for sex.

Laye: if you want to get anywhere in this business you need the help of others. If you are lucky, maybe some man hears your music and decides to help you. If not then you may end up with a lady. And if you are gorgeous and talented, then they will always try to use their power. This woman who brought me over, she divorced her husband hoping to be with me.

The experiences of Laye and Kim highlight how abuses can occur in some circumstances. The added component of transnational movements makes this especially grim, as it could easily be seen as a form of trafficking. However, Kim says that this behavior was quite commonplace in world music.

Kim: White women in the world music industry were all out for finding young black men. That’s all they were doing...

Laye: Before I met Kim. The former manager came over to Senegal. I invited her to stay in our home and after two or three nights she wanted me to come stay with her. I told her that I am married and cannot be with her for sex. She got angry and then everything changed.

Foucault (2000, p.340) argues that a relationship of power ‘is action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions.’ He further argues that power exists only as exercised by some on others (Ibid, 340). Laye’s rejecting the manager’s sexual advances repeatedly both in the UK and in West Africa set
into motion a reversal of the manager’s dedication to his career.\textsuperscript{26} This also highlights the gender and power relations that are entangled in the commodification process. McClintock (1995, p.193) asks how does one begin ‘to speak of different power relations between socially empowered women and disempowered men?’

Kim: it’s about a lot of European men and women go over to the Senegal, find their musicians, and try to bring them over with other interests… and the other interest is sex. And it wasn’t just her… it is rife…
Laye: it’s what half of them do… as a Black musician, it’s hard to find a chance to stand on stage.
Kim: this is like bonded labour… it was kind of like a slave trade. And there was another agent, where all of the musicians tell you that if you slept with her then you get the gigs.
Kim: and these women have the ultimate power is that they can send (the musicians) back to Africa.

This allegation of domination regarding some white women over black African musicians has its roots in many overlapping areas. One of which is the allure of the ‘Orient’. Said (1979, p.104) argues that by the end World War I, ‘both Africa and the Orient formed not so much an intellectual spectacle for the West as a privileged terrain for it.’ The sense of discovery of an African musician gives power and prestige to the discoverer. World music is by definition a transnational discourse. To that end, Guarnizo notes that the ‘liminal sites of transnational practices and discourses can be used for the purposes of capital accumulation quite as effectively as for the purpose of contesting hegemonic narratives of race, ethnicity, class, and nation’ (1999, p.23). Interestingly, both Kim and Laye said that the motivation of these women is not money, only sex. While this may be an oversimplification of the women’s motives, it highlights that were seeking some means by which to escape particular social narratives that they faced in the ‘mainstream’ lives.

\textsuperscript{26} Unfortunately, his financial situation in West Africa was complicated by some music deals in Senegal that did not materialize. Namely, he was unpaid for compiling some music for a presidential campaign.
As I have argued in the case of Helen in Chapter Six, women often face(d) a double-invisibility in British society, struggling against gender and class discriminations. The women that Kim spoke of could be attempting to reconstruct a ‘historically gendered relation to power’ (McClintock 1995, p.193) in a power system that has and does commodify women. hooks refers to this as ‘eating the other’ (2001, p.425). She argues that bodies and cultures of the other, in this case, black bodies are commodified as resources of pleasure. In this way, ‘members of the dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relations with the other’ (hooks 2001, p.425). This is not the only way to feel empowered, of course. But, it is one that has a very long history in Europeans relations with the Other. We should be careful not to reduce this to a class issue, although many of the women that I have met involved in world music share a set of characteristics. Namely, that they did not quite ‘fit’ into British discourses of national identity, either in attitude or ethnicity.

Changes in visa restrictions discourage this kind of ‘bonded labour’. As of November 2008, musicians who enter the UK for work have to meet qualifications similar to those of international students. Specifically, UK-based promoters/sponsors must be licensed. These changes in immigration law virtually eliminated the likelihood that individual sponsors will bring over musicians for performances. Kim feels that this law is good but also reduces access for new musicians to potentially lucrative markets in the UK. Miller (2002, p.166) refers to this as ‘unintended consequences’ of structural changes. The next section looks at how individual musicians based in the UK have exercised a unique form of agency that have facilitated limited degrees of success.

4.3.2 THE SELF AS THE COMMODITY- MUNTU
Muntu describes himself on his Myspace page as ‘the artist is he who dares write the story of his life with his own blood.’ He then begins a fairly long ramble on his life in his native Cameroon. This is in many ways also his attempt to write his future in his own way. This form of representation is not as independent as it appears. For Muntu must rely and interact with the world music establishment in the UK as he crosses over from a lesser-known artist to the one that he is becoming today. Some evidence of this includes the following: he recently toured with Staff Benda Bilili, the Congolese group discussed earlier in this chapter, his music is played during intermissions at the Barbican; and he is currently touring his new album in the UK, Sawa Blues. He is being promoted by Serious and will also play at WOMAD in July 2010, the ultimate performance destination for world music performing artists. In such case, we can ask, as does Lacey (2009, p.143), who is doing the re-presenting? Though Muntu may be adding value to his embodied commodification by discussing his turbulent past in Cameroon, he is still using the portal and reviews of institutional actors.

Hebdige (2001, p.210) argues that as soon as ‘original innovations that signify “subculture” are translated into commodities and made generally available, they become “frozen”’. This suggests that Muntu’s success may limit his creativity to a space of ‘strategic inauthenticity’ (Taylor 1997, p.126). What’s different about Muntu’s self-construction is that he positions himself as a hybrid performer; mixing different musical styles to create his unique performance style. This may create opportunities for him to create new forms of music, so long as he remains in a hybrid space. But, this could also lead to his having or maintaining an identity that is neither British, nor French, nor Cameroonians. In an earlier part of this chapter, I showed the disparity between how Muntu was represented by the Financial Times reviewer and how he chooses to represent himself. The review was a full two years before his gig at the Vortex. Muntu’s pre-Vortex advert represents to some extent the materiality of a commodification process that

began many years ago. It is the accumulation of concurrent and consecutive shifting relationships that took him from nearly losing his life in Cameroun through police brutality to eight years of working as a musician in Paris to his present touring gigs and WOMAD. Muntu’s discussion of his life on Myspace is a form of intellectual production that interacts with material productions onstage thereby producing favourable economic consequences. The ‘mainstream’ world music industry has welcomed Muntu here in the UK. However, questions remain as to why? In answering this, I will compare Muntu’s case with a different path of commodification from an individual actor, Richmond Kessie, the head of the music group, YaabaFunk.

4.3.3 The self as the commodity: Richmond Kessie as Chief Commander

YaabaFunk has been discussed in the Chapter Six on musician identities, particularly with respect to the British black female lead singer, Helen. Here I would like to focus on the leader of the group, Richmond, a 40-something Ghanaian born singer who came to England as a child. He is the only African in the 14-member group and creates much of the music performed by the group. He and Helen sing in different Ghanaian native languages. Performances feature music influenced from different parts of Ghana; which Richmond introduces to his audiences before most, if not all, of the songs they perform. The two key ways that he and the band create particular forms of commodity for themselves are: his self-representation and ‘licence’ over culture.

When he was asked how he describes his music, he said the following:

Richmond: YaabaFunk as a sound, I mean we kind of have to quote, you know…gritty Afro-funk beat from Brixton. The origin of YaabaFunk is Highlife, from Ghana… but we live in Brixton so we have all different sounds. Reggae, Ska, and so forth…

Aaron: what is your relationship with world music?
Paul Brett: I have got this love/hate relationship with world music. I mean I was exposed to Fela Kuti by my father. I remember when world music took off. I mean I was really into WOMAD. I think now world music ghettoizes you. I really didn’t want to be placed in that camp.

Richmond: I would call what we do as African dance music. I mean our audiences are more in clubs, you know DJs play our music in clubs.

Both Yaabafunk and Osibissa (discussed in Chapter One) are Ghanaian-influenced groups. However, while Ossibisa predates the label of world music and was attributed to ushering this form of music; Yaabafunk rejects the label to a large extent. Instead they choose to represent themselves and circulate outside of the restriction of the world music label. In so doing, they create a sense of resistance to both the world music moniker and contemporary pop music. They have, instead, adapted a glocalised approach, meaning that they are using the transnational elements of world music but anchoring their performance to the local Brixton attachments and meanings (Longhurst 2007, p.44). By doing this, the Yaabafunk into the vibrant music life of Brixton, but also its history of resistance to establishment (Brixton riots of the 1950s and the 1980s).

Notice their response to my inquiry as to how they became a group:

Paul: we have been listening to music for a long time, I mean Rich[mond] is from Ghana so he grew up with certain things but when he came here he wanted to get away from all that. He got into Western pop music and then…

Richmond: It took me from 1981, and I don’t know if it was deliberate but I kind of abandoned my own music and it took me from rock music to pop music to house music to drum base. And one day I saw a record shop called Stern’s and the first record I saw was Ancestral Music from Ghana. I mean it was the cover of the album that really got me.

Although an Italian member of the band studied traditional Ghana music in Ghana. It is Richmond who holds the key to performing this unique form of music. He refers to himself as the Chief Commander, which connotes some forms of authority of something. When Richmond was asked why he refers to
himself as such he and his fellow band member laughed it off as ‘just something (he) do’. In reality, he is the chief in that he holds forms of agency that allow him to commodify his heritage even though he did not originally value it. He can do this in ways that other members of the band are not able to. In the five separate performances of Yaabafunk observed for this project, it is apparent that Richmond’s African-ness is definitely the focal point of the performances.

Even the other eccentricities of the band do not detract from Richmond's performance; for example, Helen’s look with braids and other representative trinkets of the African Diaspora and the Italian guitarist with long dreads and training in Ghana. The Chief Commander titillates audiences as he slowly unbuttons his shirt throughout the performance and playing up his sexuality. From his space of musical in-betweenness he offers up his race, ethnicity, culture, and body as ‘an alternative playground’ (hooks 2001, p.425) where audiences can engage in imaginaries, sexual and otherwise. He radiates power not only through knowledge of the music he performs but also his power over the other members of the band. He teaches them the musical notes that they sing back to him in West African languages. However, the complete freedom that he seems to exercise over his embodied commodification is not without consequences. Yaabafunk still create music ‘under the radar’ of the UK and even London world music scene and they have never been invited to play at WOMAD.

The cases of Yaabafunk and Muntu highlight some of the ways that commodification and commercial success can change according to the individual behaviour. Muntu’s success has been fully materialized from within the UK world music industry; whereas Yaabafunk have largely rejected world music as a means of categorization and, as a consequence, the world music industry has largely ignored their activities.
The two main perspectives of this chapter, commodifications from above and from below, may suggest a bifurcated process. In other words, it would seem that social actors are on either side of the commodification divide. In reality, this process occurs on all levels from the producers to the musicians. Because spaces overlap and interact (Lefebvre 1992), individual actors have been able to exercise different types of agency and, as a result, achieve some commercial success. However, the actions of these individuals rely on larger, more powerful actors that dominate the social structure of world music. Longhurst (2007, p.35) shows that the ‘interconnections between the small and dominant companies in the music industry’ serve to move the (pop) music industry from a Fordist mass-produced one to a post-Fordist one; one that is marked by specialty departments within large organizations that collaborate with smaller independent companies. Although this may be the case with some large labels, generally speaking the actors from above discussed in this chapter have shaped virtually their entire operations around world music. What is useful from his observations is the idea of collaborative efforts between the two dialectics.

In many ways, the minutes from the 1987 meeting and the short list of key actors highlight what Frith comments on how commodification occurs:

‘A new genre world’…is first constructed and then articulated through a complex interplay of musicians, listeners, and mediating ideologues, and this process is much more confused than the marketing process that follows, as the wider industry begins to make sense of the new sounds and markets and to exploit both genre worlds and genre discourses in the orderly routines of mass marketing (Frith 1996, p.88).

The complex interplay discussed by Frith is really a negotiated struggle for power and resources of this market. The web-like relations that exist in world music should brings out two interesting points: that commodification from above is quite systematic in nature; and secondly, the delicate, small grassroots nature of this
music genre’s structure creates a challenge in distinguishing where ‘above’ really begins.

The use of the term ‘from below’ implies a decentering of particular forms of power within this production activity. It also suggests that new ‘liberatory practices and spaces’ (M. P. Smith & Guarnizo 1999) are being constructed in and around this label that occur from the musicians themselves rather than industry leaders. In between these bookends are various other musicians and actors who commodify this cultural product. The example below is an instance where this dialectic of above and below can be seen to play out.

4.4.1 The Best of British Awards: A Movement from Below to Above?

The world music series run by WOM@tt at the Tabernacle in Notting Hill London was discussed in an earlier chapter on the venues. Interestingly, the promoters recently began a series of concerts entitled the Best of British Awards. The series is a collaboration of

Womatt and Carnival Village, the management company of the venue, in an effort to recognize and promote ‘pioneering UK based African, Caribbean, and Latin artists’ excellence and achievements.  

In this case, it is hard to say who or what is being commodified. The processes of commodification in this case are doing something quite different than they appear. Namely, the artists who received the Best of British prize are already

28 www.carnivalvillage.org.uk
recognized in many London and international music markets. As a fledgling organization Wom@tt celebrated its first year anniversary in December 2009), such a recognition bestowed upon established artists would almost seem disingenuous. The commodity that is being ‘parceled up’ for mass production and sale would appear to be Wom@tt itself. In discussing subcultures, which could aptly describe world music consumption, Hebdige (2001, p.210) shows that such narratives can be ‘communicated through commodities even if the meanings attached to those commodities are distorted or overthrown.’ He continues to say that this makes it difficult to distinguish, in any absolute form, between commercial exploitation and creativity; or to put it plainly, had Wom@tt not seen the Best of British as a means to bring in more business, it is unlikely that they would have begun the series solely for the recognition of the talents of these musicians. However, their actions highlight ways to think about the reconciliation of above and below.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored some of the ways in which commodification can occur and how the results may have unintended consequences. Key actors in the UK world music industry are small in number. However, they are able to control the fortunes of many musicians. These institutional actors have the power to determine who ‘makes it’ in the business and under what conditions. The entire world music industry was based upon perceived goodness of two or three people; however, the institutions and power structures that arose as a result and varying levels of exploitation that have followed should give one pause to think about how this cultural commodity is produced and how representation with this production process has clear repercussions particularly for individual musicians. In some cases, musicians are able to exercise agency over how they are represented and commodified in other cases not. However, while working within
the institutional framework of world music and its forms of representation, some musicians were able to retain control over how they were represented in the commodification process.

Particular representations and narratives were used to commodify the music and served to empower and disempower various actors. This occurred through the actions of cultural intermediaries who control access to the UK market and use their power to include and exclude different musical traditions at different points in time. Gillett created a geographical imaginary of world music and the people that perform it through his Album of the Month programme. His contributions to world music in the UK also contributed to constituting a context ‘within and out of which the sounds, words and images of [world] music are made and given meaning’ (Negus 1996, p.62). WOMAD is also an interesting case. The organization has managed to create its own momentum above and beyond its original purposes and launch into an international commodity. It was able to use and manipulate perceptions of would be audiences around the world to create different products for a variety of consumers.

There is a limit to how much cultural intermediaries can affect the movements and representation of performers from above. The overlapping power structures within the industry have created uncertainties in knowledges and use-value for the promoters of the music. At the same time, the processes that constitute the production of music from Senegal or Mali to the Barbican in London remain a mystery. However, evidence presented here suggests that when the commercial interests of both the musician and Western producers come into conflict the musician is the one that loses out: opportunities for valuable exposure to the UK markets are lost. Yaabafunk’s efforts to operate outside of the world music label have yielded mixed results for the group. They still give regular performances in London; however, by their own accounts they have yet to reach the success they are hoping for. On the contrary, Nigerian artists have found a voice that neither
acknowledges nor needs the world music label. These artists have reached success solely within their own expatriate communities in London.

A key point can be found in looking at where ‘above’ and ‘below’ occur when referring to how production processes work. This is the area where power is fought over between the groups of the dialectic. Some institutions and actors are clearly operating from above to control means of production; even being sanctioned by the State through regular funding. For other actors, a grey area exists between the two groups where former or part-time musicians and/or everyday citizens take on the role of promoting or sponsoring musicians with different effects; some are altruistic, while others are more sinister. The next chapter examines the venues of live world music in London and examines how these spaces become produced in different ways.
Chapter 5: The spaces of world music

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the role of space and place in world music and how venues or physical spaces of world music production generate particular kinds of social agencies for the participants. The small music venues considered in this study run live world music performances throughout the year and draw crowds from 50 to 300 people. These places are usually located in areas with high densities of leisure consumption choices; hence, they constitute part of the fabric of London’s nighttime economy (Hall & Winlow 2006). Venues matter because they present a more explicit spatiality than cities; in essence they are really local. Grazian (2004, p.39) argues that venues are sought out by consumers as a result of ‘internalizing myths that celebrate clubs as bastions of community and solidarity in contrast to the asphalt jungle of the city at large.’ This is especially true as consumers seek alternative forms of entertainment in the city. Examining venues of this nature also highlights the tension between commodification of the recorded music versus that of live performance. Live performances are commodified in different, more complex ways that relate to interactions between musicians and audiences and even solely among audiences.

Unlike many entertainment choices, live world music has positioned itself as a consumption good of the professional or middle classes rather than the working class. Having said that, it should be understood that there is much heterogeneity within this group of consumers (S. Stewart 2010). However, this customer base plays a role in understanding the location choices of the venues. Marketing the events toward particular types of consumers reinforces the construction of these
venues with a certain degree of exclusivity. For example, many world music events are frequently listed in the entertainment magazine Timeout London and the Observer’s Music Monthly magazine, part of the UK newspaper, the Guardian. I will argue that the commodification of world music venues and their spatial politics creates narratives that are, in many ways, contradictory to the original ideals of constructing the label of world music (discussed in the literature review).

Many scholars have argued that the early success of world music was based on differences situated through discourses of exoticism, discovery, authenticity, uniqueness, Othering/difference, and a sense of place (Slobin 1992; Reily 1992; Barrett 1996). However, in 2009, more than 22 years after the launch of the world music genre, it may be due time that we reexamine how venues articulate ‘difference’ and other discourses in world music consumption. The changes in discourses also signal changes in society and have direct implications for how musicians use these spaces as a means to construct their identities. The spaces facilitate this activity for the musicians and consumers alike.

In world cities such as London, the constant mixing of cultures brings with it new identity constructions. Difference is still symbolized in world music; however, it is not necessarily or absolutely through the identities of the performers. Miles (2010, p.8) argues that spaces ‘celebrate difference, but they do so by imposing uniformity.’ Following this line of thought, this chapter examines the ways in which the venue and performance work together to create a unique distinction that this consumption good offers. This focus will arise from participant observation at twelve venues throughout London, advertising materials and interviews. Through an in-depth analysis of four of these venues, I wish to show the kinds of diverse narratives that these spaces produce and the repercussions that this production has for the world music consumption and identity construction. Crang (1996, p.59) argues that particular narratives can be
constructed through ‘aesthetic creativity’ that is based ‘in the kinds of constructed knowledges about that which is being consumed…and in associated representational performances of both objects and their individual and generic [pathologies]’. This is also in conjunction with Miles’ (2010, p.7) discussion of spaces offering ‘specific experiences depending upon the immediate topography of the environment which they consume.’ The remaining sections of the chapter proceed in the following way: section 5.2 looks at how live world music venue contribute to our understanding of the construction of space. It empirically builds on work developed by Cohen (1995) and Valentine (1995), among others (both discussed in the literature review). Section 5.3 introduces the four venues selected for closer scrutiny in this thesis and the themes that are commodified within them; namely, resistance, community, nostalgia, and peace and reconciliation. The remaining four sections discuss findings from each of the four venues and contextualize them with appropriate theory; these sections are followed by the conclusion.

5.2 SMALL VENUES—BIG LESSONS

The spaces of consumption, their location within the city, and their aesthetics tell different stories about the types of people who congregate there to listen to live world music. Ley (1982, p.220) shows the complexity that spaces offer. He argues that spaces offer ‘more than their own dimensionality; as place it is a vicarious commodity point beyond its physical or functional nature to a set of values which may be appropriated’. This important component of spaces lends itself as a means of creating added value above the consumption activity. Music—like art—offers associations of places that serve to cross boundaries and create multiple and overlapping spaces. These include spaces of resistance, transnationalism, peace, and community or belonging; which are brought to life through performance from the participants (J. Butler 1999; Thrift 2006).
Traditional melodies and instruments such as the djembe, the calabash, and the xylophone further energize these venues. DeNora (2000) argues that this music, as with any music, moves the listener away from everyday life in different ways. All Londoners are subject to the same constraints of urban life; however, only particular residents gravitate toward this form of entertainment.

