



# Renegade Software:

*Identity-Driven Cultural  
Economies of UK  
Drum & Bass Music.*

*SWDTP Research Proposal,  
Human Geography, Tommy Nagle, 2024.*

# Agenda:



The  
Importance of  
Electronic  
Dance Music



Drum & Bass  
Specifics



My Relation to  
the Research



Methodology &  
Ethics



Impact  
Potential



Masters Work  
+ Timeline

A DJ with a beard and a blue jacket is performing at a club. He is standing behind a DJ booth with large speakers. The scene is dimly lit with blue stage lights. The text 'The Importance of Electronic Dance Music:' is overlaid in large white letters.

# The Importance of Electronic Dance Music:

## Spatialities:

- 'Hedonistic' spaces of relational self-fulfilment.
- Performative spaces of resistance and progressive sexual politics.

*Fraser (2012); Fraser & Ettlinger (2008); Pini (2001)*



£2.5 billion generated from  
Electronic Music for UK  
Economy

‘Electronic Music’ ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>  
overall on music streaming  
services

80% of people experience  
emotional and/or mental health  
benefits at Electronic Music  
Events.

“Experiential activities now  
closely intertwined with social  
media, influencing younger  
audience choices”

<https://ntia.co.uk/nte-economy-report-2024/>  
February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024

# Fraser (2012):

**“Progress has been made. And there are good reasons to expect further contributions, not least from new generations of geographers, many of whom will have grown up listening to and knowing EDM, rather like previous generations knew rock ‘n roll.”**

**(501)**



# Drum & Bass Music:



160-180 Beats Per Minute [BPM]



Digitally Produced Electronic Dance Music [EDM]



Reflective of chaotic experience of post-modern urban living – in the ‘concrete jungle’



Above: DnB Pioneers *Fabio & Grooverider* at a 1988 ‘rave’.  
Below: Fabric Nightclub, London, 2018. Popular DnB venue.



# More Than A Genre:

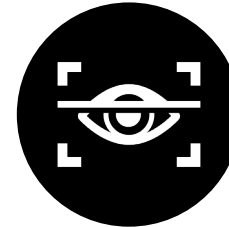
***“It’s part of the underground fabric, New York has hip-hop, we have drum & bass”***

***DJ Goldie***



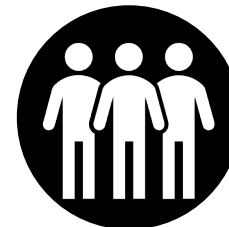
Anti-establishmentarian political movement, championing neo-liberal sensibilities.

*Keeler (2019); Abrahams & Wishart (2016)*



Key facet of identity production, evidenced by self-termed ‘DnB Heads’

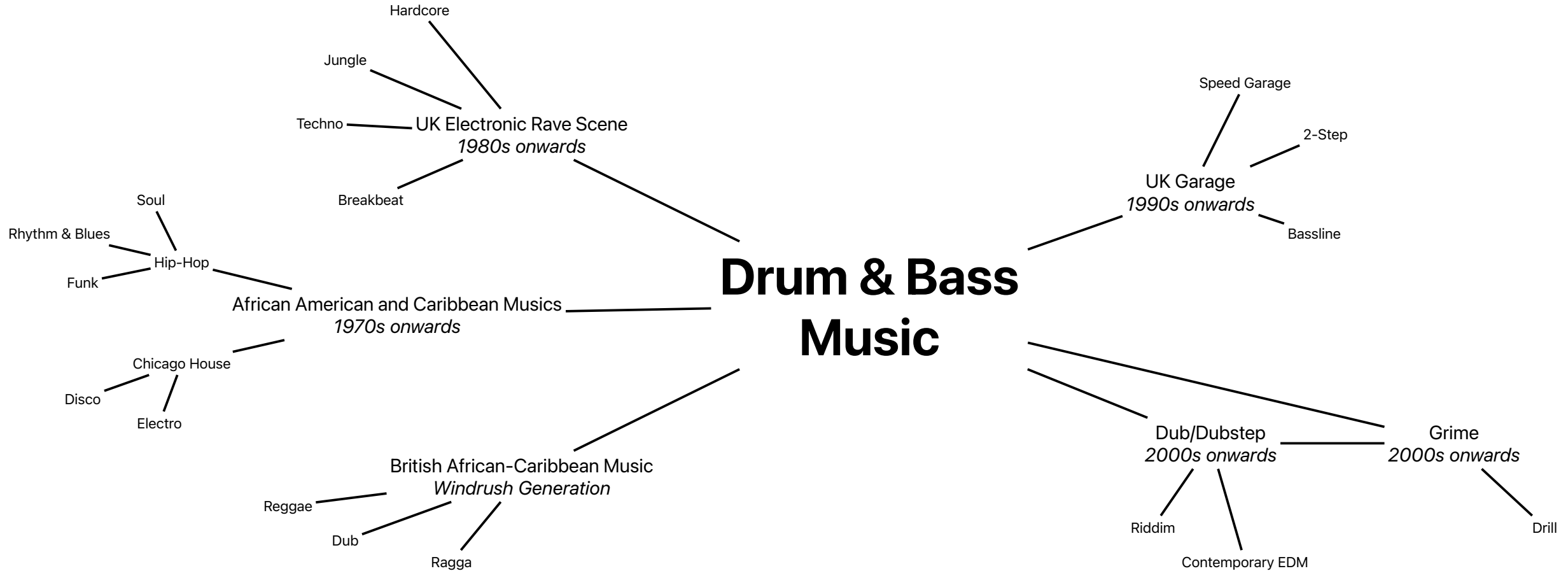
*Fraser & Ettlinger (2008); Hetherington (2000)*



