Artistic lives: a two-city study
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I, Kirsten Forkert, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.
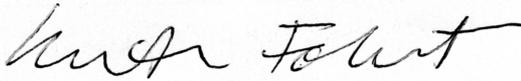
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ARTISTIC LIVES: A TWO-CITY STUDY

This project, based on a study of artists in London and Berlin, is an exploration of the social conditions of cultural production. I am exploring cultural production as an activity which does not fit conventional definitions of work, as it is self-directed, frequently unpaid and takes place outside of paid employment. It is precisely its irregular character which makes cultural production vulnerable to barriers to free time, such as the expensive rent and chronic overwork prevalent in London.

I explore the social conditions of cultural production as an intersection of several factors: material conditions (particularly housing and the cost of living) which can shape the time and space artists have for their work, and their ability to survive on part-time and freelance employment; the politics of the cultural field, which shape the expectations artists have for their work and lives; cultural and social policies, which also impact on artists' ability to support themselves; and subjective issues such as artists' sense of themselves and their work, their sense of place and their relationship to other artists. This project explores how these factors intersect and inter-relate, in the way that social conditions can affect who can be an artist, who can sustain an artistic career, and the ways in which one can be an artist. In particular, I focus on the relationship between housing and professional identities, and how this functions differently in London and Berlin.

In order to explore these intersections, the project brings together policy analysis, interviews, biographical narrative descriptions, photographs and descriptions of my travels through neighbourhoods in both cities. It is an interdisciplinary project which draws on analyses and methodologies from the fields of art, visual culture and sociology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Is art losing its autonomy?

The motivations for beginning this project come out of my experiences as a freelance artist, critic and organiser, and where I noticed that factors normally seen to be external to the field were directly affecting the production and presentation of work. These experiences led me to question whether culture had become less autonomous than I had thought to be the case, and which I had certainly been trained to believe. I will now describe these experiences and the questions they provoked.

For several years, I volunteered as a board member for a media arts organisation in Canada, with a history in the Canadian equivalent of film workshop movement. The organisation presented public screenings, distributed works to media festivals and other events, and facilitated access to video, audio and digital media equipment. Recent changes to arts funding had led to introduction of auditing measures such as the keeping of detailed records of audience attendance figures (which inevitably, caused some arts organisations to lie). Arts organisations were encouraged to set their programming at least two years in advance, and concentrate on both recognised names and events which took place within narrowly defined disciplinary boundaries. This led to the exclusion of spontaneously curated events (often the most interesting in my experience), events featuring work by users of the facilities, or amateur production (which was becoming more common due to technological developments which made video production cheaper and more accessible).

Fearful of losing funding, many organisations internalised the demands of funding agencies, and policed themselves accordingly. This became obvious when, at a meeting,

I saw someone say without a trace of irony that 'we should curate screenings that will result in the Arts Council giving us more money'. In my experience, these kinds of scenarios were common: aligning one's interests and goals with policy imperatives. Ironically, because they let funding demands determine their mandate, arts organisations often received negative feedback on applications about a lack of direction. However, in my experience, these issues were rarely discussed or analysed, as they were seen to be outside the remit of proper aesthetic discussions. The only response seemed to be a generalised frustration at state interference or what seemed like rather hollow declarations of artistic autonomy (an autonomy which, in many respects, no longer existed). This experience led me to question what seemed like the inability and, in some cases, the unwillingness, within the art field, to analyse and discuss the issues which directly affected the production and presentation of work.

Simultaneous to these developments, it appeared as though contemporary art was increasingly playing a significant role within an expanding global lifestyle industry. This phenomenon included, for example, art galleries on the ground floor of luxury tower blocks; museum complexes (or 'clusters', in the lingo of the day) which also included up-scale restaurants and wine bars (the role of such developments within gentrification processes seemed to be rarely discussed). The last ten years also saw an ever-expanding number of biennials which frequently showcased the same artists in different locations, in connection with what often seemed to be plays for legitimisation for cities and local art scenes; these were organised specifically for the international art audience to hop from country to country (Wu, 2007). It was becoming increasingly obvious how art was being framed within hierarchies of taste and distinction; these seemed similar to those theorised by Pierre Bourdieu twenty-five to thirty years earlier (1984), but also reflected both the newly globalising nature of the art world and also its

increasing integration into the lifestyle industries. Perhaps, in retrospect, this phenomenon may have also been a reflection of the conspicuous affluence of a boom economy, connected to the dot-com and property bubbles. All this raised questions about the function and purpose of culture, and the parameters such developments created for the production, presentation, experience and interpretation of art.

My motivation for this project also comes from reflections on the experience of working as a freelancer in the arts (which I did for a number of years before beginning the research). I began to notice an uncanny coincidence between certain aspects of my experience as a freelancer, and conditions which seemed to exemplify both the competitiveness and insecurity which seemed intrinsic to neoliberal society: the sense that one could never turn down a contract (due to the financial instability of freelancing); the requirement for a high level of resourcefulness and self-reliance (as well as the sense of this requirement increasingly becoming the norm). This was also reflected in the feeling of many artists that they were only as good as their last exhibition, their awareness of the shortness of their own careers; and the tendency for many to blame themselves when things did not go well. Disturbingly, it seemed as though these very qualities (particularly self-reliance and resourcefulness) were being championed at the time when the social safety net was being dismantled. These issues were also not being discussed within the cultural field, for some of the reasons mentioned earlier. There also seemed to be a general reluctance amongst artists to discuss issues that affected them directly (for a similar reluctance amongst academics, see Ross, 2000). Basic questions such as working conditions seemed rather banal and unfashionable; in retrospect, they may have also raised uncomfortable questions about socio-economic privilege.

These experiences led me to question my relationship to the art discipline; it was as though I no longer accepted what Pierre Bourdieu calls the *illusio*, or the taking for granted of the principles of the field (Bourdieu, 1996, p.333). More generally, I also began to realise that wider social and economic conditions had a much greater influence on cultural production than those within the art field wanted to admit or were willing to discuss. This led me to begin this project; I wanted to examine, in greater detail and depth, the specific ways in which social conditions affect cultural production. This included questions such as who can become an artist, who can sustain an art career, and who can have the time and space to be creative.

These experiences led me to the question of why working conditions in the arts tend to be ignored, and the blind spots this might reveal within both art and social research. I have already mentioned the long-standing tendency within the art field to ignore the social and economic conditions of cultural production, because they are seen to be irrelevant to aesthetic discussions. The working conditions of artists have also received relatively little attention within social research. This may be because the irregular, unpaid and often informal nature of artistic work can present many methodological difficulties and complexities. It may also be a consequence of the cultural field situating itself as autonomous, which might lead those within other fields to also perceive it as such. The result is that working conditions in the arts remain understudied and many long-standing myths around artists and art production remain unchallenged.

The challenges of researching artistic labour

As must be clear, I am not trying to argue for the exceptional nature of art (particularly given the earlier discussion about the loss of artistic autonomy). However, it is also important to point out that artistic labour does not fit conventional definitions of

employment. For example, it is frequently unpaid, is often performed outside the context of paid employment and in some cases is subsidised by other income sources. It is deeply imbricated with many aspects of everyday life outside the workplace. Another complication is that artistic labour has been historically defined in opposition to conventional definitions of work, which I will discuss in greater detail in the following chapter. Because of both its irregular nature and also its rejection of conventional definitions of work, researching the working conditions of artists means exploring many aspects of their everyday lives, beyond the time spent in studio. In a wider sense, artistic labour, and other irregular forms of labour of like it, possibly require developing a broader theorisation of work which in fact extends beyond the workplace and engages with many aspects of everyday life.

Examining artists' working conditions has thus involved drawing not only art history, but also sociology, urban geography and aspects of policy research; in this project I attempt to map these analyses (from seemingly unrelated disciplines) onto culture. It is thus an interdisciplinary project. It also involves exploring a complex intersection of many different factors: artists' living conditions, their studios, their jobs, their professional identities, their relationship to other artists, the neighbourhoods where they live and work, and the wider social/economic factors shaping the urban environment and housing in London and Berlin. In order to engage with this complexity, I develop a methodology which combines analytical prose, biographical narrative descriptions, and descriptions of my journeys through neighbourhoods in London and Berlin. I am drawing on my own background as an artist in developing this methodology, particularly in the use of images and text.

Art and social conditions

The project is based in a study of two cities, London and Berlin, where I interviewed 41 artists, intermediaries and academics. I have chosen these two cities because they represent very different social conditions: London, with its high living costs, deregulated property market and spatialised inequality; and Berlin, with its lower living costs, larger quantities of empty commercial space, and its high levels of unemployment (which, for artists, requires them to possess resources and contacts, and in some cases independence from the local economy). What kinds of art practices, projects or ways of working do these very different conditions make possible? What do they discourage?

Exploring these questions involves considering material conditions such as housing and the cost of living, employment, and welfare, particularly in terms of how they might exacerbate or limit the risks and insecurities of freelancing. It also means considering the politics of space, and particularly who can have time and space for creative activities (an issue in London where space is literally at a premium). Considering the politics of space means engaging with very practical issues such as: the rent the artists paid for their homes and their studios in both cities; the commuting distance between home, work and studio; the hours the artists had to work in order to pay for living costs in both cities, and the effects of this on the time and mental energy to make art. It also involves exploring the complexities of the relationship between culture and gentrification, and the effects on artists.

The project also explores the intersection between living costs and professional identities. This includes: the types of jobs held by the artists (ranging from casual service work to highly skilled employment, which in some cases functions as a second career), and the amount of time and energy spent in paid work. In addition to practical

matters such as income, I also explore more subjective issues, such as the artists' identification with their art work or with their jobs (such as, for example, whether or not they see themselves primarily as artists or as arts managers or educators), and their relationship to other artists and to local artistic communities. This is a question not only of work or income, but also field and discipline, in shaping how the artists see themselves and their work. I pay particular attention to the myth of the bohemian lifestyle, and how it shapes the artists' expectations for themselves.

As might be imagined, many aspects of this project are about demystification. As mentioned earlier, the starting point for the research was questioning the limits of artistic autonomy. In exploring the social conditions of cultural production, this project challenges certain assumptions intrinsic to the artistic field, and particularly its exceptional nature. This includes the perception that that 'great art' can flourish even in times of adversity, because artists are so intrinsically resourceful. I also consider the specific needs that artists might share with other local residents of the cities I research, such as affordable housing and decent wages, and particularly those that would enable one to survive on part-time or freelance employment. Furthermore, I suggest that the possibilities of cultural production may at least partly depend on these sorts of factors (which are not conventionally seen as related to the arts).

Whilst this project questions certain aspects of the cultural field, it also does not take demystification to the level of dismissal (as do some of the authors I discuss in the following chapter), where the very decision to become an artist is seen as a form of false consciousness, and artists are seen to be rather naïve and deluded individuals, with an inflated idea of their own fame and talent, incapable of critical reflection. Whilst I am critical of many of the power relations and hierarchies of the art world, I also am

arguing *for* the time and space for creative activities, particularly independent cultural activities. As mentioned, these are frequently unpaid (as it is difficult for them to attract funding either through the state or the market) and self-directed (unlike other types of work, nobody is telling artists to make art) . This project is thus also motivated by concerns about how recent social and economic developments might make it increasingly difficult for artists to engage in such activities, particularly those who are not independently wealthy.

An overview of the text

In the first chapter of this project (the first chapter of the review of literature), I will examine theories which apply a sociological analysis to culture, beginning with an overview of the work of Pierre Bourdieu. I will then move on to analyses of the relationship of culture to capitalism. This will include the work of Bernard Miège, as well as examinations of how the freedom associated with the bohemian lifestyle became incorporated into neoliberalism, drawing on the work of Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, Maurizio Lazzarato, Paolo Virno and others. In this chapter, I will begin to explore what will become a recurring theme throughout the project: the impasse between certain concepts of freedom (freedom defined as meaningful and interesting work and liberation from the conventional bureaucratic or corporate hierarchy, and more generally, from aspects of the post-war settlement such as full-time stable employment) and security (defined here as a stable income and living conditions). According to this logic, it becomes inconceivable to have *both* freedom *and* security. I have already hinted at this impasse in my description of the experience of freelancing; in the following chapter, I will explore the historical origins of this impasse in the 1960s rebellion, as well as its present-day implications within neoliberal society. I will end with a critique of the arguments made by Pierre-Michel Menger and Hans Abbing, particularly their

argument that the problem is that there are simply too many artists, and their proposals to restrict entry to the field.

The second chapter of the literature review will focus on questions of policy. As a theoretical framework to consider these questions, I begin the chapter by exploring Michel Foucault's concepts of governmentality and biopower, and his analysis of the development of neoliberalism in *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008). I then examine George Yúdice and Toby Miller's application of Foucault's theories to cultural policy, and the role played by cultural policy as a form of *population management*. I then move on to a historical overview of cultural policies in both the UK and West Germany, beginning with their post-war origins, moving through the 1970s cultural democracy movements in both countries, then the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. I then examine the role of social welfare policies, considering their role within the post-war economies of both the UK and West Germany. Next, I consider developments of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, including initiatives to reform the structure and the organisation of the public sector, as well as attempts to penalise the unemployed, such as the *Hartz-IV* reforms in Germany and the adoption of 'social exclusion' policy discourses in the UK and Europe (Levitas, 1998). I will explore how these reforms affect artists, and particularly their access to the free time necessary for creative activities.

In the third chapter, I concentrate on the methodological dimensions of the project. I reflect on the interdisciplinary nature of the project and explore, in greater detail, some of the discussions around the disciplinary gaps mentioned earlier. I reflect on the process of conducting the fieldwork, including the experience of contacting the organisations, interviewing the artists and travelling to their studios, as well as my role in the research as both an insider and an outsider to the field. I then consider the

disparate material generated by the fieldwork, which has involved interviewing individuals with very different lives, circumstances, backgrounds, art practices, etc. I speculate on the fragmentary nature of this material, drawing on Beck's individualisation theories. I discuss the methodologies I have developed to analyse and write up such disparate and complex material, inspired by the work of Annemarie Mol, John Law and Vicky Singleton.

The fourth and fifth chapters consist of the London fieldwork. The fourth chapter focuses on spatial politics, and explores housing and urban policies through research by GLA Economics and others. I also examine spatial inequality in London through the work of Saskia Sassen, Chris Hamnett and Doreen Massey. The chapter also includes descriptions and images of my journeys through London to visit the artists' studios, which give a sense of the geography of London on an experiential level. In the fifth chapter, I concentrate on the question of professional identities, focusing on the relationship between the artists' paid employment and their artwork. I also examine the politics of the art market and arts funding. Taking inspiration from Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's concept of the 'do-it-yourself biography' (2002), the chapters also makes use of biographical narrative descriptions, in which I examine each individual artist's life, considering their work, their art, and their everyday experience.

The sixth chapter is based on the Berlin fieldwork, and explores the activities, identities and ways of living that are made possible by the conditions in Berlin (particularly cheap rent and the availability of commercial space) which are currently not possible in London. I examine Berlin's unique historical circumstances (particularly the period immediately following unification), and the conditions that led to its cheap rent and availability of space, and which shaped certain aspects of the city's sub-cultural history

(particularly the club scene). I also examine how these very qualities are being incorporated into city-branding processes, which could potentially have the result of undermining Berlin's unique conditions and reputation as a cultural centre. I then explore how artists in Berlin live and work within these circumstances: how they support themselves, how they see themselves and their work, etc. As with the two previous chapters, I also make use of descriptions of Berlin neighbourhoods, biographical narrative descriptions and photographs, as well as analysis of cultural policies and urban politics in Berlin.

I end with a summary of the project's findings and the major issues which were explored, and reflect on my relationship to the artists I interviewed (in terms of methodological issues and field politics).

Conclusion

I have discussed my initial motivations for developing this project; its interdisciplinary nature, and the importance of considering the social conditions of cultural production. In the following chapter, which is an examination of sociological theories of culture, I will examine the nature of the cultural field: its founding principles (particularly that of artistic autonomy), its hierarchies and power structures, and, in a wider sense, its relationship to capitalism and the changing nature of work.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

This project examines the social conditions of cultural production. As I have suggested,

thinking about these issues is not conventional to the art field and may seem counter-

intuitive. Because of this, it is first necessary to prepare the ground, providing a

framework for these issues to be considered. This means thinking about the cultural

field as a *site of power relations* (rather than, as it is conventionally thought, a space that

is largely free of them); it also means mapping out the specific relationships between

culture, capitalism and wider social developments. As we will see later on in the

chapter, this is not only a question of the specific situation of artists or the politics of the

cultural field. This is also about how artists are perceived within society in general: the

ideals, values and ways of living the figure of the artist has come to represent, or what

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have called 'the artistic critique' (Boltanski and

Chiapello, 2005), and the developments it has inspired.

I will begin with Bourdieu's analysis of the power relations and hierarchies within the

cultural field, and will also consider the historical tendency within the cultural field to

ignore social and economic conditions, particularly the principles of disinterest and

distance from economic realities, which Bourdieu terms 'the economic world reversed'

(Bourdieu, 1993). Following this, I will explore Bernard Miège's exploration of the

'capitalisation of culture', particularly his argument that the integration of culture into

capitalism does not lead to its democratisation, but in fact perpetuates the genius myth.

In the next section, I will then focus on the role of culture within society in a more

general sense. I will focus on what artistic work, the figure of the artist and the artists'

lifestyle have come to represent within neoliberal society, drawing on the work of the

Italian *Post-Operaismo* thinkers, as well as Boltanski and Chiapello's *New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005). I will pay particular attention to 1960s rebellion, particularly what Mario Tronti has termed 'the refusal of work', and its incorporation into capitalism. I will end the chapter with a critique of Hans Abbing and Pierre-Michel Menger's argument about the 'oversupply' of artists, and their proposals for restricting entry to the cultural field.

1.2 Culture as a Site of Power Relations

Pierre Bourdieu offers some important models to consider power relations in the cultural field. I feel these models continue to be relevant despite recent changes to the nature of the art field, which I will discuss later. In developing the concept of 'field', Bourdieu attempts to apply the 'relational' mode of thought to cultural production: an element is defined though its relationship to other elements, which also determine its meaning and function (Bourdieu,1993, p.6). Fields for Bourdieu are historically constructed and contingent, but also involve fundamental laws, which he terms *nomos:* principles of 'vision and division' that separates one field from another (Bourdieu, 1997, p.96). The *nomos* permits the division between art and non-art, and between legitimate and non-legitimate artists (Bourdieu, 1996, p.230). This tension between historical construction and fundamental laws, I would argue, reflects the influence of structuralism on Bourdieu's thinking (in this case; the rules shift according to particular situations but the process is more like shuffling a deck of cards, rather than a complete rule change).The literary or artistic field can be defined by the 'manifestations of the social agents involved-literary or artistic works, of course, but also political acts or pronouncements, manifestos or polemics, etc. (Bourdieu, 1993, p.30). Fields are sites of power struggles, which Bourdieu terms 'struggles for position': individual authors

seeking recognition, and particular forms and genres seeking validation; at stake are reputations, sales, funding and jobs. Using a well-known diagram which evokes both game-play and magnetic fields, Bourdieu represents the 'relative autonomy' of the literary field—though this could equally apply to the art field (1993, p.37).
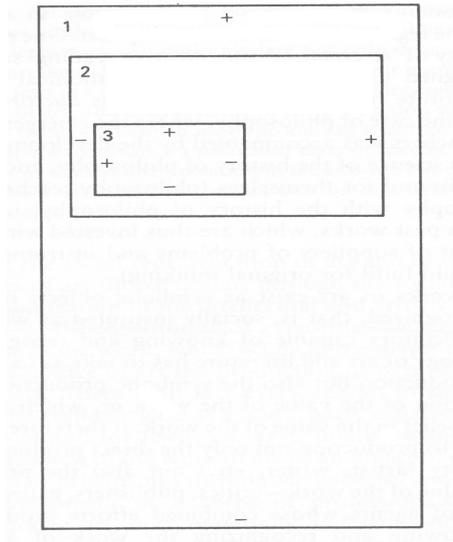
Figure 1. *The Field of Cultural Production and the Field of Power*

(Bourdieu, 1993, p.38)

The literary field holds a dominated position in relation to the field of power (in other words, the ruling classes or the dominant culture), but a dominant position in society as a whole, through associations with the dominant class. It is affected by two principles of hierarchisation. The first is the *heteronomous* principle, whereby artists and writers are subject to the same laws as other fields, and success is measured by conventional economic indicators such as book sales. The second is the *autonomous* principle, whereby artists and writers are validated only by their peers; particularly within the 'restricted field of production' of specialists (*Ibid*), which Bourdieu also characterises as 'producers who produce for other producers' (Bourdieu,1993, p.51). The more

autonomous the field becomes, the more it operates by its own codes and criteria.

Related to this, in the most autonomous fields there is a 'systematic inversion of the fundamental principles of all ordinary economies: that of business..., that of power... and even that of institutionalised cultural authority' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.39). This is also what Bourdieu terms the 'economic world in reverse'. This principle should not be confused with an anti-capitalist politics, as it fits within an economic logic: an *investment* in one's reputation and visibility, or a trade-off of immediate sacrifice for future gain. For example, early economic success can be a career risk, as being labelled 'crassly commercial' can damage one's chances at future success. However, the field can never be entirely independent from the demands of the state and the market. The capitalisation of the cultural field may have also lessened the field's autonomy or perhaps reconfigured its relation to the state and market; this will be discussed in detail later on.

Bourdieu traces the development of the principle of artistic autonomy beginning with the Renaissance. He focuses on the Romantic reaction to the Industrial Revolution (Bourdieu, 1993, p.113). The autonomy of the artistic field is used both in class domination (to produce distinction and prestige) but was historically also a site of class struggle. In *The Rules of Art* (1996), Bourdieu describes how artistic autonomy, and related to this, the bohemian lifestyle, bore an ambivalent relationship to class: 19th century bohemia encompassed both the 'delinquent or downgraded bourgeois possessing all the properties of the dominants' except for money, and also 'destitute young people' from working class or provincial origins, who were 'often obliged to live off a second skill (sometimes with no direct relation to literature) in order to live an art cannot make a living' (Bourdieu, 1996, p.57). Bourdieu was writing about the 19th

century, when bohemia was still an emergent social phenomenon. Bohemia's ambiguous and contradictory relationship to class, it could be argued, still persists, but again has been reconfigured in relation to bohemia's 'industrialisation' (Ross, 2004).

Bourdieu argues that to be successful in the long term, an artist must forgo the need for immediate financial rewards long enough to accumulate enough 'symbolic capital' (or accumulated prestige) which can then be transformed into concrete rewards such as sales, awards, etc. enabling the artist to live off his/her art. As suggested earlier, this raises the question of how artists survive while trying to accumulate symbolic capital, whether it be through paid employment, arts grants, family support, etc. Who can afford to take these risks, and who cannot, and what role does socio-economic privilege play (such as, for example, access to family support), and what is the role of the state? This is both a question of material conditions and also, crucially the knowledge of how to further one's artistic career, as well as the access to contacts that would allow one to develop opportunities.

This sort of knowledge is characteristic of what Bourdieu terms *habitus* (which Bourdieu defines as both a 'feel for the game' and as a system of 'durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.53). *Habitus* is the product of social conditioning and defines one's ease and confidence in negotiating the field. In part, it requires 'cultural capital' which Bourdieu defines as competencies, forms of knowledge and dispositions that would allow one to appreciate and interpret artworks. Cultural capital can be acquired through both formal education, but more importantly, informal education through family, friends and social networks (Bourdieu, 1984, p.2). It is within these informal settings where

socio-economic privilege plays a stronger role, rather than in formal settings.

A related concept to *habitus* is *illusio:* 'the acceptance of the fundamental premise that the game, literary or scientific, is worth being taken seriously' (Bourdieu, 1996, p.333) which marks one as a member of a given field. Belief in the *illusio* of the artistic field means identifying with its fundamental principles, internalising and naturalising them as part of one's *habitus* so they become 'second nature'. The term *illusio* does suggest 'illusion', and there are similarities with 'false consciousness' (although, according to Bourdieu, every field has an *illusio*, and there is not an obvious 'true consciousness' that can be opposed to the false one). Interestingly, Bourdieu feels that one cannot found a 'genuine science of the work of art without tearing one's self out of the *illusio*, and suspending the relationship of complicity and connivance which ties every cultivated person to the cultural game' (Bourdieu, 1996, p.230). In other words, one cannot critically examine the art field and still belong to it, because to belong to it is to believe in its autonomy and other related principles. However, this raises methodological questions: must one stand outside a field in order to study it, or can one occupy a position of insider/outsider (where one might possess both specialised disciplinary knowledge and also some critical distance)? Is art different than other fields, because such a strong emphasis is placed on autonomy? Or does this reflect a traditional view of the artist as mute creator (who is incapable of self-reflexivity)? Bourdieu's collaborations with the artists Hans Haacke and Andrea Fraser (both who develop a kind of sociological analysis through their artwork) might in fact contradict this perspective.

1.3 Artistic Autonomy and the Capitalisation of Culture

I will now discuss changes in the relationship of the art field to the market and the state,

and how this has reconfigured artistic autonomy. It is important to understand that

certain principles of the art field, such as artistic autonomy and the 'economic world in

reverse', in fact serve an important role in the economy. For example, when businesses

sponsor the arts, they come to be associated with qualities connected to the arts, such as

innovation – and thus distinguishing themselves from other businesses:

> ...sponsors do not in fact threaten the autonomy of artistic production, but
> rather demand it, to the detriment of the reassuring atmosphere of a business
> held together by 'corporate culture', because they have grasped that it is
> essential to the image of the philanthropists—at once disinterested and
> avant-gardist—that they want to construct for themselves. (Bourdieu, 2005,
> p.xiv-xv).

Bourdieu terms this relationship between artistic autonomy and business the

'charismatic ideology'... which directs attention to the *apparent producer*, the painter,

writer or composer', allowing the 'cultural businessman' to 'consecrate a product which

he has "discovered" and which would otherwise remain a mere natural resource'

(Bourdieu, 1993, p.76). In other words, the authenticity of the unique genius is

necessary in order for it to be 'discovered' and marketed.

Perhaps more than Bourdieu, Bernard Miège's work theorises the centrality of cultural

production to changes in the management of labour in Western capitalist societies,

which he characterises as 'the promotion of culture by commerce and the promotion of

commerce by culture' (Miège,1989, p. 36). *The Capitalisation of Cultural Production*

(1989) focuses on the television, music and publishing industries, but Miège's analysis

can equally be applied to visual art. Miège sees the figure of the artist as a

representation of authenticity as intrinsic to these developments, which is why the

capitalisation of cultural production does not result in its democratisation. Using the music industry as an example, he talks about the 'need to maintain the aura of artistic activity'; reproducible cultural products such as records 'must continue to bear the stamp of genius and uniqueness, and not appear to be emanating from research laboratories, but to be exclusively produced by artists accountable to no one but themselves' (Miège, 1989, p.46). Cultural intermediaries (who Miège terms '*éditeurs*') come to play an increasingly important role in the creative process, but the 'stamp of genius' must remain intact for these distribution systems to function: 'the star system and the industrial organisation of Hollywood are indissolubly linked' (Miège,1989, p.29). Miège argues that as cultural production is further capitalised, it will also become further individualised, both reinforcing and also exploiting pre-existing contradictions within artistic professions, namely, the conflict between artists of a similar success level, between stars and less successful artists, as well as between artists and members of other professions (Miège,1989, pp.87-93). The cultural industries, as a risky market, spreads risk through continual access to a supply of artists; uncertainty for artists stems from their difficulty in controlling the valorisation processes (Miège,1989, p.34), which results in enormous waste (as many cultural products never reach audiences). Miège points out that:

> **except for a small minority, artists do not defend their interests very well against the industries. As they define themselves in relation to art and its trends, they neglect the very conditions of artistic production** (my emphasis)**.** As long as artists lack the necessary organisations capable of defending them, the industries will continue to have the upper hand and pay for only a small part of the cost of conception (Miège, 1989, p.46).

He also is not very hopeful about existing artists' organisations, as he sees them as defending the autonomy of artists, but not fundamentally challenging the principles or structures of the star system (Miège, 1989, pp.28-29). Overall, I agree with Miège's

analysis of the integral role of the genius myth and the capitalisation of culture. In certain ways, the charisma of the artist has merged with aspects of celebrity culture (as in the Young British Artists or YBA phenomenon of the 1990s). The genius myth also remains intact in recent cultural policy, through the emphasis on the generation and protection of intellectual property (seen to be the product of unique, exemplary individuals).

1.4 Cultural Intermediaries and the Professional Identity of Artists

A recent development in the art field has been the tendency of artists to occupy multiple roles. This has some relationship to artists' material conditions; as we will see, this is more common in situations in which artists need to work at secondary jobs in order to survive, and particularly when these second jobs begin to function as second careers. This shift in occupational identities may reflect both the expansion of the art field, and also wider social developments such as the expansion of university education and the development of cultural industries occupations. Bourdieu offers an interesting figure to consider this phenomenon, the 'new cultural intermediary' (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.357-365). The 'new cultural intermediaries' were a form of petty bourgeoisie that developed in connection with both Post-Fordism, and with the social and economic changes following the 1960s. It was a broad, amorphous category which included 'all the occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services' (Bourdieu,1984, p.359), but also jobs in 'medical and social assistance (marriage guidance, sex therapy, dietetics, vocational advice, pediatric guidance) and in cultural production and organisation (youth leaders, play leaders, tutors and monitors, TV producers and presenters, magazine journalists)' (*Ibid*).

Bourdieu suggests that these occupations (which he saw as emergent at the time of writing) were less codified than other fields, and hierarchies were less entrenched. Because of this, they attract 'upwardly mobile individuals who seek in marginal, less strictly defined positions a way of escaping destinies incompatible with the promises implied in their scholastic careers' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.365). The class origins of the new cultural intermediaries include both the aspirational working classes and the downwardly mobile middle classes. Without being explicit, Bourdieu implies a link with mass university education and its devaluation – so that qualifications no longer guarantee particular jobs.

The broadness of the category of the 'cultural intermediary' has led some to question its usefulness (Hesmondhalgh, 2006, p.227). However, I feel that it is useful for considering the multiple occupations held by the artists, particularly those living in London and who held secondary jobs. These artists tended to work in arts education, arts administration, or the service industry. They were thus involved both in producing culture and also mediating it. Another issue is that in order to survive, artists, particularly those in the non-profit sector, must mediate and market their own work; in an increasingly competitive cultural economy, the time and effort required to secure opportunities can often exceed that required for producing work.

It is important to see this development not only in terms of economic necessity, but also as part of the legacy of the expansion of the art field in the 1960s and 1970s. This period saw the emergence of forms such as film, video and performance; women and minority artists also began to assert a greater presence in the art world. Film workshops and independent arts spaces played a crucial role in these developments, as they allowed

artists working in experimental forms and other forms and genres marginalised by the art world, greater control in producing and presenting work. Because artists were involved in the management of these organisations, they took on some of the functions of arts administration.

However, for the reasons I have discussed earlier, the genius myth still persists, as does the view that art works are the product of exemplary individuals and that artists should dedicate themselves entirely to their work, in a narrowly defined sense. As I will discuss later on, this viewpoint is particularly prevalent within the art market, where divisions of labour are conventionally stronger, and traditions of self-organisation have been less influential. It is less present within publicly funded contexts, where artists tend to be responsible for marketing their work. As might be expected, this opens up tensions between the figures of the artist as intermediary and multi-tasker and the artist as bohemian romantic (who concentrates on his/her art alone, leaving the 'business' to someone else).

1.5 Freedom and Security

Moving on from the discussion of artists' professional identities, I will turn to the perceptions of artists within society in general, particularly the ideals represented by the figure of the artist and the bohemian lifestyle, and the role they have played within wider social and economic transformations. By these ideals I generally mean the promise of a life that is personally meaningful, although less predictable and stable; I also mean a rejection of permanent, full-time employment (which has become associated with tedium and drudgery), as well as traditional family and community structures. By wider social and economic transformations I mean the demands for

freedom and autonomy which were made during the 1960s, as well as the incorporation of these demands into both the state and capitalism – the effects of which we are still living with today. Central to these changes was an impasse around *freedom and security* – where freedom becomes associated with entrepreneurial risk-taking and adaptation to change, and security with routine drudgery and social conformity. Another crucial aspect of these changes was that culture came to be seen not only as the experience of the arts or even a 'whole way of life', but a *livelihood* (as Angela McRobbie has written about from 1998 to 2008): both a means of financial support, and a way of maintaining a life in culture (connected to the earlier discussion about full-time dedication to the arts).

The tradition of Italian *Post-Operaismo* is useful in theorising the 1960s rejection of full-time employment and social norms, as well as class as a central axis of social struggle. It was based in what Sergio Bologna called 'new social subjects' (Bologna, 1980), who no longer fit the description of the proletariat championed by orthodox Marxism: students, the unemployed, etc. The concept of 'new social subjects' may open up interesting ways to consider the situation of artists (particularly in terms of the decision to pursue a *livelihood in culture* instead of more conventional forms of employment). However, it is also important to remember that there are many different types of artists, from many different backgrounds (if artists may be difficult to categorise in terms of traditional categories of class or employment, this also does not mean that inequalities do not exist in the arts); there are also in fact many different types of artistic careers. For these reasons, it is perhaps too much of a generalisation to simply equate artists with new social subjects.

Post-Operaismo was also based in a critique of conventional trade union demands for

full-time employment and higher wages as the reduction of life to work. Mario Tronti's *The Strategy of the Refusal* (1965) played a pivotal role in articulating these sentiments, theorising this reaction as the refusal of work: '…the platform of demands which workers have for decades, presented to the capitalists have had—and could only have had—one result: the improvement of exploitation. Better conditions of life for the workers were not separable from greater economic development of capitalism' (Tronti, 1965). It is also important to remember that at the time, in Italy and elsewhere, the demands for meaningful work were in many cases made against trade unions. In 'The Refusal of Work as Demand and Perspective', Kathi Weeks describes refusal of work as based in critiques of productivism within the Marxist tradition, or in other words, the belief in the inherent value of work, and 'allegiance to the values of worldly asceticism in which the richness, spontaneity, and plurality of social interactions and relations are subordinated to the instrumental and rationalist logic of productivity…' (2005, p.111). She also argues that the post-autonomist tradition emphasised liberation *from* work, rather than liberation *of* work or unalienated labour (Weeks, 2005, p.120). This refusal is both a rejection of the present system, but also about opening up spaces (which would otherwise be taken up by work) to construct alternatives (Weeks, 2005, p.122).

The refusal of work provides an interesting concept for considering cultural activity. It suggests the rejection of conventional work routines, such as the fixed workplace, the corporate structure or the 9 to 5 schedule. It is also about finding alternative ways of earning a living which are seen to be more pleasurable and personally satisfying, such as self-employment, contract and freelance work, and particularly employment in culture. However, these developments coincided with economic shifts in relation to Post-Fordism (such as the growth of the culture, media and service industries). This

creates new forms of exploitation, including the extension of work into personal life (and the consequent loss of personal free time), self-exploitation and self-blame (because of the lack of clear line management responsibility). I will now turn to the theories of Maurizio Lazzarato and Paolo Virno, who have theorised these implications. Their work captures important aspects of experience of cultural work, connecting ephemeral phenomena as emotional states to a wider political condition (Virno) and providing some compelling images and metaphors.

Maurizio Lazzarato has theorised cultural work as 'immaterial labour', which he defines as 'the informational and cultural content of the commodity'(1996). He is concerned with paradigmatic post-Fordist industries such as 'audiovisual production, advertising, fashion, the production of software, photography, cultural activities, and so forth' (*Ibid*). He uses the concept of 'interface' to define the situation: the interface between production and consumption, between various levels of production, etc. This definition bears certain similarities with Bourdieu's 'new cultural intermediaries', although Lazzarato does not mention the concept. Lazzarato argues that the Taylorist model of 'scientific management', closely associated with the Fordist assembly line, meant that the worker was meant to perform the job as efficiently as possible as a 'cog in the machine', but not to think for him/herself, meaning that his/her mind did not belong to the company, nor did his/her spare time. In contrast, the immaterial labourer is encouraged, and in some cases even obligated to think for him/herself, but his/her ingenuity and creativity are then used to produce surplus value. Lazzarato characterises the current situation, or 'cycle of production' as an even more oppressive form of capitalism than industrialism, because it integrates our thoughts, feelings, desires and creativity into capitalist production. Because of this, and the increasingly contract- and

project-based nature of work, 'precariousness, hyperexploitation, mobility, and hierarchy are the most obvious characteristics of metropolitan immaterial labour' (*Ibid*). Another related aspect of immaterial labour is the blurring between work and leisure, and production and consumption (including, I would add, the capitalisation on sub-cultural and informal activities). The result is that everything becomes work. I should mention that Lazzarato is drawing on the concept of the 'social factory', where all of life, including leisure time, interpersonal relationships and the family, are integrated into capitalism; where, in other words, of all of life becomes a 'factory' (Tronti, 1973). He is also working with Foucault's concept of biopower to theorise the conditions of immaterial labour as a form of social management.

This concept of 'immateriality', of course, is rather misleading, as work in the media, cultural and service industries is not really 'immaterial', and has real physical effects (Dyer-Witheford, 2005; Wright 2005). One could also argue that, contrary to Lazzarato, the cultural industries are in fact becoming routinised and standardised (superficially taking on Fordist characteristics) due to the incorporation of cultural work into capitalism.

1.6 Emotional Tonalities: Cynicism, Opportunism and Idle Chatter

In *Grammar of the Multitude,* Paolo Virno speculates on the 'emotional tonality' of the present political climate (2004, p.76), which is experienced as a kind of collective mood. The emotional states that characterize the present moment according to Virno, are cynicism, opportunism and the 'idle chatter'. He references Heidegger's concepts of fear and anguish (fear being linked to a specific cause, such as the loss of a job, anguish being a more general existential condition). Virno argues that it is no longer possible to

distinguish between fear and anguish, and because of this, no stable or reliable place

where one can definitively feel safe. The most common response to the situation is to

desperately search for security; obvious examples of this being authoritarian thinking,

careerism, or racism and xenophobia (Virno, 2004, p.34). Workplaces require adaptation

to constant change, switching between different sets of rules and criteria, and choosing

between possible alternatives. The possession of political or ethical principles becomes

a liability, as the dominant ethical consensus can change at any moment. These sorts of

conditions produce nihilism, cynicism and opportunism—which then become

professional requirements within the Post-Fordist workplace. Virno defines nihilism as a

praxis with no solid foundation in any principles, cynicism as an awareness and

experience of the arbitrariness of rules, and the ultimate acceptance of inequalities with

the knowledge that one can benefit from them. Virno defines opportunism in structural

rather than moral terms, as originating:

> in an outside-of-the-workplace socialisation marked by unexpected turns,
> perceptible shocks, permanent innovation, chronic instability. Opportunists
> are those who confront a flow of ever-interchangeable possibilities, making
> themselves available to the greater number of these, yielding to the nearest
> one, and then quickly swerving from one to another' (Virno, 2004, p.86).

Opportunism becomes integral to the Post-Fordist workplace, as:

> the cognitive and behavioural reaction [is due to the fact] that routine
> practices are no longer organised along uniform lines; instead, they present a
> high level of unpredictability. Now, it is precisely this ability to manoeuvre
> among abstract and interchangeable opportunities which constitutes
> *professional quality* in certain sectors of Post-Fordist production, sectors
> where the labour process is not regulated by a single particular goal, but by a
> *class of* equivalent *possibilities* to be specified one at a time.' (*Ibid*).

Virno argues that that cynicism, opportunism and idle chatter originate from the

incorporation into management theory of everyday workplace rebellions (as well as

more generally intellectual and creative capacities), leaving little time or mental energy

left to be creative outside the workplace, let alone to be politically active.

Virno also uses the concept of 'virtuosity' to theorise the incorporation of creative and intellectual capacities into capitalism. He defines virtuosity as an activity which finds its own fulfilment in itself, taking place in contingent situations, and requiring the presence of others (audience). Virno discusses Marx's analysis of the work of dancers, orators and musicians in the appendix to *Capital, Vol.1*, entitled 'Results of the Immediate Process of Production'; Marx describes them as engaged in activities in which 'the product is not separable from the act of producing' (Marx, 1990, cited in Virno, 2004, p.53). If organised in a capitalist fashion, virtuoso performances can ultimately be a source of profit. Virno sees a great deal of the work within the cultural and service industries as a series of performances: between salesperson and customer, between employer and employee, or between employees (here Virno is describing similar phenomena as those studied by feminist sociologists; see Hochschild, 2003). The result is that everyone is a 'virtuoso'; this does not necessarily mean that everyone has specialised skills in public speaking or performance, but that everyone has to communicate (which is the link here between virtuosity and 'idle chatter').

This raises the question of the extent to which everyone is a virtuoso, or whether some people exemplify this quality more than others. Furthermore, Virno oscillates between claiming cynicism, opportunism and idle chatter to be universal conditions, and arguing that the cultural industries specifically exemplify these qualities, and that, furthermore, the conditions in the cultural industries are at the forefront of social transformations. This is where Virno risks the accusation of vanguardism (the assumption that those who are the most productive for capitalism are also the most revolutionary).

Virno concentrates on the workplace as a site where these emotional tonalities play out. This raises the question of whether or not they are experienced by artists, particularly those who work as freelancers have a less conventional relationship to work. As I have suggested earlier, artists who worked in the public or voluntary sectors are more likely to work as freelancers, and must also mediate and promote their own work. This sort of activity – of chasing after contracts and writing funding proposals – can be much less common for artists who work in the commercial sector. However, does the very fact of engaging in these activities – such as chasing contracts and funding – intrinsically make artists cynical or opportunistic individuals? This may not necessarily be the case. This means that we should not interpret Virno's analysis literally, or at least acknowledge the complexities and nuances of freelancing and self-employment.

1.7 Free Labour

Drawing on the work of the above theorists, Tiziana Terranova discusses the unpaid work involved in 'the digital economy': the building and maintenance of websites and email lists, the altering of software characteristic of Open Source and Free Software, and, I would also add, social media. Terranova argues that people often are involved in these sorts of online activities for their own pleasure and self-fashioning, but in doing so, essentially perform site maintenance and 'content development' for free (2000, p.36-39). Connected to the concept of the 'social factory' discussed earlier, Terranova points out the fact that users draw on knowledge gained in informal contexts (such as subcultures), and that this collective knowledge has 'stuffed the pockets of multinational capitalism for decades' (Terranova, 2000, p.39) often with the voluntary participation of members of subcultures. Terranova also argues that a broader analysis can be made of the structural dependency of the cultural economy on the free labour of consumers and

amateur producers.

Another issue is the reliance of arts organisations (where many artists work) on internships and other forms of unpaid volunteer work—in this case the exploitation of the desire to have a job in the arts and/or to make enough contacts to further one's art career. As organisations and businesses (not only in the arts, but also in other 'desirable' fields such as the media and politics) come to rely on unpaid work, this becomes a workplace norm.

It would be useful here to return to Bourdieu's 'economic world reversed', and the deferral of immediate financial gain for the possibility of future fame and reward. Although less about bohemian asceticism or a deliberate commitment to 'pure' definitions of art, it could be argued that unpaid internships involve a similar type of waiting game, as symbolic capital is accumulated (in this case, lines on the CV) until it can be eventually transformed into an actual income (a job in arts management, or enough art world connections to be able to pursue a full-time art career). Although not entirely synonymous with the conditions discussed by Bourdieu, socio-economic privilege plays an important role in these situations, particularly in terms of the financial support that will make it possible for people to work for free, and especially in expensive cities such as London. Specific to the arts (particularly their most institutionalised forms), specific traditions of philanthropic support for culture as a 'worthy cause' and the involvement of independently wealthy may have led to the perception, within certain contexts, that a living wage is not an important concern. These factors can exacerbate social inequalities in the arts. However, the particular crux Terranova identifies is also significant: where pleasurable or personally meaningful

activities double as unpaid voluntary work and free 'content generation'. This reflects a wider condition in which activities which are traditionally seen outside the sphere of work become economically productive. This is connected to cultural and economic shifts where having one's finger on the pulse becomes increasingly lucrative.

In a general sense, *Post-Operaismo* could be seen as the attempt to reinvent Marxist theory for post-Fordism; its popularity, particularly Hardt and Negri's *Empire,* coincided with the anti-globalisation movement and the post-1989 revisiting of Marxism (which also included texts such as Derrida's 1994 *Spectres of Marx*). Their theories also reveal the influence of poststructuralism; for example, there could be certain similarities between Tronti's 'refusal of work', which Virno calls 'exodus', and the Deleuzian 'line of flight'. Their analysis of the present moment in terms of the deep and sophisticated penetration of capitalism into everyday life draws very heavily Foucauldian concepts of biopower and governmentality, as well as Deleuze's 'society of control' (Deleuze, 1992). In *Empire's New Clothes,* Timothy Brennan has described these theories in terms of the combining of Marxist with non-Marxist or even anti-Marxist demands (Brennan, 2003). He cautions that these theories are brought together in a way that creates a totalising system; in some cases subjectivity becomes the only place where resistance can take place (*Ibid*). It is beyond the scope of this text to fully engage in a critique of these theories; I should point out that I do in fact share the *Post-Operaismo* theorists' interest in subjectivity, but this project is also very much about material conditions, policy discourses and field politics – and where all of these intersect.

1.8 The Artistic Critique and the Social Critique

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* is a play on Max

Weber's concept of the 'spirit of capitalism' by mapping out the ideologies that motivate

the participation of individuals and maintain the social order, or as they define it, *the*

ideology that justifies engagement in capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p.8).

If the Protestant work ethic (the subject of Weber's famous analysis) served an earlier

phase of capitalism, and the large firm and the 'organisation man' served the post-war

years until the sixties, then the 'new spirit of capitalism' is based in capitalism's

response to, and absorption of, the struggles of May '68. It coincided with the 1960's

generation's entry into the government and business establishment. This 'new spirit' is

'the city of projects', requiring flexibility in which autonomous persons pursue multiple

projects' (Turner, 2007). This is connected to what Boltanski and Chiapello also term

'the connexionist world', where business is structured in terms of relationships and

interdependencies between firms and between suppliers and customers (2005, pp.129-

132). *The New Spirit of Capitalism* is thus another analysis of the Post-Fordist

transformation through the 1960s, based on changes to the world of work and the

incorporation of the 1960s rebellion into the economy, particularly through new

management theory (particularly in the French context).

The New Spirit of Capitalism focuses on the traditions emerging out of particular forms

of 'indignation towards capitalism':

1) capitalism as a source of disenchantment and inauthenticity
2) capitalism as a source of oppression, opposed to the 'freedom, autonomy and
creativity of human beings'
3) capitalism as a source of poverty and inequality
4) capitalism as a source of opportunism and egoism
(Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p.37).

The authors see these forms of indignation as producing two essentially incompatible

traditions, which they term 'the artistic critique' and 'the social critique'. The artistic

critique is 'rooted in the invention of a bohemian lifestyle', and the critiques of bourgeois society, and is based in the indignation at capitalism's 'disenchantment and inauthenticity' and 'foregrounds the loss of meaning, and in particular, the loss of the sense of what is beautiful and valuable' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p.38). It stresses the tendency of capitalism to dominate human beings, subjecting them to the profit motive, while 'hypocritically invoking morality' (*Ibid*). Against these forces, the artistic critique presents 'the freedom of artists, their rejection of any contamination of aesthetics by ethics, their refusal of any form of subjection in time and space and, in its extreme forms, their refusal of work' (*Ibid*). The model for the artistic critique is the mid-nineteenth century dandy, who 'made the absence of production (unless it was self-production) and a culture of uncertainty into untranscendable ideals' (*Ibid*). It was specifically the 'artistic critique', according to the authors, which was taken up by new management in the 1980s and 1990s. Artists themselves play no role in their analysis, which is really more about representations of the artist's lifestyle.

The other general tendency, which Boltanski and Chiapello term 'the social critique', is based in the indignation at the 'egoism of private interests in bourgeois society and the growing poverty of the popular classes in a society of unprecedented wealth' (Ibid). They locate the social critique within the Marxist tradition, which they argue rejects both the individualism and also the political and moral neutrality of artists—and is thus incompatible with the artistic critique. Lazzarato has argued that the artistic and social critique are not in fact separate, and that the 'artistic critique' is based on outdated models of cultural production (Lazzarato, 2007). Social movements (such as feminism) which do not fit easily into the 'artistic critique' or the Marxist-inspired 'social critique' are also largely absent, as Bryan Turner has pointed out in his review of the book

(2007). However, it is also important to remember that, as discussed earlier, the fundamental disciplinary principles of the art field (artistic autonomy, the figure of the artist as an exceptional individual) have not changed, despite numerous challenges (including those posed by feminism). This raises questions as to whether the definition of cultural production which serves as the basis of Boltanski and Chiapello's concept is in fact outdated.

Boltanski and Chiapello's analysis is based around the central argument that capitalism is strengthened by incorporating critiques. They focus on May '68 and the early seventies as a pivotal moment, marked by strikes and other forms of unofficial workplace disruption, which reflected a desire to escape from the routine drudgery of work. The authors also mention the quintupling of university enrolment between 1946 and 1971, which essentially meant a much broader section of the population attended university. The experience of university education created a desire for work involving creativity and independent judgement. However, it also coincided with a period of both high unemployment and also a lack of professional/managerial positions, which meant that many young people with university training were working at low-skilled jobs. Combined with the anti-authoritarianism of the 1960s counter-culture, this produced a widespread questioning of workplace hierarchies and routines. Many young people preferred odd jobs to stable, permanent but ultimately unsatisfying employment for which they were over-qualified. Boltanski and Chiapello dedicate the rest of the book to examining how this desire for autonomy and flexibility became incorporated into capitalism in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly as the 1960s generation entered positions of power in government and business; they also trace the rise of new management theory and the increasingly important role played by management consultants. In other

words, the incorporation into capitalism of the artistic critique (including the demands for flexibility, autonomy and personally meaningful work) produced the current climate of insecurity and deregulation.

Boltanski and Chiapello's proposals seem to centre around tighter regulations and the formalising of informal networks (which, they argue, perpetuate existing inequalities), and as such are not relevant to this project. However, they point out a key contradiction: of how freedom and security are seen to be mutually exclusive. For example, they argue that 'the premium based on mobility leads to assessing people according to a mode of existence, which, in addition to being far from universally desired, presupposes access to resources that are very unequally distributed' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p.468). In other words, one of the reasons why mobility is so highly prized is precisely because it is so difficult to manage, particularly for those without access to private means. Boltanski and Chiapello argue that to prevent further exploitation, it becomes necessary to redefine the concept of freedom so that it is no longer opposed to security. Conversely, I would argue, it is also necessary to redefine security so it is no longer opposed to freedom.

1.9 Artists and the Risk Society

I will now discuss Ulrich Beck's analysis of the developments I have just described, which he theorises in terms of risk, the disappearance of stable social structures, and contradictions between the 'first' and 'second modernity'. Beck is describing developments in society in general, rather than the specific situation of artists. However, his analysis of the instability of work, place and social structures has implications for artists.

According to Beck, the 'first modernity' was marked by the national welfare state, full employment, clearly defined social hierarchies and boundaries, geographically fixed production, and secure and standardised forms of work. The 'second modernity' is defined by the collapse of these structures, exposing people to uncertainties: there is rising inequality, but it is not easily translatable into class structures; both the welfare state and the model of full-time, paid employment enter into crisis; the experience of global risks calls into question the authority of experts; intergenerational hierarchies are no longer 'naturalised' but are questioned, and one's life biography is no longer a given but something one must invent for oneself. The metaphor that Beck uses for exposure to risk is 'dancing on the edge of a volcano' (Beck, 2000, p.71). For Beck, unlike for authors such as Zygmunt Bauman or Richard Sennett, this is not a narrative of loss or decline or a call for the return of traditional social structures and collective identifications. There is a sense of no going back; modernisation must come to terms with its own limits, or become 'reflexive'.

From a certain perspective, the lives artists lead could be seen to exemplify these developments: in terms of self-made biographies or incompatibility with stable, full-time employment, conventional family structures, etc. However, this is problematic as it could be interpreted as a vanguardist statement (to position the arts at the forefront of social transformations), and it is important to remember that many people are in fact affected by these shifts, not only artists. If we think of artists as a heterogeneous groups, with varying degrees of socio-economic privilege, then some artists may even be affected by these shifts more than others. Another question comes up if we consider Beck's analysis (particularly in relation to self-made biographies) in relation to the

previous discussion on changes to the nature of the art field. As the arts become more integrated into the economy and policy imperatives, does the cultural field in fact become more codified, leading to the development of ready-made templates for artistic success (studying at certain schools, working at certain jobs, occupying certain social circles, or even making certain kinds of art)? Does this mean that, in some cases, artists' biographies are in fact less self-made than we might think?

Beck also examines the persistence of certain older structures or institutions which have outlived their relevance, which he calls 'zombie categories' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.203). 'Zombie categories' are 'still dead and still alive'; they are simultaneously being rejected but are still are valued, and continue to structure many institutions, as well as social research (Ibid). The 'zombie categories' that Beck describes include the family, full employment, and, controversially, class. This raises questions about the criteria defining a zombie category, and the problems of making universal claims (and applying them outside Western metropolitan contexts), and whether or not people actually experience social categories as living or dead. Another question is about whether in fact we are talking about an overall process of 'detraditionalisation', which Beck has discussed elsewhere (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994). Lisa Adkins has argued that neoliberalism actually exacerbates processes of 'retraditionalisation', where caring responsibilities are shifted from the state onto (mostly female) family members, entrenching traditional gender roles (2003).

Adkins's argument has a wider significance in terms of how neoliberalism can entrench social hierarchies, particularly in terms of the relationship between the state and the family. The erosion of the social safety net creates divisions between those who can

rely on family income and those who cannot (problematising Beck's argument about the family as a 'zombie category'). Because, as mentioned earlier, artistic labour can often be precarious, self-directed and unpaid, it becomes particularly vulnerable to these sorts of developments, as the decision to pursue an artistic career becomes an even riskier prospect for those without family support. The withdrawal of state support, particularly benefits, thus could potentially affect the cultural field, in terms on who could participate in the field and the types of experiences that are reflected.