Spaces become increasingly differentiated in symbolic terms as greater commercial forces shape cities (Zukin 2008). These spaces begin to take on characteristics formerly associated with the distinction of world music and generate their own agency through consumption practices. The interactions of people and music within spaces thereby generate flows that affect the participants, which, in turn, contribute to the reshaping of the structure in which they participate. West African world music bands that were once composed of all Africans have become increasingly mixed with white and UK-born black members. Hence, some of the currency of world music has necessarily been shifted onto the venue in order to remain in competition with other leisure activities. Savage and Warde (2003) also point out that symbolic differences also become important as real geographical differences begin to erode. Hence, the venues themselves have become the physical and symbolic space. This new power that the physical spaces of world music production occupy is intensified in smaller venues. Sarup (1996) explores the role that commodity aesthetics plays in shaping the consumption process and, consequently, the identity of the consumer. He further points out that the aesthetics are a ‘necessary function inherent in every purchase or sale’ (ibid, 122).

London benefits from having many large-scale venues that run world music as part of their regular season. These venues include the Barbican and the South Bank Centre, which includes Royal Festival Hall. Larger spaces of world music consumption also have considerable marketing budgets and professional PR staff, and they work with particular agents in booking acts that are usually flown
in for performance. Their events are also advertised broadly through several types of media. Another factor of these venues is that they usually book renowned acts rather than lesser-known London based acts. For example, Senegal’s Youssou N’Dour or Baaba Maal or Marizu from Portugal make regular appearances at large venues in London.

By contrast, the smaller venues under analysis are much more reliant on informal networks for advertising, using such channels as text messaging, distribution lists and other free multimedia sources to advertise such as mySpace and Facebook. The promoters for this group of venues also rely on advertisement through specialist magazines, such as fRoots and Songlines, and the more mainstream magazine Timeout London. Often, while attending one performance, I receive promotional flyers for future events. The musician usually shown on the flyer sometimes distributes the flyers.

The local scene of world music is a dressed-down version of both the larger outdoor festivals and organizations, such as WOMAD and WOMEX, and the large venues mentioned earlier in this chapter. The festivals are temporary and mobile in nature. Womex in particular moves around to various locations. WOMAD, on the other hand, is held around the same time every year in the same, open-air location in Charlton, England. The small venues are often themed with particular aesthetics and afford close contact between musicians and the audiences. This scene is more fixed and routinised through a regularity or timing of the events. For example, Womatt is a group of local organizers who runs a regular series at the West London venue, the Tabernacle. Their series is held together through various informal marketing channels, such as Facebook and email. Often, towards the end of a performance, Fred, the MC, will announce future performances and dates. Womatt have also recently initiated a “Best of British” five-part series to recognize particular UK-based artists. This combination of elements contributes to the performance's being made socially
meaningful. I would like to position these spaces of consumption as ‘active agents’ (Crang et al. 2003) in producing/reinforcing the performance’s value. In other words, the spaces themselves contributed to the conditions of world music production and facilitate identity construction by musicians (this latter point will be discussed in Chapter Six) This is important because it helps the smaller venue remain viable as they compete with each other, the larger venues, and other forms of entertainment.

In a few cases, I visited venues that played African music, as opposed to world music from African sources, to see if differences in performance, aesthetics and politics existed. A city like London holds many African clubs. For example, six venues host live Ugandan music on a regular basis, several clubs run live Nigerian music in Camberwell, Peckham and Woolwich, South East London, as well as in Tottenham Hale, North London. Club Afrique, in Canning Town, East London, is a main venue for Francophone Africans, although other venues are scattered in Deptford, Peckham, and Lewisham; all in Southeast London. These clubs are located in areas that have high concentrations of ethnic minorities, specifically Black Africans, and working-class whites. By contrast, the world music venues tend to be located in areas that are in Central London neighborhoods such as Notting Hill and Clerkenwell, for example. These neighbourhoods are predominantly white and middle-class. The cover charge at both types of venues is virtually the same; however, the African clubs are not advertised in mainstream media outlets such as the Music Monthly or in Timeout London. The musicians who were performing at the world music venues told me of these other venues. This suggests that mainstream consumption places different values on locations that are tied to class and race. This chapter will show how world music scenes attract people of differing objectives and dispositions to these small venues. By thematically constructing these spaces, consumers are corralled into different performances depending on the politics that are being offered for consumption.
In every case, the music venues and the venue organizers draw upon different knowledge systems and particular world views of the participants to re-create/re-produce spaces of oneness, resistance, and counterculture—in addition to art production and consumption for what Frith (2000) terms as a ‘community of world music enthusiasts.’ In these ways, the small venues are able to continue to operate in London and other cities. An examination of the aesthetics and politics of these spaces of consumption can aid our understanding of how the production and consumption of this cultural good contributes to and shapes world music communities in multiple ways.

5.3 Four Venues- Multiple Themes

The places chosen for detailed analysis provide the broadest range of world music experiences of this scene at the local level. This account should also help in understanding the degree to which this scene actualizes ‘particular states of relations between various populations and social groups’, as argued by Straw (1991, p.379). I am trying to understand what makes these four spatial experiences different from each other and what this says about consumption places and spaces. The four venues are: Passing Clouds, The Tabernacle, Darbucka World Music Lounge, and St. Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. The venues all run live world music performances, with (predominantly West) African styles and other forms of world music. Their spatial configuration—the physical arrangement of space, location in the city, and their aesthetics all represent a range of differences for live world music consumption. Significant differences lie in the types of audiences, performances, and interactions that occur in these spaces. However, the timing and regularity of events are fairly similar; most venues run performances from September to late May/early June. Over the summer, fewer events are run, giving way to the larger
outdoor Festivals such as WOMAD, Africa Oye in Liverpool, and other festivals in Kent, Bristol, and so on.

The space allowed for dancing, the number of seats provided and the décor are as much a part of the performance as the music. Promoters use the venues to act as tools in producing particular kinds of spaces in conjunction with the performance and the audiences. For example, in the case of Passing Clouds, narratives of resistance are reinforced through selections of more radical performance style, such as the South African singer Doreen Thobelkile. She performed at both the Tabernacle and Passing Clouds. The Tabernacle performance was part of the Women of Africa series. The performance was more subdued and she wore a formal long crimson dress. By comparison, her style of singing at Passing Cloud had a more rebellious or raw tone matched with a racy leather mini-skirt. Doreen was 67. She died shortly after that performance. Her performances at two of the venues were undoubtedly shaped by the spaces where she was performing. The Passing Clouds venue, which I will show further on in this chapter, personifies anti-establishment, whereas the Tabernacle is promoting more community. I will now move on to four discourses that show how people and spaces are entwined.

I will now focus on exploring themes related to the thesis as they developed from research in answering the research question. These four were chosen because they represent a broad range of experiences observed during the fieldwork. World music venues do not draw the same type of audiences as each other. The promoters tend to select particular aesthetics and types of performances to represent their personal ideologies. Hence, different ideologies and discourses are attached to each of the four venues under analysis. This serves a primary purpose: it solidifies the audience base. For these venues to survive, it is critical that particular expectations associated with the constructed spaces are met.
The extent to which venues can attract beyond their core audience depends upon which, if any, formal marketing networks are successfully tapped into. In one case, a ‘Women of Africa’ Tabernacle performance was announced in Timeout London. In the wake of this performance, I met with one of the promoters to discuss the success of the event. I commented that I had noticed a difference in the Tabernacle crowd from other performances previously held there. She responded that she also noticed the difference and that it was probably because [the performance] was ‘picked up’ by Timeout. As such, ‘we received more of the Southbank crowd’. Though she was seemed quite pleased with this result, she did not see this success as sustainable. This could be because this venue’s world music productions are rarely mentioned in the influential Timeout magazine as a regular entertainment choice for its readers.

Though the four venues do not constitute an exhaustive list; it is hopefully an interesting way to examine how different spaces can be created from a similar source of consumption good and how the representation of the good changes to meet particular expectations of the consumer and producer. It is also a way of understanding how world music contributes to the cultural economy of the city. It is not only contributing toward cities as a new type of economic agent (Amin & Thrift 2007), but the venues have been reclaimed and reconstructed as cultural assets to the city. They play into city aspirations of being cities that are multicultural and dynamic.

I have observed four different discourses or themes in my fieldwork that emanate from many of the venues I visited through repeat visits over the course of their world music schedule. Some of the discourses are explicit, others not. I will describe them briefly here, then in detail through an analysis of a representative performance in detail. The four themes are resistance, nostalgia, community involvement, and peace and reconciliation. The first club under analysis is called
the Passing Clouds. This club is among the recent establishments on the London world music scene and is second largest of the four venues.

5.3.1 Resistance and Passing Clouds

The first theme is one that is shared by many music styles, including world music. Resistance can take many forms, including full-scale revolutions or/and personal consumption choices. They can and often do occur on the ‘margins’ of various forms. I am here referring to the work of resistance through third space or conceptual spaces such as detailed by hooks (1990), Bhabha (1990), and Soja (1996). In this context, these spaces can be constructed through performances of various means. Art and music offer particular moments of resistance against mainstream culture forms and Passing Clouds in Dalston, East London is an interesting place to see how this plays out.

The owner, William Beaufroy, is himself born of upper-class background in Central London. However, after a stint in the Congo, he rejected his home and privilege in Knightsbridge, Central London, to live in a bedsit in Dalston. The area has been a first stop for immigrants for over 100 years and, at its core, is still a working-class community. It is currently gentrifying due to the extension of the East London rail line and real estate prices are now reflecting this shift. However, for many years before this, music enthusiasts including middle-class and migrant audiences frequented Dalston’s music scene.

As a consequence of these recent changes, the neighbourhood is developing a trendy edge that is similar in feel to the East Village in New York. The venue website mentions that they hope to bring West End Londoners to East London to experience ‘what life was really like’. The owner also mentions that he refused help from his wealthy family and successfully sought a ‘sizeable grant’ from the
very tight budgets of the Arts Council.²⁹ Passing Clouds, through the vision of its owner, promotes itself as an organization seeking peace and harmony. However, further down on the website, the founders of the venue note the following:

Our musicians are a family of revolutionary-minded people that spreads its wings across London as part of a growing movement seeking an alternative to commercially- and individually-minded society that threatens to destroy both us and the planet we live on.³⁰

The orientation of this venue is an all-encompassing effort toward community building that includes community activist, artists, teachers, and the like. In one sense, the owner and the discourse of the venue serve to break down barriers in terms of social class, race, and culture. Inadvertently, new barriers are being constructed in an anti-consumerist enterprise that rejects rampant commercialism of London’s West End. Littler (2005) argues that a key feature in anti-consumerism is a ‘rejection of, negotiation with or attempt to create a new form of identity politics’. In this case, the role of the venue as a commodity complete with the music and aesthetics serve to generate particular counter-hegemonic discourses. In the midst of this, the Passing Clouds offers a full bar with premium spirits. For example, I purchased two gin and tonics totaling about eight pounds, which is more or less the same price as in the West End. Additionally, the venue proudly sells its in-house-produced organic ginger beer. This highlights the tensions between alternative consumption choices and the political economy needed to function, but also signifying the West End clientele.

The owners’ efforts to create a space of resistance, however, open up a platform for a multitude of cause-bearing patrons. Resistance can entail any number of activities, including day-to-day activities to ‘full scale political movements’ (Frith

For Beaufroy, the West End has come to symbolize the establishment, commercialism, and forms of social exclusion. He has positioned his club in opposition to these so-called negative qualities. Ironically, without the West End, the identity and perceived social contribution of Passing Clouds would be greatly diminished.

These places also function as spaces of entertainment and art. As such, many members of the audience may be coming to Passing Clouds simply for the music rather than the politics. The space, then, can become re-spatialized if the audience dynamic moves too far away from the intended theme of the venue. Were the West End London crowd to come to Passing Clouds, as Beaufroy suggests, in too great a number then the constructed space would become destabilized. To cite Harvey (2009, p.310), the re-created ‘space replaces effective space as the overriding principle of the geographical’ and political organism.

True to their mission, the venue hosts bands that fulfill the requirement. They have hosted many bands that have some connection to Africa or Afro-Caribbean music, such as YaabaFunk and Toli Nameless. This in turn attracts a particular crowd who share similar beliefs. What’s also interesting about this club is its location. I lived in the area of Stoke Newington and was often in Dalston. Despite my familiarity with the area, I had a very difficult time finding the place while doing fieldwork. The venue is located in an alleyway facing train tracks. Hence, it receives no car traffic. The doorway has no distinctive markings on it. My party and I were unable to locate the place. We walked along the alleyway with another group of four people searching for the same place. Finally, we stumbled upon it. Beaufroy’s positioning of the club off of the high street (main road), in a not-so-vibrant area of Dalston, is in itself another layer of resistance. It serves to further differentiate Passing Clouds from mainstream entertainment through signifiers of a dangerous, poorly lit, and gritty area. This can serve as a form of
resistance from the clean, orderly, and middle class leisure consumption symbolized by the West End. It creates another form of exclusivity that is quite similar to the West End it opposes. It also implies that one’s attendance to any music events held there is certainly deliberate.

Passing Clouds is a venue in Dalston, East London that presents itself as ‘Afrospot’. Some of the promotional material for this venue uses the backdrop of the continent of Africa in yellow with red and green stripes emanating from it. These colors are also the main colors of the flags of many African countries. Passing Clouds is one of the premiere venues in London to experience Afrobeats-inspired music. The performance provides an opportunity for self-expression by both audiences and musicians alike; self-expression facilitated through the very aesthetics of the place and the type of performance.
The venue is located an alley behind the main road in an up-and-coming neighborhood in Hackney. The entrance has no sign posted, with simply a reddish light above the door.

Inside the venue is dingy, with the look and feel of a small warehouse. This is partly because the place was converted from a warehouse. The bar advertises an organic ginger beer along with the usual alcohol choices, including a good selection of premium wines and spirits. The toilets were very clean, which was in stark contrast to the dance floor. The limited seating included a comfy couch and loveseats. They were positioned alongside one of the walls and could accommodate about 10 people, although the venue holds approximately 300 people. Clearly this placed emphasis on active dance participation from the audience.

On November 13, 2009, the performance was that of an all-female band called The Femm Nameless. The doors opened at 8pm with a five-pound entrance fee. The fee increased to 8 pounds after 10pm. Two DJs, a white British woman and an African male, took turns entertaining the growing crowd by playing African and Afro-inspired music. Most of the audiences were in their 20’s, European and British whites with a smattering of non-white and mixed race people. Many attendees wore some type of ethnic clothing such as a purse of east or south Asian detail or parts of a sari – traditional South Asian clothing. By 11pm, many attendees had taken to sitting in circles on the grungy floor. They held lively conversations and, occasionally, one or two of them would get up to dance to DJ’d rhythms that appealed to them. Music choices like any other consumption
goods can become tools of identity construction (Kong 1995). The sari and other ‘ethnic’ clothing pieces worn by a noticeable number of attendees to this performance could represent an active selection that provides the wearer with outward symbols of particular social and cultural knowledge or a particular ideological position (Dwyer 1999; Jackson et al. 2007).

Just after midnight, the performers appeared. Three of the women were black, including the lead singer: a woman from New York called Toli Nameless. One woman was Latina and played the Conga drums. Two white women completed the band, one on electric guitar and the other on the drums. All three of the black women wore masks of make-up that appeared to be African-inspired, while the non-black women didn’t appear to wear any unusual outfits or make-up. The first song was an Afro-rock rendition of Eddy Grant’s Electric Avenue. This 1983 song describes Electric Avenue, a street in Brixton, South London. Its lyrics highlight the poverty, crime, and violence that plague the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Grant sings about the disenfranchisement that accompanies this segment of the British population. The song is a pop song that is a political and social criticism of local institutions’ failure to help the needy.

Jackiewisz and Craine (2009, p.70) argue that music can create activist spaces that can, and often do, contain multiple layers of resistance that entail a ‘local/global dialectic…where music challenges and contests power and the (re)colonization of space by the process of capitalism.’ In this light, the song choice can be understood as a New York black woman of Jamaican descent wearing make-up representative of traditional African tribal markings performing a song that originated in London and describes the plight of Afro-Caribbeans living in poverty in Brixton. This is not coincidental. Straw (1991) argues that there is an affective link between ‘contemporary music practices and musical heritage. Together, these are seen to ‘render this contemporary activity appropriate within a given context’ (ibid 1991, p.373). This is supported by
Shank’s observations of music scenes. He points out that the audience and musicians participate in a ‘nonverbal dialogue about the significance of the music and the construction of their selves’ (Shank 1994, p.125). His analysis doesn’t include spaces of consumption directly. However, the integration of self with musical performance and the environment in which it is consumed became the eight-pound experience in Dalston.

The first song was followed by a riveting performance of a song made famous by the late Nina Simone, See Line Woman. Several politically themed songs written and developed by the band then followed this. Among these were fusion African songs that used words, performing patterns and dance movements associated with West African music. The audience loved the performances. We jumped when cued by the lead singer and rocked to and fro in synch with the rhythms. Undoubtedly, many fans attending the performance that evening were drawn to the venue because of its ability and commitment to creating ‘spaces of activism’ (Jackiewisz & Craine 2009, p.67). However, the combined forces of the performances, the place, and the aesthetics came together to create multi-scalar of resistance to various social and commercial forces. This was not the case for every attendee. I spoke with one woman who was with the second group looking for the venue shortly before the performance began. After two hours of waiting for the gig to begin, she commented that she still wasn’t quite sure what the venue was or the performance. The other members of the group invited her along. However, most attendees seemed very connected to the performance. Interestingly, nearing the end of the gig, around 1.45am, Toli called a young black female to the stage to perform a spoken word piece. At first, the audience reacted with patience and a little confusion. After the young woman finished her performance, Toli announced that she was a future performer and that ‘we had to encourage our young people to fulfill their dreams’. The audience went wild with applause.
The next venue offers a different view of world music consumption and London night time economy. It is called Darbucka World Music Lounge. Its setting is the trendy, gentrified area of Clerkenwell. The club is well positioned to make a significant contribution to the cultural economy of the local community.

5.3.2 NOSTALGIA AND THE DARBUCKA WORLD MUSIC LOUNGE

The next venue under discussion is located in the middle class area of Clerkenwell. This area was largely Italian working class until the 1960s. Clerkenwell’s location in The City makes it convenient for London’s professional class to live close to work. Unlike Notting Hill’s histories of music and ethnic conflict, Clerkenwell had a more stable transition to its ultramodern status. Banks et al (2000, p.455) use the term city fringe to describe Clerkenwell. With a focus on cultural entrepreneurship, they describe the fringe as a ‘transitional zone where micro and small enterprises can take advantage of the value of centrality without traditionally high city centre rents’.

The neighborhood’s shift from an artisan past to its current status as a London entertainment hotspot can be seen in a few examples. The area offers a vibrant nightlife that includes Fabric, one of the largest nightclubs in London and Turnmills, a club that ran for 20 years closing in January 2008. Clerkenwell also hosts many excellent restaurants including The Eagle, London’s first gastropub, and St. John’s—a traditional English restaurant on the fringe on the famous Smithfield’s market. So, Clerkenwell’s transformation represents a ‘re-organisation of urban space to meet changing market demands and ascendant forms of intermediate services production’ (Hutton 2004, p.95). Neighborhoods such as Clerkenwell represent a ‘new inner city economy’ that offers an amalgamation of culture, technology, and place (ibid, 94). In this light, Hutton further argues that the intense co-mingling of ‘artists, artisans, cultural industry
workers among other actors' provides opportunities for collaboration and growth. However, the area's key location in the metropolitan center also symbolizes broader processes of changes in the economic and social fabric of the inner city.

The Darbucka World Music Lounge is in the midst of all of these entertainment choices. Its prominent location right on the corner of St. John's Street makes it a choice for both passersby and people who are coming to attend a particular performance. In addition, it is located in the basement of a well-regarded Lebanese restaurant. Hence, it would receive some spillover crowd from the restaurant.