Underlying ideology of community inclusion and ‘Peace, Love, Unity and Raving’ [PLUR]

*Anderson (2015)*

# Musical Anatomy:



**Drum & Bass is “where all the different musics of the African-American/Afro-Caribbean diaspora converge”**





# PURPLE SNEAKERS

## Are We Currently Experiencing The Drum 'N' Bass Renaissance?

20 October 2023 | 1:13 pm | Cyclone Wehner

[COPY LINK](#)

[SHARE](#)

Drum 'n' bass is back – and bigger than ever.

**RollingStone**



MUSIC POLITICS TV & MOVIES (SUB)CULTURE

### MUSIC

## ‘Sounds That Actually Have Feeling’: The Drum-and-Bass Revival Is Finally Here

How the resurgent U.K. dance genre points to changing attitudes about music and nightlife

BY MICHAELANGELO MATOS

JUNE

The New York Times

## Drum-and-Bass Is Rising Again, With Nia Archives in the Spotlight

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Drum'n'bass

◆ This article is more than 1 year old

**‘It’s just good energy!’ How TikTok and Covid made drum’n’bass hot again**

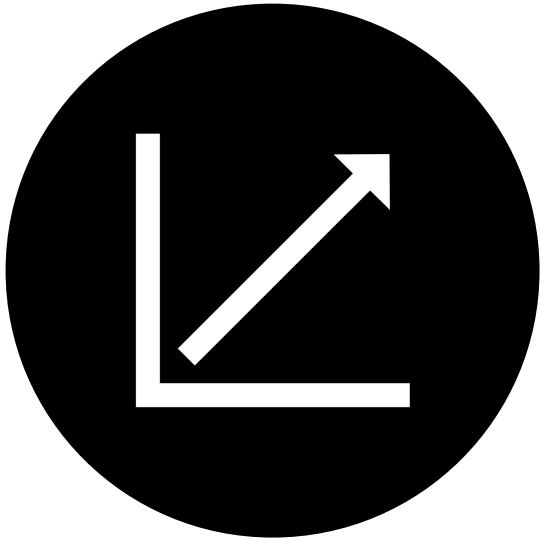


Alexis Petridis

Fri 22 Apr 2022 08:00 BST



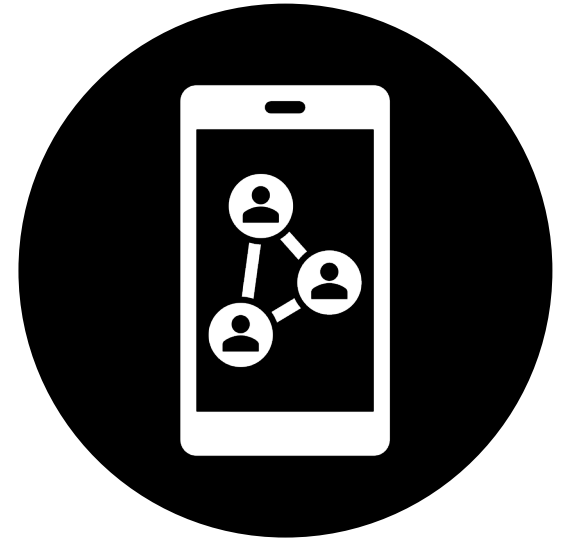
# Consequences:



**Increased Economic  
Output**

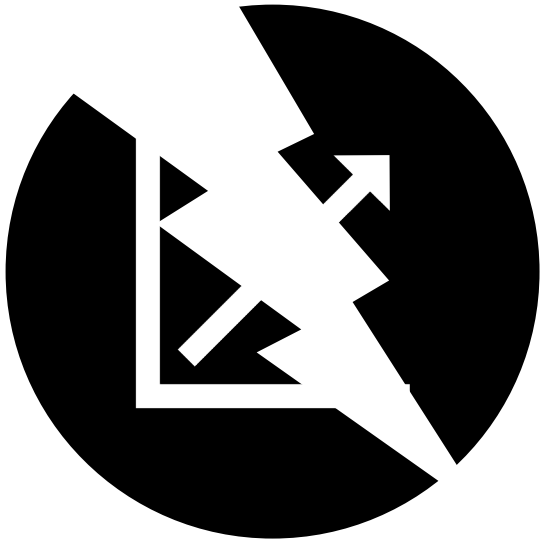


**Increased Female  
Interest**



**Hybrid Online/Offline  
Production Networks**

# Consequences:



**Unequal Access to  
Economic Profit**



**Socio-Economic  
Discrimination Along  
(Intersectional) Identity-  
Centric Grounds**



**Community  
Fragmentation**

# Drum’n’Bass DJ Mistabishi Dropped From Hospital Records After Racist Tweets

The DJ said that London's Mayor cannot be a "real Londoner" because his parents were not England-bred.

By Kat Bein +  
01/16/2018



# BACKSTAGE SEXISM

NOW READING • Backstage Sexism

Howdy! I'm Whisky Kicks- long-time music journalist and editor of UKF. I am also a woman.

As International Woman's Day approached I considered different articles I could write to celebrate the phenomenal females who reside in the bass music scene; "Women to Watch in 2023", "Ten Women Who Are Killing It Right Now" or maybe I could focus a spotlight on the incredible work being done by groups like **Dynamics** and **EQ50**. I decided against it. It felt forced, and performative, merely paying lip-service to social issues which affect women. I believe as an industry all genders are working hard to create an equal and balanced space for everyone to enjoy and thrive in. We've made huge progress. I want to continue supporting women through our usual posts because they are talented artists with interesting stories which deserve to be told- on any day of the year.

I was so set on my decision not to post something for International Women's Day, and content in my thinking that we've come so far on the path to equality, that what happened a few days after took me by surprise. I was backstage at Print Works talking to my colleague when an up-and-coming DJ interjected our conversation and made a comment about my age. Now it won't come as a shock to you that as a woman who's worked in the music industry for 15 years, I don't look like the springiest of chickens, but should that matter? After my colleague pulled this DJ up, we made our way back to the bar and I thought about all the amazing pioneers that created our scene, how many times do you think **Fabio** has been made to feel like he's too old to be at a rave? **Hype? Ray Keith? Chris Goss** maybe? I would bet my bottom bassline that older men don't have this kind of commentary uninvitedly thrust upon them.

This minor incident made me reflect on all the times over the years I've been asked "who my boyfriend was" while I was backstage as if I'd have no other reason to be there other than to be a male DJ's girlfriend. The times when it's been creepily suggested that my job is equivalent to some kind of 'Elite Groupie' or that sexual favours were used in exchange for guestlist rather than my journalistic skill. At the very beginning of my career, I changed my pen name to Whisky Kicks because when a record label saw my real name on an email it was insinuated I didn't understand drum and bass- being a female in bass music has always presented its challenges.

