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**POSTINDUSTRIAL IDENTITIES IN THE
CULTURAL AND CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES: EXPLORING
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE AND
HAMBURG**

M. J. Durey

Doctor of Philosophy

2019

**POSTINDUSTRIAL IDENTITIES IN THE
CULTURAL AND CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES: EXPLORING
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE AND
HAMBURG**

Matthew John Durey

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Northumbria
at Newcastle for the degree of
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Abstract

This thesis explores the construction and practice of postindustrial identities of people working in cultural and creative industries in the cities of Newcastle, UK and Hamburg, Germany. Cultural and creative industries have become an important area of research in recent years, and are regarded by many commentators as archetypes of emerging patterns of work in the new postindustrial economy. In seeking to appeal to people who work in cultural and creative industries, cities have experienced, and continue to experience, significant cultural and spatial transformations in order to 'rebrand' themselves as 'cultural' or 'creative' cities with the right material, economic, and cultural landscapes to attract cultural and creative workers. Although it is argued people working in cultural and creative industries are drawn to particular urban environments because of the importance of place for practices of identity construction, very little research concerned with the cultural and creative industries has paid attention to issues of identity.

Drawing on mixed-methods qualitative research comprising ethnographic work, narrative interviews, and a method of urban encounter inspired by Walter Benjamin, this thesis makes a case for understanding these 'artistic identities' as constructed through negotiations in relation to a social, cultural, and spatial landscape influenced by the dialectical relationship between art and economy, and the romantic image of the autonomous, independent artist.

This thesis suggests that the artistic identities of people working in the cultural and creative industries are contradictory, ambivalent, and heterogeneous, and significantly influenced by material, social and cultural conditions of work related to the postindustrial economy and the transformations of urban space.

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Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas, and contributions from the work of others.

Ethical clearance for the fieldwork undertaken as part of this research has been approved. Approval was sought and granted from the Faculty Ethics Committee on the 14th March 2016.

I declare the word count of this thesis to be: 87, 164 words.

Name: Matthew Durey

Signature:

Date: 14th March 2019

Postindustrial Identities in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Exploring Newcastle upon Tyne and Hamburg

Matthew J. Durey

Chapter I: Introduction

‘No doubt the artist is a child of his time; but woe to him if he is also its disciple, or even its favourite.’ Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*¹

I.1 ‘The Eye of the Storm’: Exploring Cultural and Creative Industries and Identity

In recent years, the cultural and creative industries (hereafter CCIs) have become a key area of interest amongst geographers, sociologists, and other scholars of urban culture. The changes to the economy and both the character and the organization of work in the postindustrial ‘knowledge economy’, combined with the (entirely interrelated) rise in interest in cultural and creative work amongst policymakers and urban planners, influenced in large part by the UK New Labour government’s emphasis on ‘creativity’ as an engine of economic growth in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the work of urban policy prognosticators such as Richard Florida (2002b, 2014) and Charles Landry (2000), have placed CCIs at the centre of numerous academic debates. Building on arguments which suggest that in postindustrial society the economy is becoming more cultural – and the cultural sphere in turn is being subsumed within the economic – Andy Pratt (2008b: 95) has suggested that ‘the study of the cultural industries presents the best opportunity for a case study in the “eye of the storm” of economic-cultural change.’ Moreover, the significance of CCIs lies not simply in the fact that production is becoming more cultural, but, as Pratt (2008b: 96) suggests, if ‘the economy is becoming more

¹ Schiller, F. (2004[1795]) *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Trans. R. Snell), New York: Dover. p.51.

“culturalised,” then changes in the cultural industries might serve as an interesting weathervane that could mark the future of the whole economy’.

The implications of the ‘culturalization’ of the postindustrial economy go further afield however, and have had particularly significant bearing on recent postindustrial urban development and regeneration, as questions of culture and cultural production and consumption have become increasingly implicated in the shape of urban landscapes (Gospodini, 2004; Miles, 2010; Zukin, 1995, 2009).

Despite the significance of CCIs for understanding how people relate to work and society in a growing sector of the postindustrial economy (and being potentially indicative of more general future trends) and the fact that it is a central aspect of Florida’s arguments concerning the ‘creative class’ – one of the most influential theories in recent policy and urban development practice – the concept of identity, and the significance of questions of identity, has received very little attention in the academic literature on the CCIs (notable exceptions exist in the work of Bain [2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005], Banks [2009, 2010a], and McRobbie [2002, 2016b, 2016b]).

I.1.1 The Research

This research seeks to explore the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs through comparative research in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK and Hamburg, Germany. These two European port cities have a significant amount of history in common, but their trajectories since the second half of the 20th century have taken very different paths into their postindustrial forms. Both grew in wealth and stature through industrial manufacturing and maritime trade, becoming significant features of their regional economies and developing strong local cultures and identities as a result. In recent years both cities have made significant efforts to (re)brand

themselves as cultural and/or creative cities, and have experienced a significant amount of material and spatial transformation directly connected to these efforts. But while Newcastle experienced significant and rapid deindustrialization in the later decades of the 20th century, developing a postindustrial economy out of necessity to replace its lost industrial one, Hamburg's postindustrial economy has developed in parallel with its still successful industrial manufacturing sector and industrial port. Consequently, while both cities can be seen as 'successful' postindustrial cities, with successful – and growing – cultural and creative sectors, they display marked differences in how CCIs have impacted upon their cultural and material landscapes, and in the conditions and challenges faced by cultural and creative workers living and working within them.

Consequently, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) How are postindustrial identities constructed and performed by people working in cultural and creative industries in Newcastle and Hamburg?
- 2) How are these identities influenced by transformations to the urban environments in which they are constructed and performed?

The research seeks to address these questions through mixed-method qualitative research encompassing narrative interviews, ethnographic observations, and a method of urban encounter inspired by the work of Walter Benjamin carried out in the cities of Newcastle, UK and Hamburg, Germany.

I argue that the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs are best understood as dialectical processes of identification, the construction and performance of which entails negotiations with the ambivalent and contradictory relationship between the material and

socio-economic conditions of the postindustrial cultural economy of capitalism and the discourses of individualism, autonomy, and creativity encapsulated in romantic notions of ‘an artistic life’: what I call here the *dialectic of art and economy*. Drawing on a series of illustrative vignettes from the fieldwork in Newcastle and Hamburg, I show how these negotiations, and the experiences of the dialectic of art and economy, while particular, and context-dependent, reveal important insights into the underlying contradictions and ambivalences which shape cultural and creative workers’ practices of identification and their experiences of changing postindustrial urban landscapes.

This thesis draws on, and contributes to, three highly contemporary fields of research: identity, CCIs, and postindustrial cities. It is concerned primarily with the intersection of these three issues – although some of the issues it raises are of more general interest to one or more of these themes. As it draws together a number of fields of research, it also inhabits an interdisciplinary space in regards to the themes, literatures, theoretical frameworks, and interpretive approaches which inform it. I offer no apology for this eclecticism: indeed, I believe it strengthens the arguments I make throughout the thesis, and makes the results – limited though they are – of interest and relevance to a broader audience. As I hope any reader, by the time they reach the conclusions, will be aware, I am suspicious, and critical, of classifications, and reluctant to assign labels whenever not strictly necessary. That notwithstanding, I see the arguments of this thesis contributing (to various extents) to debates in social and cultural geography, urban sociology, cultural studies, and urban policy and planning.

In the remainder of this introduction, I want to establish a foundation for the discussions that follow throughout by addressing two foundational and interrelated issues: the question of postindustrial society, and of urban comparison.

I.2 Postindustrial Society

While there is much debate, there is some sense of agreement that a combination of technological, social, and cultural transformations around the end of the 20th century have had significant consequences for the experience of life across advanced western economies and, in some characterization, around the globe. Various described by grand terms such as late modernity, postmodernity, or late capitalism; and characterized by various processes such as time-space compression (Harvey, 1989a), acceleration (Rosa, 2015), globalization (Held *et al.*, 1999; Held and McGrew, 2000), post-Fordism (Amin, 1994), and postindustrialism (Bell, 1974) to name a few significant labels, these characterizations seek to capture what are unquestionably significant transformations in socio-economic organization, culture, and the relationships between people and society from the latter half of the 20th century.

While these general transformations and the grand narratives they have inspired reflect some important developments, they should not be taken as universal. These processes and transformations are all contradictory and ambivalent in nature, driven by interconnected, dialectical forces which are expressed differently in different socio-spatial contexts. Postindustrialization is a tendency across societies of the western global north, largely enabled because of the increasing industrialization of eastern economies such as China or those of the global south. Within Western Europe and North America, where deindustrialization is most advanced, it has occurred and continues at a markedly uneven pace. In some areas, it represents less the total deindustrialization of countries or regions but rather the geographical relocation of industrial sectors of the economy from centre to periphery. At the same time, globalization 'does not reflect a simple linear developmental logic' (Held *et al.*, 1999: 27), but rather multiple uneven processes of interrelation, leading to ambivalent and hybridized social, cultural, political and economic forms as the global and the local become increasingly implicated in each other (Byrne, 2001; Castells, 1996). Rosa (2015) is at pains to point out that although acceleration

describes a trend throughout modernity, acceleration in some places or aspects of life has always gone hand in hand with deceleration in others. While recent decades have seen the rise of consumer society (e.g. Bauman, 2005; Clarke, 2003; Lury, 2011) (which is closely associated with the move from industrial to postindustrial society), and consumption, it has been asserted, has come to replace production as the principal driving force of society, as Bauman (2005) has suggested: it is not that production does not occur in postindustrial consumer society, nor that consumption was not fundamental in industrial society, but rather that the form that the relationship between these two features has changed, and with it, something deeply significant in the character of society.

There is no place for a discussion of the merits of these various explanatory models, merely a regrettably brief statement to justify the decision to stick with one single term (postindustrial) rather than considering the merits of them all. The reasons for this are thus: (i) in what follows, although I am using the term to encapsulate the general trends of time-space compression, acceleration, globalization and others, my emphasis is on *the change to the relationship between individuals and their societies*, expressed most significantly in the way in which culture, work, and identity are organized and inter-related in everyday experiences. This, I would argue, has more to do with the kind of social organization that characterizes society and the relations – and identities – that it generates than the impact of time-space compression, or post-Fordist regimes of accumulation; (ii) I am concerned with the experiences of people working in particular industries, or industry sectors, which are particularly associated with (indeed, as many have argued, exemplary of) emerging postindustrial economies; and, (iii) I am interested in the spatial transformations to urban environments brought about by deindustrialization and reurbanization, which are directly related to the developing postindustrial economies of those cities.

In making these points, I wish to emphasize that none of these factors are exclusively the result of the shift to a postindustrial economy and nothing to do with, for example, acceleration in structural change or interaction (Rosa, 2015), the increasing interdependence of cities around the world due to globalization (Castells, 1996; Held *et al.*, 1999), or the economy of signs and space (Lash and Urry, 1994); all of these things are interconnected, and are, as I understand them, expressions of the same processes of transformation which, for the reasons above, and out of convenience, I signify here by the term postindustrial society.

I.3 Comparative Urbanism

A large amount of literature concerned with postindustrial society has focused, and with good reason, on the experience of cities (e.g. Amin and Thift, 2002, 2007; Byrne, 2001; Clarke, 2003; Jones and Evans, 2008; Läßle, Mückenberger and Oßenbrügge, 2010; May, 2018; Musterd and Murie, 2010; Heineberg *et al.*, 2017). It is widely accepted that cities are finding new significance within the globalized, postindustrial world (Byrne, 2001; CFC, 2016; Madanipour, 2006; Sassen, 1991, 2002; UN, 2016). In a postindustrial economy, in which service-sector, knowledge-based, and cultural and creative occupations take up increasingly larger shares of the job market, the density and proximity of jobs and people - and, by extension, knowledge and skills - within urban centres obviously affords cities a privileged position. At the start of the 21st century, the rise of cities could be clearly observed all across the world (Madanipour, 2006; UN 2016); the interconnected nodes of the global network society, Castells (1996) argued, had becoming increasingly urbanized (Glaeser, 2011), leading to increasing and often rapid growth of cities, particularly the top tier of deeply interconnected 'world cities' (Sassen, 1991, 2002). Although highly heterogeneous, urban patterns of living are becoming increasingly important features of social, cultural and economic life, and, as I argue in chapter 4, are particularly

important for understanding the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs. At the same time, urbanization has been accompanied by ‘various forms of stagnation, shrinkage and marginalization’ in a ‘contradictory interplay’ (Brenner and Schmid, 2015: 151), which speaks to the heterogeneity, porosity, and multiplicity of cities (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Brenner and Schmid, 2014, 2015).

As a consequence, many commentators have suggested what we understand as ‘cities’ in the 21st century is very different to what may have been meant a century earlier. The transition from industrial to postindustrial society has had enormous implications for cities, not merely in terms of demographics or structure of the urban economy, but in the way in which cities are conceptualized and experienced, raising challenging questions about what cities are (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Byrne, 2001), how they can, or should, be studied (Brenner and Schmid, 2014, 2015; Byrne, 2001; Gough, 2012; Robinson, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Roy, 2009; Simone, 2011), or if they can be meaningfully compared at all (Peck, 2015). A number of voices have taken up the challenge posed by 21st century cities in arguing for a new ‘comparative urbanism’, which seeks new practices of theorizing and researching cities that acknowledges their status as unique assemblages whilst situating them within their global context (see Nijman, 2000, 2007; Robinson, 2014, 2016a; Ward, 2010 for discussions; *cf.* Storper and Scott, 2016).

I (broadly) follow Amin and Thrift’s account, which sees ‘the city as a place of mobility, flow and everyday practices, and which reads the city from their recurrent phenomenological patterns’ (2002: 7). They argue for an ‘everyday urbanism’, which ‘has to get into the intermesh between flesh and stone, humans and non-humans, fixtures and flows, emotions and practices’ (*ibid.*: 9). Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s notion of ‘transivity’ to capture the ever-changing nature of the urban, they argue that the city is ‘a place of intermingling and improvisation, resulting from its porosity to the past as well as the varied spatial influences’ within the city itself as well as from without (*ibid.*: 10). Cities, then, are understood not as fixed, purely spatial entities, but as

constellations of human practices in which the spatial, material, social, and symbolic interconnect and co-evolve. In an interconnected and global world of constant flows, urban spaces are not demarcated by fixed boundaries, either physical, economic, social, or otherwise, but are always porous and 'exposed' to what Amin and Thrift (*ibid.*: 22) describe as 'footprints' from the past and present. Urban spaces, and their identities, are what Massey (1995: 186) describes as 'articulations of social relationships', which draw on a multiplicity of histories that are continually reinterpreted and reconstructed in the present; or, as Byrne (1998, 2001) would put it: cities are complex, evolving, open systems. Cities are immense human projects which are never finished (Jones and Evans, 2008), but are always sites of potential in states of becoming (Massey, 1995); they are 'agitation[s] of thought and practice' (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 157), which are constantly (re)producing, (re)constructing, (re)utilizing, (re)classifying and (re)signifying social space. In chapters 6 and 7 I present accounts of people working in CCIs in Newcastle and Hamburg who, in different ways, interpret and engage with these various urban processes in their constructions and performances of identity.

The challenge for new comparative urbanism is in thinking of cities globally – what Robinson (2016b) refers to as 'thinking through elsewhere' – in order to avoid treating cities (or aspects thereof) as independent, or isolated. Cities have their own particular histories, but these trajectories, as Amin and Thrift (2002) suggest, do not develop in isolation, but in relation to the broader spatiotemporal context: other cities and spaces both nearby and at the global scale, and their histories.

Understanding cities (particularly postindustrial cities) to be socio-spatial constellations of flows characterised by transivity, porosity, and mobilities (Amin and Thrift, 2002) has significant implications for how the study of cities should be approached. Robinson (2013; 2014, 2016a, 2016b) has argued for a new kind of theorizing which emphasizes the strength in revising urban theory: in which 'the mode and style of urban theorization itself is transformed

from an authoritative voice ... to a celebration of the conversations opened up amongst the many subjects of urban theoretical endeavour in cities around the world' (Robinson, 2016a: 196).

A key aspect of this relates to methodological innovation, and recent years have seen various advances in methods of geographical investigation and analysis concerning cities (e.g. Jacobs, 2006; Peck *et al.*, 2009; Robinson, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Simone, 2011) which seek, through various means to conceptualize and explore the 'impossible object' of the city (Brenner and Schmid, 2014), in ways which capture both the particular, context-dependent experience of cities, and the significance of the broader - often global - context with which they are inseparably intertwined.

Robinson has argued for methodological innovation which valorizes 'more provisional, modest and revisable claims about the nature of the urban' (2016a: 196); placing the ability to challenge and revise theories of the urban at the forefront of comparative research. This position is complemented by the negative dialectics of Theodor Adorno, and in the methodology in chapter 5, I argue for an approach to understanding postindustrial identities in which respecting and maintaining the particularities of the case can provide insight into underlying issues which, while never simply general, can provide insight into the context out of which individual cases emerge. Consequently, Robinson (2016a: 194) argues for abandoning the attempt to carry out comparison on 'quasi-scientific case selection', as it is precisely the variation between cases which provides the basis for theoretical insight. Cities as cases should be viewed as unique but deeply interconnected assemblages: viewed as particularities rather than exemplars (Peck, 2015). It is the variations, complexities, and contradictions of the material minutiae that give us insight into what makes cities the particular cities that they are. It does nothing to disprove the argument that global cities share much in common, or that urban centres in western cities are becoming strikingly homogeneous, or that cultural regeneration processes in European cities often involve waterfronts, or share architectural styles, to point out that all these things which so many cities share tell us very little about what makes any individual city specific and unique:

what makes Kyoto Kyoto, or Baltimore Baltimore, or Newcastle Newcastle, or Hamburg Hamburg, are all those things that exist *despite* the things that they all have in common. It is, as Benjamin (1979) argued, in the particularities and the contradictions that what counts is revealed.

This research is concerned with understanding postindustrial identities, and, consequently it is constructions and practices of identification which it takes as its object. In this sense then, because its object is not cities themselves, this thesis is not, *sensu stricto*, an urban comparison. Nevertheless, its object(s) (postindustrial identities) are specifically urban, and, as I argue in chapter 2, embedded within their social, spatial, and cultural contexts; consequently, they cannot be understood independently of the cities in which they are constructed and performed. Therefore, while this research makes no claim to be an urban comparison, it is, nevertheless, *sensu lato*, an exercise in the comparison of cities. The research therefore seeks to draw out 'actual practices' to 'build on the specific spatiality of the urban, notably the overlapping connections amongst cities which shape both distinctive but often shared and repeated outcomes,' (Robinson, 2016a: 195) in order to generate new forms of understanding in which case studies are put 'into wider conversations'.

In emphasizing the geographical specificity and interconnectedness of cities, comparative urbanism makes a conscious effort to shift focus away from the 'rock star' world cities, drawing attention to the different experiences in cities around the world – those of the 'global South', and smaller cities whose urban characters are shaped in different ways, although always in the shadows of their more infamous cousins. While this research is restricted to north-west Europe, it does avoid capital and 'global cities' (Sassen, 1991, 2002), as well as cities more readily associated with CCIs (e.g. Leeds or Bristol in the UK, or München or Köln in Germany), instead

focussing on two (albeit significantly different) cities, in which urban landscape and culture are in many ways quite different to those typically associated with postindustrial transformation and CCIs.

As a final thought, Robinson has criticized urban studies for an obsession with all that is 'new' and novel with cities: 'today's urbanists,' she chides, 'mobilise tropes of "newness" to justify and garner support for distinctive analytical agendas' (2013: 667). I hope that it will be clear that while there is something inescapably 'contemporary' about the urban transformations that accompany the postindustrial cultural economy and in relation to which cultural and creative workers construct and perform identity, this most certainly does not mean that everything is 'new'.

I.4 Outline of the Thesis

The first three chapters following this introduction comprise the literature review. Here I establish a case, in three movements, for understanding the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs in Newcastle and Hamburg. In the first literature review chapter, I consider how identities are to be conceptualized and the central role of culture, place, and memory in their construction and maintenance. I draw here on social constructionist and narrative ideas to establish identities as socially-embedded practices fundamentally concerned with our position in and ability to understand the world – issues which I will revisit in the methodology.

Having established an understanding of identities as a process by which individuals are connected to their social and material contexts, in chapter three – the second literature review chapter - I consider the history of the CCIs, and their significance to the 'new economy' and

postindustrial identities. Here I introduce some key themes from the work of Theodor Adorno, which will underpin the ideas developed in the rest of the thesis.

In the third and final literature review chapter, I move from a discussion of the relationship between identity and culture in general to one in which practice of identification are embedded within their socio-spatial contexts: postindustrial cities. Here I explore the role of culture and CCIs in postindustrial urban transformation, and the relationship between art and culture and specifically urban space, places, and identities.

Chapter five is the methodology, concerned with establishing the epistemological and methodological grounds for the research. I draw again on the work of Adorno, specifically his negative dialectics, to link the discussion of identity in the first literature review chapter to a methodological approach to its exploration, making a case for the use of mixed-methods qualitative research – including a method of urban encounter inspired by Walter Benjamin – to produce a series of vignettes, or stories, providing insight into the particular, contextual ways in which people working in CCIs construct and maintain postindustrial identities. Following Adorno's negative dialectics, I argue that these practices of identification cannot be understood outside of their contexts, but that through the use of a constellation of concepts, it is possible to make visible the contradictions of the cultural economy, with implications that go beyond the particular.

Chapters six and seven contain the vignettes from Newcastle and Hamburg respectively. These are presented as stories about specific participants selected not to be representative of identities or identity practices *per se*, but to provide illustrative examples of how identity practices are related to the broader context of CCIs and to the spatial and cultural transformations of postindustrial cities.

The discussion in chapter eight attempts to develop a constellation of dialectical concepts through which to view the contradictions and tensions that people working in CCIs must

negotiate: what I call the dialectic of art and economy. I suggest that this dialectic is expressed in multiple forms – I focus here on the interrelated dialectical concepts of ‘culture and industry’ ‘autonomy and interdependence’, ‘industrial and postindustrial’, ‘vernacular and universal’, and ‘resistance and compromise’ – which, I argue, both frame the experiences of people working in CCIs and offer key insights into their practices of identification. I argue that in negotiating this dialectical field, cultural and creative workers construct ‘artistic identities’: highly variable and context-specific practices of identification through which to make sense of the contradictions and ambivalences of the dialectic of art and economy. I suggest that these identities, while not being formulaic, or conforming to ‘types’, nevertheless frequently draw on a number of contemporary and historical discourses, or, in Alison Bain’s (2005) terms, ‘myths’, concerning art and artists which are fundamental to the dialectic of art and economy.

In the ninth and final chapter, I draw together the earlier discussions to establish some key conclusions concerning the postindustrial identities of people working in the CCIs, and reflect on some of the implications of this research in the context of broader debates in comparative and urban geography.

Chapter II: Identities

II.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced the topic of this thesis and provided some preliminary discussions of what is meant by postindustrial society and the significance of comparative urban research. In this chapter, which is the first of three comprising the literature review, I make the first movements towards establishing the argument of this thesis by discussing the concept around which all subsequent discussions revolve: identity.