However, the 'zombie category' is still a useful concept for understanding the particular contradiction in which the artists (as well as many others) find themselves. This contradiction exists between the organisation of society around stable, full-time employment, conventional family structures and long-term living arrangements (with their origins in the post-war welfare state and social order), and on the present-day instability of work, place, living arrangements, etc. In practice, this means that social norms and policies remain structured around a way of life that many people are no longer living; this inflexibility produces a great deal of exploitation. For example, if certain rights and benefits are contingent on stable full-time employment at a time when full-time employment is becoming increasingly rare, then many fewer people are able to enjoy these rights, falling through the cracks because they deliberately reject these norms or are unable to conform to them. This is not only a question of policy but also of identity and subjectivity: full-time employment (and, I would add, marriage and property ownership) as normative expectation can lead people to deny their own situations, or worse, to personalise them and blame themselves (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2002, p.24). Beck asks some crucial questions about the role of the welfare state:

> How can social safety nets continue after the end of the full-time employment society?... 'Living one's life' is the guiding image of our times. So how can the desire for self-fulfilment and self-determination be harmonised with the need of democratic institutions for participation and consent? (Beck, 2000, p.120).

What Beck proposes as a response to this contradiction is state support along the lines of a guaranteed income, whereby other forms of work (such as parental work or what he terms 'civil society work') will be compensated, and where full employment will no longer function as a normative ideal, or a requirement for rights and entitlements. As mentioned earlier, Beck does not specifically discuss the situation of artists, but this raises the question of how civil society work will be defined, and whether artistic activity could be considered in these terms, as a socially important activity which does not fit conventional employment structures or in some cases social norms. The history of avant-garde transgression and art's rejection of conventional definitions of utility means that terms such as 'civil society' work would be controversial.

1.10 Too many artists?: The Issue of 'Oversupply' and the Exceptional Nature of the Artistic Field

I will end by discussing the work of two authors working in the field of cultural economics, Pierre-Michel Menger and Hans Abbing. Both authors address the conditions of 'oversupply' and extreme competition in the arts. They argue convincingly that it is the cultural sector's 'exceptional' character (that it does not behave like other labour markets) that leads to structural inequalities. Their prescriptions are more problematic because of their basis in a 'moral hazard' argument (that state subsidy encourages risky behaviour). They also call for the normalisation of the sector, and (even more problematically) the restricting of who can become an artist.

Pierre-Michel Menger's research is primarily focused on the social insurance scheme for freelancers in film, television and live entertainment, or '*intermittents du spectacle*'. Menger's starting point is that the arts do not behave according to normal economic principles; instead of more opportunities leading to greater employment, more jobs actually lead to greater unemployment (Menger, 2005, p.53). Menger also cites Eliot Freidson, who argued that art by nature challenges traditional definitions of labour (Freidson 1986, cited in Menger, 1999, p.19). Menger suggests that, in France, the expansion of the film, television and live entertainment sectors (particularly the development of small, independent production companies) are a direct result of the deregulation of those industries. These employers, who Menger terms 'cultural entrepreneurs', hire and fire at will, without taking responsibility for the career development of their staff. Job allocation is based on reputation as well as industry contacts and networks (Menger, 1996, p.356). As the system expands, 'it generates more competition among a growing number of performers and workers for a less rapidly increasing number of job hours' (Ibid). The result is greater competition for shorter and shorter contracts; the state, through the social insurance scheme, absorbs the risks from irresponsible employers (Menger, 2005, p.52). Menger sees the social insurance scheme itself as the source of the problem, as it encourages a highly competitive freelance economy, which attracts increasing numbers of people. This results in greater competition for fewer opportunities, and longer periods of unemployment between contracts (which are then covered by the social insurance scheme, which has run a deficit for almost its entire existence). Menger also does not understand why people would pursue such a risky career choice:

> we cannot simply assume that on average people in the artistic freelance labour market are true risk lovers; nor can we assume that they are mainly moved by such a love for the arts that they could do with even much less

without quitting, provided that psychic income is always secured. (Menger, 1996, p.354).

Menger argues that these conditions (of extreme competition and 'oversupply) are intrinsic to the artistic field in general. Referencing Cesar Graña's analysis of 1830s Paris novelists, Menger suggests these these conditions of oversupply and skewed income distribution are nothing new, after artists were no longer sponsored by the church or aristocracy (Graña,1964, cited in Menger, 1999, p.566). The artistic field has always been marked by a continual drive for novelty, exposing people to the whims of fashion: an instability which must then be managed by 'insurance devices' (Menger, 1999, p.31). Menger references Baumol and Bowen's 1966 study of the performing arts (Baumol and Bowen 1966, cited in Menger,1999, p.23), which found that artists often improve their situation through private sources (the financial support of a spouse, family or friends) and public funding sources (such as grants, subsidies, sponsorship or benefits). However, a more prevalent tendency is multiple job holding (which may reflect both difficulty in accessing state funding, and also the entry of people without family support into the field). Menger argues that multiple job-holding makes artists closer to entrepreneurs, as this allows them to both diversify the risk and facilitate networking with others in the field. As a response to these uncertain conditions, Menger argues for more regular employment for artists, but also points out that this would require the further regulation and normalisation of the field, such as more clearly defined professional criteria (which, as Bourdieu would argue, would contradict one of the field's fundamental principles). In doing so, he takes the opposite position from Beck and some of the other authors mentioned earlier, who would claim that the labour market has irreversibly changed, and that calling for permanent, stable, full time jobs is no longer possible (for artists or for anyone else).

Menger's argument is that artists have become exemplary figures for neoliberalism; contrary to the received wisdom that artists resist capitalism by their adherence to *l'art pour l'art*, artists' unquestioning belief in the star system and the 'talent economy' are very conducive to neoliberalism. Menger does not specifically use the term 'false consciousness', but it is implicit in his referencing of Arthur Stinchcombe's concept of superstition as a way of dealing with uncertainty (Stinchcombe, 1968, cited in Menger, 1999, p.19*)*; for Menger, talent is exchangeable with superstition. However, as Yann Moulier Boutang discusses in his review of Menger's book, P*ortrait de l'artiste comme travailleur* (Portrait of the Artist as Worker*)*, Menger seems to have little concern or sympathy for artists' working conditions: 'the author presents an absence of empathy, even an unconscious antipathy cloaked in "scientific objectivity"' (Boutang, 2004, p.265, my translation). Boutang points out that Menger's critique of the cultural economy is that 'the division of labour that exists in project-based management, conflict and cooperation does not take place in a direct and organised hierarchy' (Menger, 2003, in Boutang, 2004, 268; my translation). This explains his prescription to normalise the field and restore those hierarchies. This 'antipathy' may also be a result of Menger's methodologies, which seem to come from census or labour market statistics, but do not contain interviews or other qualitative material. Such methodologies are useful for mapping overall labour market tendencies but less so for such subjective questions such as individual motivations to become artists, beyond the attractions to fame and risk-taking.

In *Why Are Artists Poor: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts* (2002), Hans Abbing expresses many similar observations. His argument is that state funding encourages too many people to be artists and props up unsuccessful artworks. Despite the policy

implications of his argument, Abbing's work has been well received in cultural policy circles, perhaps because of his unique perspective as both an artist and an economist. *Why Are Artists Poor* includes numerous anecdotes of art world interactions, as experienced by 'Alex' (a stand-in for the author). Abbing plays the roles of the economist and the artist off each other and the sometimes contradictory perspectives they reflect:

> as an artist I… adhere to the this view that true art does not pay and that artists must suffer... As an economist, however, I oppose the notion that there is no relationship or even a negative one between quality and market value. I believe that market value and aesthetic value generally correspond (Abbing,2002, p.56).

Like Menger, Abbing argues that the art field is an exceptional economy, even a gift economy, the gifts in this case being state subsidies, private and corporate sponsorships, and artists' self-subsidisation. Because both artworks and artists are perceived as possessing inherent authenticity, they are perceived as an alternative to the banality and superficiality of the bourgeois lifestyle. As this myth of authenticity maintains the exceptional status of the gift economy, the purity of art must not be sullied with the dirt of commerce. Abbing also draws attention to the skewed income distribution of the art field, citing Frank and Cook's *Winner Take All Society* (1995) and Sherwin Rosen's discussion of competitive sports, where small difference in performance lead to large differences in income (Rosen 1981, cited in Abbing, 2002, p.108) . He argues that artists deliberately choose this unfair situation because they are more inclined to risk-taking than most, and are also misinformed about their chances of success. Similar to Menger, Abbing feels that state subsidies contribute to the field's exceptional nature, and thus its unfairness. Instead of increasing artists' income, grants encourage artists to 'quit their day jobs', choosing instead to dedicate themselves to their work, or making commercially unsuccessful art, and thus not improving their economic situations.

Grants and other forms of state support (including benefits) make the situation worse by encouraging people to pursue artistic careers, reassuring them that the state will support them if they are unsuccessful. This creates a situation of too many artists for too few opportunities. Subsidising organisations (so that, for example, museums, theatres and concert halls can charge free or cheap admission), is also of limited public benefit as only privileged people feel comfortable within such environments. The subsidisation of high culture leads to a lack of support for popular art forms (Abbing, 2002, p.223). Abbing's proposal is to reduce state subsidies to the arts, which will reduce the number of artists and because of this, the field's exceptional and hyper-competitive character.

Abbing's critique of the 'winner takes all' economies of the arts are important, but his analysis is quite reductive. For example, it is based on the assumption that all publicly subsidised culture is defined as high culture, produced by and for the social elite; with no difference, for example, between an opera house and a community centre hosting local bands.   This is where *Why are artists poor?* reflects certain European and even possibly Dutch assumptions about both state funded culture and the ritualistic value placed on high art. It also reflects the common perception that all artists are (equally) privileged, as though mass arts education has not brought others into the field. If all artists are all privileged, then they would not be affected, on a material level, by Abbing's proposal to remove subsidies and therefore restrict entry to the field. In other words, Abbing's proposals would simply stop privileged but *mediocre* artists from entering the field, rather than, for, example, disproportionately impacting on low-income or working-class artists. His perceptions (rather surprising given Abbing's background as an artist) are also indicative of a more general blind spot around the socio-economic conditions of artists. If all artists are seen to be privileged, then their

material conditions effectively do not matter.

If, instead, we begin with the premise that mass arts education has brought at least some people into the field who do not necessarily come from privileged backgrounds, and who may not have access to family support or other sources of private income, then the question of who will be affected by withdrawing subsidies becomes more controversial, as it may lead to the restriction of the field to those with access to private sources of income or high levels of symbolic, social and cultural capital. This raises the spectre of the potential homogenisation of the cultural field – not only in terms of taste cultures, but in terms of who can be a cultural producer, and especially who can survive the risks and financial insecurities of an artistic career. Thinking along these lines means considering material conditions, more so than Abbing does in his study.

1.11 Conclusion

This first chapter has examined the impasses and still-unresolved contradictions around the relationship between culture and capitalism. It is also an attempt to evaluate what the figure of the artist and the bohemian lifestyle have come to represent within Post-Fordist society, and what purpose is served by these representations. There is a larger debate as to whether the figure of the artist as Romantic genius is in fact a 'zombie category'. As discussed earlier, there have been critiques of this model of the artist since the early twentieth century. However, the Romantic genius could be seen as very much alive and in fact surprisingly resilient, having recently merged with aspects of celebrity culture and intellectual property regimes. As Bourdieu and Miège have argued in different ways, the genius myth is in fact a necessary part of the marketing of culture. This might reveal how the fundamental disciplinary principles that define art, and which

distinguish it from other fields are surprisingly inalterable.

As we have seen, this brings up thorny questions around power, socio-economic privilege and the role of the state. Who can become an artist? Does state subsidy for the arts promote entrepreneurial risk-taking and encourage too many people to enter the field, producing extremely exploitative and competitive conditions? Conversely, is state subsidy actually a means of democratising the field, allowing artists to survive the risks and contingencies of freelancing without family support or other forms of private income? How does the art field deal with the entry of many more people? This requires examining the role of the state in more detail: for example, what are the differences between arts grants and other forms of subsidy? What is the relationship between state subsidy and state power? It is to the relationship of culture to the state that I will now turn.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I began with the premise that cultural production should not be seen as the activities of exemplary individuals, but within the context of a much wider set of conditions. I have also examined the figure of the artist and the bohemian lifestyle in relation to the 'capitalisation of culture' (Miège) and the social transformations of the 1960s onward. Towards the end of the chapter, I challenged the perception that the material conditions of artists do not matter (because they are all assumed to be privileged), and raised the question of who bears the risks and insecurities of freelancing in the arts. The roles of the state and the family become important. I will now specifically focus on the role of the state, both in terms of cultural policy, and also social welfare policy. Social welfare policy may, at first, seem unrelated to culture, but plays a crucial role in terms of the conditions that enable precarious cultural work, and irregular types of employment such as freelancing, particularly for those without access to private income.

At the same time, we also need to see social welfare policy within the wider context of *population management*, and in the maintenance of social norms. Supporting precarious cultural work may be one of the effects of these policies, but that does not mean it is the intended outcome. Because many artists freelance and more generally occupy unconventional income and employment situations, they can be caught within the contradictions of state support and social norms. This brings to mind Beck's concept of 'zombie categories' in the previous chapter, as well as the related discussion of those who are caught in the contradictions between policies based on older social norms, and contemporary modes of work and life which do not fit (and the resulting exploitation

and inequality). The nature of artistic labour (which, as previously mentioned, is often unpaid and takes place during spare time) means it can be vulnerable to reforms which result in a loss of free time, and which penalise those who do not occupy normative situations (such as full-time employment). At the same time, because of their resourcefulness, self-reliance and willingness to subsidise their own work, artists can be positioned as entrepreneurial ideal types by neoliberal policy-makers. This chapter will thus explore artists' contradictory relationship to policy, and how social welfare policies both enable and undermine creative activities.

The chapter will begin with Foucault's concepts of governmentality and biopower, followed by his writings on neoliberalism. This will be followed by a discussion of cultural policy, focusing on the work of George Yúdice and Toby Miller, as well as the phenomenon of 'managerialism' in cultural policy, then a brief history of cultural policy in the UK and Germany (as the fieldwork takes place in London and Berlin). The second part of the chapter will be concerned with social welfare policy. I will begin with the history of social welfare policies in Germany and the UK. This will be followed by a discussion of 'social exclusion' as an influential policy discourse in Europe, and its implications for artists.

2.2 Governmentality and Biopower

A useful framework for thinking about policy can be found in Michel Foucault's concepts of *governmentality* and *biopower*. Roland Barthes had originally used the term 'governmentality' in the 1950s to mean 'the Government presented by the national press as the Essence of efficacy' (Barthes, 1989, 150). Foucault adopted and developed the concepts in *The History of Sexuality Vol 1* (1984), Governmentality (1991), and *The*

Birth of Biopolitics (2008). He used the term to mark a shift in the nature of governance in the transition from rule by sovereign power to rule by government. By definition, sovereign power was embodied in the figure of the ruler and so did not need to be justified according to any external logic, but governmental rule must prove that it is successfully managing the population, according to rational principles (governmental rationality). Foucault contrasts these definitions of rule in Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Le Mothe Vayer's educational writings. For Machiavelli, the prince's power to rule might have been established by violence, inheritance or treaty, but there is 'no fundamental, essential, natural and juridical connection between the prince and his principality' (Foucault, 1991, p.90). For Le Mothe Vayer, the 'art of government' can be characterised by 'the introduction of economy into political practice' (Foucault, 1991, p.92). Le Vayer's text outlined three related forms of governance: governing one's personal behaviour (morality), governing one's family (economy), and governing the state (politics). There is continuity between the three: governing the state requires governing the self, goods and patrimony; conversely, when the state is run well, the head of the family will know how to look after the family, goods and patrimony (Ibid). The 'art of government' also involved forms of surveillance and population management, coinciding with the development of the field of demographics (Foucault, 1991, pp.99-101).

Foucault defines governmentality as 'the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow for the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means the apparatus of security' (1991, p.102). It involves questions of 'how

to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor' (Foucault, 1991, p.87). It is an art and science of population management, with wealth and health as social goals. Historically, the rise of governmentality was connected to the transformation of the juridical state into an administrative state, and the growing pre-eminence of this type of rule over other forms. This led to the development of governmental apparatuses, and 'a whole complex of *savoirs*' (Foucault, 1991, pp.102-103). However, there is no clean departure or even transition from one form of governance to the other, as sovereign power or the use of force have not disappeared from governmental rule.

A related concept that Foucault develops in *The History of Sexuality Vol.1* (1998) is biopower, defined as power over life and death. He again focuses on the passage from sovereign to governmental power, pointing out that within feudal society, the sovereign had the power to take the life of one of his subjects; within governmental society, institutions which underpin the life and well-being of citizens (schools, hospitals, etc.) are also used to manage and control populations. The power over life and death thus no longer belongs to one sovereign individual, but is exercised through institutions of the state and civil society (Foucault, 1998, p.140).

2.3 Biopower and Neoliberalism

In *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008), Foucault draws on these concepts through tracing the development of neoliberalism. One could possibly see the very beginnings of these tendencies within the idea of introducing the economy into political practice; however, Foucault distinguishes neoliberalism from older forms of liberalism, stating that

'neoliberalism is not Adam Smith' (Foucault, 2008, p.131). Foucault traces

neoliberalism through the development of the principle that the *state's legitimacy is*

based on guaranteeing economic freedom, connected to the reaction to totalitarian

regimes such as Nazism and Stalinism, in both Europe and the US (Foucault, 2008,

p.83). Foucault defines the central concern of neoliberalism the ways that 'the overall

exercise of political power can be modelled on the principles of a market economy'

(Ibid). Foucault characterises the neoliberal relationship between social and economic

policy in three different ways. The first is that social policy must not include any form

of income redistribution, as this is seen to damage the economy; this is different from

Keynesianism, which positioned social policy as a counterweight to unrestrained

economic processes (Foucault, 2008, pp.133-134). The second is that neoliberal social

policy does not guarantee individuals against risks:

> ...society, or rather the economy, will merely be asked to see to it that every
> individual has sufficient income to be able, either directly and as an
> individual, or through the collective means of mutual benefit organisations,
> to insure himself against existing risks, or the risks of life, the inevitability
> of old age or death, on the basis of his private reserves (Foucault, 2008,
> p.144).

Thirdly, economic growth is seen as the 'only one true and fundamental social policy';

it is what enables individuals 'to achieve a level of income that will allow them the

individual insurance, access to private property and individual or familiar capitalisation

to absorb risks' (Ibid). Although it is caught up with values and regimes of

individualisation and privatisation, neoliberalism does not necessarily involve a laissez-

faire approach to governance. In fact, 'neoliberal government intervention is no less

dense, frequent, active and continuous than any other system' (Foucault, 2008, p.145).

The goal of state intervention is so that 'competitive mechanisms can play a regulatory

role at every moment and every point in society' (Ibid). Another way of characterising

this is the 'application of the economic grid to social phenomena' (Foucault, 2008, p.239), interpreting social phenomena in economic terms, and intervening in society based on economic criteria.

This is where the differences between neoliberalism and classical liberalism become evident. For example, liberalism's *homo economicus* or economic man is a partner in a process of exchange (Foucault, 2008, p.224). However, neoliberalism's ideal subject is an 'entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings' (Foucault, 2008, p.226). Foucault connects this shift with development of the concept of human capital (Foucault, 2008, pp.226-228). He illustrates this through the example of the family, which, historically, both provided a model for governance (as in Le Mothe Vayer's instructions to manage the state like a household) and also maintained the dominance of heteronormativity. However, what is crucially different about the neoliberal family is that 'time spent, care given, as well as the parents' education—in short, the set of cultural stimuli received by the child' functions as an *investment* into the child's human capital; the child is seen as an 'abilities-machine' (Foucault, 2008, p.229).

These concepts of govermentality and biopower are useful for thinking about developments in cultural and social policy in terms of *population management.* If we then think about artists, creativity and cultural production in relation to population management (particularly within a neoliberal context), this raises a number of questions. How is creativity itself defined? What kinds of creative expression are seen as conducive to the values of neoliberalism and the interests it serves? Following this, which forms of creativity are supported, or at least tolerated, and which ones are not?

Who can become a creative practitioner and how is this role envisaged? How close is the definition of the creative practitioner to the entrepreneurial subject, or creativity to 'human capital'? I will examine how these questions play out through cultural and social policy.

2.4 The Origins of Cultural Policy: Governmentality and Taste

In *Cultural Policy* (2002), Yúdice and Miller apply Foucault's concept of governmentality to the history of cultural policy. Drawing on Michael Shapiro's *Reading Adam Smith: Desire, History, Value,* the authors also point out that the 18th century saw the emergence of modern capitalism and that the state was required to regulate and manage 'flows of exchange within the social domain' (Shapiro, 1993, cited in Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.4). They contextualise the development of modern cultural policy in terms of an increasing concern with demographics, including reproduction, ageing, migration, public health and ecology. The goal was to deliver a healthy and obedient population. 'Cultural policy became part of this duty of care', using the example of the UK Education Act of 1902, which mandated school-pupil visits museums' (Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.5). They also argue that the concept of a unified national artistic culture was the aesthetic counterpart to linguistic nationalism and imperialism, serving to 'educate the citizenry into a set of tastes' (Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.7). Kant's aesthetics marked the philosophical dimensions of this shift, whereby knowledge began to have a human rather than a theological foundation, and where the universal character of this foundation is located in the public sphere and bourgeois modernity. Kant defines taste as a *sensus communis* or public sense, a 'conformity to law without the law' (Kant, 1978, cited in Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.7). An aesthetic of truth and beauty functions as an 'internal monitor', and the 'very *ethos*

of singular appreciation becomes, ironically, a connecting chord of national harmony, binding individual goals to an implied national unity' (Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.10). For Matthew Arnold, like Kant, culture was universal; it is 'the best which can be thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1994, p.6) which, embodied in the state, transcends particular class interests. For Arnold, culture can be taught; he campaigned for the merits of a liberal education against utilitarian training for industrial production; however, he also believed that culture served an important purpose, namely to counter the social disintegration or 'anarchy' of the Industrial Revolution.

Cultural policy thus brings together taste and governmentality, and plays a hegemonic role through securing of the idea of the *ethical* state through education, philosophy, religion, and so on. The ethical state is also seen to transcend class identifications and class conflicts. National cultural policies 'hold up the nation as an essence that transcends particular interests', an aesthetic unity with a 'tight link between language policy..., teaching, literature and the audiovisual media..' (Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.8). Social harmony was 'bought at the expense of those whose tastes are not only ethically unacceptable, but more importantly, potentially contestatory' (Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.11). The tasteful citizen (imagined as white, bourgeois and male), was seen as a kind of unattainable ideal subject position; one could strive towards this ideal through aesthetic education, but never completely embody it. In this contexts, subjects are always 'ethically incomplete', and this indeterminacy is to be resolved through a unified national identity (Ibid). The role of cultural policy furthering a national project has existed since, albeit in contested form. The difference today is that 'citizenship is no longer based on soil, blood or culture' (Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.28); instead, competition for international comparative advantage within global capitalism provides

the framework. At the same time, European states have also seen a renewed nationalism and xenophobia, which appeal to essentialist definitions of national culture.

2.5 UK Cultural Policy: 'Moral Uplift' vs. Extending Access

The histories of cultural policy in both the UK and Germany were shaped by these imperatives of national identity and moral uplift. The Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) was founded in 1946 with John Maynard Keynes as its first chairman. It was a descendent of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), intended to boost wartime morale. CEMA was populist in nature, supporting theatre, concert tours, and painting exhibitions in restaurants. The term 'fine arts' was used by the ACGB to specifically refer to canonical cultural traditions, but more practically to avoid the ACGB paying tax (Francis, 2005, p.45). The period between 1964 and 1970 saw both increased funding and the development of regional arts associations (which were based on pre-existing, self-organised arts initiatives). The term 'fine arts' was replaced with 'the arts' in 1967 (Ibid) because it was seen to be more democratic. During this period, cultural democracy initiatives challenged the elitism of both arts funding and the definition of culture. These were exemplified by policies of the Greater London Council and other metropolitan councils, which focused on community centres and libraries, and which tried to reflect the diversity of the UK's inhabitants (rather than taking the white bourgeois male as universal). However, tensions always existed between extending access and maintaining status quo values, reflecting much larger tensions about the relationship between high culture and the elite (Williams,1989a). In some cases, the term 'access' became code for alternative theatre and community art, which received marginal funding when compared to, for example, the Royal Shakespeare Company (McGuigan, 2004, p.40).

2.6 Culture as Entrepreneurialism

In reaction to 1970s cultural democracy initiatives, 1980s cultural policy returned to conservative definitions of both culture and authorship, exemplified by the ACGB report by then-chair William Rees-Mogg, entitled *The Glory of the Garden* (1984), 'the work of the artist in all its aspects is, of its nature, individual and free, undisciplined, unregimented, uncontrolled' (Rees-Mogg, 1984, cited in Francis, 2005, p.148); it is perhaps all too easy to point out the relationship between this rhetoric championing individual freedom and Thatcher's economic programmes. In 1994, the ACGB was replaced by the Arts Council of England, the Arts Council of Wales, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Scottish Arts Council. The National Lottery was also announced in 1994 and arts councils were given responsibility for distributing lottery funds. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) was established in 1997 under New Labour, responsible for policy on variety of sectors including: 'the arts, broadcasting, creative industries, historic environment, internet and international ICT policy, licensing and gambling, libraries, museums & galleries' (DCMS, n.d.). In 2002, the Arts Council for England and the regional arts boards were merged into a single body, the Arts Council England (ACE); this centralised state control of arts funding (Francis, 2005, pp.138-9).

2.7 German Cultural Policy: Traditions of Regionalism

Cultural policy in Germany has been shaped by a strong tradition of regionalism, reflecting its history as a collection of independent states and city republics with their own cultural policies and institutions, which persisted after the nation's founding in 1871. The National Socialist regime attempted to end this diversity with forced centralisation and the instrumentalisation of culture – a tendency which only increased

the penchant for federalism during the post-war period (Sievers and Wagner, 2009).

After the Second World War, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) consisted of a

federation of regions called *Länder,* each of which held autonomous jurisdiction over

cultural policy (with the exception of German culture abroad, which was administered

centrally). There continued to be strong regional differences between *Länder* in terms of

cultural policy priorities, as well as levels of public spending power. In particular, the

de-industrialisation in the 1970s produced regional disparities, benefiting the local

economies of some *Länder* and disadvantaging others. Although some funds are now

administered federally, attempts by the national government to extend its reach into

cultural policy remain controversial, and funding for culture is still largely administered

at the regional level.

Another important aspect of the post-war reconstruction in the FRG was a tendency to

position high culture as a counter to totalitarianism, at a time when the government was

focused on restoring the traditional values, cultural institutions and facilities that had

been destroyed during the Second World War (Friedrichs and Dangshat, 1994, p.116).

As Burns and van der Will observe:

> the bureaucrats in charge of cultural policy not only did what, as products of
> the German grammar school system, came naturally to them, but they also
> felt obliged to show that culture was capable of playing an important part in
> rescuing Germany from the moral pariah status which Nazism had
> bequeathed it (Burns and van der Will, 2003, p.141).

Post-war cultural policy in the FRG involved a mix of public and private institutions,

and was focused on canonical traditions of European bourgeois high culture, primarily

aimed at middle-class audiences. Berlin was a particularly favoured location for cultural

policy during the Cold War, as East Berlin was the capital of the GDR, and West Berlin

was an outpost of the FRG in the East.

2.8 Cultural Democracy

It was against this backdrop that the theories of the Frankfurt School and Herbert Marcuse critiqued the 'affirmative' nature of culture. The influence of these theories, in connection with the 1960s counter-culture and student protests, created a larger movement around cultural democracy. Terms such as 'alternative' and 'culture for everyone' became popular (Friedrichs and Dangshat, 1994, p.116). These ideas also influenced sympathetic policy-makers, as part of what was termed the 'New Cultural Policy', with the agenda of widening the remit of cultural policy to include activities outside of traditional high culture institutions (Sievers and Wagner, 2009). For example, Walter Scheel, Foreign Minister in 1971, stated that:

> Culture is no longer a privilege of the few but should be accessible to everyone. We should no longer sit in awe of Dürer, Bach and Beethoven; we must arouse interest in the burning problems of the present day, including adult education, opening up educational opportunities, the reform of the school system and the problems of the environment ((Burns and van der Will, 2003, p.142).

One of the more utopian visions was that of Hermann Glaser, a municipal arts administrator in Nuremberg; he developed and advocated for the concept of *Sozio-kultur* (socio-culture) whereby 'the goal of culture, understood now as a network of communicative practices, was to generate emancipated citizens empowered to think critically about themselves and their position in the world' (Burns and van der Will, 2003, p.143). However, it is important to remember that despite these developments, conventional definitions of high culture have remained more or less intact and unchallenged.

2.9 Culture as Economic Development

Drawing on both the regionalism and regional competition between large German cities,

1980s cultural policy emphasised the role of culture within local economic

development, and in inter-urban competition. The 1983 publication of the New

York/New Jersey study, *The Arts as an Industry*, was particularly influential on

policymakers. The report demonstrated that investment in cultural infrastructure would

create economic growth; culture was seen to be a 'soft' factor in making cities attractive

to business (Friedrichs and Dangshat, 1994, p.116). Throughout the 1980s as well as

during the unification process, the argument for a unified Germany drew on the idea

that East and West Germany shared a similar culture and language (despite their very

different political histories). In connection with this, the term *Kulturstaat* or 'culture

state' became prevalent in cultural policy circles, because it suggested this shared

identity.

The reunification process led to the building of landmark institutions such as museums

and memorial sites, much of which was funded by the federal government. This was

hugely expensive, and in 2003, Berlin was facing a €45 billion deficit (Burns and van

der Will, 2003, p.149). The 1990s saw not only funding cuts, but also changes to

regulations to allow for private foundations to fund culture, inspired by the model of

American 'endowment culture'(Burns and van der Will, 2003, p.145). This led to the

sponsorship of the arts in Germany by banks and corporations, which Burns and van der

Will describe as a positive development, but which Alice Creischer and Andreas

Siekmann have critiqued in 'Sponsoring and Neoliberal Culture'(n.d.). According to

Creischer and Siekmann, these sponsors strategically used contemporary art's cachet

and associations with the 'cutting edge' to enhance their corporate image *(Ibid)*.

2.10 Cultural policy and Neoliberalism

I will now turn to the effects of current social and economic developments on cultural policy, particularly neoliberalism. According to Miller and Yúdice, current tensions in cultural policy reflect the different perspectives on the neoliberal expansion of the economy into culture (Miller and Yúdice, 2002, p.184). The concepts of moral uplift and the 'ethically incomplete citizen' still persist within neoliberalism, but the key difference is that now, citizens are seen as needing schooling in adaptation to the needs of post-Fordism (such as, for example, IT or business skills). Paul Du Gay has characterised neoliberalism as an 'evangelical project'[1], and a 'struggle against lack of enterprise, which they conceptualise as a cause of social antagonism, a disease spreading through the social body destroying initiative, innovation, creativity and the like' (Du Gay, 1996, p.71). Cultural policy thus plays a role in producing better neoliberal subjects – seen as an unfinished task, as the 'neoliberal subject' is also seen as in need of continual improvement.

Miller and Yúdice also discuss several international agreements that impact on cultural policy through redefining culture specifically and as *intellectual property*. This began with the 1978 UNESCO agreement on cultural heritage; the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which involved debates around whether or not culture can be traded like any other commodity; and the World Trade Organisation's explicit language around culture as intellectual property. The authors do not mention the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) but it too plays a significant role. Positioning

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[1] In *In Praise of Bureaucracy* (2000),   Paul Du Gay in fact discusses the links between new management gurus such as Tom Peters and aspects of US evangelical Christianity.

culture as intellectual property is significant in defining creativity within the language and framework of business and technology, which has been influential in neoliberal cultural policy.

2.11 Culture as Resource

George Yúdice's *The Expediency of Culture* (2003) explores neoliberal cultural policy based on a central concept: that culture is no longer autonomous, but has become a *resource.* Yúdice takes Heidegger's definition of 'resource' (or 'standing reserve') from *The Question Concerning Technology*; Heidegger defines 'technology' as a 'calling-forth' that assembles, orders and enframes, and sees everything as potentially exploitable (2003, 27). Yúdice uses this concept of 'culture as resource' to theorise the folding of culture into economic policies. Another way of understanding this is that culture is no longer seen as having intrinsic worth but has become *expedient*, and must now produce definable results and outcomes. He sees the broader framework for these developments as the erosion of welfare state and its replacement by localised, micro-level organisations, NGOs, social entrepreneurship initiatives, etc.

Yúdice sees the expansion of culture's role as a consequence of the 'reduction in direct subvention for all social services, including culture, by the state', which then require new forms of legitimation (Yúdice, 2003, p.11). Culture is no longer experienced, valued or understood as transcendent (Yúdice, 2003, p.12) but must now prove that it can 'enhance education, salve racial strife, help reverse urban blight through cultural tourism, create jobs, reduce crime and perhaps even make a profit' (Yúdice, 2003, p.16). As I have discussed earlier, the association of culture with population management has a long history, but there seem to be new utilitarian demands on culture:

that it must heal the wounds of social and economic strife, and also function as an incentive for economic growth (Yúdice, 2003, p.11). Appeals to the value of culture must justify themselves in terms of outcomes such as 'fiscal incentives, institutional marketing or publicity value, and the conversion of non-market activity to market activity' (Yúdice, 2003, p.15). These must be demonstrated through quantitative data and other forms of hard statistical evidence.

2.12 Managerialism

One aspect of neoliberal policy is what Jim McGuigan and Paul Du Gay have termed 'managerialism', or the restructuring of government and public sector organisations along business lines (a process which began before Thatcher, but accelerated and intensified under both Thatcher and New Labour, and likely will intensify further under the coalition government). Managerialism is based on the assumption that the private sector is intrinsically more efficient and dynamic than the public sector, which is perceived as outdated (Du Gay, 2000; McGuigan, 2004). In *Rethinking Cultural Policy* (2004), McGuigan describes how cultural institutions were changed by corporate sponsorship. The financial contributions by businesses to institutions' budgets were relatively small. However, sponsors influenced cultural institutions by making funding contingent on the demand to focus on pre-existing patterns of cultural consumption over seeking new audiences. The late 1980s and 1990s also saw the increasing popularity of new management literature within government. McGuigan mentions *Reinventing Government* by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1992) as a particularly influential text. Osborne and Gaebler, 'disciples of the renowned management gurus Peter Drucker and Tom Peters', combined a modernising imperative with a technological determinism, associating the public sector with Fordism and entrepreneurialism with Post-Fordism

(McGuigan, 2004, p.47). As a result of these influences, many publicly-funded organisations were increasingly required to re-organise themselves and operate *as though they were private businesses,* a common pattern across Europe.

2.13 Creative Industries Discourses: Culture as Growth and Employability Strategy

The 'creative industries' policy discourse has been influential within both the UK and Germany. It represents an explicit attempt to position the arts and cultural industries within the terms of business and technology, and to justify them within these terms (such as through the use of productivity indicators or the frequent use of terms such as 'innovation'). As Nicholas Garnham has argued, the very term 'creative industries' involves the inclusion of technologically based industries such as software or videogames, along with the arts and cultural industries – which have led to rather inflated claims for their contribution to economic growth (Garnham, 2005). Where earlier tensions within cultural policy existed between imperatives to foster 'talent' (based on the conventions of individual authorship), and to 'extend access', current tensions exist around encouraging talent (defined more narrowly in terms of intellectual property generation), and encouraging employability.

In the UK, the DCMS emphasises 'individual creativity, skill and talent', as well as economic growth through intellectual property generation (DCMS website). The tensions still exist around, on one hand, fostering individual talent, and on the other hand, the issue of 'access'. However, what is significant is that the more traditional understanding of 'access' (as encouraging non-traditional audiences to participate in the arts) is understood generally in terms of employability and specifically in terms of jobs

in the creative industries. Museum attendance or music lessons, for example, encourages people to develop their creative potential, and participate in the creative industries, which the DCMS describes as 'at the centre of successful economic life in an advanced knowledge-based economy' (DCMS, 2001). In other words, creativity becomes yet another form of human capital. A 2008 'mapping document' entitled *New Talents for the New Economy* defines creativity and the creative industries in even more explicit and narrow terms: that the creative industries are expanding at twice the rate of the economy as a whole, but that the UK's comparative advantage faces challenges from other countries (DCMS, 2008). The focus is almost exclusively on skills training and business development; the arts as traditionally defined are barely present.

The creative industries discourse in Germany is slightly different in the UK in that there generally seems to be a greater focus on high culture than on IT-related fields or employability (Fesel and Sönderman, 2007, 9), and on the role of high-profile cultural events such as the Berlinale film festival in city- and nation-branding (Fesel and Sönderman, 2007, 12). However, in Berlin it has a much stronger emphasis than in other *Länder*, because of the role played by the media and cultural industries within the local economy. As I will discuss later, the success of the Berlin music industry, and attempts by policymakers to capitalise on this, are also significant. According to Bastian Lange, these policies tend to focus on 'context-improvement ("urbanity", city branding)' as 'the only legitimate form of "helping" creative agents' (Lange, 2009). In 2007 (the year of Germany's EU Presidency), the role of the creative industries in economic development were also the subject of several large conferences and parliamentary debates. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Minister of State for Culture, introduced the following programmes 'Culture Initiative and the Creative Industries', and the 'Music

Initiative' (Sievers and Wagner, 2009). This suggests an increasing focus on creative
industries for policy-makers.

2.14 Artists and Social Policies

I have discussed cultural policies in terms of how they frame cultural production, both
in terms of their concrete effects on cultural production (in terms of how they affect the
structure and functioning of the venues where the artists work) and also how they
function as *discourse,* affecting how we think of art and artists. However, it is important
to remember that on a material level, arts grants actually go to very few artists and in
some cases, artists are unlikely to receive more than several grants for their entire
careers. The artists I interviewed mentioned that, in fact, grants were practically out of
reach for them (several said they did not even bother applying). Because of this, cultural
policies may actually have little effect on how artists survive on an everyday basis.

If arts funding plays a limited role in artists' working conditions, and also makes up a
very small proportion of their income (if at all), then it is actually *social policies* which
in fact have a greater impact on their everyday lives. Because artistic work is frequently
unpaid, self-directed and takes place outside of working hours, it is affected by policies
that impact on the amount of time artists have to spend on their artwork. Policies that
affect artists' ability to support themselves on part-time and freelance employment
(including their ability to survive periods between contracts, where they might receive
little to no income) thus become important. Cultural work does not fit easily into either
conventional definitions of employment or means-tested definitions of poverty, which
places them in an awkward position in relation to current social policy discourses. In
this second part of the chapter, then, I will explore how certain forms of social welfare

provision enable or limit precarious forms of cultural work. I will also consider the effects on precarious cultural work of recent reforms which position paid employment as both a social norm and the only form of financial stability (such as, for example, restricting access to benefits).

A report from the European Parliament's committee on Culture and Education *The Status of Artists in Europe* (2006), illustrates the awkward position of artists. The report begins by asking why 'despite flourishing culture/creative industry markets, their activities are generally carried out in far more precarious circumstances than other occupations' (Capiau, Wiesand and Cliche, 2006, p.iii). The authors also observe that much policy considers artists to be entrepreneurs, but their practices are 'atypical', because artistic projects are often not launched to specifically earn money, but to 'express the creative forces of a personality' – notably, perpetuating the familiar binary of money vs. self-expression (Capiau, Wiesand and Cliché, 2006, p.6). The authors cite a 2004 EUROSTAT study on cultural employment in Europe, which showed (as we might expect) that cultural workers were more likely to hold temporary jobs, part-time jobs, and more than one job than the workforce in general (EUROSTAT, 2004, cited in Capiau, Wiesand and Cliche, 2006, p.8). They paint a picture of multiple job-holding, project/contract based employment, and self-employment (Capiau, Wiesand and Cliche, 2006, pp.9-13). This situation leads to legal uncertainties in terms of artists' taxation and social security status; lack of sector-specific expertise in employment law also makes it difficult for artists to know their rights. The authors also state that in some cases it can be difficult to identify who is the employer or employee, as the artist can sometimes fall into one of these categories, or occupy them simultaneously: the employer of others on a specific project, a self-employed worker within a micro-company, and an employee

engaged in a project of a company, which in some cases could be his/her own project.

This mix of private and professional work makes difficult to determine what the authors

call 'the classic link of subordination' between employer and employee, and also makes

it difficult for trade unions to represent their members as either entrepreneurs or

employees. (Capiau, Wiesand and Cliche, 2006, p.17). As a result, collective

representation fails to develop, except in larger public institutions or companies. The

authors acknowledge that funding cuts and privatisation can produce 'grave

interferences with [artists'] ideas and professional practices and may even consider

changing their work or working status altogether' (Capiau, Wiesand and Cliche, 2006,

p.11); however, their analysis seems to be based on the idea that these changes affect all

artists equally (based on the assumption, discussed earlier, that all artist possess similar

levels of socio-economic privilege).

The authors' overall recommendations include:

> -More flexible qualification criteria for unemployment insurance schemes that would take into account the irregularity of artistic work and its risks, as well as the role of family life
>
> -An allowance to pursue an artistic career whilst formally unemployed, and to consider the development of projects as job-seeking
>
> -Support for professional development and retraining
>
> -Better coordination between EU member states so that artists are not financially penalised for working in different countries; facilitation for non-EU artists to work in the EU
>
> -Clarification of individual contractual relations, for both individuals and small cultural enterprises
>
> -agencies providing clear, practical advice to artists on legal, social security and tax information (Capiau, Wiesand and Cliche, 2006, pp.iv-v).

The authors then outline several schemes specifically targeted at artists and freelancers.

Most of them seem to focus on either reproducing the 'classic link of subordination' between employer and employee, and reducing the irregularity of freelance work in the arts (in other words, giving artists more security is by making artistic activity more like regular employment). This raises the question if there are other ways of providing more security for artists, without making them more like conventional employees. One example of such a policy, '*Künstlersozialkasse' (KSK)* or the social insurance scheme for self-employed artists, will be discussed in further detail in a later chapter.

Having discussed the contradictions between irregular employment in culture and the basis of social policy in regular employment, I will move on to discuss social welfare policies in the UK and Germany. I will now examine 'social exclusion', an influential policy discourse in Europe, drawing on both Ruth Levitas's text, *An Inclusive Society?* (1998), and also *Beyond Social Inclusion, Towards Cultural Democracy* (2004) by the Glasgow-based Cultural Policy Collective, which makes some very pointed critiques of the role of artists in social exclusion policy.

2.15 Social Welfare Policy in Germany

Gösta Esping-Andersen has characterised West German social welfare policy as 'conservative-corporate', as it was based on pro-family ideals, and has historically provided a large role for voluntary organisations, particularly religious charities (Esping-Andersen, 1990, in Cochrane, 1993, p.8). Until the Hartz-IV reforms of 2003-2004, there was a dual system of benefits: the contribution-based Social Security (which was administered by private companies, except for public sector workers) and the means-tested Social Assistance, provided by the *Länder,* federal government and the voluntary sector and administered by local authorities.

This dual system reproduced a class, gender and race divide; as women, working class people and migrants were less likely to be in full-time, stable employment, they were less likely to qualify for Social Security and had to apply for Social Assistance (Wilson, 1993, pp.143-158). However, the 'middle class legitimacy' and status quo maintenance of Social Security spared it the backlash that took place in the US and the UK in the 1980s (Wilson, 1993, p.144). After 1989, the GDR was absorbed by the FRG. Berlin became its own separate *Land*. There was mass unemployment in the GDR, with official figures at 16% and unofficial figures at 31%; many East Germans were only eligible for means-tested benefits. Young people, particularly young East Germans, were affected, with the result that they either lived on benefits or became dependent on their parents.

2.16 The Hartz-IV Reforms

During 2003-2005, the government implemented a series of very controversial welfare reforms (termed '*Hartz-IV*'), initiated by Peter Hartz, advisor to the then Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. These reforms included:

> 1) cutbacks to health care, requiring patients to co-pay for doctor visits and prescriptions.
>
> 2) the merging of the administration of Social Security and Social Assistance, and the reform of both programs. Social Security was renamed 'Unemployment Benefit I'; the maximum duration for receiving benefits was reduced to 12 months (18 months for older employees) and labour laws were reformed to make it easier for employers to hire and fire. Social Assistance was renamed 'Unemployment Benefit II' and was capped at €345/month in addition to rent, with €331 in the former GDR. People with working spouses or assets exceeding €13000 would be ineligible (Deutsche Welle, 2003).

In addition to these reforms, *Ich-AG* or Me, plc was introduced as a granting scheme in 2003 to encourage unemployed people to start their own businesses. Another,

particularly controversial scheme was the 'One Euro Jobs' workfare scheme, so called because it would pay €1/hour, in addition to benefits. Many of the jobs involved cleaning and security work (Mayer, 2007). These reforms were unpopular, leading to the downfall of the Social Democratic Party. Many researchers and anti-poverty activists predicted that these reforms would lead to rise of poverty; this was confirmed by a 2005 report which reported a 2.7% rise in child poverty in Germany over the past decade (UNICEF, 2005, 6) as well as a report by the Berlin research institute DIW which showed a rising gap between rich and poor, and the shrinking of the middle, despite a reduction in the jobless rate (Deutsche Welle, 2008).

2.17 Social welfare policy in the UK

Cochrane and Clarke argue that British social policy originated in the postwar universal welfare provisions, developed by William Beveridge and John Maynard Keynes. Similar to Germany, there was a dual system for social insurance: the earnings-based National Insurance, and the means-tested National Assistance. The welfare state was created in the image of the 'respectable, white, working class family, headed by a securely employed father, with wife-and-mother in an appropriately dependent and subordinate role'; the British welfare state, 'based on this model family, was presented to the world as a great national monument, attained in the face of imperial decline' (Cochrane and Clarke, 1993, p.20). Wage labour was seen as the primary source of income, and the breadwinner was assumed to be male. Women who did not fit this normative profile (such as working mothers) were marginalised and in some cases driven into poverty (Wilson, 1993, p.79). However, lobbying by feminists led to some material improvements for women.

If one major tension in UK welfare policy existed around gender roles, another was around immigration and race. Migrants were treated as temporary, low-wage labour with little access to benefits. There was also a prevalent belief that migrants, particularly Black people, were a drain on the system; this was challenged by anti-racist activists in the 1970s and 1980s. The role of the welfare state was essentially to provide for the involuntarily unemployed; however, because other forms of insurance were often insufficient, employed people still needed to apply for means-tested benefits. As Cochrane and Clarke argue, these limitations have to be seen within the wider context of the Cold War, and particularly the UK's subordinate relationship to the US during European reconstruction, and through its Atlanticist orientation during the Cold War era; in the US, the welfare state was even more severely curtailed because it was seen as a nascent form of communism (Cochrane and Clarke, 1993, p.21).

The 1970s saw fundamental changes to both British society and the British welfare state. By this time, it became apparent that many people were no longer living in the nuclear family structures which had served as the model for the 1945 welfare state (to what extent this reflected reality even then is another discussion). Women's employment, lone parent families, rising divorce rates and the increasing numbers of older people who were supported by state rather than family care indicated a gap between policy and reality, interpreted by certain commentators as a crisis of the social order. The second shift consisted of the mass unemployment caused by the energy crisis and economic slowdown of the 1970s. This forced the government to seek a loan from the International Monetary Fund, which stipulated cuts to public spending on welfare, health and education. These austerity measures produced widespread protest.

Margaret Thatcher took over the Conservative Party in 1976, and was elected to office

in 1979. The Conservatives based their critique of the failure of the welfare state on

'three D's': *de-industrialisation, disincentives* and *demoralisation.* 'Deindustrialisation'

meant that the state was seen as responsible for the decline of the UK's manufacturing

base; 'disincentives' meant personal and corporate taxation were seen as limiting

enterprise and risk-raking, and that the state represented officialdom and regulation

(Clarke and Langan, 1993, p.52). Demoralisation meant that the welfare state prevented

people from taking responsibility for their own lives, undermining the will to work and

promoting a culture of dependency. What followed were a series of cuts targeting

working-class people, including an attempt to reform welfare so it would become a last

resort for desperate people with no other options, but the state would no longer be the

primary provider for most people. The role of the family was prioritised, particularly

unpaid caring work by women, *as a form of privatisation.* Rights and benefits were

restricted to those in normative work situations.

However, the Conservative Party was actually cautious to fully implement these

ideologies for a variety of reasons, including the worry that they would alienate middle-

class public sector workers, who had increasing power and influence (Clarke and

Langan, 1993, p.56). Clarke and Langan argue that the Conservatives were actually

more successful was on the level of organisational changes, motivated by the belief that

government should be run like a business.

2.18 The Enterprise Allowance Scheme as Unofficial Arts Funding

In connection with Thatcher's imperative to encourage enterprise, the Enterprise

Allowance Scheme (EAS) was set up during the 1980s to encourage unemployed

people to start small businesses. However, it was appropriated by artists as a form of

unofficial arts funding.[2] There were several reports on the Enterprise Allowance

Scheme (EAS), from the *Social and Community Planning Research* (now the National

Centre for Social Research). According to these reports, most of the businesses set up

by the EAS were in the service industries, catering, repairs, manufacturing and

construction (Maung and Erens, 1991, p.134). There has been little information about

the use of the EAS specifically within the arts, although according to one report,

'literary, artistic and sport' constituted 3% of EAS usage (Wood, 1984). In *Art Work:

Artists' Jobs and Opportunities 1989-2003*, Susan Jones points out that in 1989, '10% of

the people on the Enterprise Allowance Scheme were estimated to be artists or arts-

based businesses' (Jones, 2004, p.1). The extent to which EAS actually functioned as

arts funding is understudied (perhaps due to the sensitive nature of the topic). However,

in another context it would be interesting to find out whether or not a more diverse

range of cultural projects was funded through schemes such as the EAS than through

conventional arts funding.

There seems to be little information overall about how these reforms affected the

livelihoods of artists, perhaps for the reasons mentioned earlier (such as the blind spots

around the social conditions of cultural production). Chin-Tao Wu has studied processes

of privatisation within arts organisations (Wu, 2003); others have examined the role of

Charles Saatchi in promoting specifically entrepreneurial forms of creativity under

Thatcher and New Labour (Hatton and Walker, 2005; Stallabrass, 2006). Certainly this

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[2] Alan McGee, founder of Creation Records, "you can thank UK Prime Minister Maggie Thatcher for the existence of McGee's Creation records' and that 'the take up was huge – nearly every label I knew in that era was formed that way, COR records, Rise Above, etc. It was really successful because it offered a way for many would be musicians, comics, designers, artists etc. to get the jobless tag off their backs and so have time to concentrate on building a business... it wasn't just for budding record label owners, anyone could join" (Ask Earache, 2008).

can be seen to have particular effects on artists' professional identities, although, as mentioned, this has been understudied. The present-day impact of these developments on artists' everyday lives, particularly the withdrawal of state support and the financialisation of housing, will be discussed in a later chapter.

2.19 Social Exclusion Policies

I will now examine the development of 'social exclusion' policies, which have been extremely influential on social policy in Europe. Social exclusion originates from several different contradictory policies from several different countries which nonetheless share a core belief in *equating full-time paid employment with participation in society.* I am focusing on social exclusion, not only because it has been so influential in Europe, but also because of its consequences for those in non-standard employment, including artists). In *The Inclusive Society?: Social Exclusion and New Labour* (1998), Ruth Levitas describes three types of social inclusion discourse. The redistributionist discourse (RED) emphasises poverty as a prime cause of social exclusion (however, social exclusion is seen as not only material but also cultural); it calls for the redistribution of resources (Levitas, 1998, p.14). The more punitive moral underclass discourse (MUD) originates in the US New Right, and demonises those who do not fit a neo-conservative vision of a social order (family, nation, job), blaming the state for creating a 'culture of dependency' (Levitas, 1998, p.21). The social integrationist discourse (SID) originates in French policy and was adopted by the EU; it is communitarian, emphasising paid employment as providing social integration (Levitas, 1998, pp.26-27). Levitas summarises these discourses in terms of what they construct the 'excluded' as lacking: 'in RED they have no money, in SID they have no work, in MUD they have no morals' (Levitas, 1998, p.27). Within both the UK and Germany,

SID and MUD have been the most influential.

Within the UK context, Levitas argues that through the 1990s, the government discarded any language around income redistribution; it also centralised decision-making power, so that governance became 'less about participatory democracy as about participation in the delivery of policy' as Caroline Daniel observed in 'May the Task-force Be With You' (1997, cited in Levitas, 1998, p.29). A similar technocratic approach was taken in Germany, notably around urban politics in poor areas, and in dealing with unemployment; through 'neighbourhood management centres', community organisations were taken over by technocratic service providers who implemented government policy (Mayer 2003a, 2007, 2009).

2.20 Social Exclusion and the Arts

Social exclusion policy discourses place artists in a contradictory position. By emphasising normative forms of work and life (as paid employment is seen to provide social integration and personal discipline), it provides justification for withdrawing support for those in irregular work situations, including artists. Activities that do not fit either into paid employment or improving employability (as strictly defined) are de-legitimised. What does this mean for the cultural sector, which (as mentioned before) involves a great deal of unpaid work and frequently takes place during spare time?   If social exclusion policy discourses (as well as their concrete effects in terms of benefit reforms) result in less spare time and if periods spent out of work become increasingly precarious, then we can see them as undermining the conditions for cultural production.