The lounge is described as a Bedouin basement bar (www.darbucka.com). It has floor and chair seating with lots of pillows in rich colours. A volunteer DJ named Jamie Renton runs the world music series. Jamie is a white British Londoner whose main job is managing a charity shop in East London. He is married with two children. His passion for world music is what drove him to start the organization, which is named Chili Fried Productions. This 'globalbeats sessions club' began in November 2004 and recently celebrated its fifth year running. Two locations served as a base for the club, Chili Fried North at Clerkenwell, and Chili Fried South at the Ritzy Café in Brixton, South London. The café and Windrush Square immediately in front of it were recently renovated. The venue no longer hosts Chili Fried events. However, world music performances are regularly run there. Jamie has constructed the Chili Fried world music scene as mobile, having recently begun running gigs in Croydon and at Passing Clouds.

Figure 3: The basement lounge of Darbucka; Source: www.darbucka.com; Accessed: June 29, 2011.
Jamie was the first person whom I interviewed and he has continued to be a source of information on the ever-changing world music scene. Performances at Darbucka come from all over the non-Western world and have also included a few Irish and British folklore groups. Jamie started as an amateur DJ when he was approached by the owner of Darbucka and asked to DJ. He has never been to Africa; however, he claims that his love for African music, and world music generally, stems from ‘nothing more than the beats [rhythms].’ In an interview with Jamie about world music, he noted that he used to DJ music for his friends at parties; however, as ‘their tastes became more mainstream, [his tastes] moved in the opposite direction’ (interview transcripts). Evidence suggests that this shift in taste is quite similar for many participants of this project. It seems that rejection of a British status quo vis-à-vis consumption choices permeates the world music scene. What’s striking about Jamie is how completely unassuming he is in person. This was interesting because many of the people interviewed in this study seemed to cloak themselves with a particular kind of authority as they showcased their knowledge of African world music. Jamie is a gentle, kind DJ who is well regarded by senior members of the London world music set. His love for music and his world music series in the heart of Clerkenwell seem coincidental to its location rather than a political objective as in the case of the Passing Clouds. The point is that within the discourses of commercialism, anti-commercialism and globalization, among others, this music is also an art and the passion that it generates from its listeners can be as pure and simple as that.

More visits were conducted at Darbucka than other clubs during fieldwork in part
because of the frequency of performances run at the venue. The research conducted for this venue includes conversations with musicians, members of the audience, and dancing to the music. The club works well because of the quality of the performances. It is also successful because of the marketing efforts of Chili Fried Productions, the organization that runs the music night, who is primarily Jamie.

My numerous participant observations at this venue revealed several things. The complexities of identity and ideology manifested through the venue and music choices seem to have a different orientation here. In this case, the aesthetics recreate a Bedouin retreat in the heart of the city and the venue appears to have a loyal following of Londoners who regularly attend performances. This is despite the common complaints of musicians and sound technicians that poor acoustics—because of the interior structure—weaken the performance quality. In fact, the design of the place has a subtle awkwardness primarily because of the very low ceiling and the discontinuous spatial flow. As such, it looks and feels like a decorated, sectioned box. Another complaint from patrons is the insufficient open floor space. This is particularly problematic because the venue often runs performances that are very lively with danceable rhythms, for example Congolese groups often perform Soukous, a form of Congolese dance music.

I have gotten to know and discuss my research with a few members of the audience on nights of low attendance. On such nights, there are usually long delays in starting the performance with the hope of more attendees arriving.
Maureen is a middle-aged, white Englishwoman who lives in Glastonbury. She comes to London quite regularly for African world music. On one evening, our conversation ventured to her interest in world music. Her responses were not unexpected. She said that she simply loves how the music makes her feel. She likes the beats and melodies. They ‘transport’ her… [she didn't elaborate]. She purchased a kora, a traditional West African music instrument that is cut from a large gourd. It is an enduring symbol of music from West Africa. However, she claims that she is still ‘too intimidated by it to learn to play.’ This reflection on world music was a running theme in many of the interviews conducted. The so-called awe that West African world music offers also becomes an associative quality of the venue.

I have attended music gigs around London where she and her good friend, King, also attended. King is a 50-something year old, Chinese British man with a PhD in History from SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies). He owns a bookshop in Russell Square. The two of them met for the first time on a world music tour to Mali, sponsored by Songlines. We had become quite familiar with each other the past six months, so I shared some of my insights on the state of world music in Britain. I mentioned, among other things, that my research looked at who attended different venues in the city and how the dynamics of these places might influence their experiences. I also said that I found it interesting that I rarely see Africans as members of the audience at these performances. Maureen looked happy and interjected that she and King had been discussing the very same thing. She was quite keen to have a ‘real multicultural experience.’ For her, having Africans as part of the audience would translate to having an idealized multicultural experience in the middle of the posh Clerkenwell neighbourhood.

Performances at Darbucka also reflect other aspects of London. I wish to discuss a performance that typifies the musical experiences of this venue to see what
lessons can be learned. The gig was held as part of a two-day Afro-Latin festival beginning on the 18th of March 2009. The door charge was five pounds and a mixed Congolese and Latin band called Grupo Lokito was performing. It is composed of mostly Congolese males with two exceptions: a Latin band member and Sara, a ‘white, Irish woman with a Canadian passport’ (interview transcript). On this night, Darbucka was packed with one of the most diverse audiences in terms of age that I had seen to date. A large group of SOAS university students attended. The other members of the audience were mostly between 40 to 60 years old, white and, appeared to be, quite middle-class. The band played several songs from their recently-released album, which was being sold at the door for ten pounds. At these venues, it is quite customary for the artist to have CD available for purchase. The band members wore at least some articles that were traditional African attire and played on a platform of Latin and traditional African fusion. It is well documented that Latin music forms traveled to Africa and bore an influence on local music particularly in the Congo, so this is not an unusual combination (White 1999; White 2002; G. Stewart 2003).

Hutnyk (2004), Connell and Gibson (1998), and Pacini-Hernandez (1998) point out that world music is acceptable to Western audiences as long as it continues to have a sufficient geographic distance between the source and listeners in the West. Hence, a cross-fertilization of different world music between, for example, West or Central Africa and Cuba is acceptable for European and British audiences. Pacini-Hernandez (1998) further elaborates that Latin music was never accepted in the US as world music because of the lack of political and geographic distance of the countries that produce it. This line of reasoning is reminiscent of Appadurai’s (1986) conceptualization of commodities as increasing in value as the distance between the source of production and consumption becomes greater. However, this conceptualization is becoming increasingly complicated by artistic collaborations between white British and
African musicians, and even more so as British artists of African descent blend music forms.

This also calls into question research that hinges the success of African world music on particular perceptions of places of production. Taylor (1986, p.152) uses the examples of the renowned world music singers, Youssou N'Dour and Angelique Kidjo, to show the struggle and responsibility that many artists have in fighting perceptions of narratives on Africa that accompany the commodification and marketing of this music. These artists asserted that African music and its narrative were to remain pre-modern or modern, while ‘the rest of the globe moves further toward a post-industrial, late capitalist, postmodern culture’ (Taylor 2004). He terms this as ‘strategic inauthenticity’ (Sarup & Raja 1996, p.25). The overarching identity of world music is changing, which I will discuss in another chapter. Clerkenwell is a neighborhood that is constantly transforming and as a ‘multidimensional space in which a variety of ideas blend and clash’ (Ti. Butler & Lees 2006). However, most of the performances at Darbucka World Music Lounge do not seem to reflect the rapid changes that are occurring in the neighbourhood where it lies. Instead, the aesthetics and the performances create a contrast not only with Clerkenwell but also in the world music industry. Remaining suspended in particular, often artificial, narratives facilitates the contrast. The next venue being discussed shows how a different theme in world music has been commodified.

5.3.3 Community Involvement and the Venue of Notting Hill

The local Western music industry and transnational music forms have shaped the artistic identity of London’s Notting Hill neighbourhood. Connell and Gibson (2003, p.161) argue that music provides a mechanism for ‘mediating memories of the people and places of home with the realities of their new surrounding’. It is not accidental that these themes reflect the neighborhoods where the venues are
located. The area currently maintains a vibrant music scene and has an established history of integrating art, culture and community. For example, the Notting Hill Arts Club is described as ‘an eclectic underground club that is a trend leader in the club scene of London.’ While another popular venue is the MauMau Bar, a DJ bar on Portobello Road. The name of the venue is a throwback to the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya from 1952 to 1960. Mau Mau was a Kenyan peasant who staged a rebellion against British colonialist rule (Kanogo 1987; Hutnyk 2000a). The venue receives a large proportion of tourist trade, which in the context of Notting Hill could also refer to people from other parts of London. It maintains its ‘atmosphere of a local thanks to the eccentricities of the staff and regulars.’ When I attended a gig held there by a Senegalese band, no cover price was charged and many locals drifted in and out of the venue during the performance. This creates a more authentic urban experience for non-locals by integrating the local culture of Notting Hill with a global music experience. This neighbourhood also hosts the Gate Theatre, a well-known fringe theatre in London. The Inn on the Green offers ‘a shed-load of activities and entertainment to go with the consumption of alcohol, including mini plays, table football tournaments, comedy nights and regular live music.’ Finally, the Beverley Knowles Fine Arts Gallery is said to be the ‘only art gallery in the country that specialises in contemporary British female artists.’ This collection of cultural activities constitutes a ‘single

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31 http://www.spoonfed.co.uk/london/venue/notting-hill-60/notting-hill-arts-club-2162/
32 http://www.spoonfed.co.uk/london
33 http://www.spoonfed.co.uk/london/
cultural space’ that gives different types of consumers an ‘image of a global village’ (Slater 1998, p.196).

I observed the articulation of this theme in three of the four venues in Notting Hill, including the Tabernacle and Inn-on-the-Green. Inn-on-the-Green is a venue located on the first floor of a mix-purpose building. The ground floor houses the Portobello Green Fitness Club. Inn-on-the-Green usually books London-based artists of all types rather than renowned international artists. It has a bar that serves basic levels of wines, spirits, and beer, two billiard tables, and a concrete patio where you can purchase Jamaican style ‘jerk’ chicken. In a separate area, the auditorium is used for music performances and dancing/drumming workshops as well as hosting. Since the post-war period, Notting Hill has had different waves of development. Not least of these were the race riots that occurred in the late 50s. The neighborhood continued to have various frictions for the next 20 years or so as waves of gentrification; along with the more recent ‘super-gentrification’ (Connell & Gibson 2003, p.161) that has created new contested spaces.

In conjunction with economic and financial transformations occurring in Notting Hill, music has also been a characteristic marker of the neighborhood and has had an integral relationship to the development of the neighborhood. For the past 50 years, Notting Hill has been the base for many musical artists such as Mick Jagger, Alice Cooper, Damon Albarn, The Clash, Grace Jones, Baaba Maal, and Bob Marley, among many others.34 The area is also well known for another music tradition, Carnival. Trinidadians who lived in the area founded the two-day festival in 1965. The street festival is billed as the largest in Europe and has attracted over one million attendees. A report conducted by the mayor’s

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34 For more on this see, http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00mj7nc. The programme, The Other Notting Hill, explores the area’s musical past from the point of view of area residents.
London Development Agency showed that the festival contributes £93 million to the local economy.\(^{35}\)

The 1970’s movie ‘Performance’ was filmed in Notting Hill. It was about the life of a burned-out rock star and his attempts to restart his career. Mick Jagger made a cameo appearance near the end of the film, which signified the rebirth of the protagonist, Mr. Turner.\(^{36}\) The movie was filmed on Powis Square, in the heart of Notting Hill and also the spot of the Tabernacle. This converted music venue is scheduled to become a World Heritage Site. It is managed by a group called the Carnival Village and runs a full gamut of music events, not the least of which is a subgroup of world music performances run by a group called Wom@tt. This group makes a consummated effort to include the residents of Notting Hill by offering different dance and education workshops, which focus on younger audiences. The workshops feature music, dance, African history and their relationship to the UK. One of the organisers, Wil, runs the group’s education projects. She noted that they distribute flyers to residents in Notting Hill ahead of performances to ensure neighborhood participation rather than relying solely upon London’s monthly events and entertainment magazines. The group also maintains a very active mailing list and database through Facebook. In repeat visits to this venue during fieldwork, it was observed to have a very local crowd who seemed to know each other as neighbors and friends. This experience was unique to venues in Notting Hill.

Hutnyk (2000b) notes that music productions such as the ones that occur in these smaller venues rarely reflect the social and political make-up of the city. The complexity in this statement can be seen in the following example. All of the performances held at the three venues in the west London neighbourhood of Notting Hill showed a significant ethnic mix. The promoters of Wom@tt run

\(^{35}\) [http://www.lda.gov.uk/](http://www.lda.gov.uk/)

regular live world music performances at a venue named the Tabernacle in Notting Hill. They collect data on audience demographics for all of the Tabernacle performances, which they generously shared with me. What it showed was that members of the audience came from as faraway as the outer London borough of Croydon and mainland Europe. Repeated participant observations at this venue also revealed that, on average, approximately 30% of the audience was non-white. In an interview with one of the promoters, I asked her why audiences at the Tabernacle were more ethnically mixed than at other venues. She commented that her team made a concerted effort to recruit ‘audiences right on the doorstep [of the Tabernacle]’, meaning from the neighborhood immediately surrounding the venue. This served to diversify audiences to some extent. However, she said that they aim for ‘white, middle-class Guardian newspaper readers, you know, the South Bank crowd’. She further said that practical considerations drove this purpose; primarily, the amount of money spent at the bar by different customers segments. She continued that the ‘South Bank Crowd’ would probably spend more money on alcohol consumption than other groups, so it made sense to pursue this market. Ironically, the performance atmosphere seemed a bit disjointed with the addition of the new faces. My observations reveal that the Tabernacle crowds have not really been ‘middle-class Guardian readers’. This could be because Wom@tt had been in business for just over one year and are still developing their identity and, consequently, their consumer base. Their aim for the South Bank crowd signifies that it is a work in progress. It will be interesting to see if they will ‘get there’ and if so, how it will alter Wom@tt’s identity. This was the second interview where the term ‘white middle-class Guardian readers’ was used to describe world music audiences.

Wom@tt runs a series of performances at the venue. I have conducted participant observations of many of them this year. I will discuss a few of them because the performances have been quite different from each other. The
promoters at Wom@tt focus on African music, but incorporate musical forms originating in the Caribbean, such as Calypso from Trinidad and Tobago. For example, a Calypso guitarist provided the warm-up act for the August 22\textsuperscript{nd} performance of the Sierra Leonian singer, King Masco. The inclusion of Caribbean singers can be seen as a reflection of the large number of Caribbean residents living in the area and further highlights the market ‘at their doorstep’.

One ongoing series is Mama Africa. It is a collection of female singers who are African or of African descent. On October 30, 2009, the third installment of Mama Africa concerts was held at the Tabernacle. The performers were a collection of eight female artists, two of whom were from Africa. One was a Congolese artist named, Mimitah. The other was the former lead singer of Transnational Underground—a 67-year-old South African, Doreen Thobilkile.

A few notable observations resulted from this evening. Although I had attended many performances sponsored by this organization, I noted an obvious difference in the attendees that evening. A critical mass of middle-class, professional white couples attended. This group was clearly ‘the South Bank crowd’ that Wil referred to in her interview. They appeared noticeably yuppie. When I asked Wil who their target audience was, she responded that:

\begin{quote}
We are looking for people who are malleable... uh, who are open to different musical experiences... education is our main theme. Educating the audience and highlighting the music.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
We always get the bands to market for their audiences. Ourselves, we don’t market to African or Caribbean audiences, but we try to link into these whenever possible. For Kasai Masai, we try to cross-market and get the band to market to their audiences.
\end{quote}

Notice that she makes a distinction between the venue audiences versus the band’s audience. This demarcation highlights the absence of particular groups in
attendance at the performances, but also reinforces particular positionalities of different groups within London. She continues:

So, we want to get the South Bank Crowd, because they are the ones with the money and they will return because they don’t want to be left out. They want to be able to say to their friends ‘I heard a West African band at a little club in West London the other day…oh, you mean you haven’t been there…’ They have money and they will buy drinks and keep the catering bar quite happy. (pauses)

We are also trying to increase the community audience as well... [This is almost an afterthought]. She continued to say her efforts to target the community included ‘blanketing the community with flyers’ ahead of a performance. And for the first time, Wom@tt offered concessions—discounted tickets—to local community organizations. She noted that the strategy worked in keeping neighbourhood locals connected to the venue while being able to reach new markets. But targeting locals alone does not keep the venue profitable. From here we move onto a different theme and a different venue to see the ways in which geo-historical contexts are used to create a political theme of peace and reconciliation.

5.3.4 PEACE AND RECONCILIATION AND THE CHURCH ON BISHOPSGATE ROAD

The history of St. Ethelburga’s Church contributes to its discourse of peace and reconciliation through music. It also offers opportunities of resistance but in ways that are strikingly different from Passing Clouds. This is a small venue that holds about 50 people in its main hall. The church was bombed by the IRA in 1989 and has been reconstructed as the ‘Centre of Reconciliation’. The history and location of this transformed space has as many layers as the performances that occur there. This venue lies in the heart of the Liverpool Street commercial district at 78 Bishopsgate Road in the City of London. The church is dwarfed by the tall, modern, commercial buildings that surround it. Perceptions of oneness
and peace contribute to reshaping this former church into a space of consumption for and through music. It reinterprets the church space and its history of being bombed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). It moves participants beyond the past inequalities that prompted the IRA bombings to new global conflicts, namely inequality between North, symbolized by the commercialism of the area, and the Global South, embodied in the musical performances.

The venue runs approximately 17 performances during its season, which extends from the end of September until the end of February. Most of the performances are with musicians who are non-British and non-European with one exception on February 5, 2009; on this night an Englishman, Andrew Cronshaw, performed with the Armenian musician, Tigran Aleksanyan. The associate director of its world music series is an Irishman named Wallee. He mentioned in our interview that performances are chosen based on their ability to offer 'solace from any number of social ills' (interview transcripts).

On September 25, 2009, the venue ran a performance of a band called the Adriano Adewale Group. The performance was promoted as a ‘fusion of musical traditions of Nigeria, Angola, and Brazil, infused with contemporary European classical and jazz styles’ (promotion literature). The venue is intimate with an ornate, medieval church feel; hence, the space between the stage and the audience is quite narrow and limits the audience from dancing to the music. It was quite reminiscent of a baroque concert setting. In this respect, the place felt more like a theatre spectacle, which distinguished it from the other three world music venues under observation. The auditorium-styled seating also obliged the audience to fix attention on the performance and discouraged side conversations.
The performance was scheduled to begin at 7.30pm with a cover charge of 12 pounds, more than twice the price of other venues. Additionally, food was available for purchase. The choices were fusion South Asian rice concoctions with stew for 5 pounds and wine or beer at 2.50. Shortly after 8pm, Wallee, the Irish associate director of this world music series, gave a brief introduction. As this was the first performance of the series, he gave an overview of some of the acts and the general progress of their efforts in putting on ‘high quality’ performances. The band then entered the small auditorium to the distilled applause of the 50+ something audience.

The four-member band was composed of two black Africans and two non-Africans. The Africans were Kadialy Kouyate from Senegal, and Adriano Adewale from Nigeria. Both were dressed in traditional clothing that appeared to be West African. The other two members were white: Australian Nathan Thomson and Brazilian Marcelo Andrade. They were dressed in modern clothing and played multiple Western instruments, such as the saxophone, flute, and the double bass. The promotional brochure described the performance as ‘rooted in the musical traditions of Nigeria, Angola, and Brazil and infused with contemporary European classical and jazz styles.’ The choice of outfits seemed to coincide with and reinforce this expectation. The music of the first set was experimental, incorporating traditional instruments and vocals that invoked a combination of a Phillip Glass piece and African-American performer, Bobby McFerrin. The audience seemed to respond with enthusiastic applause.