Identity is a difficult concept. It crosses disciplinary boundaries, has myriad meanings, and has common sense understandings in everyday language that exist in a troublesome relationship with its scholarly applications. It is a perfect example of a concept that both says too much and too little (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). However, I agree with Lawler's (2014) assessment that the formless and dissipative nature of the concept does not render it meaningless or unhelpful, but, on the contrary, reflects the complexity and ambivalence that are central to the experience of identity in real life. It is the contradiction and ambivalence inherent in the identities of people working in CCIs that I explore in this thesis.

This thesis is concerned with the identities of people working in the CCIs and the ambivalences, contradictions, and complexities that are part of their identity practices as they construct meaning out of their experiences of living and working in two postindustrial European cities. In

this first literature review chapter, I establish an understanding of identity as a dialectical socio-spatial process through which individuals construct narrative projects of self and the relationship between these identities and postindustrial society. In the second part of the chapter, I provide a basis for subsequent discussions by considering the implications of deindustrialization for postindustrial identities through three interrelated aspects: culture, place, and memory.

II.2 Identities: Dialectics and Narratives

Contradiction is at the centre of the concept of identity (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). Perhaps most fundamentally, as Jackson (2002, quoted in Lawler, 2014) has pointed out, identity is, paradoxically, simultaneously an assertion of sameness and difference, and conceptions of identity have ultimately been concerned with addressing what 'the self' is both the same as and different from. The most tenacious and the most pervasive of everyday understandings of identity comes from the Enlightenment rationalism of early modernity and conceived of a unified and sovereign self separate from and in a relatively unproblematic relationship with its environment and the objects contained therein (Kellner, 1992). Understood in this way, identity is, in effect, the sum total of classifications based upon an individual's relationship to various factors considered socially significant: such as employment, ethnicity, gender, etc. To see identity as characteristics merely reflective of external conditions, however, obscures the contradictions and tensions between identities (Lawler, 2014: 10); viewing them as finished products, and obscuring their changeable and dynamic qualities (Calhoun, 1994), and practically dismissing individual agency. Influenced by postmodernist and poststructuralist accounts (particularly the work of Foucault, 1988), as well as cultural (Norton and Walton-Roberts, 2014) and feminist geographies (McDowell, 1999, 2003) much identity scholarship

since the last decades of the 20th century has sought to move away from understandings which posit fixed or essential qualities, emphasizing instead the socially-constructed, multiple, and contingent nature of identities (Eriksen and Schober, 2016; Jenkins, 2004; Lawler, 2014).² These approaches stress that while it may be possible to posit relational groups based on identity traits or characteristics, these classifications are neither fixed nor homogenous, but social constructs resulting from evolving social, cultural, geographical, historical, and political processes (Somers, 1994). As social constructs, and therefore the products of (individual and collective) acts of human interpretation, identities are continually reconfigured, reconstructed, and reproduced (Jenkins, 2004; Lawler, 2014) in spatially-embedded performances (Fortier, 1999). This 'weak conception' of identity, however, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) point out, risks reducing the notion of identity to discursive play unconcerned with material realities, and can overstate the agency individuals and groups have to 'self-identify'. Understanding identities to be contingent and socially-constructed should not obscure the fact that they are subject to power relations, and that there are manifold situations in which identities, in their real life consequences, are extraordinarily fixed and foundational, and over which individuals may have very little control (Jenkins, 2004). Identities, rather than being fluid, expressive and discursive, can indeed be things people have or are: 'something to be *discovered*, and something about which one can be *mistaken*' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 10, original emphasis). The ambivalence of identity as both sameness and difference, fixed and fluid, emphasizes an important point: the contradictory nature of identity results from the fact that they are never merely given, but, as Jenkins puts it, 'must *always* be established ... [and] can *only* be understood as process, as "being" or "becoming". One's identity - one's identities, indeed, for who we are is always singular *and* plural - is never a final or settled matter' (2004: 4-5, original emphasis). Particular attention has been paid to understanding identities as ongoing projects of self (Beck, 2000b; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Giddens, 1991; Rose, 1996) or narratives developed

² Although foundational and essentialist notions can still readily be found both in academic and especially everyday discourses of identity, particularly, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) point out, in the field of identity politics.

over time (Bruner, 1990; Calhoun, 1994, Ricoeur, 1991, 2004; Taylor, 2010). I return to these points in the next section.

Identities, then, are better understood as practices of *identification* (Jenkins, 2004: 15-26). The transitive verb 'to identify' is crucial to understanding identity for two reasons: firstly, it highlights the nature of identity as a process; and secondly, because a transitive verb requires both a subject and object to be meaningful, and thus draws our attention to the dialectical character of that process.

The duality of subject and object and their dialectical relationship is fundamental to the process of identification, and so to the understanding of identity that underpins this thesis. There are two understandings of identification and its dialectical character at work here. The first understanding of identification comes from the epistemological question central to German idealism passed from Kant through Hegel to Adorno, whose work underpins the theoretical and methodological positions taken in this thesis. Here, identification is concerned with the relationship between the subjective images (intuitions), or concept, of an object of experience - which are products of our individual, subjective, cognitive systems of meaning - and the particular experiential objects to which they relate, and whether there can ever be 'identity' between them. Identification, in this sense, is the process of knowing (interpreting, ordering, *identifying*) the objects of our experience. The need to reconcile the knowable, 'identical', (and, for Hegel, universal) concepts of our minds with the particular and nonidentical objects to which they are dialectically related is what Adorno (1973) describes as 'identity thinking': the search for the unity - the identity - of the identical and the nonidentical. These questions are more suited to the methodology, and I consider them there in more detail; what I want to establish here is that the process of identification by which socially-embedded individuals make sense of their world, and by which they construct an understanding of both the social and the

self, is the same process, and subject to the same limitations, as the processes of identification which Adorno rejects in German idealism.

The second use of identification, following Jenkins (2004), I derive from constructionist accounts of identity, in particular those of interactionists such as G.H. Mead and Erving Goffman, in which identity is understood as a social process which draws on (and produces) self and societal constructions and discourses in a meaning-making practice or performance. Constructionist positions have long maintained the significance of the dialectical relationship inherent in the construction of identity by stressing what Jenkins (2004: 18) refers to as 'the internal-external dialectic of identification'. For Mead (1967: 138), identity emerged from viewing ourselves as the object of another's subjectivity:

[an individual] enters his [sic] own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience.

This interplay between the self and the social, what Cooley (1969) termed 'the looking glass self', implies that individual notions of identity, or self, cannot exist without an already existing external, social context to provide meaning (Mead, 1967, *cf.* Du Bois, 2005 and the 'double consciousness'). Blumer (1969) maintained that all experiences of this externality gave the self meaning, what he called 'self-indication', and consequently only through our experiences with external objects could we establish a sense of self. Identity is never something we can 'simply assert' subjectively, but must be constructed – or negotiated – in relation to the socially-constructed symbolic economies of external objects (including material landscapes, and the views and judgments of others, both specific and generalized). For Goffman (1990), the embodied and performative character of the internal-external dialectic is key to how identity was constructed. Identities are practical achievements that result from people seeking to 'be'

and be 'seen to be' somebody or something, in practice: 'to successfully assume particular identities' (Jenkins, 2004: 20). Identity, for Goffman, requires an audience; it involves the (conscious and unconscious) use of devices such as scripts and costumes, and 'techniques of impression management' (Goffman, 1990: 228) in order to ensure an identity performance is accepted, or seen as legitimate. This emphasis on the need to develop 'legitimacy' in everyday identity performances is echoed in Bourdieu's model of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), the internal system of dispositions which structures our everyday behaviours and attitudes in such a way as to make our identity practices unconscious and habitual. Crucially, Bourdieu's *habitus* simultaneously structures our own behaviours and dispositions and interprets and judges those of others: it is 'simultaneously collective and individual' (Jenkins, 2004: 20). A fundamental feature of this understanding of identification, then, is its dual construction, as both an individual and social process (Beech, 2011; Beech, *et al.* 2012; Jenkins, 2004; Watson, 2009a). As will become apparent, this dual, dialectical character of identification is necessary in order to understand the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs.

Both of these understandings of identification depend upon a dialectical relationship between a perceiving subject and experiential objects. The internal-external dialectic of identification implied by Mead and Goffman depends upon individuals being aware of and directing their action towards objects external to them: viz. other individuals and society. Indeed, for Mead (*op cit.*), it is through 'first becom[ing] an object unto [itself]' that the self exists in a knowable form at all. As we experience objects we make sense of them (*we identify* them); in doing so, we establish a relationship between those experiential objects and ourselves as perceiver and interpreter (as subject): it is only in relation to our position as an experiencing subject that we can identify external objects, and so only in relation to experiential objects that we can know ourselves as a subject: 'Consciousness is always consciousness *of* something. An object is always

an object *for* someone' (Crotty, 1998: 79, original emphasis). This necessary relationship between subject and object is of significant importance because it keeps the objects of identification, and their particularity, as well as subjective 'ideas' at the centre of practices of identification. As I shall argue, it is the particularity of objects - especially cultural commodities and urban environments - which is especially significant in postindustrial society, and central to understanding the identities of people working in CCIs.

People working in CCIs construct identities not only in accordance with their own ideas, but also by engaging with societal discourses, expectations, and attitudes. In order to 'make sense' of these competing forces and to put identification into practice involves constructing and maintaining a more-or-less coherent stories or narratives of identity.

The work of Paul Ricoeur (1988, 1991, 2004) has been particularly influential in moving the use of 'narrative' in social science away from a research device or way of (re)presenting data into an argument about how we 'make sense' of the world (and ourselves) (see Wood, 1991); what Somers (1994) refers to as 'ontological narrativity':

While the older interpretation of narrative was limited to that of a representational form, the new approaches define narrative and narrativity as concepts of *social epistemology* and *social ontology*. These concepts posit that it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities. (Somers, 1994: 606, original emphasis)

Ricoeur's work offers an understanding of identity as neither essential and fixed nor merely a continual stream of events and subjective impressions, but as a continuous product developed through the telling and retelling of stories that locate us within the world (Ricoeur, 1991). For

Ricoeur, our very understanding of 'a self' results from the fact that 'we constantly tell stories which *produce* it as something continuing through time' (Lawler, 2014: 30, original emphasis). Narrative identity 'provides the practical means by which a person can understand themselves as living through time, a human subject with a past, present, and future, made whole by the coherence of the narrative' (Elliott, 2005: 125). In order to maintain coherence, our narratives inevitably draw on the past and our memories. I return to this point below.

Establishing (and maintaining) a coherent narrative of self involves a negotiation of the internal-external dialectic of identity, as individuals seek to tell stories that position them in the world and relate them to other people and their narratives, and established narratives of the world around them. In doing so, narratives need to be believed by others. Interactionists like Mead (1967) and Goffman (1990) have understood this through the exchange of gestures, through which individuals 'identify' themselves by seeing themselves as (they believe or expect) others to see them. Identity is thus intersubjective: constructed dialectically in the interaction between performer and audience where the internal and external (or individual and collective, or self and social) aspects of identity meet. Understanding identity as narrative allows us 'to see past and present linked in a spiral of interpretation and reinterpretation' and 'to break down the dividing line between self and other and thus see selves and identities as embedded in the social world' (Lawler, 2014: 32-33).

The identity work literature, as Beech (2011: 286) describes it, 'focuses on identit[ies] as being constructed and reconstructed through a dynamic interaction' of self- and social-identities. This interaction involves the ascription of identities from outside - when we *identify* others (and they us), and cast them in particular roles (Karreman and Alvesson, 2001) - and the projection of particular identities onto others (Brown, 2001). The notion of identity as a practice is key to this understanding, for individuals must adopt and carry out the symbols, stories, and behaviours of identities (Sims, 2003). In this way, identities are ongoing projects through which internal and external discourses are 'managed' into a coherent narrative (Watson, 2009a), and the practice

of identification is the subject-object (or agency-structure) dialectic in action (Ybema *et al.*, 2009): 'through which the individual agent constitutes and is constituted by their social setting and the discourses available to them and those around them' (Beech, 2011: 286). Negotiating the complex, intersecting fields of self- and social-identities in order to construct a coherent narrative is frequently problematic. As ongoing projects, narrative identities, like Goffman's (1990) performances, must be convincing and viewed as legitimate. They are subject to constant revision, as we improve or reconsider our stories, or 're-narrate' between identities - e.g. from teenager to young adult, or from junior employee to manager (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009; Watson, 2009a), or adapt when narratives break down (Beech *et al.*, 2016) or are threatened (Brown and Coupland, 2015). Beech (2011) has drawn attention to the importance of liminal practices of identity work, where identities are held in, seen to be, or forced into liminal positions relative to established social structures or practices, enabling people to experiment with, redefine, or reconstruct identities dialogically.

Narratives of identity therefore involve constant re-narrations and negotiations between multiple intersecting and possibly conflicting stories, in which we not only write our own stories, but are also written into other people's and write other people's stories into our own (Beech *et al.*, 2012). Contradiction, then, is not the failure of practices of identification, but is in fact inherent to them (Beech *et al.*, 2016). As will become clear, the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs often exist in marginal, conflicted, liminal positions, and the central argument of this thesis is that ambivalence and contradiction are inevitably part of any attempt to understand them.

In the foregoing discussions I have established an understanding of identities as ongoing processes of identification, through which individuals construct narrative stories out of the dialectic of individual and society. In order to construct their narratives, CCI workers must negotiate the internal/external dialectic of identity and draw on personal experiences and

societal discourses concerning their work and its relationship to postindustrial society in their practices of identification. In the next section, I consider the implications of the emergence of postindustrial society for these practices of identification

II.3. Postindustrial Identities

II.3.1 The Question of Identity and Projects of Self

In our world of rampant “individualization”, identities are mixed blessings. They vacillate between a dream and a nightmare, and there is no telling when one will turn into the other. ... In a liquid modern setting of life, identities are perhaps the most common, most acute, most deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of *ambivalence*. (Bauman, 2004: 32, emphasis in original)

The question of identity arrived with the advent of modernity and the emergence of industrial capitalism (Hall, 1996). It was with modernity, and the rise of the Kantian subject, Lash and Friedman (1992) suggest, that identity left the certainties of external determination which persisted in small-scale kinship- or religion-based societies and became heteronomous: ‘in modernity, with the demise of God and Caesar, social space opens up the way for an autonomous definition of identity. In modernity we are fated to be free’ (1992: 5). Modernity called identity into question; rendered it problematic (Calhoun, 1994b; Kellner, 1992). It was with the emergence of modern capitalist society that the idea of identity as something inherited was replaced by the idea of identity as something which had to be constructed and performed (Bauman, 2004); and where the qualities or characteristics by which individuals and social groups are identified are established and (re)produced through what we do (Bourdieu, 1984,

1990). As Sartre pithily put it, 'to be a bourgeois it is not enough to have been born a bourgeois – one needs to live one's whole life as a bourgeois!' (in Bauman, 2004: 49). Throughout industrial modernity, this was largely a collective – often class-based – process in which the question 'who am I?' could largely be answered in terms of occupation, ethnicity/nationality, gender, and place. However, in postindustrial society, as 'the pace, intensity and complexity of contemporary culture accelerates, so too the self becomes increasingly dispersed' (Elliott, 2001: 2). The fragmentation of social groups, and the 'disembedding' (Giddens, 1991) of individuals from formerly relatively stable social structures of industrial society and thrown into the flux and flow of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), it is argued, has led to the burden (and potential) of identity construction being placed increasingly upon individuals to forge new (or re-establish old) relationships with society (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 2000b; Beck and Beck-Gersheim, 2002; Rose, 1996), in what Giddens (1991) termed 'projects of self'.

In modernity, identity became something over which individuals had responsibility, and the success or failure of establishing and managing identity became normative (Bauman, 2005; Beck and Beck-Gersheim, 2002). This is amplified in postindustrial society wherein social life and identities are far more 'individualized' (Bauman, 2004, 2005; Beck, 2000b, Beck and Beck-Gersheim, 2002) and spatially differentiated (Harvey, 1989a; Massey, 2005); and in which there exists a far greater sense of personal responsibility, as well as far greater choice and variation, over reflexive projects of the self (Giddens, 1991). For Giddens, this individualization and reflexivity provide significant opportunities for individuals to construct new identities and capture new opportunities for self-development and fulfilment; for Beck, the necessity of choosing and constructing an identity is an unavoidable burden: as Rose (1996) points out, we have freedom of choice, but never freedom from it. Importantly for this thesis, the burden of projects of self is realized, as Bauman (2004, 2005) argued, through consumption and the 'freedom of choice' implied by the market (Miles and Paddison, 1998). We are, he argues, 'all consumers in consumers' society. Consumer society is market society; we are all *in* and *on* the market, simultaneously customers and commodities' (2004: 91). Postindustrial identities,

therefore, are importantly linked to the conditions and demands of postindustrial capitalism. As Bell (1996: xvi) argued, the idea of self-realization, as a rational, calculative exercise in the production and reinvestment of value echoes the structure of the commodity form: 'the release of the individual from traditional restraints and ascriptive ties (family and birth) so that he could "make" of himself what he willed'. In an important sense, then, identities are commodities, produced for the market, and projects of self 'achieved' through consumption (Bauman, 2004, 2005). In postindustrial society, this consumption is increasingly cultural, and is predicated on a different relationship between society and culture, which is central to understanding postindustrial identities. This is especially true, as I argue in the next chapter, for people working in CCIs.

The postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs can only be understood in relation to the tremendous social changes associated with deindustrialization and the emergence of postindustrial society as they manifest in spatially-specific contexts. Before turning to that, it is necessary to consider the central role of culture in postindustrial society.

II.3.2 Culture and Aestheticization in Postindustrial Identities

In this section I suggest that culture is a key feature for understanding postindustrial identities for three interrelated reasons: firstly, because culture, and especially cultural commodities, are pervasive in postindustrial society and intrinsic to the production of projects of self; secondly, because it is through the construction of these aesthetic projects of self by way of cultural consumption (and, in the case of people working in CCIs, production) that people relate to the cultural economy of postindustrial capitalism; and thirdly, because questions of culture and identity are inseparably connected to the kinds of social change and transformation associated with deindustrialization and the emergence of postindustrial society.

The concept of culture, like identity, is notoriously troublesome. Raymond Williams, in his seminal text *The Long Revolution* (2011 [1965]), offered three different understandings of culture: (i) an ideal notion, in which culture is 'a state or process of human perfection' in line with the discovery (or, in Platonic tradition, anamnesis) of universal truths and values represented imperfectly in art; (ii) a documentary sense, in which culture is the representation and recording of the thought and experience of human society; and (iii) the social definition of culture as 'a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but in institutions and ordinary behaviour' (Williams, 2011: 61).

Williams insists that 'the variations of meaning and reference, in the use of culture as a term, must be seen ... not as a disadvantage, which prevents any kind of neat and exclusive definition, but as a genuine complexity, corresponding to real elements in experience.' Consequently, 'any adequate theory of culture must include the three areas of fact to which the definitions point' (Williams, 2011: 64). To the three aspects identified by Williams, Byrne adds a fourth, in which culture 'constitutes a set of commodities which are produced and consumed as part of the capitalist process of circulation as well as through the processes of "taste"' (2001: 131). This latter sense, Byrne argues, is especially characteristic of postindustrial society in which 'culture' - in the full and ambivalent sense - is far more prevalent; meaning not only a greater engagement with, and use of, cultural goods, texts, and symbols in everyday life (Featherstone, 1991; Harvey, 1989a; Jameson, 1992; Lash and Lury, 2007; Lash and Urry, 1994), but also a much greater variety of cultural commodities to navigate and deploy, especially in practices of identity construction. 'One of the crucial characteristics of the postindustrial urban world,' Byrne (2001: 131) argues, 'is that these commodities ... form an ever greater part of capitalist production and realisation; and the processes through which they are made, displayed and consumed matter more for lived experience than was the case in industrial capitalism.' These cultural commodities include urban space, a point to which I will return in chapter 4.

For Jameson (1992: 48), postindustrial society implies the 'dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture', which he argues is:

to be imagined in terms of an explosion: a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life - from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself - can be said to have become "cultural".

This 'explosion' of culture in postindustrial society has enormous significance for practices of identification. As culture 'seeps out of the superstructure ... and comes to dominate both the economy and experience in everyday life' (Lash and Lury, 2007: 4), questions of culture and aesthetic judgements become ubiquitous in understanding what it means to live in society. The liberation or democratization of art and culture (Harvey, 1989a; Jameson, 1992) and its coadunation with everyday life means that the use and manipulation (and consumption) of cultural, symbolic, and aesthetic forms become inseparable from the construction and practice of postindustrial identities (Bauman, 2000, 2005; Clarke, 2003; Featherstone, 1991; Lury, 2011). Featherstone (1991, 1992) terms this the 'aestheticization of everyday life', which he understands as 'the effacement of the boundary between art and everyday life, a general stylistic promiscuity and playful mixing of codes' (1991: 65). Indeed, the pervasive nature of culture in postindustrial society means that our projects of self (Giddens, 1991), our practices of identification, are necessarily *aesthetic projects* (Featherstone, 1991, 1992) in which culture, in all its complexity, is fundamentally implicated.

In addition to the proliferation and rapid flow of cultural objects and symbols that characterizes the economy of signs and space (Lash and Urry, 1994) and which 'saturate the fabric of everyday life' (Featherstone, 1991: 67), Featherstone highlights two additional ways in which everyday life has become aestheticized in postindustrial modernity. Firstly, erasing the

boundary between art and everyday life represents the democratization of culture, including from some quarters the 'desire to de-auraticize art' (1991: 66) and the move from institutionalized 'high' culture towards a popular, mass culture, and 'the assumption that art can be anywhere or anything' (*ibid.*). Secondly, the aestheticization of everyday life means that life itself, and identities, can themselves become works of art, largely through cultural consumption.

Featherstone argues that this aestheticization of everyday life is 'central to the development of consumer culture' (1991: 68), and, as Bauman (2004, 2005) points out, aesthetic projects of self relate individuals to society chiefly in terms of their consumption of cultural commodities. The democratization of culture, and the increased availability and variety of cultural commodities contribute to individualized aesthetic projects of self, in which individuals, 'free to choose [their] path toward self-realization' (Zukin and Maguire, 2004: 180) face increased pressure to construct aesthetic identities which demonstrate and signify their individuality through consumer choice (Beck, 2000b; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Rose, 1996). It is through the consumption of particular cultural goods and services, or indeed 'lifestyles' (Featherstone, 1991; Zukin, 1998), that aesthetic projects of self are realized (Bauman, 2004, 2005; Miles and Paddison, 1998; Zukin and Maguire, 2004). 'Society engages its members,' Bauman asserts, primarily 'in their capacity as consumers' (2005: 24): it is through consumption that individuals relate to each other and to society, and therefore only through (cultural) consumption that postindustrial identity is possible. As Bauman (2005: 26) puts it, '[t]he roads to self-identity, to a place in society, to life lived in a form recognizable as that of meaningful living, all require daily visits to the market place,' and it 'is aesthetics ... that is deployed to integrate the society of consumers' (*ibid.*: 31).

This 'aesthetic of consumption' (Bauman, 2005) can be seen as an 'ideal' in Williams' first sense of culture: the aestheticization of postindustrial identities is the manifestation of a drive within postindustrial capitalism to hold up individuality and its aesthetic construction through cultural consumption as a virtue; one which, as Jameson (1992) points out, ultimately serves the

interests of capitalism itself. As I argue in the next chapter, this 'new spirit of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005) has particular significance for understanding CCIs and the identity practices of people who work in them.