International Women's Day was originally created as a focal point for the Women's Rights Movement, including highlighting the struggles of working-class women in their working environment. Today we're more likely to use March 8 to celebrate the achievements of women. And we love to see it! In the words of **Fracture** Big Up the Ladies! We also want to Big Up the many men who support females and stand against the inequality they see. But while we've certainly made headway, there are noticeably more women on line-ups for example, it's important to note some of the injustices women still face being part of the industry, and the gender-specific hurdles they have to jump throughout their careers.

# Chris Inperspective: Black people should own Black art

Following his viral Facebook videos calling out Hospital Records for their part in the whitewashing of the drum & bass scene, founder of the Black Junglist Alliance, Chris Inperspective, explains why the route to real change is more Black ownership

CHRIS INPERSPECTIVE  
Tuesday, July 21, 2020 - 12:33



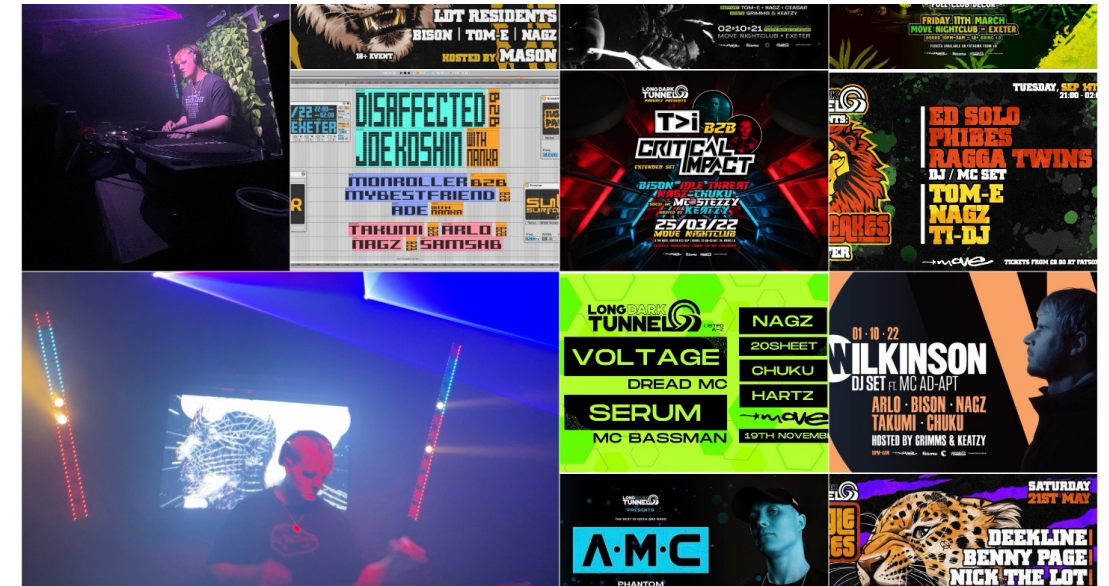
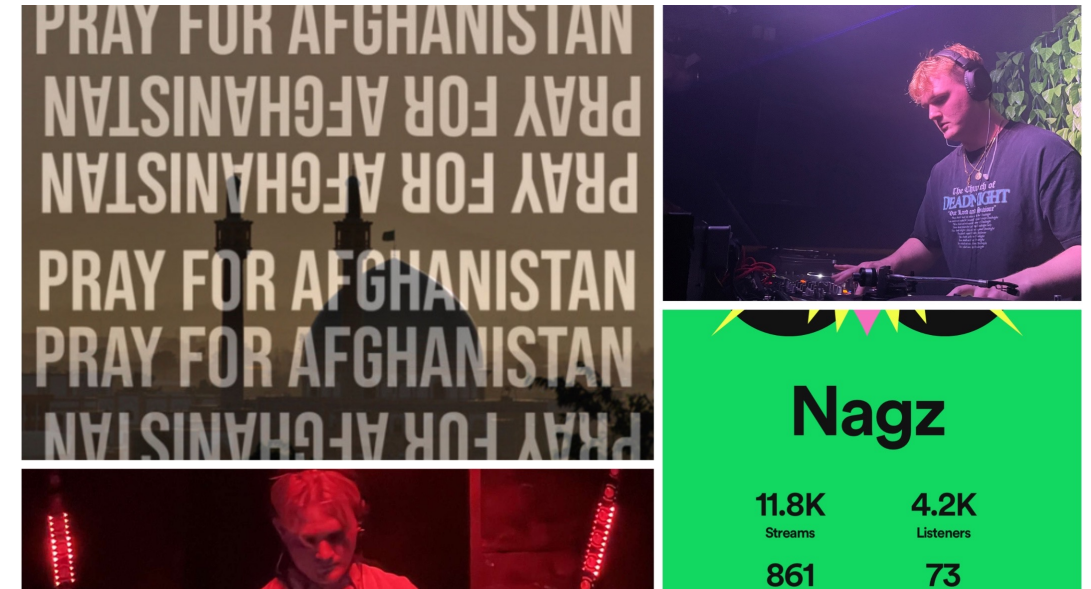