Ironically, at the same time as state support is withdrawn and artists experience

increasingly precarious conditions, they are required to act as agents of social cohesion, through their involvement in public art projects involving marginalised groups of people. In 2004, the Glasgow-based Cultural Policy Collective (CPC) published a text entitled *Beyond Social Inclusion: Towards Cultural Democracy.* They mentioned the Scottish Executive's 2001 National Cultural Strategy, which contained the phrase, 'culture promotes social cohesion' (Scottish Executive, n.d.). Whilst their critique is focused specifically on the Scottish context, their critiques of top-down implementation and lack of sustained engagement could equally be applied elsewhere: 'they recruit willing representatives from targeted zones without considering the non-participation of far wider sections of their population'; 'due to a paucity of funding, a lack of sustained engagement with participants is typical, with the result that many outreach projects are bureaucratically regimented to produce bland outcomes with little communicative power'; 'too many programs are defined with a missionary ethos… their content often bears scant relation to the lives they aim to improve'; 'local people—rightly or wrongly—perceive them as being promoted at the expense of more urgent priorities like housing, safe play-areas, or proper policing' (CPC, 2004, p.11). They argue that these programmes promote 'a parochial sphere of action that is almost wholly dependent on professionalised community organisations', with little power given to communities to determine their own needs (CPC: 2004, p.33). If culture is seen to promote social cohesion (in the face of a perceived moral crisis), then this leaves little room for debate or conflict. If we remember Yúdice and Miller's discussions of cultural policy as population management, we could see social inclusion as a neoliberal adaptation of concepts of older concepts such as moral uplift.

In this situation, artists function as service providers for marginalised groups, and agents

in the delivery of government policy. In the UK, artists are also increasingly reliant on this role as a source of income. Susan Jones draws attention to 'the growing role of public art commissioning in terms of providing artists with opportunities to generate what are often major "one-off pieces" in complex circumstances' (Jones, 2004, p.3). Public art commissions constituted 5% of opportunities advertised in A-N magazine in 1989; by 1999 they had increased to 10% (and 20% of the value) of artists' incomes; by 2003, they made up 15% of the opportunities, but 40% of the monetary value (Jones,2004, pp.2-3). At the same time, exhibitions decreased in terms of the percentage of monetary value, from 5% in 1989 to 1% in 2003 (Ibid). Jones points out that unlike exhibitions, commissions at least 'acknowledge the requirement for higher skill and experience levels' and provide 'realistic additional sums for expenses and material costs' (Jones, 2004, p.3). This is less the case in Germany as community arts have been comparatively less influential; however, as Sievers and Wagner point out, cultural projects and employment are often indirectly funded through EU structural and social funds, particularly in deprived areas (Sievers and Wagner, 2009).

If artists are relying more on public art commissions because they are better paid, then how does this change the nature of the cultural field? If artists who are involved in these commissions become service providers (subjecting them, in a certain sense, to similar conditions as other public sector workers) then what are the implications for artistic autonomy? Not surprisingly, some critics have called for a return to gallery-based cultural forms (Bishop, 2004). Related to this, others have asserted the importance of artistic autonomy in the face of the bureaucracy and crass commercialism of the cultural industries, rejecting any engagement with cultural policy, even a critical one (Leslie, 2005). However, this response is problematic because, as Bourdieu and Miège have

argued, some of the conventions of the art field (such as artistic autonomy and the artist as an exemplary figure) have already been incorporated into capitalism.

2.21 Conclusion

I have discussed policy developments which increasingly position culture in terms of its ability to teach people to become more adaptable and employable within a post-Fordist climate. This takes place within an overall framework which positions paid employment both as an intrinsic moral good, as a means for people to individually insure themselves against risk, and as a way of belonging to society. I have also discussed how culture is seen to promote, not only skills, but a sense of social cohesion: of making the 'excluded' feel they are they are part of society. The irony is that cultural producers (who are often part of these efforts to promote social cohesion) also become subject to a precarious existence as a result of these policies.

This is why the recommendations outlined in *The Status of Artists in Europe*, which call, for example, for greater flexibility in unemployment insurance policies to reflect the mobility and irregular work characteristic of the arts, seem to point in an opposite direction from current developments, which seem to be about tightening regulations and restricting access, and, to a certain extent, entrenching pre-existing social norms. To return to Beck's 'zombie categories', could we also interpret current policies in terms of a desperate attempt to re-instate older conventions, in the face of a perceived moral and social breakdown (in which artists then become implicated)?

If individuals must increasingly take responsibility for their own employability and in insuring themselves against risk, how will this affect artists? As I have suggested earlier,

the worst case scenario is one where the possibility of pursuing a career in the arts becomes restricted to those with private means. Another question is about how much it might change artists' sense of their art work or art careers in relation to their paid employment. For example, will it lead to a situation where artists in fact come to identify more with their 'day jobs' and less with their art? How does this affect the disciplinary principles mentioned earlier, which is are about the rejection of the utilitarianism of work, and identification with paid employment? To consider these sorts of questions (which are about the intersections between material conditions and field politics) means making some unlikely connections, imaginatively linking together discourses that have been traditionally unrelated. I will outline this approach in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I examined the social conditions of cultural production. The first chapter explored the work of theorists who have considered these conditions, as well as the role of the figure of the artist to recent social and economic transformations. Beginning with Foucault's theories on governmentality, the second chapter examined cultural and social welfare policies in the UK and Germany, and their impact on artists. I examined how social welfare policies have particular implications for artists, by enabling or limiting their ability to survive on irregular and contingent employment.

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodological implications of the project, and more generally of researching artists' working conditions. As I have suggested earlier, the prospect of studying artists' working conditions may not be difficult to imagine from a materialist perspective but may be seen as counter-intuitive in terms of how the disciplines have developed historically. In this chapter, I will discuss the disciplinary gaps this project is attempting to address, and the methodological implications. I will also reflect on the experiences of interviewing artists in London and Berlin as a disparate group of people, from different backgrounds and with different art practices, living in different circumstances. I will discuss the methodologies I have developed to work with such disparate material, and will also examine my own role in the research, as both an insider and an outsider to the art field.

PART 1: FIELDS AND DISCIPLINES

3.2 The Tendency Within the Arts to Ignore Social Conditions

The project is interdisciplinary in nature, involving aspects of both art history and also sociology. Whilst it shares art history's concern with artists and art practices, it departs from conventional art historical approaches through its focus on social conditions. Within the cultural field, social conditions are not really seen to be an area of concern, because they fall outside discussions of aesthetics and individual art works. We can understand this in relation to how the cultural field has developed and defined itself in relation to other fields (particularly in terms of artistic autonomy and the 'economic world in reverse'). The project also does not focus on historically significant works or artists, but takes a broader perspective; I am interested in the conditions experienced by a a range of artists, with varying degrees of success, including those working in relative obscurity. Greg Sholette has argued that the art world is characterised by a dynamic where very few artists are successful enough to gain visibility within the art press while the majority (including less successful artists, art students, and amateurs) do not. However, these 'invisible artists' are nonetheless necessary for the functioning and reproduction of the art world as they make up an important part of the art audience, and also often work as teachers, gallery staff ,artists' assistants, etc. (Sholette, 2004). By interviewing a range of artists (including those with international reputations as well as recent graduates), I am hoping to explore a broad range of social conditions and levels of status within the art world. My approach to the project is also inspired by the critiques of authorship discussed in the first chapter, which attempt to shift attention away from the unique voice of the author and towards the conditions of production. Following this, the work and lives of individual artists serve as the basis for a sociological analysis, rather than a study of their unique and exemplary qualities. This is

also why I have not focused more exclusively on the artists' work (I am more interested in situating their work within the broader framework of their lives).

3.3 The Tendency Within Social Research to Ignore Artists

If the art field ignores sociological analyses, then there is also a converse tendency for sociology and policy research to ignore the experience of artists. Perhaps out of an imperative to focus on broader social patterns rather than more atypical situations, I have found that sociological analyses of work, social policy and urban politics (such as some of those discussed in both earlier and later chapters) tend to avoid studying those in irregular working and living conditions, including artists. Public perceptions of artists may also play a role in producing this blind spot, such as the widespread perception that artists belong to the social elite. If they are assumed to be privileged, then any poverty or hardship experienced by artists is seen to be a choice rather than a necessity, and so it follows that artists are not really worthy of research attention. However, this perspective ignores the expansion of arts education, which has led to people from a wide range of backgrounds entering the field, as well as the expansion of the art field itself. It could be an example of 'talking about art as though it was [still] existing in the time of 'princely patronage' (Miège, 1989, p.66). This also raises other issues on further consideration. In this particular economic climate, what is a safe or 'sensible career choice' can be difficult to determine and is liable to change quickly (if we remember the discussion on Beck's risk society) complicating the distinction between 'choice' and necessity. My own view on the matter is closer to that of Bourdieu, who does not simply assume artists are wealthy, but argues that socio-economic privilege plays a crucial role in career success. For artists from privileged backgrounds, economic capital provides 'the conditions for freedom from economic necessity', and the 'basis of self-assurance,

audacity and indifference to profit'(Bourdieu, 1993, p.68). Privilege also allows artists to develop 'the flair associated with the possession of a large social capital and the corresponding familiarity with the field' (Ibid). These conditions give artists from privileged backgrounds considerable advantage over artists from working-class or petit-bourgeois backgrounds, evidenced by Bourdieu's study of nineteenth century writers. There is, of course, another discussion about how the cultural field has changed since the nineteenth century, and how socio-economic privilege might operate in the arts today (Bourdieu did in fact write about neoliberalism in the 1990s, but did not apply this analysis to culture).   For example, how might 'freedom from economic necessity' function within a neoliberal context, or the audacity and confidence Bourdieu described, when the expectation to be an 'entrepreneur of the self' has become normalised? I will explore how these issues play out when I discuss the fieldwork.

Because this project sits between disciplines (in this case visual culture and sociology), it becomes necessary to do more work in applying the analysis from one discipline to another, or conceptually mapping one field onto another. For example, how do the analyses of social policy or housing specifically apply to artists? This project also sits between disciplines not only in terms of its subject matter (applying a sociological analysis to culture) but also in terms of methodology and scale. To generalise, the urban and social policy research I have encountered when researching the two cities has tended to make use of quantitative rather than qualitative methods, and has focused on macro-scale developments (such as changes to city or neighbourhood demographics or local economies), but not individual life experiences of cities. My project specifically explores the intersections between policies, material conditions and subjective experience. It is thus an attempt to make links between the

macro and the micro – which is why I combine policy analysis with interviews and narrative descriptions.

My starting point for the research is a condition that Irit Rogoff has characterised in terms of being 'without': 'a state in which we acknowledge that we had some navigational principles and models of critical analysis to hand, but that they no longer quite serve us in relation to a new and emergent conjunction of problems'(Rogoff, 2006). Doing an interdisciplinary project, for me, comes out of a situation where the tools offered by the art field are not appropriate for understanding the neoliberalisation of culture, but neither are more rigid sociological approaches. I also have trained as an artist and not as a sociologist, which is sometimes a source of 'methodological anxiety' (about this project being judged inappropriately by conventional sociological criteria).'Being without' for me is a starting point, but not a static condition of continual uncertainty; my objective is to develop new methodologies that can address the disciplinary gaps I have mentioned.

This project is also an attempt to generate critical discussion about artists and cities, in contrast to other discourses which have recently become dominant. The work of Richard Florida and Charles Landry, for example, has framed both artists and cities in terms of culture-driven economic development, from which both artists and cities are seen to benefit. These discourses tend to be quite promotional, if not openly boosterist in tone, focusing on how to attract the 'creative class' to a given city or region, with the value of the cultural economy justified by 'productivity statistics, that orbit, halo-like, around Creative Industries policy' (Ross, 2009, p.27). For all their celebration of the creative class, there is actually little concern for the material conditions of artists, and

little acknowledgement of how aspects of culture-driven economic growth (which in practice are often connected to boosting the property market) could actually make the situation more difficult for cultural producers. It could be thus argued that the blind spot around the conditions of cultural production also affects these discourses (in that they are focused on the role played by culture in economic growth, but do not consider the effects of economic growth on cultural producers). The dominance of these discourses can make it difficult to find other ways to think about culture and cities, particularly those that are neither boosterist (as in Florida) or dismissive (as in Neil Smith). One of the tasks of this project is thus to develop a more complex and nuanced approach.

3.4 Material Conditions and Professional Identities

My project focuses on the intersections between the material conditions under which artists live and work and their professional identities. I consider relationships between practical survival concerns (such as the economics of living in London or Berlin) and more subjective issues such as artists' self-understanding of their art careers and their jobs, their sense of hope or anxiety about the future, their relationship to other artists, etc. In particular, I examine the connection between living costs and processes of professionalisation: how expensive rent can intensify pressures to professionalise (such as the taking on of full-time professional employment or expectations for instant market success). For example, do higher living costs create a *habitus* of constant work, where one's time is always allocated towards some useful and productive activity? Does an unstable living situation (as is the case in London) create a *habitus* of a tenuous and provisional relationship to home and community? I am interpreting *habitus* in this situation as perhaps less 'durable' than Bourdieu defined it (this is not really about the sedimented weight of tradition or knowledge transmitted through generations). This

also raises questions about how one can observe *habitus* in fieldwork (interviews for example)—does it manifest itself as an involuntary or unconscious sense of ease or comfort with certain issues or topics and discomfort with others (expressed, for example, through awkward silences)?   It is also important to keep in mind that professionalisation for artists might mean something different than in other fields, both because bohemianism has been specifically defined in opposition to conventional professional identities, and also because the duration and trajectory of artistic careers can be quite different from conventional career paths (although, as Beck and Sennett have argued, the extent to which conventional career paths may in fact be the norm is another question; see Sennett, 1998; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). This places the artists in a contradictory situation, which I will discuss later on.

3.5 Spatial Dimensions of the Project

My project takes place in two cities: London and Berlin. I am exploring the different dimensions of these cities: as sites where larger social/economic processes such as post-industrialism or neoliberalism play out (albeit in very different ways), places where the artists live and work on an everyday basis, as cultural economies, as art scenes and as urban environments. As the conditions in London and Berlin are so different from each other, they are not, strictly speaking, comparable.

Within the Western European context, London and Berlin can perhaps be seen as extremes in terms of the social/economic conditions and the particular possibilities and challenges they present for artists. London is an extremely expensive place to live, particularly because of its global city status and the financialisation of housing; as we will see, this has consequences for artists and for the cultural economy in general. Due

to its historical circumstances, Berlin is relatively inexpensive compared to other major European cities; cheap residential and commercial rents enable certain lifestyles and art practices. However, because it is also difficult place to find employment, contacts and resources and in some cases independence from the local economy become necessary to avoid the worst aspects of poverty.

London and Berlin both play a particular role in the international division of labour in the art world. In *Neo-Bohemia,* Richard Lloyd applies Manuel Castell's analysis of networks in *The Information Society* to the art world (Lloyd, 2005, p.162); he characterises the art world as a global network in which the nodes (such as London and Berlin) are cities with *cultural* infrastructure (such as venues, publications or art schools) that are also linked into art scenes elsewhere. These cities set the terms of a contemporary art 'international style', which those on the periphery are pressured to replicate or else be dismissed as provincial. London and Berlin also serve certain specialised functions within the international art world, which I will discuss later.

In addition to functioning as cultural economies, London and Berlin are simultaneously *places* where the artists live out their everyday lives, make art, work at their jobs, and try to develop artistic communities. This means that, rather than existing in a completely separate contexts, artists in both cities are subject to many of the same urban pressures experienced by other residents, such as gentrification and (particularly in London) the spatialisation of inequality. In order to explore this, I apply research on housing and urban politics (which deals with the conditions of local residents in general) to the specific situation of artists. This is combined with the interview material exploring the artists' living situations.

London and Berlin are also urban environments and the experience of their neighbourhoods, streets, houses, buildings, etc. is also an important part of the project. In order to capture this, I recorded my impressions of my journeys to the artists' studios (the streets, the buildings, the people, etc), and took photographs of the surrounding neighbourhoods. Most of these journeys were taken by bicycle, and a couple by foot or public transport. This aspect of the project is very much in the spirit of Certeau's notion of 'walking in the city', rather than viewing it from the top of the Empire State Building. However, as a researcher, I am not like Certeau's walkers 'whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it' (Certeau, 1984, pp.93-94), and my journeys, in most cases, had a defined purpose (they were not psychogeographic drifts). In London, the journeys took me far from the city centre, to neighbourhoods and buildings which were often difficult to find, and in some cases, tiring to reach. This meant that I experienced myself, on a physical level, how the artists had been pushed into more peripheral areas and the effort they spent in commuting. In Berlin, the studios of the artists I visited tended to be concentrated in the same areas (such as Kreuzberg and Neukölln), no more than a thirty minute cycle journey from the city centre. Appointments tended to be made more spontaneously (reflecting, perhaps, the fact that the artists had more unstructured time).

2. THE PROCESS OF CONDUCTING THE FIELDWORK

3.6 The London Interviews

I began the London fieldwork in the summer of 2008. I began by contacting studio providers, which I did so that I did not have to rely on my own social networks. Those who responded were: ACME Studios, Bow Arts Trust and Live Art Development

Agency. After a preliminary meeting, I asked each organisation to suggest artists for me to interview. With the intention of hearing from different perspectives, I asked for artists working in a variety of media; different ages and career stages, as well as a mix in terms of race and gender. In retrospect, I acknowledge that this could have possibly produced an unrepresentative sample, although it is questionable if a representative sample is even possible when researching artists. The artists were all given pseudonyms so they could speak candidly without concern for their reputations, as the art world is a context where opportunities come through personal contacts, and where rumours spread easily.

3.7 Organisations in London

The majority of the London artists I interviewed rented studios at ACME, a studio provider based mainly in South and East London. It has existed since 1972, and began as an initiative to provide short-life housing and studio space for artists, in buildings that would have otherwise remained derelict. According to Michael Archer's commissioned essay on the history of ACME, the concept was developed by artists who were squatting buildings in East London (Archer, 2001). ACME now receives funding from the Arts Council England, and manages 370 studios for 600 artists across ten different sites; four sites are permanent (owned by ACME) and the other six are on long-term rental contracts. ACME's studio allocation policy is strictly based on a waiting list, with no specific career requirements or preference given to any particular medium or artistic approach. There is high demand for ACME's studios as they are subsidised and costs are relatively low; the average waiting period is normally at least several years. Because of this, most of the artists I interviewed were at least in their thirties and most were British citizens or had indefinite leave to remain. Most of the artists were painters or sculptors, but there was also one film-maker, one community artist and one electronic

artist.

Bow Arts Trust (BAT) provides studios for artists in the Bow and Poplar areas of East London. It is a social enterprise which focuses on arts education, also operating a program for artists to work in schools. BAT gives priority to socially engaged artists, although their studio allocation process, like ACME's, is also based on a waiting list. The rent is higher and less stable than ACME's as it is not subsidised; the waiting list is also shorter. I was given a list of ten artists by BAT; only one responded to my email. She was living in a building near Devons Road in Bow, which she used a live/work space, as part of a scheme BAT was organising in collaboration with Poplar HARCA, an East London housing association. This scheme allowed artists to occupy derelict council estates to use as live-work spaces until the buildings were demolished or sold off. After meeting with the artist, I told her I was interested in the scheme and she gave me the contact of another artist, who I also interviewed; she was taking part in the scheme but in a different building.

I contacted Live Art Development Agency (LADA) in order to interview a wider range of artists, as the artists I interviewed through ACME and Bow Arts Trust were primarily painters and sculptors. LADA supports artists working in live art and performance, with connections to both theatre and visual arts. The LADA staff then put me in touch with a list of artists, who they chose both because of their art practices and what they understood of their personal circumstances. LADA is not a studio provider and has no wait list, but it is necessary to have established a certain reputation and contacts to be connected with the organisation (which is primarily curatorial and educational). For this reason, the artists I interviewed tended to generally be at least in their thirties, although

one was in her late twenties; they were all UK citizens.

3.8 The Berlin Fieldwork

The Berlin fieldwork was more challenging, both because it was on conducted on a much shorter timeframe (I stayed there for a month), and because of my limited command of German. Similar to London, I began by contacting organisations, but received only one response, from Kunsthaus Tacheles, a studio provider in Oranienbürger Straße in Mitte. Tacheles began as a squatted space in 1990, then was legalised, and operated as a self-managed artists' co-operative for twenty years. Artists who rented the studios took part in the management of the space, although a few paid staff dealt with its day-to-day operations. The artists renting the studios worked in a variety of media; they consisted primarily of visual artists but theatre directors and electronic music producers also made use of the space. I spoke to the artists renting the studios there, spent some time in the space, and attended one of their planning meetings. Mitte has gentrified over the years, and many of the artists in the area have since left, so the building now seems incongruous with the rest of the area. Tacheles's landlord recently went bankrupt, and the bank which managed the landlord's assets was bailed out by the taxpayer; to prove that they are financially responsible, they were threatening to evict the artists. There is currently a campaign to save Tacheles, aided by the fact that Tacheles has now become a tourist attraction (as one of the legendary 'Berlin squats').

Tacheles was quite willing to facilitate the project; Linda Cerna, who was responsible for press and public relations, welcomed my involvement (perhaps seeing this as a form of international outreach in connection with the campaign to save the space). However, the other organisations I contacted never responded. I also generally noticed a certain

reluctance to participate in the project (manifesting itself as non-responses to emails and phone messages, and, in some cases, aloofness or coyness during the interviews). This could be interpreted in terms of the Berlin artists having less of a *need* to speak to me, and possibly less of a sense that their careers would benefit from being interviewed. Another interpretation could be that Berlin's unique circumstances and trendy reputation have already generated so much interest from the media and academics, resulting in a kind of 'research saturation' or fatigue. Perhaps, given the investment of the Berlin scene in a subcultural identity, there may have been a related perception that attracting the attention of a foreign academic was evidence of 'going mainstream'.

Another challenge for the Berlin fieldwork was that there was less academic research on cultural and social policy available. That which I could find was in German, of which I have limited knowledge. In response to this situation, I interviewed academics and intermediaries to hear their thoughts and experiences of social and cultural policy in Berlin. These included Ingrid Wagner, the director of the Berlin Senat Cultural Office, Sabine Schlüter, Deputy Managing Director of *Künstlersozialekasse (*KSK), a social insurance scheme for artists, as well as the sociologists Margit Mayer, Volker Eick and Jens Sambale and the geographer Stefan Krätke. I also was given a walking tour of gentrification in Prenzlauer Berg by urban sociologist and former resident Andrej Holm.

3.9 Reflections on the Interview Process

I interviewed 25 people in London and 16 people in Berlin, a combination of artists, intermediaries and academics. The interviews with the artists consisted of 30-60 minute semi-structured conversations about their work, their circumstances (including how they supported themselves), as well as their role within a wider arts scene. I often brought

my background as an artist into the conversations and related some of my own experiences of surviving as an artist. Some of the questions were about their work, and others were more explicitly 'sociological' in character, and were more about their circumstances or relationship to other artists. As the interviews were partly about their work and partly about their lives, they were difficult to categorise, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the project; they were not the type of interviews one would do for an arts publication, but nor were they strictly sociological. Within the interviews themselves, there was a sense that the participants and I were trying to find ways of making the interview useful to both of us; what frequently happened was that the artists tried to use it to critically reflect on their work and lives.

The artists seemed to have different motivations for participating in the interviews. Some were questioning the current state of the art field and their involvement in it, possibly their motivation for speaking with me. Several artists were even considering leaving the field: one because she was frustrated with increasing managerialism within public art and arts education (where she did most of her work); and another because he felt uncomfortable with the values and practices associated with the art market. Others (particularly the London artists) held arts management jobs where they worked with other artists in a supportive role, and actually felt that the issues discussed in the interviews would help them better understand their jobs. In two of the interviews, the artists treated me as a curator or critic who was approaching them for a potential exhibition or article. They repeatedly tried to change the subject so we would talk specifically about their work (and this in a flattering light), rather than about their lives or relationship with other artists (in other words, the sociological aspects). Most of the artists I interviewed were quite thoughtful, but I also encountered difficult attitudes

during some of the interviews: egotistical or even selfish behaviour, social conservatism, moralising judgements, etc.

The interviews were quite awkward experiences, which I see as connected to the disciplinary issues mentioned earlier (the uncomfortable relationship between art and sociological research, and because the interviews did not fall into familiar categories of conversation), as well as to the fact that I was interviewing strangers in unfamiliar locations. However, there was also a particular awkwardness connected to the strangeness and artificiality of the interviews themselves (as exercises in self-reflexivity). In *Sexing the Self: Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies,* Elspeth Probyn also points out that 'the meeting of the ethnographer's self and the self of the informant is problematic on an ontological level (Probyn, 1992, p.63), and turns to Paul Rabinow's *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977) to explore this problematic. She notes that Rabinow emphasises the unnaturalness of the informant reflecting critically on his/her everyday experience: 'having to (or being paid to) describe his or her world to the ethnographer is a profoundly unnatural act (Ibid). Self-reflexivity is located not only in the writing of texts, but is an 'integral and uncomfortable process on the part of both parties' within the encounter of ethnographer and informant (Probyn, 1993, p.78). It is the 'self-reflexivity and jarring denaturalisation of one's sense of self' [that can be' used to construct a mutual ground between the ethnographer and the informant' (Ibid). The 'common understanding they construct is fragile and thin, but it is upon this shaky ground that anthropological inquiry proceeds' (Rabinow, 1977, p.38).

Each of the interviews, was in fact a negotiation process, an attempt to seek common ground. In many cases this had to do with the desire to question and reflect on the

nature of the art field and the artists' involvement in it. In some cases, I noticed I was being 'tested' in certain ways – and that finding common ground was contingent on giving the right answers. This was particularly the case in Berlin, when I was frequently asked about how I support myself in London (the assumption made was that I was wealthy, because the city's expensive reputation, of which the artists sometimes had an exaggerated impression).

3.10 Reflections on my Role

I decided to interview artists out of the imperative to understand the field I had previously occupied, but also to research people who were not too unlike myself. For ethical reasons, I felt uncomfortable with researching people in marginalised positions, and, related to this, a politics that envisions the ethical responsibility of the researcher in terms of an obligation to study the most disadvantaged. This, for me, can become too close to a politics of charity; I was also uncomfortable with the power imbalance between the researcher and the subject this approach entails. I also felt uncomfortable with what felt like the thrill of exoticism of venturing into a very different culture than my own, or worse, the idea that a place or culture was meant to instantly give the research originality, as this seemed to have aspects of neo-colonial 'discovery'. A related issue is that some of the research I have encountered on housing and gentrification tends to (understandably) to focus on its most obvious victims: the poor or the long-term residents displaced by gentrification processes. Cultural producers are not given much attention because (as discussed earlier) they are seen to be too atypical of a group, and also because some of them possess resources and contacts which would make it difficult to categorise them as conventionally 'poor', as well as the blind spot around the conditions of cultural producers discussed earlier. The problematic role of

culture-led economic development schemes in gentrification may also lead to reactions in which authors become wary of addressing the situation of artists as the objects and not only as agents of gentrification.

However, my decision to interview artists has other ethical implications, connected to my situation as both an insider and an outsider in the art field. I am an insider because of my history and involvement in the art field, which has given me some common reference points with the artists and has informed some of the interview questions. My outsider status is connected to my role as a researcher, my 'disillusionment' with some of the limitations of the cultural field, and some of the disciplinary boundaries and impasses discussed earlier (meaning that sociological analyses have little symbolic capital in the art field). Because of my insider role, some of the artists saw the interviews as a network activity: one London artist wanted to be my friend, and one arts manager wanted me to write for a publication she was involved in; a Berlin arts administrator asked me for London contacts. Because I was seen to be occupying the same field, some of the artists were hesitant to talk about their experiences with particular organisations. This seemed to be based on the concern that word could get out and potentially damage the reputations, both of the artists themselves or the organisations, (potentially causing them to lose funding). This reflected the fragility of both opportunities and arts funding. This is why I both have used both pseudonyms and removed references to the names of organisations.

In further considering my role, I should acknowledge that I am neither from London or Berlin, and have lived in neither city for long. Because of this, the project has required me to learn the histories and cultural references within both contexts. Canada also has a

different history of social policy (perhaps shaped by the nation's proximity to the US), which has historically been one of less state support than much of Western Europe – although with the austerity regimes being imposed in Europe, this situation may now change. I have seen North Americans uncritically romanticise the situation in Europe, but am cautious not to do so myself. I should also address the (perhaps unavoidable question) of why I am not researching Canada. My reason for this is because Canada seems to be following the UK in terms of cultural policy to a certain extent (although this has not always been the case). For example (following the hiring of Richard Florida at the University of Toronto) Canada is now embracing DCMS-inspired 'creative industries' policies, although culture has always played a much more marginal role in both policy and the economy[3.] Canada is also such a familiar environment for me that it would be difficult to be self-reflexive.

DISPARATE MATERIAL AND UNCERTAIN TIMEFRAMES

3.11 A Disparate Group of People

Before conducting the interviews, my assumption was that these people might have more in common – for example, that they might share some sense of belonging to the same milieu, or have similar reference points. Instead, what I found was that the artists had vastly different biographies, different definitions of 'art', different career aspirations, different socio-economic backgrounds and different politics. In organisations with a high degree of institutionalisation, (particularly ACME in London) artists had little connection or contact with each other; they might rent studio space in the same building but had no real reason to interact with each other. This may have been

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[3] The Canadian economy is primarily based on resource industries, such as forestry, mining, energy extraction and agriculture. Its economy is thus less typically Post-Fordist than the UK.

the result of different work schedules, or simply having to work so many hours that there was little time left to spend in the studio. This impersonality and lack of contact was less prevalent in self-managed organisations such as Kunsthaus Tacheles, or between some of the artists in the Poplar Harca/Bow Arts Trust spaces. However, one of the Tacheles artists complained that unless there were co-ordinated attempts to bring artists together, they would not do so on their own initiative.

3.12 Unpredictable Career Paths and Uncertain Occupational Identities

The broad range of different art practices engaged in by the artists (which ranged from painting and sculpture to performance, film-making or public art) can be seen as the result of a succession of avant-garde movements which, since the nineteenth century, have expanded the range of artistic expression. The development of mass arts education (including part-time and further education courses) has also created different routes for entry into the field. In an interview, Susan Jones, the director of Artists' Information (A-N), told me the following:

> If you look at the change within art school and the growth of part-time courses, and stuff to do with people returning to art school at a later age, as a second or third career, and you know, I mean, I think that's what is so fascinating about the visual arts, is that it is the broadest brush. You can get everything you can't get anywhere else. And live art, everything can be art. (interview 10 Dec 2008).

Art has not only become porous as a discipline, but also does not involve conventional patterns of career development (which means there is no straightforward relationship between age and career progress). This is partly because of the unpredictable nature of artistic success, and partly because of the risks involved – which leads some to wait until they are financially stable before beginning an artistic career (more the case for the London than the Berlin artists). Another issue is that the founding

principles of the art field are very much based around generational conflict narratives (Bourdieu, 1993, 60), and the tendency of the art market to fetishise youth (which works against the countervailing tendency for artists to wait to enter the field until they are financially stable, and, it could be argued, exacerbates inequalities in the arts). This means that artistic success can often be short-lived.

Because of both its non-renumerative nature (requiring some artists, particularly those in London, to work at secondary jobs) and also its rejection of conventional economic principles (as in 'the economic world in reverse'), art also has an awkward status as a profession. The artists I interviewed worked in different jobs and workplaces. Most of them held teaching or arts-related jobs (such as in arts management, art handling or arts education) but some worked in other sectors; for example, one was an administrator in a legal firm; another was a builder, and another worked at two different music shops. This meant that researching artists was very different from a conventional occupational study. It raised questions about what they might have in common.

The temporality of the project contributed to the disparateness and uncertainty of the fieldwork. Reflecting the porous nature of the cultural field, the artists I interviewed seemed quite inventive and resourceful, able to shift and redefine their activities quickly, even to the point of moving into other disciplines. For example, one of the London artists redefined her art practice as academic research to access a fellowship. Two of the London artists mentioned wanting to change discipline. One Berlin artist became bored with the art world and shifted into theatre for a number of years, after which she returned to art. Another issue was that both London and Berlin, for different reasons, were difficult places to live long-term, and were marked by global flux. The

current economic situation further exacerbates this sense of instability, as cuts to arts funding and job losses could potentially provoke career changes. Because of this, there is a sense that I was meeting them at particular moments of their lives—moments almost as temporary as a snapshots.

Interviewing a disparate group of people, some of who are in economically precarious situations, in a place where it is difficult to live long term, during a period of economic instability requires one to accept a degree of provisionality and uncertainty in one's research findings. These sorts of conditions also exemplify what Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim term 'making something of one's life', as an aspect of 'individualisation' (2002). They define individualisation in terms of a reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and the individual, requiring the individual to be an active agent: 'to create, to stage manage, not only one's own biography but the bonds and networks surrounding it and to do this amid changing preferences and at successive stages of life, while constantly adapting to the conditions of the labour market, the education system, the welfare state and so on' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.4). One's personal biography becomes something to actively develop, with all the risks this entails: 'the normal biography thus becomes the "elective biography", the "reflexive biography", the "do-it-yourself biography"... the do-it-yourself biography is always a "risk" biography, indeed a 'tightrope biography", a state of permanent (partly overt, partly concealed) endangerment' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p.3).

The artists could be seen as living the kinds of conditions that Beck and Beck Gernsheim describe: of inventing their own biographies and in some cases, their own jobs, as it was common for them to work as freelancers. However, some of them were

more exposed to the worst effects of these risks than others (such as bankruptcy, poverty, career failure, burnout, etc.) because of their possession of money, education, or contacts. It also paradoxically enabled some of them to live precarious lifestyles and pursue full-time artistic careers, rather than, for example, taking on full-time employment, which would limit their time to make art (and thus their career development). These differences seemed more strongly marked in London than Berlin. In this sense, the art scene could be possibly seen as homologous of wider conditions of inequality, particularly because, as mentioned, cultural activities are frequently unpaid, self-directed and take place during spare time.

There are also larger questions about how individualisation theories can be reconciled with the developments discussed in the first and second chapters, particularly the incorporation of the cultural field into governmental and capitalist processes. Some of these developments celebrate conventional aspects of artists' professional identities for what they share with the neoliberal subject (such as, for example, resourcefulness or in some cases libertarian individualism). However, it is also important to consider how these developments might cause the cultural field to become more codified and predictable. In *Seven Days in the Art World*, Sarah Thornton points out that 'if you look over the resumes of the artists under fifty in any major international museum exhibition and you will find that most of them boast an MFA from one of a couple of dozen highly selective schools' (Thornton, 2009, p.46). If we are seeing the emergence of formulas for career success (which involve attending certain art schools, showing at certain galleries, etc) then how much does this really involve inventing your own biography?

3.13 Studying Complex Phenomena

The crucial task, then, is to find ways of working with such disparate material, under such uncertain conditions, in which certain social structures are being destabilised or entrenched in new ways. It becomes important to both avoid (artificial) claims to clear and objective mastery over the material, and also be careful about the project turning into an easy postmodern celebration of incoherence and pluralism which at the worst would lead to the *naturalisation* of present conditions. This is where a situated, embodied approach (such as that offered by Donna Haraway's concept of 'situated knowledge'), becomes useful. In *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of a Partial Perspective,* Donna Haraway discusses the need to challenge both what she calls 'the deadly fantasy that feminists and others have identified in some versions of objectivity, those in the service of hierarchical and positivist orderings of what can count as knowledge' (Haraway, 1988, p.579) and also a kind of extreme relativism, based in interpretations of poststructuralist theory prevalent at the time of writing, in the late 1980s (Haraway, 1988, p.577). As an alternative to the extremes of totalisation and relativism, Haraway calls for 'partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology' (Haraway, 1988, p.584). She also says that '...the object of knowledge [is required to] be pictured as an actor and an agent, not as a screen or ground or resource' (Haraway, 1988, 592). However, to simply assert that the people we study are our equals is to deny a certain responsibility (Haraway, 1988, p.584). Haraway's caution about the simplifications of both totalisation and relativism, and her insistence on 'the particularity and embodiment of all vision' (Haraway, 1988, p.582) are important both in dealing with the kind of material I am working with, in which I am interviewing artists who are very different from each other, who are living

and working in different circumstances, but who are nonetheless experiencing larger structural conditions.

In response to this situation (of dealing with disparate individuals, in cities which are shaped by global flux, and whose lives and financial circumstances are precarious and liable to change), I have written about the artists' lives using biographical narrative descriptions. I have done so in order to explore how macro-level developments play through individual lives and circumstances, and to capture a sense of how they are experienced and felt. They also narrate the 'do-it-yourself biographies' theorised by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim. These descriptions also reflect the awkward experience of the interviews (which I have discussed earlier).

The following chapters bring together several different types of writing: biographical narrative descriptions of the artists, descriptions of my journeys through neighbourhoods as I made my way to the artists' studios, and the analytical writing, which contextualises these descriptions in relation to issues such as housing, gentrification or issues around professionalisation. I have divided the pages in half, with descriptions and photographs on the top and the analytical prose on the bottom. Each section can be read separately, but it is also possible to read 'across' them, which will hopefully allow for lateral or unexpected connections between the different texts. I have developed this approach in order to capture the intersection of related (but seemingly disparate) elements: the atmosphere of the space themselves and the surrounding neighbourhoods, the lives of the artists, my impressions of them during the interviews, as well as analyses of housing, urban policy, gentrification, and cultural policy. By combining analytical and impressionistic voices, I am hoping that one might offer what

the other could not, or that it might be possible to create a synthesis between the two.

This approach to writing draws on the work of several authors who have used experimental writing techniques to explore complex social phenomenon, inspired by Actor-Network Theory, as well as possibly Deleuze and Guatarri's concept of the 'assemblage'. Annemarie Mol's exploration of the diagnosis and treatment of artheroschlerosis (hardening of the arteries) in *The Body Multiple* (2002) is an example of this. She juxtaposes vivid and at times visceral descriptions of the hospital environment, the operations, interviews with patients (both in and outside the hospital), with reflections on the nature of medicine, the body and illness. This bringing together of different voices, contexts, and methodological approaches captures the complexity of the illness, and the intersections between the medical, the scientific and the social. The work of John Law, particularly his collaborative research with Vicky Singleton on alcoholic liver disease, has also been quite interesting in this respect (2000). Alcoholic liver disease involves many complex intersections between the social and the medical, including issues around poverty, addiction, the quality and funding of patient care, the experience of medical staff, etc. Law and Singleton's study explores these intersections using a variety of methodologies and styles of writing, including the following evocative description of the Castle Street treatment centre in Sandside:

> The leaflets and the papers are spilling over everything. Brown cardboard boxes. Half drunk mugs of coffee. New mugs of coffee for us. Clearing a bit of space. Not too much. There isn't too much space. Files and pamphlets are pushed to one side. Two more chairs. And the numbers in the room keep on changing as clients arrive, or people go out on call, or the phone rings. One client hasn't turned up. Relief at this. The pressure is so great. And then there's another with alcohol on his breath. A bad sign. The staff are so keen to talk. Keen to tell us about their work. Keen to talk about its frustrations and its complexities. How to *tell* this? (Law and Singleton, 2000, p.18).

This description functions as an allegory for conditions of chronic underfunding,

disorganisation and piecemeal support for recovering patients; it creates a graphic sense of how these conditions are felt and experienced. Their question of 'how to *tell* this?' raises epistemological questions (how can such an experience be analysed or interpreted by conventional means?). By using a combination of both analytical and also allegorical writing, they explore the aspects of alcoholic liver disease that can easily be 'told', as well as those aspects which cannot (such as the above description). My training as an artist has also influenced my use of text and images in the project, particularly the collage and montage approaches I have explored in text-image works, installations and videos. The photographs, for me, are a way of thinking visually about urban space and architecture, and are perhaps another register on which to engage with the material. In future research, this is an approach I hope to develop further.

3.14 Conclusion

To summarise, this project navigates between sociology and visual culture; because these disciplines have been historically opposed to each other, this posed particular challenges for the project. Dealing with these disciplinary gaps and impasses has required some imaginative thinking, in terms of how analyses from one field could be applied to another. The project has involved interviews, analyses of housing and urban politics in both London and Berlin, and descriptions and photographs of my journeys through both cities. The disparateness of the interviews (in which the artists had little in common with each other), and the unpredictable temporality of the artists' lives has also been challenging. In order to engage with the complexity and disparateness of the material, I have made use of narrative descriptions of neighbourhoods and artists' biographies. These, hopefully, capture the sense of the artists I have interviewed, the places where they work, and the geography of the two cities.

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reflected on the experience of developing the research project and conducting the fieldwork. This chapter will be based in the London fieldwork; I will concentrate on housing and urban politics, and their implications for the artists. The pages in this chapter, as well as the following two chapters, are be split in half. The text in the bottom half is written in an analytical voice, and will begin with a consideration of how developments that have boosted London's status as an economic and cultural centre have had negative consequences for the London artists. I will then examine the history of housing in London, followed by an exploration of how these dynamics played out in the lives of the artists I have interviewed. The section in the top half of the page is written in a more impressionistic voice. It consists of descriptions and photographs of my journeys to the artists' studios, as an attempt to create an experiential sense of London's geography and urban environment. These sections can be read separately, as well as 'across' each other.

4.2 London as a Global city and a Place to Live

In *Global City*, Saskia Sassen explores how the developments which have led cities like London to attain 'global city' status do not benefit many of their own residents, as they exacerbate social and economic inequality (Sassen, 2001, p.223). As the headquarters of corporations concentrate in global cities, this leads to both the growth of a professional-managerial class, and also to the 'return of the "serving classes"; made up largely of immigrant men and women', as well as 'clerical and blue-collar workers' who essentially maintain the infrastructure of the command centre (Sassen, 2001, p.322). Unlike professional-managerial staff, neither the service workers, nor the clerical or blue collar workers have 'experienced a parallel growth in their wages and salaries' (Sassen, 2001, p.275), and their 'conditions of life have often declined, given the privatisation of public housing and the higher prices in gentrified commercial areas' (*Ibid*). In London, inequality is spatialised: financial services are concentrated in the City, IT services in both the City and 'and several adjacent boroughs, [signalling] the further expansion of the urban glamour zone' (Sassen, 2001, p.275). Poverty is concentrated disproportionately in certain boroughs in East and Northeast London (Sassen, 2001, p.277). In *Unequal City: London in the Global Arena,* Chris Hamnett contests Sassen's view that globalisation creates an increasingly polarised workforce (creating both highly paid white-collar jobs, and low-paid service jobs). Instead, he argues that that London has become 'professionalised': that employment growth has tended to be within professional-managerial jobs, and so low-income people tend to be marginalised and pushed to more peripheral areas (Hamnett, 2003, pp.64-65). Wages in high income jobs have also risen; the City and Westminster make more than the rest of London (Hamnett, 2003, pp.86-89). Hamnett connects this shift in the labour market with processes of gentrification, as people in high-income jobs tend to have greater purchasing power. In a housing market where choice is determined
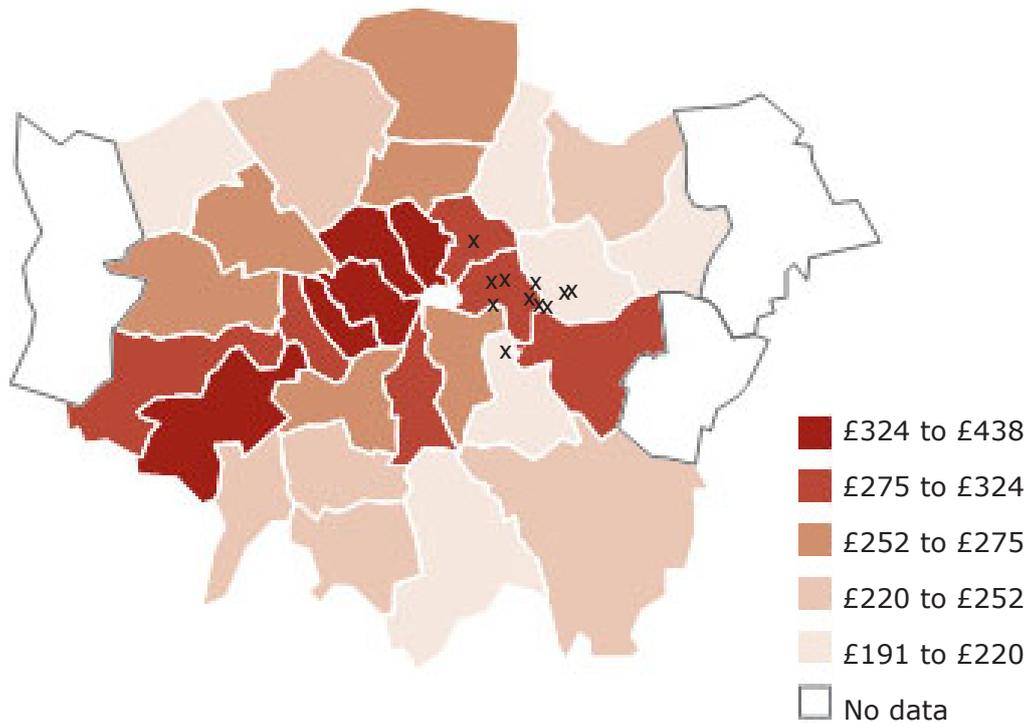
Figure 2. *Location of the artists' studios, based on a GLA map of average rent in 2010 for a two-bedroom property in London.* Note: Not all the artists had studios.

by the ability to pay, this means they are more able to afford the most attractive housing in the most central neighbourhoods. Landlords, who have much to gain from selling property to buyers who can afford to pay a premium, sell houses at higher and higher prices.

It is within this wider context that we need to consider the role of artists; in a sense, to map artists into this larger picture. This is difficult because of the polarised nature of debates around artists and gentrification: on one end, the elebratory discourses around 'creative cities' discussed in the previous chapter, and on the other end, the critiques of gentrification which can position artists as its willing or unwilling agents (Zukin, 1989; Smith,1996). These critiques focus on the role of culture in processes whereby 'artists came to imbue the environment in old warehouse districts with "value", notably aesthetic value', particularly in cities such as New York (Sassen, 2001, p.342). This coincided with the 'new consumption capacity represented by the large increase in high-income earners', and which meant that 'real estate developers picked up on the 'value-giving power of artists and made it into a profit-making tactic' (*Ibid*). Sassen connects the this new consumption capacity with the shifts in attitudes that led the middle classes to move into the inner cities rather than the suburbs (as in post-war consumerism): 'style, high prices,

JAMES'S STUDIO, BETHNAL GREEN

It's about two o'clock in the afternoon, a warm sunny autumn day. I cycle along the ca-nal towpath then through Victoria Park (leaves crackling under the wheels, children play-ing, people having coffee by the pond). Through a large iron gate, then along a quiet residential street with large, stately row houses, well maintained, some with plants in window boxes in front. There's a school across the street, a one-storey postwar building, with children's art hanging in the windows. It's a scene of quiet domesticity, with a family packing the car for a trip or a picnic. I inevitably find myself fantasising about living in this area, but with the underlying knowledge that I could not afford it – friends of mine who live around here pay twice the rent that I do.

The studio building is difficult to find as it is set back slightly from the street, and the street number is not clearly marked. In a residential neighbourhood such as this one, it tends to fade into the background. Eventually, I figure it out; I have to buzz in at an inconspicuous entrance next door to an art gallery (which has now closed; it has relo-cated to a cheaper part of the West End, as part of an overall movement west, both to be closer to the art fairs. I ring the buzzer, James answers and I go inside. It's a yellow brick workshop building with swinging iron gates. I can see the other studios through the windows: art supplies, canvases. Perhaps it was once a workshop: carpentry, metal-

and an ultra-urban context characterise the new ideology and practice of consumption, rather than functionality, low prices and suburban settings' (Sassen, 2001, p.323).

In *Unequal City: London in the Global Arena*, Chris Hamnett describes a similar process. Although he does not specifically mention artists, he cites Rose (1984) who identifies 'marginal gentrifiers', working in the 'the lower ranks of the professional or technical occupations or low-paid creative jobs and have managed to pioneer a sequence of gentrification in marginal areas'... these people 'need to find affordable housing in the city' and 'seek out areas which have not yet been gentrified' (Hamnett, 2003, p.165). They are then displaced into other neighbourhoods by the more affluent and risk averse, and the cycle continues.

The conclusion drawn by these sorts of analyses is often that artists promote gentrification by their very presence, and are incapable of self-reflexively questioning their own role; for an exception to this, see Deutsche and Ryan (1987). Artists are also assumed to be a homogeneous group, rather than people with different levels of socio-economic privilege, who play different roles within gentrification processes, and who are also affected in different ways. A further complication is that in the arts, higher levels of education do

Figure 3. *Street outside James's studio.*
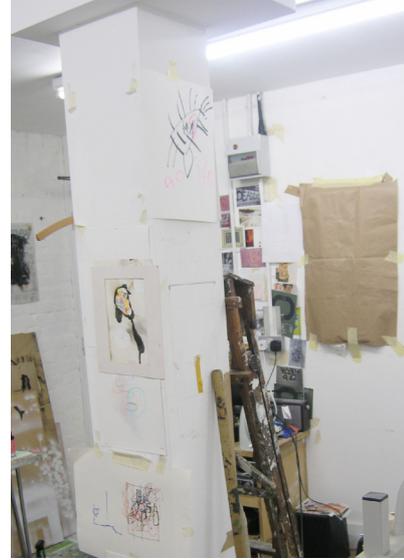
Figure 4. *James's studio*.

not necessarily translate into greater incomes. This means that artists do not easily fit into the definition of the professional-managerial class theorised by Sassen or Hamnett. Some of them, in fact, might belong to the professional-managerial class of gentrifiers; others might be more characteristic of the low-paid service employees who are pushed out by rent increases.

However, these debates do raise important questions about the current role and definition of creativity, and the interests that are served by this. For example, geographer Doreen Massey described her experience of being interviewed on an arts radio program about the relationship between finance and the art market:

> And there was a question, it was an arts program, but one of the questions came back that if we didn't have all those super-rich and this flamboyance, could we have had the Freeze exhibition? And well, I kind of said, I'm not sure, perhaps not, but is that the price worth paying? On what terms, if so then what role do you think culture is playing?... So the money doesn't just go into yachts, it goes into buying Damien Hirst (interview 5 December 2008).

Creativity is seen to be synonymous with the flamboyance of the ultra-rich, and more

work, a small-scale family business. Now, I think cynically, it would be an estate agent's wet dream: the exposed brick, the large windows, the ironwork (nostalgia for artisanal production), the 'central' location (would Victoria Park be seen as 'central' twenty or thirty years ago?). This place may not last. Unless, of course, ACME got hold of the building long ago, before the area became trendy, and secured some sort of special deal. I've come to almost instinctively think in such terms: have we all developed our own inner estate agent and does our *habitus* now include a 'feel for the property market'? Is the counterpart to this a kind of underlying sense that certain neighbourhoods are out of reach, or that once we see the first signs of gentrification, the writing is on the wall and it will be soon time to move on?

Inside, the studio is not much different from other buildings I have seen so far: fluorescent lights, fibreboard panels for hanging work (paintings, drawings and photographs), and tables for holding paint and laying things out. There are photographs of bathroom drawings here and children's doodles, which James says inspires his work, which consists of small, scale subtly coloured drawings and paintings. He insists that there's a difference between graffiti and doodles. Doodles are less self-consciously aggressive.

James tells me that this was one of the first buildings that ACME got hold of, and that

generally with the free market. By asking 'is that the price worth paying', Massey is referring to the impasse between freedom and security discussed earlier. In other words, one cannot have both decent affordable housing and a milieu that fosters creativity; the concepts are seen to be mutually exclusive.

Sassen's theories are also useful in theorising a logic of centre and periphery within the global economy, which is also present within the art world. One's proximity or distance from cultural centres such as London can affect access opportunities (which are often secured through informal contacts) and exposure to new developments in the field. The presence of museums and other forms of cultural infrastructure in London could also be seen as contributing to its political, economic and cultural dominance on a national and global scale. As Doreen Massey argues in *World City*, 'Londoners have the Tate Modern on their doorstep. The concentration of such institutions in the capital means that cultural "news", as well as political and economic, is drawn to focus on what happens in the city' (Massey, 2007, p.124).

This dynamic of centre and periphery came up in the interviews with the London artists. One artist (Robert) described London primarily as a place for career advancement.

he's been there for years. He's lucky, he says, because this is both one of the most attractive, and the most centrally located buildings owned by ACME (the inner estate agent talking?). Other people would really love to get a studio in here, he says, but they joined too late (some because they got on the list too late, others because they were simply too young). He says the same thing about the house he bought a long time ago, in Walthamstow: that he bought it before the property bubble, so it was still affordable. James isn't smug about these things (who could be smug about coming from the 'right' generation?), but there's a sense that the rise of property prices is both unstoppable and inevitable. He feels the credit crunch might change attitudes about art (he feels it's become too much about money and celebrity, and the recession would make a more DIY approach more appealing, which he feels would be a good thing). But it wouldn't change the housing situation in London.

James is in his early forties, and supports himself on a part-time job at the National Gallery and sales of his drawings, and is able to live comfortably on this. His partner works full time. They share childcare duties. Things are stable and relatively settled, both with his art practice and with his life in general. The questions I ask rarely lead to longer reflections; he often responds with platitudes about 'that's just the way things are' as well as comments that as we get older, we come to peace with certain things. This is frustrat-

London was a place he had to be in order to 'make it', on a short list of world centres: New York, London, Berlin (or else Mexico City, a more peripheral place, but one that was exotic enough in order to attract art world interest). He saw London as a place for aspiring young people, 'whether you're a banker or an artist' (was the comparison more than coincidental?) (Interview 9 October 2008). For Robert, London was a place to realise short-term ambitions, but not to live long-term. He saw his current lifestyle (he was squatting) as both precarious and unsustainable. If he became successful, Robert hoped to eventually buy property in Devon. This is a predictable middle-class trajectory, similar to that of the professionals Massey describes in *World City*: they spend time in London to accumulate contacts, symbolic capital and in some cases property assets, then move to the 'regions' (Massey, 2007, 110). Carlos (who was from Mexico, but had lived in London for twenty years) saw London entirely as a place to make money (he was able to earn £3000/month as a decorator), but not a place for any kind of artistic community, or even for any critical reception for his work, which he mainly exhibited elsewhere, or even friends (interview 6 November 2008). For the other artists, London was less explicitly about career ambition, but more about contact with other artists, a chance to receive feedback on their work, participate in art discussions, and see exhibitions. These motivations could not easily be separated from those for career advancement, in terms of

ing: a sign of complacency or apathy? The one thing he isn't happy with is the current state of arts education. He identifies as working class and says that, with the way art education is going (such as the increasing cost), it's become much harder for younger people from his background to become artists today. But he doesn't know what anyone can do about this. Similar to what he says about the property market, these sorts of inter-generational dynamics are too large and complex, out of his control.

an overall desire to be 'at the centre of the action'.