Other accounts of postindustrial identity have emphasized a more emancipatory role for the aestheticization of everyday life. Giddens (1991), for example, suggests that the increased reflexivity over projects of self create new possibilities for innovative, creative approaches to meaning-making and the realization of new forms of agency. Aesthetic projects of self developed through cultural consumption can be seen to democratize the way in which identities are negotiated (Bailey, Miles and Stark, 2004; Miles, 2004), providing opportunities for identities to be reinterpreted, contested, and expressed in different ways (Deutsch and Theodorou, 2010; Kosmala, 2011; Nayak and Kehily, 2004). The freedom to construct and express identities, particularly marginal, unorthodox, or bohemian identities, has particular bearing on the (re)development of cities (Caulfield, 1994; Florida, 2002b, 2003, 2005; Lees, 2000; Ley, 1996, 2003), a point which I will return to in chapter 4. As Bourdieu (1984, 1990) reminds us, however, even at its most reflexive, cultural consumption, like all consumption, is embedded in pre-existing social relations and therefore subject to judgements and systems of classification which reflect and reproduce hierarchies of social power.

While the aestheticization of everyday life may mean that culture has become more significant to practices of identity construction in postindustrial society, this of course does not suggest that culture was irrelevant in industrial society. Moreover, as some of the stories explored later make clear, the culture prevalent in postindustrial cities is most certainly not exclusively 'postindustrial culture', and questions of whom and what is represented by postindustrial urban culture and imagery play an important part in the narratives of people working in CCIs. Instead, the aestheticization of everyday life and increased significance of culture and cultural consumption point to a more ambivalent and complex relationship between deindustrialization, culture, place, and postindustrial identities.

II.3.3 Identity and Deindustrialization: Culture, Place, and Memory

While the significance of questions of culture, aestheticization, and cultural consumption for postindustrial identities reflect general tendencies within postindustrial society, these trends are not homogeneous and universal, but are actualized in specific times and places, and it is at the spatial level that they are most often expressed and experienced.

The fundamental spatiality of everyday life means that identities are always geographical. Practices of identification are always embodied (Bourdieu, 1990; Jenkins, 2004) and situated in material spatialities (Cresswell, 1996). Consequently, people's narratives of identity are always interwoven with the material, social, and spatial landscapes of the environment. People's relationships to place, therefore, play 'an integral role in who we are, and, consequently, how everyday life is lived' (Bennett, 2014: 658, see also Keith and Pile, 1993; Khademi-Vidra, 2014; Stevens, 2012).

The relationship between place and identity is fundamentally concerned with meaning (Cresswell, 1996; Massey, 1995, 2005). We do not encounter the world merely as physical space, but as material, social, and spatial landscapes of meaning (Duncan and Duncan, 2009). 'Because places are meaningful and because we always exist and act in places, we are constantly engaged in acts of interpretation' (Cresswell, 1996: 13) through which we infer meaning from and inscribe it on our environments – that is, we *identify* them. Thus the material landscapes of places are not merely physical, but meaningful social constructions (Lefebvre, 1991). Places are 'always constructed out of articulations of social relations' (Massey, 1995: 183) and 'have meaning through the action of interpretation and/or consumption in specific context' (Byrne, 2001: 142). Place is not something fixed and essential, but is multiple and dynamic; it is 'made in social interactions' (Blokland, 2001: 270), and forever in the process of being (re)constructed and (re)articulated – forever *becoming* (Massey, 1995, 2005). The material, social, and symbolic landscapes in which we live our lives and carry out practices of identification are encountered not as fixed and 'merely' material, but as texts on, in, and through which cultures and identities

are written and expressed (Cosgrove and Jackson, 1987; Byrne, 2001; Mitchell, 2002; Zukin, 2011). They are, as Ingold (1993) described them, 'material texts' in which the symbolic realms of human meaning are incorporated into the material landscape.

The emergence of postindustrial society has enormous implications for the spatiality of identity. In a globalized network society (Castells, 1996; Lash and Urry, 1994) characterized largely by acceleration (Rosa, 2005) and time-space compression (Harvey, 1989a), places (and particularly cities) are increasingly interdependent (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Byrne, 2002) and more easily traversed: consequently, the boundaries between places that traditionally 'anchored' identities to places (e.g. home, neighbourhood, city, and nation) become destabilized and unreliable, and their relationship to identity less predictable (Bauman, 2004: 30). Place, for postindustrial identities, consequently, becomes more 'liquid', and, in some respects, another variable to be chosen as part of a project of self (Lloyd, 2005; Zukin, 2011).

At the same time, the transformations associated with postindustrial society develop unevenly (Harvey, 1989a; Massey, 1991; Smith, 1982), and time-space compression and acceleration simultaneously removes and reinforces the role of the spatial in structuring people's lives (Massey, 2005; Rosa, 2005). Aestheticization and deindustrialization find their expression in specific spatial configurations, where broad social change and individual experiences – the general and the particular, or the global and the local – become intertwined (Byrne, 2002; Harvey, 1989a; Massey, 2005). Consequently, in postindustrial society, it is the nuances of, and variations between the material, cultural, and symbolic landscapes of places and place-identities that are critical in understanding how postindustrial society is spatially expressed (Harvey, 1989a), and how practices of identification are constructed (Kirkwood *et al.*, 2013; Lewis, 2016; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Taylor, 2010). Places can be seen as stages in which identities are performed (Goffman, 1990), and the selection of places, like costumes and scripts, serves to frame and to legitimize identity performances. In this way, place takes on the position of symbolic capital in constructions of identity (Bourdieu, 1990) – becoming a resource to be

capitalized on (Bennett, 2014). The particular characteristics and identities of places then become key identifiers with which to establish identity performances (Florida, 2002b, 2014; Zukin, 2011). As I discuss in the next chapters, the cultural and symbolic value of places, particularly cities, is seen as especially important in establishing a 'sense of fit' (Müller, 2012) between place and individual identities for people working in CCIs.

There is a discursive element to the production of place-identities (Kirkwood *et al.*, 2013), whereby particular place-identities and particular historical interpretations of places are constructed and promoted (Cresswell, 1996; Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Dixon, 2001; Massey, 1993; Zukin, 1995). A range of recent scholarship has drawn attention to the role of discourses of place-identity for constructing particular interpretations of places and their pasts (e.g. Till, 2012), including significant work on post-conflict legacies (e.g. De Nardi, 2014, 2015, 2016; Drozdowski, 2012, 2016), and geographies of social control (Kirkwood *et al.*, 2013). Much of this research has drawn attention to the significance of place-identity as a factor in how spaces and places are contested within discourses of power, and how control over the use and meaning of space is implicated not only in constructing and promoting certain identities above others (Malone, 2002; Miles, 2010), but also in erasing the histories and identities of marginal groups (or ideas) (Cresswell, 1996; Dwyer, 2000).

The postindustrial identities of individuals and the historical development of places are interwoven together in what Warren (2016, 2018) has called 'biographies of place'. In order to understand postindustrial identities, and in particular their relationship to postindustrial cities, postindustrial identities must be understood as bound up in the histories of places and the impacts of deindustrialization.

As contested a term as any used in this thesis, deindustrialization has been strenuously debated (e.g. Crafts, 1996; Saeger, 1997; Booth, 2003; Tregenna, 2009; Strangleman *et al.*, 2013). Although there are many ways to measure and interpret the process of deindustrialization (Lever, 1991; Saeger, 1997; Booth, 2003; Kollmeyer, 2009), understood as the decline in the relative proportion of people employed in industrial manufacturing, it can be seen to have occurred (and be still occurring) across OECD countries since around the 1960s (Byrne, 2001; Kitson and Michie, 2014; Lever, 1991; Saeger, 1997). Industrial society was 'the crux of constructions of place and identity' for many people around the world (Rhodes, 2013: 56). The spatiotemporal rhythms and structures emanating from industrial life spread beyond the factory walls, providing structure, meaning, and identity in all areas of life. Consequently, deindustrialization is a cultural as much as an economic process (Cowie and Heathcott, 2003; High, 2013a; Strangleman *et al.*, 2013; Strangleman and Rhodes, 2014; Rhodes, 2013; Linkon and Russo, 2002), and, compounded by questions of social class, which were always dependent on occupational categories, as well as always intersecting questions of gender (Lawler, 2005, 2008; McDowell, 2003) and ethnicity (Clayton, 2012; Nayak, 2003a, 2003b) is deeply implicated in a range of social and cultural transformations (Byrne, 2001, 2002; Stenning, 2005; Strangleman, 2013). Understood as 'a social and cultural phenomenon that reshapes places and identities' (Rhodes, 2013: 57) deindustrialization can be seen to have unsettled industrial cultures, communities, and places (Beer, 2016a, 2016b; Biessel *et al.*, 2013; Linkon and Russo, 2002; Rhodes, 2013; Stenning, 2005; Thorleifsson, 2016). Deindustrialization, it is argued, 'has rendered more marginal forms of identification and practice that were rooted in industrial cultures' (Strangleman and Rhodes, 2014: 416), leading to new forms of dispossession (Byrne, 1995) and 'deproletarianization' (Wacquant, 2016), through which some (especially, but by no means exclusively, industrial, working class, and masculine) cultures and identities 'have become materially and symbolically reshaped' (Strangleman *et al.*, 2013: 14) by deindustrialization (High, 2013a, 2013b; Lewis, 2016; Linkon and Russo, 2002; Strangleman and Rhodes, 2014). Consequently, contemporary scholarship is more concerned with

‘examining the long-term social and cultural legacies of deindustrialization’ (Strangleman *et al.*, 2013: 8), which are deeply connected to the transformations of postindustrial urban space and postindustrial identities.

The legacies of deindustrialization are most clearly articulated spatially (High, 2013a, 2013b; Mah, 2010, 2012; Miles, 2004; Rhodes, 2013; Zukin, 1995, 2008, 2009), and are intrinsically linked with the significance of culture and aestheticization in postindustrial society. Deindustrialization, like industrialization before it, ‘transformed built environments and landscapes, producing dense urban collages of factories, plants, dockyards, collieries, warehouses and transportation networks’ (Emery, 2018: 6), often leaving sites of dereliction and abandonment, ‘wasted’ social and cultural spaces (Cowie and Heathcott, 2003; Zukin, 1992) that show ‘the footprint of capitalism’ (Mah, 2010: 399). Alice Mah (2010, 2012) has drawn attention to the ongoing process of deindustrialization and its inherent spatiality as ‘industrial ruination’, in which socio-economic, cultural, spatial, and temporal ‘legacies’ of deindustrialization continually resurface in postindustrial landscapes and identities. Rather than being mere ‘forms’ which represent a lost past or the ‘spatially uneven “violence” of capitalism’ (Mah, 2010: 399), the ruins and remainders of industrial society are part of lived and ambivalent processes:

Each spatio-temporal moment of industrial ruination is situated somewhere along a continuum between creation and destruction, fixidity and motion, expansion and contraction. Over time, landscapes of industrial ruination will become landscapes of regeneration, reuse, demolition or abandonment all over again (Mah, 2010: 400).

However, as Rhodes (2013: 58-59) has argued, while the ‘material landscapes of manufacturing communities may have been transformed ... the sociocultural legacies of industry have proven to be much more permeable’. Industrial cultures and identities are wrapped up in what Williams (2011) described as ‘structures of feeling’; what for Bourdieu (1984, 1990) include the

feelings of familiarity and 'locatedness' that, come from one's place in the, largely economic – but also thoroughly cultural – social hierarchies. Place matters 'not just because it is where people reside, but also because it is where belonging and character are invested' (Lewis, 2016: 913, see also Macdonald *et al.*, 2005; Nayak, 2003a, 2003b). So entangled are our own identities with those of places and their histories that we carry them with us, and are, in a sense, 'embodied history, internalized as second nature' (Bourdieu, 1990: 56). Studies carried out in various geographical contexts in the UK, Germany, and beyond consistently show sociocultural and spatial legacies of industrial society surviving through deindustrialization and emerging, often in ambivalent, contentious, or hybrid forms in the postindustrial (e.g. Charlesworth, 2000; Emery, 2018a; Hollands and Chatterton, 2002; Linkon and Russo, 2002; Mah, 2009, 2010; Nayak, 2003a, 2003b; Rhodes, 2013; Thorliefsson, 2016). Walkerdine and Jiménez (2012) found in their study of a Welsh steelworks, where the spatiotemporal patterns as well as the culture and identities of industrial society have survived long after the closure of the works themselves.

The symbolic landscapes survive in memory (Byrne and Doyle, 2004), and therefore continue to feature prominently in people's narratives of place and identity. This often takes the form of nostalgia, and the 'yearning for the past, a sense of loss in the face of change' (Bonnet and Alexander, 2012: 392), or the longing for a home that no longer exists (Legg, 2004). Numerous studies (i.e. Clark and Gibbs, 2017; MacKenzie *et al.*, 2006; Meier, 2013) highlight 'senses of loss, dislocation and mourning wrought by job loss and workplace closures' (Emery, 2018b: 5).

While nostalgia is often a feature of accounts of deindustrialization, notions of 'a past now gone,' are not always the complete picture. As Alice Mah comments about her study of deindustrialization in Newcastle: '[l]ocal accounts of sites and processes of industrial ruination ... represent "living memories" which are defined by a lack of closure with an industrial past' (2010: 399). Meier (2013) has drawn attention to how former sites of industrial work retain an affective presence, and former workers are "haunted" by memories and a sense of loss and the 'ghosts of industrial ruins' (Edensor, 2005a, 2005b). There is a distinctly emotive and affective

dimension to industrial ruination: the loss or transformation of material landscapes and monuments to an industrial past is significant because of what those material landscapes represent (Meier, 2013). However, as Edensor (2005a) has pointed out, the landscapes of deindustrialization, or ruination, are not merely material and physical but are embodied and affective. The relationship between identity and place is visceral and corporeal, and place is experienced physically, sensuously, and emotionally (Lewis, 2016). Whilst there is much to be said for an approach to understanding postindustrial landscapes which emphasizes the affective nature of such environments and their impact on identity, commentators have warned against the tendency towards historical romanticism in the form of 'smokestack nostalgia' (Cowie and Heathcott, 2003; Strangleman, 2013), and treating deindustrial landscapes and ruins purely as aesthetic objects, and thus abstracting them from lived histories and social relations (High, 2013a, 2013b; Linkon, 2013; Mah, 2012). There is a danger of 'fetishizing' industrial working class life through representations that glamorize and aestheticize industrial decay whilst separating it from its historical and cultural context – what Strangleman (2013) has termed 'ruin porn'. Mah (2010: 400) highlights the ambivalence of accounts of deindustrialization which 'simultaneously mourn and celebrate the landscape of industrial ruin', constructing identities which struggle to reconcile ambivalent pasts with uncertain futures.

The ongoing legacies of deindustrialization and the conflicts of representation are, as High (2013a) has argued, struggles over identity, meaning, and memory. Memory is often ignored in accounts of place and identity (Drozdzewski *et al.*, 2016), but is becoming an increasingly common feature of accounts of deindustrialization (Emery, 2018b). I argued above for an understanding of narrative understanding of practices of identification: memory is an essential component of narrative identities because it is in remembering and (re)retelling past experiences that we link the past with the present (and the future), and provide cohesion to our identities (Beer, 2016; Blokland, 2001; Brockmeier, 2002b; Linkon, 2013; Middleton, 2002; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Ricoeur, 2004). Memories are not static objects that are stored and retrieved, but continually reconstructed in the act of remembering (Brockmeier, 2002a, 2002b;

Gross, 2000; Ricoeur, 2004). 'The activity of narrating a life,' according to Elliott (2005: 126), 'therefore involves the restructuring and or reconfiguring of past events in the light of the present' and re-interpreting them in a way which makes sense to our present 'self' in what Hacking (1994) calls 'memero-politics'. Memory, then, is better understood as a social accomplishment (Middleton, 2002). As Ritiovi (2010: 232) summarizes:

As we bring to life an event that happened in the past, we endow it with meaning that combines experience with expectation. Similarly, identity defined in narrative terms is not the story of a past self, told from the privileged perspective of a present self that remains nevertheless invisible, unknown. Instead, the story is continuously adjusted to accommodate and reconcile, if necessary, the self whose actions have already been committed with the self who makes plans for future action.

Building on the foundational work of Halbwachs (1992), recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of social memory for cultures and identities (Erll, 2011; Fentress and Wickham, 1992; Leichter, 2012; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Ricoeur, 2004), particularly in making sense of socio-spatial change (Blokland, 2001; Blunt, 2003; Brockmeier, 2002b; Legg, 2004, 2005, 2007; Linkon and Russo, 2002; Linkon, 2013; Mah, 2010). Middleton has argued that drawing on ideas of succession and continuity in our understandings of the past, present, and future shapes the way 'our lives, our identities and memberships, are organized and given shape' (2002: 81); while Brockmeier (2002b: 26) argues that individual and social memory are inexorably intertwined, and without the symbolic space of cultural memory, 'we are unable to remember what our "individual" lives have been all about.'

It is no coincidence that the study of memory coincides with the social transformations related to the emergence of postindustrial society (Said, 2000).³ By drawing on cultural memories, narratives of identity offer potential safety against the insecurities of 'liquid modernity' and individualization (Crang and Travlou, 2001; Dwyer, 2000; Hoelscher and Alderman, 2004; Said, 2000; Till, 2003).

Discourses of continuity and change are central to the way in which we draw on the past (and imagined futures) in constructing individual and collective narratives and identities (Middleton, 2002), and consequently remembering (and forgetting [Brockmeier, 2002a, 2002b; Legg, 2004, 2005, 2007; Markusen, 2004]) are necessary to make sense of social change and to understand our place within a changing social environment. The ability to remember (and to forget), as well as feelings of nostalgia, are inevitable defences against the loss of certainty and familiarity which accompanies social change (Said, 2000). This is at the core of Harvey's concern with 'place-bound nostalgias' and the need, experienced as a result of globalization, to protect, emotionally and symbolically if not materially and physically, the characteristics of place to which practices of identity are tethered (Harvey, 1989a). The search for, or attempts to construct, a sense of identity or authenticity from local history in postindustrial cities is a significant feature of the relationship between CCIs and postindustrial urban transformations, and I will return to these points in chapter 4.

Cultural memories are part of the material and symbolic landscapes we interact with on an everyday basis through what Brockmeier (2001; 2002b) refers to as 'memory texts'. Cultural memories 'like a palimpsest, [are] written over a previous writing, which in this way is absent and present at the same time' (2001b: 25). The built environment plays a significant role in generating and maintaining shared place-identities and collective memory (Assmann, 2008; Hoelscher and Alderman, 2004). In their seminal study of the deindustrialization of Youngstown, Linkon and Russo (2002) argued that deindustrialization created a 'crisis of

³ In much the same way that heritage and nostalgia was, in Britain, very much a Victorian invention in the face of social change and upheaval brought about by the emergence of modern-industrial society.

representation' for the people and the town whose identities centred on the steel industry. As Rhodes (2013: 57) puts it: 'Where smokestacks had long stood as markers of industry and prosperity – identifying cities as industrial and “working class” – their closure and demolition saw the marginalization of industry and industrial workers within both the material and symbolic constructions of place.' Even though industrial cultures and identities survive through processes of deindustrialization, the ways in which they are represented (if they are at all) in postindustrial landscapes is markedly different.

The built environment plays a key role in establishing place-identities through cultural memory. Memories, architecture and public art not only represent particular histories and identities but fix them in time (Dwyer, 2000; Johnson, 1999, 2003; Drozdewski *et al.*, 2016) in what Nora described as *lieux de mémoire*: places 'where memory crystallizes and secretes itself' (1989: 7). These sites where culture and the past are fixed in place exist because the 'real environments of memory' (ibid.) have been replaced by 'official histories', which divorce the past from its context in order to maintain a particular narrative. Tying the past to the present through social memory, Roberts (2007) has argued, also constitutes an *ex post facto* cultural narrative through which the relative importance of certain industries or occupations can be reinterpreted, rewritten, or reappropriated in line with the 'narrative' of the postindustrial economy. Culture, and especially cultural consumption, is deeply implicated in these transformations of space (Clarke, 1997; Harvey, 1989a; Zukin, 1993, 1995, 1998). Miles (2010) has drawn particular attention to the role of (particularly cultural) consumerism in the (re)construction of places – especially cities – in postindustrial society, suggesting that '[t]he physical environment, the cityscapes increasingly dominated by spaces for consumption, constitute a graphic manifestation of the changing nature of selfhood and the changing ways in which the individual relates to society' (2010: 10). As I will argue in chapter 4, urban environments, as places of particular density, intensity, and variety of cultural forms, are especially significant for practices of identity construction, and the material and symbolic transformations of postindustrial urban

environments in particular have important bearing on the postindustrial identities of people working in the CCIs.

Deindustrialization is an ongoing process (Mah, 2012; Rhodes, 2013). It does not imply a categorical break between the postindustrial and the industrial, but rather a 'phase shift' involving 'combined and uneven development' (Byrne, 2001: 23ff); 'reinforced by the fact that people in different parts of the country had distinct traditions and resources to draw on in their interpretation of, and their response to, these changes' (Massey, 1991: 268) deindustrialization and its impact on places, cultures, and identities is expressed in locally-specific ways. Moreover, while 'deindustrialization has marked the marginalization of the industrial past and of industrial workers and their claims to certain places, there has not been a complete erasure' (Rhodes, 2013: 59). Numerous studies have supported arguments made by Williams (1981) and Byrne (2002) that industrial cultures and identities resist the transformations of postindustrial society, continuing on in various, locally-specific forms, either in oppositional, residual forms, or, by adapting to postindustrial change in hybrid forms through which industrial identities can be reaffirmed (Lawler and Byrne, 2005; Linkon and Russo, 2002; MacKenzie *et al.*, 2006; Miles, 2004, 2005; Nayak, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; Nayak and Kehily, 2014; Strangleman and Rhodes, 2014). These hybrid identities, which highlight 'a more ambiguous process of disavowal, deemphasis, invocation, and accommodation' (Rhodes, 2013: 73), often draw on characteristics and values associated with their industrial past and associated masculinities (McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2003a, 2006; Strangleman, 2017; Thorliefsson, 2016), femininities (Lawler, 2005; Nayak and Kehily, 2014), and ethnicities (Nayak, 2003a, 2003b, 2006), and 'reveal the complex way in which the past is negotiated in relation to both the present and an imagined future' (Rhodes, 2013: 73, see also Beer, 2016a, 2016b). Studies of this kind draw attention to the power of legacies of deindustrialization 'to shape and unsettle formations of identity, place, inclusion and expectations of the future in post-industrial space' (Emery, 2018b: 5).

Moreover, the history of places, often particularly their industrial past, far from being erased by the postindustrial, becomes a key factor in signifying the move from centres of industrial production to places of postindustrial consumption (Harvey, 1989a; Mathews and Picton, 2014; Miles, 2010), and in establishing the 'authenticity' of postindustrial places (Benz, 2016; Zukin, 2011) and their appeal for people searching for authentic locations as part of their aesthetic projects of self. This point is particularly significant for understanding the significance of place for people working in CCIs and urban transformations, particularly those connected to culture-led regeneration and the creative city agenda, which I discuss in subsequent chapters.