# Research Questions:

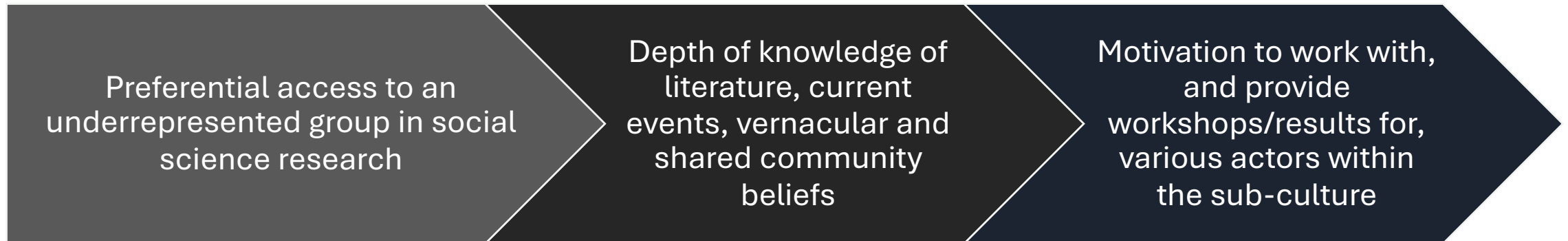
**How is the production and performance of identity online and in-person used to promote and/or exclude people within UK dance music economies?**

# DnB & Me:

- Worked in the Drum & Bass music industry for over 5 years.
- Over 50 DJ bookings, and >100,000 collective plays.
- Collaborating with various music labels, venues & charity organisations.



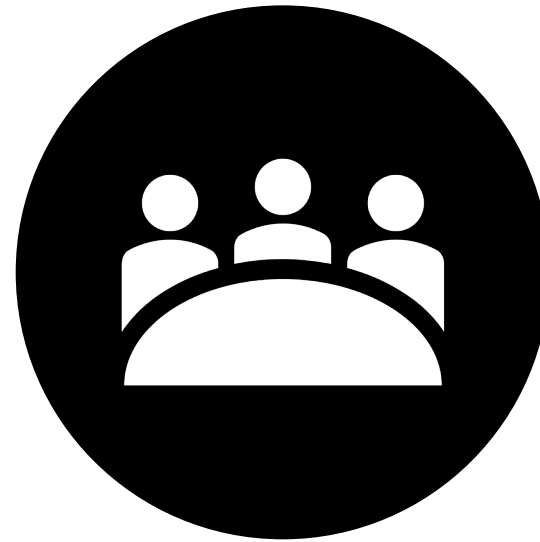
# Input To Research:



# Methodology & Ethics:



**Digital Ethnography**



**‘Media Go-Along’  
Interviews**



# Digital Ethnography:



- Adaptation of ethnography to target digital interactions of community members (*cf. Hine, 2015*)
- Collection of data relating to performances of identity and exclusion/inclusion in online spaces and economies
- Inductive and deductive codes will be applied in analysis, synoptically linking analysis with the interview stage.