The second set started with an interpretation of a child’s nursery rhyme and lullaby, ‘Rock-a-bye Baby’. At first the audience hummed along and then sang the lyrics at the encouragement of the lead singer, Adewale. He contorted and twisted in the small spaces between the stage and audience. Barefoot, with his hair in dreadlocks, he used small bells and other instruments to add a distinctive flavour to the melody. The audience was encouraged to clap and move, if even
in their seats. The response went from lukewarm to sluggish. At such point the
director slipped out of the room and returned standing at the back with a silver
painted ‘thumbs down’ sign attached to a stick. The singer immediately but
smoothly joined the other musicians onstage and returned to a more hands-off
performance reminiscent of the first set.

A few reasons might explain the director’s actions. The industry is not
particularly financially lucrative and many smaller venues often struggle to
maintain a consistent customer base. Hence, performance errors such as artists
not connecting with the audience are highly risky. The promoters must ensure
that audiences are not disappointed. The scope of world music that this venue
offers attracts a particular clientele. Wallee, the director of the world music series
at the venue, says that:

Music for me has to touch me inside. Move me, lift me, and soothe me…
we offer a unique space for musicians and audience alike to connect and
understand how close we really are. A common link through rhythm,
string and silence…

However, the Nigerian musician’s attempts to incorporate what he interpreted as
a ‘common link’ were not well received by the audience or the director of the
venue.

Wallee also commented on the appeal of his preferred world music styles, Malian
singers, and other West African musical styles:

Singers in the West don’t have the [vocal] range of people who come from
Africa and other eastern countries, where they are really playing with the
voice and adding all kinds of trilling... In particular with the West African
singers, you have this chorus of singers who deliver a punch… Then you
have the instruments like the Kora...stunning. I feel so alive.
When asked about the audience demographic, Wallee commented:

They are mostly Western, meaning white. With some exceptions, for example, if an Iranian or Afghan musician is performing then we will get some members of the audience from those places; however, the core audiences are British white.

Wallee continues:

I am very easy in how I run the event. I am easy with the artists and audiences; however, I seek artists [whose music is] slightly mellow because it matches the church [aesthetics].

He further argues that the music and performances should allow each audience member to get in touch with themselves. He said that he wants to encourage people to overcome their fears and, therefore, looks for the performances that are fluid and expand people’s ideas. He did not indicate what people were supposedly afraid of, however, this seemed irrelevant to his case. He wants people who leave the venue to be better able to embrace ‘this world that we are living in’… This underscores Connell and Gibson (2003, p.195) suggestion that music ‘shapes spaces and spaces shape music.’ In fact, a reciprocal relationship interweaves and connects the performers, audience, and the venue. The venue itself gives a particular feeling of peace and comfort; however, the carefully selected musical performances reinforce or affirm the notion of a ‘dialectic relationship’ between music and space (Connell and Gibson, 2004, p. 192). In this context, the music becomes part of the space and must meld accordingly into the architecture and feel of the place. The venue itself has a bearing on which forms of world music are performed there and which types of world music attendees will participate.

Another layer in this performance and others is the ways in which identities are manipulated for commercial purposes; in particular, how both white and black
musicians performing world music are obliged by cultural code and by audiences to perform particular narratives connected to their ethnic origins. This will be given further attention in another part of the thesis. Nevertheless, the roles and identities of the Australian and white Brazilian appeared almost tangential, if not suppressed altogether by the dominant African themes in the music. Yet, their presence and jazz contributions to the performance was sufficient enough to create the kind of ‘chill effect’ that Wallee wishes to promote.

5.4 CONCLUSION

It was argued at the beginning of this chapter that spaces of consumption create particular forms of social agency for its participants. The cases of four small world music venues in London were used to show how these spaces take on different ideological constructions that are then commercialized in different ways. The venues market themselves as a product that is entirely lifted from the music itself; thereby adding a layer of value to a highly competitive and small market. Hutnyk (2000b) has argued that these performances are attended by white, middle-class Westerners. This correlates to comments from two promoters in the industry who said that their target audience is ‘white, middle-class Guardian readers’ (interview 2010). However, evidence suggests that there exists a great deal of complexity in the ethnic and social mix of different audiences that seemed to depend upon additional factors, namely: the location of the performance space in the city, how the gig is marketed, and who is performing. The project does not attempt to understand exactly what drives audiences to world music, as there is a very long list. Audience experiences when listening to music may also innumerable and much research has already been conducted on the various contexts that people listen to different forms of music (Finnegan 2003, DeNora 1999, Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998). What the study points out is that these so-called world music venues share one commonality with respect to audience, which is that very few, if any, Africans attend. Venues tap into consumers’
particular desires and position themselves as focal points for this kind of activity. What is of concern is that promoters, who operate the venues, do not see Africans, other ethnic minorities, or the white working class as a viable consumer base. The locations of the venues are in trendy, gentrified areas that in one way or another support the very ideas that the organizers oppose.

Individually, each place can be evaluated on its own terms, as they privilege different components of the concept behind world music. This is achieved through the commodification processes of particular combinations of ideas, aesthetics, and music. Collectively, they highlight the complexities of world music and its audiences. In a city such as London, the global and the local are already greatly interwoven. Listening to a live performance in these venues creates new tensions between local and global. This occurs, in part, through the interactions among social actors, representations of world music, and constructions of place and identity through the venues themselves. In developing a sense of place, the venues often worked to establish a difference between themselves and other forms of entertainment in the city.

Massey calls for an examination of ‘the different sets of relations to place and the power relations which construct social space’ (1996, p.173). The dynamics that occur during live world music performances differentiate it from, say, listening to a CD. Specifically, themes are infused with life and work to create space in different ways for each venue. Each case showed a different kind of transformation that highlights various aspects of the ideologies that surround world music consumption. Venue aesthetics, its location, and the performances work in tandem to create particular spaces of consumption. Whether they are presented as spaces of activism, community, peace, or otherwise, they provide an outlet for musicians and audiences alike to shape their identities in various ways. They also work to revitalize and reproduce various forms of marginality that exist within the city. As opposed to commodifying differences as previous
research suggests, these spaces work to commodify ideas about how we live our everyday lives and the values that we place upon ourselves.
Chapter 6 All the way from... world music performers and identity

6.1 INTRODUCTION

We have become disarticulated, dismembered because the history we’ve learnt has been imposed from outside. We are still looking for an identity, which is making us vulnerable to another form of colonization, the colonization of modern Western values.

--Malian singer Rokia Traore, Songlines, October 2008

World music performers, their histories and the narratives they produce are at the very center of transnational production and consumption processes, and, as a result the identities that emerge from and inspire these. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to examine the ways in which musicians and other participants act on and through their music to construct particular aspects of their identity as a way to interrogate the thesis’ central research question. The role that the production of world music plays in constructing participants’ identities is of central concern here and this chapter will thus explore how the musicians position themselves and are positioned in the production-consumption process of world music. In addition, it will also interrogate the processes by which world music is used as a means of shaping identity.

This chapter explores the complex relationships between distance, value and authenticity in the constitution of identities and the role that nostalgia plays in closing and widening that distance. To do so, it draws upon analysis of interview and secondary data. While perceived distance is part of the commodification process, as examined in Chapter Four, in music production, participants tend to articulate distance and authenticity differently as they construct their own identities. Cook and Crang’s support this argument in the following way:
The actual representational politics associated with such geographical differentiations [depend] on the varied processes of voicing, translation, interest construction and surplus extraction going on in particular circuits (Cook & Crang 1996, p.144).

An examination of the musicians and promoters will help to identify the representational politics embedded in the ‘activities and efforts involve a continuous process of making and remaking the musicians and other participants’ (Brunt 1989, p.151) and can also show how discourses, such as authenticity, play out in the production process.

At almost all of the 70 performances where participant observation was conducted for this project, the musicians and much of their backup band were almost always presented as being ‘all the way from’ a non-local destination. By introducing the artists in this way the promoter or master of ceremonies is making a perceived distance a clear selling point. Hence, places of origin and identities are highlighted and contribute to the performance production. This is despite the fact that some artists have lived in London for many years and, in some cases, were born in the UK. This representation of geographical, social and cultural distance becomes an important component in the consumption process and invokes a feeling of authenticity in the performance. Notions of authenticity are shown to be as ‘subjective as any other social value’ (Grazian 2004, p.34). So then being ‘all the way from…’ invokes a particular kind of social value that promoters feel would resonate with consumers. However, different identities and values are associated with different places. For example, if the musician were to be presented as being ‘all the way from Plaistow, East London, this would contribute to a different set of conditions of production and meaning of world music; in other words, the production of the music may not have the appropriate ‘biography’ (Kopytoff 1986, p.67). Hence, geography and the geographic imagines remain an important of music production (Smith 1994), particularly of world music.
On the other hand, world music performers and promoters shape their identities around the overlapping meanings and production of this cultural good. This study argues that conditions of production of world music have changed sufficiently to offer opportunities for musicians to construct their identity around the production of West African world music in ways that supersede the idea that authenticity need be attached to particular ethnic backgrounds. While Chapter Four looked at how representations of world music affects the conditions of production, this chapter examines how musicians’ identities are shaped around this production process.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows: The first section is a discussion of how world music is represented by some of the cultural intermediaries discussed in Chapter Four. This activity is expressed as an authenticity from above, drawing on the dialectic relationship between above and below (see Chapter Four). The second section looks at how London-based artists themselves construct their identity and the implications this has on how music is represented from below. Through this chapter an underlying theme is that distance is (re)constructed in different ways for different actors and this has an effect on the changing notions of authenticity and how identity is constructed. The last section examines how actors construct (conceptual) spaces of empowerment through the performance of world music. Throughout this discussion, ethnographic data from primarily six interviews and visual data were used.

6.2 CATEGORIZATION IN WORLD MUSIC

The fieldwork performed as part of this thesis revealed how the ways in which cultural intermediaries categorize world music artists has resulted in something of a fluid continuum that relegates artists into clusters of sub-categories that are contradictory and overlapping in many ways. Del Casino and Hanna (2000, p.24)
argue that identity formation is a representational process. Furthermore, ‘identities are defined and contested, and at times naturalized, through representational practices and individual performances’; which this thesis examines directly and indirectly. In general, it seemed the groups encountered in the research seem to fall into a continuum from ‘tradition’ to ‘modern’. Here ‘tradition’ is marked by a perceived purity in terms of self-representation and of musical style. By contrast, at the other end of the spectrum, is a sub-set of (often, but not always) younger musicians who fuse traditional music style with other traditional or Western styles to produce what might be thought of as a more “modern” version of world music. These musicians tend not to wear full traditional costumes, if at all. However, while these distinctions are useful care should be taken so as not to blindly categorize performers because the fluidity of music and different components of a single musical performance can reflect numerous, co-existing spatio-temporal narratives. For example, an artist can use non-traditional instruments but can invoke a traditional feel or an illusion of authenticity through the use of particular vocal arrangements. Alternatively, some musicians have chosen to use modern vocal arrangements with traditional instruments, and so on. However, all are playing in creative ways with their own self-representations in order to carve out a niche for their music, appeal to particular venues and audiences and, ultimately, make a living.

Another complexity in categorizing types of world music is hybridity. This concept has come to mark many aspects of world music; particularly in the ways that world music is being represented (Hutnyk 2000). This thesis revealed that world music performances seem to occur along in clusters along a continuum from traditional to modern drawing upon different elements of both extremes. This corresponds to Taylor’s (2007) observations of the shift in consumers’ tastes toward greater hybridity in world music. Though music is also experienced for the pleasure of listening, much of what is marketed as world music corresponds to particular histories and rituals in their native lands (see Chapter Four, but also
Njoora 2010; Connell & Gibson 2003). What follows is a brief description of two of the main clusters of performances observed during the fieldwork. Following this will be a discussion of some of the ways that these performers maneuver along the continuum.

The first category is more traditional, marked by traditional instruments, traditional or mixed costumes, and traditional vocal arrangements. However, this categorization has innate complications. For example, if the instrumentation is ‘traditional’ and amplified, is it traditional? To what extent do instruments have to be ‘authentic’ before they can be considered as such? Such complications highlight the difficulty that categories (and even the label of world music) contain. For vocal arrangements, this thesis defines this as the use of polyrhythmic sounds and intonations (Miller & Shahriari 2008). This characteristic contributes to what some respondents have termed the unique ‘raw sound of African world music’ (Interview data). During the fieldwork for this project, two striking performances fell within this category. They were Massukos and the Zawose family, from Mozambique and Tanzania, respectively. Both groups appeared at the Darbucka World Music Lounge in Clerkenwell, central London. Another London-based group is the African Culture Development, Ugandan-influenced music and dance group. They are a large group of about 16 instrumentalists, dancers, and vocalists.³⁷

The second category of performers uses a mix of traditional and Western instruments and clothing, but not necessary traditional vocals. The vocals are often a combination of French and native African tongues, such as Wolof, Fula or Patois; rarely is English used in such performances. Observations of this music show that the rhythms tended to be more ‘danceable’ and the imagery more akin to ‘Western’ culture, achieved through costumes and body language. To sum up, world music is in effect not static, not easily categorized, as there are multiple

³⁷ I acknowledge that none of these groups is West African.
forms of it. This stands in contrast to the supposed idea of it as being traditional, set in the past, and so on. Moreover, that such representation is not passive, but an active choice on behalf of the performers who are exercising agency.

Del Casino and Hanna argue that ‘authenticity can never be fully realized, however, because it is constantly staged through the process of creating representations’ (2000, p.26). The implication of this is that no matter how authenticity is defined, it may be out of reach because of the very representations embedded in the performance. The next section begins with a discussion of the Ghanaian-influenced group Ossibisa and looks at the materialization of authenticity and what it means for the identity constructing processes in which the musicians and the producers engaged with.

6.2.1 TEDDY OSEI AND OSSIBISA

Mr. Osei is the founder of Ossibisa, the first major African-influenced band to ‘crossover’ to Western audiences in the UK and beyond. The group enjoyed considerable success throughout the 70s and early 80s. This band drew upon Ghanaian high-life music and blended it with funk and Caribbean rhythms; neither of which are traditional—but constructs themselves.

When I spoke with Mr. Osei, he recounted how he began his career in London. In the 1950s, he arrived in London to study music through a government scholarship from Ghana. He played music largely for Ghanaian audiences living in and around Southwest London in the neighborhoods of Balham, Tooting, and Clapham. His band, composed of members from Grenada, Trinidad, Antigua, and Nigeria, began to play at small clubs in Central London for more ethnically mixed audiences. Ossibisa’s music was in many ways a ‘soft introduction’ to ‘African’ music for mainstream British audiences. The group played an adaptation of Ghanaian highlife music – a music that was developed in the early
1900s in Ghana as a form of resistance to colonial forces (Collins 1989); hence, not so traditional.

Ossibisa, as a hybrid sound, was probably less associated with traditional notions of authenticity (Feld 2000a). For this group, authenticity was reconstructed as a space of freedom rather than linkages to particular narratives and places. In fact, what they may have perceived as an authentic sound could not have been defined by a specific place as many of members of the group were from the Caribbean rather than from Ghana, West Africa. Spooner (1986, 200) argues that authenticity has less to do with ‘genuineness and reliability of the face value, but with the interpretation of genuineness and our desire for it.’ Music was very much at the centre of social and cultural shifts in the late 60s and 70s, when Ossibisa was in its heyday. Hence, authenticity could have been defined or redefined within the context of a Britain that had already produced a mainstream audience that would appreciate the music of Ossibisa without a world music label. Authenticity, as such, was not found in the label of world music. Indeed, one could make the argument that creating a world music genre in 1987 potentially retarded a growing appreciation and integration of non-local music in the UK. Grazian (2004, p.34) points out that ‘various interpretative communities evaluate local music scenes according to multiple definitions of authenticity.’ The music was danceable and drew upon Western music forms of funk. Mr. Osei commented that the ‘British music scene at the time was very much engaged with and influenced by black American music.’ In fact, Christopher (2006) points out that the musical styles of James Brown, known as the American ‘godfather of funk’, Ray Charles, and blues singer Muddy Waters were already being incorporated into the British musicians’ repertoire to create new forms of music in Britain.

The band’s success then could fall in line with Frith’s (1996, 109) argument that music ‘creates people’ by producing and constructing an aesthetic experience. In
addition to Black American musicians, the mass market in Britain was already listening to music from American artists, such as Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis, among others. Their songs were popularized against the backdrop of a youth rebellion against the world created by the earlier generation (Christopher 2006, 179). If Ossibisa’s music is any indication, identity-building processes in Britain were more likely to be relational and dynamic rather than a simplistic causal depiction. An example of this can be seen in one of the group’s biggest music hits, Sunshine Day. Listed as the one of the greatest hits of Ossibisa, Sunshine Day plays right into the social and cultural trends in the 70s. The lyrics are free, open, and accepting:

Sunshine Day

Everybody do what you're doing

smile will bring a sunshine day
Everybody do what you're doing

smile will bring a sunshine day

SOLO

Everybody do what you're doing

smile will bring a sunshine day
Everybody do what you're doing

smile will bring a sunshine day

TUTTI
Everybody do what you're doing

smile will bring a sunshine day
Everybody do what you're doing

smile will bring a sunshine day

BRASS
TUTTI
Everybody do what you're doing
The songs, Uruhu (Born Free, Live Free) and Dance the Body evoke themes of freedom of expression and happiness. Hence, Ossibisa’s songs of liberation and freedom were in alignment with current mindsets and trends. Such music was not based on difference, *per se*. The boundaries around this music mentioned in this section were constructed based on cultural identities that were prevalent at the time. Hence, a song could be deemed as authentic if it was able to contribute to a ‘social production of collective meaning’ (Grazian 2004, p.33). Authenticity was not found in notions of exotica (Hutnyk 2000), but in the familiarity with the meaning of the song and its embodiment of a particular kind of cultural movement that was taking over Britain at the time. Afro-funk rhythms
and imagery that evoked a touch of exotica worked well in providing the average
British person with an ‘exotic’ outlet that was still accessible and familiar through
language. So, although Ossibisa are accredited as a ‘founding band’ of world
music in the UK, there was no need for a new categorization for their music. This
points to the question of how authenticity is constructed from above, that is
through the efforts of cultural intermediaries. The next section will discuss these
points.

6.3 AUTHENTICITY FROM ABOVE

The complexities surrounding the production of authenticity in a performance can
be seen in the April 7, 2010 performance of Salif Keita, the Malian superstar. The
performance was held at the Barbican in London, a large venue that receives
nearly £20 million annually from the Corporation of London. Mr. Keita wore a
white jacket and sunglasses with a hat resembling something of a pop star. The
staging included a 10-piece band and a scantily dressed female African dancer
who occasionally shimmied onto stage in synch with the rhythms of the lead
djembe player. The drummer pretended to spank the rear end of the dancer as
she gyrated very close to him. The performance was more polished than
performances at the smaller venues. One reason could be the ticket price
(£27.00 as opposed to £5.00 for the smaller venues) and the production
expectations of the organizers.

At the end of Keita’s performance, an older gentleman seated next to me asked if
(the performance) was what I was expecting. I responded, ‘sort of, how about for
you?’ He shook his head in disappointment and walked away. Clearly Keita’s
performance had not met his expectation. Although I was not able to follow up
with him, I encountered one of my regular respondents, Maureen (introduced in

38 http://www.barbican.org.uk/about-barbican/annual-reports
39 The Djembe is a West African drum.
Chapter Five). She is a white British woman in her 50s who regularly attends world music performances in and around London. In our conversation immediately following the performance, she said that although she has bought and will continue to buy Keita’s music, it was her first time hearing him live. She did not enjoy the performance, she felt that it was too ‘rockstar and/or poppish’. At a later date before a different performance, Maureen commented that some of her friends saw him perform two years ago at the Barbican and held a similar impression as she did. Ree (1990, 1058) suggests that narratives (such as authenticity) are ‘elucidations of the structure of an [musician’s] identity’ rather than a justification of it. He terms it as an ‘escapable piece of make-believe’.

Maureen and perhaps others in the audience had a different conception/expectation of authenticity. Keita’s being ‘all the way from Mali’ was not enough to produce an ‘authentic’ performance. In such case, what would constitute authenticity to them?

Hence, distance (Appadurai 1986), being ‘all the way from Mali’; and narratives (Gilroy 1993; Frith 1996), such as Keita being a ‘pure’ African performer, work together in producing a perceived valuable commodity. When these mandates are not met then dissatisfaction occurs for some listeners. That is to say, a different geographical imaginary is produced than the expectation. Appadurai (1986, p.44) notes that as technology changes, ‘the reproduction of [commodities] on a mass basis becomes possible… and the dialogue between the original source and middle-class consumers (who now enjoy higher participation) becomes more direct.’ Therefore, Maureen’s disconcertion with the Keita’s performance could have been a manifestation of ‘knowledge’ about Malian music, enhance through her participation in world music tours that she often takes to West Africa (as she commented in a later interview).

Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000, p.16) term geographical imaginary in music as an attempt to construct ‘a relation of absolute difference, non-recognition, and
non-reference’. This can be seen in Charlie Gillett’s description of Keita. Mr. Gillett says the following in describing Keita’s 2002 album ‘Moffou’:

The power and the glory of that record dispelled all doubts that an African record could match Western rock at its most dramatic and anthemic, with Salif soaring to vocal heights no singer in the West could hope to emulate, framed in arrangements that broke new ground. Western and African rhythms made room for each other, while the backing vocalists tipped the balance towards the sound of the Sahara.

For myself, as an observer, the performance lived up to Gillett’s description of the artist. However, the multiplicity of audience experiences underscores the ways in which consumption preferences can vary and how artists choose (or are directed) to respond to them. Gillett is producing a narrative that positions Keita as an invitation for listeners to abandon Western artists to some degree. It is ‘alternative’ in that it does not represent or partake in the status-quo of Western music. Gillett’s description is also interesting for another reason. His choice of words shows that Keita ascends beyond ‘Western’ singers and puts Keita in a space that is inaccessible to Western musicians, but not other African musicians, or, for that matter, Turkish or Andean musicians.

In Gillett’s construction, only musicians with non-Western vocal characteristics (whatever that is!) can achieve this level of performance. Gillett’s description underlines Gregory’s (1994, p.175) argument that a ‘profound gendering of colonial/colonized space was one of the basic dimensions of the Western political imaginary…’ Many obvious complications are inherent in Gillett’s observations. If his reference point is traditional constructions of a white Europe and a white West, then singers of African origin living in the UK would also not be allowed to access this constructed space of musical superiority. It also means that it would be difficult to classify such singers as the white South African Johnny Clegg. Gillett’s notions of black African musicians is further complicated by Keita’s being
an albino. Indeed, Gillett’s observations serve to disempower white musicians and empower, through othering, ‘African’ musicians. He is comparing musical styles; it is about rock versus African music. However, in the process he is tying the comparison to particular ethnic personifications, both real and imagined.

A second point worth mentioning is Gillett’s use of the term, anthemic; which is used to ‘describe music that has a particular presence to it/atmospheric feel.’[^40] The structure of his sentence makes it unclear as to whether he is referring to the dramatic and anthemic nature of rock music or of this ‘African record’. His choice of rock music as a comparison as opposed to opera, classical, or gospel music suggests that Gillett is reinforcing particular boundaries in music and societies, namely, the distinctive and almost antithetical relationship between rock music and African music. The former is associated with being Western, white, and anti-establishment, whereas the latter represents non-Western, non-white, and (a post-colonial) establishment. He constructs ‘African’ music as inaccessible for Western vocals, thereby resurrecting a mystique reminiscent of colonial discourse.

Lastly, I would point out his use of the term ‘African’ to describe the record. Not only does this label obfuscate the music and traditions of singer’s native Mali and, in fact obscures and clouds geographical difference. Gillett also suppresses the extent to which Keita’s music represents his Mandinka culture, or the representation of Malian Mandinka culture, as opposed Mandinka culture from other parts of West Africa. One could argue that Gillett is privileging ‘Africa’ as a (generalized) site of representation that is ‘socialized, temporalized, and fantasized’ (Duncan 1993, p.43) through the commodification process (see Chapter Four) and, as a result, becomes ‘authenticated’.

Keita has maintained a residence in Paris for nearly 25 years. The global flows of this singer’s extraordinary life complicate an essentializing application of an African label. With Hall’s (1995, p.207) interpretation of diaspora, it seems that Keita is able and should have been able to draw on ‘different maps of meaning, and of locating themselves in different imaginary geographies at one and the same time’ and to multiple places. While Gillett acknowledges ‘Western’ influences in Keita’s CD, he made it clear that they were suppressed in favour of sounds from the Sahara. European aspects of Keita’s identity, such as the arrondissement in Paris where Keita maintains a flat, are ignored. His labeling the record as African and his subsequent exclusion of western musicians suggests that all of Africa has the same ability and vocal power.

The reactions to his presentation on that evening and the performance two years before, according to Maureen’s recounting, means that for many world music audiences, artists cannot become too ‘mainstream’. Chow (1996, p.123) argues that [for scholars] the stereotypical ‘native’ has gone from view. In this context, when performances reach particular levels of polish, musicians as ‘natives’ are no longer ‘staying in their frames’. The reality is that these musicians embody an authenticity that many listeners want for/in themselves. So, it is not necessarily the case that a musician’s perceived inauthenticity is linked to post-coloniality as some scholars (Gilroy 1990; Taylor 2004; Bhabha 2004) suggest. Zukin (2008, p.728) argues that ‘men and women [become] authentic if they are closer to nature – or the way intellectuals imagine a state of nature to be—than to the institutional disciplines of power.’ Which begs the question as to the extent to which these musicians close to nature, and how nature gets negotiated and defined between the musicians and the intermediaries. The interconnectedness of musical space means that artists are influenced by many factors, not least of these are the social, political, and economic contexts in which the artists find themselves. Because music and its performance often reflect these realities,

http://www.allmusic.com/artist/salif-keita-p3311/biography
Keita’s performance could have been more authentic than Maureen and the other member of the audience gave it credit for. His music represents his reality and that reality is a new, modernizing West Africa, or even Paris where he has lived for many years; as such, we would expect to see a more polished (modernized), rockstar-like musical performance. This questions where and what are the linkages between authenticity, music, and identity. Authenticity is a construct of world music that is adapted to produce particular interpretative frames in world music; however, by itself, it may not be fully adequate in capturing layers of representation and identities built upon world music production.

The next section shifts focus and examines the roots and routes tension even further. It compares the cases of Muntu Valdo and the Zawose family to see how different identities are articulated in world music.

6.3.1 Roots and routes: a night with Muntu and the Zawoses

World music performers maintain their own sense of music identity in balance with pleasing Western audiences. This process is described as ‘strategic inauthenticity’ (Taylor 2004). This is in reference to ‘constant pressure from westerners’ for this music and its musicians to remain ‘premodern or culturally natural’ because of ‘racism and western demands for authenticity’ (ibid 2004, 126). At a performance at the Vortex, a mixed music venue in Northeast London, Cameroonian musician Muntu Valdo (first discussed in Chapter Four) gave ‘shouts out’ to different groups of people attending the performance. He was able to list people who had RSVP’d their attendance through the Facebook invitation by name. He also thanked ‘friends’ who had come from as far away as New York and as near as Streatham (a neighborhood
in South London). The audience responded with applause and laughter. His local knowledge and his self-representation as a contemporary artist gave him license to create a space of familiarity and oneness with the audience. He also performed some of his French-language songs, which appealed to the many French-speaking attendees in the audience. This way of representing himself has a dual effect in terms of authenticity. Taylor (1997) argues that audience perception of authenticity is a key component of the success of this music genre, a fact that potentially brings with it tensions between intermediaries and musicians in the production of this music.

Connell and Gibson (2004) discuss the complications involved in maintain a balance between the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’ in world music. They argue that some music that is re-invented and marketed as traditional may in fact be entirely contemporary in authorship. However, Muntu uses no traditional African costumes, nor traditional instrumentation. Muntu’s success apparently contradicts assertions that audiences still rely on particular aesthetics to appreciate this form of music. It might therefore be the case that the difference lies, rather, in how believability is generated. On one hand, it can occur through costumes and dance and authenticating the performance through sounding ‘native’. On the other hand, the artist can let the music represent itself and hope that it is enough to convince the audience. To illustrate this, let us examine two performances at Gillett’s annual CD launch in July 2009. The performances and their effects on the invitation-only audience of world music cultural intermediaries say much about what get constructed as authentic and relevant products. At Charlie Gillett’s behest, Muntu performed first, following his
normal methods of playing the harmonica and guitar, while working an equalizer and soundboard with his bare feet. His performance was followed by a very different act.

The second and main performance was the Zawose family. This group comes from a long line of traditional performers in Tanzania. Since the 1970s, the Zawose Family have been a world music scene fixture; long before the 1987 creation of the genre. They performed with instruments and wore feather pieces and outfits that are not associated with present-day Western society or even Tanzanian society. Their music involved a lot of physical movement and synchronized rhythms among the seven or eight members of the band. In a span of 20 minutes, the intermission between acts, the space was transformed from one of urban sophistication to a fictional construction of a pre-modern, colonial Africa; achieved through the power of representation in music and aesthetic. The fluidity of music makes a clear identification of the split more difficult. On this occasion, however, the dichotomy between these two styles of music was quite striking, and so were its effects on this audience of industry professionals. However, the experience at the CD launch was instructive in materialization of some of the aspects of identity and narratives that are so intrinsic to world music production. It reflects a range of ‘African’ music that has been reconstructed as world music in London.

Connell and Gibson (2003, 29) argue that ‘ideologies of authenticity’ underpin
music consumption. However, there are a number of ways in which this feeling of authenticity can be articulated. More precisely, when a performer brings out the ‘inner meaning’ of a song and where listeners ‘read this emotional meaning by bringing their own personal experience’ then the music has authentic qualities. Some artists, such as Ben Baddoo and Henri Gaobi (discussed in this chapter) have argued that choosing particular traditional outfits enhances their market appeal and their believability. The dichotomy between the two musical styles at the CD launch may have reflected the industry’s ideas in as much as it did the musicians. Alex, one of the promoters at the event, discussed the differences between the fusion-based world music and the more traditional musician.

He says of the CD launch party:

Like the crowd that were at Darbucka (world music lounge) the other night. Funny enough, someone like the Zawose Family, who have done a great service to traditional Tanzanian music, I actually felt really uncomfortable seeing that kind of performance, in a basement bar in St. John’s Street. I felt colonial, if you like. This just doesn’t feel right. Muntu, to me is modern world music; he is using modern technology to get his sound across.

It was felt like watching a specimen. I find it difficult to explain. If I put a band on it’s got to feel contemporary… funny enough that sort of thing (a Zawose style performance) works at a festival.

What you were looking at on Thursday (the CD launch) is the old guard of Third World music.

Alex highlights that the ways in which world music is reproduced to UK audiences rests upon the politics of a few cultural intermediaries. This is no doubt influenced by their own interpretations of Africa and its relationship to British identities. The next section examines how some artists have shaped and reshaped their identities around world music and what this means for how world music gets authenticated by and through the artists.

6.4 AUTHENTICITY FROM BELOW
Many musicians who performed world music in London have lived in the UK or other European countries for many years. For the most part, however, their continued success is contingent on their ability to evoke an imaginary that gives the music simultaneously an ‘agent of mobility and a cultural expression permanently connected to place’ (Connell & Gibson 2003, p.144). This section explores some of the embedded politics of representation that are generated by and through the activities of the musicians and connected to notions of authenticity. Zukin (2008, p.729; see also Zukin 2010) argues that artists and writers have long been represented or have chosen to represent themselves in ‘rebellion against the conformity of the bourgeoisie.’ She draws on examples from France and Germany to highlight the extent to which authenticity became associated with ‘downwardly mobile’ artists and intellectuals; heavily inscribed with the romantic tradition and bohemian chic. Art and music are industries that are not particularly lucrative for the majority of its performers. In this context, artists participate in this production out of passion or purity of the art form as much as, if not more than, for commercial interests.

World music, however, was marketed based on a particular globalised mobility that was also ‘responsible for performance types and musical spaces rebuilt in new circumstances as the result of flows of music, rekindling traditions or inspiring unexpected borrowings and appropriations’ (Connell & Gibson 2003, p.45). For example, a Ghanaian-born singer Ben Baddoo, founder of the group, BouGaRaBou, has lived in the UK for more than 30 years. He has performed at outdoor gigs in Margate and Bristol, and in London’s Darbucka Lounge. However, at every performance, the second lead of the band, Neil Sparkes (who is white English) introduces him as being ‘all the way from Ghana’. This type of reconstructed mobility speaks to the role that distance has in creating and substantiating authenticity, which creates economic value. When I asked Ben why Neil introduces him as being ‘all the way from Ghana,’ he replied ‘oh, it’s
just a thing that he does… anyway I am from Ghana’. My follow-up question was ‘When do you get to be “from England”?’… to which he did not reply. This is reminiscent of Feld’s (2000b, p.262) argument that ‘schizophrenic makeovers’ of world music performers disempower musicians because they ‘never gain control over how they are discursively represented’. While this may be an extreme view, there is an argument be made that many of these artists struggle with how they are made over in the commodification process.

As mentioned, Ben responded that he was in fact from Ghana. That which was not apparent at that moment in the interview was how important it was for him to maintain authenticity through an imagined Ghanaian identity. Spooner (1986, p.231) helps to explain the position that Ben may have found himself. He argues that the definition of authenticity is the result of ‘choice and negotiation within (Western) society, based on supply from the (source). This requires that the ‘Other be preserved in its pristine form.’ He further argues that the value in cultural goods is tied up in particular representations of those goods, which is ‘inspired by an interest in the Other and its products.’ However, Crang (1996, p.57) shows that critical knowledges, such as Ben’s ‘being all the way from Ghana’, position the ‘producers and consumers of such knowledge in privileged positions according to the dominant norms of geographical capital.’ So does this representation of Ben create a source of empowerment or disempowerment for him? Does it really create greater authenticity? The answers would depend greatly on how power and authenticity are understood by both Ben and the audiences he entertains. Frith (1996, p.110) argues that postmodernism introduces questions of the ‘decentred subject’; and, it challenges one’s ability to distinguish the ‘real’ and the ‘simulated’ self. Hence, Ben is complicit in this way of representation, as are other such musicians living in the UK and the cultural intermediaries. Collectively, they create what Zukin (2008, p.728) terms ‘an authentic space’. This space is needed to add value and profit. By necessity, it also creates some feelings of being outside of one’s everyday life for all the
participants (Certeau 2002; Grossberg 2006, p.545). Hence, if the musicians feel that the music is too familiar with to the everyday, the experience may be perceived as having an insufficient authenticity. This is in stark contrast to how authenticity played out in the case of Ossibisa. I argue that authenticity, for them, was not based on being exotic; rather, it was based on the mutually created space of freedom for both the listener and the performer (Jackiewisz & Craine 2009).

Musicians need to stay connected to real and imagined roots while working in London and the UK and this is reflected in how they live. This is especially difficult for musicians who have lived in Britain for many years. Due to scheduling conflicts, his interview took place in his current studio in Bristol. Ben’s studio is located on a small estate in the Bristol neighborhood of St. Paul’s. His choice of location is quite interesting in that it is a deprived, largely black Caribbean neighborhood that sits just in the shadow of Cabot Circus, a swanky mall that houses upscale stores such as Harvey Nichols, Zara, and Lacoste, among others. Despite using Senegalese, Caribbean, and white musicians in his band, he discussed the ways in which he maintains an authentic sound. He visits Ghana every few years, however, his main strategy for producing authenticity is watching Ghanaian movies on the Internet at his recording studio. He is reconstructing authenticity through the use of the Internet in order to draw inspiration for creating music. This is a bit ironic. His own authenticity is in fact created at a distance since he’s not really all the way from Ghana, or at least hasn’t been for a long time. He himself is distanced and detached.

After the interview, we walked from the studio to Cabot Circus because he wanted to show me where he often performs. On the way, he joked about his days in Brixton, South London, when he went to rave parties and would ‘hang out with white girls’ after his music sets. He also has a daughter who is mixed race from his partner of many years. I got the impression that there was another story he was trying to tell. It was reminiscent of hooks’ (1990, p.145) argument of choosing spaces of marginality from
which to ‘shape and determine our response to existing cultural practice and our capacity to envision new, alternative, oppositional aesthetic acts.’ In some ways, he too has chosen the margin as a point from which to exercise resistance (hooks 1990). His effort to maintain an identity that complements the Ghanaian music he performs, in some ways, keeps him in a counter-hegemonic position to mainstream articulations of ‘Britishness’.

6.4.1 STAYING RELEVANT

This section examines how musicians remain relevant through different strategies. Relevance as a term has ambiguity. Taylor (1997) argues that importance of musicians maintaining a relevance to audiences. For continued economic viability, the music must evoke relevance for both the musicians and the audiences. However, the determination of relevance is a negotiated process among the artists, musicians, and the promoters. In an industry with very few key cultural intermediaries (more on this see Chapter Four), a small but powerful base controls how world music gets marketed and which music and musician are deemed relevant. Within this framework, I want to look at how musicians attempt to maintain their relevance to the market. Jackson (2002, p.4) shows how the ‘mutual constitution’ of culture and economy create entanglements that influence how musicians operate within and around this industry. As argued in this project, such entanglements are embodied in the musicians. However, the musicians are not the sole commodities. Music is the primary commodity. Therefore, social actors use the music in a variety of ways, including for commercial means and for shaping and reshaping identities.

This research indicates that West African music that is performed as world music is used as a form of expression not only for Africans living in the UK but also for whites and British blacks. Scholars (for example Gilroy 2006) have argued the
exchange value of this music is another example of post-colonial appropriation. However, appropriation may not be the motive or the result of this engagement. Like Appadurai’s (1986) conceptualization of commodification discussed in earlier chapters, Gilroy is also assuming a one-directional perspective on appropriation; meaning that only non-Africans are drawing upon African forms of music as a source of inspiration. As a contrast to this perspective, Grossberg (1996, p.89) argues that the process of contesting negative images with positive ones involves struggling against existing constructions of a particular identity. He continues that it also involves the discovery of the ‘authentic’ and ‘original’ content of the identity.

However, involvement with world music, or any music for that matter, may be an attempt by the subject at struggling against their perceptions of negativity of a status quo identity. As such participants attempt to (re)create an authentic or ‘pure’ content in their own identity. However, even the West African singers, Youssou N’Dour and Angelique Kidjo, have argued that Western music forms and culture influence their identity and music (Taylor 2004). Hence, the narratives of purity/authenticity constructed around this music by Gillett and other cultural intermediaries are, in fact, false.

Notice how one promoter defined authenticity in world music:

I think that authenticity is, well, passion. As long as one is passionate about the music then it is authentic. Take for example, a cannabis plant, if you plant the seedling in the UK instead of the Caribbean, is it no less potent? Does it make it less authentic?

In this light, the battle to stay relevant in the midst of globalized diversity implies adaptation, change, or even disintegration of ‘authenticity’ with an accompanying new definition. The promoter’s answer suggests that authenticity can and should
be couched in a language that removes place. To some extent, the label of world music requires and does this. But it also suggests that adherence to an idea can, to some extent, substitute for an ethnicity-based conception of authenticity in world music. However, Connell and Gibson (2003, p.88) show that the consumer ‘engages with and reacts to the reputations and associations’ that accompany both the music and the performer. Consequently, meaning in world music is constituted through the histories and perceived realities of the artists.

It is in this spirit that the strategies for staying relevant will be examined against the backdrop of constantly-changing production demands that reflect a ‘consumption culture’ (Jackson 2002) laden with struggles and negotiations. Locally based musicians are in a better position than musicians based abroad to tailor their music to local tastes. Ironically, being ‘based’ in the UK does not automatically give the musicians the agency they seek. Many West African musicians who are in the country illegally experience marginalizing effects that affect them socially and professionally. In fact, four planned interviews for this thesis did not occur because the artists were either detained just before the interview or were fearful of speaking to an ‘outsider’ (discussed in Chapter Three).

Staying relevant requires that musicians use a number of activities to maintain a livelihood for themselves. This research outlines the ways in which world music performers have constructed and re-constructed themselves in the UK market over time. The list of the strategies below was derived from interview fieldwork. It is neither exhaustive nor hierarchical; however, it gives an insight into how some performers attempt to diversify in order to appeal to a broader market:

• Musicians are able to group and regroup with other bands.
• Offering drumming and dance lessons
• Keeping the sound ‘pure’ through watching movies from their native countries
• Repeat visits to the homeland
• Performing in universities and schools

What follows is a consideration of two of the strategies: regrouping and drumming lessons. This will be done through a consideration of primary and secondary data. The other three strategies have been discussed either directly or indirectly throughout this chapter.