II.4 Summary

In this first literature review chapter, I have argued for an understanding of identities as narratives constructed dialectically through ongoing practices of identification. I have suggested that ambivalence and contradiction is inherent to these practices. I have argued that, in postindustrial societies, these practices are significantly influenced by culture, place, and memory, and the impacts of deindustrialization. Because culture, and the production and consumption of cultural commodities is central to postindustrial identity, people working in CCIs occupy unique positions in relation to the transformations associated with postindustrial society, and their narratives of identity are likely to provide significant insight into the challenges of identity construction. In the next chapter, I locate the CCIs within discussions of postindustrial society and economy, and explore the conditions of work in the cultural and creative economy and its significance for postindustrial identities.

Chapter III: Cultural and Creative Industries

III.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I set out a case for understanding postindustrial identities as dialectical social practices of identification through which people construct narratives to make sense of their relationships with the world. I suggested that in postindustrial society the ‘task’ of constructing an individual project of self is increasingly aestheticized, and that these ‘aesthetic projects of self’ are largely realized through the consumption of cultural commodities (which, as I argue in the next chapter, includes urban space). In this second literature review chapter, I consider the relationship between the CCIs that produce these commodities and the ‘new economy’ of postindustrial capitalism, and the significance of this relationship for understanding the identification practices of people working in CCIs.

In *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), Daniel Bell argued that culture had come to rise above material conditions as the source of potential social change; that ‘*homo pictor*, the symbol-producing animal ... [had become] a creature uniquely able to prefigure what he would later “objectify” or construct in reality’, and that ‘what is played out in the imagination of the artist foreshadows, however dimly, the social reality of tomorrow’ (Bell, 1976: 33). This, Bell argued, had happened because culture had become the most dynamic aspect of society, ‘a dominant impulse toward the new and original, a self-conscious search for future forms and sensations’ (*ibid.*) and, crucially, because this cultural and creative impulse had become socially legitimate. Culture, Bell suggested, is no longer seen as inherited from the past, but ‘an official,

ceaseless search for a new sensibility' (*ibid.*: 34). It is my argument in this chapter that the CCIs – frequently viewed as archetypes of the 'new economy' of postindustrial society – are indicative of, and central to, this new sensibility, or 'new spirit' of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005), and that the socio-spatial conditions in and through which this sensibility is expressed are of considerable importance in understanding the identification practices of people working in CCIs. In particular, I suggest that the dialectical relationship between culture and economy, and the idealized image of the autonomous, independent artist are deeply embedded in the everyday experiences and identities of cultural and creative workers.

In the first part of this chapter I provide a brief history of the CCIs, which, drawing on Adorno, I explore in term of the dialectical relationship between culture and economy. In the second section, I consider the significance of CCIs for the 'brave new world of work' (Beck, 2000a) in the postindustrial economy. These themes are drawn together in the final section, where I consider the importance of an 'artistic subjectivity' for understanding postindustrial identities.

III.2 Understanding Cultural and Creative Industries

As argued in the previous chapter, the aestheticization of everyday life (Featherstone, 1991) means that culture is deeply implicated in practices of identification in postindustrial society. The consumption of cultural objects in particular is fundamental to how individuals relate to society (Bauman, 2000, 2005) and construct aesthetic projects of self. As the producers of cultural objects, and thereby (at least in large part) the producers of ideas, symbols, and discourses which constitute our way of seeing the world and thus our everyday lived experience of culture as a way of life (Power and Scott, 2004; Williams, 2011), the CCIs are important actors

in postindustrial society. The interrelated 'discovery' in recent years of their economic significance and the increased attention to matters of culture brought about by the aestheticization of everyday life, have led to the CCIs being high on policy and research agenda; most notably, as will be discussed in the next chapter, in the field of urban development and regeneration. The significance of the CCIs, however, is neither exclusively economic, nor experienced universally: for many, the significance of CCIs reflects the changing – and increasingly aestheticized – conditions of postindustrial society (Adkins, 2017; Gill and Pratt, 2008; O'Connor, 2000; Ross, 2009), especially concerning work (Beck, 2000a; Mayer, 2014; McRobbie, 2002, 2003, 2016a). Consequently, CCIs can be seen as especially implicated in the relationship between individuals and society, which, as I suggested in the previous chapter, are questions of identity.

III.2.1 Defining Cultural and Creative Industries

Despite becoming a popular focus for research around the end of the 20th century, there has been little success in arriving at a settled definition of what precisely CCIs are (Flew, 2012; Galloway and Dunlop, 2007; O'Connor, 2000, 2010; Pitts, 2015). Definitions vary widely due to geographical, historical and political variations (Banks and O'Connor, 2009; Kong, 2014), although within Europe, they tend to include a central core of 'artistic' practices (Throsby, 2001). Demarcating particular industries, sectors, or occupations as either 'cultural' or 'creative' (and, as I discuss below, the distinction here is significant) has proven troublesome, or even impossible (Drake, 2003; Flew, 2002, 2012; Gibson, 2003; Hartley, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Mato, 2009; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2009); in large part because standard definitions 'typically struggle to account for the diverse manifestations of creative employment and creative practices in other areas of the economy' (Pitts, 2015: 73). As this research is concerned with the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs, analysing the cultural and creative economy itself is not an aim, and I am therefore not concerned with the debates concerning technical

definition of the CCIs (for which see, *inter alia*, Allen, 2002; Cunningham, 2002; Daubaraitė and Startienė, 2015; Flew, 2002, 2012; Galloway and Dunlop, 2007; Gibson, 2003; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Mato, 2009; Moore, 2014; O'Connor, 2000; 2009, 2010, 2011; Potts and Cunningham, 2008; Power and Nielsén, 2010; Power and Scott, 2004; Pratt, 2008a; Throsby, 2001, 2008). These debates, while not unrelated, often have little bearing on cultural and creative workers' identity practices. The variety of experiences included in CCIs means that people working in them share little if any sense of collectivity (Hartley, 2005). Many identify little with the technical or political definitions, and many of the participants I spoke to explicitly rejected official labels and classifications.

Nevertheless, there are a couple of important points concerning definition worth mentioning here. Firstly, academic debates concerning the definition of CCIs have typically fallen into two camps (Pratt, 2008b): influenced either by the 'cultural turn' and associated with the work of Amin and Thrift (2007) – and emphasizing the cultural nature of production and economic activity (Pitts, 2015; Pratt, 2008b); or the 'cultural economy' approach (Anheier and Isar, 2007), focusing instead on studying CCIs as economic phenomena, and 'as an integral part of economy production' (Pratt, 2008b: 97). Both of these approaches, as Pitts (2015: 73) points out, 'are predicated on an assumed distinction between culture and economy'. This point is essential to the arguments I develop in this thesis, and I shall return to it in the next section.

Secondly, within a policy context, Pratt (2008b) suggests that a 'modest consensus' has emerged around the UK's Creative Industry Mapping Documents (DCMS, 1998, 2001), which identify 13 'creative industries': advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio. This definition draws in 'the whole production chain of cultural goods, from creation to consumption and re-use, but is defined by final usage', and encompasses a broad understanding of cultural production ranging 'from the fine arts to popular culture' and sometimes even further (Pratt, 2008b: 97). It also

explicitly emphasizes the for-profit motivation of these industries. The DCMS definition of the creative industries has been exported globally, and is either identical to, or the basis of, equivalent policy definitions in countries across the world, including the definition used in Germany (HKG, 2016; Söndermann, 2009, 2010; Söndermann *et al.*, 2009).

Throughout this thesis, I use the expression cultural and creative industries (CCIs). I use this broad term to acknowledge the ambivalent relationship between culture and creativity which is central to the CCIs as both concept and social practice, and to focus attention on the relationship between these organizations and both questions of culture *and* the creativity of people who work in them, rather than focusing on one at the expense of the other. In employing the term CCIs I acknowledge the complexity of these issues of definition; rather than seeking to force an inevitably flawed definitional schema on a messy and ambivalent reality, I choose to embrace that ambivalence – indeed, as I argue in the final chapters, the ambivalence itself is the most important feature of postindustrial identities and their relationship to CCIs.

More important than establishing a neat definition of CCIs, however, is conceptualizing them as part of a more general, yet decidedly uneven, transformation of society, culture, and the economy (Florida, 2002b; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; O'Connor, 2000), and understanding how they are implicated in the relationship between individuals and society, and therefore practices of identification. This, as I argue in the following section, concerns the relationship between culture and the economy.

III.2.2 Culture and Economy: A Harmony of Contradiction?

Although they are often considered a recent economic innovation, in a certain sense, CCIs are not new at all (Freeman, 2012; Pitts, 2015; Potts *et al.*, 2008). The production of objects of

primarily cultural and symbolic meaning long predates industrial manufacturing, and culture has existed as a commodity since antiquity (Freeman, 2012). Indeed the exchange of symbolic meaning, Baudrillard (2004) has argued, is itself prior to the functional value of material objects. What changed with the shift to industrial capitalism as a mode of production - and has continued throughout modernity - is the relationship between culture (and its production and consumption) and the economic logic of capitalism. This relationship has been described in various ways, e.g. the 'art-market nexus' (O'Connor, 2010: 17), or the 'art-commerce relation' Banks (2010a). The arrangement of these two logics, positioned in opposition, can be seen as central to the discourses and the social conditions in which cultural objects are produced (and consumed) - what Bourdieu (1993) describes as the 'field of cultural production'.

The historiography of the conceptualizations of CCIs has been rehearsed many times (e.g. Flew, 2002; Hartley, 2005; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; O'Connor, 2010, 2011) and does not need repeating here. Instead, in order to establish its significance for the practice of postindustrial identities, I want to focus on some important aspects of how the relationship between the CCIs and society has been understood, starting with the origins of the term in the work of Adorno.

III.2.2.1 Adorno: Commodification and Standardization

The first conceptions of the CCIs were primarily concerned not with what counted as 'cultural' (or 'creative') but with the social significance of that culture (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007). The term 'culture industry' first appeared in Adorno and Horkheimer's essay 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997 [1944], hereafter *DE*), and became a feature of much of Adorno's subsequent work (Adorno, 1997, 2001). Horkheimer and Adorno argued that, as a result of commodification and mass production, cultural objects had become standardized bearers of the ideology of capitalism and the logic of the commodity

form. Produced like any other commodity under capitalism, not for their intrinsic use-value, but for exchange-value and profit. As Adorno would later put it:

The cultural commodities of the industry are governed ... by the principle of their realization as value, and not by their own specific content and harmonious function. The entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms. (Adorno, 2001: 99)

Adorno's critique of 'the culture industry'⁴ and the implications of commodification and standardization for the role of the CCIs in late capitalism is rarely given more than a perfunctory tip of the hat in accounts of CCIs in the 21st century,⁵ and consequently some of his most relevant and lasting insights have received less contemporary attention than they deserve. Space prohibits a thorough treatment of Adorno (and Horkheimer)'s critique of the culture industry here, but three key points are especially significant and deserve mention: the standardization and universalization of cultural commodities, the role of *Kulturkritik*, and the dialectical nature of the relationship between culture and economy.

III.2.2.1a The Standardization and Universalization of Cultural Commodities

Adorno's critique of the culture industry is not concerned with the process of cultural production itself, but the character of the objects produced: 'the expression industry,' he remarks, 'is not to be taken too literally. It refers to the standardization of the thing itself ... and to the rationalization of distribution techniques, but not strictly to the production process' (Adorno, 2001: 100).

⁴ Most criticisms of Adorno build a straw man of his critique of the culture industry, suggesting that by referring to the singular Adorno saw no variety of cultural commodities or practices, or agency on the part of the producers within the cultural industries. This, I argue, is to entirely miss the point of Adorno's arguments and to mistake the tendency within capitalism which Adorno is critiquing for his own position.
⁵ O'Connor (2010) is a notable exception.

The standardization and commodification of cultural objects under the culture industry is a reflection of the universalizing tendency of capitalism, which seeks to transform everything into commodities produced, consumed, according to the universal logic of the commodity form rather than their particular characteristics. For Adorno, the particularity of cultural objects is central to their very nature. Benjamin (2008[1936]) articulates this point clearly when he describes the 'auratic' quality of works of art: that which derives from their particularity and is inseparable from their historical and socio-spatial context. For Adorno, cultural objects standardized according the logic of the commodity form have no particularity, no *aura*: 'the whole and the parts are alike; there is no antithesis and no connection' (DE: 126); 'every detail is so firmly stamped with sameness' (DE: 128) that works of art and their components are essentially interchangeable: and 'the general can replace the particular' (DE: 130). At the same time that the cultural industry standardizes cultural objects it imbues them with an entirely false individuality, and thus 'the cultural industry perpetually cheats its consumers' (DE: 139): forever promising the particularity which it has destroyed: and '[e]ach product affects an individual air; individuality itself serves to reinforce ideology' (Adorno, 2001: 101), extending a 'ruthless unity' over individuals through the illusory individuality of standardized cultural objects (DE: 123).

This destruction of difference is central to Adorno's understanding of the culture industry and its role in the relationship between capitalist society and individuals.⁶ The effects of standardization and universalization concern not only the aesthetic quality of cultural commodities, but the way in which culture is implicated in people's ability to understand and interpret the conditions of their world; what Adorno refers to as *Kulturkritik*.

⁶ It is also connected to Adorno's negative dialectics, which I discuss later in the methodology.

III.2.2.1b Kulturkritik

Fundamental to Adorno's position, and the point which underlies the arguments in this thesis, is that the culture industry is implicated in the role that culture plays in how individuals understand and relate to the conditions in which they live – in particular, with the conditions brought about by modern industrial capitalism. Adorno approaches culture from a position of modernist aesthetics, arguing that cultural objects are able to critique and present alternatives to social reality: to raise 'a protest against the petrified relations' of life (Adorno, 2001: 100). By bringing the logic and conditions of cultural production under the logic of the commodity form, Adorno maintained that the particular ability of culture to critique social conditions, and provide an image of reality beyond, or contrary to, empirical social reality was undermined. The products of the culture industry, in contrast with 'genuine culture', offered no authentic *Kulturkritik*, but, by 'infecting everything with sameness' (*DE*: 94) and saturating consumers in mass-produced cultural commodities, the culture industry dissolved the distinction between art and the everyday, 'intentionally integrat[ing] its consumers from above' (Adorno, 2001: 98). The standardized products of the culture industry, incapable of providing or allowing criticism, merely reproduce the familiar ideology of commodity relations under capitalism: 'sacrificing whatever involved a distinction between the logic of the work and that of the social system' (*DE*: 121). Consequently, the standardized commodities of the culture industry no longer require critical interpretation as particular works of art, but are presented to consumers already interpreted, with their (ideological) meanings already constructed, leaving 'nothing left for the consumer to classify' (*DE*: 125).

III.2.2.1c Culture and Economy as Dialectical

Adorno's concern over the standardization and commodification of cultural objects was not based on a separation of the sphere of culture and economy, but on their interdependence

(Adorno, 2001: 61ff.). When Adorno writes of ‘unity of the opposites of market and autonomy’ (DE: 127), he is describing a relationship between people and society, and between the sphere of culture and capitalist industry, which is decidedly *dialectical* in character. The autonomous work of art, for Adorno, was one which followed its own internal logic; it was not *independent* of its material conditions, but embedded in them; which was the source of its ability to mount a challenge to capitalist ideology. ‘Pure works of art,’ he argued, ‘which negated the commodity character of society by simply following their own inherent laws, were at the same time always commodities’ (DE: 127); and just as ‘the reduction of the work of art to empirical reason’ (Adorno, 2001: 64) robbed culture of its *kritik*, the belief in art’s autonomy, Adorno maintained, was itself ideological. Accordingly, it was ‘the elimination of the difference between [cultural] image and reality’ (*ibid.*: 65) that characterized, for Adorno, the impact of the culture industry on the dialectical relationship between culture and economy. The consequence of the mass industrial organization of cultural commodity production was that ‘the complex play between art as commodity and as autonomous form collapsed as the independent artist gave way to the culture factory’ (O’Connor, 2010: 14).

Adorno’s understanding of the culture industry centralizes the critical role of culture and cultural objects in the relationship between individuals and capitalist society. By ‘emphasising the connection between art and society at the level of formal logics and contradictions’ (O’Connor, 2010: 21), rather than positioning culture and industry as quintessentially separate, Adorno draws attention to the dynamic and contradictory interrelationship between critical, autonomous art, and standardized, ‘industrial’, cultural production – what I refer to throughout this thesis as the dialectic of art and economy.

III.2.2.2 The Democratization of Culture and The Creative Turn

Responses to Adorno came from many directions: significantly, those influenced by cultural studies, particularly the work of Raymond Williams (1981, 2011), which emphasized the ‘everyday’ nature of culture ‘as a way of life’, and the possibilities for meaningful forms of working class resistance to dominant culture through popular cultural consumption (e.g. Hall and Jefferson, 1976); and those from the political economy of culture school (Garnham, 1990, 2000; Miège, 1979, 1987) that took a more materialist reading of the cultural economy by considering the whole range of cultural commodities and the conditions of their production and consumption as material objects and not merely ideological texts (Hesmondhalgh, 2013; O’Connor, 2010). These approaches critiqued Adorno on several fronts. They argued the outputs of the culture industry were characterized by more than mass ‘industrial’ production and standardization, arguing that post-Fordist cultural production was subject to changing consumer demand and required constant innovation (O’Connor, 2010), which also challenged the idea of top-down programming of consumer response/demand for cultural commodities, drawing attention to the likelihood of market failure for cultural commodities (Caves, 2000) and the necessity of a scatter-gun approach to cultural production (Hartley, 2005). They argued that different types of cultural commodities generated economic value in different ways and were subject to different conditions of production and dissemination (Miège, 1979, 1987) requiring different types of creative labour, and therefore constituted different *cultural industries*. Crucially, they argued that, contrary to Adorno’s pessimism, independent artists continued to find a place within cultural industries, and “‘creative labour’” remained very much about freelancers, short term contracts and flexible working’ (O’Connor, 2010). As I argue in section III.3, the reality may be rather more complicated.

As a result of these critiques, understanding of the cultural industries became more pluralized. Influenced by the work of Miège (1979, 1987) in France, this pluralized account of the cultural industries informed the work of the Greater London Council (GLC) in the 1980s (Bianchini,

1987; Garnham, 1990, 2000; Garnham and Fuchs, 2014). Garnham's work with the GLC sought to remove the cultural industries from a particular top-down high-art interpretation of culture, reflecting the democratization of culture which followed pop-art movements in the 1970s and the adoption of 'cultural critique of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Roberts, 2012); opening up 'a new kind of "cultural political" space' (O'Connor, 2011: 27) for the role of culture in everyday society – which, as I suggested in the last chapter, is greatly implicated in postindustrial identities.

The plurality of culture and cultural industries embraced in Miège and Garnham's work also emphasized that art and culture are not the sole province of public institutions and funding, but increasingly produced, circulated, and consumed privately through the market. Embracing the power of the market to meet people's cultural needs (Myerscough, 1988), discussions increasingly 'took on the language of arts as industry' (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007: 18). Far from implying universalization or standardization, commodification encouraged the diversification of cultural products in meeting consumer demand. Market provision democratized culture, enabling the pluralities of cultures and cultural commodities to reflect diverse cultures, rather than being merely a vessel for top-down enculturation by either modernist high-art, or capitalist ideology (Hesmondhalgh, 2013; O'Connor, 2010, 2011). Consequently, Adorno's distinction between the cultural commodities of the culture industry and 'true culture', ran counter to the democratized, everyday, and mundane interpretation of the cultural industries: the cultural industries and their products, then, could not be considered 'other' to authentic art (O'Connor, 2010); and the autonomous, 'auratic' (Benjamin, 2008) quality of art and culture was replaced by the 'authenticity' of cultural forms and commodities which, although produced and disseminated through the market, were nevertheless 'true' expressions of diverse cultures. Thus, while these accounts of the cultural industries were largely unconcerned with aesthetics and the value of aesthetic (or cultural) critique, they nevertheless saw culture as a political battleground in which consumers exerted more agency in

resisting the ideology of the culture industry than they had seen in Adorno's account (O'Connor, 2010).

The move towards aligning cultural production and consumption with the economy in general was taken further by the UK's New Labour government in the late 1990s with the rise of the DCMS definition of the 'creative industries' and the 'creative turn' (Kong, 2014). The discursive shift from 'cultural' to 'creative' did not clear up any ambiguity in the definitions of CCIs, but rather represented a very political move towards centralizing the economic role and value of the CCIs on the one hand, and emphasizing the individual 'creative' processes involved in production over the 'cultural' values, function, or purposes of cultural commodities on the other (Banks and O'Connor, 2017; Kong, 2014; Pratt, 2008a; Throsby, 2001).⁷

Under New Labour, creative work and business opportunities became effectively synonymous (Arts Council, 2004; DCMS, 2001). While the cultural industries aligned culture with the economy, they nevertheless sought to preserve, albeit in a marketized form, culture's social and political critique; in contrast, the 'creative industries' discourse marginalizes questions of culture in favour of 'exclusively economic agenda' (Kong, 2014: 598; also Banks and O'Connor, 2017; Gablik, 2004; Kong and O'Connor, 2009), in which 'the framework, policy aims and measures of success are all based on economic analysis and economic terms. Culture and the arts are valued only because they are seen as drivers of economic growth' (*ibid.*) rather than for intrinsic cultural returns (Banks and O'Connor 2009: 367–368; Cunningham, 2002); and artists, rather than standing outside and challenging capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005), are valued as some of the best entrepreneurs (Arts Council, 2004). Artistic critique itself, 'is transformed into the affirmative creativity of the new economy' (Roberts, 2012: 89).

⁷ This, as some commentators have suggested, was as much about promoting the 'Cool Britannia' image and identity for Britain under the New Labour government as it was about achieving meaningful change in the cultural economy (Navarro, 2016; see also Oakley, 2004, 2011).

Thus the purely economic rationale behind the creative industries (Kong, 2014) replaces *Kulturkritik* with individual – and essentially *entrepreneurial* – creativity (Banks, 2010b; Galloway and Dunlop, 2007; Miller, 2009), reinforcing not only the commodification of culture as Adorno saw it, but also the position of culture (and creativity) as fundamental values within postindustrial capitalism. As I discuss below, this has significant implications for people’s (and especially cultural and creative workers’) relationships to work and their postindustrial identities.

Equating culture with individual entrepreneurship also serves to further dissolve the distinction between culture and economy, reinforcing the idea that ‘everything is cultural’ and therefore nothing is distinctly ‘cultural’; thus, as Adorno (2001) argued, culture no longer ‘stands apart’ but is indistinguishable from the everyday relations of capitalism. The ‘distinctive aspects of the cultural sector have been subsumed within the wider creative industries agenda – culture is now viewed as just one more “knowledge economy asset”’ (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007: 25) in an increasingly ‘culturalized’ economy.

While the notion of a ‘culturalized economy’ has been challenged on various grounds (see, for example, Du Gay and Pryke, 2002; Mato, 2009), the distinction between the ‘economic’ and the ‘cultural’ has changed significantly in recent years. Rather than viewing the cultural economy either as an incursion of economy into the cultural, or the cultural into the economy, the two are always interconnected (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Miller, 2002; Roberts, 2012): as Pitts (2015: 73) puts it, ‘each is present in the other and neither bears an ultimately determining force’. The ‘culturalization’ of the economy refers not to an entirely new phenomenon, but to a change in the forms of the dialectic of art and economy identified by Adorno. Characterized by the pervasive intermingling, and rationalization (Pitts, 2015), of cultural and economic influences throughout the economy on the one hand, and the way in which culture (and creativity) is seen to be both thoroughly embedded through the aestheticization of everyday life (particularly as it relates to the significance of cultural production to the postindustrial

economy) and routinely *evaluated* in economic terms (Kong, 2014; Kong and O'Connor, 2009) on the other. Thus, for many more people than was ever before the case, questions of culture and creativity, are inherent to practices of identity, particularly, as I discuss in the next section, through work.