I am not arguing that artists with more careerist attitudes are implicated more deeply in these dynamics; to do so would be to make a voluntarist argument. In fact, all of them seemed to generally be caught up in the overall structural logic of centralisation. Most of the artists had a strong desire to be at the 'centre of things' (galleries, studios, etc) and to interact with artists on a fairly intensive level, which they felt would help their work grow and develop. Who could argue against the desire for engagement and intellectual stimulation, and for being at the centre of important debates (as academics, are we so different?). However, it also important to acknowledge how this imperative to be at the centre of things might reinforce these centralising dynamics. If being at the 'centre of the action' (London, Berlin, New York or Mexico City) increasingly becomes a requirement for career success in the arts, then does this mean that the arts become subject to the dynamics of the global economy theorised by Sassen (although her focus is the financial and IT sectors rather the arts)? This also raises questions about who might have the resources to 'be at the centre of the action', particularly in expensive cities like London, and how this might affect who can have a successful career in the arts.

Figure 5. *Beth's building.*

However, not all the artists saw London in these terms. For some it was a place where they wanted to make their home. This was more the case for the artists who had developed, or were attempting to create more settled lives, saw London differently. For example, Jackie had lived in East London all her life and had mostly worked there, particularly in arts education projects and public art commissions. She mentioned wanting to exhibit work outside of London (perhaps with a slightly guilty acknowledgement of the city's insularity) but expressed excitement at travelling to such peripheral places as Margate, 'because I'd never been' (interview 24 September 2008). Jill had moved to London from Liverpool, and mentioned wanting to stay in the Mile End area, because of knowing other artists there and wanting to keep in contact with them. She mentioned wanting a sense of stability in her living situation (particularly in terms of housing), and felt that this stability would give her the freedom to experiment with her art. Jill's observation about stability and freedom, interestingly challenges the association of creativity with risk and the flamboyance of the ultra-wealthy in the radio interview with Massey. According to Jill, access to stable, affordable housing will *enable* her art practice; the continual displacement she experienced (a result of the effects of the property market) makes it more difficult (interview 15 November 2008).

BETH'S STUDIO, POPLAR

It's a grey evening, at around 5PM, and there is a fine mist in the air, almost rain. I cycle to the building, near All Saints; it is outside my usual routines. I go through Mile End (small shops, churches, fast-food restaurants) but then am in unfamiliar territory; I have to check my cycling map frequently, in a search for quiet streets that will allow me to avoid heavy traffic. Luckily, the estate is large enough that it's actually marked on the map. This is one of those areas of East London where substantial redevelopment took place, the latest phase being luxury flats (particularly near the river). After cycling down a small narrow street, I suddenly find myself near a huge motorway, with rush-hour traffic roaring past. It feels like everything is on the wrong scale (it's all set up for cars), and I start to wonder whether or not drivers can see me in the hurry to get home, even though I've got lights on my bike and am wearing a hi-viz vest.

The estate is easy enough to locate from a distance: a collection of several Brutalist concrete buildings, casting a dramatic figure against the evening sky. The buildings are starkly impressive, and the windows are located on the buildings in unusual and striking patterns, making me think that at one point in time the estate was an architectural landmark. Later on, I would meet someone who made a documentary film about these buildings and the architects who designed them, and the utopianism that inspired their

4.3 Why is London so Expensive?

I will now focus on the housing situation in London, and will examine why London has become so expensive and difficult to live in long-term. A key change within London's economy over the past forty years has been the financialisation of the property market. Recent reports from the Greater London Authority (GLA) Economics Unit have pointed out the importance of the cost of housing in determining how people survive in London (2007, 2008). Using this observation as a starting point, I will explore the history of housing in London and will consider how it applies to artists. I will examine the financialisation of the property market and the adoption of owner-occupation as a social norm, the decline and increasing scarcity of council housing. I will also discuss squatting and the use of empty spaces for exhibition spaces, as this is an important part of the history of London's cultural scene.

The history of housing in London of the past forty years has been marked by large-scale shifts (Hamnett, 2003, p.11). In the 1960s, most people rented privately. The 1970s saw the development of large-scale council estates; in 1981, 40% of London's population rented from local authorities. The 1980s and 1990s saw several developments which led to owner-occupation becoming much more prevalent; 40% of people in London were

plans.

I enter the estate through a walkway between two bushes in large concrete planters (stunted, black from car exhaust) and see a small wooden sign with the name of the estate on it. This reassures me that I'm going in the right direction. There multiple entrances and I'm not sure which is the right one, as Beth didn't tell me (thinking, I should have asked her in anticipation that it would be this complicated). A group of teenage boys is hanging out near one of the entrances. They're in a heated argument; it's not quite a fight, not enough to worry about someone getting hurt—but just on the edge (I can sense pent-up aggression). I go to a walkway in the middle of the buildings (where it's still a bit brighter and easier to see) and call Beth to ask her where the entrance to the building is (her text message with the directions was slightly cryptic). Beth says she's running late from work (she works at two different HMVs in the City), and asks me if I'm the one standing on the walkway with the bike. I say yes and then she tells me to look behind. There she is, waving—she has long red hair and glasses (slightly fogged from the bike ride), and is wearing a raincoat. We cross the walkway and enter the building. She tells me her flat is on the nineteenth floor. The lift is small, but she thinks we can fit two bikes inside. There are several people waiting outside (who will have to wait until the lift comes down again) and so we apologise to them.

owner-occupiers in 2001 (*Ibid*). These developments, amongst other factors, consisted of the introduction of right-to-buy legislation in 1980 which enabled council tenants to buy back properties (leading to a loss of revenue for local authorities); the stigmatisation and the worsening state of council housing, the movement of skilled working class-people either into owner-occupation within London or else away from the city, as well as shifts in the labour market which led to the creation of high-income professional jobs (*Ibid*).

This shift from council or private tenancy towards owner-occupation was both productive and symptomatic of a property speculation boom which began in the early 1990s and continued until the recent slump. This has led to a situation where the cost of properties averaged from £5-10,000 in 1971, £98,000 in 1995, and £206,000 in 2001 (Hamnett, 2003, p.155). The resulting situation meant that those who bought property before the boom benefited (as the value of their property increased), but those who bought houses later on, particularly younger generations, suffered as property becomes increasingly unaffordable. This dynamic affected the composition of London's neighbourhoods:

> ...the social mix found in many Inner London areas can be seen to be a result of the historical legacy of successive waves of buyers, with older households now living in areas they could no longer afford if they were buying today. As they

The lift is slow, taking two minutes to reach the top. Once we get up we cross a walkway with glass walls, the kind I normally associate with shopping centres (particularly those built in the 1970s: the beige and brown interiors). The view, through the scratched and dirty glass, is astounding; you can see much of East London, even in the fading evening light. We enter the flat and I leave the bike in the hallway. The flat is run down but cozy; there are several small rooms, two of which she uses as studio spaces; the other is her bedroom. It seems quite spacious for one person, but I wonder how many people were living in here before: was there an entire family squeezed in here?

The walls are all painted white; the furniture is functional and cheap. There is nothing extravagant or decorative here, with the exception of the large candelabra on top of the fridge (she is Jewish; at another point she tells me about bringing people from her synagogue to see her work). I don't see all the things piled up on shelves and the stacks of boxes that I've seen in other council flats, both because of the lack of storage space, and also because the residents have lived there for years (invariably, they got their flats long ago, before it became impossible to get one). She hasn't been here long enough to accumulate much.

Part of our conversation is about the building. She is renting her flat through a joint

> die or move they will be gradually replaced with households able to pay current prices. It is only in some of the cheaper, more peripheral boroughs that middle income groups can gain a foothold in the market. Consequently, teachers, social workers, policemen and women, nurses and other groups of key workers are increasingly unable to afford to live in Inner London (Hamnett, 2003, p.156).

Hamnett calls this phenomenon 'micro-level' class segregation (Hamnett, 2003, p.177), where decaying estates and expensive houses co-exist in the same neighbourhood, and wealth coincides with high levels of poverty. The GLA's *London Divided* report confirms this situation (2002). In addition to reducing access to home ownership for younger generations (symptomatic of declining social mobility), this situation has also created pressure on the private rental market by causing a shortage, which led rents to increase. The result is that the average rent in London is now significantly higher than the rest of the country (GLA 2007, 2008).

If we consider the wider picture, the property expansion could also be seen within an overall climate of wage stagnation and financialisation; for a discussion of the wider implications of financialisation, see Marazzi (2008). Within this context, the funds raised through property speculation compensated when wages did not keep pace with the cost of

scheme between Bow Arts Trust and Poplar HARCA, which allows artists to live in the flats, pay the same rent as the other council tenants (£450/month) and use them as studio spaces. She is able to afford this, by working part-time at two different HMVs and receiving working tax credit. Beth sells her paintings, but not enough for this to be a significant or reliable source of income. The artists are responsible for fixing up the spaces, which are in various stages of disrepair. Beth tells me that because she moved in at the beginning of the scheme and so her flat was in relatively good condition and didn't require too much work. This was because she was willing to live in 'bleak Poplar', which other artists were reluctant to do. Others who moved in later had to deal with flats in much worse condition: leaks, mould and water damage.

Beth tells me that when the building was owned by the council, there were leaks and floods in the other flats; that there was drug-dealing in the stairwells and people didn't feel safe; that the lift was fixed with parts that were stolen from other lifts of different makes and so nothing really fit. There was so little money, I'm imagining, that the council staff was forced to make do with whatever they could find. It's commonplace for dodgy landlords do this sort of thing, but it's perhaps more disturbing to see a local authority doing this sort of thing. The building has been turned over to Poplar HARCA, a housing association, who has actually gone about fixing things and put in proper secu-

living (Montgomerie, 2007). This also meant that escalating property prices became seen primarily as a revenue generator, rather than a threat to affordable housing. It also meant that becoming a landlord in the buy-to-let sector became seen as particularly lucrative (due in part to changes to the law in 1989 that removed tenants' rights).

4.4 The Decline of Council Housing

If property speculation and the financialisation of housing have played a major role in making London so expensive, a related development was the privatisation and decline of council housing. Whilst some London council housing did exist before the 1960s and 1970s, it was during this period that the building of council housing took place on a grand scale. The original purpose of council housing was to break the link between poverty and poor housing and to eradicate the overcrowding, lack of basic facilities and slum landlordism of the early post-war period (Hamnett, 2003, p.133). Initially it did in fact accomplish these tasks, particularly in boroughs such as Hackney, Islington, Tower Hamlets and Southwark (Hamnett, 2003, p.135). However, the stock quickly deteriorated because of poor design and construction, particularly the concrete-slab high rise buildings with 'streets in the sky' walkways and reliance on lifts, to the point where many would be extremely expensive to refurbish. Some became too dilapidated to repair and were slated

rity. The building is Grade II listed and is being refurbished so it can eventually turned over to the private sector and the flats sold off. This, she feels, is ultimately a good thing (implying that it will encourage people to better themselves). Two of the buildings in the area 'have always been private', which she says 'sets a good precedent'. This is both disturbing (how can the high rents charged by private landlords actually set a good precedent?) and also not surprising: if council housing has become automatically associated with crime, drugs and deteriorating conditions—then who wouldn't want to get out, even if it means paying significantly higher rent or taking on the financial risks of a mortgage? Working hard to better yourself is something she believes in strongly, and which she speaks about with a certain intensity.

I think of friends who are council tenants; they've told me of their frustrations with both the conditions of the building and also other tenants in the building (one of them had her bike stolen by her next door neighbour, another worries about the upstairs neighbour's violent, and at times racist alcoholic outbursts), but at the same time, they're all aware that they got in through a stroke of luck (before the door shut, or the ladder was pulled up, to mix metaphors); that their cheap rent and stability was the envy of many, and that there was much they would give up by moving. For them, the choice was between being stuck in cheap, but deteriorating (and in some cases unsafe) housing, or

for demolition. Both the growth of home ownership and the outmigration of employed working class people from Inner London mentioned earlier led to a change in the social composition of council tenants: from primarily manual workers and junior white collar workers to the unemployed, the poor, single parents and refugees (Hamnett, 2003, 134). Certain estates quickly attracted violence, crime and other social problems. The poor conditions of the housing and the desperate circumstances of the inhabitants combined with neoliberal ideologies to stigmatise council housing and council tenants as an 'urban other' (*Ibid*).

The introduction of Right-to-Buy legislation by the Conservatives in 1980 also contributed to the decline of council housing. Right-to-buy allowed council tenants to purchase their properties (and also to sell them or lease them). While this might have improved the lot of individual tenants, it led to a loss of revenue for local authorities, a reduction in the number of available properties, and created a situation of fragmentation (whereby some residents would be council tenants and others would be owner-occupiers, even on the same estate) which made it more difficult for council tenants to lobby around issues relating to particular estates. Right-to-Buy also contributed to property ownership as both a sociological and ideological norm, and to the stigmatisation of council tenancy

paying high rent as private tenants, or the financial risks of home ownership: sub-prime mortgages, negative equity, foreclosure. They're also in their forties; I do not know any-one younger who was able to get in.

Then again (reflecting on my own personal history) I think about how these conditions are not limited to public housing: I think of the flat that my uncle and grandmother shared on the outskirts of Toronto, Canada, before she passed away and he moved to another city: another 1970s tower block, practically identical to the ones on British council estates, in a similar state of disrepair; but they were private tenants, with fewer protections than council tenants (although rent control still exists in certain regions of Canada, and housing in Toronto is not near as expensive as it is in London).

Beth doesn't talk about what will happen to the people who live in the building once it gets refurbished and sold off, including the other artists taking part in the scheme (and who meet regularly to show each other their work and talk about art). How might the sale of the building break up communities, including the one she is trying to establish with the other artists in the building? What will happen to the tenants, some of who might have known each other for years? This is something Beth never mentions. How can one simultaneously desire community and also think that the sale of the building is

as a last resort, reserved for the most desperate and marginalised. In addition to this, the dwindling number of places available and the lengthening waiting lists (exacerbated by the loss of affordable housing due to the property bubble) meant that council housing became reserved for those seen most in need – but many of the working poor, particularly those without children, would never qualify. This was also acknowledged in the GLA London Living Wage reports, which assumed that for childless singles and couples, access to council housing is 'significantly less likely' than for families (GLA, 2007, p.25; GLA, 2008, p.37). This can understandably be seen as a response to the high cost of raising children in London, but could have the effect of entrenching social norms, in this case penalising single people and childless couples. As I will discuss later, this had particular consequences for the artists.

4.5 Squatting, Short-Life Housing Co-ops and Alternative Spaces

I will now briefly discuss squatting (as it is entwined with London's cultural history) as well as the use of empty spaces by artists. Squatting is currently still legal; it is also increasingly the only option for cheap housing. There are also many empty buildings in London; research (Empty Homes Agency, 2009) shows 75,706 empty properties in London in 2009. Some of these empty buildings include council estates, which have

ultimately a good thing? This seems like such a glaring contradiction. However, perhaps there is no contradiction at all. Beth's sense of community could possibly be so temporary as to be impossible to imagine it lasting longer than a couple of years.

After the meeting I take the lift back down, which takes a couple of minutes to get from the top of the building to the bottom. Beth said earlier that people frequently strike up conversations with each other in the lift (even total strangers) because it would be awkward to just stare at the floor for that length of time. She says it helps her get to know people in the building. This happens to me too. A young man chats with me, and casually tells me that he was once stuck in the lift for twenty minutes when it broke down, and that this sort of thing happens on a regular basis. I asked him what he did when it got stuck, and he said he just waited until it started moving again. He does this with the casualness of someone who has experienced this sort of thing many times, to the point where it has become normal.

become derelict due to the reasons mentioned earlier (there is a certain irony around the way that younger generations of people are squatting council estates, who, in a time of greater access to social housing, might have been able to rent them as tenants). Squatting has a long history, not only for residential spaces, but also in terms of the use of empty commercial properties as art spaces. These have functioned as sites for social and cultural experimentation, enabling both activities that would not receive state or market support, and also ways of living that do not require paying rent (and thus freeing up time for creative activities), as well as combining living space with production space (were they ironically one of the precursors for 'live/work'?). For example, in the 1960s, the Arts Laboratory on Drury Lane 'had a theatre, coffee shop, gallery and a cinema' and served as an important space for experimental theatre, music and film, with close ties to the film co-op movement (Thomas, 2006, p.462). In the 1990s, the Cooltan Arts Collective in Brixton served as a base for organising Reclaim The Streets parties. One of the artists I interviewed briefly set up a squatted art gallery in Whitechapel called 'Section Six Gallery' ('Section Six' refers to the section of the law that makes squatting legal in the UK). Some of the squats eventually became legalised as housing co-ops. For example, the Black Sheep Housing Co-op was set up in the 1980s by artists and musicians, and played an important role in the punk scene.

Figure 6. *Carlos's studio building*.

Figure 7. *Carlos's studio.*

The Institution of Rot, the ongoing art project by Richard Crow and Lucia Farinati was originally part of this housing co-op. It was a short-life housing co-op, which took on temporary ownership of buildings or individual lodgings from local authorities, and relinquished them once the properties were sold off or re-developed. As mentioned earlier, ACME studios began by providing short-life housing for artists; some of their studios are still rented on this basis, although they now own some of their own properties. The Poplar HARCA/Bow Arts Trust scheme was a similar type of arrangement, allowing artists to use derelict council flats until the buildings were sold or torn down.

In *High Art Lite*, Julian Stallabrass discussed the use of empty office and industrial spaces by artists in the late 1980s (2006, pp.50-52). This was done both out of financial necessity and also as a way of sidestepping 'the temporarily defunct apparatus of the private galleries' and 'the public sector, which was not yet ready for what they had to say' (Stallabrass, 2006, p.50). According to Stallabrass, 'the best pieces were often those that had found some way to respond to their environment' (Stallabrass, 2006, p.52). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, when artists were able to achieve rapid success and visibility through the use of empty office and industrial spaces for large group exhibitions.

CARLOS'S STUDIO, DEPTFORD
The studio is the only one located near where I live. It is on a long, wide street off the north end of Deptford High Street, between a residential area (Georgian row housing and postwar tower blocks, a couple of pubs, kids playing football in a basketball court) and the industrial zone along Surrey Canal Road (warehouses, scrap metal dealers, the incinerator). On the next block, a new building is being built, flats for a housing association. It's a cold clear day with a bright blue sky, around 3PM. I've just been doing my shopping and am carrying a bag of vegetables for tonight's supper, as well as a loaf of Turkish bread, some of which I eat as I'm hungry.

The studio is in a huge red brick warehouse building with large windows that takes up the entire block. It has several occupants. One end of the building is occupied by a paper bag manufacturer (there are several packaging companies in the area). There is an an evangelical church called Pillar of Fire Ministries in the middle of the building. These have have recently become more common in warehouses and certain shopfronts, possibly due to tax and planning loopholes. On the other end of the building, SR Communications, a direct mail company.

The studios are in the middle of the building, next door to Pillar of Fire. You can see

One of these exhibitions, *Freeze*, was influential in launching the careers of the Young British Artists; it took place in an empty administrative block in the Docklands. However, what made it different from projects such as the Arts Laboratory was that it was mounted as a 'professional-looking exhibition', and had 'an impressive list of corporate sponsors, many of them associated with the service industries and urban redevelopment projects' (Stallabrass, 2006, p.53). This reflected a shift in terms of the use of empty commercial or industrial spaces being seen as a 'launching pad' for successful careers within the established art world rather than as an alternative to the gallery system. The sponsorship of *Freeze* by urban redevelopment corporations returns us to the question of culture and gentrification; in this case, art exhibitions can provide potential cachet for companies keen to develop a trendy image. It may also reflect a further professionalisation of the art field, in terms of an increasing orientation towards career success.

4.6 Artists' Living Situations and Experiences of Gentrification
I have discussed the dynamics of culture and globalisation and gentrification in London, as well as the history and politics of housing. I will now discuss how these processes play out in terms of the London artists' working and living situations. Most of the artists I interviewed generally lived in East London: four in Hackney or Dalston, two in

things in the windows that indicate that there are studios here: brushes in glass jars, tools, or other stuff suggesting domesticity: coffee mugs, plants, beer cans. There's a sign marking out the studios, listing some of the private foundations that have financially supported the studios, in addition to the Arts Council. The sign looks like it's been there for around 20 years. Just as I'm at the door and trying to figure out how to enter the building, someone opens it and lets me in (a white man in his late forties or early fifties). I ask if he knows where Carlos's studio is and he says he's never heard of anyone named Carlos, and wonders if he's moved in recently. I then call Carlos on his mobile and we eventually find each other on the stairwell. He brings me upstairs into his studio. It turns out he didn't just move in; he's been there a long time, but never really developed a relationship with the other artists.

There are worktables and shelves lining the walls of the studio. They are cluttered with stuff: tools (screwdrivers, pliers, soldering guns), electronic components, children's toys (mostly robot action figures), Halloween masks, books, old computer parts (monitors, circuitboards) and other stuff that he's either found or bought cheaply, to assemble into kinetic sculptures. The studio brings to mind the mad scientist's lab of so many science fiction films, or the engineer's workshop where everything is arranged according some idiosyncratic sense of order. At the centre of the room is a table, with a metal grid on

Stoke Newington, one in Bethnal Green, one in Walthamstow, one in Poplar and one in Bow. Two of them lived in South London: one in Brixton and another in Deptford. One recently moved to Hertfordshire. The artists' studios (for those who had them) were also mainly in East London: two in Dalston, two in Hackney, two in Bow, two in Stratford, one in Deptford. It is worth noting that none of them lived or worked in areas (such as Shoreditch or Hoxton) we now stereotypically associate with artists' communities, perhaps because these areas had become unaffordable.

Most of the artists I interviewed rented privately. Three of them were owner-occupiers; one (in his forties) described himself as lucky that he was able to buy a house before the property boom. Two of the artists (in their forties and fifties) were council tenants. As mentioned earlier, two of the artists had live/work studio spaces as part of the Bow Arts Trust/Poplar HARCA scheme. One artist was squatting a flat in a derelict council estate in Hackney.

My overall impression of the London interviews was of lives that were difficult to sustain, particularly in the long-term. In many ways, this was due to the high cost of living and lack of affordable housing; the gentrification of East London (where many of the artists

which sit rows of butterflies with wings made from the thin metal from soft drink cans (the Coca-Cola logo is recognisable on a couple of them). Carlos turns a switch on, there is an electrical hum and the mechanical butterflies all slowly flap their wings slowly and solemnly. There's a particular aesthetic to everything in the studio: bricolage, cheap, everyday materials combined with sophisticated electronics. He said the butterflies were expensive to produce because of the cost of the electronic components.

He says that he originally came from an engineering background, but then studied art history and then taught himself electronics from mail order kits and manuals. However, our conversation is less about materials or technical stuff than about identity and place. Carlos is originally from Mexico and is now considering relocating there more or less permanently, so I am interviewing him at a point in time when he is asking himself many questions.

Carlos feels the interest in his work is all mainly elsewhere: the Netherlands (where he once took part in a prestigious residency program) and other countries that are more supportive of electronic art (he also mentions Switzerland, Austria, Germany and France). There is not much interest in electronic art in the UK, which he characterises as dominated by an art market which favours more traditional art objects such as paintings

lived); and the dismantling of support structures that would provide enough stability to counter the risk and unpredictability of freelancing. These conditions intensified the pressures of multitasking and hustling to make ends meet. In the face of such overwork, this made the artists' efforts to preserve some space and time for their art practices an uphill battle. This also had physical and psychological consequences, such as exhaustion and burnout.

4.7 Precarious Housing Situations

If culture is implicated in gentrification processes, then the artists themselves experienced their disruptive effects. One artist (Jill) described continually being displaced by landlords selling the property she lived in. Two artists (Jenny and Jackie), had studios in Stratford, which ACME was renting from Newham Council; they were worried they would eventually lose the spaces, because the council would eventually sell off the buildings or tear them down. Another artist (Joe) described having been involved in a shared studio an gallery in a warehouse near the Olympic site; it was evicted when the Games caused the property to enter a 'rent gap' situation (the land became more valuable than the building), this created an incentive for the landlord to evict the tenants and demolish the building.

or sculptures (in other words, work that is recognisably 'art'). He says that collectors look at the work and think that at best it's a gadget, and at worst it's something that is going to break. Carlos recently sold a piece of work for £9,000, of which the gallery took half; this was the first work he sold, despite attempts to sign up with a gallerist, and receiving critical attention (critical attention in the art world does not necessarily translate into sales) . He feels that in the end, after the amount of time, work, research and technical expertise he put into the work, it's not actually very much money—at least not when compared to the kind of money earned from wages.

Carlos's relationship to the city is almost completely economic: London is where his studio is located and where he produces work, and it is where he earns a living. However, it is not where he shows his work, receives critical feedback or engages in any ongoing dialogue with artists about issues that interest him. It seems as though he works more or less in isolation (remembering to the man who let me into the building, who had no idea who Carlos actually was). Carlos works as a freelance decorator in the building industry, and can potentially earn £3000/month (benefiting, no doubt, from the housing boom). He says this would be impossible to do this in Mexico. In general, in his description of different places is entirely pragmatic: what he can do in one place he can't do in another. It's never about people or relationships (friends, family, lovers).

Consistent with the developments described earlier, I noticed an intergenerational dynamic of declining access to stable housing amongst the artists I interviewed. For example, the two youngest artists (both in their twenties) felt that getting on property ladder was basically impossible for them. Robert said he was 'burying my head in the sand on that one (interview 9 October 2008) and Sally said that she saw mortgages were 'out of reach' for her and most of her former classmates from art school (interview 24 November 2008). Sally was working full-time as a sixth-form college teacher and also mentioned, at another point during the interview that all her friends were also working full-time—but even with full-time jobs, could not consider purchasing a house.

A similar dynamic existed around access to council housing: for older generations, it was difficult, but still possible to get a council flat, whereas it had now become practically impossible for many younger people. This reflects one consequence of the scaling back of state support and the application of means-tested criteria. A gap is created between those desperate enough to fit, and those who are poor but not poor enough to qualify; this gap produces resentment (which was expressed by one of the artists).

When some of the artists mentioned housing being expensive, I then asked them what

His attitude and demeanor changes when he talks about Mexico and the small town where he grew up. The conversation becomes less pragmatic, and starts to become more personal. After twenty years in the UK, Carlos's identification with Mexico has become stronger, particularly after learning to speak the indigenous language spoken by his family (which he did not learn as a child). In learning the language he was exposed to the traces and fragments of a different set of values; he says that the language has no word for 'rubbish' reflecting a relationship to the environment where nothing is wasted, and everything is seen as part of a larger ecology. Mexico is also the site for his political commitments: in vivid, passionate detail, he describes how the suburban sprawl of Mexico City is swallowing the small town he comes from; how the clay dust from the city is polluting the air. He talks about how indigenous farming practices are being forgotten, and with them the knowledge of how to work with the specific properties of the soil in the region. London does not concern him this way; he does not mention air pollution in the neighbourhood due to the high volume of traffic, for example, or the limited recycling program. It is a rootless place, even after twenty years.

This may be because his politics seem so intrinsically tied to a sense of origins which have been lost through colonialism, and for the need to recover them. According to this logic, any other definition of politics would be completely impossible; a place such

they thought about social housing. The usual response was that people drew a blank or changed the subject. This response could be interpreted in two ways. The first, most likely interpretation is that accessing social housing has become so difficult to be not even worth considering. The second interpretation could be that the artists felt social housing was 'not for them'; it was seen to be an option only for the most destitute (consistent with the developments discussed earlier). Some of them also felt that any financial hardship they experienced was a choice, rather than a necessity. Most of the artists I interviewed generally did not access housing benefit (or did not admit to it). This may reflect the bureaucratic nature of the benefits system (which might dissuade them from applying), the stigmatisation of benefits, or the middle class background of some of the artists.

In *Individualisation* (2002) and *The Brave New World of Work* (2000), Ulrich Beck points out a central contradiction around the role of the welfare state in a neoliberal climate. During the post-war period, state support has historically developed around social norms (such as, in the German context on which he bases his analysis, the nuclear family with a male breadwinner in full-time employment), but these norms no longer apply to many people's lives. Neoliberal reforms undermined the principle of universality, then caused means-tested criteria to become more stringent (often along the lines of traditional social

as London must seem like the belly of the beast: the seat of the regimes of capitalism and colonialism that have all but decimated the alternative value system he is trying to recover. I start to feel vaguely uncomfortable; I'm sympathetic to his environmental concerns, but am troubled by the essentialism of his politics. It's an essentialism that has never been possible for me, as a mixed-race, second-generation immigrant, now living in another country. I have never been able to lay claim to any form of cultural authenticity, and feel uncomfortable using this as the basis for politics or a personal philosophy. I wonder if he sees me as part of the problem.

Carlos is returning to Mexico to dedicate himself full time to a NGO, which he has set up with his mother and sister in his home town a few years ago. The NGO is dedicated to preserving the local environment as well as researching indigenous languages and practices, particularly farming. It is interdisciplinary in nature, and has involved archaeologists, biologists and linguists; Carlos has also applied for funding fo artists' residencies, and has already hosted a Dutch artist through contacts in the Netherlands. He says his art world connections have been particularly useful in attracting funding from private foundations, but Carlos talks about how he finds the art world 'constrained', particularly the art market (suggesting that it is caught up in the values he is now rejecting). The NGO will allow him to create his own context for artwork; it will create the framework for

norms). We can certainly see social exclusion policies, for example, within this context. The result was that more and more people, particularly those in atypical working and living circumstances, fall through the cracks, unless they have access to other sources of income.

I am not arguing that the situation of artists exemplifies unconventional lifestyles, as there are many others who live in atypical circumstances who are not artists; conversely, some of the artists could be seen to live quite 'normal' lives. However, two of the artists experienced conflict with the benefits system: one artist (Beth) could not access council housing because she was childless, and another (Tamar) had her housing benefit cut when she received an Arts Council grant. Beth said quite bluntly that as a single, childless person, council housing was completely inaccessible to her (interview 15 December 2008). She mentioned trying to get on the waiting list and then being told that her chances would be better if she got pregnant. Beth also mentioned an artist couple she knew who had been on the waiting list in Tooting for years, and had no hope of ever moving up the list, because they were childless. Beth actually said that this encouraged women to have children because of 'knowing you'll be supported' rather than make something of their lives. In many ways Beth's situation is not specific to artists, but would be faced by any

collaborations with archaeologists and linguists, for example. He says that in Mexico, it's common for artists to be involved in socially engaged projects, but he doesn't see this in the UK. He seems unaware of the public art commissions that have become recently become common, but perhaps a city such as London is so large that it is possible to inhabit one part of the art world, and be unaware of other aspects of it.

Carlos described his decision to return to Mexico as a 'gamble', because he would not be able to earn money the way he could in London; as there is no property boom in Mexico, he would not be able to earn as much as a decorator. Before going, he wanted to make sure that he got his UK passport as a way of keeping the door open, if he wanted to return; 'it would be stupid to decline that'. 'That' means the legal entitlement to work, and make money should the fundraising efforts prove unsuccessful. It also means connections with Europe, and access to the greater comparative symbolic capital. It is ironic that getting the passport (a symbol of settled living if there is any) coincides with the sense that there is very little reason for him to stay in London—perhaps this reflects the gap between the slow time-frame of immigration bureaucracy and the changing sense of identification with place.

childless person trying to get into council housing. However, for Beth, staying single and childless was about being able to concentrate on her art. She described her career choice as an artist in aspirational terms: working hard and supporting herself through part-time employment rather than relying on benefits.

Another artist described a situation where her housing benefit was cut whenever she received a grant from the Arts Council. The grant was budgeted to cover the cost of art materials, but the council saw the money in the account, and assumed she was receiving on a regular basis, as disposable income. She explained the situation to the council, but was treated with a degree of suspicion. This caused her so much stress that the next time she received a grant, she simply lied about it. This case specifically revealed the difficulty of local authorities in distinguishing between arts grants and employment income but also the problems experienced by self-employed people, and, more generally, the inability of the welfare state to cope with those in irregular employment situations.

The dereliction of some council housing stock meant local authorities could no longer maintain it, and turned over management to other organisations, such as the Bow Arts Trust/Poplar HARCA scheme. This ironically made it possible for some people to access

Figure 8. *Stratford.*

Figure 9. *Jenny's studio*.

the housing in ways that would not be possible through council waiting lists. Two of the artists (Jill and Beth) were renting flats as live/work studios through the scheme; one building was slated to be demolished, and the other (which was Grade II listed) was to be turned over to the private sector and converted to luxury flats. The artists were able to rent the flats through Bow Arts Trust; they paid the same rent as the other tenants, but to Bow Arts Trust rather than Poplar HARCA. Artists applied to the scheme and decisions were made by jury; one of the criteria was community involvement. The artists were responsible for fixing the flats themselves, as they were often in a state of disrepair. The artists lived in the flats with the understanding that their presence was temporary, and that there was no possibility for long-term occupation (although, due to the recession, the process of demolition or sale might take years, giving them more time). More cynically, the scheme could be seen as using artists to provide anti-squatter services, similar to companies such as Camelot.

I asked both Beth and Jill for their views on the scheme. Beth thought the scheme was conducive to both the development of artists' communities and the expansion of the audience for art, saying that 'if this expanded, if there were hundreds of artists doing this, then there would be a significant proportion of recent graduates who were getting

JENNY'S STUDIO, STRATFORD

The studio is in Newham, near Stratford station. The station is a labyrinth of twists and turns; no matter how many times I use the station, it's always confusing due to the detours caused by ongoing renovationn work. I don't use the station frequently enough to keep pace with these changes, which could be connected in some way with the Olympics. I use the toilet in a little compound near the newspaper kiosks, then exit the station, walking underneath a huge white decorative awning – which comes across as a rather desperate attempt to make the station look spectacular rather than impersonal. It's about two o'clock in the afternoon, and the sky is uniformly grey, with a few specks of rain. I walk down a large, wide, and fairly busy motorway lined with tall glass and steel tower blocks: government buildings, a hotel, a movie theatre, shopping malls, loft condos, all built fairly recently, although they do not age well and are already showing signs of wear (moss, green and black streaking along the sides). What will they look like in ten years?

I'm thirsty and would like to buy some juice, but there is no corner shop or supermarket in sight now (thinking, I should have bought some in one of those kiosks). How do people who live in the area do it: where do they do their shopping? Do they have to drive off to some shopping centre or box store? What do they do if they don't have cars

themselves into very secure studios... [And] if your neighbours are artists, and you just saw them at some event and if you saw them in the lift again, it feels like a more accessible thing (interview 15 December 2008). The irony that the conversion and selling off of the flats might actually disrupt artistic communities did not seem apparent to her. Jill said that she was glad to have finally found some stability, and was happy with living in the building (saying 'I don't like looking at it, but I like living in it'). Significantly, neither Beth nor Jill talked about their situations as though they were temporary: Jill actually described her current living arrangements as 'stable', although, ironically, her building could be demolished in a few years. However, her present situation could have been comparatively more stable than in the past (in which she faced frequent evictions by landlords).

4.8 Transience and a Provisional Sense of Stability

How did these material conditions intersect with more subjective issues (such as, for example, the artists' sense of place or understanding of their future)? What is striking about Jill and Beth's accounts is that they reflect both an *acceptance of their own transience* and also *a short-term sense of stability*. They both seemed aware that when the buildings are torn down or sold off in the future, it would be time for them to go;

(imagining someone walking down the motorway carrying shopping bags)? Probably this would have been a very different neighbourhood twenty years ago. This is confirmed several months later in a party conversation; someone tells me about the appliance shop and its long row of fridges on the pavement (he would photograph this on a regular basis, drawn to it as a kind of ordinary spectacle). He insisted that it used to be very different, and now it's become practically unrecognisable. I wonder if it was more pedestrial scale in the past. Other than the area around the station and the shopping centre, there aren't very many people on the street. It feels like North American suburbia. Everything seems larger than normal. The signs seem to be billboard scale, designed for the perspective of motorists rather than pedestrians.

I pass several building sites, surrounded by blue- and green-painted plywood fencing. Much of the area is under construction, probably in preparation for the Olympics. I then turn up a winding road with council estates (postwar tower blocks), a school and a pub, with more building work further ahead (a street that goes under a set of train tracks is now completely blocked off, with no way of getting through). Nothing here would have been built before the 1950s; what was here before? The studio building is on a small street that turns off the large winding one. The street sign is broken, propped up by a fence; someone has spraypainted yellow over othe sign, but it's still more or less legible.

the bonds that they have made with other artists in the building might possibly dissolve, unless they make a concerted effort to stay together as a group. However, neither of them seemed to be thinking of this at the moment. Jill and Beth were not the only ones who described their situations in this way. Another artist I interviewed, described herself as 'having a house', which at first I took to mean that she owned property. She then clarified this to mean that she was living in a flat where she paid cheap rent. In general, the artists I interviewed tended to think mainly in terms of the present; the future, beyond a few months, was difficult to imagine. This may reflect the difficulty of thinking or planning long-term in a city as expensive as London, particularly on a limited income, and where housing arrangements were often temporary. Perhaps because the property market had played such a central role in London's economy, the artists also seemed to accept its continuing expansion as unstoppable and inevitable. The recession was seen as a momentary blip. The reluctance of politicians to intervene (lest they be seen as 'anti-development') perhaps contributed to this perception. For example, Joe mentioned contacting his MP about the landlord's attempts to evict the project space from the building; she was supportive but said that she ultimately could not help them.

Some of the artists also seemed to have internalised the idea that they were implicated in

There are only two buildings on the street, both small, two storey 1960s brick buildings. Perhaps at one point in time they would have been workshops, storage or maintenance buildings for the council; are the only spaces that can be used as studios these kind of leftovers, which can't be converted easily into luxury flats? The specks of rain grow heavier. I walk towards the first building and open a chainlink fence, and walk through a muddy area towards the building entrance. Have I come to the right place? The windows are grubby and the building looks like it could be abandoned, but I see a sign by the door that says 'ACME'. I ring it and there's nobody there. It's now raining. Then I see Jenny driving a small hatchback car in front of the building. She motions to me to open the chainlink fence, which I do, and she drives in and parks her car in front of the building. Jenny gets out; she's dressed casually, wearing a sweater, jeans and boots, but is also wearing quite heavy makeup around the eyes. The first thing she does is warn me about what a mess her studio is. I tell her that it won't bother me. We both go inside the building.

It's dark inside, and there are huge theatre props piled in a storage area by the door. She explains (guessing that I'm wondering what they are used for) that there's a theatre company on the ground floor; they use the space for rehearsals and are the people she sees the most frequently in the building. We walk up a flight of concrete stairs, then

gentrification processes, which made them reluctant to participate in housing activism or anti-gentrification campaigns. The tendency of some anti-gentrification campaigns both to focus on long-term residents in danger of displacement, rather than on more recent arrivals, and to also foreground the loss of the authentic character of neighbourhoods may have also made the artists feel there was no place for them. This manifested itself in terms of awkward and uncomfortable moments during the interviews, and expressions of (perhaps middle-class) guilt. For example, Jackie expressed discomfort at discussing the displacement of artists, feeling that it was an arrogant assertion of artists' needs above other people: 'I kind of get annoyed at communities that are displaced, as opposed to just artists' (interview 24 September 2008). For Jackie, being involved in an anti-gentrification campaign would imply laying claim to an authentic experience to which she does not have access: '... I'd just be giving myself airs to pretend that I remember a time that... lots of spaces, squats I used to go to...'. Significantly, she also described gentrification in *cultural* terms (in terms of authentic experience) rather than economic terms (such as, for example, in terms of increased rents), perhaps also symptomatic of the impasses in thinking about gentrification.

 Joe said that being an artist was a luxury, which meant that he would feel out of place

along a dimly lit coridor on the first floor (light coming in through cracks under the studio doors). It's completely silent; I wonder if we're the only ones in the building. Then we open the door to the studio. It's lit by fluorescent light, and there are large windows. She has one half of the room, which is full of sculptures. The shapes all suggest something biological: animals, alien creatures, viruses. She shows me photographs of past works in a catalogue: accumulations of the sculptures: metaphors of chaos taking over order. Some of the sculptures are in the process of being packed into a crate wooden crate, to be sent away for an exhibition in Belgium (hence the mess, for which she continues to apologise). There are also some pieces of heavy equipment, which she uses to make the sculptures. Another person is using the other half of the room, although he doesn't have much stuff there yet because he just moved in. The studio is right next to the DLR tracks, and the DLR train goes past every fifteen minutes or so causing the windows to rattle slightly, punctuating the conversation. It appears not to bother Jenny; perhaps she's gotten used to it.

Jenny says that she's not sure how long the building will last, because they're leasing it from Newham Council, who will likely tear it down in preparation for the Olympics. She doesn't say what she will do for a studio then; perhaps she doesn't want to think about it. The roadworks that are taking place in preparation for the Olympics have already

in these sorts of campaigns (interview 5 October 2008). This assertion of art as a luxury rather than a necessity undermines the legitimacy of artists' involvement in housing campaigns – their needs are seen to be trivial in comparison to long-term residents, for example. For Joe, campaigning to save the project space in Hackney would require both long-term commitment and local community involvement, beyond the art community. Joe said that by the time the space had come under threat 'the project had run its course'; he felt that it was time to put his energies towards his own work (perhaps he was also aware that developing too much of a reputation as a curator or organiser might possibly damage his career as an artist).

However, it is also important to acknowledge that some artists actually found ways to take advantage of an overall condition of fragmentation and transience. For example, Robert was squatting a derelict council estate, which he shared with several other artists. His relationship to other artists, even those he lived with, seemed to largely be one of individual competition. I repeatedly asked him about his relationships with other artists, to which he responded in ways that were about distinguishing himself, and his work, from others. Because he was squatting (a transient mode of living), he did not have to pay rent; but because he had no desire to stay or establish some sense of community, there was

made it difficult for her to drive between the studio and her flat in Hackney (I remember passing the road that was blocked off on my way here, which was the main road connecting Hackney Wick and Newham). She says that now she has to take another route, which is much longer and more circuitous; the time spent commuting means she has less time in the studio. Her worry about losing the space and the frustration with the commute contribute to the underlying anxiety in the conversation, which surfaces occasionally when she says things like, 'things aren't OK at the moment'.

The anxieties are not really about money, as they might be for some; she works twenty hours a week as an arts administrator, which she supplements with sales and occasional interior design commissions (such as painting a mural on the inside of a bar in Hoxton). She pays cheap rent at the flat she shares with her boyfriend, so her living costs are relatively low. Rather, the anxieties are about her career, and whether or not it's progressing quickly enough. She worries about the fact that her work isn't selling; although she is showing regularly and has all the signs of 'having a career'. She wonders whether the fact that she makes sculpture puts her at a disadvantage, as collectors might think it was too large and unwieldy for their homes; she also acknowledges that the credit crunch has made selling art much more difficult these days. Jenny also expresses frustrations with arts funding, saying that what she's doing isn't 'social work', and that that's all the Arts Council wants to fund these days, and that they don't care about aesthetics; she

no need to stay in one particular neighbourhood, and because of this, no concern about being displaced. He was proud of his resourcefulness, and saw his decision to squat as a clever way of short-circuiting the need for paid employment, which would take time away from his art career. However, the (conventionally middle-class) aspiration to buy a house in Devon was ironic given he was living what could be seen as a more precarious existence than the other artists (most of who were paying rent). Was the precariousness he was experiencing different from that of the other artists? In other words, did Robert's middle-class background enable to see his present circumstances as a temporary phase, after which he could confidently look forward to a stable and prosperous future – a future which seemed less certain for some of the other artists?

How can we understand both this acceptance of transience and also the normalisation of such a provisional sense of stability? It might be useful to return to Virno's theorisation of opportunism (which he defines in structural rather than moral terms) as a way of considering these attitudes. He characterises the orgins of opportunism in this way:

> outside-of-the-workplace socialisation marked by unexpected turns, perceptible shocks, permanent innovation, chronic instability. Opportunists are those

also resents the pressures to fit her work into the 'ethnic minority' category, which she feels has nothing to do with her own interests. At other times, Jenny is more animated, perhaps reflecting the excitement about being at the centre of things:

> For example last week there was one night with about four shows because a friend of mine, the one in Berlin, was showing at Museum 52. That was at the same night as when there was a big exhibition at that new place on Calvert Avenue, Calvert 22, anyway, there was a big show with lots of different people, and anyway, there was a friend of a friend showing in that, so I thought I'd go anyway, and there was one at Vegas gallery, which is around the corner from Museum 52, and just popped in, and apart from that, I know the gallerist and it was just next door, and then I went to go see my friend's show who I used to have a studio with, and so it was four things in one night! And there was something across the road and it was fine, because it was packed with people we knew'.

The excitement and the anxiety surface at different times during the conversation. It's almost like I'm talking to two different people: one who feels confident about the future, excited about the buzz of being at the centre of things, and is relatively lucky with opportunities, and then another who worries that things are not going as well as they might, and who fears that she ultimately might not really be able to make a living

> who confront a flow of ever-interchangeable possibilities, making themselves available to the greater number of these, yielding to the nearest one, and then quickly swerving from one to another (Virno, 2004, p.86).

Opportunism is about living with continual instability, as well as the underlying knowledge that one must adapt to quickly changing circumstances. According to this logic, one can be inventive in developing new projects, but one must be prepared to give them up in an instant; one can temporarily live in cheap housing, but only on the condition that one must eventually leave. One can be tactical; as Joe said in relation to the impact of the Olympics on the East End art scene, 'maybe we'll creep around the borders and everything will be fine' (interview 5 October 2008). It is a question of stealth and subterfuge, but not of any long-term, visible commitment when it comes to sustaining projects, communities or homes. Long-term commitment would not only mean fighting a losing battle, it would also be so much at odds with the the cultural logic of the present climate that it does not even present itself as a possibility worth considering. It might also possibly go completely against the *habitus* that many of the artists have developed.

The other side of opportunism, which Virno discusses less, is resignation: resignation

from her work. It's an emotional rhythm of highs and lows; of feeling hopeful, and then feeling anxious and frustrated. It's almost as though she copes with those moments of anxiety by trying to put them out of her mind and focusing on the excitement, instead of trying to reflect on what is making her anxious. It might in fact reflect a larger situation where she feels there is little she can do to change things if things turn out badly; if she loses her studio space or the gallerist does not sell much of her work, it's out of her control.

to the idea that one must always go with the flow, but that one is ultimately powerless to act on one's circumstances. The best that one can do is try to adapt, and hopefully carve out some space for one's self in the process. Another way of considering this sense of resignation and acceptance is through Franco Berardi's theorisation of 'depression', depression being the other side of the imperative to be an entrepreneur of the self (if we remember the discussion on Foucault in the second chapter). Berardi sees anxiety and depression as the Post-Fordist equivalent of Fordist alienation; they are the consequence of the imperative to exploit one's thoughts and emotions (Berardi, 2009, pp.134-135). Depression is thus not simply a psychological diagnosis; it is the result of the splintering of space and time in the Post-Fordist economy as 'the coherence of lived time' becomes reduced to fragments (Berardi, 2009, p.132), as well as the disappearance of '*privacy* and its possibilities...if we understand this word in its fullest meaning and not only to its specific juridical definition (Berardi, 2009, p.107). It is also about things changing too quickly to come to grips with them (Berardi focuses on technological change, but I would apply this to other forms of social and economic change, such as the fluctuations of the property market or policy shifts). Berardi also defines depression as 'a lack of sense, an inability to find sense through action, through communication, through life' as well as 'an illness of responsibility, dominated by a feeling of inadequacy' (Berardi, 2009, p.116).

Figure 10. *Joe's studio build-ing* .

Figure 11. *Joe's studio.*

Drawing on Alain Ehrenberg's *La fatigue d'etre soi* or *The Fatigue of Being Ones' Self* (1998), Berardi argues that depression and fatigue are the consequence of the pressure to be exemplary, entrepreneurial individuals: 'nobody can conceive of his or her own life in a more relaxed and egalitarian manner. S/he who relaxes may very well end up in the street' (Berardi, 2009, p.119).

4.9 The Loss of Space and Time for Creative Activities
In reflecting on the London interview material, it is possible to see how the London artists were subject to the fragmentation of space and time. The artists were pushed further and further away from the city centre, into tiny spaces in rundown, and in some cases semi-derelict buildings. Relatively speaking, most of them did not live in stable housing circumstances. The fragmentation of time they experienced was connected to the juggling and multi-tasking involved in maintaining both a job and an art career, as well as the commuting between home, work and studio. Several of the artists in the shared studio buildings mentioned that they never saw other artists in their studio because they were on different schedules. Joe and Robert speculated that they were too busy earning a living. Joe said, 'there are a lot of artists who rent their space, and don't go into it. They're

JOE'S STUDIO, MILE END

It's about 2 on a Saturday afternoon and raining so heavily that I can't cycle. Because it's the weekend and several tube lines are down, I end up taking a bus from Bow Road. The bus takes a long time to show up and I have to walk for fifteen, maybe twenty minutes in the station. This area is off the cycle route I normally take through the area; if I were to cycle here I'd come up through the Isle of Dogs, through the roundabout near Westferry, then along the canal towards Mile End. Because it's off my normal route it's a bit unfamiliar (I become more familiar with the area later on). I end up asking someone on the bus to tell me where I should get off. She tells me, and I get off on a winding street near the canal and Ben Jonson Road. Once I get out, I walk for a bit and then things start to look familiar again (piecing together the map in my head, like puzzle). I pass a park with a playground, and public art. There is much of it in this area; these sorts of neighbourhoods always seem to be the target for public art commissions. I eventually come to a large, white warehouse building, with some corner shops across the street. There is a gallery on the ground floor, which seems to be closed. I get to the entrance and try to buzz in, huddled under the glass awning as the rain pelts down. But there's no buzzer to the studio—only one for the office (closed, I assume, as it's the weekend) and for the gallery. I end up calling Joe on the mobile, trying my best not to get it wet in the process. He comes down and lets me in. The entire building, both the

hanging onto it, hoping that they can find time, or clinging onto the idea that they're a creative person' (interview 5 October 2008).

In *Precarious Rhapsody* (2009), Franco Berardi develops a related concept to theorise these conditions, 'cyber-time'. He uses 'cyber-time' to characterise the effects of information technologies on experience, such as the demand to be continually available and to respond to others immediately. The specifically technological aspects of Berardi's concept are less relevant, but it is nonetheless useful for theorising overload and oversaturation: of being expected to work faster and with greater intensity than what is physically and emotionally possible (Berardi, 2009, p. 44). The consequences, Berardi argues, are fatigue, exhaustion and burnout: 'the constant mobilisation of nervous energies can lead to a depressive reaction' (Berardi, 2009, p.115). The artists I interviewed did experience periods of exhaustion: one described herself as recently recovered from a moment where she was 'nearly half-dead from stress' (interview 13 October 2008) another had recently recovered from a long-term, chronic illness. Others artists' experience was less dramatic, but revealed an ongoing grind of trying to make ends meet, and trying to keep their artwork going, as much as they could. They talked about continual attempts to fight tiredness and the impulse to relax at the end of the day,

outside and the inside, are painted white. There's an almost monastic calm to the place. It's a place to concentrate, free of distractions. The building also seems rather empty: I don't see anyone hanging out in the hallways, and I don't hear any noise coming from the studios.

We enter the studio; he says he moved in recently so there isn't much in there yet. It's true that it's very clean and neat; it doesn't seem lived-in at all. The walls are white and pristine. A soft grey light filters in through the windows, making the drawings hanging on the walls all the more dramatic. They're large (7 or 8 feet high) black and white charcoal drawings of moonlit fantasy landscapes, Gothic imagery that that brings to mind Edward Gorey's illustrations as much as 18th century Romanticism or early twentieth century German Expressionism, but done with a certain self-consciousness and even irony. There has been a recent trend in painting towards Gothic imagery and representations of the supernatural; is it part of the same trend?

Joe describes the studio as a place for him to concentrate on his 'own work' in relative security, quiet and stability. He misses the camaraderie of other projects he was involved in, but at least this allows him to get things done. He supports himself through teaching part-time and through sales of his work, as well as through stipends from his gallerist (a rare thing as gallerists don't typically offer stipends).

instead of going to the studio. One of the artists (Jill) mentioned how she had to learn to become better at the 'switch on-switch off thing' (a technological metaphor), meaning switching out of job mode into studio mode. In many cases it was a combination of passion, ambition and discipline (such as Beth's belief in hard work) that kept them going.