6.4.1. Re-grouping with other bands

Musicians are able to group and re-group with other bands. This can occur in at least three reasons: market forces (e.g. new recording opportunities); visa complications that break up the members of an established group; or as part of an artist’s developing different musical styles. This can be through a collaboration of non-Western and Western musical styles or pan-African musical styles. In the case of musicians who are in the UK illegally, participation in the mainstream world music scene is particularly precarious. Two detained musicians were fighting deportation back to the Congo. The effect of their detention was that the remaining band was forced to find replacements. They chose two Kenyan musicians to fill the gap. This reshaping of the band could have brought different musical styles that would alter the performance. However, the Kenyan replacements may not necessarily have affected the dynamic of the band. Notice the comments one of the remaining Congolese members of the band: ‘Well, I just had to show (the Kenyan replacements) the beats that (the Congolese) use but you know, because he is African he gets it...’ Hence, the implication is that being an ‘African’ contributes to having similar understandings of the music and performance. This highlights a particular transferability of a key commodity that can be constructed either as the music, being a musician, and/or being ‘African’.

A few contradictions come forth: First, as long as the musician is an African there

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42 The mainstream scene denotes the world music activity advertised in London entertainment guides, such as Timeout magazine and newspaper the Independent’s music section. These events usually occur at larger and/or well-established places, such as the Barbican or Ronnie’s Scotts.
is a presumed knowledge about the good that does not interfere with producing an authentic Congolese sound (Gilroy 1990; Connell & Gibson 2003; Kong 1995). Second, if ethnicity does not matter for the performance quality or musical experience then the promoter mentioned earlier was correct in arguing that authenticity is about passion rather than place associations in world music. The next section looks at the second strategy for relevance: drumming lessons.

6.4.1.2 Drumming Lessons

Agawu (1995) argues that the discourse surrounding ‘African music’ has pivoted around the construction of the ‘African rhythm’. The concept was popularized in ethnomusicology studies of the 1950s (Coester 2008). In fact, most of the discussion regarding sub-saharan African music in Miller and Shahriari’s (2008) work center on the drums with the Kora, a West African harp, coming in a distant second. Therefore, the African drum has come to symbolize ‘African’ rhythms and people (Goerg 2007).

The example of the UK based company, Trap Media, shows how African drumming has become a commercially viable strategy for some musicians. This multimedia production company liaises with funding sources to provide performance workshops to schools and events around the UK. Notice the advertisement for their African workshops:

Please note we only offer authentic African Arts Workshops for our traditional based workshops, which simply means that our facilitators will either be from Ghana, Senegal, Cameroon, Zambia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Zimbabwe or South Africa - this way the participants can get a multicultural feel for the workshop.

--Source: http://www.trapmedia.com/african_arts_workshops.htm

The website has several tabs, each with an accompanying video. On the main
tab is a narrator who is a woman with blonde hair and an Irish accent. She is on all of the web pages except for two of them: African dance and Asian dance. On these pages a black woman and an Asian woman, respectively, speak about the authenticity of African and Asian dance and drumming workshops. The company obviously recognizes the marketability of these cultural forms but also that commercial authenticity is achieved only in particular representations. Ironically, right on the heels of stressing authenticity of the workshops prepared for UK Black History month, the black woman adds that all of their performers have undergone criminal background checks. On the one hand, this could be a selling point in that consumers can have a raw, ‘authentic’, African drumming session that offers cultural development for the children. On the other hand, the UK policing techniques have still sanitized the performance and protected the children from any perceived harm from the interaction. The point here is in understanding how control is exercised over the relevance of drumming in the school curriculum. Of particular interests is that the drumming session is subtly portrayed as being inextricably tied to a black African identity. So, a white Welsh drummer such as Alicia, discussed later in this chapter, may not be suitable for this type of performance.

Figure 8 - This is the group of Henri Gaobi performing. Source: http://www.kaago.co.uk/; Accessed June 27, 2011.
The next example is a discussion of Henri Gaobi. He came to Europe from the Ivory Coast with the national dance troupe of his country; however, the deteriorating economic and political conditions in the Ivory Coast prompted him to stay on in Europe. In London, he performs and teaches West African dance and has earned enough money in his years in the Europe to own four homes in Abidjan and the surrounding villages. While he maintains relationships with both the Western audiences and West African audiences, his main performances tend to be for African audiences, which is unlike many of the other African musicians interviewed. His strategies for staying relevant involve the use of exotic costumes and energetic drumming.

In his performance at the Hootnanny’s in Brixton in August 2009, five white musicians dressed in West African traditional clothing accompanied him on stage (see figure 2). The group performed drumming styles from the Ivory Coast, Ghana, and South Africa and the performance was well received by the audience shown by an enthusiastic applause. However, I was left wondering who the white performers dressed in traditional clothing were. They were never introduced as his students and were always in the backdrop. Would I had even questioned their performing with Henri had they been black? In a subsequent interview, Henri revealed that the performers were his long-time students.

Immediately following this performance, the entire group was transported to
another gig in nearby Camberwell, a neighborhood approximately one-half mile from Brixton. The group performed different songs for an Ivoirian audience to celebrate the independence of the Ivory Coast from the French. When asked how the white performers were received and Henri commented that the Ivoirians were delighted and surprised. It is interesting that he included his white students in two very different performances and created a similar effect but from different audience perspectives. According to Henri, many Ivoirians live in London and as such he is able to perform for different ceremonies and also keep an active schedule in the world music scene. Additionally, he plays for other West African audiences. For example, he had just recently performed at a Nigerian birthday party. He is able to do this because he can perform in different African languages:

I can sing in Jula… and several other languages…Zulu and Kenya language, Key Swahili. My music is pure African. I asked, ‘have you had a lot of success?’ He answered, ‘yes they like it, everywhere I go people come to me afterward and complement. The people with me are my class people (students), if I take no money for the performance then I use my students.’

I have had these students, some for 10 years, some for 12, some for six years. I teach every Sunday across from St. John’s Church in Brixton.

–Interview data

The performance at Hootnanny’s was meant to raise funds for a school in Ghana. Hence, Henri says that he uses his students if no money is involved. If he is being paid for the performance then he only uses other professional musicians. He has a very open description of world music. He feels that even Tina Turner is performing world music. His personal construction of world music may fall outside of the ideas of the industry and its cultural intermediaries; however his performances including dress and choice of singing languages is in step with world music commodifying narratives. Hence, he has played at WOMAD three times and says that it’s very beneficial to play there because of the notoriety you receive, even though, he continues, ‘it is not “good” money’.
6.5 World music as a means of empowerment

It is unclear the extent to which being a black or black African musician gives the artist particular social capital in world music despite the earlier interviewee’s rationale for replacing the detained Congolese musicians with Kenyans. Jackson et al (2004, p.166) shows that no single society can provide the ‘authentic’ source of meaning for any particular commodity or cultural form. World music is a coveted and contested space of identity construction in which black Caribbean artists have also partaken. Ossibisa, for example started with Ghanaian performers and musicians from Trinidad and Grenada. Additionally, Barker (2007, p.250; see also Ignatiev 2008) has shown race to be ‘constitutive through power relations between groups’. The increasingly global flows of people and ideas means that any artist should have the power to represent any place (Massey & Jess 1996). Hence, many Caribbean artists in the UK have taken to performing different forms of black music, as have many white British artists. These opportunities for reshaping identity through a music that was directly tied to black African artists is increasing more open to non-African black and white
artists. This section looks at the lives of two female world music performers, Helen and Alicia. Their stories speak to the point just made and shed light on how and why identity shaping through world music is chosen by some British musicians.

Helen is a black British woman from Derby, of Jamaican descent; while Helen is a white British woman of Welsh ancestry. These two interviews indicate that identity and representation is very much a concern among some non-Africans. Helen performs music in many different black music genres. She sings jazz with a Russian quintet, Caribbean music at The Tabernacle (a venue discussed in Chapter Five), Ghanaian-fusion music with the Brixton-based group Yaaba Funk, and funk fusion with a New York based musician called Toli Nameless. Notice excerpts from our interaction:

I said, ‘at a gig, Toli introduced you to the audience as Jamaican, and I was thinking…Helen is not Jamaican…’

Her response, ‘[Toli] feels, she thinks that she’s Jamaican as well but she is born in New York and I am born in Birmingham.’ ‘That’s how we kind of got to know each, you know like we both have Jamaican parents but we are very different. I realized that as we got to know each other and it is a bit strange. But I think that that’s part of the whole world music thing. You know holding on to something…well, she’s Jamaican, so that makes her part of the gang… you know (laughter) she is related to Bob [Marley]’

Although Helen and Toli are both of Jamaican descent, their identities are influenced more by their immediate surroundings; New York in the case of Toli and the Midlands first then London for Helen. But Helen is also making a connection between product distantiation and value. In other words, it is beneficial for her to have the linkage with Jamaica because it gives her more currency in music circles. Pratt (1999, p.163) argues that boundaries that are ‘blurred in one place can be reinvented elsewhere.’ Hence, for Toli, Helen, and others, the complications of place and belonging can be constructed and re-constructed on stage in the way that coincides with the hybridity of world music.
In trying to understand how Helen relates to Ghanaian cultures she is representing in her work with YaabaFunk, I recounted to her an experience that I had while doing fieldwork at a Sierra Leonean pub in Camberwell, South East London. It was packed with more than 250 people. Even as a black person, I felt extremely out of place in the small venue. I am not sure if my feelings were because I am not Sierra Leonean or whether it was a reflection of social class differences. My host said, ‘almost everyone here is from Sierra Leone…except you.’ I then directed his attention to a young attractive white woman dancing with what appeared to be her male partner, who was Sierra Leonean. He remarked that she was one of us (meaning Sierra Leonean). I asked Helen what she thought about that. She remarked that she often experiences the same feelings of awkwardness despite being black or maybe because of being black. Mostly this happens when she is performing for audiences with a higher concentration of Africans.

I have seen Helen perform in different capacities as a musician. Originally, I believed that her blackness allowed her this flexibility over and above musical talent, passion and motivation. However, what was learned from the interview told a different story:

I am a black Brit but I feel like I am made invisible. I am hybrid person anyway, because I have so many different races in me. So, it’s like, what is authentic? It’s a weird one for me because I feel like I have been made invisible in this country and I am fighting that… the politics of that.

When I started singing jazz, it was like with a group of white men. I was like this lone black woman…I felt like, you know, I should have been this middle-aged white woman singing Billie Holiday songs (laughs).

I am in this band that’s sort of Ghanaian. You know, Highlife music, Yaaba Funk, and I feel like we have like mostly Europeans (as band members) and then I am like this black person representing African music… but then again the music is a hybrid. And also the world is a hybrid and London is like this mishmash of, you know, everything. So I don’t really know what authenticity is…
I am all of those things (referring to the different styles of music she sings).

I just think that we have all these labels, Jamaican, Nigerian, and so on. You can never be from ‘here’. You can still see it (othering) and we need about 100 years before can have something different...

Pollock and van Reken (2001, p.21) describe third culture kids as having grown up in two different cultures and whose ‘experiences affect deeper parts of their personal or cultural being.’ Not everyone participating in world music can be described in this way. However, a couple of interesting points to be made with respect to Helen; The first is the role that skin colour actually plays in world music. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter being black may not lend a particular authentic experience to performing different African music. And, according to other respondents, authenticity can be based on passion alone. In Helen’s case, another point is brought up; namely, that it is precisely her blackness in a British context that forces her to seek out ways of self-empowerment. By her own account, Helen faces struggles reminiscent of the discourses that surround the working class, specifically disempowerment (Fraser & Ettlinger 2008; Paul 1997; Ignatiev 2008). Again, music has been used as a tool or outlet by which she can create her own sense of being. Helen’s choice of garb could also be showing unity with African people/culture. However, being black is not the only opportunity to represent some African music. Her hairstyle and other choices of aesthetic expression (see figure 10) suggest a non-conformist stance against British middle class, for example. When I asked her if her choice of hairstyle (Rastafarian-esque braids) was an attempt at authenticating herself, she responded:

This is me, this is how I like to dress. I like my hair this way. But, um, I like natural sort of things… (pauses) um, you know I feel empowered, you know. I am empowering myself as a black African queen. And Toli (Nameless) likes to paint herself up when performing. You know she is kind of leading in the way that Fela (Kuti) did.

She is attempting to construct a new identity for herself. Hebdige (1979, p.43) identifies this look as a visual corollary used in particular by Caribbean British in
an attempt to express forms of resistance and black identity. It is the result of negotiations with herself and her environment (Sarup 1996; Said 1979). By her own criteria, music has become her outlet. The irony is that none of the music forms that she is performing closes the gap. In other words, her invisibility as black British is not necessarily improved because she is performing this music.

She continues to discuss YaabaFunk’s relationship with the industry:

You wonder whether you can go into WOMAD because you don’t fill that label. You are not ethnic enough. I have not played at WOMAD because they don’t want to book some Black Brit like me... But I have played at Glastonbury and some other contemporary places. But for some reason, I am not ethnic enough for [WOMAD]. We have a lot of Europeans playing in our band. And I don’t know if that makes you world enough...unless somebody is playing folk music from Germany. I just get the feeling that we are not acceptable to [WOMAD].

Her words indicate that she views WOMAD as not contemporary, perhaps this is not so much in the music but rather a reflection on its management style. The processes of creating an imaginative geography are part and parcel of what sells world music. Said (1979, p.55) argues that ‘imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away.’ What he does not mention in this instance is the role that institutional and commercial forces play in this process. Her being born in the West relative to other locations, such as West Africa or Jamaica, privileges her in many ways, but at the same time locks her out of the imaginative geography that is linked to the production processes of WOMAD. Specifically, her status as a black British woman does little to dramatize and exaggerate the distance and difference for the audience at WOMAD. According to many respondents, this audience is not interested in celebrating its own. She will never reach the top level of world music in its current state. This is despite the fact that she has restructured her identity to facilitate her participation in world music performances.

hooks (1990, p.145) argues that the politics of location necessarily ‘calls those of
us who would participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice
to identify the space where we begin the process of re-vision’. If we could qualify
this music as ‘counter-hegemonic’, which in itself is an elitist assumption, then
Helen’s choice of performing African-influenced world music appears to be one
that positions her into further invisibility. Related to this, Notice her remarks on a
second form of invisibility that she endures:

I love meeting female musicians because, you know, it’s a man’s world
especially in the music business (laughs)...it’s really hard. And even though
you know people are your friends or colleagues. It happens in Yaaba and
you sort of turn around and think, oh my god, they are treating me like this
because I am a woman. I am not trying to be negative but you know, I am not
accepting it and I think that we have to continue to fight against it.

It appears that many factors play a part of her feeling marginalized; gender
included. Her comments reflect a complex mix of gender, ethnicity, and social
positioning (McRobbie & Garber 2006). In some ways, Helen is bridging
boundaries and spaces by representing African music fused with Western
musical styles in and around London but for whom? By her choosing this course,
she is in many ways reifying this marginality. She is separating the margin and
the center. In her space of world music and jazz she feels that she is able to
reconstruct her identity so she feels empowered against a Britain that has
ignored her.

In a performance at the Ritzy Café in Brixton, South London, the lead singer
introduced Helen. Each time he gave a different aspect of Helen’s background
she made a face to denote another ‘layer of crazy’. Pratt (1999, p.153) argues
that mobility ‘articulates a non-essentialist identity that emerges out of
identifications rather than an essence.’ So, as the lead singer, the High
Commander, mentioned that Helen was all the way from Jamaica via Derby via
Brixton, Helen made a different crazy face. It was a hit with the audience;
however, it also exemplifies Helen’s struggle to position herself within British
society or to position herself as an outsider.
The world music label obfuscates (Eyben & Moncrieffe 2007) the processes that connect the source of music with its destination audiences and at the same time makes it easy in that consumers need not look beneath the veil; that is, understand the complexities that produce and encompass the music. Hence, musicians and listeners are able to reconstruct narratives and histories of the song at site of music production. Feld (2000b, p.263) argues that the material and commodity conditions of music create new possibilities ‘whereby a place and people can recontextualized, re-materialised, and thus re-invented’. This process depends on particular perceptions of the musician and audiences in different spaces and social context.

We can compare Helen’s case to insights from another woman interviewed for this project, Alicia. Alicia is a white woman of Welsh descent who plays percussion. She described her life in Britain as being quite mainstream, but uneventful. She said that she ‘absolutely hated’ her desk job in journalism and could not get along with her colleagues. She is one of the few white female musicians performing West African music in the world music scene in London. Having previously trained at Central Saint Martins College of Art, she said that playing this music was something like a ‘coming out’ for her. She learned drumming by taking lessons in Maida Vale (northwest London); which is quite a far distance from her residence in Brixton (South London). The instructor was a white British man who traveled around West Africa and studied the art. She mentioned that it was ‘quite fortuitous’ that she had him as a tutor because his Western music training made him very precise and he was able to systematize her learning African music. She said that she patterns herself after him when she teaches music.

In the interview at a café, she pointed out that she loved ‘black music’, much to her father’s chagrin. She makes a reference to the James Brown song blasting
in the background – ‘you see? This is the kind of music that I like. My father was a wonderful man but he absolutely hated music that was not classical and calm’. Agawu (2003, p.231) asks whether difference in music is real. This includes lots of music and is certainly not bounded by race; for example, punk rock, rock and roll, and heavy metal. But this gives some insight into how Alicia constructs and gives purpose ‘black music’ for herself. The boundaries that we construct around music that we feel possess similar characteristics can sometimes be erroneous drawn around people who produce or consume the music. Gilroy (1993) and others have argued that appropriation of cultural forms (such as music) have been used to enhance particular Western appetites. Hence, the desire for people to gravitate toward this form of music either as artists or promoters could be coming from the same ideological place. This is manifest in a number of ways; for example, Alicia felt that ‘mainstream’ music or life does not give them satisfaction in one area or another. Becker (1963, p.81) describes this as a (sub)culture that ‘arises essentially in response to a problem faced in common by a group of people, insofar as they are able to interact and communicate with one another effectively’. In such a case, they choose this form of representation regardless of the associations people make with this music. According to Becker (1963, p.81), participants in

> deviant activities have the opportunity to interact with one another, thereby developing a culture built around the problems rising out of the differences between their definition of what they do and the definition held by other members in society. (emphasis added)

The very act of performing music positions the performer as oppositional to ‘conventional behaviour’ (Becker 1963, p.87). Hence, an attraction to performing and representing West African music could be precisely because of associations of world music with narratives that are in some ways oppositional to mass consumption. Hebdige (1979, p.91) describes subcultures as representing ‘noise’ that interrupts the ‘orderly sequence’ that follows from a system of representation of mainstream. Weinstein (2000, p.218) argues that ‘songs
performed by the band embody the values of the subculture.’ I would argue that the songs are not a complete embodiment of a subculture’s values but one sufficient enough to be built upon by identity-constructing participants. Songs and musical styles are not chosen randomly but are chosen based on their ability to ‘give voice to sub-cultural themes by idealizing them’ (ibid 2000, p.218). Notice Alicia’s comments on music in ‘Africa’:

When I have been in Africa, it seems that young people are not interested in their own music. They are into hip-hop. I mean that is a big sweeping generalization but they are not interested in their own music.

Alicia says that her involvement with West African music comes from a love of music. It’s interesting that more than once in the interview she reflected that Africans, in particular young Africans, should not forget their music. For example, 'hip hop' has been developed and owned by many Senegalese musicians who position themselves against 'world music' (Osumare 2007; Motley & Henderson 2008). She continues that

they do not realize what thing they have. They take it for granted. Other cultures have long lost that connection with culture and music.

Her statements imply that Western music no longer represents Western culture or is in some ways not connected to Western culture. The contemporary British culture then would and should be represented through contemporary music. But so would a contemporary Africa. Music in the West coincides with social and political changes in the West, as music does in societies everywhere else. Frith (1996, p.111) argues that social groups ‘only get to know themselves as groups through cultural activities’, such as music. Thus, any efforts to keep West African music as a form that represents particular notions of authenticity would then imply that the culture itself should remain unchanged and that the music and those that represent it become essentialized and romanticized. This occludes the possibility of Africans partaking in a contemporary, non-essentialized musical production. Alicia is not alone in her feeling this way. Almost all of the white
respondents in the project, either directly or indirectly, expressed a desire not to see African music performed in London begin to mirror ‘Western’ music or even current African music forms. This is important for world music to maintain particular social meanings, however contradictory. Frith shows that musical identities are a reflection of ‘the social world one inhabits’ (1996, 122). Alicia’s ideas then would require African cultures not to modernize. It also reflects the efforts of Darbucka World Music Lounge (discussed in Chapter Four) to capture and market particular nostalgias (hooks 1999) embedded with colonial and post-colonial narratives (Featherstone 2005; McClintock 1992).