III. 3 The Brave New World of Work in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Work in the cultural and the creative industries is often held up as an archetype of work in the postindustrial knowledge economy (Adkins, 2017; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Ross, 2009). Aside from the centrality of cultural goods to a culture-laden consumer society, the working conditions and employment relations of the CCIs, it is argued, typify those of the emerging postindustrial society (Bauman, 2000, 2006; McKinley and Smith, 2009; Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009).

Beck (2000a: 19) suggests that 'the dynamic power of technological and economic innovation within the framework of global capitalism ... has been revolutionizing the very foundations of society'. This 'new world of work', Beck argues, reflects a new modernity 'characterized by general insecurity' (*ibid.*), and built on increasingly individualized and precarious forms of work: what has been variously described as portfolio careers, project-based working (Connor, Gill and Taylor, 2015) or the 'gig-economy' (Coles, 2015; Kessler, 2018). This individualized, postindustrial experience of work is seen as typified by short-term, irregular, flexible employment contracts and conditions, a passionate attachment of workers to their labour process and/or output, and a blurring of the lines between work and leisure, home and office (Banks, 2007; Lewis, 2003; Sennett, 1998). The CCIs, in which these employment conditions are well-established (even integral), it can be argued, have pioneered a conception of work-life organization and been instrumental in its adoption in other spheres of the economy (Hartley, 2005; Ross, 2009; Thiel, 2008). Encapsulated by the notion of making a living "doing what you

love” (Duffy, 2016) in the ‘cool, creative and egalitarian’ world of cultural and creative work (Gill, 2002), this (distinctly postindustrial) economic model and worldview, I argue, is built upon the dialectical relationship between culture and economy, and on the image, inherited from 18th century romanticism, of the independent artist, which is embedded in both discourses of the CCIs and the experiences and identities of cultural and creative workers.

III.3.1 ‘De-traditionalization’ and the Creative Fetish: A New Model of Work

In contradistinction to the alienating models of work which dominated and drew such criticism in industrial society, work in the CCIs, Banks and Hesmondhalgh (2009: 417) suggest, is ‘presented as good for both capital and labour’. Unlike the hard, anonymous, and alienated toil of work in industrial society, ‘creative work is highly prized since it appears to offer workers the chance for non-alienating employment conducive to self-expression and “personal growth”, as well as the promise of monetary rewards, consecration and fame.’ Banks (2010: 256) suggests that according to those who advocate work in the new economy, CCIs ‘seem to have finally broken the bureaucratic shackles of work, offering individuals a new relationship to labour that emphasises its intrinsic freedoms and opportunities for personal growth and constant creativity’. They are the ‘vanguard of the de-traditionalization of work’ (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009: 417), in which the identity of the worker is an integral part of labour and its product. This new ‘de-traditionalized’ relationship between work and workers both appeals to, and generates, new, postindustrial, attitudes towards work. As Ross (2009) has suggested, the freelance ‘creatives’ have become the new model workers of contemporary capitalism (Wing-Fai, Gill and Randle, 2015). Leadbetter and Oakley (1999: 15) describe these model postindustrial workers as ‘anti-establishment, anti-traditionalist and in respects highly individualistic: they prize freedom, autonomy and choice. These values predispose them to pursue self-employment and entrepreneurship in a spirit of self-exploration and self-fulfilment’.

These arguments are most clearly encapsulated by Florida's (in)famous characterization of the 'creative class' (2002b, 2003, 2005, 2014).

According to Florida, 'human creativity' has become the driving force of the postindustrial economy, and at the centre of this creative economy is the 'creative class': the core of 'scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, and architects, as well as the thought leadership of modern society: nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts and other opinion makers', whose day-to-day lives involve 'producing new forms or designs that are readily transferable and widely used' (2014: 38). These creative elites, while well-heelled in both economic and human capital, are characterized by a rejection of traditional trappings of economic success, such as suits and offices. They embrace a distinct set of creative values: individuality, meritocracy, diversity, and openness (*ibid.*: 56ff), and mix high-flying creative careers with a demand for a lifestyle defined by 'more intense, high-quality, multidimensional experiences' (*ibid.*: 134). The creative class's 'passionate quest' (*ibid.*: 134) for 'the experiential life' (*ibid.*: 133ff), leads them towards careers, lifestyles, and identities that blend bourgeois and bohemia (Eikhoff and Haunschild, 2006); in which work, identity, and place are closely intertwined in distinctly postindustrial and aesthetic projects of self, which - as I discuss in section III.4 below - are largely built on the romantic image of the independent artist.

The CCIs and the creative class who comprise them characterize a model of work in which individuality and self-expression are central features of how work features in identity projects. Heelas (2002) describes this as the 'turn to life' in which work (in the new economy), like art's challenge to the disenchantment of modern society (Gablik, 1991), is seen as a way to fill the gap left by the dissatisfaction with traditional social institutions (including traditional work). This has resulted in a situation in which 'creativity' is valorised and 'creative' individuals celebrated

as possessing – or *being* – something inherently valuable: a ‘wonderstuff’ in Ross’s (2009) terms.

The ‘utopianization’ of creative work and labour (Banks, 2009; Kong, 2014) that underlies accounts such as Florida’s (2002b) positions creativity not simply as a feature of a particular kind of work (or even work more generally), but as an end in itself - considered as the *sine qua non* of the culturalized postindustrial society. Being ‘creative’ is seen as *necessary* not only for success in the creative economy (Florida, 2002b, 2014; Howkins, 2001), but, because the drive for individual creativity and self-expression that such work is seen to depend upon is a fundamental part of aesthetic projects of self – for identity in general. Consequently, Osborne (2003) has suggested creativity represents a new form of ‘moral imperative’ pervading contemporary society with what Banks (2007), in more materialist language, describes as a ‘creative fetish’ in which everybody is (or must be) an artist.

The perennially sunny pictures of work in the CCIs promulgated by advocates like Florida and Leadbetter, however, have been substantially criticized (e.g. Banks, 2007; Markusen, 2006; McGuigan, 2009; Nathan, 2015; Peck, 2005; Pratt, 2008a; Wilson and Keil, 2008). Peck (2005) has argued that accounts of the creative class (and urban regeneration policies based on Florida’s predictions) amount, theoretically and in practice, to a reassertion of neoliberal individualism (see also Pratt, 2011), and while CCI policy and rhetoric extol the virtues of autonomy, self-expression, and the advantages of flexible work, the reality is precarious and unstable (Evans and Smith, 2006; Vivant, 2013). Banks and Hesmondhalgh (2009) have suggested that the working conditions of the CCIs are themselves highly individualized, reflecting that not only the broader neoliberal economic context, but the impact individual decisions and motivations, as well as gender, class, and ethnicity have on how cultural economies take shape (Negus, 2002). The cultural and creative labour market can be exceptionally competitive, and commitment to work in this sector represents a particularly big gamble (Mayer, 2014). Gill and Pratt (2008) have suggested that cultural and creative work

represents 'immaterial labour' undertaken increasingly by an emerging postindustrial precariat (Standing, 2014; cf. Savage *et al.*, 2013; see also Bain and McLean, 2013), often with little opportunity for long term success or stability. The nature of often short-term contracts and flexibility, along with the high rate of movement between places of work (Banks *et al.*, 2000; Thiel, 2005), means that there is often little collegial support or prospect of unionizing to protect workers from exploitation (Saundry *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, Allen and Hollingsworth (2013) have drawn attention to the class and gender inequalities in the aspirational culture of the knowledge-economy, suggesting that access to the 'desirable' jobs in the knowledge economy is not equal, but shaped by traditional concerns and practicalities, particularly place-based identity, that affects the chances of many from entering the world of cultural and creative work. Moreover, while the emergence of the postindustrial economy and the rise of female employment are concurrent (Läpple *et al.*, 2010), and CCIs tend toward a greater gender balance than industrial occupations, gender imbalances still exist (Adkins, 1999; Bain, 2003; Banks and Milestone, 2011; Dean, 2005; Duffy, 2016; McRobbie, 2002). While the individualization of work (Beck, 2000a; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) is often seen to represent the release of the individual from the restrictions of traditional, industrial labour conditions (albeit a forced release), the reflexive modernisation that Beck describes has not, universally, had this effect. Instead, 'culturalized work may actually be inciting the formation of new, yet somewhat traditional patterns of discrimination and inequality, rather than uniformly alleviating their more pernicious effects' (Banks and Milestone, 2011: 77; see also Gill, 2002; Nixon, 2003; Perrons, 2003). As archetypes of the reflexive modernisation of Beck's new world of work, then, CCIs are especially 'risk exposed' (Banks *et al.*, 2000).

Despite the substantial critiques of Florida's arguments, the highly influential narrative of work and identity embodied by Florida's creative class, whilst purporting to describe a 'new condition' of the postindustrial economy, is actually a positive re-articulation of the account of

the dialectic of culture and economy that can be found in Adorno. Florida presents a one-dimensional, universalist account of the role of creativity in the postindustrial economy (Peck, 2005; Pratt, 2008a), which not only discounts the deep ambivalences in modern society (Rosa, 2015), but also the importance of socio-spatial context (Amin and Thrift, 2002). While the 'creative fetish' reflects an important development in culture for postindustrial identities, it must be understood within the context of some significant changes to the relationship between work and identity in the postindustrial economy.

III.3.2 Subjectivization and the *Entgrenzung der Arbeit*

The 'new economy', or the brave new world of work in Beck's terms, denotes not simply new 'kinds' of work, but new socio-spatial relations between work and people. Thiel (2008) describes these in terms of the erosion of the standard, or normal, working relationships that structured and defined work and everyday life in industrial society, which tended, in accordance with Fordism, to clear social, spatial, and temporal separations between work and leisure, factory and home, commercial and personal, public and private (Amin, 1994; Lewis, 2003; Thiel, 2008). In postindustrial society, the relationship between the spheres of work and non-work is transformed by a process of *Entgrenzung* (Gottschall and Voß, 2003; Huber, 2005; Kratzer, 2017; Läßle *et al.*, 2010; Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009; Voß, 1998),⁸ through which the boundaries separating or demarcating spatial, temporal, and social spheres of life are becoming more flexible, porous, and changeable. *Entgrenzung* does not imply the absence of socio-spatial patterns or structures, but rather a characteristically ambivalent postindustrial process of 'the

⁸ The concept of *Entgrenzung* encapsulates a number of interconnected ideas that do not translate neatly into English. It can refer to 'un-bordering', 'de-limiting', or opening out and overcoming of traditional boundaries. It does not mean unlimited, or without borders, but a kind of ambiguity and liminality that comes from going beyond previously established boundaries. It also has a particular history within the discipline of German geography, in which borders – political, physical, and disciplinary – played a definitive and troubled role. In this context, *Entgrenzung* represents the breaking down of political and disciplinary borders and taking geography in new directions outside of traditional maps. Rather than wrestle with these issues and encumber myself with poor translations, I keep it here in the original German.

erosion of familiar limits and the loss of previous certainties, and the simultaneous drawing of new boundaries' (Minssen, 2006: 149). *Entgrenzung* leads to particular spatial expressions, especially in urban environments, which are important for CCIs and identity practices, and I will return to these in the next chapter. Here I am concerned with the implications of this postindustrial 'erosion' for experiences of work in the CCIs.

Entgrenzung has particular significance for the experience of work in the postindustrial economy (*Entgrenzung der Arbeit*), and especially for work in CCIs, which have an established history of non-traditional working relationships and identities. In this context, *Entgrenzung* describes how the boundaries between the 'sphere of work' (*Arbeitssphäre*) and the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) 'are increasingly no longer clearly contoured and delineated but blurred' (Kratzer and Sauer, 2003: 12). Adorno (2001: 188) argued that the instrumental use of leisure, in which the culture industry was implicated, meant that 'unfreedom [was] gradually annexing "free time"', which was becoming 'nothing more than a shadowy continuation of labour' (Adorno, 2001: 194). Paradoxically, this was only possible because in industrial society leisure and work were seen as polar opposites; but Beck's 'brave new world of work', and the 'gig-economy' of Florida's creative class, however, suggests something more. Work, for the creative class, according to Florida, is not distinguishable from leisure: the two are intertwined (Banks, 2007). The same is implied in Howkins's (2001) exhortation to make your passion into your career 'doing what you love' (Duffy, 2016). This *Entgrenzung der Arbeit* is spatiotemporal: work and leisure are not just seen to be connected, but spill into each other; both taking place in new (and often the same) spaces and times (Lewis, 2003; McRobbie, 2002, 2016a). Work in the CCIs is not spatially tied to the office, but often conducted in bars and restaurants in the early hours of the morning (Lewis, 2003). While for some this *Entgrenzung* brings relief from the spatiotemporal patterns of Fordism and provides new opportunities for forms of self expression and flexible work-life balance, for others, it represents new forms of domination.

The conflation of working lives and the rest of life, Läßle and Stohr (2010) suggest, revolves around two interrelated processes: the commercialization of the lifeworld, whereby commodities and commodified relations are increasingly part of our personal lives and identities, and amusement becomes 'the prolongation of work' (DE: 137); and the subjectivization of work (Baethge, 1991; Kleemann, 2012; Lohr, 2003, 2017), where work is seen to be both an expression of our 'subjectivity' and increasingly exerts an 'obligation' to an economized management of self in line with the demands of the postindustrial economy (Lohr, 2003).

Subjectivization of work, however, as Baethge (1991: 6) points out, has not removed the externally-directed character of work but 'softened the operation of its established forms of expression and patterns of regulation'. This brings into question, 'the traditional (although institutionally validated and anchored to today) forms of identity construction and socialization in and through work' (*ibid.*). Subjectivization, in this sense then, is not the transformation of work in line with the desires and needs of the workers, but the transformation of people's working lives and consciousness in line with the demands of postindustrial economy: the development of the 'working consciousness of employees' (Baethge, 1991: 7), such as that which Banks (2007) identifies in the instrumental use of leisure (also Cremin, 2007, 2009). This kind of 'self-rationalization' (Thiel, 2008) can be read as the internalization of the governing structures of society (in this case, the moral imperative of creativity, aestheticized individualism and self-expression) via 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988). This was also the effect of the culture industry as Adorno saw it: the barrage of cultural commodities each containing the same message, reproduces the social order within individuals making them unable to see out/beyond the limits set by the culture industry. Culture, as Adorno (2001: 107ff) observed, is always also administration.

Thus subjectivization is a process of socialization which is not simply a structural process of institutional reorganization, but is instead an expression of the meaningful actions of

individuals as they 'experience and manifest their social identity as belonging to the symbolic reality of a group' (Baethge, 1991: 14). Subjectivization means further integrating work as a part of practices of identification, not as a *label*, or *title*, derived from occupation by which we *identify* ourselves and others, but to interpret the world *through* work as an aspect of self: to create *identity* (in the Hegelian sense) between *Arbeitssphäre* and *Lebenswelt*; between the person as subject and the worker as object.

The personalized nature of creative work also serves as a way of anchoring employment in CCIs to identity. The subjectivization of work, and the *Entgrenzung* of spatiotemporal spheres, thereby means that work becomes inseparable from the everyday activities of life, and thus integral to a sense of identity. Thus, 'the fetish character of commodities lays claim to actual people; they themselves become fetishes' (Adorno, 2001: 191); leading some, such as Rose (1989, 1996), to argue that the 'freedoms' of the kind associated with the expressive, 'subjectivized', work-identities of the CCIs are illusory. Nevertheless, Thiel (2007: 66) argues that it is wrong to see *Entgrenzung* simply as the colonisation of the lifeworld, as self-rationalisation must be at least in some sense voluntary otherwise it would not happen (Kratzer and Sauer, 2003).

The significance of the dialectic of art and economy, then, is not only in how it is implicated in the working conditions of the postindustrial economy, but in the central – and highly contradictory and ambivalent – role which questions and practices of identity play in those conditions. In order to appreciate this significance, it is necessary to understand how the dialectic of art and economy is implicated and expressed in practices of identification and aesthetic projects of self for people working in the CCIs.

III.4 Cultural and Creative Industries and Identity: An Artistic Subjectivity

[T]he compulsion or desire to choose one's life, to act as an autonomous cultural worker ... is perhaps better conceptualised as a constantly shifting terrain of interrelationships that encompass the logics of art, commerce, the internal demands of the practice and other exterior demands of the social (Banks, 2010a: 265).

Aesthetic projects of self are key features of the image of work in the new economy typically characterized by CCIs. However, despite the subjectivization of work in the postindustrial economy and the centrality of questions of lifestyle for Florida's 'creative class', much of the literature concerned with the CCIs displays a marked absence of accounts of identity (Banks, 2006; Glăveanu and Tanggaard, 2014). Taylor and Littleton (2012) suggest this is the result of a general tendency to begin accounts of the CCIs in terms of the (changes to) structural processes of capitalism, and consequently to view the experiences of workers from within these social structures. Such accounts, they argue, 'provide a limited and inadequate characterization of the workers themselves' (2012:29). While the experiences of work in CCIs is undoubtedly associated with the transformations associated with postindustrial society, these transformations are uneven, and are experienced in multiple, complex, and ambivalent ways in the everyday lives of cultural and creative workers. As Byrne (2001) suggests, it is in its local expression that the global is most evident. In the last section of this chapter, I want to suggest how a particular notion of artistic identity is interwoven with the contemporary debates and experiences of work in the CCIs. I suggest that the image of the independent artist is fundamental to the way CCIs and their relationship to society have been understood and to their appeal in postindustrial society. The ambivalent and contradictory nature of this image, I argue, is at the core of the dialectic of art and economy.

III.4.1 Cultural and Creative Industries and Artistic Identities

The significance of the relationship between questions of identity and CCIs concerns the often imagined contrast between the sphere of culture and art and the typical image of industrial labour. As discussed above, work in the postindustrial knowledge economy is often promoted as distinct from 'traditional' or 'industrial' *work* because it apparently offers greater capacity for (self) expression and fulfilment (McRobbie, 1998): things which traditionally were associated less with work and more with culture. CCIs are often taken as archetypes of the postindustrial economy because they explicitly represent the realization of the 'creative fetish' (Banks, 2007) discourse of blending culture and economy together in aesthetic projects of self.

These projects of self typically construct and reinforce images and identities of people working in CCIs as *artists* rather than *workers*. Scase and Davis (2000: 23) suggest it is a defining feature of workers in the CCIs that they must exhibit creative and original intellectual skills: 'to think the unthinkable'. In order to be able to adapt to the demands of the 'new economy', they must be innovative, creative, and reflexive (Lash and Urry, 1994; also Florida, 2002b, 2014; McRobbie, 2002). Specifically, the marriage of subjectivized work in the postindustrial economy and aestheticized projects of self depends upon cultural workers being 'autonomous, resourceful and creative individuals along the lines laid down by the modes of conduct associated with artists and other creative types' (Nixon and Crewe, 2004: 130). Consequently, careers in CCIs represent what McRobbie (1998: 66) describes as an 'expressive extension of self', which Bain (2005) has suggested results in practices of identification for people working in the CCIs being built, either implicitly or explicitly, on rather stereotypical images of artists, and largely romanticized 'myths and stories' regarding artistic work and lifestyles. At the heart of these identities lies a particular image, or discourse, which is tied to the historical expression of the dialectic of culture and industry, and is implicit in the accounts of both advocates of the postindustrial cultural economy and critics of the culture industries: the image of the independent, autonomous, artist.

III.4.2 Autonomy and the 'struggle within'

The separation of the realms of "art" and "industry" has its origins in Romanticism and the '*art pour l'art*' (art for art's sake) movement and its rejection of the instrumental rationality of industrial capitalism (Banks, 2010; Faulkner *et al.*, 2008; Roberts, 2012).

This romanticism, according to Banks (2010a: 253):

not only sought to separate art from the rational and instrumental demands of the new commercial society, but also its incipient bourgeois morality, and so artists' innate expressivity appears to serve as a bulwark against the creeping incursions of the market, and quickly became a signifier of individual autonomy.

For the *art pour l'art* movement, the autonomy of the artist and their work was the cornerstone of artistic identity. This autonomy, Faulkner *et al.*, (2008: 297) suggest, has a dual character:

It claims to define the instincts, motives and desires of artists and other creatives, but also states that creatives only prosper when left to their own devices, in a world where the defence of artistic freedom is a permanent struggle against outside forces that seek to colonize and subvert the aesthetic.

The image of the 'autonomous artist', as an individual possessing and living an artistic subjectivity, then, was a product of the ambivalence related to the rise of industrial capitalist society (Bourdieu, 1996); characterized by the separation and independence both of their (creative, expressive, individual) work and their lifestyles and identities from the commercial, industrial, mass production and practices and morality of (bourgeois) industrial capitalism.

While the romanticized images of the *art pour l'art* movement suggest a distinct separation of the realms of culture and economy, the two are rather more interrelated (see Bourdieu, 1996). Banks (2010a) argues that mass industrial production and the development of commercial art markets increased artistic production and brought art and cultural goods to a wider audience, thereby liberating artists from obscurity and enabling them to earn a living producing art that challenged society and the status quo. Commercialization, then, was necessary if art was ever to have an audience and be consumed (Banks, 2010a; Caves, 2000; Faulkner *et al.*, 2008), and in order for artists themselves to be able to work independently (that is, free from the system of patronage on which they had previously been largely dependent). Slater and Tonkiss (2001, quoted in Banks, 2010a: 253) suggest this constituted 'a cultural dialectic' in which 'the autonomization of culture and its commercialization' were inseparable. The image of artistic autonomy, then, is a central and ambivalent part of Bourdieu's (1996: 83) 'paradoxical economy', in which the symbolic (cultural) and economic values of art and culture vie for dominance and recognition within the field of cultural production.

Despite this interwoven history and the 'cultural dialectic', the imagined separation between the spheres of culture and industry remains fundamental to enduring images of cultural and creative work and artistic identities (Caves, 2000; Shorthose and Strange, 2004). The notion of autonomy is a lynchpin that unites the changing relationship between culture and economy in postindustrial society, the 'creative fetish' of work in the CCIs, and postindustrial identities. It was the autonomy of culture and works of art that Adorno and Benjamin saw as threatened by commodification and industrial mass-production, and it is autonomy which is prized in the new economy, and seen to characterize cultural and creative work (Banks, 2010a). McRobbie (2016b) has paralleled the artistic identity fostered in the CCIs in postindustrial capitalism with the romantic image of the *auteur* – representing an identity and a lifestyle to be lived, and performed which establishes a distinction between art (and artists) and (capitalist) work. The identity of the *auteur* represents both freedom and status for both the artist and the artistic work – what Benjamin (2008 [1936]) described as 'aura'. Significantly, this image is no longer

restricted to a narrow definition of artistic pursuits, but is being extended to a range of highly individualized careers, which, as Banks and O'Connor (2017: 647), echoing Adorno, suggest, are becoming 'an exemplary manifestation of the wider ideology of contemporary capitalism'. As Banks (2010a) concludes, autonomy for artists has become 'institutionalised as a binding and necessary feature of the industrialised production of commodities in the contemporary cultural industries'.