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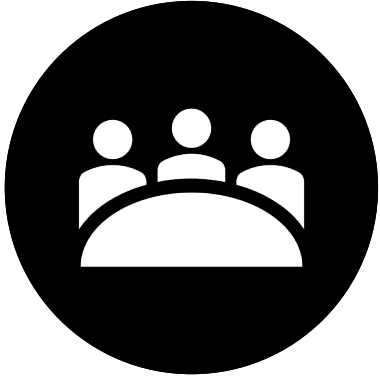
## ***Ethical Concerns:***



Ensuring anonymity – creative representations and/or rewording in thesis  
Covert notion of ‘lurking’, accessing cultural meaning despite not being in a subject position

*Working with Sam Kinsley key to negotiating dynamic digital ethnography ethics*

# ‘Media Go-Along’:



- Involves conducting a (semi-structured) interview *in situ*, noting the hybridity of online and offline interactions (*cf. Hine, 2015; Jørgensen, 2016*)
- Enables complex trans-digital networks to be elucidated in an ‘intensive’ or performative manner
- Additional interview data supplementing observed practices

*Potential Partnerships:*

*Nationally Relevant Record Label and Promoter*

*3 South-West Record Labels and Promoters*

*1 ‘Female’ Collectives*

*10 Independent Artists*

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## ***Ethical Concerns:***



Discussion of potentially traumatic or harmful events – ensure good interview practice, back-up questions and awareness of participants’ feelings  
Data protection – reword and/or creatively represent, feedback to participant before submission

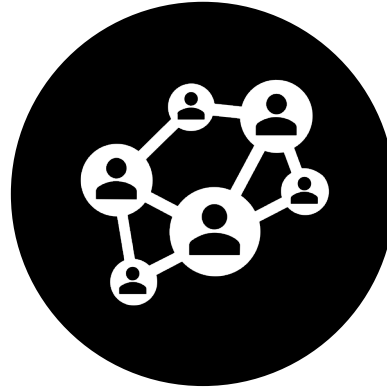
# Impact:



## Academic Impact

- Re-contextualisation of UK Electronic Music research considering recent growth
- Interdisciplinary sub-cultural theory re-investigation
- Wider applicability to other sub/counter-cultural groups and their respective cultural economies

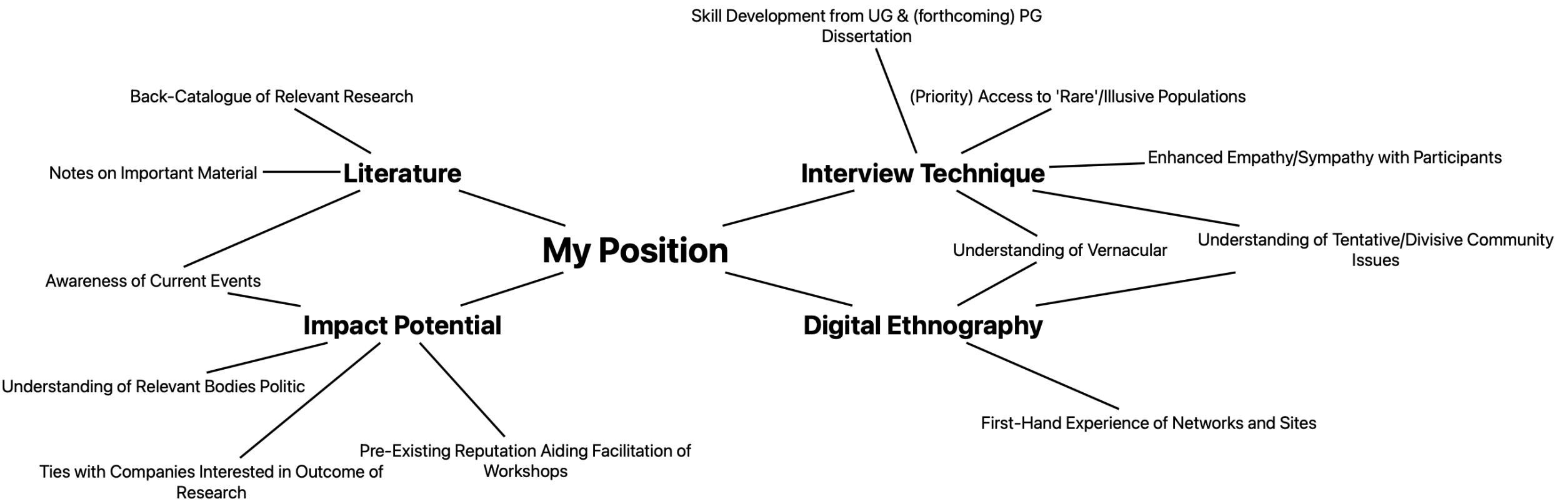
# Impact:



## External Impact

- Clearer information for upcoming artists as to how to navigate complex economies
- Awareness of intersectional injustices in music economies
- Collaboration with partners to enhance the diversity and inclusion of their rosters
- Dissemination of results to other bodies politic





# Mobilising My Masters:



Cultural economic work undertaken at undergraduate level.