Alicia approaches world music with a particular musical and cultural authority that is absent from Helen’s case. Alicia asserts that she understands that (Africa) cannot remain underdeveloped otherwise ‘it will fossilize’. However, socio-economic development touches upon all aspects of life including what music is produced (Jackson 2002). Development can be a double-edged sword for world music. For example, with increased investment, the music industry can begin to make use of better technology, which, in turn, gives the sound more polish. This in turn may produce a less ‘authentic’ or raw sound associated with world music (Taylor 2004). Furthermore, the unequal and uneven effects of economic development in regions such as West Africa ensure a steady stream of musicians to the West and a ready network of club owners and promoters.

Alicia says that she has experienced dissatisfaction with what she terms ‘the status quo of Britain and its bureaucracy’ and is, in her own way, opting out. She is using West African music as an instrument to preserve a sense of nature and purity, however artificial. Hers is a nostalgic reflection of tradition. However, this reflection can be a form of delusion. After listening to what was once seen as ‘alternative’ music in the West, such as James Brown, she began experiencing other kinds of music. Notice a quote from her Myspace page:

I stumbled across the fabulous sounds of Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso,
Senegal, and Gambia, and, before long, the music of West Africa took me over. From then till now I have played it, studied it, performed it, wrestled with it, and been inspired by it to pursue my own particular creative journey, while travelling nearly every year to Senegal and Gambia to drink in the culture, learn, and spend time with friends.

It is not only that young Africans ‘need to realize the beauty of their music’ as she argues, but also she needs West Africa to remain suspended in a particular geographical lens. Her suspension of Africa in time serves as a key resource to reproduce West African music here in London. Also on her webpage is an interview she given to Freddy Macha, an East African musician and journalist, she says that her home looks and feels like Africa.

She adds, ‘People feel at home here, African people usually feel at home [in my flat].’

The journalist responds, ‘Only African people?’

She says, ‘oh no, no all sorts of people. Because people say oh its just like Africa in here.’

Alicia has tried to reproduce ‘Africa’ in her flat in Brixton, South London, by the use of warm colours reminiscent of Senegalese artistry and many plants all around. She then seeks further validation of her identity-constructing efforts from the Tanzanian journalist by asking what he thought of her place. Such nostalgia or geographic imaginaries take the place of having any critical engagement with its politics for the consumer of world music. The consumer can feel a sense of knowledge about the people and the countries through the music. However, such ‘knowledge’ is situated in that it is ‘linked to the contexts in which it was created’ (Haraway 1991).

Alicia, like the other white female respondents, uses other means to keep their connections with West African culture and music alive. They have had or are having relationships with West African males. These relationships usually occur in relation to music production and often result in the man marrying the woman.
or being sponsored by the woman to come to the UK to live and work. Alicia had a relationship with a younger Senegalese man and she commented that it was an uneven relationship in a few ways. She said that as a musician herself she ‘could not afford to keep sending him money’. She recounted the story of giving him a mobile phone from the UK and he was dissatisfied because it was the latest brand that he requested.

Helen and Alicia’s participation in West African world music reflect a particular means of expression that is rooted in feelings of not belonging in British society. However, their motives are quite different, as is their approach to the music itself. Alicia has a much more authoritative view of West African music and exudes a confidence when discussing the subject. An interesting point during our interview was her reflection on the night of her performance with Malian singer, Daby Balde. He performed at a small club in Camden. During the performance, a Malian woman was called up to the small stage to sing along with Balde. She sang in her native language and was warmly received by the audience. She appeared to be part of the band; however, to my surprise, Alicia said that she was not part of the band nor had they even rehearsed the song the woman sang. She expressed annoyance at the woman’s taking up part of the physical space where Alicia was playing. I was left wondering if Alicia felt that the safety and sense of belonging she found in West African music was being challenged. At that moment, she was no longer the only female on stage. Additionally, all of her difference and uniqueness of being a (white) female who easily circulates in this music scene was overshadowed for the five-minute ad-hoc performance. She became invisible. During this part of the interview, her voice showed clear irritation at what she said was a ‘lack of order’. So, on the one hand, Alicia views music and, consequently, the people and cultures of West Africa as a pure, unadulterated sound that deserves protect. One on the other hand, she has, in some ways, appointed herself as the protectorate of this purity in London.
By contrast, Helen seemed more cautious in how she was representing African music. She commented on the very frequent rehearsal schedule that Yaaba Funk maintains. In this hybrid group, only the male lead singer is Ghanaian, which creates an interesting dynamic of how the other members receive the filtered Ghanaian-influenced material to perform. She commented that she had no say in the group’s decision to release a 10-inch LP rather than a CD. At many points during the interview, she appeared to be on the margins of Yaaba Funk, which is strange because she is the lead female singer. One can argue that in some ways she turned her back on feeling marginalized in greater British society in exchange for a form of marginality in music. In a sense, this means exchanging one form of subjugation for another (Foucault 2000, 337). Both women are exploring their identities through this fragile empowerment. However, what they have discovered about themselves differs greatly.

In Alicia’s case, she has found her voice of authority and sense of fragile empowerment, which can easily be challenged in different spaces. Helen also found a voice in that she can circulate in and around many ‘black’ music scenes. However, these contexts are still not providing the kind of visibility that she is seeking. Steinert (2003, 71) argues that identity is always ‘the result of classifying an object in abstract terms by linking it to a concept.’ He further adds that such classification misses the target ‘precisely because of its abstractness’. Frith’s (1996, p.123) argument supports this in a sense. He says that representation and identities in music are as fluid as music itself. ‘While music may be shaped by the people who first make and use it, as experience it has a life of its own’.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The connection among these stories is that people can and do construct identities from world music involvement in different ways. One way musicians
choose to represent themselves in this industry might have a lot to do with how they see themselves in British society. Ossibisa’s success was enabled through their ability to tap into shifting cultural values in the Britain and the US. Without the label of world music, they were able to represent music with a different set of boundaries. Another point that comes up is how some musicians use this music as means of empowerment in their own lives. As demonstrated by white participation in this art form, world music has become an accepted form of self-expression in which authenticity often extends beyond colour. Many of the respondents who contributed to this chapter expressed strong narratives of nostalgia and authenticity, although the construction of these narratives varied according to the respondents’ own needs. This also highlights the balance between identity and authenticity, and the wider structures of representation in world music.

Musicians, such as Ben Baddoo, try to tap into different outlets such as watching movies and traveling to West Africa, the original source of production. Alicia has visited Senegal and the Gambia eight times and brags about how she drinks in the culture in an effort to find means of expression for herself. Helen and her group Yaaba-Funk also travel to Ghana for linkages to the original source of music. However, this does not provide unambiguous access to authenticity because it is still a multifaceted negotiated process that changes according to circumstances and meanings that participants attach to a performance production. If ‘authenticity’ is an intangible concept as Connell and Gibson (2004) suggests, then it will forever be contested in world music, The contested identities of the music and its performers consequently keep world music in a ‘conflict of interpretations’ (Clifford 1988, p.8).

However, there is still an undercurrent of what Gilroy terms ‘the changing same’ (1990, 113), which can be seen and felt in the stated and in the implied; for example, Alicia’s sense of order and preservation is reminiscent of colonial and
post-colonial speak. She finds herself fighting against the politics of being British and finds some respite in West African music forms. In fact, many of the interviewees are doing identity and positioning work in their discussion of this music. Helen still struggles with her identity as a black British woman more than 50 years after Windrush ship landed carrying the first group of black Caribbean migrants (Gilroy 1991) and the riots of ‘Notting Hill to Nottingham’ (Paul 1997). Helen wears African aesthetics and draws upon alternate expressions of her blackness in ways that may not be accessible to Alicia. Their approaches to West African music are also a reflection of who they are as people. They are finding themselves in this art, however, with very different results—one is from a position of subjugation, the other of authority. The next chapter is the conclusion. It brings together the key arguments in this thesis. The chapter goes back to the research question and objectives and shows how these arguments contribute to our understanding of identity and geography and music.
Chapter 7 Concluding chapter

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to summarize the main finding that resulted from the research question of this thesis: What are the relationships between the conditions of production of world music and the constructions of musicians’ identities? The question was evaluated through three key objectives that will be discussed in turn. The first objective explored how world music was produced and by whom. This objective was the framework for Chapter Four. As part of this objective, the chapter examined the process of commodification of world music. When Appadurai wrote *The Social Life of Things* in 1986, the process of commodification of world music was already changing. WOMAD’s creation in 1982 began a series of changes to how this music became marketed to British public. The further labeling of world music by cultural intermediaries in a London pub in 1987 established this music as a means of viable entertainment. It also created a sustainable livelihood for musicians, promoters, and venue owners, all seemingly good things. However, the music of different cultures and places subsumed in the world music label ‘have been produced in a syncretic pattern’ (Gilroy 1993, p.3) such that the music has been reconstructed and relocalised as an established part of the landscape of music in London, yet not quite part of ‘mainstream’ music in London. The next section explores the first objective in greater detail and discusses the lessons that a study of world music production can offer to understandings of commodification.

7.2 COMMODIFICATION OF WORLD MUSIC
To understand how Appadurai’s (1986) commodification framework can be applied to world music first required a clear identification of the commodity. A commodity is any object whose principle destination is for exchange, therefore the commodity in this case could be the music itself, the narratives that accompany the music, the musicians, and/or ideas offered through the consumption of the music. These overlapping constructions of the commodity indicate the relativism and complexities of commodities, and of the commodification process. Within this process, two directionalities of commodification occur; from above and from below. In London world music production, cultural intermediaries control the flow and representation of world music. Chapter Four explored how this small group of elites exercise control over how the music get represented through media and the selection of musical styles and artists. This activity takes place at the more prominent, larger venues for world music in London, such as the Barbican and London’s South Bank, but its effects trickle down to both the activity of smaller venues and in the actions of the musicians themselves.

Research (Hesmondhalgh 2007; Finn 2008; Laing 2009; Brandellero & Pfeffer 2011) has been done to show how commodification in music occurs from above. Their approaches examined global economic forces that also created marginalized spaces for different actors as commodification processes occurred. Institutional powers, such as state and industry actors, used funding and discourse to create and market particular perceptions of world music for different purposes. However, this thesis also looked at how individuals seize upon this cultural good and, in some cases, aspects of their own identity to create commercial value. By focusing on individual experiences, subjectivity was (re)positioned to open a different avenue to explore power and agency within a localized world music production.
Cultural intermediaries were largely responsible for introducing this form of music to UK audiences. They maintained close control over which music was able to enter the UK world music market and how this entry occurred. In the first instance, music performed for celebrations, funerals, as well as music for entertainment purposes was commercialized and sold in Western markets for entertainment purposes only. This meant that not only was the music re-commodified, but also sufficiently removed from their origin associated meanings by labeling it as world music.

As part of the commodification process, the focus often shifted from the song onto the performance, and the performers. As different music was promoted, the lives of the singers who were from those places were often glorified as part of the promotion of the music. Real and imagined details of the musician’s life and identity created a more ‘authentic’ performance for some intermediaries. We saw this in the case of the Financial Times review of a young Cameroonian singer and, more pointedly, of the disabled Congolese music group in Chapter Four.

World music has evolved since its founding in 1987, in part, by fusing with other genres and/or collaborations among artists from different parts of the world. These changes have not been entirely organic but rather they represent a continued effort to (re)commodify or (re)create value from music that had become familiar to audiences. Commodification from above and from below means that such developments in world music are not haphazardly done, as a result of throwntogetherness (Massey 2005) of market forces nor are they limited to changing societal values as Appadurai (1986) argues; rather, they are the result of skillful reflections on perceived needs of the market by musicians, DJs, promoters and powerful cultural intermediaries. This highlights two key points: organizations like MBM and Serious, both discussed in Chapter Four, have a critical role in controlling the means of resources. But also, and more importantly, they are leaders in (re)constructing ideas not so much about ‘the
other’ but about what constitutes aspects of British society. Reflecting on Mary Douglas’ work, Slater (1998, p.150) argues that ‘consumption is about stabilizing cognitive orders in societies.’ Though the term society usually refers to the whole of the society; in this thesis, it should be understood as a group of individuals and actors that coexist within this production-consumption system. These actors are not reactants to social change; rather, these institutions have a keen interest in guiding and maintaining particular perceptions of this commodity as a desirable consumption good. This is accomplished through controlling the means and conditions of production of world music in London. It is within this remit that the musicians of this study shift, create and (re)shape their identities to achieve some level of self-satisfaction and earn a living.

The second point is that the structure, meaning the regimentation within which the commodity is delivered, suggests that there is a recognition of and value in the ‘changing same’ (Gilroy 1990, p.126). By this Gilroy is referring to the ‘reproduction of cultural traditions…that suggests that the invocation of tradition may itself be a distinct response to destabilizing flux of the postcontemporary world’ (Ibid 1990, p.126). This is evidenced through careful construction and moderation of various ‘themes’ of world music in the commodification process. What Gilroy does not clearly show is who is responding to what. In other words, who is invoking the traditions that have come to symbolize world music? Using Spooner (1986), this thesis argues that cultural intermediaries create and recreate traditions through the adaptation of existing forms of world music. Spooner (1986) showed that responses to social and economic changes drove producers to modify their goods using what they knew previously as a basis on which to build. However, data from MBM’s website showed that there are limitations to changes in performance style and representations. An important contribution of this thesis is that, just as Spooner (1986) showed, commodification from above is not the only force in creating the changing same.
Other research has cast this behaviour as a means of exploitation (see Chapter Four). However, this thesis showed the complicity of the musicians themselves in the commodification process, referred to as commodification from below. Therefore, the notion of the dialectic was used to illustrate the relationship that existed between ‘from above’ and ‘from below’; one that was at once dualistic and hybrid in nature. Commodification from below meant that non-institutional actors such as musicians and low level promoters acted quite deliberately to play up the musicians’ own histories as a means of selling the music. In this case, the narrative and histories of the musicians became a critical point in distinguishing this music from other types. However, this suggests a particular level of agency in both groups, which brings forth tensions over what or who gets (re)presented and how. It also underscores the position of each group within the system and how they relate to each other an that control over representation of both the music and the artists is a key part of commodifying world music.

Marketing as a tool of commodification uses particular language to create different types of expectations before and during the performance. The language that stoked ideas of otherness (Hall 1999) is of particular interest with the marketing and commodification of world music from parts of West Africa. The depiction of these artists as being from another world, as was shown in Chapter Four using promotional material from Liverpool’s Africa Oye Festival and the Financial Times’ review of Muntu Valdo, added a degree of mystique to the performance and also resurrected old beliefs about the Other. However, this promotion strategy is becoming less convincing in positioning the product as a key entertainment good. This is not to suggest that attempts of exotification of world music are no longer part of the commodification process, for it most certainly is. However, the increased global flows (Jackson 2002) also means an increase in knowledge about the world and our relationship to it. In other words, as a result of the continued overlapping of spaces, there are fewer and fewer ‘mystifying’ stories or exotica left to accompany world music. The situation
yielded a contested struggle over how the artist commodified him or herself versus how cultural intermediaries chose to represent them as both parties attempt to maintain the relevance of world music.

This thesis showed how different representations of an artist can be derived from above and below. For Muntu, the choice of self-representation resulted in him seeing himself in a much more normalized way as opposed to the Financial Times’ reviewer’s perspective. That is, no mention of witchcraft or other exotica was made in his own promotional advert. Whereas the commodification from above sought to highlight difference, real and imagined, commodification from below emphasized similarities with western music genres (othering versus belonging). The lesson that can be derived from this example is that agency requires a reflective understanding of the Self. As such, in deciding how to represent himself, Muntu should examine not only places and spaces but also the ‘material conditions’ under which he is producing this good. That is, the forces of concentration of cultural production and the forces of differentiation (Couldry 2000, p.129).

The last part of this chapter looked at how one person’s exercise of agency can have (negative) repercussions for others. These ‘unintended consequences’ (Miller 2002) fostered by economic and social forces in the UK and in West Africa led to further marginalization and exploitation of some foreign-born musicians while empowering some of the locally-born promoters. Hesmondhalgh (2007, p.186) shows that commodification ‘leads to a situation where we are cut of from the work that goes into making life what it is’. Hence, exploitation and other factors that Cook (2004) has shown at the sites of production are also (re)constructed throughout the production-consumption process. While, this chapter introduced the notion of ideas being commodified and marketed in world music. Chapter Five discussed how this takes place in the venues that offer world music in London.
7.3 Spaces and Places of World Music

The ‘deteriorialization of world music’ (Connell & Gibson 2004) was part of its commodification process. This has given a fairly free range of interpretations by both producers and consumers. As this thesis argued in Chapter Five, spaces were (re)constructed to offer particular narratives in the production of world music. The narratives themselves became a means by which to increase value of both the venues and the performers. Promoters provided key data for this chapter. These intermediaries exercise control over how the music is disseminated and who partakes in world music production in particular spaces. This is achieved through marketing strategies that reinforce ideas about core-periphery relations or resistance to hegemonic forces outside of the venues, among others.

Although there are many such venues throughout London, four were chosen to demonstrate the broadest range of narratives observed during the project. Each of these locations generated particular themes that offered a different reflection on the conditions of production of world music in London. Gottdiener (2000, p.270) observed that ‘themed environments’ though relatively recent have proven highly successful. The focus on small venues yielded a particular intensity for the actors involved and allowed me to witness how spaces become produced by and through music (Cohen 1995) and how aesthetics underscored by particular spatial dynamics created different sets of world music experiences. The locations of these venues in the city also gave insights into who were ‘allowed’ to participate in world music and, consequently, what it says about the broader socioeconomic landscape of the city.
Four themes were teased out of this examination and (re)contextualized into discourses of commodification. These themes were resistance, peace and reconciliation, community involvement, and nostalgia. Once the aesthetic and form were created to capture the theme, venue operators gave careful attention to maintaining the product for their customer bases. Each venue constructed a different interpretation of authentic spaces that were then transposed onto the performance venue. This was achieved through selection of musical styles that promoters felt embodied the theme of the venue. By doing this, promoters steered consumers toward their venue; however, often such efforts did not necessarily yield the intended result. One promoter derided part of the so-called consumer base of Passing Clouds. ‘Yes, [the venue] is popular but half the people don’t even know why they are there!’ This declaration shows that some promoters view venues for world music as having a greater purpose other than entertainment and work toward infusing the space with directed political meaning. Ley (1982, p.221) argues that ‘places can reveal less self-conscious or explicit messages of dominant ideologies and social relations.’ He continues that, in turn, this emphasizes the ‘dialectical nature of human freedom’. In this respect then the venues can be seen as an attempt to re-territorialise world music in a new hybrid and particular form.

This chapter also examined the kinds of power structures that are contained within and in relationship to the conditions of production of world music. The theory of hegemony was used to understand how resistance and power worked within some of these consumption spaces. It was apparent in the venues that prevailing dispositions existed regarding people who did not participate in world music (production or consumption) and even among world music consumers. This is not a particularly surprising result because commodities are acted upon for different reasons at different points in time. However, more attention should be paid to how hegemony and resistance function within the performance venue. World music offers this opportunity because it was formed with a particular
political orientation (discussed in Chapter Four). In this thesis, it was pointed out that every aspect of the performance worked to promote a particular kind of space. In some venues, the messages or narratives administered through the choice and arrangement of seating and aesthetics were quite direct. For example, in Passing Clouds, there were pictures of Bob Marley and other revolutionary figures. The promotional materials used similar incendiary visual devices (see Chapter Five). In other venues, the narratives were subtler. In this latter case, there is a correspondence with the framework of hegemony, Thwaites et al (2002, p.169) argue that hegemony is subtle in nature and does not ‘impose’ itself; rather, ‘it is offered to them, as something you already agree with, as a reflection of your own desires and wants, in which you can already and effortlessly recognize yourself.’ I thought this was really interesting in helping to explain my own discomfort that I often felt in these spaces. So the promoter’s comments about the Passing Clouds’ audiences above could be an assessment of a perceived unconscious resistance or ambivalence in some attendees to the dominant ideology of the space. That is to say that she felt that they did not have the ‘right’ political orientation for the space, which may have represented me in some ways. However, on reflection I question her ability to determine that.