The image of the cultural and creative worker as *auteur* is inseparable from the discourse of work, and crucial to the subjectivization of work, in the cultural economy. While the romantic ideal of artist *contra* worker exerts great appeal, Léger (2010: 564) argues, '[t]he conditions of cultural production that prevail within advanced countries ... require that contemporary artists think about the demands that are made by neoliberal market capitalism for the creative production of new symbols and new knowledges'. Consequently, the construction of artistic identities, McRobbie (2016b: 943, also 2016a) notes, 'is not merely a sign of the ego of the artist, more a recognition of the economic need to project a commercially viable sense of selfhood'; and while autonomous, artistic identities satisfy the desire to combine self-actualisation and work (or *subjectivization*), they also reconcile cultural and creative workers 'at least for a time, to the poverty or uncertain income which is conventionally associated with the creative life' (Taylor and Littleton, 2012: 31-32; also Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009; McRobbie, 2016b). Faced with the pressure to conform to the standards and expectations of the economy – 'always to fit into business life as an aesthetic expert' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 133) – cultural workers must often compromise autonomy or artistic values in order to maintain their artistic practice and earn a living (Becker, 1963; Bain, 2004a, 2005; McRobbie, 2016b; Taylor and Littleton, 2012).

The practical necessities of earning a living, however, do not lead inevitably to conditions in which artistic identities are irredeemably compromised, because such identities are about more than just the work. As Bain (2005: 41, my emphasis) suggests, '[w]hile it might be widely

acknowledged that an artist must negotiate other part-time jobs and roles at a distance to earn a living, being an artist is regarded as a full-time commitment to *a distinctive way of life*'. Moreover, for the bohemians upon whom romantic images of artistic identities are partly based, 'art meant living the life, not doing the work' (Seigel, quoted in Zukin, 2008: 729; also see Bourdieu, 1996: 54-57). Banks (2010a: 262), describes these ambivalent identity practices as forms of 'negotiated autonomy', 'where workers find themselves engaged in a quotidian "struggle within" to try to mediate, manage or reconcile the varied opportunities and constraints of the art—commerce relation.' In contradistinction to the *art pour l'art* movement, and the 'artistic critique of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005), the concern of artistic autonomy in this sense, as Banks (2010a: 262) suggests, 'is less with usurping capitalism and more with seeking opportunities for meaningful self expression within its limits; more prosaically, it is concerned with subsistence, survival and "making the best" of the conditions under which one is employed as a cultural worker.'

While the possibility of artistic 'autonomy' has been significantly critiqued (see Banks, 2010a for a discussion), this does not imply that autonomous art is impossible; nor, crucially, that the image of the *auteur* ceases to be a key feature of cultural workers' identity practices. Several commentators note the potential for the (re)construction of spaces for autonomous artistic practices where vernacular creativity can resist the commodification of culture (Hollands, 2009, 2010, 2017; Ray, 2004; Shorthose and Strange, 2004). Kosmala (2011) has suggested that despite the neoliberal creative industry paradigm art, and artists, can still have an important role in challenging established – and neo-liberalized – ideas of art (Banks, 2007). Likewise Holmes (2004) maintains that despite the weight of commodification (autonomous) art objects still have the power to enable us to view things differently (to facilitate *Kulturkritik*).

In this sense, 'acting as a resource underpinning a variety of practices and courses of action' (Banks, 2010a: 262) the image of the autonomous artist is contradictory, changeable, and

'always in flux', and central to how the dialectic of art and economy is built into the practice of constructing an artistic identity.

III.4.3 Practising Artistic Identities

While the image of the autonomous artist plays a paradoxical role in the practices of identification for people working in CCIs, it is nevertheless important in how artistic identities are constructed and performed. The contradictory nature of autonomy draws attention to the fact that the discourses around CCIs, autonomy, and the creative fetish are not universal, but uneven and contested. The experiences of workers in the CCIs, while subject to general trends, are highly individualized (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009): bound in local, and particular, contradictions and ambivalences.

Taylor and Littleton (2008) have shown how cultural and creative workers undertake 'fine-grained' practices of identity work, drawing upon a range of resources while pursuing a variety of goals. McRobbie (2003) argues the hybrid character of creative work and 'work identities' that results from the blurring of boundaries between work and everyday life (*Entgrenzung* and subjectivization) necessitates particularly complex and varied 'identity work' in maintaining successful and convincing identity practices. As Oakley (2009) has argued, practices of artistic identity construction are not immediately the result of either the decreasing autonomy described by Adorno or the rejection of economic concerns suggested by Bourdieu (see also Banks, 2010a), but take on more complex and heterogeneous forms of identity performance in what Bain (2004a: 424) describes as a 'complex interplay of absence and presence, invisibility and visibility ... by which contemporary professional visual artists construct and maintain their occupational identities'.

Others (e.g. Heelas, 2002; McRobbie, 2002) have emphasized the importance of the construction and performance of both individual and collective artistic identities: performances through

which tensions between precarity and status, alternative and mainstream, and art and economy are negotiated (Beech *et al.*, 2012, 2016). Much of which, as Williams (2011: 46) suggests, involves 'artists remaking themselves through their work' (also, Korn, 2017), in which the practice of art is simultaneously the construction and practice of artistic identity (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006; Elsbach, 2009).

Although the pressures of subjectivization that accompany the image of the independent and autonomous artist generate what Drew (2007: 95) describes as 'an art-world culture that worships at the altar of individualism', collectivity and collective identities have played an important role in shaping the artistic and cultural scene throughout the latter half of the 20th century (Stimson and Sholette, 2007a; Vail and Hollands, 2012), and consequently in influencing practices of artist identity which emphasize social and collective expression, potentially 'imbued with moral and social commitments' (Vail and Hollands, 2012: 337), which bring into focus 'the broader social and economic conditions of production, which are themselves always collective despite appearance' (Stimson and Sholette, 2007b: 11).

Both individual and collective artistic identity practices, closely related to the nature of artistic of creative work involved, are frequently concerned with the establishment of social and spatial differences (Lloyd, 2005; Zukin, 1982, 1995, 2011), transgressing boundaries (Betterton, 2009), and exploring frontiers (Bain, 2003).

The ability to construct and perform artistic identities, however, is materially and socially limited. Bain (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) has pointed out that the ambiguity over the definition of art and artists (exacerbated by the promulgation of 'artistic' characteristics in all areas of the postindustrial economy) evokes questions of, and draws boundaries around, what counts as 'legitimate' art, artistic identities, and ultimately artists themselves. Constructing and practising artistic identities are not necessarily socially liberating, but can be mired in inequalities (e.g. Allen and Hollingworth, 2013; Connor, Gill and Taylor, 2015; Dean, 2005; Duffy, 2016; Nixon and Crewe, 2014; Negus, 2002; Taylor and O'Brien, 2017; Wing-Fai, Gill and Randle, 2015).

More fundamentally, as Mayer (2014) reminds us, creative work is still part of the neoliberal capitalist economy, in which the constructions of identity, along with the self-imposed regulation and exploitation Rose (1989, 1996) describes is an inevitable part of the self-staging, multi-tasking, and competition that is a necessary part of constructing the kind of 'entrepreneurial subjectivity' (Scharff, 2016) required to succeed in a highly competitive employment market (Lash and Urry, 1994; McRobbie, 2016a, 2016b, Vivant, 2013). Consequently, the 'entrepreneurial' and 'meritocratic' identity practices of cultural and creative workers, Taylor and O'Brien (2017) suggest, may actually reinforce social inequality within, and beyond, the cultural economy.

While fundamentally implicated in the contradictions associated with the experiences and discourses of work in the postindustrial cultural economy, it is at the level of local, spatial particularity that the tensions and contradictions surrounding the images and discourses associated with artistic identities are experienced. Consequently, questions concerning the use, designation, and transformation of (especially urban) spaces and places are particularly significant for the construction of artistic identities (e.g. Bain, 2003, 2005; Lloyd, 2005; Zukin, 1982, 1998, 2011). While existing research has often highlighted the importance of (particularly urban) space and place in CCIs, it has often omitted to connect these issues with questions of identity. As I go on to argue, the particular characteristics of places, such as those discussed in chapters 6 and 7, can play a significant role in practices of identification, as physical sites, sources of inspiration, communities, and artistic projects for, in, and through which artistic identities are constructed. In the third and final literature review chapter, therefore, I consider the relationship between the experience of living the artistic life and the emerging landscapes of postindustrial cities.

III.5 Summary

In this second literature review chapter, I have traced an understanding of the relationship between the CCIs and what Beck (2000a) calls the 'brave new world of work' of postindustrial capitalism. Drawing on the work of Adorno, I have argued that the CCIs exist within a dialectic of art and economy (or culture and industry) which positions 'art' and the activities and lives of 'artists' in opposition to modern (industrial) capitalism, and that understanding the contradictions and ambivalences within this dialectic – particularly concerning the autonomous, or auratic, qualities of art and artists – are vitally important to understanding the identity practices of people working in these industries. CCIs, however, can only be understood in relation to their particularly urban context (Thiel, 2017). In the next and final literature review chapter, I shall discuss the implications of the dialectic of art and economy for the transformations of urban space (and the significance of spatial variation for the expression of the dialectic) and the lived experience of people working in CCIs.

Chapter IV: Postindustrial Cities

IV.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters I have argued that identity, understood as a dialectical process of identification – drawing on culture, place, and memory – through which individuals make sense of the relationship between themselves and the world, is fundamental to understanding the experiences of people working in CCIs. I have suggested that the conditions and discourses that characterize the postindustrial cultural economy – particularly the image of the independent, autonomous artist and what Banks (2007) calls the ‘creative fetish’ – are particularly important in understanding the experiences of working in CCIs and the significance of these experiences for practices of identification. As Berger and Luckmann (1967: 195) pointed out, however: ‘[i]dentity remains unintelligible unless it is located in a world’. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to consider what the world of postindustrial identities for people working in CCIs is like.

CCIs are particularly associated with cities (Amin and Thrift, 2007; Coles, 2015; Florida, 2005; Howkins, 2001; Lloyd, 2005; Mossig, 2011; Zukin, 1995, 1998, 2009). A recent UNESCO report suggested urban areas ‘are today’s principal breeding grounds for the development of new strategies, policies and initiatives aimed at making culture and creativity a driving force for sustainable development and urban regeneration’ (UNESCO, 2018). While the association of culture – and particularly of cultural diversity and innovation – and cities is far from new (see section 4.3 below), the emergence of postindustrial society and the increasing significance of culture in general, and particularly the cultural production and consumption associated with

CCIs has had significant implications on the socio-economic structure of cities and urban landscapes.

Thiel (2017) has suggested that cities – particularly postindustrial cities – are the ideal environment for CCIs because, like the cultural economy and the work that characterizes it, cities are themselves flexible and adaptable. Urban environments, it is argued, are more able to support diversity and social, economic, cultural, and artistic experimentation; they are, as Jane Jacobs (1961: 6) remarked, ‘an immense laboratory of trial and error, failure and success’; or, as Florida (2003: 3) more recently put it: ‘cauldrons of diversity and difference, creativity and innovation’.

The close association of CCIs and cities, however, should not be taken to suggest that cultural and creative work or practices only take place in urban settings. While the edgy diversity of city centres may be noted as the prime location for the spontaneous, unrestrained innovation and risk-taking that is seen to fuel CCIs (Bain, 2003, 2010; Montgomery, 2008), a growing body of work shows the amount of cultural and creative work carried out in a variety of suburban or extra-urban settings (e.g. Edensor *et al.*, 2010; Felton *et al.*, 2010; Gibson *et al.*, 2010): a reminder that while there may be a synergy between culture and cities, urban artistic practices and identities are only one (albeit significant) form such identities can take. Nevertheless, the broad trend towards urban living amongst many sections of the population in postindustrial societies suggests that CCIs and the conditions and relations of production and consumption which, as I have already suggested, are coming to characterize the postindustrial economy more generally, are, in a significant sense, based in urban contexts. Moreover, the cultural and ideological aspects of the cultural economy which are key to its relevance for working relations and identity, particularly as exemplified by arguments such as those of Florida (2002b, 2014) and Howkins (2001), are targeted at cities (e.g. Florida, 2002a, 2003, 2005, 2014; Landry, 2000). It is, therefore, the urban environment in which these discourses and, for our purposes here, the most significant implications for practices of identity construction, are felt.

In this third and final literature review chapter, I suggest that postindustrial cities and urban transformations are especially implicated in both the emerging cultural economy and the artistic identity practices of people working in CCIs. I discuss the ambivalent relationship between artistic practices and identities and urban space(s), and the significance of the emerging cultural economy for the urban landscapes and their classifications and the ways in which postindustrial identity practices are carried out.

IV.2 Culture and Urban Transformations

Alongside globalization and deindustrialization, the culturalization of the postindustrial economy and the increased attention paid to CCIs in recent years has had significant implications for the social and economic structures of cities and transformations in urban landscapes (Amin and Thrift, 2007; Breitbart, 2013; Burgers, 2000; Byrne, 2001; Sassen, 2002). Allen Scott (1997, 1999, 2010; Scott and Soja, 1996; Storper and Scott, 2016) has argued that the changes to cities are directly related to the transition from Fordist to post-Fordist industrial organization and accumulation regimes, which are especially implicated in the postindustrial economy (Lash and Urry, 1987, 1994). The increasing significance and time-space compression (Harvey, 1989a) of the 'new cultural economy' of services, knowledge, and communication has significantly altered the way international, national, and local economies interact and function (Madanipour, 2004), and the growth in size and significance of cities is tied to the related changes in economies and labour markets. In particular the increased proportion of service-sector (and increasingly cultural and creative) work in postindustrial cities. This, again, is not a universal process, but rather a broad yet ambivalent and uneven spatial reorganization, especially of CCIs, towards the urban, in which local labour markets act as an 'anchor' on the cultural economy (Thiel, 2007).

As a result of the time-space compression and flexible accumulation in postindustrial capitalism, the mobility of capital is increased (Harvey, 1989a; 1990; 2006). The removal of spatial barriers which accompanies time-space compression also has the effect of increasingly universalizing space for capitalism (Smith, 1996). The uneven development of cities at the global, regional, and national levels notwithstanding (CFC, 2016; Thorleifsson, 2016), postindustrial cities in advanced western economies are in many ways becoming increasingly similar. The drive towards service-sector labour markets and economies means that cities engage in a process of continual refashioning, which in many ways reproduces the same urban landscapes ubiquitously around the world (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004; Bookman, 2014; Boyle and Rogerson, 2001; Chang and Teo, 2009; Gospodini, 2004, 2006). As a result, postindustrial cities have become increasingly homogenized; indistinguishable in their hard-infrastructures and their commercial presence (Chang and Teo, 2009), and increasingly interchangeable as economic actors (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004; Boyle and Rogerson, 2001; Gospodini, 2006). This is far from a single totalizing process, however (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Byrne, 2001), but rather an ambivalent and uneven one. As Harvey (1990: 427) puts it: 'the reduction of spatial barriers has an equally powerful opposite effect; small-scale and finely-graded differences between the qualities of places (their labor supply, their infrastructures and political receptivity, their resource mixes, their market niches, etc.) become even more important because multinational capital is in a better position to exploit them.' In turn, places 'become much more concerned about their "good business climate" and inter-place competition for development becomes much more fine-tuned.'

The 'good business climate' Harvey describes is less concerned with the traditional factors which influenced the location of capital in industrial society (geographical location, proximity of resources, physical infrastructure, etc.) – although these are certainly not inconsequential – as it is with the particular, local variations in the soft infrastructure, and the vernacular, cultural and symbolic characteristics of place (Bontje and Musterd, 2009). Thus cities must appeal in new ways, which often result in cities 'being reshaped and urban landscapes rapidly transformed'

(Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004: 188) in order to make themselves competitive (Musterd and Murie, 2010). This has led to what Cox (1993, 1995) has described as a new urban politics, in which cities must compete with each other in order to attract capital: investing in, changing, and marketing urban environments as consumable commodities (Boyle and Rogerson, 2001). This moves beyond providing economic incentives or inducements to capital (such as tax abatements, property or transport), but actively changing the physical, cultural, and symbolic urban environment in accordance with the needs of capital and in order to attract customers (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004; Gospodini, 2006). In consequence, '[c]ulture,' as Zukin has remarked (1995: p.5), 'is more and more the business of cities'. It is no surprise that in recent decades, CCIs have been at the forefront of these urban transformations.

IV.2.1 Cultural Regeneration

As CCIs become an increasingly significant part of the postindustrial economy (and questions of culture, art, and creativity become more implicated in processes of identity construction), the CCIs themselves, and the people who work in them, in turn become increasingly significant features of urban transformation. According to Florida's creative class thesis, postindustrial cities ought to be principally concerned with attracting the increasingly global class of young, mobile, creative knowledge-makers (Florida, 2002b, 2003, 2005, 2014; Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Landry, 2000), with the consequence that in recent decades significant effort and investment has been made by local authorities and urban planners to make European cities appeal to Florida's creative elites (cf. Pratt, 2008a; Peck, 2005; Gabe *et al.*, 2013, Nathan, 2015).

While much urban transformation is the inevitable result of the increased economic and social significance of culture and cultural consumption in postindustrial society (Bauman, 2000; Featherstone, 1991) and the economy of signs and space described by Lash and Urry (1994), since the 1990s, the socio-spatial transformations in urban environments have increasingly

taken the form of deliberate strategies of cultural, or culture-led, regeneration designed to transform and rebrand cities as centres of high-skilled jobs and vibrant social and cultural hubs of consumption (Bayliss, 2007; Markusen and Schrock, 2009; McKenzie and Hutton, 2015; Miles and Paddison, 2005; Paddison and Miles, 2009). The use of CCIs, cultural events (Beriato and Gospodini, 2004; Cominian and Mould, 2014; Evans, 2004; Hollands, 2010; Smith, 2012; Thiel and Grabher, 2015), public art exhibitions and installations (Kwon, 2002), and the construction of iconic architecture to stimulate economic and cultural revitalization has become a common (almost ubiquitous) response to the challenges of postindustrial society (Barber and Hall, 2008; Crewe and Beaverstock, 1998). Indeed, as Boyle and Rogerson (2001: 404) suggest: 'city visions are being shaped by the requirement not merely to attract capital investment in its many forms but also to adopt some of the characteristics of this capital'; consequently cities, as well as individual workers, become compelled to commodify their cultural, historical, and symbolic characteristics in order to market and (re)produce themselves as 'cultural' or 'creative' in order to 'compete' in the cultural economy in something akin to a creative fetish (Banks, 2007) for cities. Consequently, it is more and more the characteristics of the 'soft-infrastructure' which are being used to present an image of an urban landscape defined as much by its place-identity as its physical characteristics; consequently, 'aesthetics, creativity, and uniqueness lend a critical edge in urban competition for talent and capital' (Chang and Teo, 2009: 341-2).

Cultural regeneration has typically involved the use of CCIs to simultaneously repurpose and reimagine the formerly industrial urban spaces 'hollowed out' and left largely abandoned or neglected by capital following deindustrialization. This involves maximizing physical and cultural space for capital investment and constructing a new (postindustrial) urban identity; often by reclassifying space and aestheticizing the industrial past (Mathews and Picton, 2014). Unsurprisingly, therefore, it is formerly industrial spaces which have featured prominently in cultural regeneration programmes (Jones and Evans, 2008), repeating a now familiar (almost ubiquitous) story of the regeneration of waterfront areas (Gospodini, 2001b; Karsten, 2003), historic buildings (Pendlebury, 1999, 2002), (formerly) industrial sites, and sometimes entire

urban quarters (Bell and Jayne, 2004; Montgomery, 2003, 2004; Pratt, 2004) into contemporary spaces of postindustrial production and consumption (Bovone, 2005; Evans, 2003; Mathews and Picton, 2014; McKenzie and Hutton, 2015; Miles, 2010; Wynne and O'Connor, 1998). Consequently, it is 'the cliché of regeneration,' according to Jones and Evans (2008: 118), 'that where once men sweated in docks and shipyards, we now have middle-class professionals sipping cappuccinos in pavement cafés and living in converted loft apartments'.

Many have argued that despite aiming to differentiate cities from their 'competitors' in the global urban marketplace, the formulaic nature of cultural regeneration strategies aimed at attracting the creative class have further reinforced the universalization of postindustrial urban landscapes (Oakley, 2004; Shaw, 2005), creating 'a kind of serial replication of homogeneity' (Harvey, 1993: 8). Others have drawn attention to the divisive aspects of cultural regeneration (Bayliss, 2007; Benz, 2016; Huning and Schuster, 2015; Jayne, 2016; Lees and Melhuish, 2015; Lees, 2008; McLean, 2014; Zukin, 1998) arguing that the transformations of urban spaces to attract CCIs and the 'creative class' marginalize, displace, or erase the communities, cultures, and identities that previously inhabited or identified with those now transformed spaces (Mah, 2010, 2012). Indeed, Peck (2016) has suggested that cultural regeneration in line with the 'creative city' logic amounts to little more than another neoliberal urban development strategy to render urban space profitable to capitalism (Peck, 2005; Pratt, 2011); what Miles (2004) argues effects a 'Hausmannization' which serves to divide cities and segregate or displace 'problem' populations.

IV.2.2 Urban Branding

While cultural regeneration involves the often instrumental use of cultural amenities and CCIs to transform often abandoned urban spaces, it is also, as Bookman (2014: 327) suggests, 'often

themed or “narrated” using a dual effort of symbolic and material framing’ to reclassify, redesignate, and discursively reconstruct cities or particular urban spaces as ‘cultural’ or ‘creative’, in what Yeoh (2015) describes as a process of spatial and cultural imagineering. As Jones and Evans (2008: 72) put it: ‘cities have begun to realise that in order to compete effectively they need to establish their own identity. In order to “stand out from the crowd” and attract a share of the global knowledge economy it is necessary to establish a positive identity, by either building upon existing (perhaps neglected) heritage or by establishing new selling points’.

Cities have always had particular place-identities, which, as discussed in chapter 2, are interwoven with individual practices of identification and with broader discourses of power. Urban identities have often been constructed on industrial production, and commodified as markers of authenticity, or particular claims to the quality of goods produced by particular cities of regions.⁹ However, while cities have always had, or been associated with, and indeed often fostered, particular identities or brands, what is significant, Evans (2003) observes, is that for postindustrial cities, brand-building has become a deliberate and conscious strategy in response to the increasing competition between cities, which is increasingly focused on enhancing and marketing the cultural and creative characteristics of particular cities (Bookman, 2014; Gibson, 2005; Jenson, 2007; Zukin, 1992) in order to ‘re-image perceptions of urban space and transform the way it is consumed’ (Harris, 2011, quoted in Bookman, 2014: 327). Often the products, but more commonly the cultural landscape or environment of cities designed to appeal to the artistic and cultural imagination (Mommaas, 2004) and the consumption of urban lifestyles (Greenberg, 2000). As a consequence, cities and ‘public-private assemblages’ now frequently employ a range of more-or-less familiar strategies ‘to create edgy neighborhoods where members of [the creative] class can “actualize” their creative identities in work and play’ (Bookman, 2014: 327), and create the ‘open, diverse, dynamic and cool’ environments said to

⁹ Obvious examples might include Sunderland shipbuilding, Sheffield steel, Bordeaux wine, or New Orleans blues music.

attract the creative class (Peck, 2005: 740; Thiel, 2007). In an era of neoliberalism, and in parallel with the necessity of constructing and performing an aestheticized project of identity to 'manage the self' in line with the demands of the postindustrial economy discussed in the previous chapter, urban branding is an imperative – 'a necessary cultural strategy' as Zukin (2008, quoted in Bookman, 2014: 327) put it – in the urban competition 'for investment, tourists and "creative" workers' (Bookman *ibid.*).