I will now implicate myself as a researcher and acknowledge that I found myself experiencing some of these very conditions in the process of interviewing of the artists. In many cases (with the exception of Carlos, whose studio was close by), I would often have to commute quite far in order to meet the artists, either by bike or public transport and foot. I see this as not only about the geographical distances that one must routinely travel in London, but also specifically because of the location of the studios in fairly peripheral regions of the city, a result of property market pressures. In some cases I actually got lost (such as when interviewing Beth, although this is perhaps more of a reflection of the complex and confusing layout of the estate she lived on). To summarise, doing this type of research in London took a degree of effort, which I see as a kind of *research labour* - the work involved in finding the places, making my way there, and interviewing people who, for the most part, were total strangers. I found myself experiencing similar

It turns out that his work, though, is not really what he wants to talk about, or his gallerist or his job; it's his involvement in a project space in a warehouse in North Hackney, which lasted for five years. The space was initially set up through what Joe described as an 'inheritance-type situation'; his brother, who was not an artist, inherited some money and wanted to live, work, and generally be surrounded by 'some creative people'. This motivated him to set up a live-work space and cover the costs, then allowed Joe and his artist friends to take over the management of the space. Curation was fairly informal, out of a spirit of 'fuck it, we'll just do it', and 'I like this guy's work, I like this girl's work, let's invite some friends and sell beer'. Decisions were made collectively, and to a certain extent, democratically, 'at a time when people were either being dynamically and competitively commercial, or they were being dynamically and competitively networky'. The immediacy and informality of the space and the art they presented was seen as refreshing, and led the space to have considerable interest. However, Joe is also insistent about the fact that they weren't motivated by any sort of aesthetic criteria, or by the imperative to present types of work not normally given exposure (he said that it would be dishonest, and perhaps too flattering to say this).

There were other, similar initiatives at the time; Joe says 'that part of the East End has floated on project spaces for the past ten years, or at least artist-run projects, even if they're just one-offs'. He identifies quite strongly with this tradition of East London proj-

conditions to the people I was interviewing, such as fatigue and fragmented time. I am drawing attention to this experience to point out the ways in which we, as academics, are also implicated in the processes theorised by Berardi.

4.10 Conclusion

I have considered the situation of artists in relation to the spatial politics of London, particularly housing. In doing so, I have attempted to 'map' the situation of artists onto analyses of housing and urban politics, and to develop a more complex and nuanced approach to the issues rather than those offered by both 'creative cities' discourses and also some of the critiques of gentrification (which concentrate on artists as agents of gentrification, but ignore gentrification's effects on artists). The picture that has emerged was one where culture is indeed implicated in boosting London's status as a global city and in promoting gentrification processes, but artists have also experienced the negative effects of these processes: expensive rent, the loss of time and space for creative activities, greater pressures to multi-task and take on secondary employment, etc. The most extreme example of these pressures was the people who rent studios and define themselves as professional artists, but never actually spend any time in them. To generalise, London has increasingly become a place for exceptional, entrepreneurial

ect spaces, and with the independence and the resourcefulness of the artists who set up projects, as well as some of their struggles against developers. He uses natural, and even biological language and metaphors: it's a 'progressive, dynamic changing thing, just oozing further east', a natural development over 40-50 years 'as a response to people's need for art and culture'. His description of the East End scene also seems to be inflected with a certain libertarianism. Joe acknowledges that the project space received generous support from the Arts Council, particularly for major projects, but feels that, more generally, the East End scene developed in a largely independent manner, without government assistance', and even imagines that there are those within government who feel jealous because they feel they cannot claim to have created it. He sees the lack of state recognition and support for art as possibly due to this jealousy and inability to claim ownership.

The building itself was a continual source of stress, particularly because of dealing with 'shady characters' who were renting them the space. Joe knew that things had come to an end when the Olympics were announced, and he knew that cuts to the Arts Council's budget would soon follow as funding would be redirected away from culture towards the Olympics. The announcement of the Olympics, and the subsequent rise of property prices in North Hackney had put the space within a 'rent gap' situation, where the land became worth more than the building that stood on it, which meant the landlord wanted them out. Joe said 'it felt like the walls were closing in on us', and tried to appeal to their

individuals; it has become more difficult to live and work there in a more relaxed, sustained and measured way. Independent cultural activity is particularly vulnerable to these developments, because of its unpaid and self-directed nature.

While I have interviewed too small a sample to draw definitive conclusions, I noticed that these negative effects seemed to have a greater effect on younger artists, reflecting the increasing difficulty for younger generations of people to find stable housing situations. The artists also seemed largely resigned to their own transience, and to have naturalised a quite provisional sense of stability. The work of both Paolo Virno and Franco Berardi offers some useful concepts to theorise this phenomenon, as well as, more generally, the relationship between material conditions and subjective or psychic states.

If living costs were cheaper in London, and if it were easier for artists to access stable housing, would we see a very different situation? Would artists have more time to make work;would they have to do less multi-tasking, with only the most skilled and resourceful able to really develop careers? Would they be able to work in a more relaxed manner, without the constant pressure to make every moment productive? Furthermore, would there be more independent spaces of the kind that Joe was involved in, and which were

MP, with no luck. He acknowledges that there wasn't much else that they tried to do, because they felt it was largely pointless. This spelt the end of the project, though Joe also says it had run its course and it was time to move on, to concentrate on his own work—which also meant, in a certain sense, moving from a self-organised project to perhaps a more traditional structure (operating entirely as a studio artist, with a gallerist taking care of the 'business' of mediating and marketing his work), although these worlds overlapped perhaps more than might be apparent; one of the artists whose work they presented in the project was also picked up with the gallerist.

Joe is still bitter about the Olympics, as he felt it has disrupted much of the activity in the East End and could possibly spell its end, but speculates that 'maybe we're thicker-skinned, and we'll creep around its borders and everything will be fine' (creeping around the edge of the blue plywood Olympic fence?). It's a question of 'creeping around the borders': guile, stealth and cunning; remaining invisible so as not to attract attention. If attention and visibility ultimately means attracting the interest of developers, then who would blame them? However (as Joe is not the only artist I have interviewed who has used this sort of language and metaphors), is this indicative of a wider cultural logic or even a strucuture of feeling where it is assumed that all one can literally do is creep around the edges and avoid attention, and other approaches become inconceivable?

also more common in London during the 1980s and 1990s? This is where it becomes important to consider the relationship between living costs and professional identities. I will focus on the question of professional identities in the next chapter.

5.1 Introduction

In the previous section, I explored the pressures that the high cost of living and the lack of stable, affordable housing have created for the London artists, and the constant difficulties this has caused them in terms of having enough time and space to make art. I focused on the intersection between their material conditions (such as their housing situations) and subjective issues, such as anxieties around not being serious artists, or stress and tiredness. In this chapter, I will examine the artists' professional identities: they how envision their careers, how they support themselves, and how they negotiate the relationship between their paid employment and their art practices. I am examining the links between their material conditions (such as, in the case of London, very high living costs) and processes of professionalisation, particularly as this affected artists' relationship to their careers and their paid employment. It is also important to point out that professionalisation is a complex phenomenon, involving many inter-related factors, including the changes to cultural policy discussed in the second chapter, changes to arts education, as well as changes to the field itself, particularly the temporality of artistic careers. It is important to see professionalisation in terms of an intersection between material conditions, field politics and policy.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter will also be divided into two sections, on the top and bottom halves of the page, which will correspond to two different voices: an analytical voice and an impressionistic voice. As with the previous chapter, my hope is that the reader will be able to read both section separately or 'read across them' (making connections between the two). The top half of the page will consist of biographical narrative descriptions of the artists, in which I will describe their work, their life and career decisions, and my impression of the interviews. The bottom half will consist of an examination of the key issues around artists' professional identities, and is written in an analytical voice. I will first briefly describe some of the contradictions around the notion of artists' professional identities, drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu. I will then provide an overview of the artists I interviewed and their experiences of work, benefits, the art market and arts funding. Following this, I will examine neoliberal pressures on the arts, and how they affect arts funding, the structure of artists' careers and arts education. I will finally examine artists' responses to these developments.

5.2 The Contradictions of Professional Identities in the Arts

In order to understand the issue of artists' professional identities, it is important to consider how the professional identity of the artist has been defined against conventional occupational categories. We can see this in relation to the principles of autonomy and the 'economic world in reverse' discussed in the first chapter, which had their origins in the Romantic reaction against the Industrial Revolution (Bourdieu, 1993, p.113). In the 20th century, art was positioned against 'administered rationality', or the division of labour and

alienation of the modern bureaucratic society (Adorno, 2005, pp.112-113). This meant that the autonomy of the field has come to be defined against bureaucracy and other aspects of modern professionalism (as theorised by Weber and postwar sociologists). Bourdieu sees this rejection of professionalism as central to what he calls the 'charismatic ideology' - that which 'directs attention to the painter, writer or composer' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.76). In other words, the artist must embody a certain authenticity (which is then to be discovered by the cultural broker). Career success depends, to a certain extent, on the ability to embody and perform this authenticity, in the eyes of dealers, collectors or other cultural intermediaries. Ironically, the disavowal of bureaucracy or administrative competence becomes a professional requirement: an anti-professional professionalism.

Navigating the art world requires a high degree of tacit knowledge, in a field where 'every gesture, every event is, as a painter nicely put it, "a sort of nudge or wink between accomplices"'(Bourdieu, 1993, p.109). Art school is one of the key sites for developing this tacit knowledge, as it is where one learns to identify, think and speak as an artist. Similar to other forms of professional accreditation, students do learn specialised discourses required for entry into the field, but much of the learning that takes place is also informal (even if it takes place within a formal setting), involving emulation and intuitively 'picking things up'.Writing about the US university context, Howard Singerman argues that arts education has become increasingly about the 'theorisation and a verbal re-enactment of the practices of art and the role of the artist' (1999, p.4). In other words, it is inherently performative. Art school has also been the site of conflict between the objectives of university training and the charismatic ideology (which is often expressed through the belief that 'art cannot be taught'). The introduction of post-graduate degrees have been particularly controversial, as they are seen by some to encourage esoteric, over-theorised and aesthetically compromised art (Hickey, 1993) and by others as promoting alternative definitions of art practice which are less patriarchal and Eurocentric, and thus offering more space for women and minorities (Kester, 2003).

The division of labour central to the 'charismatic ideology' has also been challenged by neo-avant-garde traditions (such as installation art, performance art or experimental film) social movements in the arts (particularly feminism), and the tradition of artist-led spaces. The latter two in particular have involved artists taking on some of the tasks of the intermediary, such as curating and writing about exhibitions or establishing and running arts organisations. As discussed in the first chapter, it has now become quite common for artists to also work as curators and critics, due to the expansion of the field; many artists working in the public sectors also take on considerable administrative duties in mediating and promoting their own work. However, despite these developments, the bohemian romantic has continued to persist as a predominant model for how artists should live their lives or develop their careers, either explicitly or implicitly.

ROBERT

Robert is in his early twenties. He is short and wiry, and wears a denim jacket, a sweater and a scarf (it's starting to get cold, and the studio is unheated). Once I get to the studio I realise that, unlike the messy work-in-progress I've seen in the other studios, he's cleaned up the studio and set all the work up, like from a studio visit from a curator or critic (which he possibly thinks I am, even though I've been quite clear about who I am and why I'm speaking to him). This colours the entire conversation: he's (anxiously) trying to sell himself to me without looking like he's doing it, attempting that delicate balance of self-promotion and offhandedness. His manner is one of calculation and cynicism, with a few candid flashes. I ask him about his living situation and how he supports himself, but he keeps trying to change the subject so that we talk about him and his work.

Robert is from West London. After doing his BA in Bath, he is now living in the East End which horrifies him ('there are no trees here!'), despite the studio's proximity to London Fields and Victoria Park. He is now living in a squat in Tower Hamlets (in a former council estate) and rents a studio in Dalston, which is paid

If the question of artists' professional identities is a complex and contradictory one, then understanding forms of *professionalisation* in the arts, particularly those resulting from neoliberal policy and economic developments, is equally complex, involving the intersection between material conditions, field politics (including the ideal of the bohemian lifestyle), policy discourses, as well as artists' hopes and aspirations. For example, in the previous chapter, I discussed a situation where artists take on secondary jobs to support themselves, particularly in the face of high living costs, with the consequence of having less time for their work. Supporting themselves required the artists, in some cases, to take on professional-level work, which in some cases became a second career. Can we see this as a particular form of professionalisation, in which art begins to lose its exceptional status and artists become *more like other workers*? How does this affect the ideal of the bohemian lifestyle, which, as discussed, in many ways is a rejection of conventional employment and lifestyles?

There are other kinds of professionalisation that I will discuss in further detail later on, which I see as both symptomatic and productive of forms of neoliberal governmentality and biopower (particularly the increasing perception of skills and abilities as 'human capital' and the increasingly normative expectation to be an entrepreneur of one's self).

for by his mother. He has gallery representation and supports himself from sales. Robert worked part-time in a bar, but since last December, he has been working on his art full-time. He quantifies his time in the studio in precise detail, not unlike a regular paid job: 'on average about 6 hours a day... but over the last four months, it's been 7 days a week, 8 hours a day'. He is rather dismissive of the other people in the studio building, who do not spend much time there: 'maybe they're schoolteachers'; not serious artists, in any case.

Although it is his home town, Robert describes London almost entirely as a place to make it; if it were cheaper there would be more artists, and thus more competition, so this is the trade-off. He mentions that as a young artist, he needs to live in London, New York or Berlin—or else, Mexico City: centres of power and prestige in the art world, or those that are peripheral in ways that attract art world intrigue.

Robert seems acutely age-conscious. He identifies himself as a 'young artist' several times during the conversation. It's as though he knows just how

These include: the further shortening of artistic careers (in a field where youth has been historically associated with artistic innovation, and where generational conflict narratives have played an important role); and the reframing of culture by policy-makers in terms of *employability and career development,* consistent with the policy discourses discussed in the second chapter. How do these developments affect artists' understanding and expectation of their work, their careers, or their understanding of themselves? How do artists respond to these developments, particularly as some of them seem to be completely at odds with the founding principles of the cultural field?

5.3 An Overview of the London Art World

I will now give a brief overview of the art scene in London, although its size and complexity means that I cannot discuss it fully within the scope of this text, and I acknowledge that I am making many omissions. The London art scene involves a combination of major institutions (such as the Tate or the Serpentine), public museums (such as the Whitechapel Art Gallery or the South London Gallery), commercial galleries and a number of independent spaces. The art market has historically had a fairly strong influence in London, which continues to grow through the development of art fairs (notably *Frieze*), and also despite the effects of the recession. London has a network of commercial galleries. The more prestigious galleries are generally located in Central

important it is to be young, (or to be seen to be young), and covets it jealously, as though it's something precious. He also uses age as a yardstick to measure success – that one should have achieved certain things by by a certain age. He's also extremely ambitious, mentioning that, at one point, that he convinced his gallerist to schedule his exhibition sooner so that he could 'force myself to work harder'. This ambitious, hard-working, and in some cases competitive mentality is at odds with the slack stereotype of squatters, but squatting for Robert functions as an investment in his future career success. If he does not have to pay rent, he can avoid having to work at another (non arts-related) job, and in a sense can avoid 'wasting time'. And time is a precious commodity; someday, he will no longer be young.

This calculation also comes out in Robert describes his work, and to a certain extent, the work itself. His sculptures resemble theatrical props and involve a literalness and nihilistic, deadpan humour I associate with Gavin Turk or Sarah Lucas. In speaking about his work, Robert highlights how clever he is; for example, one work was a 'sequel' of an idea he 'stole' from a 1970s performance

London (such as Hauser & Wirth or White Cube),and the smaller ones (including those who represented some of the artists I interviewed) in trendier areas, such as Hoxton or Vyner Street in East London; one of these recently moved to Deptford, as a possible sign of that area's gentrification.

There are also many independent arts spaces and shared studio buildings, many of these in North East London and some in areas of South London. These developed out of various contexts: the tradition of artist led spaces, the large group shows in rented or squatted warehouse spaces in former industrial areas, as discussed in the previous chapter. The most established of these, such as Cubitt, Gasworks, Matt's Gallery or the Showroom, receive regular state funding; if some of them began as artist-led spaces, the involvement of artists seems to be mainly in an advisory capacity (such as in serving on advisory boards). Other organisations struggle with high commercial rents and unstable funding, and tend not to last for long.

More recently, the London art world largely made its reputation on the global scene in the late 1980s and 1990s, through the success of the YBAs, whose combination of shock tactics, celebrity personas and entrepreneurial approaches came to set a template or formula for artistic success. As Julian Stallabrass described in *High Art Lite* (2006), this

by a now-famous artist, but he has adapted it so nobody would know where it came from. It's an apparently successful formula of combining the authority of the canonical with the originality of the new. I try to ask him about some of the ideas behind his work and he mentions that at a certain age he became deeply cynical and said that life was basically meaningless, and that his work expresses this. I ask him about what specifically made him cynical and he doesn't answer.

Because he is trying to so hard to draw attention to himself, questions about his relationship with other artists are deflected into attempts to distinguish his work from that of other artists ('her work isn't like mine at all'). He shares the squat with other artists, but says they rarely talk about art or share ideas. He mentions that the gallery who represents him is organising a dinner for curators and collectors who are in town for the Frieze art fair, and that the artists with the gallery are invited. Robert describes himself as 'not being part of the London scene'. When I ask him to define the London scene, he seems unable to say what it is, although he does acknowledge that in a city so large, there are many sub-scenes.

phenomenon also coincided with several key developments: the relaunch of the Turner Prize, involving the introduction of an age limit of fifty; the involvement of the Tate Modern and Channel Four; the growing interest on the part of collectors in contemporary art and young artists (rather than 'safe investments' such as historical art and canonical twentieth century artists); and New Labour's modernising imperatives (particularly after 1997). The sponsorship of contemporary art by corporations to enhance their public image as innovators (Alberro, 2004; Wu, 2003) is another factor in this overall scenario; the prestigious BloombergSPACE, sponsored by the US software and media conglomerate, is a current example.

The UK also has a strong tradition of public art, arts education and community art, with origins in cultural democracy initiatives in the 1970s, socially engaged art forms which developed out of 1960s conceptual and performance art (such as the work of the Artist Placement Group and Stephen Willats). In London, some of the initiatives of the Greater London Council played an important role. These traditions have become institutionalised; for example, there is now a tendency by organisations outside the arts to support art projects (which might now be funded by local authorities or other government departments as much as they might be by the Arts Council). As discussed in the second chapter, these traditions of work have also in many ways been incorporated into central

At one Robert was involved with a squatted art gallery for a few months, which he originally occupied to use as a studio, but then decided to show the work of other artists in the window space (which he describes as 'easy', because it did not require invigilation – here he makes a point of showing how effortless it was). After a few months, he eventually gave this up, because he was 'not a curator or a gallerist', and he just 'wants to make art work'. It's at moments such as these when the anxiousness comes into his voice: the anxiety at not being taken seriously as an artist, or at being seen as neither an artist nor an intermediary (neither fish nor fowl), and the possibility that his career could suffer. The assertions that the gallery was 'easy' to run could also be about signalling that he had no serious ambitions as a curator.

Robert's identification as a studio artist and his willingness to forgo certain material comforts typifies the personal sacrifice and passionate dedication of the romantic artist. This is combined with the entrepreneurialism exemplified by Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons and many artists since then: the performance of the artist-persona as self-marketing. He does not sell the work, as this is the gallerists'

cultural and social policy initiatives, in line with the 'social exclusion' discourses.

5.4 The London Artists

I will now turn to the experience of the London artists, beginning with a snapshot or overview of their situations; I will then discuss how they supported themselves. The artists I interviewed ranged in age from 23 to 58 years of age. Half were male and half were female; two-thirds of the artists were white and one third were Black/ethnic minorities. Most of the artists were British citizens; one was Mexican but had immigrated to the UK long ago. Four of the artists had grown up in London; two of them had gone to school elsewhere (in Bath and Norwich) and then returned. Others had moved to London from elsewhere in the UK.

Using a questionnaire, I asked the artists to tell me how much money they made and the sources of their income. Four of the artists (interestingly, all male) made good incomes: one had a full-time teaching position and made £50 000 per year; two worked part-time and also sold their art, earning £35 000; another who received regular funding from the Arts Council to operate his own theatre company, and also received commissions and foundation grants, made £28 000 per year. Most of the artists, who supported themselves on a combination of part-time or freelance work and sales or grants, earned around

responsibility—Robert's task is to sell himself, as he is doing for me now. I'm not taking the bait, which is a little unsettling.

Robert is proud of his resourcefulness, particularly his ability to 'find stuff' and 'steal stuff', and find ways to do things cheaply—his pride in his resourcefulness is connected to his belief in supporting himself through his work. It's also about the *frisson* of doing something apparently transgressive like stealing. When asked about grants, Robert says,'I never got any awards or grants, or any aid or help or anything. You're just resourceful'. It is interesting the Robert describes grants as 'help', when (based on the other interviews) they are extremely competitive and the application process requires a great deal of work. It is also ironic that he describes himself as never having having received any aid or help, when his mother is paying for his studio.

£15 000 per year. Two of them earned £7-9000 per year: one from part-time paid employment (in retail) and another completely from sales. Almost all the artists I interviewed listed several different income sources, typically a combination of paid employment and sales, grants or commissions. One of the artists listed paid employment as her only income source, but mentioned that if it became financially feasible, she would like to quit her job and live off sales of her paintings. The artist who described himself as living entirely off sales was also squatting and so had significantly lower costs; he was also receiving help from his family to cover his studio rent.

5.5 Employment and Art vs. Work Identities

All the artists, except for two, were employed. Teaching seemed to be a fairly common activity. Several of them taught part-time in university or art school; one taught full-time at university and another at a sixth-form college. Another worked freelance in gallery education. Several of them also worked in arts administration: one in a museum, one worked part-time for a studio provider and another freelanced as an arts manager. Several also had jobs in other fields: one worked as a freelance builder and decorator, one worked in two different music stores and another worked as an administrator in a legal firm specialising in property law. In general, the artists who worked through the commercial gallery system were less likely to identify with their paid employment and seemed more

It is also revealing that in London, it is only people in these kinds of circumstances (squatting, with some family support) who are able to dedicate themselves full-time to their art practice on an ongoing basis, and live entirely off their art.

willing to leave if they earned enough money from sales (their chances of living off their art was another question). Those who worked in the public sector knew that they could not rely on their work to support themselves, as grants could be an unreliable income source. They were generally more likely to develop the jobs into second careers, if they were able to do so.

When they were employed in art-related jobs, the artists talked about the need for a separation between paid employment and their art:

> And I turned down a project to work with the education department at the South Bank, to work on [another artist's] work, because it was at a stage where the line between what he was doing and what I was doing was so close, that I actually I couldn't, it would just be muddy, it wouldn't be the same... (Jackie, interview 24 September 2008)

> I've done various bar design jobs and it's probably because I'm not a painter that I can probably do that, and have a certain level of pride. People don't really ask you to make sculpture as a design brief, and that's when it would start getting tricky (Jenny, interview 6 November 2008)

This separation was both out of the need to maintain some sense of autonomy for their

JILL

She has long, straight brown hair and is wearing a white sweater and and dress pants, with no make-up. When I meet her, she has just come from work (from her job as an administrator for a legal firm in the City, which specialises in property law). She speaks softly and quickly, with a Liverpool accent. She is very frank and a little confessional; there is a sense that she is looking for someone to confide in. There is a vulnerability about her which I've sometimes noticed about people who have undergone difficult experiences. She later tells me that she's recently recovered from a chronic illness, which left her practically housebound for months; she is now trying to put her life back together.

Jill moved to London from Liverpool eight years ago to go to art school. She had wanted to do this earlier, but couldn't afford the financial risk. She had done office and administrative work in Liverpool for ten years, then decided to make the decision to go to art school after she had developed enough of experience and contacts that would enable her to freelance. She took an access course at City of Liverpool Community College, and was unable to get funding for it, so

work, trying to avoid the confusion that arises (as was the case for Jackie, who worked in arts education), when her job involved mediating the work of other artists, as well as the concern that that paid commissions might actually be confused with their art work, and might lead to them not being taken seriously as independent artists in their own right.

The artists also seemed affected by the implicit expectation that they should dedicate themselves to their work full-time, even if it was financially impossible for most of them. This gap between the expectation and reality was a source of anxiety, and even, in some cases, an identity crisis. For example, it led one of the artists (Sally) to question whether or not she was a serious artist:

> That is confusing, I find it, it's like, what am I? It feels inauthentic sometimes, like I'm this person or I'm that person... I've spent a lot of time over the past couple of years thinking about how I really enjoy facilitating things. That's obviously why I facilitated this workshop. And just questioning, should I just focus on the facilitating of things? ...we did this workshop together and at the end of this workshop, I thought, it went really well, it was successful, but on a personal note, I felt frustrated just being the facilitator. I wanted to be the one making the work (interview 24 November 2008)

she worked during her studies in a Beatles-themed pub ('that's why I hate the Beatles'), asking herself at various points in time, 'what the fuck am I doing?'. Jill was accepted to Goldsmiths and moved to London, in what she described as a 'pioneering spirit'. She worked part-time through college, as it was the only way she could manage it financially. She worked out a system with her classmates where they could 'sign each other in' to show that they were in the studio. Immediately after finishing her BA, Jill enrolled in the first year of a landscape architecture program at the University of Greenwich. She said this inspired her current art practice, both in terms of the technical drawing techniques she sometimes uses, but also in terms of developing her interest in design and public space.

Since moving to London, Jill has mainly worked at office jobs (receptionist, secretary, administrator): for a probation service, for Lewisham Council and now as an administrator for a legal firm. She began her current job to 'get out of the legal secretary trap' as she found the monotony draining: 'it's like, please, can I use my brain?'. She actually finds the added responsibilities of her current job

For Sally this was not only about having limited time for her art (she worked full-time as a sixth-form college teacher), but also of having certain types of skills (in this case teaching and facilitation) not conventionally associated with the role of the artist, and which may not have been part of her training at art school. She was trying to reconcile her interest and in facilitating workshops with her desire to 'be the one making work'.

However, in other parts of the interview, Sally set up the Romantic genius as a 'straw man': 'this 18th-century type person... sitting in a studio alone, painting, you know, drinking lots of red wine, whatever' (interview 24 November 2008). She then implied that this particular definition of the artist was outdated and did not fit the experience of artists today, which she then used to justify why she could not spend much time on her artwork because of her job. Sally then dismissed her own desire to make art full-time, and her frustrations at her inability to do so as elitism (based on arguments from *the art field*: a populist critique of the supposed insularity of the art field, and the avant-garde imperative to merge art with everyday life). If most people could not dedicate themselves full-time to artistic activities, was it not arrogant of her to assume she could (although whether or not she would have applied the same argument to other fields is another question)? According to this line of thinking, artists without jobs lose touch with the rest of society (she did not mention the possibility that one could be in work and still be out of touch

can make things easier rather than harder. She said that it was difficult at first to do that 'switch on switch off thing' between her job and her art practice, but has gotten used to it. Her job also informs her art practice, which, since she left college, has explored issues around the home and domestic space, primarily through painting.

She describes her work (which consists of paintings and drawings) as exploring a particularly British psyche which she feels places importance on the domestic, connected to 'a belief in property ownership' and the idea that the 'home is the castle'. She sees this as causing many problems, such as the lack of affordable housing, and comparing the property market to a 'house of cards' (the interview took place during the last days of the property bubble). She feels slightly uncomfortable about gender stereotypes (in terms of a female artist making work about domestic space), but continues to be fascinated by the subject.

The paintings themselves are produced through a painstakingly laborious process, beginning with detailed three-dimensional computer drawings, which are then

with society). Her response also seemed to reflect a degree of middle-class guilt: a self-perception as privileged, and a desire to disavow it.

5.6 Declining Access to Benefits

If paid employment was the norm for many of the artists, then receiving benefits (or at least admitting to doing so) was more prevalent amongst the older than the younger artists. In response to the question of whether or not they had ever accessed benefits, the artists in their twenties said no; two in their thirties said 'yes, but a long time ago' or 'yes but only once'; and it was more common for the artists their forties to mention accessing benefits. One artist in his early forties, who was now one of the most successful of the group, mentioned that the dole had subsidised the first ten years of his career. Another artist (also in her early forties) said the following:

> Tamar: I've been poor for years, absolutely struggling for years, because I've never done anything else. I've never ever worked, like in a job. I always just did art. I've lived on public funding.
> KF: What kind of public funding?
> Tamar: All of it. Grants. Housing benefit. Bursaries. Commissions. I've been paid to do performances. (interview 13 October 2008)

transferred to canvas. She says that she takes a month to complete each painting, which frustrates her. At the same time, this slow, intensive process and her exploration of painting techniques is so integral to the work that she cannot really give it up.

Jill does not have gallery representation, although she would like to have this, and although she does sell her work, sales are infrequent enough so that she still typically ends up putting £4-5000 of her wages into the cost of materials ('no wonder I'm skint!'). This frustration sometimes makes Jill envious of artists who can work quickly. She says she is both fascinated and repulsed by artists who have become a kind of franchise, mentioning Damien Hirst, Keith Tyson, and even Thomas Kincade (who paints landscape paintings with glow-in-the-dark paint and sells them off his website for £1-200) who she says is 'frightening', but 'fascinating', 'like a squished rabbit on the road'. She describes reading an interview with the novelist Jackie Collins, and respects her honesty and pragmatism: 'she was like, I write a book a year, I make millions of dollars and I don't give a crap'.

It is difficult with such a small group of people to determine, in any conclusive way, whether or these generational shifts reflect decreasing access to benefits or changing attitudes (such as increasing stigmatisation) but would be worth exploring elsewhere. According to a 2003 study by Rhys Davies and Robert Lindley entitled *Artists in Figures* (2003), artists are statistically less likely to claim social security benefits than other workers (2.6% as compared to 5.3% of non-cultural occupations). Davies and Lindley interpret this in terms of ineligibility for non-means-tested benefits as resulting from both low or inadequate National Insurance contributions and also because of employment interruptions characteristic of cultural occupations (2003, p.57). Workers in cultural occupations are also generally less likely to claim family-related benefits (although child tax credit was not taken into consideration in the study), which the authors attribute to the higher percentage of people aged 25-35 in cultural occupations. However, they are three times as likely to claim unemployment-related benefits whilst in employment than the general working population (17.2% to 6.2%) (Davies and Lindley, 2003, p.56). When they are self-employed, people in cultural occupations are more likely to claim benefits than the self-employed in non-cultural occupations (Davies and Lindley, 2003, p.55). This could be interpreted in terms of benefits supplementing low pay, or marginal self-employment.

Jill is living in a flat in a mostly derelict council estate on 'the wrong side of Bow', which she is using as a studio and living space, as part of the Bow Arts Trust/ Poplar HARCA scheme. The building was built in the late 1950s/early 1960s, and was allowed to deteriorate to the point where it is now slated to be demolished in two years. Most of the tenants have been, euphemistically, 'decanted', or temporarily rehoused elsewhere (she remarks on the strangeness of the term and wonders what will happen to them). She had to refurbish the flat herself (she has painted everything tastefully white). Her family came down from Liverpool to help her with the plumbing and more complicated work. She says they were proud of her, and saw the flat as a symbol of their daughter trying to make a life for herself.

Prior to moving into the estate, Jill was constantly having to move due to continual evictions, which disrupted her life ('it does have a real effect'), and made her crave stability, particularly after moving around as a child (her father was an engineer and worked in different countries): 'you know, some people live in the same place and never move. I think that's what I want!'. She feels in a

5.7 Experiences of the Art Market

The artists who had gallery representation supplemented their work income through sales of their art. The galleries representing the artists were mostly in the Shoreditch/ Dalston area and had a moderate level of prestige (primarily representing early-to-mid-career artists). The artists did not generally earn enough from sales to support themselves. Sales functioned more as a supplement to part-time employment, allowing the artists to work fewer hours and thus dedicate more time to their work. Robert was the only artist who was able to support himself from sales; because he was squatting his costs were significantly lower. He saw selling art as enabling him to dedicate himself full-time to his art practice, without having to work at another job:

> And my first sale came through last December, so I had an injection of cash, and so I said, screw that, and I quit my job. And a few more sales happened to follow on. And so I started to get on a roll (interview 9 October 2008)

Even so, income from sales could be quite precarious, because of the time lag between the sale of the work and the receipt of payment. Robert claimed to make £8000/year from sales, but later said that the figure included money he was owed, and for which he had not yet been paid; this suggests his actual income could in fact be lower.

more general sense, that a certain degree of stability is necessary to be able to 'go out in the world and take risks' (contrary to the assumption that precarious conditions encourage creativity). She mentions that for the first time in years, she is living in a stable housing situation—at a point, ironically, when she has moved into a building that is slated for demolition.

The division of labour within the gallery system is set up so that artists are never involved in sales transactions or in the promotion of the work. This is very much in keeping with Bourdieu's charismatic ideology; if artists are seen to take on too many of the functions of intermediaries, they would cease to be seen as artists. This distance from sales transactions also meant that artists would have little to no direct contact with the people who purchased their work. In some situations their work would be shipped to other cities or countries for exhibitions, but the artists would rarely travel with the work; this meant they had a limited understanding of how their work was received elsewhere. As a result, the artists I interviewed had little idea of who bought their work, or why it was being purchased, although they would engage in guesswork and speculation about this (with the acknowledgement that the work's popularity may be due to factors external to the work):

> Robert: But for some freak reason, I'm doing really well in Norway.
> KF: Why Norway?
> Robert: I think it's word of mouth, networks, networks of gallerists, and it's like, have you checked that out... Maybe my work taps into some Norwegian sense of humour? It's always quite Gothic and dark... (interview 9 October 2008)

If the reasons why work sold seemed rather arbitrary ('some freak reason'), then this was

SALLY

I meet Sally in a cafe in Islington, between two different appointments. Sally is in her late 20s, is rather demurely dressed in a dark sweater and skirt, tights and flat dress shoes, with her dark blonde hair neatly pinned back. She's polite and earnest, and smiles often. She has a tendency to put everything in a positive light. Questions about power relations or conflicts leads her to change the subject, or there is an awkward pause (indicating incomprehension), or she says, 'I never thought about that'. It's as though she's trying to block out the bad thoughts, but it doesn't always seem that deliberate.

We meet because I wanted to ask her about a workshop she taught to other artists. The workshop was about drawing inspiration from the 'day job' to use in artwork. When I first met her, I imagined that the workshops might have been more subversive or cynical in nature, perhaps along the lines of de Certeau's *perruque*: using the photocopier at work to make fanzines, stealing office supplies for art projects or writing blogs full of razor-sharp workplace insights. Something that presumed some kind of critical relationship to one's

also the case when work *did not sell*. For artists who were less successful, this became an underlying source of anxiety. The artists seemed to understand that lack of sales may not be a reflection of artistic quality; in some cases, they saw the very qualities that gave their work integrity as also making it difficult to sell (although, at times, the worry that this might be a sign of personal failure seemed just below the surface). For example, one artist (who did not have gallery representation, but ultimately wanted this), said she was not selling her paintings because she worked too slowly, although speeding up the production process would have meant making completely different paintings. This was also the case for another artist, who saw the eclectic nature of her work as a strength, but also made it difficult to sell:

> A gallery I used to be with in New York, said at some point, they said, when I had a solo show, the problem is that someone comes in and thinks it's a group show, because there are three different things. They dropped me not long ago, and I think that was an issue. There's no signature sense of production at all (Tamar, interview 13 October 2008)

Another artist mentioned the physical size of her sculptures as a possible reason why her work might not be selling, but also admitted that this could also be due to the recession:

job, however subtle or cleverly concealed. I tell Sally about a poet who worked as a receptionist in a mental hospital, and who wrote poems based on memos from her line manager; the poetry was about the inner workings of institutions. She says 'that's interesting', but doesn't share the poet's desire to actually think critically about her workplace. Throughout the course of the interview, I realise that she actually really likes her job (which is teaching art and design at a sixth form college) and finds it personally meaningful and rewarding. She does not really mention any of the frustrations I've heard from friends of mine who are schoolteachers: the standardised and programmatic curriculum, the paperwork, the increasing class sizes, the discipline and crowd control.

The others who took her workshop also actually enjoyed their jobs, and largely seemed resigned to the fact that they would also be always be working full-time, some of them at jobs outside of the art field. From Sally's description, these were mainly low-paid service industry jobs; Sally's employment was the exception. The cynicism that I assumed would be unavoidable, even with so-called 'good jobs', seemed completely absent. Instead, the jobs were framed in terms of

> I do have a commercial gallerist, although she doesn't really sell my work... Maybe I don't make very... I don't know, it's quite strange... if it started selling really well, whether I'd see it differently... Everyone goes on and on about credit crisis and that kind of thing at the moment, and I make sculpture and it's a bit unwieldy with the size and the shapes... I don't know, people buy all sorts of things, you can't really say what is commercial art and what isn't. So she doesn't really seem to sell it. (Jenny, interview 6 November 2008)

The artists did not discuss their dealings with the galleries in detail, but generally did not describe them as supportive environments, or as fostering relationships between artists. For example, two of the artists I interviewed were (perhaps coincidentally) represented by the same gallery, but did not actually know each other. Another artist said that 'galleries are not networks of support' (Tamar, interview 13 Oct 2008). The competitive nature of the set-up (if the work of one artist sold, this meant the work of another would not) and the concerns about being dropped from the roster, of course, do not make them conducive to developing more supportive relationships. Joe's experience was the exception to this. He was connected with an agency which was based in a collaboration between a gallerist and a hedge fund manager. It had no physical space but functioned as both the promoter and the collector of the work of the artists it represented (the agency saw itself as 'producing' the artists careers). Unlike the other artists, who were only paid after the

skills acquisition and 'professional development'. In fact, the more I listen to her, the more I realise that the workshops were really more about helping her and the others adjust to a life where art can only be made during evenings and weekends.

Sally had developed the workshop concept within the framework of 'professional development for artists'. I ask Sally how she came up with the idea. She says that she always had to work, both as a student and after art school; all her classmates from art school worked during their studies, and are now working full-time. Some of them are still managing to keep their art practices going. Sally is also adamant that having a 'day job' as a schoolteacher gives her the financial stability she needs; she feels that relying on her art practice to support herself would mean turning her work into a 'product'--and so, pragmatically, she had chosen one compromise over another: working full-time hours and having very little time for her work, rather than deliberately trying to make her work marketable. It is a compromise she is mostly happy with. According to her, most of the workshop participants also seemed happy with the fact that they

work had sold and the gallery had taken a cut, Joe actually received stipends for his work. When Joe described the agency, it was mainly in terms of how supportive the gallerist was of his work, describing him in familial (and more specifically paternal) terms: the gallerist as the 'head of the table' and a 'father figure' (interview 5 October 2008).

Prior to signing up with the agency, Joe was involved in an artist-led space in Hackney (discussed in the previous chapter). At the height of their reputation, they were asked to participate in the Zoo Art Fair, which meant effectively trying to sell the work of the artists involved with the space, an experience he and the others found both uncomfortable and also rather artificial. Joe said he felt silly 'standing on the shop floor, talking about your best friend's work in the third person, and trying to dynamically represent them as a prospect to be taken seriously...' (interview 5 October 2008). However, Joe's reaction to the art fair should not be interpreted as discomfort with some of the crasser commercialism of the art market – instead, it was about playing the role of intermediary.

The division of labour within the agency (the hedge fund manager takes care of the financing, the gallerist takes care of the art, and the artists produce the work) is why Joe trusts the agency, and why, in a more general sense, it has art-world credibility.

were working full time; the workshop possibly helped them find a way to be comfortable with the compromises they were all living with.

Sally frames the workshop in terms of a populist critique of the insularity of the traditional figure of the artist, the Romantic genius who sits alone in the studio and who doesn't have a job or other responsibilities. Having a day job is a way to bring the Romantic genius down a couple of pegs, forcing artists to communicate with the wider public (otherwise, the implication is, that they will wallow in narcissism and self-indulgence). Having a day job, she argues, makes her really 'mainstream' but that's a good thing (I think: the neat hair, the understated style of dress, the polite manners and proper middle class behaviour, the deliberately positive thinking?). The workshop can be seen in the avant-garde tradition of merging art and everyday life; however, it is being combined with another imperative, which is to help people adjust to and cope with a life of continual full-time work, where they will never be able to dedicate themselves full-time to their art practices. It's avant-gardism without rebellion or transgression.

Two of the artists (notably, less successful amongst the group) participated in an online art rental scheme, which was essentially an attempt to expand online shopping to art purchasing. The scheme, set up as a social enterprise in 2003, allowed work to be purchased or to be rented at £1 per day. It catered to both artists without gallery representation, and also to buyers with little knowledge of contemporary art or the insider knowledge required to navigate exclusive social situations. Evoking dot-com populist rhetoric, the scheme based itself on the principle that work that is the most popular with art buyers earns the most money, allowing buyers to 'be your own art consultant', 'avoiding nepotism and cliquey politics' (Artswitch, 2009). Such schemes should perhaps be seem as expanding a parallel lower tier of the art market, which involves less money, prestige, connections or tacit knowledge. It is also unlikely to cross over with the upper echelons of the art world, because the prestige of commercial galleries depends precisely on the exclusivity of their social networks (of artists, collectors, etc) and their role as institutional gatekeepers. It is because of this that the phenomenon of internet success stories (common within popular culture), is unlikely within the art world. In fact, at this point in time, the scheme no longer exists; the decision was made by the company's founder to shut it down because of conflict between the profit motive and the social aims (Artswitch, 2010).

The embrace of the 'day job' as a critique of the idleness, self-absorption and isolation of the Romantic artiste dovetails neatly with policy imperatives to move people into into the workforce, based (at least in part) on the perception that paid employment could integrate people into mainstream society. Questions about the division of labour in the workplace, or why some skills might be valued and renumerated more than others, were noticeably absent, let alone any discussion of exploitation.

However, there were times when Sally doubts herself (she seems to be using the interview to think things through): is she really an artist, is the pleasure she takes from teaching and facilitating workshops a sign that she isn't really cut out for art, but is really meant to be a teacher? She mentions 'feeling inauthentic'--which she then counters by arguing that these doubts and feelings of inauthenticity are based on outdated models of the artist: the cliché genius in the studio who is not really part of society. She says that the job somehow keeps her honest, stopping her from being detached from society and thinking she was better than everyone else.

5.8 Experiences of Public Funding

The division of labour in the gallery system serves as the basis for codes and prestige hierarchies; this means it is not in artists' best interests to promote or mediate their own work. Ironically, it was artists working in the public sector who were actually more involved in the *business* aspects of their careers: in securing opportunities as well as mediating and promoting their own work. As the field became more competitive and funding became scarcer, these activities took up more and more of artists' time, to the point where time spent securing opportunities began to outstrip time spent producing the work. As one artist said, 'I'd say about 90% of the time can be spent in securing opportunities and 10% of the time is spent on the work' (Tamar, interview 13 October 2008).

Artists frequently applied for funding from Arts Council England (particularly the Grants for the Arts scheme). In some cases artists would work with organisations who would apply for funding (rather than the artists themselves). In other cases funding came from non-arts sources, such as the European Social Fund or regeneration schemes by local authorities, particularly for public or community art projects. Arts Council funding also seemed easier to access outside of London because there was less competition. For example, one of the artists divided her time between London and Norwich, allowing

What begins to emerge was that Sally works during her every waking moment. Work is all around her, she lives and breathes work, and she can't imagine a life without constant work (perhaps in a way that during periods of extreme activity, you don't get tired until you stop). Constant unending work is her *habitus*. Cynicism or 'slacking' isn't even conceivable, as she, and the workshop participants seemed to completely identify with their jobs. Even the way she speaks suggests never slowing down, never stopping.

I ask Sally to reflect on whether people have to work harder now than in the past, and she mentions that when she last spoke on the phone with her parents, they were shocked at how much she crammed in, and that she didn't take time out just to relax or spend time with friends and family. She also mentions that in the seventies, the pace of life was more relaxed and that one did not have to make such stark choices—that it was possible to both be an artist and have a house and children, something which she felt is not really possible now. Her generation (she is 28) decides to either have a house and children or to become an artist, but not both.

her to access arts funding from East Anglia which would not be available to her in London. Another had relocated to Hertfordshire, primarily because of her job, but also because of greater funding support; she mentioned that contemporary art and specifically experimental art practices tended to not be produced in the region, which allowed her to occupy a particular niche.

The artists generally could not actually rely on grants as a stable source of income. High levels of competition meant that the artists were subject to all the pressures, uncertainties and speculative dynamics of applying for grants, commissions and other opportunities. They needed to manage their expectations accordingly, working hard at applications at the same time as knowing that their chances of success might be slim at best. A certain degree of multi-tasking was involved, as the artists had to simultaneously pursue and secure funding opportunities and produce the work itself. This process also required a great deal of efficiency and administrative competency, which required the artists todevelop skills associated with arts management, fundraising or small business. Some of them were in fact employed in arts management, indicating that they had reached a level of professional skill that they could now be paid for these sorts of activities. In what might seem like an extreme situation (a reflection of the level of competition), one artist set up an advisory board for herself as an individual, as one might normally do for a

I ask her if the cost of living was lower, or if there was a better social safety net, or better access to social housing, would it be necessary to work full time. I mention that I would be researching artists in Berlin (where costs were much lower), and my impression that it wasn't as common for artists to work full-time there. At these points, our conversation comes to an impasse. Sally responds with a blank stare (suggesting incomprehension). I begin to wonder if her belief in the value of work could be so strong, that she could not imagine a life that is not based around work. Sally's acceptance of an identity that is both about constant work and identification with work, and her 'professional development' workshop raises questions about the relationship between the erosion of the social safety net and perhaps a 'structure of feeling' around the naturalisation of constant work.

I also ask her about her thoughts on the recession and the possibility of mass unemployment (based on the newspaper headlines of the time). Might the recession change our relationships to work, if many people lose their jobs?

company; revealingly, the primary goal of the board was mainly to advise on project and funding applications.

For the rest of the chapter, I will discuss neoliberal pressures on the arts. These manifested themselves as managerialism in public funding; an increasing orientation towards targets, outcomes and employability initiatives in arts education; and pressures for artists to have shorter careers and be successful more quickly.

5.9 Managerial Pressures on Arts Funding

Even before the neoliberal reforms of the past thirty years, the autonomy of the Arts Council, and its predecessors, had its limitations; in his 1979 essay 'The Arts Council', Raymond Williams remarked that the principle of 'arms-length' was in fact closer to 'wrist length' (1989b, p.43). Consistent with the developments described in the second chapter, more recent policy reforms applied the same criteria, blanket-fashion, to different aspects of the public sector. This had the effect of flattening out differences between fields, and requiring artists and organisations who receive public funding are required to carry out centralised government agendas. Audit and quality control regimes also became increasingly common, leading to a loss of autonomy for publicly funded arts organisations. It was this loss of autonomy that led to the demise of the National Arts

Again, trying to be positive, she actually says it could ultimately be a good thing, evoking hippie voluntary simplicity: growing our own vegetables and bartering instead of spending. She doesn't seem worried about losing her own job (perhaps because, at the time of the interview, education budgets were yet to be cut) or the possibility that many people might be living in poverty. This seems like a typical middle class response: guilt at a perceived consumerist excess, and the idealisation of simple living.

After the interview, I am left asking why the mismatch in expectations: why did I assume that she would have a different attitude towards her job, or that she and the other workshop participants might be more cynical? It's incomprehensible. Is this a projection, because the decision to study art, for me, was about escaping small-town boredom and disaffection, the sausage-factory routine of school and the dull life I knew was waiting for me, where I would inevitably marry the boy next door? Has this led me, unconsciously, to assume that art might be in some way about asking questions and not taking things at face value, rather than adjusting to lifelong compromise? Is it because of a sense that even the best

Association (NAA), a professional organisation for artists, according to an interview with Susan Jones, the director of Artists' Information or A-N:

> But the trouble with funding is that it always has strings attached to it, and then you find that the Arts Council starts to influence what is done, 'we'd rather you did this and this', and then gradually sucked all the kind of energy out of it... It ended up a rather bitter, argumentative kind of organisation, that had £90,000 of Arts Council revenue funding and could have done a lot with this (interview 10 December 2008).

She described a situation where it became increasingly impossible to both receive public funding and also maintain any independence from government (crucial for any professional association). Artists also historically had little say in cultural policy matters, a situation which Jones termed the 'paternalism of arts-policy making' (interview 10 December 2008). This could reflect perceptions of the artist as lacking the necessary skills to play a useful role in cultural policy, despite the fact that many artists have had to develop considerable skills to manage their own careers. However, Jones also suggested there was some basis to this perception, because many artists' first inclination was to speak from their own perspective rather than acting as community representatives:

> There was a review that came out the other year, the McMaster review, that

jobs can give one many reasons to be cynical? If anything, these moments of incomprehension remind me not to make any assumptions.

> said, there should be two artists on every board. That's got a lot of issues wrapped around it. Well, how are they going to nurture and develop those artists so that they can in fact make really good contributions to boards, rather than 'I think..., well from my own perspective, I think...'. That notion of representing a wider artist community when you sit on a board has to be taken into account... (interview 10 December 2008)

Writer and researcher Paul Glinkowski, who worked in the visual arts department of the Arts Council's national office from 1996 to 2004, said that he felt that there had been a 'vacuum in representation' for visual artists in the Arts Council since 2003, which marked both the demise of the National Artists Association and an Arts Council restructure which meant that a National Framework Plan that had been drawn up for visual artists was shelved. Later recommendations for greater participation by artists in decision-making made in two influential reports, the McMaster Review (DCMS 2007) and the McIntosh Review (ACE 2008) had not yet been heeded by the Arts Council. However, Jones also mentioned an chronic inability to formally consult with artists or deal with representative organisations, as well as a tendency to do this on a more ad-hoc basis: 'They would be like, we're going to talk to so-and-so who we already know about, or to the artists who have had grants from them' (interview 10 December 2008). She characterised the Arts Council as a fearful and defensive organisation with high staff turnover, facing both

GITA

It's difficult to schedule in a meeting with Gita. She's sandwiched me into an hour between board meetings with two different organisations, which are happening at the office across the street from the cafe where I've agreed to meet her.

Gita is in her early thirties. She is wearing a bright red shirt, jeans and trainers: casual but neat (in her job as a freelance arts manager, she perhaps does not have to dress up at work, although there's a formality to her behaviour which seems slightly out of place with the casualness of her dress). She's soft-spoken, courteous and chooses her words carefully, perhaps all too aware of how easily rumours could spread. There's a wariness and nervousness to her behaviour: eyes darting quickly from side to side; thin, anxious grins. This is a cautiousness that I have sometimes seen with arts managers: they're all too aware of how easily rumour spread, damaging reputations and relationships. She prefaces descriptions of conflict situations with phrases such as 'I don't want to mention any names', and describes her role within them as competent and impartial: as someone who does not caught up in internal conflicts, or sidelined by larger issues. This wariness makes

continual public criticism for being a waste of public money and also having to respond to demands imposed by central government:

> But the difficult thing for the Arts Council is that they are concerned about people who represent what may be views that contradict their policies. They don't know how to handle it. And in fact they are fighting off criticism on a daily basis. I'm sure that if I was in the Arts Council that I would think, I'm doing the best I can. (interview 10 December 2008)

Ironically, one of these policies included equality issues:
> ...they should hand the grant-giving out, delegate it to peer review. Which is not what they're going to do. Because they're frightened that things like peer review wouldn't deliver the exact objectives, such as their targets for cultural diversity' (interview 10 December 2008)

Equality issues in the arts have always been controversial because they specifically challenge some very fundamental principles of the field: the genius myth and the presumption of universal definitions of 'artistic quality' (despite the challenges posed by feminism, Black Arts and post-colonial theory). The most common argument made against incorporating equality issues into cultural policy is that they will that it will compromise artistic quality. The workforce of visual arts organisations in the UK remains

our interactions slightly tense; at times I wonder if she really says what she thinks, and if I'm being judged on my own professionalism and competency as a researcher.

Gita's work consists of installations and performances dealing with question of cultural identity, particularly representations of South Asia, the UK and the US. However, rather than talking about her art practice, she talks about her experiences as an arts manager; she is currently involved in six different organisations and has been working in arts management for ten years. In her arts management work, there is a sense that Gita is trying to continually improve her abilities and find the best techniques to be as efficient as possible. Although Gita frequently mentions the term 'artist-led' to describe some of the organisations and projects she's involved in, none of the organisations she describes actually involve artists taking on a key administrative role; they're all run by arts managers. There is perhaps a sense that the stakes are too high, and even small mistakes could have serious consequences, such as the loss of funding.

very homogeneous; research suggests that only 4% of staff identify as members of Black/ Ethnic Minorities (Galloway, Lindley and Behle, 2005, p.4). There is thus a legitimate concern that unless they are forced to act differently, artists and organisations will 'naturally revert' to patterns of institutionalised discrimination. Another issue is that when equality issues are incorporated into the audit regimes mentioned earlier, they become seen less as the outcome of social movements and more as yet another bureaucratic requirement encroaching on artistic autonomy.

Both the artists and some of the arts managers I interviewed expressed their frustrations with arts funding, characterising it as bureaucratic and inflexible (the phrase 'box-ticking' would frequently come up). Jackie (an art educator and community artist) described how parameters had become so rigid that she had very little room to develop projects.

> But it used to be that something that was done by artists and was quite fluid and quite open to change and to different ideas and risk-taking, it's being incorporated more and more into government plans ... And so now you have an obligation to provide this and that, and it's become... not about rights of access in a particular way, but everyone wants you to have outcomes for it all and that stuff. It starts to hamper it and what I found more recently was that it's shifted away from something that's been about artist-led projects, and more about

She describes the experience of being on a fellowship for culturally diverse arts managers and realising that she was brought in and 'paid all this money' to give the impression that something was being done, but not really to actually change anything or even indicate that there were any problems. She even found out that behind the scenes, there were debates as to whether or not an Asian arts manager would automatically develop an Asian-themed project (revealing some of the assumptions in funding agencies).

However, she also knows that one sometimes only has a brief window of time to accomplish things, because she works in a situation where there is very high staff turnover. For example, she feels she was able to productively engage with issues around race and representation while she was doing the fellowship, because then, she had direct contact with the people and knew who all they were—once that moment had passed there was little she could do to sustain the dialogue. She also mentions working at an arts organisation that was badly run (she compares it to a dysfunctional family) and telling the other staff that she was considering joining a union, but never followed through with her plan because it

> quite management-led projects, where artists are dropped in at the last minute. And it's become a lot more about quality control and so it's been a lot more about 'would you just do what you exactly said you're going to do?' (Jackie, interview 24 September 2008)

Spontaneity had come to be seen as a sign of unreliability and inconsistency. Jackie said she found negotiating all these external demands stifling:

> And it's that stage now, and so someone at the National [Gallery] who's producing a pack about about working with people and a pack of resources, and it all sounds exciting and interesting, but it just kills me dead, I'm not interested at all. (Jackie, interview 24 September 2008)

Her frustrations were leading her to question her involvement in museum education and community art, and led her to speculate about continuing to do art projects, but outside the context of the art world.