Although this thesis did not directly look at audiences, participant observation proved Hutnyk’s (2000) argument that these venues rarely reflect the diversity of the city to be true in some respects. The lack of diversity among the audiences was readily apparent. Since world music from West African was the focus of this thesis, it was interesting to see how much racial diversity was present in the audiences.

The Tabernacle promoters commented that marketing strategies simply did not target non-white audiences despite different kinds of West African world music being performed. Their approach has a direct bearing on how the purpose of the space gets constituted and what type of identity building activities the musicians
can engage with. In other words, the lack of diversity in the audience is, in some cases, a deliberate move by cultural intermediaries and it has a direct bearing on the conditions of world music production within a particular space. While another promoter said, because ‘Africans don’t drink as much [alcohol] as the English, and since we make a wide margin on the bar bill, we lose out.’ In another case, a senior world music performer felt that Africans were susceptible to economic realities that meant working late hours and not having the extra income or energy to come to such places. So, cultural and economic factors were blamed on the lack of diversity in world music audiences. These reasons are problematic in a number of ways. The economic factors presume that there are no middle class blacks in London, which of course is not true. The cultural factors (drinking less alcohol) point to the commercial interest of the owners. However, what I was surprised not to hear from the respondent was the impact that the location of the venue had on participation and the extent to which these places and spaces ‘market’ toward particular groups of consumers: ‘White, middle-class Guardian readers’, as one promoter described their consumer base. This emphasizes that a particular political orientation is characteristic of world music production. But it also highlights the degree of exclusionary practices that world music production engages in, which it was ironically created to fight against.\footnote{\url{http://www.realworldrecords.com/about-us/}; Accessed March 2010.}

An equally important point is that the narratives identified in this research clearly play to the political orientation of these consumers. These spaces of consumption then reinforce this orientation by using themes to create the aesthetics and choices of music. Gottdiener (2000, p.221) goes on to show, however, that although ‘landscapes’ are created with a particular ambition, ‘they are created within (social and political) constraints that may not always be visible to the creator.’ What this implies, as was shown in a couple of the examples in
this chapter, is a side effect that reinforces the broader social and political realities of the city onto this site of production.

7.4 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND WORLD MUSIC

The third objective of this thesis examined how musicians used world music as a means of identity construction. Distance and commodity forms were germane to this research because they highlight the ‘biographies’ of world music (Kopytoff 1986). Identity was operationalized in three ways in the introductory chapter and was developed through empirical research of Chapter Six. First, identity formation is a continuous and negotiated process. That is, identity is shaped and reshaped according to interactions with others, which in turn means that identity is socially constructed (Sarup 1996). According to Kopytoff (1986, p.73), commodification is ‘best looked upon as a process of becoming rather than as an all-or-one state of being’. The case of world music tells an interesting story about how its participants become; that is to say, how identities are shaped around this performance art. In the chapter, much of the data was generated from the performers themselves and the chapter’s title captures the multiple and overlapping identity configurations that create value for world music but also plague the art form.

Chapter Four discussed how commodification was based upon both the music and the performers’ biographies. From the latter, particular perceptions of the musicians’ identities were then sold off as part of the performance experience. In this objective (Chapter Six) an understanding was sought of how individuals act upon world music as a means to shape their identities. Chapter Six discussed the ways that many musicians use different constructions of authenticity in performances and in their lives to create, highlight, and change aspects of their identity. This is coupled with an increasing deterritorialization of
world music and the recontextualization of knowledge about commodities that allow for a disaggregation of former ideas regarding what it means to perform world music. In plain terms, the visual representation of a black West African performing world music from the same region as a measure of authenticity is increasingly being replaced by mixed bands of non-African and non-black musicians and mixed narratives about places and spaces of world music production. The extent to which this has an impact on audiences is indeterminate for a number of reasons, which I will briefly discuss. Primarily, it is difficult to measure authenticity in a contemporary city. People have many different notions of what constitutes an authentic experience (Grazian 2004). If authenticity is just about passion, as one respondent expressed, then measuring an authentic production would be fairly difficult.

The shift in the ‘necessity’ of seeing a black person representing West African world music might in fact be a reflection of a host of societal changes. If so, this would support Appadurai’s (1986) argument of the commodification stages of a good. What was clear about the respondents in this chapter was their discontent with some aspect of their current sets of identities and relationships. Some respondents were white musicians and others were black Caribbean, while others were black British. The fact that they were all playing West African world music speaks to a number of points. One is that identity is a negotiated process. The implication then is that world music is a changing commodity that has enabled a hybridity, which can in turn lends itself to multiple interpretations of both Western and non-Western identities.

Second, identity should be thought of as occurring in relation to space and time. This means that identities are situational, meaning that spaces shape identity and are shaped by identity. The research showed that musicians can and do create a different persona when performing in different venue. This is achieved
through the selection of music and wardrobe, among other things. Participant observations of the performances of the late South African singer, Doreen Thobelkile, and New Yorker Toli Nameless were used to show how performers highlight/modify different aspects of their identity that correspond to particular spaces. In another case, participant observations at a performance at St. Ethelburgas’ Church, a Brazilian-born Nigerian changed his performance style during the performance and was immediately corrected by the venue promoter to relate to the audience in a way deemed more ‘appropriate’. Music is a form of identity expression (Finnegan 2003) and these examples lend support to Guilbault's (1997, p.41) assertion, 'people's identities are not “lodged” somewhere or in something' but rather, as I have argued, 'emerge from points of articulation.'

Lastly, changes in the musical practices of world music have implications for how identity develops (Cohen 1995). The research, however, highlighted distinctions among the types of representations of world music from West Africa. Some performances were marked by song choice and costumes as representing less contemporary music, such as the Zawose Family and Henri Gaobi, both discussed in Chapter Four. That is, they are less similar to Western musical styles than other world music and maintained a particular perception of authenticity. Other musicians were more ‘flexible’ in their approach to music and used no particular costume, such as Muntu Valdo. Despite this distinction, one criterion was always in place during performances, the way that the musicians were introduced: ‘all the way from…’ Such an introduction was part of an attempt to transpose a geographic imaginary onto the performance. In some ways it added to the performance value but it also framed the identity of the performer in that particular time and space.

Another key point is that the (re)production of difference, and othering more broadly, has shifted away from the (us/them) binary that was once a selling point
of this music. This is not to say that distinction in the Bourdieuan sense is not valid, rather it suggests that new definitions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ have been integrated into world music production that have implications for how identities are reinforced or produced. This was discussed through the examples of the musicians, Helen and Alicia, in Chapter Six. For these musicians, their struggles with identity were tied to their relationships with British identity. They used world music as a means to reposition themselves, in some ways, onto the margins of British society and identities. They have, for themselves, redefined who (or what) constitutes ‘us’.

Ideas are increasingly being commodified and parcelled up for sale. This is occurring both in the context of spaces creating narratives that draw in the crowds. Such as shift should be expected as flows and economic forces compel new strategies to be put forth in maintaining relevance and value for world music. It is important not to overemphasize the role of ideas as a commodity. The chapter looked at how key actors retained control and utilized language and mythologies about West African artists. Charlie Gillett’s role in world music clearly illustrates how identities of world music performers particularly from West Africa were (re) constructed as being outside of Western-ness.

Finally, the chapter examines how musicians, particularly of West African origin, attempt to stay relevant in London. The word relevance itself is open to multiple meanings depending on who or what determines relevance. Looking at the commercially viability of the artist may be the simplest way; meaning that they are able to secure performances based on the type of material they are representing. This section showed that identity is indeed adaptable to different circumstances. Guilbault (1997, p.41) argued that the multiple allegiances that musicians ‘have exhibited through their music practices and the various positionings they have adopted in various international markets’ are a testament to the fluidity of identity.
The three empirical chapters (Chapters Four, Five, and Six) engaged with the underpinning objectives of the thesis. They investigated a different aspect of the research question and, collectively, demonstrated how the conditions of world music production in London are shaped by the efforts of key actors from above and below. The chapters also discussed the implications of this commodification process for musicians’ efforts to shape their identities. The next section examines the limitations of the research and how they could be addressed in future research.

7.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This study’s focus was on the perspective of musicians and minor world music promoters. Some limitations to the study might be seen in the narrow parameters that set on this thesis, but they were due to time and financial resources. Hence, another way to approach the project would be through the potential for comparative work with other cities, or using larger samples within the London world music circle or of a greater variety of interviewees, given time and resources. As a researcher I am aware of the limited basis of the claims within this thesis; however, what was created was a very focused observation of a relatively understudied aspect of world music production. Lastly, there were a few interviews that did not happen because of the immigration status of the musicians. Living in legal marginality in the UK caused four musicians to refuse to participate in the study for fear of (imagined) repercussions from the UK Border Agency.

7.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF RESEARCH

Using Appadurai’s framework on commodification as well as Jackson’s and others (Slater 1998; Frow 1997; Bryant & Goodman 2004) work on global flows,
the thesis attempted to show that academic research on world music can still offer rich lessons about the relationship between cultural commodities and identity construction. As such, this research contributes to a wider literature on identity on geography and music (Cohen 1995; Guilbault 1997; Leyshon et al. 1998; Connell & Gibson 2004), and extends the literature on commodification of world music (Lovering 1988; Feld 2000a; Finn 2008; Pratt 2008; Haynes 2011). Furthermore, this research offers a critique of Appadurai’s (1986) framework of commodification and offers a different understanding of how commodities get infused with value. Lastly, this study critiques previous understandings of how identities get articulated and appropriated through black music and black identities (Gilroy 1993; hooks 1999). Lastly, this research complements work on music production and world music (Lovering 1988; Waterman 1991; Leyshon et al. 1998; Feld 2000b; Brandellero & Pfeffer 2011).

7.7 AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

There are still unexplored areas of research on this topic. For example, I spoke with one promoter regarding the incorporation of marketing strategies to ‘African’ audiences in London. We are both interested in knowing how marketing might change under this new condition. Specifically, what representations would work under these conditions? What would the label of world music mean in this case? Also, what it says about situated knowledges of the consumer. How would the conditions of production of world music change and what implications would this have for identity building? Would white musicians have the same degree of success as they have currently playing West African world music? This raises issues regarding how representation and power. In this research, there were many strategies that cultural intermediaries employed in controlling the industry. Would this shift in target audience change anything? Under this project, to what extent would Bourdieu’s conception of distinction and social class be applicable?
In addition to re-interpretating Sheppard’s charge of ‘whose music?’ It would also serve to re-territorialize the product; meaning that the geographic imaginary is still being transposed onto the performance, but perhaps with much less effort. This examination would also entail the city and spaces of consumption, the locations of these new venues (if new venues are used) might suggests a different of understanding spatial politics that influence entertainment choices, including spaces of resistance.

The second, and more realistic, area of research is something that I alluded to in the Chapter Five: examining the differences between sites of production where ‘West African music’ is played and where West African world music is played. In London there are many venues that play West African music. These are generally outside of the Central London (zones 1 and 2). Some key determinants that could be used for comparison include song choice, costumes, and the musicians’ interaction with audiences, and audience composition. Some of the same world music bands also perform in these clubs; hence it would be interesting to see how representation and identity change under these different conditions.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the relationship between the conditions of production of world music in London and identity construction of the musicians. The research emerged from reflections on the disparities and gaps in the literature to address the effect of the production of a particular cultural commodity that is based on particular constructions of identity, often in a racialized context. By deconstructing commodification of this good, the thesis looked at how tensions between dialectical forces between commodification from above and commodification from below played out and, as a result, how representation and identities materialized.
By drawing the findings of the London world music scene, this thesis was able to identify conditions of production in small world music venues that have facilitated identity construction, self-empowerment and, in some cases, resistance to dominant societal discourses for the musicians who perform in them. On the other hand, there are stories on marginalization and exploitation that needed to be told and understood within the framework of commodification. By foregrounding identity through an examination of music production the study showed how physical and conceptual spaces can be used to privilege and marginalise particular narratives and identities for commercial purposes.
Bibliography


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Sarup, Madan, 1996. *Identity, culture, and the postmodern world*, Athens, Ga :


## Appendix

### Item 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/respondent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Association (if any)</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe Legwebi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>Ipo Temi and Temple of Sound</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Renton</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>April 2008/Feb. 2010</td>
<td>Chili Fried</td>
<td>DJ/Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muntu Valdo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makuta</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>Grupo Lokito</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Stewart</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>May 2010/Aug. 2010</td>
<td>Flying Carpet</td>
<td>DJ/Promoter</td>
</tr>
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<td>David Mowat</td>
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<td>March 2010</td>
<td>BouGaRaBou</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara McGuiness</td>
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<td>Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora de Gales</td>
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<td>Promoter</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ossibisa</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
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<td>ADU</td>
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<td>July 2010</td>
<td>Ossibisa</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Baddoo</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>BouGaRaBou</td>
<td>Musician/Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosi Conde</td>
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<td>June 2010</td>
<td>OuterGlobe</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallee McDonnell</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>St. Ethelburgas’ Church</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henri Gaori</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>August 2009</td>
<td></td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laye Sow</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>Kim Sow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moussa Kouyate</td>
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<td>Abdul Tee Jay</td>
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<td>David Dravie-John</td>
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<td>Bashir Rutasingwa</td>
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<td>Debbie Golt, Wala, Wil; and Fred</td>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>August 2010</td>
<td>Wom@tt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wil Joseph-Lowenthal</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>October 2010</td>
<td>Wom@tt</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
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</table>
The venues listed below are the ones discussed in Chapter four of the thesis. Venues run performances series but often with different numbers of performances. Repeat visits were used to analyse these places. Other venues were also visited (detail in the another table in the appendix). In total, 70 participant observations were conducted over an 18-month period from March 2008 through December 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue, London Neighbourhood</th>
<th>Number of Participant Observations</th>
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<td>The Tabernacle, Notting Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darbucka World Music Lounge, Clerkenwell</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing Clouds, Dalston</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The different numbers of participant observations correspond to the number of performances in a given year at a given venue. Venues that ran more performances during the season (September-early June) were visited more often. During the visits, the following criteria were used: spatial configuration, distance of the stage to the audience areas, aesthetics, and size of the venues. These criteria affected the interactions of the musicians with members of the audience and the performance itself.

**Complete list of music venues visited for this study**
(The four italicized venues were the ones discussed in chapter six of the project.)

**Central London**
- Darbucka World Music Lounge, Clerkenwell
- St. Ethelburga’s Church, Liverpool Street
- The Green Note, Camden
- The Jazz Café, Camden
- Ronny Scott’s, Camden
- Momo’s, near Regent’s Street

**West London**
- The Tabernacle, Notting Hill
- MauMau, Notting Hill
- The Notting Hill Arts Club, Notting Hill
- Inn-on-the-Green, Ladbroke Grove

**South London**
- The Hootananny, Brixton
- The Ritz Café, Brixton
- Croydon Clocktower, Croydon

**Near East London**
- Rich Mix, Bethnal Green
- Open the Gate, Dalston
- Passing Clouds, Dalston
- The Vortex Jazz Club, Dalston
- The New Empowering Church, Dalston
- Cargo, Old Street
- Favela Chic, Old Street
Non-world music venues (African venues)

Club Afrique, Canning Town
The Gold Coast, West Norwood
West Green Tavern, Seven Sisters
Sierra Pub, Camberwell

Item 3

Charlie Gillett’s Album of the Month Archive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month-</th>
<th>Album/Artist</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Momo Wandel Soumah</td>
<td>Guinea/Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>O Brother Where Art Thou</td>
<td>US</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Radio Tarifa, Cruzando el Rio</td>
<td>Morocco/Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Little George Sueref</td>
<td>US</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Positive Black Soul</td>
<td>Afro France</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Kekele/Rumba Congo</td>
<td>Congo</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Susheela Raman/Salt Rain</td>
<td>Asians in UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Cherif Mbaw</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Various Artist/Tea in Marrakech</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Joe Strummer &amp; The</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Mescaleros</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Various Artists/2001</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<td>Gotan Project/La Revancha del</td>
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<td>Tango</td>
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<td>2002</td>
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<td>Mamani Keita &amp; Marc Minelli</td>
<td>Mali/West Africa</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Bob Dylan/Love and Theft</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Mariza/Fado Em Mim</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Mali Music/Honest Jon's</td>
<td>Mali/West Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Artist/Genre</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>The Be Good Tanyas</td>
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<td>Various</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>World 2002/Various Artist</td>
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<td>Meditteranean</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Travelogue/Manteca</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Sekouba Bambino</td>
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<td>Salif Keita/Mouffou</td>
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<td>Ojos de Brujo/ Bari</td>
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<td>Kad Achouri</td>
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**2003**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>*JC &amp; 419 Squad/Hip Hop</td>
<td>Africans in UK</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Sevara Nazarkhan</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Dusminguet</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Johnny Cash/The Man Comes</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Around</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Various</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Artists/Globalista:Import Export</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Arabesque/Tlata</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>World 2003/Various Artist</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Festival in the Desert</td>
<td>Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Oumou Sangare</td>
<td>Africa/Mali</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Terry Hall &amp; Mushtaq</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Daara J/Rap/Boomerang</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<td>Chango Spasiuk</td>
<td>Influences from everywhere</td>
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**2004**

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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Abyssinia Infinite/featuring</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Pietra Montecorvino</td>
<td>Napoli</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ejigayehu &quot;Gigi&quot; Shibabaw</td>
<td>Zion'/Ethiopia</td>
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276
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Tinariwen/Amassakoul</td>
<td>Mali/West Africa</td>
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<td>Amassakoul</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Carla Bruni/Quelqu’un m’a dit</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Cesaria Evora/Voz D’Amor</td>
<td>Cape Verde/Africa</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Aiwa</td>
<td>Iraiki in France</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Youssou N'Dour/Egypt</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Khaled/Ya-Rayi</td>
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<td>Various Artist 20 year history</td>
<td>Mostly West African</td>
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<td>Volga</td>
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**2005**

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<td>Chango Spasiuk</td>
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<td>Darko Rundek and the Cargo Orkestar Ruke</td>
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<td>Bamako</td>
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<td>Shukar Collective/urban gypsy</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Camile le Fils</td>
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<td>Madioko 'n' Rafika</td>
<td>Mali/Morrocco</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Toure &amp; Toumani Diabate</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
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<td>Ali Farka Toure &amp; Toumani</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Diabate</td>
<td>Mali</td>
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<td>Nyboma &amp; Kamalé Dynamique</td>
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<td>Daby Balde</td>
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<td>Salif Keita/m'bemba</td>
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**2006**

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<tr>
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<td>k'Naan/Dusty Foot Philosopher</td>
<td>Somalia in Canada</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Blue Asia Hotel Bangkok</td>
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<td>Maurice El Medioni Meets</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Roberto Rodriguez/Descarga Oriental: The New York</td>
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<td>Sessions</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Kevin Johansen + The Nada</td>
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<td>Gnarls Barkley/St. Elsewhere</td>
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<td>Titi Robin/Ces Vagues Que</td>
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**2007**

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<td>Village</td>
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<td>Bassekou Kouyate &amp; Ngoni Ba/Andy Palacio and the Garifuna</td>
<td>Mali/West Africa</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Collective</td>
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<td>Malouma/Nour</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
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<td>Mayra Andrade/Navega</td>
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<td>LaXula/In X-ile</td>
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<td>Wareika Hill Sounds/Honest</td>
<td>Madrid</td>
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<td>Jons</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
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<td>Country/Region</td>
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<td>Manu Chao/La Radiolina</td>
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<td>Sevara/Sen</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>Youssou N'Dour/Rokku Mi</td>
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<td>Rokka (Give and Take)</td>
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<td>Justin Adams, with Juldeh</td>
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<td>Camara</td>
<td>Gambia/UK</td>
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<td>madilu system bonne humeur</td>
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<td>D J Dolores/I Real</td>
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Maps of Africa and London

Figure 10: Map of Africa; Source: Googlemaps.co.uk; Accessed: June 29, 2011.