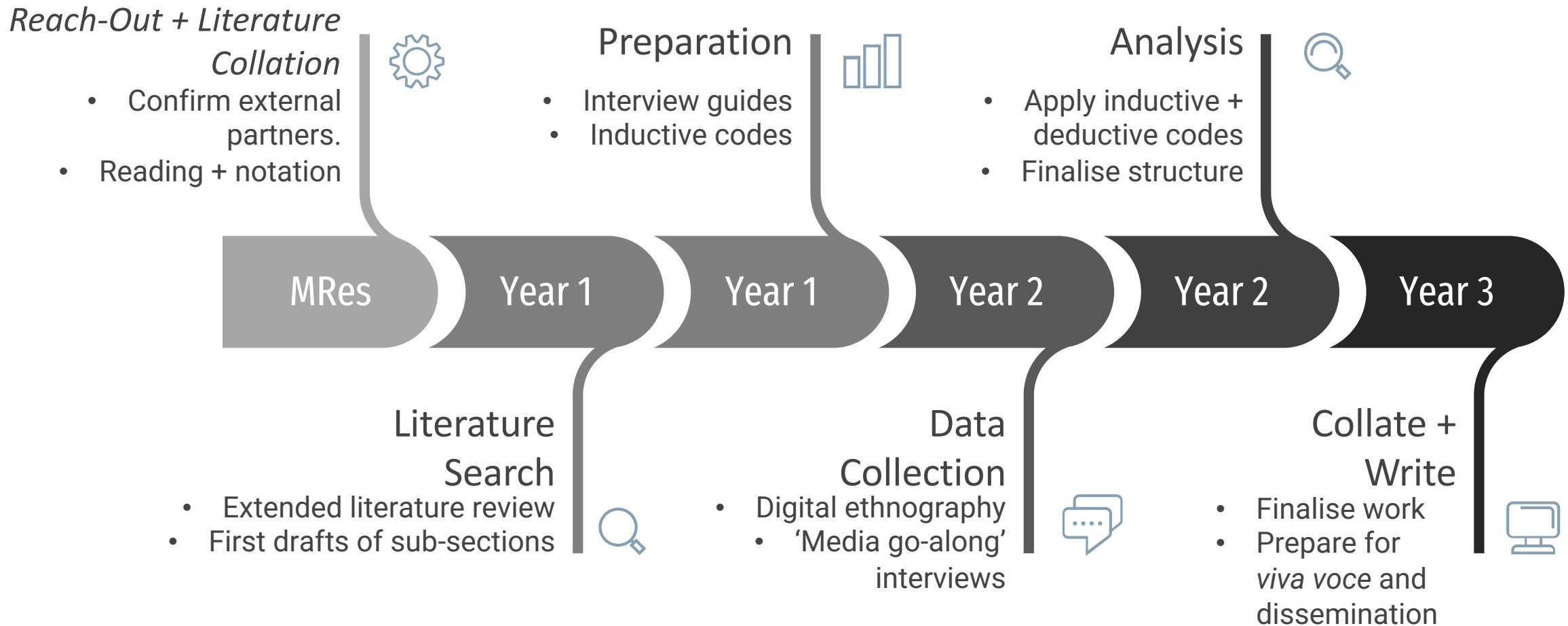


Postgraduate work focusing on non-representational, more-than-human and imaginative geographies of music

## **Examples of Work:**

- *A Critical Review on the Conceptual Impact of Non-Representational Theory on 'Geographies of Music'*
- *A Cultural Geography of Dance Praxis in UK Drum & Bass Music*
- *Emotion, Affect and Place in 'Intelligent Dance Music'*
- *'Hedonistic Spaces'? A Re-Investigation Into the Interplay Between Intoxication, Sexual Politics and Technology at Southwest UK Drum & Bass Raves.*

# Timeline:



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