5.10 The Streamlining of Artistic Careers and Arts Education

Another way that the cultural field has been neoliberalised is through the shortening and streamlining of artistic careers. By 'shortening', I mean the expectation that artists

would have involved staying in the job, and she wanted to leave rather than stay in a difficult situation.

She also does not feel strongly enough about these sorts of issues for them to make her angry. Instead, other things make her angry, like conspicuous consumption or waste: people who go to restaurants and only eat half the plate, or who order fizzy drinks when they could easily have tap water. She talks about the time she spent in the US and her shock at how much people wasted things, but also mentions the fact that she comes from an immigrant family, and was taught to save and fix things, rather than throwing them out. She seems to have a strong sense of pride in her upbringing, which she says will prepare her well for the recession, because we will need to all scale back on individual spending habits. The possibility that those with the least disposable income who might have to scale back the most does not enter the conversation. The prospect of massive cuts to the arts or public services – which could directly affect her future employment – also does not seem to be a concern. Maybe this is because her situation is stable at the moment. Gita doesn't spend a lot of money or buy

become more successful more quickly, accelerating what Bourdieu calls the temporality of consecration (1993, 54). By 'streamlining', I mean the process by which codified norms and accepted formulae become established for successful artistic careers. I see this as the result of developments in the art world and arts education which focus on career development and success within narrow terms, at the expense of other, slower, forms of artistic development; this is exacerbated by the increasing competition within the field. Within this context, arts education becomes more focused on the accumulation of cultural and social capital (such as in terms of how they might provide an entry to art world networks). One possible consequence may be the homogenisation of the field, where only artists who have followed certain types of career paths can have any measure of success (for example, only those who have studied art immediately after completing school; or who attend certain art schools, or work in certain artistic genres).

In *The Field of Cultural Production*, Bourdieu discusses the temporality of the consecration: that avant-garde producers renounce short-term economic profits and recognition in favour of long-term symbolic recognition and profits (*Ibid*). The ability to take economic risks 'seem to depend to a large extent on possession of substantial economic and social capital' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.67). Those without these resources must make compromises in order to earn a living. Writers, such as:

things very often, and says that 'I am quite good about planning my finances'. However, she also mentions that her partner is doing a funded PhD, which means that there is a regular, stable source of income.

She then talks about how she has formalised some her interpersonal relationships – again, another way of doing things better and more efficiently. Gita has set up 'mentoring' so she can receive advice from more experienced practitioners. She has even created her own personal advisory panel 'for my work as an artist, well actually, not just for my work as an artist, but just for me'; she's been able to fund this through one of the networks she's involved in. The advisory panel mainly deals with funding applications, although it sometimes involves feedback on art projects. She says it has been useful, although she says that 'I always felt you have to be a company to have a board, and it just sort of felt indulgent to set up a panel to just sort of guide me'. Gita seems happy with these sorts of structures and feels they are genuinely helpful.

But what does it mean to set up your own personal advisory board, and how

> some of the Parnassians, all from the petite bourgeoisie, either had to abandon poetry at some stage and turn to better-paid literary activities... We also find that the least well-off writers resign themselves to "industrial literature", in which writing becomes a job like any other' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.68).

Keeping in mind that Bourdieu's study was of nineteenth century literature, how does his analysis help us to understand the impatience of an artist like Robert, who is keenly aware of both his status as a 'young artist', and also that to be successful, he needs to have accomplished certain things by a certain age? One arts administrator I interviewed (who did not wish to be quoted directly) described frustrations with artists who were increasingly more concerned about their CVs than their work, and who had unrealistic expectations for early success. Could we understand these expectations as the abandonment of the tendencies Bourdieu described (the renunciation of short-term profits for greater long-term recognition), or to make that difficult, risky period at the beginning of careers as short and painless as possible?

One interpretation of this concern for career success could be that it is a direct result of artists from petit-bourgeois and working-class backgrounds entering the field, who

does it affect your understanding of what you do? Freelancing does require one to operate as a business, although different types of freelancing might require lesser or greater degrees of 'businesslike' behaviour or values. In the theatre field (where Gita has trained) the lines between being an individual practitioner and actually being a company tend to blur: it is common to set up a theatre company, and to appoint and pay ones' self as the artistic director.

In order to keep such a high level of activity going, does this require such a degree of efficiency that it actually becomes necessary to develop such structures as a personal advisory board? If the board mostly advises Gita on funding applications, then what does this say about the intensity of funding competition? Gita is relatively visible and successful within certain circles and is certainly able to support herself, but her visibility does not seem to extend beyond these circles. And how does this requirement to become efficient (to the point of taking on corporate structures as an individual) affect Gita's sense of herself or her work, or her relationship to other artists?

cannot afford to wait through years of poverty, particularly in an expensive city such as London. However, if we look more closely, the situation is more complicated. This desire for immediate success and fame could be seen as different from Bourdieu's characterisation of petit-bourgeois and working class writers, who eventually give up fame and recognition for the stability of bread-and-butter activities. When artists want to be instantly successful, this is not simply about the need for financial stability; it is about *ambition.* In other words, this is about 'making it', not 'making a living' (or may in fact reflect a model of success in which the stakes are so high that the only way to make a living is to 'make it'). From such a perspective, taking on commercial work or secondary employment to pay the bills would actually be either a sign of failure or a waste of time, or both.

The model set by the by the YBAs could certainly be seen as playing a role in creating these expectations, because it represented the possibility that one could both make millions *and* do something fun and pleasurable for a living. It also seemed to reconcile the historical opposition between market success and avant-garde innovation. The hype around their 'youth' also signalled a much shorter time-frame for consecration. For example, the transformation of the Turner Prize from a 'lifetime achievement' award to a signal of the 'next big thing' can be seen as this increasing focus on youth, as the average

BETH

Beth shows me into the kitchen, takes her glasses off and makes some tea and offers some biscuits: Garibaldis in brightly coloured wrapping, the kind you can get for £1. This says to me that she doesn't have much money (she's not offering me stuff of the organic, fair-trade variety), nor is she offering me something she's made herself; she is trying to balance making art with two different retail jobs, and doesn't have much time on her hands. I'm hungry (it's around supper time, but I forgot to pack something and there weren't any corner shops or kebab shops in the area) and I maybe end up eating too many of them.

Beth has long, red hair; she is wearing a sweater and jeans; plain and slightly worn, possibly second hand, and not really fashion-conscious (although she wears gold hoop earrings). Although Beth just came from work and she works in retail, she's not dressed up; maybe it's a more casual kind of workplace, or she's taken off her work clothes, or this is what she wears to paint: clothes she can get dirty. Her manner is calm, thoughtful, reflective; it feels like she's thinking aloud, and using the interview to help her figure things out. She speaks slowly

age of recipients dropped from 44 to 33 between 1984 and 1998 (Stallabrass, 2006, p.177).

 I am suggesting that this emphasis on youth reflects the shortening of the temporality of consecration. This means that *success comes at the beginning, rather than the end of careers,* a phenomenon that Richard Florida has called 'front-loading' (2002, 14). This accelerated temporal framework of consecration can be seen as consistent with the logic of what Angela McRobbie has called the 'one big hit':

> A single big hit is what almost everyone inside the creative economy is hoping for, because it can have a transformative effect, it can lift the individual out of the pressure of multi-tasking and all the exhausting networking this entails' (2007).

The temporality of the 'one big hit' is inevitably short-term; once one is legitimated, then (so the narrative goes) then this is how one will always be remembered; anything afterwards will be automatically consecrated. For example, it does not matter Emin and Hirst are now seen as laughable figures (not much different from washed-up rock stars), because they made their names long ago.

and deliberately. Her story is about being resourceful, living within limited means. Beth went to art school because it seemed like an easier option for her than university—it was possible to do a foundation year first to try it out rather than 'making that big leap' and committing to a full four years. Fewer requirements for assignments and class attendance would make it easier to get away with working part-time, which was a financial necessity. She also felt going to university would mean relocating to another city, which was too expensive (although other cities would have been cheaper than London). Beth could have in fact gone to university in London, but perhaps for her, university was associated with the ritualistic experience of temporarily leaving home, perhaps for a town with a leafy campus where she could entirely dedicate herself to her studies, with no outside responsibilities. This wasn't possible for her.

On the recommendation of a friend of her mother, Beth enrolled on the Foundation course at Wimbledon School of Art and stayed for the entire BA; there, she learned practical skills and a thorough knowledge of materials: how to make paint 'from scratch', stretch a canvas, the properties of different brushes

These developments have taken place within a wider social context in which youth is seen to embody contemporaneity itself (an incredibly lucrative commodity); ageing implies losing touch with the *Zeitgeist*. If money and careers are to be made sooner rather than later, then there is no time to lose—as to wait too long would be to risk losing the spotlight to someone younger. This dynamic has existed in the art world for a long time (inter-generational conflict narratives have long been intrinsic to the art field). However, aspects of the Post-Fordist economy have caused it to accelerate and intensify. This might explain, then, why an artist such as Robert would continually emphasise his youth; he is acutely aware that he can only carry the 'young artist' label for so long.

If artistic careers are becoming increasingly short-term, and based around youth as an embodiment of contemporaneity, then this is at odds with the expansion of arts education, or the entry into the field of people from non-traditional backgrounds (such as those who have studied art as part-time and mature students). I will now discuss arts education in greater detail, and how it too has been subject to streamlining processes.

Consistent with the reforms described earlier, arts education (like cultural policy), has also been increasingly subject to targets and audit regimes. This has had the consequence of cutting down the time and space for experimentation, and other aspects of learning

and the possibilities of working with paint. This knowledge enabled her to experiment and make materials from scratch on very little money.

Her experience of the MFA programme at the University of Reading was less rewarding, due to the the mismatch between the environment there (which, arguably, may have been more middle-class) and her work ethic and approach to art-making. Beth found the research-based model of art practice at Reading difficult to understand. For Beth, being an artist was about working hard and spending hours in the studio in front of the canvas. The students at Reading were never in the studio; apparently they were out 'researching' and 'gathering stuff', although she suspected that they actually weren't working very hard.

The funding was cut for the second year of the MFA, which led Beth to leave the programme and return to London. Although she had been working part-time and paid her fees in instalments, she had a £1000 overdraft on her bank account and was afraid of owing even more money. She could not assume a stable future income to justify the risks of going into debt. One of Beth's classmates, a qualified teacher, was able to fund her studies through developing and teaching

which cannot easily produce quantifiable outcomes. Paul Glinkowski referred to comments made by Grayson Perry during the conference 'The Art of Giving: The Artist in Public and Private Funding' at Tate Britain in February 2008. Perry described his art school experience in the eighties as a 'space to play for a few years, an excuse to drop out and follow your own curiosity'; he said that this space to play and 'drop out' is disappearing; because of the introduction of tuition fees, many students are now working during their studies and many now graduate with high levels of debt. This means that there is more pressure on students to have a viable income in order to pay off the debt, which is bound to influence how they think about their professional opportunities. (interview 10 December 2008). This may lead some people to not even consider studying or working in the arts; for those who do, the pressures for instant success may become even more intense. Susan Jones expressed similar concerns, describing a situation where art students had less time to reflect and explore, and for slower, less instrumentalised artistic development:

> I got my first teaching at art school so I can go in and talk to students. None of those things are happening now. People can't get that kind of 'in' into it, which is not making for such a rich experience for the students, they've got jobs, they're working ten hours a week, contact with the studio is minuscule, they suffer. What we are in danger of is a great poverty in the visual arts, in terms

an access course for international students, which combined introductory art training with ESOL instruction. The ingenuity of this is admirable, as it literally means creating a job from nothing. But what happens when this kind of resourcefulness becomes a norm, or a requirement to fund one's studies?

Beth now works at two different HMVs in the City; one is five minutes away from the other by bike. She has always worked in retail, and she says that she has always met interesting people this way (she mentions that one of her colleagues at Waterstones was an opera singer). Her shift starts early in the morning, which means she can leave at a decent hour and come home to paint. She's already begun training as a bookkeeper, but is not sure how to pay for the training courses to learn the necessary software packages. Her hope is that she could earn enough during tax time to support herself the rest of the year, which she would dedicate to painting. Arts-related jobs, which require unpaid internships, are out of the question—they are for people who could 'get money from Mummy and Daddy', who are now 'the people who will be deciding whether or not we get funding'.

> of time to become invested in it. And the Arts Council coming up with whiz-bangy centres of excellence, you know, whatever. And it's not going to help the masses in the long run. You cannot short-cut the rigour and the intensity of a learned, developed process. (Susan Jones, interview 10 December 2008)

Jones is making three key points. The first is that it was easier in the past for people who were active in the field to come in and talk to students on an informal basis, which is no longer possible (perhaps as student-staff relationships have become more formalised). The second is that art students (as well as possibly artists) do not have the time to dedicate to their work as they once did, because of work and debt pressures, as lack of studio availability. The third is that cultural policy-makers tend to focus on impressive-looking initiatives, such as the 'whiz-bangy centres of excellence that perhaps prove to the public that they are delivering 'value for money', but these do not necessarily benefit the majority of artists. As a consequence, it is specifically those slower forms of development and seemingly unproductive moments which do not deliver results in the short-term, but are nonetheless necessary for artistic development which begin to suffer. Could we possibly see this as a form of de-skilling, where arts education becomes so rushed that people do not have time to develop? Or is de-skilling in fact the wrong term (because the arts by definition reject many conventional definitions of 'skill'?)

Despite her calm demeanour, there are occasional flashes of anger and resentment: anger at the council for making it impossible for childless people, particularly women, to get council housing; or how the tax system penalises people in low-paid jobs, discouraging them from staying in employment rather than thinking 'why should I work when I can just get the dole?'. She also angry at the benefits system, which she says is so complicated and bureaucratic, she says, that the only way you can learn to navigate it is if your family knew how to play the system (such knowledge tends to stay within families and is rarely shared through other kinds of networks, let alone made public). Her father, although he was on benefits, was not one of these – he always worked hard.

It's at these moments where the interview becomes awkward. I can appreciate some of her frustrations, but feel uncomfortable with where the conversation is going. It's all about separating the deserving from the undeserving poor, and she's trying very hard to position herself as 'deserving'. The logical conclusion of her argument would be the abolition of benefits, rather than for making the system easier to understand or less punitive towards single, childless people. I

5.11 Culture as Employability

If arts education now gives students less time to experiment and develop, and students are under greater financial pressure, this coincides with greater emphasis on career advice and professional development, both within arts education and in terms of support for recent graduates. This can be seen as consistent with the cultural policy developments discussed earlier, which prioritise employability). One arts administrator I interviewed (who did not wish to be quoted directly) described a 'proliferation of professional development support' over the past five years. She welcomed the aspects of this which involved genuinely useful advice, but questioned how much it actually involved listening to artists' needs and concerns. This was echoed by Jackie's description of the experience of receiving this sort of advice from Artquest (an organisation specialising in advice and information for artists):

> And Artquest, there are some good people there, who do some really great things.... but what they do is produce a whole lot of information, but that can be quite empty, that doesn't reassure you, when you're looking for someone to chat to and it's like, why don't you check into this network or that sort of thing, it ends up just being a funnel (interview 24 September 2008)

don't want to get into an argument with her, so I just nod and listen.

Art, for Beth, is about hard work and social mobility. It's about deciding to dedicate herself to her work rather than having children 'because I know I'll be supported'. For example, she takes field trips with the other artists who live in her building to museums and high-end commercial galleries in central London. She is hard-working and enterprising, working in the studio every day and setting up her own stall at the Battersea Art Fair.

However, the position she holds in the local hierarchy of galleries is relatively low. Her paintings sitsomewhere between craft production and contemporary art (she says, 'if I were living during another generation I would have enjoyed lace-making or embroidery'). Good honest hard work (defined as spending hours in the studio) is often not enough; one must also know how to play the game. She will probably never show her work in the West End galleries she visits. Beth does not seem like someone who knows how to chat up the right people, assimilate the latest trends, or reproduce that magic balance of the familiar and

Instead of more personalised forms of support (perhaps from her peers), Jackie was told to 'check into this network' or other forms of impersonal and generic career advice. The arts administrator mentioned earlier also suggested that one of the consequences of the expansion of professional development support is that it might play a role in giving recent graduates unrealistic expectations, particularly for instant career success. The implication is that these professional development services (and, by extension, the policy imperatives that have led to the establishment of these initiatives) that encourages artists to become both more focused on their own careers, and to also have unrealistic expectations about early success. While beyond the scope of this text, in another context it might be interesting to explore why and how these expectations are being encouraged within these career advice services, and if, consistent with both the audit regimes and social exclusion policies discussed earlier, the providers of these services in turn are required to demonstrate that they are giving art students and recent graduates confidence in their own career prospects.

However (perhaps as a reaction) there was also the tendency to reject genuinely practical advice, reasserting the principle of the 'economic world in reverse', and making it a taboo to talk about money. Susan Jones described how an artist she knew was doing a talk in an art school about basic book-keeping skills such as taxes and balancing budgets,and

the unexpected. She does not seem to understand, for example, that there is greater status involved in having someone else set up a stall that would feature her work, than in setting one up herself. Within the higher echelons of the art world, artists must be enterprising in ways that do not seem entrepreneurial (the more effortless the better), and which especially do not encroach on the territory of the gallerist.

Beth's work does not commodify or exoticise working-class identity as an embodiment of 'authenticity' (an approach other artists from her background have adopted with great art world and financial success). Her artwork, abstract paintings based on patterns, is inspired by everyday life (walks to the park, looking at fixtures in the pub). These are the sorts of quotidian observations that inspired the first generation of Pop artists in the 1950s and 60s, but it's not about the literal incorporation of popular culture into high art; the recent tendency of mining popular culture's most degraded, abject aspects would in fact be completely foreign; her approach is actually about noticing things the she finds beautiful.

was told by one of the lecturers: 'you shouldn't talk about money, if they consider money in that kind of way, they will produce bad art' (interview 10 December 2008). This may reflect either arrogance on the part of educators who are out of touch with the realities faced by their students, or desperation at what they feel is a losing battle to stop art school from being completely instrumentalised (or perhaps both).

5.12 Artists' Responses to Neoliberal Pressures: Re-asserting Artistic Autonomy
I will now discuss artists' responses to these developments. One obvious response can be to re-assert the conventions of the discipline, as in Jenny's reaction to the changes to funding:

> The funding system's trying to eradicate art, as far as I can tell. Because every word that came out of that woman's mouth was 'education and participation'. And 'excellence' didn't come into it. It's all about 'let's make artists social workers'.... It's not really about what the art is, it's about who the audience is. It's almost as if, if you don't tick the box saying this will help disadvantaged children in the community, you will not get funding (interview 6 November 2008).

Jenny saw Arts Council staff as lacking specialist expertise; she was also concerned about

TAMAR

Tamar is in her early forties; she has cropped hair (which she has bleached light blonde, almost white), small glasses with thick black rims, and is wearing a sweater, a leather jacket and a worn and faded pair of jeans. She has a nose ring. She speaks slowly, with the deliberateness of someone speaking English as a foreign language (she says, later on, that she has always felt like a foreigner and that learning English was very difficult). Tamar's practice involves photography, installation, video and performance (ranging from street interventions to 'black box' theatrical work). She is also a member of the board of directors of an arts organisation.

Tamar moved to the UK from Israel in the mid 1980s; she lived and studied in Sheffield, then moved to London in 1992. She describes herself as never having a job but having 'lived off public funding': 'grants, housing benefit, bursaries, commissions' (including public art projects with housing associations), fees from projects, as well as teaching in prisons and widening participation programmes.

her work being judged by inappropriate criteria (in this case, audience development), rather than only by aesthetic judgement.

Another common response to managerialism in state funding was to reject it altogether. Robert saw the odds of receiving funding as so difficult that he felt there was no point trying. He also talked about grants as though they were a 'handout' (although the support he received from his parents did not fit this category):

> Robert: I'm really disorganised, I don't read art magazines, and I'm shit at applying for things.
> KF: Is it because of the bureaucracy?
> Robert: Yeah kind of. Applying to the Arts Council and that kind of thing, it's just horrible.
> KF: Do you feel that grants are no longer accessible?
> Robert: I never heard of any grants, I never thought I would get any grants. If I'm making enough money and I can do what I want to do then I'm kind of happy. I'm just lazy on that front. I don't know. I don't imagine that I'd get a grant. I never applied... I don't know, I never got any awards or grants, or any aid or help or anything. You're just resourceful. If you need to get a bar job for 3 or 4 days a week you do that. If you need to rent a warehouse with a bunch of people so you only pay £20/week you just do that. If you need to squat, you just do that. (Robert, interview 9 October 2008)

After moving to London, Tamar became involved with a community centre in her neighbourhood (Holborn), where she set up a darkroom and ran it voluntarily for several years, also teaching photography workshops. This was a formative experience for her, connected to a commitment to community activism; the centre 'really addressed the community'. The centre eventually closed due to internal politics, and the council let go of it ('I think it's flats now'). Tamar sees the centre as a kind of tail end or 'residue' of a previous era that she was lucky enough to experience: 'It's very much an old ethos of community centres... the last end of that kind of socialist era in the UK'. She says that many community centres have now become leisure centres, with activities driven by top-down agendas, or 'it's all this kind of middle-class, it's like let's all do the yoga for children over here'. She feels that it's become more difficult for communities to determine their own needs. As she speaks about this, I could hear the loss in her voice, as well as a painful sense of resignation that none of this could be reclaimed or even re-invented and a sense of not having any clear way forward.

Tamar speaks about arts funding with a similar sense of resignation and loss: that funding has become increasingly subject to government agendas and quality

Robert's attitude also reveals a bohemian distrust of bureaucracy, and aspects of libertarian individualism (although he probably would not name it as such). However, in considering his response, it is also important to acknowledge my impression that Robert was 'performing' for me during the interview, as he tried to present himself as an intriguing figure (was this an example of Virno's virtuosity or opportunism?). If we read Robert's response as performance, we could interpret his comment that he did not read art magazines as asserting the originality of his work (implying that it was not derivative of what he saw in magazines, as he never read them); we could interpert his alienation from the funding system as assertion of his 'artistic personality' (exemplified by his lack of interest or ability in navigating the funding bureaucracy).

5.13 Another Response: Leaving the Field

Another response to these developments was to change discipline. For some of the artists, art was ceasing to be pleasurable or personally satisfying. For two of the artists, the expansion of the art market made art too much about money and relations within the art field too competitive. They decided to change their practices in order to find environments which were both more supportive and also in keeping with their personal ethics.

control measures, particularly expectations for audience numbers and a visible public presence. This means that lying on reports and applications has become fairly common practice: 'people have to lie and bump numbers up, and do a lot of internet stuff so there's a website and people can look at the website and pick the numbers up, and deal with it that way'. There is concern for the state of the field: 'the whole sector has to rethink how they operate because you really can't rely on it any more. And I'm talking as a board member of an organisation who now has to continually rethink... It's all going into private corporate marketers again, so it's going to be quite difficult. It's going to be a very difficult time'.

Tamar has become increasingly disillusioned with the visual art field; she feels that art has become too much about money. Although Tamar 'loves making things' and takes great pleasure in working with materials, she felt the values of art market have started to creep into her thinking, influencing how she thought about her work, to the point where she could not avoid thinking about prices when she was making work. Tamar uses terms such as 'creative industries' and 'designed commodities' to characterise how the art field has became 'popularised' as part of a wider lifestyle industry; she also mentions the television show

At the time of the interview, Tamar was trying to redefine herself as a theatre artist. She was doing so both for pragmatic reasons (it would allow her to access better funding) and also because she felt that theatre as a discipline (or, at least, independent theatre) did not encourage greed or competition in the same ways art, because being successful did not necessarily result in becoming a millionaire. Tamar had already been working with performance as part of her art practice, but was now deliberately trying to make her work fit more easily into theatre conventions. At the time of the interview, she had begun a three-year AHRC fellowship in the Drama department at a London university. She talked about the importance of artists defining their work as 'research', in order to access funding, which she saw as less affected by cutbacks than arts funding. In particular, she recommended this route to artists who did not produce saleable objects; she acknowledged that object-makers also do research, but do not have have the same financial concerns.

Tamar's decision coincided with the development of 'practice-based research' grants, art practice PhDs and other related developments within academia. These could be seen as both as a sign of openness towards unconventional research methodologies (as in 'artistic research'), and also as a sign of further credentialisation. Tamar's decision also raises the issue of the role of education in providing a regular source of income for artists, such as teaching work or access to research funding, and how much artists might return

Changing Rooms, as though now art has become glorified interior decorating. In response to this, Tamar is now trying to deliberately, consciously shift her practice into theatre: to give up making objects, and to adopt theatrical conventions such as staging and scripts. Whilst her work does have some theatrical elements (she does, after all, do performances), this shift seems less motivated by the imperative to explore new directions in her practice than the search for a more supportive environment for her work. She is possibly idealising the theatre field. For example, she says that there is less money at stake in theatre, which means it is less about money: 'it's hard for everybody, but it's hard because even the most prestigious commissions, you're never going to be like a Damien Hirst. And so there's much more of a sense of support, a lot less competitive, a lot smaller.'

Tamar's fellowship at a London university, which coincided with her shift into the theatre field, was also the first time she has had any stable income, after years of grinding poverty. There were struggles with the benefits system, including attempts to cut off her housing benefit when she received a grant: the council saw it entirely as disposable income, rather than money she allocated towards

to education throughout their lives out of a search for a stable source of income. There is another question around how the work itself might be influenced by redefining it as academic research. Academia may have suited Tamar's art practice, but other types of artwork may not fit so easily.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Carlos had decided to stop making art, and dedicate himself entirely to the NGO he had set up in Mexico with other members of his family. This decision was also motivated by his discomfort with the art market, and the values associated with it – and consequently, the realisation that if he rejected this, he needed to completely redefine what he was doing. The NGO involved archaeologists, biologists, historians, linguists and other researchers, through contacts at two different universities; it also included artists' residencies, in which artists worked within this interdisciplinary environment. Carlos stated that his background as an artist had taught him lateral thinking, which he said played an important role in setting up the NGO. Carlos can be seen as making different shifts at once: a shift in role (from artist to intermediary), a shift in field (from electronic art to aspects of research) and a geographical shift (from the UK/ Europe to Mexico). What does it mean to transform one's activities in so many different ways at once? In the interview, Carlos discussed his situation with the gravity of someone

photography costs (often with little left over for living expenses) and did not really understand that grants are not a regular source of income: 'They just think, you have £8000 in your account'. This revealed a kind of mismatch between the benefits system and arts grants, as well as the invisibility of self-employed and freelance workers within welfare policy.

In describing these difficulties, she used phrases like 'hard survival' and 'whatever it takes' to show her determination in getting through it all. It's also an experience that has informed the aesthetics of her work, which she describes as 'very grungy, very DIY'; and 'I'm invested in very kind of poor aesthetics, I'm invested in making work that looks like everyone doesn't have money, like there is no money, like no one has money'. This was in part a reaction to what she saw as a very privileged and exclusive arts education, at Sheffield Hallam and Central St. Martins. However, on a physical and psychological level, the poverty was starting to wear her down; she says that when she got the news about the fellowship, 'I was already kind of half dead... I literally had a breakdown'. Having some economic stability caused 'her stress level to drop'. She hopes the fellowship can continue, but when asked about the future, she repeatedly says

who had just made a major life decision.

Tamar and Carlos's re-invention of themselves was not entirely about responding to economic demands (although one of the reasons why Tamar made the shift into theatre was to access AHRC funding). They both left the art field because they wanted to find (or in Carlos's case, actively create) other contexts more in keeping with their politics and ethics. Is there perhaps something hopeful about this: could we interpret this as a 'line of flight', and could we actually see their art background as teaching them the inventiveness and resourcefulness to completely re-invent themselves and their work? However, does this also mean that those who feel uncomfortable with competitive social relations or the bureaucratisation of arts funding will leave the field instead of trying to change it ? Will there be less room in the arts for artists with non-standard career paths?

5.14 Conclusion
If the previous chapter was about the loss of space for creative activities, this chapter has been about the loss of time: literally, the loss of time for slower processes of exploration and questioning. It has also been about the professionalisation of the arts, a complex process involving material conditions, field politics, policy, and artists' subjective sense of themselves and their work. It has also been a contradictory process, as the cultural

'it's difficult' and says she is worried, as it will be difficult to go back to where she was before.

The fellowship, which is funded by the AHRC, also allows her to access far more money than was recently possible for her with the Arts Council. She is also reacting to the limitations of the art field, as well as to how the art market may have affected attitudes about art, what kind of work is taken seriously and who entered the field. There is certain (perhaps desperate) dynamic of seeking out those contexts and funding sources that have been less affected by neoliberalism—until those sources eventually dry up. It's like trying to catch something before it disappears: the residue of social democracy. Is she setting herself for disappointment, if and when she sees that theatre and academia might already be permeated by neoliberal values?

Tamar's situation raises the question of artistic autonomy here, as she is deliberately redefining her work to make it fit into other fields (in this case theatre and academic research). What this suggests (which is perhaps a truism) is that artists change their work in response to external, and often quite pragmatic demands.

field has defined itself against conventional professional identities in certain respects. I have explored the different ways that this has played out: artists taking on secondary employment (which, in some cases, become second careers); taking on business roles and approaches; arts education becoming increasingly focused on employability and career development. I have also examined changes to the art world and arts education which have led to the streamlining and shortening of artistic careers. I have considered how these developments have affected the artists' sense of professional identity, and the uneasy relationship of these developments to the figure of the bohemian romantic and principles of artistic autonomy. In response to these developments, I have also described attempts to re-assert the conventions of the field or to leave the field altogether. In the following chapter, I will explore the situation for artists in Berlin, which is a very different situation in terms of the costs of living, the time that artists dedicate to their work, and their professional identities. As with this chapter, my focus will be on how these factors inter-relate.

6.1 Introduction

Unlike London or other major European cities, Berlin has not experienced the negative effects of the property bubble, or other aspects of the financialisation of the economy. This means it is a much cheaper place to live on a limited budget; this was not lost on the London artists, many who expressed the desire to move to Berlin. If, in London, artists have to struggle for time and space to make art, and if high living costs played a role in professionalisation processes, then what sorts of activities are enabled by the absence of such pressures in Berlin? In this chapter, I will examine the ways of living and working which the conditions in Berlin make possible. It will thus explore a very different intersection of material conditions, field politics, policy discourses and subjective experience than that in London.

I will be focusing on developments in Berlin after 1989 and the specific conditions they created for Berlin's cultural economy; because of this, the history prior to 1989 is outside the scope of this text. I should also acknowledge that the time constraints of conducting the research meant it was not possible to explore Berlin in the same depth and detail as London; this means I am treating it as a minor case-study rather than a true two-city comparison.

Following a similar format as the London chapters, this chapter is composed of two sections, using the top and bottom halves of the page. The top section consists of photographs and descriptions of walking around Berlin, my visits to the artists' studios, and biographical narrative descriptions of the artists I interviewed; it is written in an impressionistic voice. The bottom section consists of analysis and quotes from the interviews with artists, intermediaries and academics. It is divided into two parts: the first on the urban and spatial politics of Berlin, and the second on art scenes, artists' lives and professional identities.

PART 1: URBAN AND SPATIAL POLITICS

6.2 The Post-1989 Period in Berlin

The specific conditions in Berlin (particularly the cheap rent and availability of space) are, in many ways, the result of the unique political/economic conditions of the post-1989 transition period. They are not the product of specific policy measures to support the arts as such (as some of the London artists believed), although policy-makers did begin to show interest in Berlin's cultural economy after 2000. I will first discuss the economic and social transformations of the post-1989 period, then will examine their effects on the cultural economy.

MITTE

It's around 10:30 in the morning, a chilly overcast day. I am in Mitte today to meet with someone from the Berlin Senat cultural office. The building is on a wide street with a slight uphill incline, a boulevard in the centre, tram tracks running down both sides of the street, and roadworks which occasionally force me to ride into open traffic. It's a mix of art galleries, shops and high-end restaurants, although there's the occasional *Imbiss* or pizza shop. I pass an office, with a sign on the front reading 'Art Consult' (beige, with tasteful sans-serif black lettering), next to a yoga studio. Further up the street, there's a squat, long since evicted (brown Sitex covering the front windows) with '*Wir bleiben alles!*' painted defiantly across the front of the building, an anarchy symbol for the 'a' in 'alles'. It's ironic, even poignant – who is still staying here, and who is the 'we' at this point in time? Can we say that there is a 'we' with any kind of assurance? A few days later, I speak with an artist who has lived in the area for years. She said that when she first moved here there were no art galleries, no coffee shops, nothing. People thought she was crazy to move to such a run-down, ugly area of the former GDR. Half the cars in the nearby car park were East German makes. Now, she says, most of them are Mercedes. Most of the artists have left because it's become so expensive 'and so awful'.

The cultural office is in a nondescript building, built perhaps in the 1990s. It's quite

During the period immediately following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the German Parliament was transferred from Bonn to Berlin (a process which took several years), and the unified East and West Berlin became one *Land* or region. The 1990s were also a period of large-scale economic transformation. Following unification, Berlin 'was actively searching to find a niche for itself in a post-industrial Europe' (Levine, 2004, p.93). The hope—which guided much of the building and urban planning in Berlin— was that the city would become a gateway between Eastern and Western Europe, the headquarters of major European firms would relocate there and that it would attain the global city status of Paris or London. In anticipation of this, during the 1990s, office space expanded 20 times through property speculation—to the point where Berlin had 20 million yards of office space, third in Europe after London and Paris, with over 37 million and 32 million yards, respectively (Ward, 2004, p.245).

These aspirations were never actually realised, because the Post-Fordist economy was based on the infrastructure developed during the postwar period; Berlin's geopolitical location left it isolated from the development of postwar trade corridors across Western Europe, between London and Milan. Transport links, a legacy of the GDR, were still mainly with Eastern Europe, and banking had been based in Frankfurt rather than Berlin

Figure 12. *Street in Mitte.*

Figure 13. *Evicted Squat, Mitte.*

during the postwar period, a situation unlikely to change (Ward, 2004, p.243). This meant that firms did not relocate to Berlin during the post-1989 period, but moved outside the city: to neighbouring Brandenburg or to other *Länder*, as well as to Poland and the Czech Republic, where labour costs were cheaper (Cochrane and Jonas, 1999, p.155); there was thus no need for Berlin as a central 'hub' for the headquarters of major firms. The situation was that 'Berlin has literally constructed for itself, in terms of commercial architecture, the shape of a European world city – but Europe and the world have yet to respond to the invitation' (Ward, 2004, p.245).

Berlin also had to contend with large-scale de-industrialisation; 80% of manufacturing jobs disappeared before 1992, and more were lost during the 1990s (Häußermann and Kapphan, 2005, p. 196). The service, media and culture industry and government jobs that were created (particularly from the relocation of the capital to Berlin) still left high levels of unemployment; 350,000 jobs were lost overall (Mayer, 2003b, p.2). Berlin simultaneously saw a wave of middle-class flight to the suburbs following re-unification (*Ibid*). Civil servants from Bonn, stereotyped as having a a predilection for houses with gardens, moved to Brandenburg rather than into the inner city. Permissive planning permissions in the outer suburban ring (called the *Speckgürtel*, which literally means 'ring

modest compared with the opulence of some of the galleries and restaurants. I walk into the front door, and it seems surprisingly informal – no slick impressive reception area, no corporate logos, just a security guard behind a counter. I tell the guard who I am meeting and he gives me directions (it's a bit complicated and he speaks slowly because he can tell I'm a foreigner). I walk up three flights of stairs and come to a hallway. It could be a university building or any other institutional space, with the exception of the posters on the walls saying (in English) 'Creative! Connected!'. I come to a door with a tiny sign with the name of the person I'm going to meet. I knock on the door; she shakes my hand, invites me in and tells me to wait there, as she'll be back in five minutes. The office: painted muted grey colours, fairly utilitarian, with shelves lined with art books and a table covered with art books and magazines.

At the end of our meeting I ask her if there is a café in the area where I can check my email. She smiles and says that many of the cafés near the U-Bahn station have internet – with a trace of irony, she says, 'that's where all the creative people are, you can go and join them'. I find a place next to the pizza and kebab shops; through the window, I see people with laptops sitting at tables. It's full of sixties era teak furniture: sideboards, coffee tables, couches, the kind that have recently become fashionable again, as retro chic.

of fat') encouraged land speculation, causing patterns of suburbanisation to appear in the 1990s (Cochrane and Jonas, 1999, p.155). This is what led some to compare Berlin not to global cities such as Paris or London, but to Washington DC, which is sharply divided between highly paid, high-status employment (associated with government and capital-city functions), and chronic unemployment and poverty (Köpke, 1996, cited in Cochrane and Jonas, 1999, p.155). As a result of these developments, Berlin lost 20,000 inhabitants per year in the late 1990s (many to the *Speckgürtel*), and stabilised at 3.4 million inhabitants several years later (Ward, 2004, p.245). One of the results of this change was a great deal of empty space in the city centre.

6.3 The Temporary Use of Empty Commercial Spaces

I will now focus on the role of vacant properties in Berlin's cultural economy. In addition to the vacancies resulting from population decline, there was confusion around land and building ownership in East Berlin. The federal government operated a restitution service for previous owners and their heirs, whose property had been appropriated either by the Nazi or GDR regimes. Whilst ownership was being determined (a lengthy legal process), empty buildings could be used on a temporary basis with little interference from the local administration (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010, p.84). Some spaces were squatted;

Figure 14. *Art Consultancy Next to Yoga Studio, Mitte.*

others were used through *Zwischennutzungsvereinbarung* or temporary use agreements, in which the space could be used at little to no cost until the owner was located or a legal claim on the space was filed (Haghighian, 2010). This created important conditions for Berlin's burgeoning art and music scenes throughout the 1990s, as it became very easy to set up clubs and other cultural venues in empty properties. According to art historian and urban theorist Bettina Springer; 'these were spaces without heating or fireproof things, and everything was completely improvised, and that was an interesting thing. It would only be there for two weeks or two months, and then it was gone and moved somewhere else' (Interview 3 May 2010). During the 1990s, there was little interest in this temporary use either from developers or policy-makers (Haghighian, 2010).

Living space was also squatted, and the cheap or free rent and low living costs encouraged the movement of young people into the eastern part of the inner city (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010, p.84). In contrast to other German cities, Berlin 'lacks a closing time and has little regulatory influence' (*Ibid*). This made it particularly attractive for clubs and other cultural venues. Driven both by the threat of eviction, and also the impulse to create a certain intrigue and atmosphere (Bader and Scharenberg text evoked Hakim Bey's concept of the temporary autonomous zone), temporary, and partly or

I spend the rest of the afternoon walking in and out of galleries – paying attention not only to the art, but also to the atmosphere of the spaces and the behaviour of the people working in them. In the first one, there's a two-person show, of small sculptures that seem to be made of folded sheet metal (steel or possibly lead) so thin it resembles paper, and silk-screens of cartoons referencing 1960s Black Power and 1970s blaxploitation films. The cartoons seem so out of context in a Berlin gallery that they seem to be more about some generalised edginess than provoking discussion about the history of race politics. The work is selling for €2-3000 each. A man and woman (American, judging by their accents) are having an animated conversation about renting studios. They speak and act in a way that makes it seem like they're performing (for me? For each other?), with a kind of self-consciousness and studied boredom that seems distantly inspired by Andy Warhol's Superstar films. The next gallery, further up the street, is open by appointment on Fridays and Saturdays. I hesitantly push the front door, see that it's unlocked, then lock my bike and walk in. A middle aged man, talking on a mobile phone, comes out, glances at me and then walks back into the office. It's full of small photographs of a girl with long blonde hair (probably around ten to twelve years old) dressed up in various costumes, and in various poses – some of them slightly sexualised. Edginess and titillation again – in this case the sexualisation of young girls – although the photographs have a calculated informality and level of production values

entirely illegal clubs and bars became common in Berlin during the 1990s.

6.4 Club Culture and the Berlin Cultural Economy
According to Springer, the club scene also influenced the Berlin art scene through the 1990s, and also had close ties with it; she mentioned the influential role played by two Mitte art/club venues during the nineties: Galerie Berlin Tokyo (1996-1999) which hosted a mix of art exhibitions, performances and music events, and was also connected to the electronic music scene; and Kunst&Technik, an art, design and new media organisation (Interview 3 May 2010) . According to Springer, it was not only the crossover between art and music scenes that was significant in shaping the scene during the 1990s, but also the modes of socialising associated with club culture: the atmosphere, the sense of informality and improvisation, as well as the exclusiveness (interview 3 May 2010). As the scene became trendier, bars and clubs would move around, not only for practical reasons (as had been the case in the beginning), but because the elusiveness associated with continual relocation was seen to 'be cool': 'this is how the scene works in Berlin... that you cannot find the place at first, and you have to rely on word of mouth' (interview 3 May 2010). For example, she described a club whose 'character' (or one might say, 'brand') was to move once a year, and also mentioned mailing lists that were very

Figure 15. *Vacant Project Space, Mitte.*

Figure 16. *Vacant Project Space, Mitte.*

difficult to join (as these were the days before email) (interview 3 May 2010).

The elitist, self-selecting nature of these spaces, with 'entry restriction via codes and informal advertisement that can only be read by the corresponding target group', created a certain intrigue and atmosphere (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010, 84). This eventually became very attractive to major corporations trying to cash in on the trend. Springer mentioned an example of this:

> There was a bar that was called the Key Bar and you could only get in if you had a key. Very exclusive, and it was like, where is it and where do you find the key? And later, I never went there, but they found out it was Nike! There were swoosh symbols all over the place!' (Interview 3 May 2010).

This was an example of how subcultural activity came to be seen as a particularly effective marketing technique – precisely because it did not resemble conventional marketing.

Club Cultures, Sarah Thornton's 1996 ethnography of the UK club scene of the late 1980s and early 1990s, specifically theorised the hierarchies and exclusions within club

(the colours are unusually sharp and vivid). This distinguishes them from Calvin Klein advert, or from the seedy and less glamorous associations of kiddie porn. Transgression sells. In some of these spaces I start to feel slightly self-conscious about my appearance: the rain jacket I'm wearing because the weather forecast called for rain and the scuffs on my shoes. I also notice other people (perhaps like myself) lingering outside the galleries, tentatively peering through the windows, trying to figure out whether or not the work looks interesting enough to check it out, perhaps wondering if they're in fact welcome inside.

The gallery next door is a project space, run by a group of curators; the work is not for sale. There is small group exhibition on the theme of whether political art is still relevant. There's a large panel with images of machine guns on it, then an interactive project: a video projection with images of famous political figures (I notice Gandhi, Frantz Fanon, and Antonio Gramsci). On a laptop, you can choose the one you want to be projected onto the wall. The exhibition also includes a sculpture made of bits of furniture and plywood, and a poster project. A woman comes up to me and tells me (in English) that I can ask her if I have any questions, and that they have an English version of the catalogue essay if I'm interested; she also mentions that there is a workshop on the closing weekend of the exhibition. This is the first time anyone in any of the galleries has

cultures. She drew on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as a 'linchpin of a system in which cultural hierarchies correspond to social ones and people's tastes are predominantly a marker of class (Thornton, 1996, p.10). Thornton pointed out that Bourdieu theorised these forms of capital in relation to his own social world, which involved 'players with high volumes of institutionalised cultural capital' (such as academia), but argued that these concepts could be applied to 'less privileged domains' such as club culture (Thornton, 1996, p.11). She developed the term 'subcultural capital' to theorise 'hipness' and the status conferred to its owner; like the forms of capital theorised by Bourdieu, it could also be embodied in particular ways (in this case through the possession and display of record collections, or the sporting of fashionable clothes and haircuts) (*Ibid*).

Thornton saw club culture as expression of a desire for classlessness, and to forestall what Bourdieu terms 'social ageing', or resignation to one's position in a highly stratified society (Thornton, 1996, p.180). Natascha Sadr Haghighian described the 1990s Berlin club scene as involving a similar, temporary suspension of hierarchies, but simultaneously foregrounding its role in attracting a transnational elite and promoting the property market:

addressed me directly. She then goes back to her meeting with two other people, which takes place in both German and English.

I also pass by some failed art galleries, or perhaps temporary projects which have now moved elsewhere. The shops are now vacant but still have vinyl lettering in the windows, a ghostly presence. One reads 'Mike Potter Projects', and another simply 'Drawing'.

On the way home, I take a slightly different cycle route towards Unter der Linden, and notice that there's a 'Temporare Kunsthalle', a giant cube made of vinyl tent material, in the middle of a building site. I walk inside and there's another art gallery and bookshop; from the inside you would never know it was actually temporary. There are many people inside, and I hear many foreign languages (Unter der Linden is a tourist area), although one conversation I hear suggests the people are friends of the artist. There are quasi-architectural installations (one made of gyproc, another resembling a small hut covered in fabric, inside which you can see a film), documentary photographs of what looked like the GDR before 1989, as well as a few small paintings and sculptures. On the way out, I pick up a couple of free publications, which I assume will include information about the exhibition, but it's actuallly more like an art and lifestyle magazine. combining articles about art with fashion pages. There are corporate logos all over the publication,

> Rich folk from around the world arrived in expensive cars and made their way through the dirt and rubble to the various illegal fun parks and had a ball. Parties are dark zones outside of time, absorbing bodies into their rhythm, momentarily suspending power relations, contradictions, differences. In the daylight, however, bodies return to being carriers of agendas, translating their desires into very different modes of action. While some would sleep until the next party, the people you were dancing with last night might be out buying the very building where the party took place (Haghighian, 2010).

Like Haghighian, Bader and Scharenberg also emphasised links between club culture and gentrification: 'the subculture of temporary clubs and bars was not only integrated into urban restructuring, but also into the innovative processes of the cultural economy' (Bader and Scharenberg, 2010, p.84). They also suggested, controversially, that '[the music scene's] elitist character fits the self-stylisation of the new urban middle classes' (*Ibid*). The self-selection associated with avant-gardism thus played a central role in gentrification:

> The underground is always subversive and elitist at one and the same time. Access limits and separation from the mainstream make possible the avant-garde character, but they also mean exclusion. This shows how the subculture of temporary clubs and bars with their partly illegal practices could in Berlin go

suggesting that both it and the exhibition itself, have substantial private sponsorship. The exhibition is trying to cover all the bases, I think: the 'critical contemporary art' legitimacy, the novelty of the temporary space, the glamorous lifestyle evoked by the fashion pages.

Figure 17. *Temporare Kunsthalle, Unter der Linden.*

hand in hand with the gentrification of city districts, as demonstrated especially in Berlin-Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg' (*Ibid*).

These analyses differed from Thornton's, as they characterised the Berlin club scene in terms of the re-entrenchment of class hierarchies, rather than a temporary escape from them. This could reflect differences between the Berlin and London music scenes, as well as different disciplinary perspectives; as I understand it, gentrification and urban politics were not a focus for Thornton.

We can thus understand the Berlin music scene as creating as certain intrigue, atmosphere and mode of socialising that made it conducive to the development of the art scene later on. There still seem to be crossovers between electronic music and art (electronic music producers as well as visual artists used the studios at Tacheles), but this overall seemed less the case than in the past. This may be because the club scene might now seem touristy or 'mainstream' by this point in time; it also may reflect the life stages of the artists I interviewed; some of them had been part of in the club scene in the 1990s, but were no longer involved at the the time of the interviews.

It's another day, and I'm going to Mitte again, but for another reason: to visit Tacheles, an artists' studio building; I'm here to sit in on one of their organisational meetings and talk with a few of the artists. As I'm unfamiliar with the streets and not used to cycling on the right side of the road, I leave early.

The ride from Neukölln takes me along Kottbusser Damm, a wide, busy street with supermarkets, pharmacies and kebab shops. It's slightly stressful as some of the vans are double-parked, and cars are parked at an angle in the driveways so they stick out onto the street. I then cross over the canal, and along a very wide street with 1960s apartment blocks (painted blue, green, dark red) with supermarkets, video stores and Turkish bakeries on the ground floor, children playing on the pavement. Then around Kottbusser Tor, a roundabout underneath train tracks, then along Oranien Straße (bars, restaurants, cafés, book stores, music stores etc, many people hanging out in front), around a roundabout, then another couple of parks – then through a rather faceless area of Spittelmarkt: new build flats, office blocks with big banners and a huge Coca-Cola logo, and a massive building site full of cranes. I ride along the river, past the Humboldt University campus and the Museum of German History, and then I'm in Mitte.

I cycle along Oranienburger Straße towards the building. On my left hand side, a car

6.5 'Poor but Sexy': The Intrigue and Romance of Berlin

I will now focus more closely on the atmosphere created in Berlin, which is about the trendiness of club culture, but more generally the bohemian lifestyle; I will also discuss attempts to market this atmosphere. In an evocative passage, Jens Bisky points out that part of Berlin's appeal is the promise that one can seemingly live without money, or the conventional markers of money and status:

> Berlin is a city of ordinary people, students, newcomers fleeing the provincial backwaters of their childhood, and a fast-living and mercurial bohemian crowd made up of artists, intellectuals, journalists, free-lancers and plain drifters. This latter set shapes the mood and lifestyle that dominates Berlin's inner-city districts. Most of these people lead rather precarious and uncertain lives, but they have certainly made Berlin the only German city in which a carefully chosen witticism, a surprising gesture or an ingenious performance count for more than status and income. Indeed, money plays an astonishingly minor role in the social life of the city (Bisky, 2006)

It is this metropolitan anonymity and bohemian lifestyle which specifically make Berlin so appealing, particularly to 'newcomers fleeing the provincial backwaters of their childhood' (*Ibid*). The romance of this lifestyle and the decrepit appearance of some of

park where they're setting up a temporary structure for an exhibition, a massive white tent. There are signs being set up that read 'Smart Urban Stage' (in English) – I'm not sure what it is. Design? Technology? Fashion? I find out later on that it is in fact a design, technology and science exhibition, sponsored by a car company. Thinking of the 'Temporare Kunsthalle', I start to wonder if these sorts of temporary exhibitions are actually quite common.

 In front of the exhibition, there are a few kebab shops with bunting and brightly coloured signs, which are now battered and faded. They seem out of place in such a slick environment: too cheap, too run down, too garish. Next to it is the Tacheles building - a massive, pitted stone building that takes up most of the block. It's covered in graffiti and the windows are grubby; this makes it seem even more out of place, as though it's been dropped down in entirely different landscape, or perhaps another time. On the ground floor, there is a shop with t-shirts, pins, postcards and other souvenirs; there is also a café and a club called '54' (in reference to Studio 54?) which don't seem too different from the cafés and bars across the street, despite the run down appearance of the building. In the middle of the block (between the shop and the club), there's a stairwell, also covered in graffiti. Just as I lock my bike two people walk past (tourists, one carrying a map of the city), and they take a photo of the building.

Berlin's neighbourhoods (due to lack of funding for local infrastructure) produce Berlin's charm:

> This culture of the transitory, a legacy of our love-affair with everything crumbling, seems uniquely suited to the character of the city, and Berlin owes much of its attractiveness for tourists to precisely these idiosyncrasies. It has put Berlin firmly on the map in the European imagination, and proves that, here at least, everything is possible and anything goes, no matter how limited your resources (*Ibid*).

As I will now discuss, attempts to promote this very atmosphere have come to play an increasingly central role in Berlin's economy.

In *Berlin, The Virtual Global City*, Janet Ward characterised Berlin as a 'virtual global city' (Ward, 2004). Ward defined 'virtuality' in several ways: in terms of aspirations for global city status; the huge number of building sites fronted by billboards promising luxury condominiums and high-end office space (reflecting the time of the article's publication); and the role played by the cultural industries in Berlin's economy:

> Virtuality plays a major role in the only industries that stand a chance of helping

I walk up the stairwell (which smells of disinfectant - the post-party clean-up smell), and into the office on the first floor. Someone is taking out the rubbish as I walk in. The corridor leading to the office has no graffiti; instead, the walls are painted white. There's a table with flyers from various projects at Tacheles. There are a couple of old sofas and a coffee table in front. People are continually coming in and out of the office, and chatting with each other in the hallway.

I walk into the office, which has a concrete floor, and the massive arched windows and exposed brick which would normally be the envy of live-work spaces everywhere, but it's dusty, the walls covered in posters from the twenty years' of the space's existence. It's lit by fluorescent lighting, and there are desks with computers all around the room. A large glass worktable is cluttered with publicity and packages that have recently arrived in the mail. A neatly stapled stack of papers shows a diagram of the ownership and legal situation of Tacheles (now under threat), and a proposal for an alternative funding plan.

A few people are sitting; most people are standing, as there aren't enough chairs. The meeting is conducted in both English and German. The jokes and more casual conversation seems to be in German, the more practical conversation in English (in most cases spoken as a second language). A few people talk amongst themselves in

> to make Berlin global: the contemporary growth areas of (city- or place-) marketing, sports, culture, entertainment and the service economy... It is on this aspect of Berlin's economy that academics, planners, government officials, marketing companies etc. have tried to promote and develop, particularly through the redevelopment of large factory buildings as office and loft spaces, targeted at the cultural and IT industries (Ward, 2004, p.248).

Ward cited Sassen and Stephan Krätke, who argued that Berlin may not actually be a global city as a location for either finance or the headquarters of multinational corporations, but it participates in an international network of culture and 'the so-called new content industries of multimedia etc.' (Sassen, 2000, cited in Ward, 2004, p.250), and thus functions as a 'first-tier media city, even if it is a third-tier global city' (Krätke, 2003, cited in Ward, 2004, p.251).