Many authors have highlighted the relationship between urban branding and the commodification of urban space (Bookman, 2014; Gibson, 2005; Harvey, 1993; Miles, 2005; Zukin, 1995); suggesting that urban brands construct commodified images of urban living (Gibson, 2005), ultimately designed to generate economic capital by transforming cities into an 'experience' to be consumed as part of aesthetic projects of self: '[t]he city in which one lives or works,' Müller (2013: 119) has suggested, 'becomes, in the framework of social value-transformation, a means of expression of individual lifestyles, of individual personality and social status'.

The construction of urban brands, however, goes beyond the marketing of cities to external actors and has implications for the classification, meaning, and ultimately the material form of urban space. Cities are generating specific cultural symbols and brand-imagery to foster a sense of urban identity (Pasquinelli, 2014). Jenson (2007: 213) has described urban branding as a kind of 'evocative storytelling ... articulating difference and identity' by introducing, as Mommaas (2002, quoted in Evans, 2003: 420) suggests, 'a certain order or coherence to the multiform reality ... [s]een in this way brands are not purely a source of differentiation, but also of identification, recognition, continuity and collectivity'. As Zukin (1995: 3) has argued, 'the cultural power to create an image, to frame a vision of the city has become more important,' as the symbolic and spatial resources out of which postindustrial identities are formed have become more varied and negotiable, '[t]hose who create images stamp a collective identity' on urban landscapes (Julier, 2005).

The stamp of identity created by urban branding, however, like the brand itself, is not *merely symbolic*, but is often realized through material transformations to urban landscapes (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004; Gospodini, 2001a; 2004, 2006; Madanipour, 2006; Yeoh, 2005; Zukin, 1992); the *identification* of urban spaces and places as ‘cultural’ and ‘creative’ often has profound material consequences as the urban creative fetish is materialized and reified within urban environments – as Zukin (1995) has argued, the production of urban space and the production of symbols and symbolic value are inseparable.

Byrne identifies three entirely interrelated understandings of culture involved in Zukin’s account of the relationship between the production of space and the production of symbolic value: culture as commodity – the things made by artists which are sold; culture as lifestyle – the attraction of bohemian and alternative urban ‘scenes’; and ‘the actual concretisation of culture in the production and preservation of the built environment both as the new and as heritage’ (Byrne, 2001: 135). A key aspect of this latter sense of the ‘concretisation of culture’ is the establishment of an urban cultural identity and cultural narrative in the material landscape of cities through ‘hard branding’, achieved particularly through the use of public art and iconic architecture.

IV.2.3 Hard-Branding Culture

Architecture has long been used as way of signifying space and power relations (Jencks, 2005, 2006; Kaika and Theilen, 2006; Sklair, 2005, 2010; Sklair and Gherardi, 2012) The construction of iconic architecture, Kaika (2010) has argued, has been used not only to portray the power and influence of particular groups in society, but ideologically, to define the character of an era or social order. It is no accident, Kaika and Theilen (2006) have suggested, that banks and financial institutions drew inspiration from the cathedra that previously called people to worship. Iconic architecture in the postindustrial cities of the 21st century announces the power

and influence not just of the postindustrial, but also of the cultural: replacing monuments as sources of our understanding of the urban (Jencks, 2005); integrating discourses of culture and creativity with the identity and everyday experience of cities through distinctly *artistic* iconic buildings; and recasting, as Jones (2009: 2520) suggests, 'external imperatives into distinctly architectural ones'.

In postindustrial cities, 'cultural forms become laden with political-economic meaning' (Jones, 2009: 2525), and the construction of iconic buildings represents not just a cultural achievement or merely the materialization of an urban brand-identity, but is a symbol of a city's economic and cultural potency. The construction of landmark buildings – generally designed by international 'starchitects' – represents the power and success (which, in a highly culturalized economy, implies cultural and creative) of the city-as-environment, and is thus an important aspect of the 'selling of place' and the urban branding demanded in the competition for cultural and creative recognition in the global economy. As Sklair and Gherardi (2005: 66) suggest, iconic architecture is instrumental in 'selling not only the structure of the building, but also the identity of the city created by the icon'. 'Landscapes,' Mitchell (2002: 383) has suggested, 'are ineluctably dialectic ... they do not just reflect but also incorporate and reify social process': thus the drive for cultural regeneration and branding is drawn into the material landscape, giving material form to the creative fetish: replacing built heritage with new landscapes denoting new – *cultural* – characteristics of place and generating new place-identities (Hubbard, 1996; Gospodini, 2002, 2004; Zukin, 1992).

Landmark buildings, such as the Bilbao Guggenheim, The Swiss Re Tower in London, or Hamburg's recently completed *Elbphilharmonie* opera house are iconic in large part because they are *artistic*. As with public art more generally, the mixing of the material and the cultural in

public art is relied upon to express identity and stand out; as Kwon (2002) describes it, 'site-specific public art remains inexorably tied to a process that renders particularity and identity of various cities a matter of product differentiation'. The hard-branding of urban landscapes through the use of iconic architecture and public art, then, seeks to produce or establish a city's identity as both cultural and creative and *unique*, by transferring the creative character of the art work onto the city itself. In this sense, a piece of art which is used as a marker for the identity of a city, effectively serves as a logo, inserted into the urban landscape as a focal point, 'to infuse the sense of placelessness ... with the artist's creative originality', to confer an identity through marking the site 'as a singular, "specific" location' (Kwon, 2002): evoking a place's 'authenticity' (Zukin, 2008, 2009) as both the 'auratic' quality of a work of art (Benjamin, 2008) and at the same time locating it – as a commodity – within the field of competing urban landscapes to which it stands in relation.

As Julier (2005: 872) notes, however, places are not single entities, but 'agglomerations[s] of identities and activities', which brand-identities inevitably struggle to fully contain; and consequently, while urban landscapes – remodelled, reshaped, and reclassified through cultural regeneration and urban branding – experience what Zukin (1992) describes as a breakdown of traditional spatial boundaries and spatial identity, the impact of the hard-branding urban landscapes, ultimately, is the replacement of the diversity of the urban vernacular with universal and homogenizing forms of the regeneration now a common responses to the challenges of postindustrial society. As a result, Jayne (2016) has argued, the application of 'creative city' regeneration strategies in many cities is unsuccessful because culture-led regeneration ultimately represents postindustrial and middle-class cultural and economic interests, which are not shared by, and often erase, industrial working-class communities.

Cultural and creative urban brands have an ambivalent relationship with the (especially industrial) past. Many draw on the industrial history of the city (Bailey *et al.*, 2004), whereas

others attempt to overwrite, or replace, previous urban identities. Such branding, Gibson (2005: 261) has suggested, is 'best viewed as a form of semiotic warfare pitched against an amorphous enemy: the image of "urban decay"', in which the cultural and postindustrial stakes its claim over the physical and symbolic urban landscape, defeating the old, 'negative' image of the industrial city (High, 2013a). Hard-branding urban landscapes, then, as an act of material identification, is significantly implicated in the (re)construction of place identities, as the material anchors of (industrial) cultural memory (what Nora [1989] termed *lieux de mémoire*) are materially replaced and/or discursively recast under new, postindustrial, and *cultural* urban brands and place-identities (Vanolo, 2008); in what High (2013a: 140) describes as a process through which 'deindustrialization and the subsequent postindustrial transformation deliver a one-two punch against working-class neighbourhoods and the old culture of industrialism'.

The relationship between culture (and CCIs) and urban contexts is not fixed, but a constant process of negotiation and adaptation (Thiel, 2017); and while cultural regeneration and urban branding effect a transformation of postindustrial cities, reconstructing, reshaping, and reclassifying space, it is not an erasure – industrial forms, identities, and cultures show through, creating hybrid forms of culture and identity (Byrne, 2001). What Huyssen (2003) describes as an urban palimpsest, in which the contours of history are not buried beneath layers of the present, but (often subtly) shape, structure, and seep through the pores of the postindustrial landscape.

CCIs and the people working in them are deeply implicated in the transformations that have taken place in cities as a result of the rise of the (highly cultural) postindustrial economy, and in particular culture-led regeneration. While superficially it may seem that such transformations have been for the benefit of urban artists and arts communities, the reality is much more complex and ambivalent. It is to this which I now turn.

IV.3 Artists and Urban Living

The urban transformations associated with the developing postindustrial cultural economy have significant implications for the experiences of artists and cultural and creative workers and their practices of identities. Florida's case for cultural regeneration and urban branding strategies as inducements to the 'creative class' depends, as Thiel (2007: 68) suggests, on the association of 'the creativity of individuals ... with lifestyles that deviate from the mainstream' to such an extent that 'the geography of the creative class ... is oriented towards the possibilities that cities and regions offer for the realization of unconventional life styles'.

While this, like the image of work in the cultural economy, has a distinctly contemporary feel, it is not new. While never exclusively an urban phenomenon, art and artistic practices and identities have long had a connection with cities, and early work in urban theory often drew connections between cities and the experience of (especially modern) culture (e.g. Benjamin, 1979, 1999; Simmel, 2002), often emphasizing the distinctly urban experience of living an artistic life, such as that encapsulated by Baudelaire's *flâneur*, and the quintessentially urban phenomenon of Bohemia (Lloyd, 2005). In part this is due to the density and intensity of urban living, giving rise to increased diversity not only of people and cultures, but of varieties of spaces, work, and other activities, which, in the postindustrial economy, are especially important as cultural networks and production chains (Flew, 2012; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Miège, 1987; Pratt, 2004; Thiel, 2017; Throsby, 2001).

Cities, however, are neither simply appropriate stages for the performance of artistic identities, nor merely repositories of cultural resources. As Robinson (2013: 659, my emphasis) has suggested, cities themselves 'often have been portrayed as *cultural objects* valorised for their capacity for novelty and for the demands which they can place on city-dwellers to invent new ways of being'. As Zukin points out when she argues that artists 'derive satisfaction from

performing a creative life in spaces that remain distant from the both the popular commercial mainstream and high culture venues' (2008: 729, original emphasis), space – particularly urban spaces – plays an important role in the construction and performance of artistic identities, becoming both a material resource and inspiration for both collective and individual creativity (Drake, 2003; Landry and Bianchini, 1995).

IV.3.1 Artists and the New Bohemia

Various studies have drawn attention to the close relationship between urban space and cultural and artistic cultures and practices (e.g. Forkert, 2013; Hollands, 2017; Hollands and Vail, 2015; Lloyd, 2004, 2005; Shaw, 2005, 2013 Zukin, 1982, 1995): often highlighting the importance of aesthetics (Lloyd, 2005; Zukin, 1982), the authenticity (Benz, 2016; Zukin, 2008, 2009), and the freedom (Bain, 2003) associated with often deindustrialized and marginal urban places and spaces (cf. Edensor *et al.*, 2010; Gibson *et al.*, 2010). As discussed in the previous chapter, artistic identities have, historically, been constructed as alternative, marginal, and apart from the social mainstream. This positioning is not just cultural but spatial (Gardner, 1993; Ley, 1996). Artists, Ley (1996: 206) suggests, shun suburbia, preferring vernacular, 'authentic' spaces and locations in the central city which are '*marginal* to conventional middle-class definition'.

In her studies of visual artists in Canada, Bain (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006) has highlighted a particularly close relationship between artists and the quest for space. Drawing on Neil Smith's (1996) argument of the narrative of the Revanchist City and gentrification being described in terms of a new frontier in which the virtues of individualism, determination, independence and freedom characterize the new urbanism, Bain suggests that artists 'draw upon the frontier motif in their efforts to construct understandings of their occupational identities and their relationship to urban space' (Bain, 2003: 308). As Shaw (2005: 149)

remarks, alternative cultures are drawn to marginal areas, the 'interstices of the urban form: in the disinvested inner city; in the derelict buildings, deindustrialized sites, under-used docks and railway yards of advanced capitalist economies; in unregulated, unpoliced "no-man's lands"; often moving into the temporary 'empty spaces' inevitably created by urban development (Colomb, 2012; Madanipour, 2017). The transformation of urban space which is often seen to characterize artistic pioneering can be read as the 'taming' of the unruly inner city through pioneering spirit and gentrification. I will return to this point in the next section. The visual artists in Bain's interviews frequently report on the 'edgy' nature of the space in which they live or work. Taking a particular pride in living in 'rough' areas, which other (by implication, mainstream and non-artistic) communities would be unable to deal with, they draw on frontier imagery to construct a sense of place as dangerous, which is transformed into virtue as something which 'fuels their art' (Bain, 2003: 309-311). Taking on the 'forgotten places' left by deindustrialization (Markusen, 2004; Bain, 2006), then, is not just about having suitable, or aesthetically desirable spaces, but is instrumental in constructing a particular sense of identity as an artist.

Space for artists must be space for art: for creativity and expression; it must, therefore, be space which does not give the appearance of completeness, of being finished, but space that can be changed. Marginal and non-conformist spaces, such as those in neglected residential areas or formerly industrial spaces, are suitable because they are simultaneously steeped in history and comparatively open, or undefined. Because it is '[n]eglected and overlooked,' Bain (2003: 312) argues, 'marginal space holds out to artists the promise of a greater degree of personal freedom precisely because it retains the possibility of redefinition'. This 'improvisational space' is therefore practical because it can be changed to suit the (changing) needs of artists and cultural/creative producers, but is also important symbolically, as a spatial manifestation of the counter-cultural position of artistic identities, in which space represents freedom: where artists, unencumbered by the rigid spatiotemporal and normative structures of industrial capitalist labour and middle-class morality, have 'the opportunity to cultivate and express individuality'

(Bain, 2003: 312-313). Often characterized by the spatial *Entgrenzung* of both postindustrial cities and work in the cultural economy, these 'marginal spaces' often defy straightforward classification. Increasingly, they are mixed-use spaces where areas of residential, commercial, and public use contribute to the balance sought 'between freedom and order, play and structure within the urban spaces of artistic production' (Bain, 2003: 312). As a result of this 'blurring of the boundaries between what are considered places of work and sites of socio-cultural interaction' (Bain, 2004a: 423), place becomes 'an interactive creative playground for artists because it is unfinished, weakly classified and in a state of becoming'; characterized by 'informality and flexibility' in which 'structures and materials can be manipulated, adjusted and transformed by artists to meet their individual needs' (Bain, 2003: 312). Consequently, over time, these areas become suffused with layers of personal and collective meaning, transformed into reflections of artistic selves.

While Bain's picture is compelling, it is not universal. Bookman (2014: 335), for example, highlights the variation in understandings and performances of creativity within urban living and identities by distinguishing between what she calls 'artistic urbanists' who 'fashion a unique urban identity via cultural consumption in contrast to an imagined "non-creative" suburban mainstream', and 'urban creatives' who 'engage in collective and activist forms of creative expression and carve out a distinctive niche from within an urban middle class fraction.'

Drawing on Edensor *et al.* (2010), Bookman (2014: 335) conceptualizes this distinction in terms of the 'commercial' and the 'vernacular': suggesting that 'artistic urbanists' emphasize novelty in individualized, but highly commercial, consumption practices, while 'urban creatives' draw upon vernacular, and 'non-economic aesthetic expression' more focused on collective cultures and adaptability. She notes however, that these 'articulations are not entirely oppositional, however, as there is overlap and some blurring between the two in terms of practices and tastes' (*ibid.*). The variety and ambiguity in how artists and cultural producers construct and

practice identity through urban space is a common feature in the accounts provided in chapters 6 and 7.

While accounts of urban artistic and cultural producers often focus on bohemian notions emphasizing a romantic, aesthetic attachment to the desindustrialized, dispossessed, and 'forgotten' places of industrial decline and social neglect (Lloyd, 2005, 2014), the movement of artists to undervalued spaces and 'low income, working-class neighbourhoods that are still in a formative state' can also be seen as 'tactical necessity' in constructing, nurturing and sustaining artists' occupational identities (Bain, 2003: 312). Zukin (1982: 59), for example, points out the paradox of the appeal of 'loft living', as lofts have much in common with the suburban living spaces traditionally desirable to the middle classes and categorically rejected by bohemian artists: they are spacious, well-lit, and airy. Although they are located on inner-city streets rather than green estates, they are removed from the bustle and noise typically associated with inner city living.

The significance of urban space, of course, is about more than just the physical environment. A significant part of the appeal of urban spaces is in the diversity and support of a (creative) community with a particular culture, conducive to artists, their work, and their outlook are important for inspiration and a feeling of social value (Bain, 2003; Lloyd, 2004, 2005; Zukin, 1982), through, and in relation to which, artists and cultural workers can 'begin to inscribe their identities' (Bain, 2003: 313).

At the same time, the places which artists and cultural workers inhabit impact on how artistic identities and practices are shaped and understood. Hollands and Vail, (2015) have described this as 'place imprinting', suggesting that the characteristics of place influence both how artists and cultural works construct identities, and how their artistic practices relate to broader

cultural and spatial contexts; which are often particularly attached to established identities and histories of places.

While cultural and creative city discourses have often drawn on the history of cities to construct branded place-identities with 'authenticity', it is often a simulacrum - an aestheticized history (Mathews and Picton, 2014) that is commodified and consumable. Moreover, because authenticity features in place-identities, it becomes a resource to be deployed in aestheticized projects of self. The importance of being 'visible' in particular areas itself becomes a marker of artistic legitimacy or authenticity (Bain, 2004a) and of the Bohemian image of living the artistic life (Seigel, quoted in Zukin, 2008: 729). While the consumption of 'authenticity' can be an important way in which urban space is drawn on in aesthetic projects of self for people working in CCIs (and others), the aestheticization of both deindustrialized spaces and the social marginality which often accompanies them by can be seen as fetishization, obscuring the structural realities of gender, ethnicity, and class that underpin the actual experiences of poverty (Benz, 2016).

For both practical and aesthetic reasons, then, deindustrialized urban spaces are both sought-after locations for artists and many CCIs, and also as sites for capital reinvestment and cultural regeneration. It is at the intersection of these conflicting tendencies (and the dialectic of art and economy), that geographers have most been concerned with the activities and identities of artists (Bain, 2003); particularly their role in the controversial process of gentrification.

IV.3.2 Gentrification

Undoubtedly one of the most significant and controversial spatial transformations affecting postindustrial cities, the phenomenon of gentrification and its causes and consequences have

attracted a significant amount of academic and political commentary (Atkinson, 2003; Caulfield, 1994; Freeman, 2006; Lees, 2000, 2008; Lees and Philips, 2018; Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008; Ley 1996; Smith, 1996). There is much debate over the definition and conceptualisation of gentrification (see for example Bondi, 1999; Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008), which I will not explore here; rather, I wish to highlight the contradictory position of artists and cultural workers in the process of gentrification, and its significance for an understanding of postindustrial urban identities.

Gentrification is not a recent phenomenon - it was already well established empirically at the beginning of the 1980s when Neil Smith identified it as the 'leading edge' of 'a restructuring of urban space' (1982: 142) - however, as a result of the recent 'reurbanization' and culture-led regeneration of cities, gentrification is becoming an inescapable aspect of the transformations in postindustrial urban landscapes (Cameron, 2003; Gainza, 2017). Although not restricted to the activities of cultural and creative workers, because of its close association with culture-led urban regeneration, in recent years gentrification has been particularly associated with the spatial practices of artists and cultural workers and geography of the cultural economy (Bain, 2003; Ley, 2003; Mathews, 2010; Vivant, 2013; Zukin, 2009). As a result of the tendency to seek out marginal, 'forgotten', or neglected urban spaces, where 'alternative' lifestyles pose little threat, and artists and cultural producers can create cultural and expressive enclaves within cities, cultural and creative workers are often seen as pioneers of gentrification (Vivant, 2013: 62). The attraction of cheap rents and locations with a sense of historical character or authenticity (Zukin, 2009) make deindustrialized and low-income areas ideal sites for the deprived-but-authentic vernacular of the neo-Bohemia (Lloyd, 2004, 2005, 2017; Zukin, 2008); which are revitalized, through the transformative practices of artists, into desirable areas poised for the influx of new, affluent residents drawn by the trendy blend of local character and sanitized unorthodoxy (Atkinson, 2003), and the appeal of both unvalorized land capital (Smith,

1982) and the cultural amenities established by the artistic 'gentrifiers'. Thus, as Landry (2000: 125) puts it, the artist 'in effect is the explorer and regenerator kickstarting a gentrification process, bringing life to rundown areas and generating the development of support structures' which facilitate further 'waves' of gentrification (Lees, 2000) in what Pohl and Wischmann (2014) call the 'Floridization' [*Floridaisierung*] of urban spaces.

The position of artists, then, is ambivalent: artists are simultaneously romanticized for embracing neglected urban spaces and revitalizing them, and scorned for the displacement of low-income groups which often follows (Cole, 1987).

While there is compelling reason to read gentrification as the movement of capital primarily (but not exclusively) concerned with actualizing land value (Harvey, 1990, 2006; Smith, 1979, 1996), it is, as many have suggested, also very much a cultural phenomenon (Lees, 2000; Ley, 1980, 1996; Mills, 1993; Rofe, 2003; Zukin, 1995, 2009). Ley (1980, 1996) particularly has argued that gentrification should be understood as the result of cultural changes emerging from postindustrial society (Hamnett, 2003): as an expression of the 'emancipatory city' - where neglected city neighbourhoods provide opportunities for the exploration and development of new lifestyles and are transformed into celebrations of freedom and diversity in the process (Caulfield, 1994; Lees, 2000). Understood in this way, gentrification is crucially related to the construction and performance of particular (often explicitly spatial) identities (Ley, 1980, 1996; Mills, 1993; Redfern, 2003). Rofe (2003) has argued that there is significant symbolic value in inner city living, and gentrification can be seen as an effort to negotiate or take advantage of what Zukin (1991, 2009) has described as 'landscapes of power', within which cultural and spatial consumption play an increasingly significant role in the construction and performance of identity (Redfern, 2003; Zukin, 1992, 1998, 2009).

While gentrification is closely tied to issues of identity construction and performance, it is also the consumption of the symbolic value of living in a particular place – that is, a place commodity. Consequently, it is underpinned by the power relations involved in the construction of authenticity (Peterson, 2005; Zukin, 2008, 2009), in which neoliberalisation and gentrification can be seen as turning 'authenticity' into a consumable cultural object. Redfern (2003) argues that both gentrifiers and displacees are concerned with identity and place – the difference primarily is in the (economic) means available to them. Also contending with the fact that place-identities are not static; and creative and cultural industries, which are often connected to the history and identity of place, also change it by their presence (O'Connor and Xin, 2010).

Despite being seen as 'pioneers of gentrification', artists and cultural producers are also its victims (Whiting and Hannam, 2017). Artists who move into neglected areas and begin to transform them are often themselves 'priced out' of the very places they were responsible for revitalizing (Lees, 2000; Shaw, 2013). As bohemian and cultural spaces develop and are gradually 'sanitized' by artists, the vernacular appeal is replaced by mainstream consumption (Zukin, 2009) and gradually, 'the artist may become detached and removed, anonymous and, finally, absent' (Bain, 2003: 316).