In a wider sense, we need to consider post-unification Berlin in terms of efforts to develop a post-Fordist economy, in the wake of the high unemployment rates caused by rapid, large-scale de-industrialisation. The unique conditions caused a very particular cultural economy to develop; this cultural economy seemed to offer the most hope for economic recovery to policy-makers. The period immediately following 1989, in which developers

Figure 18. *Kunsthaus Tacheles, Mitte.*

Figure 19. *Stairwell, Kunsthaus Tacheles, Mitte.*

and urban planners had *carte blanche*, also seemed to offer the possibility of literally remaking the city to suit a Post-Fordist economy.

At the time when Ward was writing, Berlin's trendy reputation and increasingly prominent position within the cultural industries was beginning to attract interest from major corporations; Universal Music relocated to Berlin in 2002, and MTV Central Europe in 2004. Policy-makers interpreted this as evidence of culture-driven economic growth, at a time when 'creative industries' policies were gaining currency. Berlin's romantic poverty (which was becoming more firmly imprinted on the collective imagination) was not lost on city officials, as in Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit's rather (in)famous quote that Berlin is 'poor but sexy' (Wowereit, 2003). Wowereit undertook many 'boosterist' trips to other cities, our of an imperative 'to make Berlin's imagery work toward its economic promotion, apparently between the metropolises' – by 'linking Berlin both associatively and substantively to these other prime urban sibling sites' (Ward, 2004, p.251).

Ward also drew attention to the role of news and city-marketing websites in the promotion of Berlin, such as 'Tagesspiegel.de', 'Meinberlin.de' and 'Zitty.de' (all owned by Urban

Spanish, in some cases translating. I have the impression that some of the people there know each other quite well and have a long experience working with each other, and others are practically strangers. Some of them participate more than others, fluency in German or English being the deciding factor. The artists are dressed casually; most of them have come directly from working in the studio. Linda, sitting at a computer, chairs the meeting. She's wearing a beige shirt and black dress pants. She's quite efficient and pragmatic; the point is to make the meeting as quick as possible. This meeting seems similar to many others I've participated in, both within the arts and in other contexts.

The first agenda item is feedback from the open studios which recently took place; people felt they went well and felt they should do them again; a date is set for the following month. The second agenda item is a Mexican author, who is in town for a literary festival and wants to do a reading. Linda mentions the author's name; a couple of the artists (from Latin America) have heard of him. Are people interested in creating a larger event around the themes addressed in the author's latest novel? Yes, says Barbara (the curator of the exhibition space). They'll discuss the specifics of the event later. There's an exchange project involving artists from Minsk coming up; it's become logistically complicated as many artists are invited; travel has to be arranged, work shipped, etc. Funding has been secured for the project through the Belarusian embassy.

Media GmbH), through integrating tourism, cultural promotion and city-branding with information abut local services (Ward, 2004, p.248). Ward saw Berlin as a particularly dramatic example of 'a broader evolution of and by cities, especially ageing Western ones, toward a competitive realm of the virtual in which image-city competes against image-city' (Ward, 2004, p.250).

However, Berlin also has access to few resources, and so we need to see the attractiveness of both creative industries policies in terms of the comparatively few resources they require. Sociologist Margit Mayer pointed this out:

> Richard Florida's advice has been popular as a 'fast policy response' to cities' current economic problems because it's cheap and easy; you can have lots of cafés where they serve lattes rather than investing seriously in infrastructure" (Interview 4 May 2010).

Due to the high unemployment and a restrictive academic job market in Berlin, creative industries policy-making itself is even seen to be a possible source of employment:

> There are also many academics that have created institutes doing consultancy

Decisions are made about practical things. The artists at Tacheles will also be travelling to Minsk to present their work at a later date. The rest of the meeting consists of announcements: a Kafka play will be taking place on Friday night; there's a party the following night organised by three of the resident DJs (one of them who, shortly after making the announcement, says she has to pick up her daughter from school, and walks out the door).

In speaking with the artists later on, several of them say that the internationalism of the organisation, and of Berlin in general, is important to them. It helps strengthen and extend Tacheles's network and reputation of the organisation: new artists come to work in the studios, and the involvement of embassies and consulates will help build support for the space. I ask the artists to explain the threat to the space; they say it's complicated and refer me to Linda, who explains the situation, showing me the diagrams and the funding plan. The space was squatted twenty years ago, then legalised, but recently the owner went bankrupt and the building was taken over by a bank; the bank is now trying to get rid of Tacheles, despite the support of the Mayor. Several of the artists say they find Berlin to be a welcome change from the narrow provincialism and cultural conservatism of the the places they have left – and in one case, the far-right politics of the government. However, one of people (a sculptor and DJ) cautions that

> work. Large ones as well as small ones, where people seek to find a practical use for their work, particularly in what are seen as 'hot areas', and the city wants to make use of their knowledge. I think that if you do this sort of work you have to be very clear about your own political goals, so that you don't end up being instrumentalised. Many of these creative people with innovative ideas make a very precarious living. However, there is a range of people with different incomes. Some have proper salaries, and some are actually living on Hartz- IV (Interview 4 May 2010).

In what seems like a circular, self-perpetuating logic, reputation-building and city-branding become an economic activity in their own right (or not, in the case of the consultants living on benefits).

6.6 Berlin as a Site for Generating Symbolic Capital

Similar to Ward's characterisation of Berlin as a 'virtual city', Bettina Springer characterised Berlin as a site for generating symbolic capital, with art playing a central role. When asked about the motivations for writing her book, *Artful Transformations* (2006), Springer mentioned her involvement in two different project spaces, both of which involved arrangements with property developers: they were allowed to use the space rent-free in exchange for using the developer's logo on the exhibition publicity.

'Berlin is not Germany'. He also mentions that some of the artists are in Berlin on tourist visas, which some of them have now overstayed. He worries about what will happened to them if they lose the space – particularly if it happens suddenly. 'If the police show up and kick us out the next thing they'll do is ask for passports', he says darkly.

This led her to question the relationship between art and the property market:

> I always interested in the relationship between art and city, and real estate development. And then I asked myself the question, if you read Neil Smith on gentrification, art is always blamed. Artists come here, they upgrade it, and rents go high, and renters are expelled and so on, and art is bad. Why is it like this? Why is it art that does this? There are examples of how sports can do something like this, but not as much as art. And so I had to dig very very deep... I read a lot of philosophers, aesthetics, and it's really a complex thing. And of course you cannot find an answer to this, because it's like the question, what is art. But I think I came really close. It's really interesting. I can't explain it in a couple of sentences... but it's like... some people like being around artists and getting something of the image from the artists and the art (Interview 3 May 2010).

At the risk of simplifying, Springer is suggesting that the romantic image associated with art, the bohemian lifestyle, the freedom and autonomy associated with the figure of the artist, and the glamour of socialising with artists ('being around artists') are a kind of inexhaustible fantasy, which continues to provide inspiration for property developers. It has its sources in the twentieth century avant-garde impulse to merge art and life, and, more generally, the ideals of the authentic life of Boltanski and Chiapello's 'artistic

THE FORGOTTEN BAR, NEUKÖLLN

I've passed this place before several times, and it's so unobtrusive that you would never notice it: on the ground floor of a large, nondescript apartment building, amongst a row of shops, on a large cobblestone street off Kottbusser Damm, half-full of parked cars. As it's not far from where I'm staying, I would have walked or cycled past it before without taking notice. There's no sign, but I have the address and see a group of people clustered out front, so I'm able to find it.

There are three rooms, each directly behind the other as you walk away from the front entrance, through a set of doorways. The first room (closest to the entrance) is lit by fluorescent lights. It's painted dark grey, evoking the dark wall colours of nineteenth-century salons. There is art all over the walls and ceilings: mostly small two dimensional works, drawings and paintings, though there are a few small sculptures (one hanging from the ceiling, a couple on small plinths). There's a sense of trying to cram everything into as small a space as possible, possibly because of trying to include many artists as possible in the exhibition. Things are slightly rough around the edges: the walls have cracks and patches, the wires hanging the art from the ceiling are visible, and some of the artwork has stains and smears on it. The might be for practical reasons (lack of money, a hasty installation process as they have a different show almost every day) but

critique'. Over the past thirty years, the lifestyle industries have capitalised on these fantasies (McMahon, 2000; Meyer, 2003). Springer also mentioned the following:

> Art is the perfect, easiest way to generate symbolic capital. It's also that art is so much relying on symbolic capital; it's not only the artists, it's the art, it's the history of art, it's everything that is supporting this image and the symbolic capital, and Berlin is especially good at this. Symbolic capital is everything here. Berlin has so much symbolic capital. Look at the galleries. Every gallery has a branch here. Although they say, we don't sell here, you know, it's just for the image, you know, just for the symbolic capital. (Interview 3 May 2010)

I understand 'symbolic capital' in this case to mean both the reputation economy of the art world, as theorised by Bourdieu, and also Thornton's concept of subcultural capital. Bourdieu suggested that symbolic capital was field-specific, but the integration of culture into the lifestyle industry suggests that the boundaries between fields may have blurred. Springer's assertion that 'Berlin is especially good at this' suggests specialisation within a global division of labour in the cultural industries: that in Berlin, techniques, strategies and even formulae are being perfected in the production of reputations and other forms of symbolic capital, even if the presence of the art market is minimal. For example, artists may see Berlin specifically as a place to make contacts and build up a reputation, if not a place to sell art. Galleries may set up satellites in Berlin 'just for the image' (or in other

the look also seems somewhat deliberate – confirmation, perhaps, of the space's underground character. Some of the works reference street art, such as through the use of stencils. The works on the ceiling are about the same size as album covers, and, to a certain extent, resemble them. The second room (also painted grey) has a counter with various flyers advertising past events at the space. I pick one up, possibly revealing that I'm an outsider. The last room is dimly lit, and there's a bar. There's music playing, the Yardbirds' For Your Love, not too loud. A safe choice, I think, as it conjures up the bohemian atmosphere of the sixties without being as obvious as the Beatles or the Doors, or even the Velvet Underground.

People are hanging out and looking at the art, clustered in groups of two or three. Most seem in good spirits. Those who are alone periodically pull out their mobile phones, making plans for the evening. People are generally in their twenties to forties; it's a mix of male and female and mostly, although not entirely white (I start to feel slightly self-conscious about being one of the few non-white people in the room). There are a couple of people in their fifties or older, such as an older couple speaking to a young man in a trucker hat (possibly his parents?).

I hear many people speaking English, with both North American and British accents,

words, so they can claim to have a satellite in Berlin). It does not matter if no profits are made or even if losses are incurred; with the low commercial rents, these are not seen to be risky ventures.

The project spaces Springer described were also part of a certain symbolic capital economy. Although they generally did not receive rent, developers saw their arrangements with artists as beneficial because they functioned as free publicity:

> The real estate developers, they got a lot of positive effects from it. They don't get rent but on the other hand it's very cheap marketing for them. They don't have to engage a PR company who does lots of marketing, because with artists it's super easy. It's cool, it's cooler than doing professional marketing. Especially in Berlin, it's very important, it's a little bit of a career thing. If you co-operate with an artists' group they have their own public. You don't have to generate a new one. It's more like, what do we want in this building, who do we want to rent it to? And, it's like, OK, this is the same public as the artists' group or the gallery. It was interesting because at first, the project in Kreuzberg, they wanted office lofts. And then they noticed there's no market for office lofts in Berlin because there are so many. And then they thought, let's bring in the creatives. A project or a gallery would be the best thing (Interview 3 May 2010).

and others speaking French. Almost half the people in the room are speaking other languages than German. I wonder why this is the case. Is it because of the international network developed by the space? Is the space some kind of base for an expatriate scene? People are giving each other small, slightly conspiratorial, glances—recognising each other, or wondering if they do, or checking each other out (though the glances I receive seem to be more 'do I know you?' than the first sign of sexual interest). It's just intimate enough for people to see and talk to each other; but large enough to be slightly anonymous.

I stay for a bit in the hope that the artists I've met who have works in the show will turn up. They don't, but then again, it's a very large group show and the artist who told me about the exhibition had said (rolling her eyes) that this was the fourth time she had a piece in in a group show here, implying that it's become an obvious or cliché thing to do. As I'm an outsider here, I'm still stuck with the obvious.

As mentioned earlier, Berlin has many empty office buildings and property developers struggle to find tenants. Whilst waiting for the market to improve, they allow artists to use the spaces for free until tenants are found. Developers thus associate themselves with artists and their social circles; the building, and possibly even the entire neighbourhood develops a trendy reputation. These relationships between developers and the artistic community are presented as organic, possibly the outcome of occupying the same milieu, contributing to the developer's subcultural capital.

This approach is thus both more efficient and also cheaper than working with a public relations company. Using a public relations company might in fact backfire, as the use of obvious marketing techniques might make the developer appear corporate and 'uncool'. Furthermore, the demographic profile of the art audience is seen to be the same as that of prospective tenants (middle class and educated, possibly working within the cultural or media industries). Involving artists ensures a steady flow of potential tenants, instead of having to use other, potentially more costly measures (such as a marketing campaign) to attract them.

This represents a particularly sophisticated way of capitalising both on trendy reputations,

Figure 20. *Marthashof show suite, Prenzlauer Berg.*

Figure 21. *Marthashof show suite with price list, Prenzlauer Berg.*

and also on the unpaid work of the artists/intermediaries in curating and promoting art events (and in particular, attracting a public). When asked how artists felt about these sorts of arrangements, Springer responded that 'the projects I know of, they are happy because they don't have any money, they don't make any money. And that's a good way to be in these very magnificent places they could never afford' (Interview 3 May 2010). She also said that they were not really concerned about being caught up in processes that ultimately might lead to their displacement. This may be because the artists could occupy the spaces on a fairly long-term basis on these temporary arrangements, as sometimes buildings could sit empty for years.

Developers, in some cases, were also so desperate to fill the space that they did not care about the fact that the artists' groups they dealt with actually made no money. In the absence of profits, the developers actually looked to press coverage, or, in some cases, website traffic as an index of success:

> We did a fake interview with a real estate company, I got two friends of mine to pretend that they were from somewhere else. They said they wanted to know how the real estate developer evaluates the programme. They were confident but they said it's a really difficult question for them, as it's untypical for their

A WALKING TOUR OF PRENZLAUER BERG

It's a warm, bright day at 10AM. I'm in Prenzlauer Berg; I've arranged to meet urban sociologist and former resident Andrej Holm and a student from Stockholm for a 'gentrification walking tour' of the area. I take the U-Bahn to Mernauer Straße, then a bus and get out at the junction of the Mauerpark and Bernauer Straße, outside the show suite of a condominium development called the Marthashof. The show suite is by Bernauer Straße, in the middle of a landscaped but scruffy lawn. On the wall of the show suite, there are signs with different prices for flats in bold letters. This ranges from a 'City Apartment' at €175,500, to a 5-room, 2-balcony 'Familienwohnung' at €558,000. Next to the show suite there's a small billboard with a decorative monochrome illustration of a building and some trees. It could almost be mistaken for an artwork, as it draws on its visual language; an artist could have even been commissioned to produce it. The billboard is advertising another property development in the area.

Holm, the student and I meet. Holm starts by talking about the Marthashof. It was the result of a collaboration, he says, between a German property developer and an Italian designer. It was based around the idea that your life could be art, which was reflected in the design of the apartments themselves, which resemble art galleries.

> normal way of working; you don't have figures, where you get plus and minus. This is just on a symbolic level. They said, we know we can't use our normal evaluation, and the press coverage is the only black-and-white thing you have. Of course you can also say, after this event, we got so many hits on our website, or a couple of people called for the place to rent, you can do this too. But they not only wanted to get tenants, they also wanted to promote the name of the area. The press coverage is a very good indicator for that (Interview 3 May 2010).

This is, again, a situation where symbolic capital (in this case, press coverage, website hits, expressions of interest) takes the place of profits. Because the presence of artists is seen to promote the area (which will give them a better chance of finding tenants in the future), developers are willing to accept these sorts of indicators in the place of actual profit.

6.7 The Case of Neukölln: Instrumentalised Subculture

I will now discuss the situation of Neukölln, which is significant because informal activities such as temporary clubs, bars or galleries have become completely integrated into urban policy at a local level. This resulted in rapidly accelerating

Figure 22. *Luxury flats, Pren-zlauer Berg.*
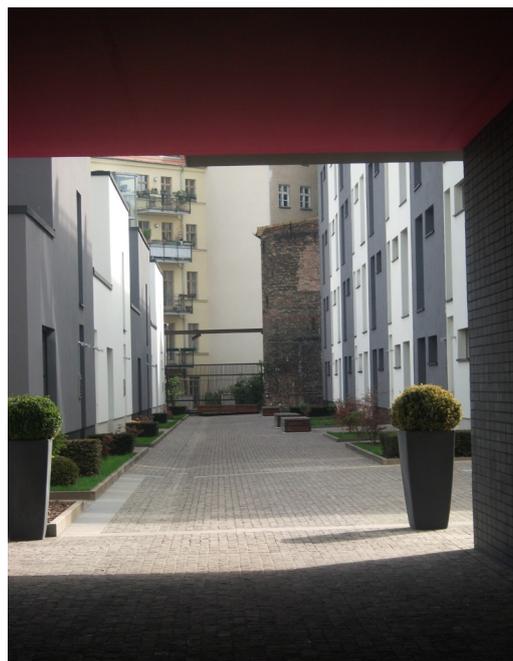
Figure 23. *Courtyard, Prenzlau-er Berg.*

gentrification processes, so that the early, subcultural phases of organisational and retail practices (such as shops with extremely limited opening hours or cafés with a restricted customer base) were taken up almost instantly by schemes to market the neighbourhood as a destination, carried out through a co-ordinated plan organised through public-private partnerships. Interest from property developers followed quickly, leading to rent increases.

In an interview I asked the urban sociologists Volker Eick and Jens Sambale for their views on the retail activities in the area (using the example of designer shoe shop that was only open three hours a week). They said that some of the shops and galleries were set up through a scheme for artists to use empty shopfront spaces, in connection with the *Quartiersmanagement* or neighbourhood management programme (Interview 27 April 2010). After doing some research, I found that in 2008, the landlords' association began a pilot project called '*Gewerbeleerstand als Ressource'* ('commercial vacancy as a resource') with a company called Coopolis. Coopolis specialises in finding tenants for empty commercial properties (particularly shop-fronts). Funded by the European Union, the federal government (through the *Soziale Stadt* or 'Socially integrative city' scheme) and the Berlin Senat Department for Urban Development, Coopolis connects the owners

The art gallery and the village home with the garden are the most common forms of imagery used by these developments. They appeal to small-town or suburban West German buyers who want both the cosmopolitanism of the big city, and also the safety and familiarity of the small town. The prices advertised by the Marthashof are expensive for Berlin, but cheap when compared to other cities. This sort of price differential is what makes Berlin so attractive to outsiders. Many of the people who purchase properties in Prenzlauer Berg are also local residents, who, when faced with the choice of expensive rent or an equally expensive mortgage, choose to buy. This is why the developers claim to not have drastically changed the demographics of the area. But this is not entirely accurate as the neighbourhood changed drastically throughout the nineties, becoming much more middle class. In the early 1990s, the average income of Prenzlauer Berg residents used to be 70% of the average income for Berlin; in 2001 it was on par with the average, and it now is 135% of the average. 60% of residents are now between 25 and 45 years, which means there's a certain homogenisation of lifestyles.

We walk down a leafy street and visit another development. This one has been completely built and is now inhabited, with large windows and balconies, and a formidable looking security gate. Even though it's a warm day, there is nobody on the balconies; we peer through the security gate into an empty inner courtyard, mostly

of empty shop-front properties with prospective tenants. The company presents itself as performing a social good, promoting civic engagement and stopping the vacant shop-front properties from becoming vandalised or derelict, or rented to '*Bordelle, Spielhallen oder andere dubiose Gewerbe*' or 'brothels, casinos or other dubious businesses' (Zwischennutzungsagentur, 2010).

Prospective tenants register with the company and submit a business plan for the use of the commercial property; the company then mediates between the landlord and the neighbourhood management centre so that there is agreement on a rental contract, and arrangements are made for the rental of the property. According to the company, often the prospective tenants are '*Interessenten Einzel- oder Mikrounternehmer, Freiberufler, Künstler oder in Vereinin organiziert*' or 'individual or micro-entrepreneurs, freelancers, artists, or organised in clubs' (Coopolis, 2010). Landlords benefit because the tenants will fix up their properties, but also contribute to the cultural and social life of the neighbourhood. These small businesses, so the argument goes, also encourage economic development in areas of high unemployment, and create jobs.

This scheme follows on a 2006 initiative of the neighbourhood management centre

Figure 24. *Rote Lotte bar, Prenzlauer Berg.*

to set up an organisation called *AG Kultur* ('Culture plc') to promote culture in the neighbourhood and improve the area's reputation). This organisation commissioned a graphic designer to create a brand called '*Kunst Reuter*' ('Reuter' being the name given to the area) displayed on all the publicity for the art spaces in the area. The word 'Kreuzkölln began to be used by *Zitty* magazine and others for the northern part of the area, associating Neukölln with the more identifiably trendy Kreuzberg (Zitty, 2008). 2007 saw the establishment of '48 Hours Neukölln', a 'gallery weekend' type event. Further research revealed that there many meetings, reports, demographic surveys of artists in the area and numerous other initiatives about promoting the creative economy in Berlin; in some cases mentioning Richard Florida or at least reflecting his influence (Kultur-Neukölln, 2010).

This reveals a complex relationship between the neighbourhood management centre, various levels of German and European funding, social enterprises such as Coopolis, various academics, and then the owners and tenants of the commercial properties themselves. Social enterprises receive public funding (as in Coopolis), and publicly funded organisations take on aspects of social enterprise (as in AG Kultur). All these organisations encourage entrepreneurialism, which they see as a social good, because it

pavement with small potted trees and stone benches in rows. It's as empty as one of those mini-parks near office towers, which it resembles; CCTV cameras would not be out of place. For all their evocations of village life, these spaces look as though they're barely used. In a certain sense, they're like gated communities.

We walk past the building and turn onto a dusty, rather scruffy alleyway, which takes us to a building site, the future location of the Marthashof. In 2010 you longer notice the massive building sites that Janet Ward evocatively wrote about in 2004; but instead you see these little scruffy zones immediately next to quite slick looking buildings; they seem slightly out of place.

We then leave the residential zone and walk onto a large, wide commercial street. Holm points to the different buildings, saying the style and cost of renovation reflects the different phases of the redevelopment of the area. He shows us a pale green stucco building which was renovated in the nineties, which is tastefully painted and decorated—but lacks the ostentation of the yellow building next door, which has an extra penthouse floor. He explains that the first wave of renovation was done with state funding in the nineties, with a view to invest in the former GDR and improve conditions for residents. Owners would pay reduced taxes in exchange for renovating buildings; the

is seen to promote 'civic engagement' and discourage less reputable activities such as sex work (presumably the wrong form of entrepreneurialism).

6.8 Cashing in: Will Berlin One Day Become too Expensive for Artists?

On a walking tour of Prenzlauer Berg (discussed elsewhere), urban sociologist Andrej Holm asked, rhetorically, 'What is the tipping point—when are symbolic and cultural capital transformed into actual profit' (29 April 2010)? Berlin is now starting to become a more expensive place to live. When asked, those I interviewed mentioned paying €200/ month (for a flat without proper heating), or sometimes €300 or €350; this is cheaper than London but not significantly so. Some expressed concern that Berlin would soon go the way of other European capitals, where the inner city would become an expensive tourist zone, forcing artists to the periphery. This was why some of the artists had left other cities for Berlin in the first place. Ingrid Wagner, the co-ordinator for artists' grants at the Berlin Senat cultural office, was worried that artists would eventually leave, in search of cheaper cities:

> In Berlin the rents are going up so we are afraid that the moment will come when artists will go somewhere else, where rent is cheaper - which is what artists always do. Maybe in 10 or 20 years you will come back to Berlin and

stringent rent control, which still existed then, was accepted by landlords as a condition of the tax reduction. In 2000, the city's finances were in trouble and the tax reductions stopped, and it became common practice for landlords to find tenants before purchasing a building.

Holm then draws our attention to the shops on the street. Close by a café with an outdoor patio and what appears to be a high-end beauty salon or spa, there is a student bar called Rote Lotte, a leftover from another era when businesses were more self-organised and informal. It was common, for example, to purchase beer from the shops and resell it. As we walked, Holm pointed to some of the other bars, which had signs with the logos of major breweries hanging in the windows. These signs indicated that the bar had entered a contract with a major brewery, which would require them to sell beer at higher prices (it was also customary to raise food prices). They could function as a visual index of the changing retail landscape, particularly in terms of attempts to attract a more affluent clientèle. Holm says there is no point really blaming individuals for gentrification; it's a dead-end discussion. Rather he sees it in terms of infrastructure: of the development of certain kinds of restaurants which cater to expensive tastes, for example.

> everything will be very clean. When we [the Berlin Senat cultural office] moved here [in Mitte] after the wall came down in '96, we wanted to be where the artists were. Now Mitte has become the main neighbourhood for boutiques, where they sell shoes and bags. So the artists and arts organisations had to move somewhere else. So they went to Prenzlauer Berg and then it became too expensive, and Friedrichshain, and afterwards Lichtenberg, and Wedding. But we are very lucky that Berlin is so large and has so much open space, so it will take some time (interview 8 May 2010).

Wagner described a pattern of movement in search of cheaper places. Because of the availability of space and limits on the financialisation of housing, it is still possible for artists to move to different neighbourhoods without being pushed to the suburbs. The Senat cultural office, as she acknowledges, has also been affected by these processes; in the 1990s, they set up their office in Mitte in order to be physically close to the artists (and thereby serve them better), but now that the artists have left and the studios have been replaced by boutiques, they are no longer be in the same area as the people they serve.

Describing the situation in Neukölln, artist and curator Eva said that she was worried

We duck into another alleyway (covered in graffiti) and then pass through another courtyard, where we can see another contrast between two different buildings: a brown stucco office building, almost black with grime, next to a spotless, cream-coloured building which has been recently renovated. The point here is to show the contrast. The grime on the brown building, he says, is from the days of coal stoves, which were common for many of the buildings in Prenzlauer Berg. It changed the quality of the air, and you could see it in the films of the 1970s, which all had a particular quality of light.

We end on Kastanien Allee, which Holm characterises as the convergence of two waves of gentrification, one from the north and one from the south. It became the site for media production and publishing, and there were celebrity sightings, which were written about in local gossip columns; the street began to be called 'casting alley'. Is this a sign of more conventional forms of celebrity culture replacing Berlin's traditional disregard for fame and success?

that if the neighbourhood became expensive, then the artists and designers would leave, and the area would become a monoculture of bars and restaurants – in other words, those businesses most able to pay increased commercial rents (Interview 11 May 2010). Although he did not specifically link it to gentrification, geographer Stefan Krätke mentioned conflicts between different sections of the creative class (contesting Richard Florida's characterisation of the creative class as having essentially the same interests). By this he meant there can be conflicts between those with greater or lesser degrees of purchasing power, and between the interests of larger companies and smaller independent producers (Interview 9 May 2010). This raises questions about the objectives and success criteria for culture-driven economic development. For example, if the goal is ultimately to attract major corporations, then is the role of smaller, independent producers to prepare the ground for larger players, and then to step aside? Krätke also mentioned that the Berlin government was actually short-circuiting aspects of the cultural economy, by encouraging conditions that would eventually make it difficult for independent producers (*Ibid*). Given that so much of Berlin's reputation seems to be based on independent cultural production, would this approach eventually undermine the basis of Berlin's marketability?

Figure 25. *Heroes Café, Neu-kölln*.

Figure 26. *Café Fritz-Kola, Neukölln*.

However, Berlin's rent control, which remains at 20% per year, gives tenants relative stability, and also, to a certain extent, prevents the rental market from becoming too lucrative (Rips and Litke, 2004). There are limits as this only applies to sitting tenants; it is customary in Berlin as elsewhere to raise rents when there is a changeover, in part because the new tenant feels he/she has no choice. However, although certain areas have become expensive, the average rent per square metre for an apartment within the private rental market (with no special rent control) without heat and utilities is only €4.83/square metre (Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2009). Tenants on average only pay 20% of their monthly income on rent; unlike other cities where home ownership is more common, rental flats account for 87% of Berlin's housing market, and 50% of flats have single occupants (Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2008). For the people I interviewed, rising rents was a concern, but less so than for the London artists. Stories of evictions and continual displacement were also rare. This means that while Berlin is becoming more expensive, the conditions that support its bohemian lifestyle (and therefore, its unique reputation) seem set to continue.

PART 2: LIVES AND SCENES
I will now turn from spatial politics to a discussion of the cultural scene, and focus more

NEUKÖLLN

I'm sitting at Heroes, a café named after the album David Bowie recorded in Berlin. They're playing minimal electronica, tasteful and not to obtrusive. There is a multilingual conversation taking place at the couch near the window: in English, French and (mostly) Japanese. I can understand a few stray words and phrases, such as 'let's organise a party' and 'Japanese bands'. At the bar, someone is sitting at one of the bar stools, knitting and speaking to the person behind the bar in French. A woman pulls up in front with her bike and sits behind the bar (changing shift with the other person. Another woman comes in and sits at the bar, chatting in German with the woman behind the bar (who has just started her shift). There's a sense that everybody knows everybody here; that the customers in the café are also part of a network of friends, and possibly some kind of French expat scene. It's as though the circle of friends are the client base, or that there's no need to expand the client base past a small circle of friends. I come back another day, and am given a slightly strange look when I order a coffee (I never see anyone order anything). A British man and an American woman walk in. The woman goes on for several minutes about a friend she was talking to on Facebook and then who she saw in a club, and then eventually leaves. Again, many of the people who come into the shop seem to know the people who work there; nobody comes for any other reason.

closely on the lives of the artists in Berlin.

6.9 The Berlin Art World

As suggested earlier, the art market has historically played a minor role in Berlin's cultural scene. As Bettina Springer stated:

> There is no money here. Cologne was formerly the art city in Germany, and they had customers who bought art. There are people there with money, and they're just used to buying art. But Berlin... look around... there's no rich people here. And there's no tradition of buying art... (Interview 3 May 2010).

 Writing in *Frieze*, Jennifer Allen pointed out that 'that familiar tag 'lives in Berlin' means 'made in Berlin' – and likely sold elsewhere' (Allen, 2010). She cited gallerist Christian Nagel: 'I always say we have 6,000 artists, 6000 galleries and 60 collectors. Maybe Berlin itself has six collectors and the other 54 are from old West Germany' (*Ibid*). In response to this situation, specific events have been organised to encourage collectors to come to the city such as Gallery Weekend (which Allen calls 'a buy and fly programme'), or art fairs such as the Forum Berlin (organised by Kunst-Werke, one of the city's major institutions) which bring collectors to Berlin (*Ibid*). Ingrid Wagner mentioned that such

Figure 27. *Inactive project space, Neukölln*.

Figure 28. *Private club, Neukölln*.

events have been successful in generating sales (Interview 8 May 2010).

Berlin's global art world reputation is also based on prestigious public institutions presenting critical contemporary art, and their role within an international network of artists, curators, institutions and festivals such as Documenta and Manifesta. These organisations developed out of citizen's initiatives in the 1970s, and have gone through similar processes of institutionalisation. For example, *Kunsthaus Bethanien,* in Kreuzberg, hosts an international artists' residency programme and has a large art gallery, which presents large thematic group exhibitions. *Neue* Mitte's *Berliner Kunstverein* (NBK), began as an *artothek* or art lending service (in which members of the public could borrow art similar to library books); this service continues but the institution's reputation is now primarily based on its exhibitions. In Kreuzberg, the *Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst* (NGBK) or New Art Society in Kreuzberg also started in 1969 and hosts large, thematic group exhibitions. Certain curatorial decisions are based on democratic decision-making processes by members (a tradition which has continued since the 1960s). In addition to these organisations, the now defunct United Nations Plaza project focused on pedagogical themes and involved some of the same curators and artists involved in *Manifesta* 2006. Bookshops such as *ProQM* (Mitte) and *b-books* (Kreuzberg) also play

There is also art on the walls: cartoon-inspired illustrations with empty speech bubbles. Again, there are usually only one or two people in the café, and they usually chat with the owner. There's a couple, speaking in English as a second language (judging from their accents, one is German and the other Slovenian); one is an artist doing a residency in Berlin, and the other is involved in 'media production'. The first day I come, I order a *milchkaffee*, which takes fifteen minutes to arrive. The second time, it takes about five minutes.

Many of the other spaces in the area are combinations of coffee shop and art gallery, or second-hand clothing or furniture store and art gallery or even an ice cream shop and art gallery. It's about providing two sources of revenue, or one activity subsidising the other – but also a way of bringing in a crowd, even if in some cases the crowd is only one's immediate circle of friends. There are a couple of yoga studios and alternative health therapists, which I associate with a more affluent population moving into the neighbourhood.

Other shop-front spaces are set up as offices or studios, with a certain kind of fish-tank effect. There's a tendency to experiment with the aesthetics of display, often in quite subtle ways: a bit of vinyl lettering in the window (or in the case of Heroes, electric

an important role in the theorisation of art in Berlin and elsewhere, and also participate in international contemporary art networks (for example, b-books was the official bookshop for *Documenta 12* and the *Berlinale* film festival). At this point in time, there is a tendency for the same themes and in some cases even the same artists to circulate within these networks, perhaps indications of a high degree of institutionalisation or codification as genre.

What is more significant about the Berlin art scene (and notably lacking in London) is the presence of many small independent arts spaces. Some of these, particularly those in Mitte, are connected with the art market (although, as we have seen, how much they actually turn a profit is another discussion). Others operate more as project spaces and do not participate in the art market, but use other activities to subsidise art activities, or costs are kept to a minimum through the types of arrangements with developers described earlier. Because of the conditions in Berlin (cheap rent, many empty office and shop-front spaces), it is easy to set up these spaces with little to no funding (which would also be impossible in London). Ingrid Wagner saw these spaces primarily as a support network for artists:

> We now have many new non-profit art spaces in Berlin, and they're run by

tape), or in one shop-front space, old television sets, deliberately placed in a row;or in a jewellery shop, twine hung from the top of the window to the bottom. These displays draw on the visual language and theatricality of art installations as much as they do shop displays. There's a suggestion that something is going on, but you're never sure what, and you probably have to already be in the know to find out. Hours are limited; a shoe store across the street (which sells one-of-a-kind shoes) is only open three hours a week, on Wednesday evening. The rest of the time, the metal gate is pulled down. After doing some web searches, I find out that Frei Ruum Galerie (the space next door to the building I am living in) specialises in 'Swiss and Berlin artists'. This sort of curatorial framing is common: at best, international exchange, and at worst, cultural nationalism or in some cases self-exoticisation. Apparently the space was set up by two Swiss artists as a 'hobby'. This would not have been possible in London, as it would have entailed substantial financial risk. You would need a proper business plan and and some reliable form of financing.

At night the galleries shut down and the bars open; spaces that were empty during the day are suddenly full of people, the doors wide open. There's a theatricality to some of these spaces: coloured lights and flickering candles. In one space I glimpse someone in a white beaded costume, and a DJ in a chef's uniform. In some ways, the possibility

> artists or art associations. They have tried to develop a sort of network. On one hand there is greater competition between individuals, and on the other hand, the people who run the arts organisations are also aware of having to stick together in the face of the big commercial gallery scene which is becoming more influential (8 May 2010).

To return to the discussion of club sociality, such spaces function as a support network for the artists who use them, but could seem insular to outsiders. This may also reflect the fragmented condition of the scene, as split into smaller and smaller niches and subgroups.

6.10 Arts Funding in Berlin

Despite its idealisation by London-based artists, arts funding is in fact extremely competitive. Grants for individual artists in Germany are administered regionally (such as through the Berlin *Land)*, while other types of arts funding (such as those for larger exhibitions and arts organisations) are administered through the federal government, or through private foundations. Artists can apply for individual work stipends worth €12,000, but only 15 people are typically successful out of 4-600 applications, according to Ingrid Wagner (Interview 8 May 2010). In addition to this, artists can only apply once every three years, in order to to limit the volume of applications without making the

of these spaces exists because of the buildings themselves: the old, 5 storey apartment blocks with shop-front spaces on the ground floor. The 'trendy' area seems quite clearly delineated; walk a block in one direction or another and it's small neighbourhood pubs, casinos and corner shops.

process unfair:

> People are only allowed to apply once every three years. We had many applications and the jury (which consists of only five people) has no mental and physical capacity find fifteen artists to fund out of thousands of applications. So we have to restrict eligibility. I feel very sorry for the artists, because as you know, artists' career can be very short and if you apply this year you have to wait two years to apply again. For some artists it's hard to find the right moment, because two years later the artist's career could already be over. (Interview 8 May 2010)

The structure of the work stipends now incorporates aspects of professional development and promotion:

> We have this catalogue for stipend recipients; each recipient gets a section. And then we have a group show at the NGBK and it's curated by a professional curator, it's set up to include a wide variety of artists, including artists who work in video (who can have an extra screening). Then we have guided tours, with guides who are involved in the art scene. Then we have guided visits for those involved in commissioning for Berlin Land. There's also a dinner with our Secretary of State and well-known people from the art scene, to give the opportunity for artists who receive our stipends to be introduced to journalists, curators, directors. Artists also have the opportunity to get to know each other,

Figure 29. *Shop only open 3 hours a week, Neukölln*.
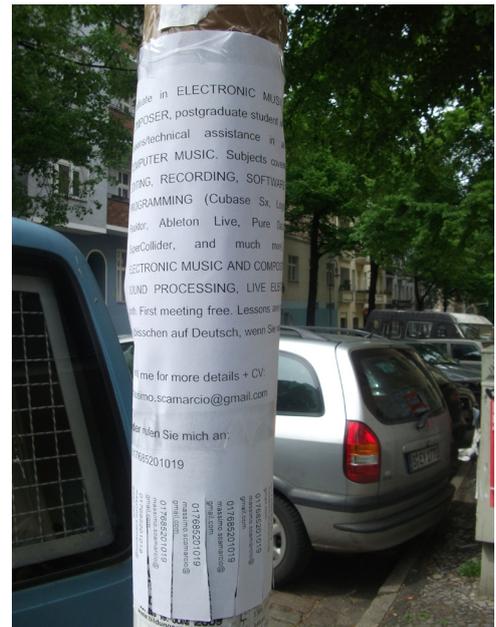
Figure 30. *Advert for electronic musician seeking work, Neukölln*.

which is important, because artists are often isolated (Interview 8 May 2010).

The NGBK exhibition was popular because 'we have many visitors for the show, many more visitors than the NGBK expected, because everybody wanted know who won and what are they doing' (*Ibid*). It is difficult to say if this focus on professional development represents an interventionist response to the increasing size and complexity of the Berlin art scene, which would make it more difficult for artists to gain visibility; or the beginnings of a Turner Prize-style situation (where people would go to an exhibition to see who won).

According to Wagner, funding for exhibitions and projects was slightly less competitive but odds were still steep: 130-140 applications, for 5-6 grants of €7-10,000, for non-commercial organisations (Interview 8 May 2010). Wagner acknowledged that 'the projects are really small and poorly funded. If I had access to more funding I would increase the amount of the grants, because it's very little money. But on the other hand you'd be amazed what people do with €7000'. She also said that it would also be supplemented with other sources: 'maybe my grandmother gives me... you know' (Interview 8 May 2010). This might be a reflection of the middle class background of the

KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN, KREUZBERG
I visit the Künstlerhaus Bethanien on Marianennplatz, in Kreuzberg. The space has
a reputation within global art world, and hosts a prestigious international residency
programme, as well as a large gallery that presents thematic group exhibitions. Part of
the building (a Victorian hospital) is squatted. During past visits this has given me the
impression of two separate realities in the same space. I come to see if this is still the
case now.

I pass over a bridge between Neukölln and Kreuzberg, and then down a couple of
residential streets (children cycling or hanging out on the pavement). Then I'm in
Mariannenplatz, a big open area with scruffy grass and crumbling concrete stairs. People
sit around the steps or lie on the grass (some half-naked as it's a hot day). The gallery
is in a large brick building, covered in graffiti. Before visiting the exhibition, I walk
around the building. There are people digging a field: a community garden. A group
of people hang around a marquee, drinking beer and listening to music. There are
paintings (small, brightly coloured, abstract) leaned against trees: an art festival, but
very different from the art I'm about to see. There's a café, but it appears to be closed.
The front door is unmarked. The signage pointing in the direction of the gallery entrance
is not too obvious. I walk in through the front door, then into the hall towards the

artists she deals with, and more generally the demographics of the Berlin art scene.

The increasing fragmentation and global flux of the Berlin art scene was increasingly
affecting the grant application process:

> In the old times we knew nearly all our applicants. And now there are many
> people we don't know, who are applying. It's a big circus here; there are many
> people who come, stay a while and then maybe leave. Others are not successful
> so they disappear from the art scene and others enter the scene. But I'm also
> amazed with how many artists the jury members know, and how they can
> remember all the new names. Because things change very quickly. (Interview 8
> May 2010).

This reflects a shift from a situation where the artists, the staff of the cultural office and
the jury members all knew each other, to one which is more anonymous and impersonal,
and is about keeping on top of a quickly changing situation, with many new artists
entering the scene all the time (the 'big circus').

Given such difficult odds, the artists described grants as essentially out of reach. For
example, Marcus described the process as too bureaucratic and said it was not suited to

gallery space. The hall is painted with a brightly coloured mural, in the style of children's illustrations, and the walls and doors are covered with stickers and tagged in marker pen.

The gallery itself is pristine. The exhibition has a combination different works: sculpture, installation, photography, video. I'm drawn to an animated video of water dripping from a foot into a cupped hand, and a short film called 'the sleeping girl', which is filmed in a newly built subdivision (it is filmed in Germany, but is much like American suburbs, with identical houses and a playground with no children). The camera slowly pans across the landscape, eventually settling on the window of one of the houses, while we hear someone leaving an answering machine message about buying insurance. When I look out the gallery window, I can see the people gardening and hanging out and drinking beer. It's a strange contrast: the cleanliness and seriousness of the gallery and the more relaxed atmosphere outside. I'm suddenly reminded of school, and how I used to gaze out the window during a particularly boring class and watch the people on the street outside, wondering about who they were and where they were going, as they walked out of my field of vision. I wonder if the people in the park and the people in the gallery ever interact. Something tells me they don't; the specialised nature of arts education, and the different forms of socialising would make it too difficult.

his art practice, which was process- rather than project-based (Interview 13 May 2010). Claudia said that she had successfully applied for grants when living in other regions of Germany (which were more generous and also less competitive) but never in Berlin; she also mentioned that because she had earned a living by teaching art, she did not really need grant money (Interview 10 May 2010).

6.11 Lives and Artistic Careers

I will now discuss how these conditions—cheap rent, high unemployment, competitive arts funding, an expanding and fragmenting scene—were experienced by the artists in Berlin. According to Simona (a painter and curator in her 30s):

> I think it's easier to live as an artist here. So if you do any other job it's very hard to find a normal job. This is a paradox because this is a town where it's easier to live as an artist than someone who works in the post office! It's not easy and you have to be the right kind of person to live this way. I have no car, I have no children... though I think if you have children they give you money. But what is interesting in Berlin is that you can survive and being an artist you have everywhere to survive. Right now I cannot live in Italy because of the money thing, I'd have to find a regular job (Interview 23 April 2010).

Figure 31. *Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Kreuzberg.*

Figure 32. *Corridor, Künstler-haus Bethanien, Kreuzberg.*

Simona suggested that it was possible to live in Berlin on very little money, and, to a certain extent, without the conventional markers of status and or life progress (such as owning a car or starting a family). This made it easier for those living bohemian lifestyles, in terms of both material conditions and social norms. For example, if it is generally less common for people to work full-time or own a car or house, then living without these things may carry less social stigma. However, Simona also acknowledged that you 'have to be the right kind of person', and be prepared to live with a degree of poverty, material hardship and self-sacrifice. To a certain degree, one must also reject certain social norms around material wealth as an index of self-worth and life progress, and develop alternative markers for success and progress in life – perhaps even a different *habitus*, although this raises the question of how much being 'the right kind of person' might depend on one's background or upbringing, as well as one's faith in aspects of the *illusio* of the cultural field, particularly those relating to the bohemian lifestyle. For Magda (another artist I interviewed) the lack of conventional success markers was actually a source of anxiety; she mentioned that nobody she knew bought new clothes or other consumer goods, and that nobody seemed to be developing their artwork or careers in a particularly ambitious way. Did her expectation for these things make her 'the wrong person'?

Later on, an activist friend of mine from London (who lives in Berlin and works remotely at his job in the UK) invites me to a discussion about the financial crisis that will take place in the squatted section of the building, which operates as a social centre. He assures me that I will get by with my limited German, as people speak different languages. The social centre is even harder to find than the gallery, and when I find it nobody seems to know, about the discussion. I then find a woman in her forties who seems to know about the discussion; she says it hasn't been organised yet but 'we'll make it happen'. |We set up the room together, pulling two dirty mattresses into the hall and setting up chairs. Others show up thirty minutes later. The conversation takes place in a mix of German, English, French and Italian, and hand gestures when we can't find the right words. They're all very curious about London, the City, the banking meltdown and the recent election. I casually ask them if there is any interaction between the social centre and the art gallery. No, they say, confirming my impression that these are still separate worlds.

Later on, I find out that the gallery and residency programme is moving to another part of Kreuzberg, to Kotbusser Straße, a *Gewerbezentrum* or commercial centre, which, according to the rather breathless language on the website, will 'house a mix of creative culture, internationalism and imaginative experimentation and so generate a stimulating

Beyond bohemian poverty and self-sacrifice, I began to see glimpses—no more than glimpses—of what could be an alternative value system. For example, Claudia, one of the artists I interviewed, mentioned her discomfort with the timing of her private view to coincide with the Gallery Weekend: 'I was really shocked at how many millionaires, how many rich people spoiled the atmosphere at the galleries. Then there was money but...' (Interview 10 May 2010). She saw this in largely negative terms: as 'spoiling the atmosphere' rather than as an opportunity for collectors to see her work. Claudia was relatively established, with a permanent teaching position, an international exhibition record and a gallerist in Vienna – and, it could be argued, did not need this attention. However, she also did not have a solo show in Berlin for 15 years; her response to this situation is significant, as it might also reflect an alternative set of values:

> Some artists would have complained when they didn't have a show for 15 years in Berlin. But I think it's OK , I think it's good to be humble, and it's good to be alone in the studio, and to work on my own things without being distracted too much by having too many exhibitions. Sometimes I'm a little sad that there were so many shows without me, on the other hand I enjoyed working on my own without being disturbed too much (Interview 10 May 2010).

Claudia pointed out the necessity of having enough unstructured time to develop her work

influence on its surroundings' (Künstlerhaus Bethanien, 2010). The launch event will be sponsored by Daimler Financial Services. What this means is that these separate realities, which once co-existed in the same space, have now become physically separate.

and said that it's 'good to be humble'. This is different from the attitude that one must exhibit as much as possible (even if it means not having any time for the work). This also reflected a different temporality: of not rushing to show as much work as possible as soon as possible, with a keen awareness of how the clock is ticking – but is instead about developing a long-term career. In a wider sense, does this point towards an alternative way of living, that is less driven by money, overwork and and the imperative to 'make it big' whilst still young? At the risk of generalising, does this suggest what the conditions in Berlin can actually make possible, and which would be much more difficult in London?

6.12 The Shortness of Careers

However, this approach contrasts quite sharply with Wagner's observation about the shortness of artistic careers, which reveals how the disciplinary codes and dynamics of the art world placed some real limits on the development of alternative career models or lifestyles. This is also why the duration of artistic careers is not only about material conditions, but also about field politics. Wagner mentioned that there was formally no age limit for the grants, but that artists would typically apply for funding until age 35 or 40, then apply for full-time teaching work. 'If not, the hard times start', she said (Interview 8 May 2010). Claudia also mentioned that because she was over forty, she did not think it

Figure 33. *Skalitzer Straße, Sudstern*.

Figure 34. *Skalitzer Straße, Sudstern*.

was worth applying for grants (Interview 10 May 2010). This raises the question of how short-term careers can be reconciled with the bohemian disregard for fame and success. Does this mean that in Berlin, can one continue to be active as an artist for many years after age 35 or 40 (because of the cheap living costs), but if one has not reached a certain level of success by that point, then one's prospects of career success, or generating any stable income from one's work begin to diminish? How does one survive beyond this point (both materially and emotionally) particularly when there is no teaching job or other stable source of income? On a psychological level, does this lead to becoming cynical and bitter, particularly after many years of self-sacrifice? Bourdieu mentions that 'it is no accident that ageing, which dissolves the ambiguities, converting the elective, provisional refusals of adolescent bohemian life into the unrelieved privation of the aged, embittered bohemian' (1993, p.50). Do the small project spaces Wagner described earlier counteract this, possibly provide support networks in the face of the (likely) possibilities of failure and disappointment? Or are they themselves subject to inter-generational tensions, with some of them possibly being seen as places for trendy young artists? To consider these questions further is outside the scope and time-scale of the project, but would be interesting to explore elsewhere.

MARCUS

The studio is in Kreuzberg, near Schlesisches Tor. I ride over the bridge from Neukölln, around the swimming pool, then along a street that runs beneath the U-Bahn train tracks. As it's a bank holiday most of the shops are closed, the gates drawn shut. I pass a large brick building (formerly a factory, not sure what it's being used for now), a tailor, a Turkish bakery with sweets piled in the window and a kebab shop. The area underneath the train tracks (a massive wrought iron structure) is barren concrete, scruffy trees and overgrown grass in planters. The address is between a pub (darkened interior, a middle-aged woman sitting outside, alone, having a cigarette) and what looks like a vegetarian restaurant with a mural painted on the front of vegetables with smiling faces. I press the buzzer, which is barely readable as there's a large piece of gaffer tape covering half of it. I walk up the stairs, thinking, is the studio actually a flat that he's sharing with other artists, each with their own room? He's left the door open on the first floor and asks me if I'd like a coffee, which he's making in the kitchen. I peek into the other rooms (the doors are open); seeing a bedroom and a clothes airer, I realise that this is actually his flat, and his studio is in one of the spare rooms. I wait for him in his studio. There's music playing, the Beastie Boys' Hello Nasty. There are paintings with complex geometric compositions hanging on one wall, and stacked against another wall. They reference Constructivism, Surrealism, scientific diagrams and digital technology, and perhaps even animation.

6.13 An Informal Economy

As I have suggested what is significant about Berlin (and is not really possible in London) is the possibility of supporting one's self without a regular source of income, and fund projects without regular funding. In London, I flagged up the relationship between high rent and professionalisation processes, particularly the requirement to take on secondary employment; I explored how this affected the artists and their work. In Berlin, the situation is very different; the low rent frees artists from the pressures to take on secondary employment and allows them to make art full-time; high unemployment means that the possibilities of finding stable arts-related work are anyway quite limited. However, the pressures and conventions of the cultural field (reflected in Wagner's comments about the shortness of careers) may limit the extent to which different material conditions might enable the development of alternative models for lives and careers. There are other questions about who would have access to the resources which would allow one to survive in a city with high unemployment.

With these issues in mind, I will now examine how, in Berlin, many artists and organisations supported themselves in informal and unconventional ways. For example, the listing of artist-led spaces listed on Berliner Pool (an information/resource site for

Marcus is in his early thirties, and is from a small town in Brandenburg ('you could always go to Berlin on the S-Bahn'). He started working as an artist's assistant while he was still a student. He's been more or less able to support himself on 'mini-jobs', usually artist assistant or gallery technician work. Many other artists he knows survive this way; if you live cheaply, you can support yourself on these short-term contracts. Even though it's hand-to-mouth at times, it's better to do this than to rely on the state, because you will be hassled.

Marcus has recently had a spell of bad luck, after what he thought would be his big break; this has made him question what he's doing. He was approached by a fairly prestigious gallerist who organised a successful solo exhibition of his work. The gallerist did nothing to promote his work, which eventually led to him leaving. The gallerist has since been affected by the credit crunch and is on the verge of folding. The lack of sales has meant that Marcus has had to do 'stupid jobs': working as as an invigilator for a show that he doesn't like, for example, and having to give up his studio and set it up in a room in his flat.

He says art in Berlin has also become more international; the international artists, he's noticed, are more networked than the German artists. He suspects this might

artists), and the Sparwasser HQ project space described most of the spaces they list as self-funded, or funded through unconventional means; for example, one gallery was financed by 'private stock trading'; another by a catering business (Berliner Pool, 2010; Sparwasser HQ, 2005). This situation was also reflected in the interviews with the artists. Magda said it was common to fund projects through odd jobs or other income sources, such as beer sales at parties (Interview 11 May 2010). Eva's shop-front project space was funded through a combination of sales of artwork, small craft/design items, sales of beer at parties and performance nights and funds raised by a charity she set up to apply for funding for the space. Other arts organisations, such as those in Neukölln, combined art exhibitions and cafés or shops, selling clothing, second-hand furniture or household goods. The cafés and shops would generate a modest income and a small audience/ customer base, although this did not seem to extend too far outside the owners and their friends. They were primarily for hanging out, and perhaps only secondarily (if at all) about making money.

It was rare for the artists I interviewed to have regular jobs, even part-time ones, which was a key difference from the London artists. Perhaps as a consequence of high unemployment and lack of arts-related jobs, it was even less likely for them to have dual

have something to do with the universality of the English language. He also mentions the access to funding that some of the international artists have, particularly the Scandinavians. In Berlin, grants are practically impossible, and don't suit his art practice: you have to show that you're working on a specific project rather than on an ongoing process.

He's also quite critical of what has happened to art in Berlin in recent years. There is now a 'Berlin style'; his description sounds similar to some of the work I've seen in the Mitte galleries. It's figurative painting, with a punk, street art inspired aesthetic, derivative of artists such as Daniel Richter. He feels that this has become an apparently successful formula for people to copy, and that it contributes to the hype around the Berlin scene.

The market also has increasing influence. Although there aren't really many collectors in Berlin, people from other cities come to buy art – and so the commercial scene continues to expand, although it's unstable; galleries open and close all the time. He has also noticed a shift in attitudes which leads people to see art as a way of getting rich and famous. 'It's not much different from any other cultural industry', he says. Even other fields within the cultural industry, like graphic design, are less about money and

careers; the job was just a temporary way to pay the bills. As Simona put it:

> A lot of people live this is, maybe they don't work, or maybe they work, there are so many restaurants that it's easy to find a job there, even if you don't speak the language, many restaurants are run by Turkish. If you want [something] you can find [it] (Interview 23 April 2010)

A job was 'if you want something you can find it'. It was not a source of identity, a meaningful activity or even a chance to develop skills or knowledge. The identity crisis that I noticed amongst the London artists ('am I an artist or a teacher/administrator/ producer?') was noticeably absent amongst the Berlin artists, as was the sense of conflict between the ideals they felt they should emulate and the reality of their everyday lives. There also was a greater pride in defining one's self solely as an artist, and a belief that taking on other forms of employment reflected a lack of seriousness. In this sense, we can also see this in terms of a greater adherence to the principles of the cultural field (in terms of identifying solely as an artist, rather than with one's employment).

6.14 Mini-jobs: Marginal Part-Time Employment as Norm
Some of the artists I interviewed worked at 'mini-jobs', or marginal part-time contracts.

celebrity than art.

He also sees this as indicative of a wider shift that has caused subcultures to become lucrative; he makes parallels with the professionalisation of the club scene, which he says has become boring and generic. He says he doesn't want to go to clubs any more, and he's become particularly bored with the clubs where everyone there is an artist. Art writing, he says, has become more promotional, more about the hype and the personalities than the work or the ideas, and the 'serious' publications (such as *Texte zur Kunst*) tend to focus on academic research and don't engage enough with contemporary practices. He also mentions Warhol's Interview magazine as creating a certain template for art publications. He says that he misses really good conversations about art, that aren't just about scene gossip.

It's this sense of questioning where our common ground lies – of wondering what has happened to culture, and the relationship of culture to capitalism. For Marcus, this questioning was provoked by his experience with the gallerist. I mention some of the insights from the interviews with academics. I say that one person has said that the present situation is just another phase of capitalism, with its particular forms of innovation and destruction; I also bring up the stories I have heard from others about club culture and city branding. This seems to confirm what he's been thinking about.

Artist-assistant work, invigilation, or art handling were common. These €400 contracts worked out to around €9-10 per hour for 48 hours of work; most artists would not work for less (Magda, interview 12 May 2010). It became apparent in the interviews that working at mini-jobs was actually the norm; regular employment was both practically impossible and also undesirable as the long hours and routine meant less time for making art. As Marcus, one of the artists explained, working at mini-jobs would also spare the state interference associated with *Hartz-IV* (Marcus, interview May 13).

The mini-job or *400eurobasis*, is a category of employment called the *geringfügige Beschäftigung*, or 'marginal job arrangement', a form of low-level part-time employment not covered by full social insurance contributions. Research shows that the mini-job is not 'an entirely new instrument of labour market flexibility but has recently grown in importance' (Ebbinghaus and Eichhorst, 2006, p.15). The employer pays full social-security contributions, but the employee is not required to pay taxes or contributions, and employees are exempted from unemployment insurance coverage (*Ibid*). Students and pensioners tend to work on mini-jobs due to the income limits for student grants and pensions; they are also popular with housewives, who who tend to be insured via their husbands' jobs (*Ibid*). Students, pensioners, and housewives generally do not fit the

Figure 35. *Street, Sudstern*.

Figure 36. *Magda's studio, Sud-stern*.

stereotypical profile of the post-war full-time employee, who still serves as the norm for employment policies in Germany. The mini-job phenomenon seems to hearken back to the 'core-periphery model' theorised in the 1980s by Atkinson in relation to Post-Fordism, where there are 'core employees' who have job security, and 'peripheral employees' work in casualised positions (Atkinson, 1985).

According to statistics from the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit* or Federal Employment Agency, over 2 million people in Germany held a mini-job on top of their main employment, and 7 million people in held mini-jobs as their only source of income (European Working Conditions Observatory, 2010). These jobs existed throughout the economy, particularly in retail and industrial cleaning (*Ibid*). The artists fit into this second category (of people who work at mini-jobs as their only source of income) but were spared the harsher aspects of casual employment (working as gallery technicians or invigilators rather than cleaners, for example) because of education or professional contacts.

None on of the artists I interviewed said they were on Hartz-IV but said they knew of others who were. I briefly spoke with a musician (ironically, who had once had a top-ten

MAGDA

It's a chilly but sunny Sunday afternoon. Magda's studio is on Gneisenau Straße, a long wide street in Sudstern which I reach after passing through a complicated junction near a church, then along a series of long wide streets lined by large stucco buildings. The pavement is made of small cut cobblestones, uneven and bumpy at times, with lumps of asphalt filling the holes (hastily filled and possibly done on the cheap), with brick bike paths. Children play in the streets; people cycle along the bike lanes, some of them with children sitting behind them on baby seats. I find myself going slower than in London, partly because I'm riding closer to the pavement than to the cars, and also because of the children playing; one of them could unexpectedly wander into the bike lane.

There are leafy boulevards along the centre of the street, the trees as tall as the houses, shielding their upper stories from view. I pass cafés, supermarkets, second-hand shops (most of them closed as it's a Sunday) and small restaurants with tables in front, although it's too cold for people to sit outside. I eventually come to a yellow stucco building covered in scaffolding, next door to a Vietnamese restaurant (two people, possibly the restaurant owners, hanging out by the door having a cigarette, nobody inside the restaurant). There are two entrances for the front door – one for the front building and the second, I'm assuming, for the workshops in the back. I buzz in and

hit) who was on Hartz-IV, and had been working as a technician for an artist-led space on a 'one-euro job', which is a form of workfare in which participants are paid €1 per hour in addition to welfare benefits; according to Mayer, many one-euro jobs are in cleaning, security and forms of service work (Mayer, 2007). He was the only person I met who actually had to deal with the more punitive aspects of unemployment and casualised work. His perspective was that at least it kept the government off his back, and that it allowed him to volunteer for an organisation that he wanted to support. One member of staff at the organisation expressed discomfort with the principle of one-euro jobs, but wanted to make the experience as pleasant as possible, and wanted the musician to feel his work was valued.

Margit Mayer suggested it was becoming increasingly common for middle-class professionals to end up on *Hartz-IV*, mentioning a researcher who interviewed an unemployed manager who was currently on benefits. She also said that:

> For German society, Hartz IV represents a drastic shift. The fundamental innovation is that if you were middle class and educated, you always had a certain status that would be reflected in the amount of unemployment benefits you qualified for. This isn't the case any more. After one year of receiving

pass through a corridor with a large tile or flagstone floor, then a small courtyard full of potted plants, then through another corridor, with junk leaning against the wall, some of it possibly from art projects, piled in the hall, and with slightly dirtier flooring. I'm in another courtyard, but this time it's paved with cement, cracked and surrounded by patches of uncut grass. Bikes are piled onto a set of bike racks, underneath an old tree. The building seems to have been recently renovated, judging by the freshness of the paint and the newness of the window and door fittings. It's surprising to see these sorts of brushed steel fixtures on a workshop building, but the windows have metal grilles across the front, an indication that this in fact a workspace.

Magda hears me walk in to the courtyard and comes to meet me. She's in her late twenties, tall and thin, with long brown hair. She's dressed for work in the studio, wearing a a dirty boiler suit and boots. The inside of the studio is lit by fluorescent lighting and has dusty concrete floors. It's full of large sculptural projects and welding equipment. Later she tells me that she makes large, labour-intensive sculptures because she feels it's important to be ambitious; she's sick of videos 'shot in the park on a sunny afternoon', or small-scale work, which she sees as symptomatic of a generalised lethargy she calls 'the Berlin soup'. At another point in time, she says, wryly, 'I thought it was Utopia but instead it's Purgatory'. At the same time, she says that she's very glad to be

> about 60% of your prior wage or salary, people who lost their job, no matter how well-paying, fall into the same category as every other welfare recipient (Interview 4 May 2010).

However, due to the social stigma, she also said it was very difficult to get any reliable sociological information about *Hartz-IV* recipients.

6.15 A Low-Wage Economy?

According to sociologists Volker Eick and Jens Sambale, there is currently no national minimum wage in Germany; this has created a low-wage economy in Germany and also in Berlin, and has also made schemes such as the one-euro jobs possible (Interview 27 April 2010). However, despite the lack of a national minimum wage, employment is still highly regulated in Germany (which includes sectoral-level wage arrangements) and flexible employment plays a fairly marginal role within the wider economy (Ebbinghaus and Eichhorst, 2006, p.16). Overall, there are significant protections for conventional employees, but few for freelancers or irregular workers. In this sense, Berlin presents a very different, even exceptional situation as compared to other German cities, in that non-traditional forms of employment are much more common; the art scene is even more exceptional.

here. She can rent a big beautiful studio here, which elsewhere would be practically impossible.

Perhaps the presence of these sculptures, their sheer size and mass, function as a kind of insistent proof that she is accomplishing something, and help ease the worry that she is not getting anywhere. The presence of stuff in her personal life also serve as markers (or possibly benchmarks) for the progress of her life and career; the absence of them makes her anxious, like she's drifting. What doesn't bother other people (or which they might even as perceive as freedom from certain pressures and social norms) seems to get under her skin. 'Nobody buys anything around here', she says. She says she and her partner have had one computer over the past few years, a gift from her parents. Nobody has an I-Phone, although they're all the rage elsewhere (she makes the gesture of fingers moving across the I-Phone's screen). People barely buy clothes. 'Is it because people can't afford it?' I ask. 'No', she says, 'people don't think it's necessary'. This is different from London, where she's from - where you'd always go to TopShop.

Nobody she knows has a regular job; instead, people tend to work at odd jobs and various forms of self-employment; one of her friends, a massage therapist, is able to access state subsidies for self-employed people. Magda works as an artists' assistant,

So are artists subject to the pressures of a low-wage economy? In a study for the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), economist Marco Mundelius described a situation where very few of Berlin's over 20,000 artists make any significant income from their work; 75% of the artists surveyed made less than €1400 per month, and many make under €700 per month (Mundelius, 2009, p.139). Artists in Berlin earn less than those in other Western German cities (Mundelius, 2009, p.140) and less than half of other self-employed people in Berlin (Mundelius, 2009, p.143). Although it might be difficult to draw definitive conclusions, Mundelius's findings suggest a low-wage economy in the arts. However, because of the values associated with the bohemian lifestyle and the access to contacts and resources possessed by many artists, a low-wage economy in the arts may not be perceived or experienced as such, as it might be in other fields.

6.16 Künstlersozialekasse: Social Insurance for Artists and Freelancers

Consistent with the employment conditions described earlier, in which full-time, stable employment continues to be the norm, the social security system in Germany has historically involved the sharing of costs between the state, individuals and employers. Because of this, health insurance, pensions and other forms of social insurance are

which she says is also common; she also does odd jobs in home renovation. The lack of routine is alienating; it means that you are never entirely working or relaxing. Nobody goes on vacation (perhaps because there is no routine to escape from); she says she hasn't left Berlin for a long time, nor have others she knows.

Magda is represented by a gallery specialising in Polish artists; she feels strange about the curatorial premise, as her work is different from the other artists because she was not raised or educated in Poland. But she doesn't make much money from sales.

She asks me how I survive in London. I mention that I am able to support myself on part-time employment and a grant, and that I live in a cheap, peripheral area, cycle everywhere, do all my shopping at the local market, and that almost all the furniture in our flat came from an email list of people giving away free stuff. 'You see? You're living the Berlin lifestyle in London', she says with a tiny smile. I say that I'm trying keep my living costs down to avoid debt in a recession and an uncertain job climate. She mentions her own student loan debt, but as though it's something distant and abstract. The job climate has always been difficult here, so it's hard to imagine how things could get worse.

based in economic and social norms such as full-time employment. Those in irregular employment fall through the cracks – including freelancers and many of those working in the cultural sector.

In response to this, a unique scheme entitled *Künstlersozialekasse* (KSK) or Artists' Social Insurance was set up in 1983 to provide protection for freelancers in culture. It is significant both as an innovative form of social policy, and also as an overall exception from the imperative to make social security dependent on full-time employment. Like other social insurance programmes in Germany, 50% of premiums are paid by individual contributions; the difference with KSK is that the remaining 20% is covered by the government, and 30% by a levy on profits from cultural industries businesses (KSK, no date). Sabine Schlüter, Deputy Managing Director of KSK, described how the scheme developed out of discussions about how self-employed people were excluded from many social insurance programmes:

> There was a discussion with young people at the beginning of their careers. It emerged that the social insurance system was set up for classical employees, but didn't work for self-employed people, as classical employees had protections but self-employed people had to insure themselves privately. The idea was

Figure 37. *Silver Future bar, Neukölln.*

Figure 38. *Silver Future bar, Neukölln.*

> that self-employed artists, lecturers, journalists, etc. should enjoy the same protections as classical employees (Interview 14 May, 2010).

Schlüter mentioned that the scheme generally has more or less been accepted by the public, as it has proven its worth after 25 years:

> The entrepreneurs also like it because they want the flexibility. When you're a freelancer, you go through periods of classic employment and periods of freelancing. A lot of creative people have said that if it weren't for KSK, they would never have entered the field because the market is so risky – they would have preferred to become classical employees (Interview 14 May, 2010).

We could see KSK as democratising the cultural field by preventing individuals from entirely bearing the risks of freelancing, particularly those without private means. Schlüter also mentioned that companies felt it gave them some flexibility; for example 'the newspapers like it because it's easier for them to have a relationship to freelancers than classic employees' (Interview 14 May, 2010). In other words, by providing incentives to hire freelancers, the scheme allowed employers to avoid responsibilities and costs associated with standard employees (which, from another perspective, could be seen as problematic, as it encouraged the casualisation of their workforce). However, she

EVA

The person I am trying to meet, an artist and curator, is at a gallery five minutes away from where I am staying. I turn the corner from the street I am staying and walk down the street, passing a small bakery specialising in organic baking, a father and son sitting outside. Surprisingly for this kind of bakery, it doesn't seem particularly up-scale; despite the *bio* logos in the window, it seems more like the older bakeries in the less trendy parts of the area. Next to it is a second hand furniture shop, and then a café (closed), with handwritten signs in English in the windows telling people somewhat sarcastically not to disturb the upstairs neighbours, who they sarcastically call the 'hoi polloi' (the uncool who need a decent night's sleep). There's a bar next door, with stickers covering the windows and the sign seemingly made of tinfoil. Near the front entrance there's a blackboard with a sign written in chalk reading (in English) 'for kings and queens and criminal queers', which I remember as a lyric from a song called 'Beautiful Boyz', a duet by transgendered singer Antony and Cocorosie. I remember the song as rather sad and wistful – but here it's like an anthem. Next to it is a notice saying (also in English) that the bar is for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people and their friends. Three or four men in their twenties (American, straight-looking) sit outside.

The gallery is next door. There's a small postcard holder on the front door, with flyers for

also mentioned that opposition to the scheme primarily came from companies, because of the 20% levy; it was also this opposition to the principle of a levy that prevented other related sectors joining the scheme or setting up a similar one. For example, she mentioned interest within the crafts sector to join KSK, but this never went any further because companies refused to pay the levy (Interview 14 May, 2010).

As might be imagined, both the expansion of the artistic field and also the increasing tendency for artists to occupy multiple roles posed particular challenges for KSK. Applicants to the scheme had to prove they were 'professional artists' to be eligible, and demonstrate minimum earnings of €3901 in arts related income, although exceptions were made for the first three years after graduation from art school. As Schlüter explained, this situation required KSK staff to determine if an applicant was a serious artist, to reconcile the unpredictability of freelancers' finances with the demands of the insurance system:

> The main concern now is about the complexity of the field. There's a question of what is art, what is literature, and how to understand it. Most people don't have only one profession. It's complex because there's the issue of how to get information, evidence and to prove that they are professional artists. A lot of artists don't like bureaucracy or having to deal with paperwork. Staff have to know about art and make decisions, and this makes it difficult. They have to ask

upcoming events: exhibitions and events with names like 'Pink Trash': performances, live music and DJs (mostly female), and social events 'for sweet homo lovers and friends'. There's a camp/trash sensibility (I'm reminded of John Waters films, punk and certainly drag), but the interior of the space suggests kitschy gentility. The front area of the space is painted pink and black, with a white counter with pink trim, and a fuchsia chaise longue near the windows.. Small drawings, paintings and craft objects are for sale. In the back, there's an art gallery with brightly coloured abstract paintings, and a pale pink chaise longue. The space is lit by a large, ornate chandelier.

She's sitting at the very back of the space, in front of acomputer. She's in her forties, has short pink hair and is wearing a white suit and white fedora. She tells me to sit on the pale pink chaise longue, makes me a coffee and offers me a raspberry tart. She's a performer: quite animated, playful, ironic and mannered; at times I'm left with the impression of a woman playing a drag queen playing a woman. She also swears at times, theatrically: 'art shouldn't be like having a house in the suburbs and making a fucking baby'. She's also quite sincere. I wonder what she thinks of me. At first, I think, she's making certain assumptions about me – does she think I'm some kind of naïve bookworm (because I've said I'm doing research) and does she assume that I'm rich (as others do), because I live in London?

> about the finances every year, and ask people to state their anticipated profits and expenses for the next twelve months, so we can make our calculations. Because they are freelancers, people often say, 'I don't know what's going to happen in the next 12 months!'. It's complex, and the relationship between the freelancers and KSK employees is a sensitive one (Interview 14 May, 2010).

This situation required KSK staff to possess a fairly sophisticated knowledge of the art field, beyond that normally required from the staff of other insurance schemes.

6.17 Increasing Competition

As Berlin was becoming more popular as a destination for artists, it was becoming more competitive. Ingrid Wagner suggested that 'We have too many artists in Germany and also from all over the world. It's a big convergence. Everybody comes to Berlin to make a career' (Interview 8 May 2010). Stefan Krätke mentioned that the Berlin cultural economy was increasingly characterised by what he called 'horizontal growth', which he defined as greater competition for fewer opportunities, shorter contracts, and greater use of freelancers (Interview 9 May 2010). In other words, the cultural economy was expanding because of the presence of more and more participants, and greater levels of activity. However, this expansion did not necessarily result in better conditions for

There are times when it seems like she's testing me – positioning me, I'm realising, in relation to class. There are a lot of people, she says, who have moved into the area as it's become trendy and she thinks some of them are living on inheritances. She also feels that artists have become wealthier as Germany has become a more unequal society. It's become harder for younger generations of artists; the ones who have money from their parents will be fine – but where will the next Fassbinder come from? At this point I end up confessing my own moments of alienation – such as the time I spoke with a small group of art history students and one of them said she'd done internships at art institutions in several different countries (beyond the means of even middle-class people), or those awkward moments after art events and lectures when people go to up-scale bars, and I always have to order the cheapest drink. These anecdotes cause her to relax and feel we're on the same page.

The use of the colour pink, she tells me, is meant to signal explicitly that the gallery is a queer, feminist space; she mentions the pink triangle. If people don't like it, if they're sexist or homophobic, they just won't come in. She started the space to counter the patriarchy of the Berlin art world (saying transgression is OK if you're male but not if you're female, except for brief moments when it's fashionable). But she doesn't want to be exclusive or dogmatic about her politics; the next show is by a straight male artist.

artists. I asked Sabine Schlüter for her views on this phenomenon, and how it might affect eligibility for the KSK scheme. She responded by saying that such concerns were outside their remit:

> SS: That's a much larger problem and it's not for a social insurance agency to deal with. Artists have to organise to get better wages. Some of them are trying but not hard enough. [The minimum income threshold for eligibility of €3901/ year] is less than what you get from Hartz-IV.
>
> KF: What do you mean, not trying hard enough?
>
> SS: There's a professional ideology of freedom. People want to be entrepreneurs, but not necessarily because they want to make money. Big enterprises know how that works. Everyone wants to be a star. It's very individualistic, and makes it very difficult to to have any kind of professional association like what exists for doctors and lawyers for example. There is no professional association for artists in Germany at the moment. (Interview 14 May 2010).

This seems like a rather defensive response, as Schlüter argued that if increasing competition causes fewer artists qualify for the scheme due to low earnings, this was not the responsibility of KSK (to lower their minimum earnings requirement, for example). To speculate, there could be other reasons (such as legal or financial requirements)

The project space is funded through a combination of sources: a percentage from sales of the work in the gallery, the smaller pieces from the shop in front, beer at public events, and through funds raised through a charity she has set up to specifically fund the space. Eva also wants to bring together art and popular culture and create both a social context and community around her work. The challenge she faces is to make sure that the art gets taken seriously, avoiding either the space developing a reputation for partying and getting drunk, or stuffy institutionalism. Although she's worked as an artist and curator for years, she originally studied communication and is aware that art doesn't exist in a vacuum—so developing this context is important.

She originally moved to Neukölln because of the social mix; people just live their lives, without the intolerance or social segregation that exists in other neighbourhoods. The area used to be a red light district and there are still traces of this, like the strip club down the street. The area is self-selecting; people move here because they want something different and special. She was based in Kreuzberg until it began to gentrify, then came here. But now she's worried about what's happening to the area – that it will become dominated by expensive bars and restaurants which will squeeze out the galleries and studios, and that the area will become more socially homogeneous as rents are increased and the vulnerable will be forced out, such as the poor and the mentally ill.

why the earnings threshold could not be lowered. Schlüter's argument about artists not organising for better wages raises other questions about the definitions of the cultural field. By using the term 'wages', she is also perhaps suggesting that if artists treated the field less as an exception to the labour market, then there would be less exploitation. She suggests that what is really needed is something like a professional association, similar to that which exists for doctors and lawyers. However, as mentioned earlier, the cultural field has historically defined itself in opposition to conventional professions. Although there has been a history of representative organisations for artists, the role of such organisations has been controversial because of how they contradict certain founding principles of the field. Another issue is that professions such as law or medicine possess a leverage that art does not, as art is seen to be neither economically nor socially useful, and the avant-garde tradition has in fact based itself in rejecting these sorts of definitions of usefulness (although it would be easier to make the economic case for the arts in Berlin than in other cities, because of the role it plays in Berlin's economy and certainly its reputation). However, I do agree with Schlüter's analysis in terms of the values of individual competition and the pressures to be famous, which do make artists easier to exploit.

There could also be a specifically generational dimension to this phenomenon of

She said tha what we actually need is a charity or NGO that will give money to the artists who come from poor families, or whose work doesn't tick all the right boxes, and which will encourage wealthy people to donate money. The state is not to be trusted as it's just too culturally conservative. 'If people with money like the atmosphere here then they need to support it', she says.

increasing competition. Stefan Krätke described the current 'creative industries' phase of the economy as symptomatic of a larger crisis, where there is less and less work available for educated young people (Interview 9 May 2010). Claudia also felt that the situation was more difficult for younger artists than it was for her generation:

> I know there are many really good artists and they have a very hard life to survive, when they have to put too much energy into another job, and the life costs become too high, then it really becomes complicated. Especially the younger generation. Their competition is bigger. Sometimes I think it would be easier for them not to live in Berlin. But in the 80s it was much easier to get success, especially in Düsseldorf, to get successful and to get a teaching job (Interview 10 May 2010).

Claudia described a situation where it was easier to earn a living as an artist in the past, due to less competition (although her comparison of two different locations, Berlin and Düsseldorf, makes this more complex). However, these inter-generational differences overall seemed less sharper than in London; there was less of a sense that older artists were living under markedly different conditions than younger artists. As mentioned earlier, this may be in part because Berlin has not experienced London's property bubble, which has had particular consequences for younger generations of artists.

CLAUDIA

We're unable to meet in person due to scheduling problems; because of this, we agree to speak on the phone.

Claudia is in her forties and makes sculpture, video and performances. The sculptures are elegant and quite minimal. She worked in theatre for a period of time after getting 'bored with galleries', but has now returned to visual art after getting tired of theatre ('it became as boring as the art market'). She studied at the art school in Düsseldorf, which during the eighties was the most prestigious in West Germany. Many people collected art in the area (something she now attributes to history and long-standing habits of the local bourgeoisie). The funding system in the region was quite generous. This meant she was quite successful with both sales and grants. But she got bored and it began to feel claustrophobic. All the people she knew in the area were artists. Because Düsseldorf was a small city, the art school dominated the local art community, as well as the art discourse, which created an aesthetic orthodoxy which was 'post-Beuys, formalist and very much connected to the art market').

In the mid-nineties, Claudia moved to Berlin, in search of a more open environment. By openness she meant the availability of space and the cheap rent, but also the liminality

6.18 Over-saturation, Fragmentation and Global Flux

As discussed earlier, the conditions in Berlin no longer exist in most other major cities in Western Europe. This means that many artists, particularly those priced out of other cities, have come to Berlin, which has affected the cultural economy in particular ways. It seems to have become increasingly difficult for critics and other intermediaries to develop a coherent overview of the Berlin art scene. Two art critics mentioned an experience of over-saturation and overload in writing about Berlin art. For example, Kimberly Bradley asked, 'is there something, anything, that defines the Berlin art world, besides the proliferation of galleries and the increasing numbers of foreign artists coming hear to score huge studios unaffordable in New York or London?' (Bradley, 2008). Jörg Heiser described a situation where:

> the sheer abundance of gallery exhibitions that demand, and probably mostly warrant, being visited, however turning any attempt to come to terms with the onslaught into an uphill battle. Friday evening alone there were at least 20 openings that would have made sense to go to' (Heiser, 2009).

If critics become overwhelmed to the point of using terms such as 'onslaught', then does

of the period immediately after 1989, where the hierarchies of the art world had not yet consolidated. There were not so many artists, and no orthodoxy had yet developed in terms of genres or styles, and there was little market interest. She still feels that there still isn't a 'Berlin School' that would make things predictable; 'you have every kind of artist: rich artists, poor artists, artists who are very intellectual, artists who are connected to the market and artists who don't want anything to do with it'. She also was drawn to the metropolitan anonymity of Berlin, which allows her to 'live my own life', very different from the insularity of Düsseldorf.

She moved to Mitte, and said her friends in Düsseldorf thought she was crazy to do so, as they just saw it as an ugly, poor and run-down part of the former GDR. Now, she says, ironically, they've all come here. Mitte now has become completely unrecognisable. She still stays because she has an old rental contract (paying €6/square metre), but most artists have left and that anyone from the former GDR has long gone. At the same time, her studio (in Wedding) is still much cheaper than in many other cities; it's 200 square metres and costs €1000/month; in London or New York she would have to pay that much every week. Living in those cities would be impossible because she'd have to worry too much about money and keeping on top of 'who is in or out'. Artists in Berlin also have not been forced out to the periphery as they have been elsewhere; they are

this make it more difficult for artists' work to gain critical attention and exposure? The globalisation of the art world has also meant that reputations no longer develop within localised art scenes, but possibly in many locations at once, as Wagner describes:

> They have their contacts from their homes or the regions they come from, the *Länder*. The Germans nearly all come here after they have finished art school in Stuttgart, Frankfurt or wherever. Then they have stipends from (for example) Stuttgart, but they live in Berlin, or the Danish people have stipends from Denmark but they live and work in Berlin, or they have their professional contacts mainly in Copenhagen, Stuttgart, or Vienna. They might be based in Berlin but don't actually exhibit so much or never in Berlin (Interview 8 May 2010).

She described a situation where, for some artists, their contacts, and even their entire careers might take place in a different place from where they live. In the case of grants, some artists even support themselves on funding from different regions or countries. The development of gallery and studio satellites and artist exchange programs also contributes to this global flux:

> For the past ten years we [the Berlin *Senat* cultural office] had phone calls from

now in places like Neukölln or Wedding, but not really the suburbs.

Moving to Berlin was a risk for Claudia. The rent was much cheaper, but she soon realised how difficult it was to make a living, particularly compared to Düsseldorf. There was very little arts funding, and very few art collectors. Others I interviewed explained this in terms of the absence of wealthy people who might collect art, unlike cities such as Frankfurt or Cologne. According to Claudia, it is because cultural traditions in Berlin are much more about theatre, music and literature and so those who could actually afford to collect art have no interest in doing so. She has gallery representation, but it has always been elsewhere.

At the same time, she's noticed the increasing influence of the art market in Berlin. She does not see this as a positive development; instead, she's concerned it might lead people to conflate market success of art works with their aesthetic and historical significance. She also feels the market perpetuates a competitive and exclusive dynamic: "A gallerist couldn't say now here are 200 very good artists in this city. A gallerist could say here are 10 very very good artists in the city and some of them are in my programme'. Her social networks involve curators or other artists, writers and people involved in theatre – but never gallerists. Her relationship with other artists is one of

all the embassies and cultural administrations of Paris and Madrid. Everyone wants to rent studios in Berlin, even places like Tokyo, they want to send artists here, because everyone who can afford it wants to have two or three studios in Berlin. So we have studio buildings for artists from Switzerland or France, but they don't even inform us; they just set up. (Interview 8 May 2010).

In the past, the art scene was perhaps once easier to map out but has now become more complex, because of the imperative and other arts organisations to have a physical presence in Berlin (for the symbolic capital reasons that Springer described). Wagner's comments may also suggest that the Cultural Office could now play a less central role in the Berlin art scene.

The most positive interpretation of this situation would be that the Berlin scene is becoming more diverse and less hegemonic so that there is less of a sense of any one particular institution, social circle, genre or artistic medium becoming dominant, encouraging a broader range of cultural expression. A more cynical reading of the situation could be that these newer project spaces and shared studio buildings exist as a kind of parallel art world, or even a kind of expat bubble. If this is the case, then what chance do foreign artists have of making a name for themselves in the Berlin scene? And

'competition and real friendship'; she says the best relationships for her are those where competition is not in the foreground.

She's been able to support herself through teaching at art schools (in other cities, never in Berlin), and feels that she is one of the lucky few with a job for life. She attributes this to her particular specialisation as a female sculptor, which was in demand at a certain point in time. This led to her developing enough teaching experience that she could continue to be employable. There's a sense of having been at the right place at the right time, as she feels that it's been easier for her generation than for younger people, who she says also have to compete harder for funding and exhibitions.

Overall, she seems happy with her own situation, although she acknowledges that for some it would not be enough (she's had exhibitions elsewhere, including international biennials, but has shown infrequently in Berlin). She says 'it's good to be humble, and it's good to be alone in the studio, and to work on my own things without being distracted too much by having too many exhibitions.'

furthermore, if contacts and careers are made in many places at once, then to what does extent does Berlin scene even exist as a local scene?

We need to consider Berlin, then, in terms of its relationship to other places, such as, for example, in terms of conditions (such as cheap rent, availability of studio space and the proliferation of project spaces) less available elsewhere. Wagner mentioned complaints from other regions that all their artists are leaving: 'The other *Länder* say that Berlin is attracting all the young artists, and we say we can't do anything about it if they want to come' (Interview 8 May 2010). Is Berlin's gain the loss of artistic communities in other cities, and does this reflect a certain lack of responsibility on the part of artists (as the impulse is to leave rather than to develop their local cultural scene)? At the same time, who could really blame artists for moving to Berlin, particularly if they are being priced out of other cities—a situation beyond their control and unlikely to change in the future? Furthermore, who could blame artists for wanting to move to Berlin for reasons like those described by Claudia, who left a relatively comfortable existence in Düsseldorf because she found the art scene stagnant and insular—and who saw the material hardship of Berlin as the necessary price to pay for a more artistically and intellectually stimulating environment?

6.19 Conclusion

In Berlin, we have seen how different social and economic conditions enable ways of living and professional identities not possible in London, or, in fact, many other European cities. These conditions have enabled artists to support themselves on marginal part-time employment, and dedicate themselves to making art full-time. Cheap rent and arrangements with landlords also make it possible for them to develop independent projects with little to no funding. Berlin is a difficult place to find work, but the resources possessed by the artists (such as education, contacts or in some cases socio-economic privilege) and the values associated with the bohemian lifestyle stop the artists from experiencing the harsher aspects of Berlin's low-wage economy.

It is partly, although not entirely due to these conditions that the Berlin artists tended to see themselves themselves differently from the London artists, and have a different relationship to the cultural field. They were more likely to identify primarily as *artists*, rather than taking on dual careers; they also seemed to have a less complicated or ambivalent relationship to the bohemian lifestyle or the traditional role of the artist. However, the integration of this very notion of the bohemian lifestyle into neighbourhood- and city-branding schemes ironically may eventually undermine the conditions which make a bohemian lifestyle possible. All this points to the question of whether these sorts of culture-driven economic strategies might one day backfire. The possibility that Berlin might someday be seen as an international hipster theme park also carries certain risks, in a city in which reputation is so reliant on subcultural capital.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how social conditions, particularly housing and living costs, can affect who can be an artist, who can sustain an artistic career, and the ways in which one can be an artist. This project has explored the different ways in which people have attempted to fulfil this role, negotiating conditions which make it easier or more difficult to live as artists. Taking an interdisciplinary, multi-scalar approach, I have explored the social conditions of cultural production as the inter-relation of several different factors:

Material conditions play an important role in shaping the time and space artists have for their work, particularly those without access to family support or private means. Housing, rent and the cost of living are of particular importance, in terms of how they affect the possibilities of surviving on part-time and freelance work. The cost of commercial rent and the availability of vacancies also enable or limit the development of independent art spaces.

Field politics (in this case, the politics of the cultural field) shape our understanding of the role of artists and intermediaries, expectations of how artists should live and work, and the duration of artistic careers. The principles of 'vision and division' which separate the cultural field from other disciplines (Bourdieu 1997, p.96), can frame how those within the art field (such as artists and intermediaries) perceive themselves and each other. These principles also shape how those outside the field perceive art and artists (such as, for example, the fantasies surrounding the bohemian lifestyle). It is also these field politics which make the artists' professional identities such a vexed question, as the identity of the artist has developed, in many ways, in opposition to conventional definitions of work and professional identity. Field politics also play a role in shaping the possibilities and limitations for thinking and speaking about culture and social

conditions; as I will discuss later, this became apparent during the interviews.

Policies also play an important role in the social conditions of cultural production. Cultural policies affect the venues where artist present their work, artists' access to funding. Social policies, particularly those connected with housing, urban planning and welfare, have concrete effects on artists' ability to support themselves, particularly those who do so on part-time and freelance work. Policies also function as discourse, by framing activities in certain ways (such as cultural activities or irregular forms of work), affecting how we think and speak about them. Examples of this include the creative industries and social exclusion policy discourses discussed in the second chapter, which both frame culture in terms of employability and economic development. These affirm certain long-standing principles of the cultural field, such as aspects of the genius myth (articulated within the terms of intellectual property generation); they are at odds with other principles, such as the rejection of utilitarianism. Social exclusion policy presents regular, full-time employment as a social norm and the primary means of social integration, with consequences for those in irregular works situations.

I have also considered **subjective issues**, including artists' sense of themselves, their futures, their relationship to other artists and their relationship to place. This is a question of the *habitus* (such as, for example, how the London artists saw their own transience as normal and natural); it was also a question of how artists negotiated their relationship to the cultural field (in terms of their sense of comfort or discomfort in perceiving or defining themselves as artists). It is also not a question of emotional or psychological matters but also of the bodily effects of precarious work in culture, such as stress, tiredness or burnout.

I have explored these issues on a variety of scales, including macro-level analyses of policy, as well as a micro-level explorations of individual lives (through interviews and biographical narrative descriptions), and the everyday experience of urban space (explored through the descriptions of my travels through the neighbourhoods in both cities). In London and Berlin, these factors intersected in different ways that affected how people could become artists and sustain artistic careers, as well as how artists saw themselves and their work, lives and jobs. The primary focus of this project has been on the relationship between housing and professional identities. In London, the high living costs created pressures on artists to professionalise (complicating their relationship to the field), whilst in Berlin, it was easier for artists to live a bohemian lifestyle and identify first and foremost as artists in the conventional sense.

I will now discuss the significance of material conditions, and, in particular housing, for artists. Housing was first flagged up during the London interviews, in which the artists described the effects of the high cost of housing, frequent evictions and gentrification processes on their lives and work. Being forced to move frequently made it very difficult for the artists to develop any sense of stability or links with local artistic communities; the high cost of living required the artists to work at secondary jobs, which limited their time for making art. As part of the London fieldwork, I also examined research by the GLA Economics, which, in its London Living Wage reports, flagged up the cost of housing as a particularly important factor in the living standards (2007; 2008). This indicated that some of the conditions experienced by the London artists were also experienced by other residents (challenging the assumption that artists are subject to entirely different conditions).

Certain cultural activities exist outside conventional employment and renumeration

structures; as mentioned earlier, they self-directed, are frequently unpaid and in some cases even constitute a loss of income. This means they are particularly susceptible to developments which lead to the loss of unstructured free time, such as the conditions of (normalised) overwork experienced by the London artists, with the most extreme case being that of the artists who rented studios but had no time to spend in them. Under these circumstances, supporting one's self on free-lance or part-time work became particularly difficult. It was only those in exceptional circumstances (such as Robert, who was squatting and receiving money from his parents) who were able to dedicate themselves full-time to their work. Although the London sample was too small for drawing definitive conclusions, there also seemed to be a certain inter-generational dimension to this, in terms of how the younger artists lived in unstable and expensive housing, and were increasingly experiencing conditions of overwork. This is why issues such as housing and the cost of living matter for artists – because they had a particular bearing on who could be an artist or sustain an artistic career, and the way in which one can be an artist. Being an artist when faced with conditions of overwork can become very difficult.

The situation was very different in Berlin, where having enough time and space for art was much less of a concern. The low rent and rent control in Berlin enabled the artists to make art full-time and support themselves on 'mini-jobs' or other forms of casual, contingent employment. They were also able to set up project spaces on little to no money, both because of the cheapness and availability of commercial spaces, as well as arrangements with landlords such as those described by Springer. It also needs to be acknowledged that the contacts, education and other resources possessed by the artists (such as jobs or access to arts funding in other German regions or countries) made it possible to survive on this sort of contingent employment without experiencing the

poverty faced by some of the other Berlin residents.

The housing situations in London and Berlin had a bearing on the artists' professional identities (which is where material conditions intersected with field politics and subjective concerns). As discussed, the London artists tended to hold secondary jobs, typically in arts education or arts management. These types of employment tended to require considerable skills and training (perhaps reflecting a situation in which professional-level employment required to pay such high living costs). In keeping with this type of employment, the London artists tended to identify more with their paid employment and saw it as personally meaningful. This meant adopting hybrid professional identities, such as, for example, seeing themselves as both artists and also curators, producers, or museum educators. In some cases, the artists saw this hybrid identity as an outcome of the expansion of the cultural field, and of avant-garde developments which had specifically challenged aspects of the Romantic genius myth.

However, this hybrid identity could also be an anxious one. As discussed earlier, the artist's professional identity, in many ways, has historically been a rejection of many definitions of classical professionalism. This meant that in some cases that artist identities sat uneasily with work identities (where they frequently played the role of cultural intermediaries). Here we can return to the question of field politics and remember that, as Bourdieu has discussed in relation to the charismatic ideology, the figure of the artist is in many ways defined in opposition to that of the intermediary: the artist must embody the unique, authentic experience which is then marketed by the intermediary. Because of this, the aspects of the interviews which engaged with this hybrid role (for example, where I asked the artists about exhibitions they had curated), could sometimes be awkward, with the artists changing the subject to their individual

art practices, or asserting that it was more important to focus on their 'own work'.

The pleasure and personal fulfilment that the London artists found in their paid employment at times placed them in a conflicted relationship with their identities as artists. In a more general sense, this also placed them at odds with certain principles of the field (in this case, the expectation that they should define themselves first and foremost as artists, and not really seek meaning or fulfilment in their jobs). Some of them still seemed to carry the expectation to dedicate themselves full-time to their art careers, even though this was not practically possible for many of them. This led some of them to question whether or not they were 'serious' or dedicated artists, rather than being cut out to be educators or administrators, for example. It led others to become more reflexive, questioning whether or not traditional definition of the artist might be in fact outdated (as in Sally's caricature of the artist as someone who sits in the studio drinking red wine all day).

Berlin presented a very different situation; due to the high unemployment it was actually difficult to find regular work, let alone the professional, arts-related jobs at which many of the London artists worked. However, in many cases the Berlin artists also did not find full-time stable employment, let alone a second career, desirable. A job was something one would do when one needed some money; ' if you need something you can find [it]', but never a source of personal fulfilment. Taking personal satisfaction in one's job, in fact, was looked on with a degree of suspicion, a sign that one was not really serious or dedicated, and perhaps orientated towards a consumer lifestyle rather than bohemian poverty. There did seem to be a certain proud asceticism in living without certain material comforts, which manifested itself as projections on me during the interviews (it was assumed by some that I was wealthy and complicit with certain

consumer values, simply because of the fact that I lived in London and worked part-time). The Berlin artists also seemed less anxious about being 'serious artists' because their material circumstances did not contradict their expectations of themselves or the standards of the field (such as, in this case, making-art full time). However, they were also less reflexive about the aspects of the field (such as the genius myth or the bohemian lifestyle) than the London artists. The *illusio*, for the Berlin artists, seemed generally to be more intact. However, some of them did acknowledge that it would not be possible for them to live and work full-time as artists in other cities (which was why they had moved to Berlin in the first place).

If we see housing, field politics and subjective issues as interconnected, this leads to the question of whether the conditions in Berlin in fact enable ways of living that are less about the 'one big hit' model of success, or the stressed-out multi-tasking I saw with some of the London artists, and the struggle for any time and space to make art. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I saw some flashes or glimpses of this possibility during the Berlin fieldwork, such as Claudia's observation that she would rather have time to work in the studio rather than be distracted by too many exhibitions. This suggests a more relaxed approach to life, work and career. My own experience of the city, too, was different from London in significant ways (although I acknowledge the artificiality of the situation, as I was there temporarily and had no external responsibilities). The situation seemed easier and much more relaxed; I travelled shorter distances to visit the artists' studios; in London these sometimes took over an hour. I saw this as not simply about London's greater geographical scale; it was also a reflection of the fact that the Berlin artists could afford to live and work fairly centrally, in contrast to the peripheral neighbourhoods in London. This might suggest the possibility of an easier and more relaxed life, in which people (not only artists) would

have more time and energy for hobbies, entertainment, friends and family, political

activities, etc.

However, it is not only a question of simple economic or social determinism; as

discussed earlier, this project was about how material conditions intersected with field

politics and other factors. The bohemian lifestyle and values which played such an

important role in Berlin's cultural scene were in fact laced through with hierarchies and

value judgements. I have mentioned the pride associated with bohemian asceticism I

encountered during the interviews; in the previous chapter I applied Sarah Thornton's

analysis of subcultural capital to Berlin, as well as Bader and Scharemberg's and Sadr

Haghigian's observations to Berlin's music and art scenes. It is also important to

remember that bohemianism is not synonymous with rejecting values such as individual

competition or careerism. Also, if we return to Bourdieu's charismatic ideology, we can

also consider how it is in fact a professional requirement for artists, to a certain extent,

to embody and perform the figure of the bohemian (which was the case in one of the

interviews, which I have not included because it generated so little material). There is

also the irony that the bohemian lifestyle, and the unique conditions in Berlin that

enabled it, were being marketed as a 'city brand' by policy-makers and property

developers. These activities may have the effect of undermining the very conditions that

make a bohemian lifestyle possible.

The situation is further complicated when we consider who has access to the Berlin

lifestyle. As I have suggested earlier, the artists seemed able to survive in a city with

high unemployment and a low-wage economy without experiencing some of its harsher

effects. This was because, for some of the artists (as well as for some of the project

spaces), their networks extended to other cities or countries, allowing them access to

income (through work, arts funding or sales). In other words, it required either a degree of resources and contacts, or independence from the local economy, or both. The phenomena of remote working and mobile lives are not, of course, not limited to Berlin or to artists, and to explore them fully is beyond the scope of this text. However, it is important to ask questions about a lifestyle, which, with all its apparent poverty, is only available to highly networked and mobile people.

In exploring the question of who can support themselves on contract or freelance work, the question of the welfare state becomes unavoidable. I have examined how aspects of the welfare state has enabled independent cultural activities, particularly in situations where it is difficult to attract support through arts funding or the market. This included the state support experienced by some of the older London artists; the rent control in Berlin, which prevented the property market from becoming entirely financialised, and, to a certain limited extent, kept housing affordable and made it possible for independent spaces to exist without regular arts funding or start-up capital; this also included schemes for freelancers such as KSK. These measures made it possible for artists to engage in precarious cultural work without bearing all the risks as individuals, and reveals how independent cultural activities, even those perceived as by creative industries policy-makers as entrepreneurial activities, are in many ways underscored by forms of state support or regulation (which runs counter to their characterisation as entirely privatised activities).

However, we should also remember that the function of the welfare state is also very much one of population management, if we remember the discussion of governmentality and biopower from the second chapter. I have discussed how, during the post-war period, the welfare state reinforced aspects of post-war social and

economic norms (particularly stable, full-time employment), penalising those who did not fit. I also discussed how neoliberal reforms, such as those inspired by social exclusion policy, have had the effect of further entrenching these norms—particularly full-time, paid employment as both a means of social integration and the only form of financial stability. The result is a contradictory situation in which current social policies entrench older social and economic norms, at a time when these norms are less reflective of contemporary experience (possibly functioning as Beck's "zombie categories"). The effects of these reforms is that working poverty becomes an increasingly common condition: where people are employed full-time but struggle to make ends meet, with a minimal safety net if one is out of work. Under these sorts of circumstances, who has time or energy to make art?

This then leads directly to the following question: is it possible to defend those aspects of the welfare state that enable independent cultural activities without wanting to return, nostalgically, to the post-war settlement—and particularly the more socially conservative elements which spurred the sixties rebellion? It would be interesting to return to Lazzarato and other *Post-Operaismo* theorists discussed in the first chapter, who have specifically theorised the sixties rebellion towards the post-war settlement and its recuperation by neoliberalism. Despite the anti-statist tendencies of some of these thinkers, we can see the proposals for a guaranteed income as an attempt to address this very question (Corsani and Lazzarato 2002, 2004; for an earlier critique of this see Wright, 1995/96). Imagining a form of welfare which does not reproduce the status quo, and is also not vulnerable to the managerial reforms discussed earlier (which would seek to limit access, for example, to those who are good entrepreneurs of the self) continues to be a crucial task.

On a more pragmatic level, Ingrid Wagner mentioned that, in order to prevent artists from being eventually forced out of Berlin, it would be necessary for different government departments to work together. She acknowledged that this would be difficult because they had different, conflicting agendas, mentioning that the cultural office would have different ideas than what she called the 'economic department' (Interview 8 May 2010). This suggests the kind of broad, lateral approach that might be necessary, which would involve thinking about the intersections between culture, housing and urban planning rather that treating them as separate. However, by pointing out that different departments have different agendas, Wagner also reveals a fundamental contradiction around culture-driven economic development: situating culture at the centre of economic growth subjects cultural producers to the damaging effects of economic growth (such as those experienced by the London artists), with the effect of eventually side-lining small, independent cultural producers.

This project has thus led to me to observe the effects of social conditions on cultural production, specifically the role they play in shaping who can be an artist and the ways in which they can be an artist. It has involved mapping the connections between material conditions, field politics, policies and subjective issues. This process has involved confronting two particular disciplinary impasses. The first impasse is connected to a reluctance to deal with social conditions within the arts, because they are seen to be outside properly aesthetic discussions (and because of this, outside the remit of the field). We can understand this as stemming from the disciplinary conventions of the field discussed earlier, particularly artistic autonomy and the 'economic world in reverse' (as theorised by Bourdieu). These conventions create the perception that the cultural field operates by different rules than the rest of society, and because of this, a reluctance to connect the conditions of cultural production to wider social conditions.

There has also been a converse tendency within social research to ignore the conditions of artists. Artists have also been seen as a rather homogeneous group (as in the discussions of Menger and Abbing in the first chapter), rather than as individuals with different degrees of privilege, education or resources, or, in some cases, conflicting interests and ambitions. Urban geography, with which this project shares some common ground, has generally tended to either celebrate artists as agents of culture-driven economic development (as in Florida or Landry), or to dismiss them as agents of gentrification (as in Smith). One of the tasks of this project, then, has been to consider the complexities and nuances of the relationship between culture and spatialised inequality.

It was not only in the literature where I encountered these disciplinary impasses. To a degree, they also played out within the interview material, framing the ways in which the artists discussed their social conditions. This raised certain questions about my relationship to the artists I interviewed, which I will now discuss. In a chapter entitled 'Understanding' in *The Weight of the World,* Pierre Bourdieu examines the responsibilities of his role as a researcher, and his relationship to the people he interviews (1999). He describes the interview as an intrusive and awkward process, in which respondents open themselves up, sometimes to the point of answering silly or inappropriate questions with surprising honesty, patience and kindness. It is an attempt to simultaneously ask questions 'which might fall "naturally" into the flow of conversation, and also following a kind of theoretical "line" (Bourdieu, 1999, 610).

Bourdieu also brings up social proximity within the interview process as a method for minimising the symbolic violence through asymmetrical power relations between researcher and subjects. Bourdieu points out that social proximity (in which 'a young

physicist questions another young physicist, or an actor another actor; an unemployed worker another unemployed worker') can lead the interview process to become 'a double socio-analysis, one that catches and puts the analyst to the test as much as the person being questioned' (Bourdieu, 1999, 611). In this project, I was in a similar situation of social proximity, as an artist-researcher interviewing other artists. The interview process thus involved similar processes of self-interrogation. In particular, it meant confronting my own perceptions of the cultural field, as someone who had originally trained as an artist and was quite familiar with many aspects of the cultural field, but who had more recently come to question some of its most basic principles: artistic autonomy, the 'economic world in reverse', and the values of individual competition, resourcefulness and self-reliance that dovetailed with certain neoliberal imperatives. The *illusio* was not intact for me; in a sense I was already standing with one foot outside the field. As discussed earlier, I was also aware of how the field set limits and boundaries on discourse (particular concerning social conditions), due to my experience within it.

What did it mean, then, to interview people for whom the *illusio* was still intact, and who had not undergone a similar questioning process? It made the interviews an uncomfortable process. In some cases it meant encountering platitudes or banal assertions of the genius myth and the uniqueness of art, or attempts by the artists to impose limits when they thought the conversation was moving away from talking about art, or (in some cases) activities which did not strictly fall within the framework of art production. In the most difficult interviews, I encountered arrogance, self-centredness and *prima donna* behaviour. In these situations, I had to deal with a complete unwillingness to engage with the questions or be reflexive, because the artists were trying to perform for me in ways that would present them as intriguing figures, perhaps

hoping for an article that might promote their work—an attempt to perform the charismatic ideology. The challenge, then, was how to deal with these sorts of attitudes and behaviour, and my own discomfort as a researcher (which in many ways was the discomfort of familiarity and social proximity), without doing symbolic violence to the people I interviewed (such as, for example, by assuming a position of superiority).

Another issue came up, specifically during the Berlin fieldwork. At the same time as I was interviewing the artists, I was also interviewing academics and other policy experts who told me how the myths around the artists' lifestyle were used to promote gentrification, city-branding and other larger processes which could eventually make the situation more difficult for artists. How does one reconcile these sorts of interviews (which are about examining the cultural field within a wider social and economic context, and which involve some degree of demystification) with interviews in which people are still very much drawn to the artist's lifestyle, and in a sense still very much believe in it? It means walking a very fine line between on one hand keeping the larger issues in perspective, and on the other hand 'an openness to the 'singularity of a particular life history' (Bourdieu, 1999, 609). This means being attentive to the artists I interviewed, actively listening to their life stories, hopes, fears and motivations; it meant resisting the temptation towards crude economic or social determinism. It also means seriously considering the role played by the *illusio* within individual circumstances, rather than dismissing it as false consciousness. For example, does thinking of one's self as an artist, as living an artist's life, make instability and financial insecurity more bearable? To implicate ourselves, do we subscribe to such different beliefs as academics?

As mentioned in the third chapter, each interview was a negotiation process in which

both the interviewee and I tried to find something useful. I noticed that the artists who were going through a period where they were asking themselves questions (such as because they were considering changing career, or were undergoing life changes) were most willing to be reflexive – and also the least likely to want to perform the figure of the artist for me. Is it because there was less at stake for these artists in terms of the possibility that I could promote them in some way? Is it because they were also in the process of stepping outside the field, even if this was temporary, only long enough to see its limits and boundaries? Were they perhaps seeing themselves in me (the converse of the interviewer recognising him/herself in the interviewees) and responding to my own doubt, questioning or reflexivity?

Conclusion

Through exploring the inter-relatedness of all these issues, I have attempted to grasp the complexities of the social conditions of cultural activity. I have explored the inter-connections between subjective concerns and material conditions; I have combined different approaches (policy analysis, narrative descriptions, interviews, images) and different scales. I have also considered theories from different disciplines, including those which we would not think of as directly pertaining to culture. I have tried to avoid both romanticising the artists (and thereby mystifying the social conditions in which they work) and also seeing them simply as the product of social and economic conditions, which would mean being much less attentive to the specificity of their work and lives. Developing this methodology has also been a challenge: how does one capture the experience of the interviews, journeys through the city, and then combine this with analyses of theories and policies, some of which only peripherally address the situation of artists? How does one study individuals who are very different from each other, have uncertain living arrangements, and, in some cases may be doing something

very different with their lives in a few years? In many ways, it has felt like a process of improvisation and *bricolage,* which has specifically developed out of the challenges of researching this sort of material. It has also come out of my experience as an artist, and working and thinking visually. However, it is in fact these very aspects that have made this approach so precisely well suited to the studying complexities and uncertainties of the social conditions of cultural production, and one I hope to develop further.

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*Pseudonyms were used for the artists in order to preserve anonymity.