The impact of gentrification has been significant (Hodgkinson, 2016; Ley, 2003; Novy and Colomb, 2013; Zukin, 2009), but, despite the acknowledged role of creative and cultural industries as a driving force of gentrification, creative and cultural workers have often been outspoken critics of the process (Novy and Colomb, 2013; Hodgkinson, 2016).

Yet despite their opposition to the commodification of culture and urban spaces (Borén and Young, 2016; Hollands, 2009, 2010, 2017; McLean, 2014; Novy and Colomb, 2013; Shaw, 2005), artists and artistic communities, in large part as a result of the 'creative city' agenda, are frequently employed, or their work appropriated, in the promotion of neoliberalized creative

city agenda (Peck, 2005), gentrification, and turning classed and racialized spaces into spectacles (McLean, 2014), through instrumentalizing art and culture (Bayliss, 2007) and aestheticizing material and spatial disadvantage and exclusion. A 'hijacking of culture' (Kavaratis and Ashworth, 2015), through which the aesthetic disposition of artists and alternative cultural production can be appropriated by capital (Bourdieu, 1996; Ley, 2003; Shaw, 2005). Contrary to creative city and cultural regeneration logic, the involvement of urban development and capital in alternative cultural areas can often spell the end of 'authenticity' and vernacular artistic spaces – what Shaw (2005) refers to as a cultural 'kiss of death'.

This complex 'geography of gentrification' (Lees, 2000, 2012) highlights the paradoxical nature of gentrification as a process (Zukin, 2016), and the position of artists and cultural producers especially. Ley (2003) has rejected 'monocausal' explanations of gentrification, pointing instead to circumstances in which both economic and cultural factors interact, in what, as Redfern (2003) has suggested, is ultimately an expression of the fundamental quest for identity within modernity.

Recent scholarship has seen a move away from understanding gentrification as explicitly about displacement (see Huning and Schuster, 2015; Lees, 2008; cf. Slater, 2006), and instead involving a range of spatial conflicts concerning participation in the development of urban areas (Pohl and Wischmann, 2014) and the right to urban space (Gainza, 2017).

IV.3.3 Artists and the Right to the City

Hard branding, gentrification, and the construction of urban identity in line with creative city discourses have not gone unchallenged, and artists and cultural and creative groups and individuals have been some of the most vocal (Hollands, 2017; Novy and Colomb, 2013; Shaw,

2014). These urban struggles have often drawn on Jacob's (1961) critique of urban planning and a modified version of Henri Lefebvre's notion of the right to the city (Brenner *et al.*, 2012; Purcell, 2003; Schmid, 2012). David Harvey (2008, 2013) has revisited this thesis in establishing an argument for reconceptualising the right to the city as part of a challenge to the 'creative destruction' of neoliberal capitalism and the commodification of urban space.

Consequently, artists' and cultural workers' worlds and uses of space have become increasingly politicized as questions of the role of artists and cultural producers in urban development become embroiled in battles over their own rights to spaces (Hollands, 2009, 2017; Long, 2013; Novy and Colomb, 2013; Twickel, 2010). Borén and Young (2016: 23) suggest, that while their responses are diverse,

Artists have opposed culture- and creativity-led forms of development which they feel will lead to a displacement of more alternative and vernacular forms of creativity, drive gentrification and rising prices (especially property) and marginalise social groups and forms of creativity which are deemed not to "fit" the overarching policy view of what types of culture and creativity are seemed appropriate in the "creative city".

Although numerous studies have highlighted the involvement of artists and cultural workers in 'right to the city' movements (e.g. Novy and Colomb, 2013; Shaw, 2014; Twickel, 2010) as well as the marginal, and often 'anti-capitalist' position of artists in 'rejecting market forces and the commercialization of their productions and spaces of residence' (Mathews, 2010: 666) (e.g. Bain, 2003; d'Ovidio and Morató, 2017; Kirchberg and Kagan, 2013; Ley, 2003; Markusen, 2006; Zukin, 1982), the relationship between artists and urban space is highly paradoxical (Shaw, 2005). As I argued in the previous chapter, the relationship between art and commerce is ambivalent and dialectical, and it is no different when considered spatially, which, as Kirchberg

and Kagan (2013) have argued, can produce tensions between the political and the artistic motivations of groups resisting the commodification of urban space.

To resist or exploit (or both) the consequences of postindustrial capitalism, reflects the contradictions of the position of art within a cultural economy, and the diversity of experiences inherent in the 'unevenness of resistance to urban change, and [artists'] structural position within the economy' (Mathews, 2010: 666). Despite its obvious importance in understanding and constructing space, the significance of the extra-economic aspects of cultural and creative workers' experiences and identities is relatively underexplored (Mathews, 2010). Socio-spatial context is key, and Jane Jacobs (2012) is right to assert that it is more ethnography, and not general policy studies, that is needed to understand postindustrial cities.

IV.4 Summary

In this third and final literature review chapter, I have discussed some of the most significant ways in which the increased significance of CCIs and the 'culturalized economy' are implicated in the transformations to the landscapes of postindustrial cities. These transformations have particular significance for how artists and cultural producers construct their identities. The appeal of particular kinds of urban spaces – typically deindustrialized and marginal spaces with the potential for aesthetic freedom and creative expression – is tied up in a complex postindustrial geography in which issues of urban emancipation and self-expression are confronted with the culture-led branding and commodification of urban landscapes and gentrification that follows creative city agenda. Consequently, the significance of changing urban landscapes for people working in CCIs is contradictory and variable, but remains nevertheless a crucially important aspects of how people working in CCIs construct and perform identities within specific socio-spatial contexts.

Despite the wealth of studies concerning the CCIs and their relationship to urban transformation, and the emphasis in Florida's influential work, there remains remarkably little research in this field engaging explicitly with questions of identity. Even though these issues are implicit in many studies, they remain unexplored or taken for granted. In addition, despite the centrality of his arguments for the genesis of the field, Adorno's work has been given little more than lip-service (if that) in most recent scholarship, and the significance of his broader philosophical system for understanding the relationship between CCIs and postindustrial cities and the significance of questions of identity to them has not been explored.

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to establish a context for this research based on the tripartite interdependence of identity, culture, and place. I have argued for an understanding of identity as a process of identification in which culture and place are significant factors; for an appreciation of the CCIs as intimately connected to the urban economy, and concerned with the production and distribution of cultural and symbolic goods and services which are increasingly important in practices of identity construction; and for the understanding of postindustrial urban landscapes as sites of profound material and cultural transformation increasingly characterized by cultural commodities, which has important implications for the practice of postindustrial urban identities.

In what follows I present the findings of research exploring the intersection of postindustrial identities, CCIs, and urban space in two European cities: Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, and Hamburg, Germany.

Chapter V: Methodology

V.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the three themes that inform this research: identity; cultural and creative industries; and postindustrial cities. This chapter is concerned with the methodological questions that underpin the research and the process of data collection. I concluded the previous chapter by suggesting that understanding postindustrial urban identities is necessary to understanding the interconnections between CCIs and postindustrial urban transformations. It is clear that, as Robinson (2016) has suggested, new approaches to research into the urban is required in the 21st century, and new forms of comparison and engagement with cities and their broader, interconnected, contexts are a necessary part of this. Moreover, the porosity, transivity, and *entgrenzung* which characterizes the urban experience means that research must be more modest in its objectives than has sometimes been the case; seeking not to produce general rules, typologies, or restraining definitions, but to explore phenomena in context-specific ways paying attention to the transivity, relationality, and contextuality through which they are made actual.

In what follows, I set out an argument for a mixed-methods qualitative approach based on the negative dialectics of Theodor Adorno and the urban encounters of Walter Benjamin. The first section provides a methodological and theoretical justification for the research through a brief discussion of Adorno's negative dialectics. This is then developed in the second section, in which I discuss the qualitative mixed-methods approach to the exploration of identity through narrative interviews and 'light' ethnographic work taken in this thesis, and justify the use of

illustrative vignettes as an appropriate way to interpret and display mixed-methods data. The final section contains reflections on the research and the position of the researcher.

V.2 On Negative Dialectics: A Preamble to Method

In chapter 2, I stated that one of the ways in which the dialectical nature of identification was being referred to in this thesis concerned the relationship between the subjective intuitions of objects of experience and the objects to which those intuitions relate. This epistemological concern is of fundamental importance to both the theoretical arguments and the methodological approach taken in this thesis. In addressing this key issue, I turn again to the work of Theodor Adorno.

V.2.1 Negative Dialectics: The Problem of (Non-)Identity

In *Negative Dialectics* (1973), Adorno seeks to return contradiction to its rightful place within the subject-object dialectic. Like all dialectical accounts, negative dialectics is built on the ideas of tension, mediation, and contradiction (Sherman, 2016), but unlike the dialectics of Hegel or Marx, Adorno's project rejects the ideas of totality, synthesis, positivity, and the identity of subject and object as dialectical goals, and instead 'sets out to be a dialectics not of identity, but of *non-identity*' (Adorno, 2008: 6). At its core, this refers to the non-identity between objects themselves and the subjective concepts by which those objects are perceived. All concepts, Adorno argues, fall short of explaining their object in its entirety. The concept 'is always less than what is subsumed under it' (Adorno, 2008: 7), and no existing object *is everything* a concept contains. No concept can ever be *identical* to the object it seeks to describe: 'objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder' (Adorno, 1973: 5). Philosophy, Adorno

(1973, 1977, 2008) argues, has mistakenly proceeded on the assumption that identity between concepts and objects (and between subjects and objects) was possible. This 'unsuccessful attempt to use philosophical concepts for coping with all that is heterogeneous to those concepts' (1973: 4) effectively denies the independent existence of material reality (Thomson, 2017: 348); subsuming that which is objective within a 'constitutive subjectivity': reducing the inherent complex particularity of given reality to the purely logical exercises of human consciousness (Adorno, 1973, 1977; Buck-Morss, 1979; Sherman, 2016), and accepting the illusion 'that the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the real' (Adorno, 1977: 120).

This error – which Adorno refers to as *identity-thinking* – is not just a failing of philosophy, but is symptomatic of a society which seeks equivalence (derived from the principle of exchange contained in the commodity form) between particular objects and an abstract, universalizing conceptual system. Adorno argues that identity-thinking misleadingly denies, or assumes away, the gap – the contradiction – between subjective concepts and real world objects (O'Neill, 2008).

Adorno's negative dialectics is concerned with the denial of identity as the dissolution (or resolution) of difference between the subject and the object, and maintaining their fundamental irreducibility and irreconcilability. Adorno argues for an approach to understanding the relationship between people and the world in which there is no identity between subject and object, and in which both are necessary: a dialectics that does not take a standpoint (Adorno, 1973: 4-6), but with its basis in contradiction, 'indicates the untruth of identity' (*ibid.*: 5). Thus dialectics, Adorno states, 'is the consistent sense of nonidentity' (1973: 5), and only 'by tarrying with the revealed antagonisms immanent to concept and thing (the truth of their nonidentity) can the interstice between them ... be sustained' (Thomson, 2017: 350).

Adorno's critique of identity-thinking raises many issues, but two are paramount here. Firstly, it is a crucial reminder that we must be ever vigilant against the dangers of losing, or conflating, either subject or object in our explanations of phenomena. The concepts we employ – cities, CCIs, identities, etc. - belong to the realm of the identical, whereas the particular entities, processes and experiences which these concepts denote – and are the objects we study – belong to the particular and nonidentical. We should, therefore, be aware of the limitations and contradictions that these terms imply, and, in fact, consider revealing these to be the true purpose of our interpretation of social phenomena.

Secondly, while the problem of non-identity is of central concern to the epistemological concerns of social research, it has a two-fold character in research in which identity itself is an object of inquiry. I stated in chapter 2 that the two understandings of the dialectical character of identification (the dialectic of individual and social, and of subject and object) were really both aspects of the same dialectic: consequently, Adorno's critique of identity-thinking applies not only to identification in a philosophical or scientific sense, but to the everyday practices of identification by which we understand the world and our relationship to it. In the context of this research, the very objects we are trying to explore. Everyday practices of identification are attempts by social actors to *identify* their subjective concepts with the nonconceptual objects of everyday experience, and must also, therefore, be considered flawed and partial.

V.2.2 Accessing the Particular: Constellations, Contradictions, and Remainders

Adorno's concern in challenging identity thinking is not to dismiss the idea of knowledge of the world, but rather the idea of knowledge of fixed universals which, like Platonic forms, lie hidden behind material actuality. Adorno argues that in order to maintain the irreconcilability – the non-identity – of the nonconceptual object and the conceptual system of subjectivity, it is necessary to move beyond identity thinking by abandoning the idea of totality, or synthesis, as

the ultimate object of philosophical inquiry. If the world of objects is entirely heterogeneous to systems of thought and their concepts, then attempts to grasp the universal from the particular are futile (Adorno, 1977: 127). Yet, identity, and the process of identification, Adorno (1973: 5) states, 'is inherent in thought itself ... To think is to identify'. 'Necessity compels philosophy to operate with concepts' (Adorno, 1973: 11), and consequently, we must go beyond the concept by means of the concept; and 'use the strength of the subject to break through the fallacy of constitutive subjectivity' (*ibid.*: xx). Drawing on Benjamin's (1998: 34) arguments in his *Trauerspiel* study regarding 'the salvation of phenomena by means of ideas', Adorno argues that the experience of particular objects or phenomena can be rescued from conceptual abstraction through the construction of a 'constellation' of interrelated elements to produce a 'dialectical image' of a particular phenomenon. Nonconceptual objects can never be known in their entirety, but, viewed through a prism (Adorno, 1997) of partial pictures based 'on clusters of concepts, on continuous combinations of words' (Buck-Morss, 1979: 90), 'phenomenal elements' can be arranged 'so that the relationships between them became visible to the intellect, so that they [form] an "idea" which could be mentally perceived' (Buck-Morss, 1979: 92). It is, therefore, through 'their mediating role [that] concepts enable phenomena to participate in the existence of ideas' (Benjamin, 1998: 34): by unravelling the phenomena, a more complete image of the object, which is attentive to the 'remainders' and 'everything that has slipped through the conventional conceptual net' (Adorno, 1997: 239), can be developed.

Constellations operate by the arrangement of a group of related and interconnected concepts or ideas in order to approach the problem from multiple angles in order to capture that which is missed, and pick up the remainders. It is in the remainders that the real interest lies, and so by examining a problem through the variegated lens of the constellation, those inconsistencies can be discovered. Adorno's method (and it is important not to imply a standard or formulaic method-as-procedure, which would obviously be abusive to Adorno's intent: the 'method' is

about context-dependent interpretation), proceeds by positing contradictions and challenging antinomies; arranging different kinds of entities in different ways to show the contradictions inherent to the particular materiality. Thus the same phenomena can be interpreted differently in different contexts (Buck-Morss, 1979). No philosophy, Adorno argues 'can drag in the *facta bruta* and present them like cases in anatomy or experiments in physics; no philosophy can paste the particulars into the text, as seductive paintings would hoodwink it into believing' (Adorno, 1973: 11). *Contra* Benjamin, Adorno does not see the presentation of a dialectical image alone as sufficient, but argues that these pictures require interpretation. The objects of inquiry are riddles, which do 'not meet up with a fixed meaning which already lies behind the question, but lights up suddenly and momentarily and consumes it at the same time' (Adorno, 1977: 127). Instead of posing questions and seeking answers, negative dialectics reveals the contradiction between the object and its concept, critically engaging what remains, 'to investigate non-reductively the difference excluded from the identifying process – what resists identification and is cast-off as surplus, contradictory and nonconceptual' (Thomson, 2017: 351).

Adorno's dialectics, then, is negative because the dialectical tension does not resolve itself into something unified and whole (as in Hegel), but remains irreconcilable: the result of the dialectical process being not the resolution of opposites, but the unveiling of the truth in the dialectical relationship itself: which is to say, the fundamental *untruth* of the universalizing logic of identity-thinking – the *nonidentical* itself (Stone, 2014). By seeking to expose the 'lack of fit' (Adorno, 1973) between subject and object, negative dialectics can 'reveal glimpses of the object that have not previously been seen or acknowledged' (O'Neill, 2008: 123). The logic of negative dialectics, then, 'is one of disintegration' (Adorno, 1973: 145). It does not seek to reconcile the contradictions which result from the non-identity of subject and object, but 'holds together differences – of object from concept, nature from subject, myth from enlightenment – letting them remain different, juxtaposed as such, without subsuming them under any unifying structure'; allowing them to coexist as differences (Stone, 2014: 1131).

In what follows, I aim to adhere to the spirit of Adorno's negative dialectics in an exploration of the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs. My intention is not to define or typologize identities, or to posit general concepts to 'explain' practices of identification, but, by viewing CCIs and postindustrial identities through the lens of negative dialectics, and constructing a constellation of partial images and interrelated concepts, I aim to produce a different 'idea' or 'image' of postindustrial identities which embraces their dialectical nature, and to cast light on the exceptions, the contradictions, and the remainders that exist within this dialectic and reveal their fundamentally contradictory and nonidentical character.

V.3 The Qualitative Exploration of Identity

V.3.1 Negative Dialectics, Identity, and Mixed-Methods

Negative dialectics provides an epistemological foundation for research and a theoretical framework for its interpretation, but constitutes neither methodology nor method in itself. Adorno's 'method' is in the interpretation (Buck-Morss, 1979); the form of which must be specific to the phenomena under scrutiny. This principle holds equally true for the process of data-gathering; consequently Adorno's concern with the nonidentical ushers us away from formal strategies and protocols that force conceptual structure onto contingent reality towards fine-tuned, even bespoke, approaches to data-gathering. Thus the task of social research demands, as Crotty (2003: 13-14) remarked, that we 'devise our own ways of proceeding that allow us to achieve our purposes'.

This research seeks to explore the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs, and the significance of urban place and spatial transformation on these identity practices. It begins from

the understanding of postindustrial identities as dialectical, narrative practices embedded in socio-spatial and historical contexts, and that consequently can only be understood within these particular urban contexts. By approaching the question of postindustrial identity from the perspective of negative dialectics, this research explores the practices of identification and the significance of place and spatial transformation for people working in the CCIs in two European cities: Newcastle upon Tyne and Hamburg.

The data informing the arguments in this thesis were collected over 24 months of fieldwork undertaken between January 2016 and December 2017. This research followed a qualitative mixed-method programme of research, comprising narrative interviews and 'light' ethnographic work, including the use of *Stadtherumgehen*-as-method inspired by the work of Walter Benjamin.

There is an established history of studies investigating urban change and the experiences of artists and other actors working in the creative and cultural industries employing various qualitative methods, including ethnographic approaches (e.g. Becker, 1963; Benz, 2016; Bookman, 2014; Comunian, 2009; Hollands, 2009, 2010; Lloyd, 2005; Rich, 2013; Thiel, 2005). Seminal studies in urban geography in which culture and CCIs have been significant, such as Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) and Sharon Zukin's *Loft Living* (1982) similarly employed qualitative data gathering, including ethnographic work. More recently, Alison Bain's work exploring artistic identity has drawn on narrative interviews to explore the connections between artistic identity and social space (Bain, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005), and research focusing on narratives has also been used effectively in range of fields (e.g. Crowther, 2017; Lawler, 2008; Sandell and Bornäs, 2017; Watson, 2009a) including CCIs (e.g. Beech *et al.*, 2012; Morgan and Nelligan, 2015; Scott, 2017; Taylor and Littleton, 2008), and particularly in research concerning socio-spatial, and especially urban, change (e.g. Lewis, 2016; Long, 2013; Mah, 2010; Nayak, 2003a, 2003b; Rich, 2013), enabling studies to situate participants' experiences within a changing socio-spatial context.

A mixed-methods approach to qualitative research is not uncommon (Hay, 2010; Silverman, 2014). Their strength lies in generating multiple views of the same phenomena (O'Reilly and Kimbiya, 2015). The ability to triangulate approaches (Hammersley, 2008) and assess the validity of data through different methods (Bryman, 2002) means weaknesses and limitations in any single method can be offset or minimized. This should not be taken to imply that aggregated results from triangulated methods produce a 'true' composite picture (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006), or that the results of one method can pass judgement on the truth of another (Silverman, 2014). Rather, triangulation and mixed-method approaches add depth and richness to qualitative inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018b; Silverman, 2014) by highlighting the partiality and contextual nature of knowledge about the world. Moreover, in this research, the use of mixed-methods fulfils an important theoretical requirement.

From the approach informed by negative dialectics underpinning this research, identity is understood as the dialectical relationship between the subjective realm of individual thought and the objective phenomena of reality; consequently, identities can only be understood if both the subjective and the objective dimensions of the dialectic are considered together: as different parts of the same whole. Therefore, in order to understand identity practices in context, it is necessary that approaches to research be taken that can cast light not only on cultural and creative workers' own narrative accounts, but also on the objects which constitute the field in which those accounts take place and to which they relate. While identities and the narratives which are constructed are necessarily dialectical, the telling of them is not. Accordingly, it is not sufficient to rely exclusively on participants' accounts for an understanding of identities as dialectical processes, as this would reduce the object-related part of the dialectic to the subject-related and fall into the trap of constitutive subjectivity. For our purposes here, this means that participants' narratives must be presented in their material, social, and cultural contexts: embedded in the objects that comprise the everyday world of experiences and practices of identification. Consequently, in order to construct a constellation of postindustrial identities, a

mixed-methods approach involving both participants' narrative accounts and ethnographic methods that allow the objects of those narratives to become data themselves must be included.

As mentioned in the Introduction, this research is not, *sensu stricto*, an urban comparison. The focus of the research is the practices of identity construction for people living and working in different cities rather than 'cities' themselves. Therefore, it is neither my intention to compare cities like-for-like, nor to claim that the results constitute a representation of the cities themselves. Nevertheless, by comparing people's postindustrial identities within the context of their urban environments in order to gain some measure of insight into the multiple and ambivalent ways in which such environments are implicated in the construction of those identities necessarily involves, in a significant, albeit limited sense, an exercise in the comparison of cities.

V.3.2 The Cities: Newcastle and Hamburg

At first appearance, the cities of Newcastle upon Tyne and Hamburg are unusual choices for comparison of postindustrial identities and CCIs. With a population of approximately 1.79 million (SAfHSH, 2018) and a total area of 755km² compared with Newcastle's population of 295,800 (ONS, 2017), Hamburg is comfortably seven times the size of Newcastle. Hamburg is also Germany's second city - an important hub of national and international trade and transport, and a wealthy, cosmopolitan centre of politics and commerce. As a major European city, the 'Gateway to the World' is a city of a quite different type to the 'depressed economy' (Hudson, 2013) of Newcastle, a relatively small and peripheral city in the north east of England. These quite stark differences are important, and should be taken into consideration in the discussions that follow. Nevertheless, I maintain that while they are not similar cities, they are cities with important similarities.

Newcastle and Hamburg are both European port cities that grew in prominence during the 19th century as key industrial centres – and this alone means they share a significant amount of history – but whose trajectories into their postindustrial forms have taken very different paths from the second half of the 20th century. Neither are capital cities nor typically renowned as cultural or creative cities (in the manner of cities such as Edinburgh, Munich, or Paris [see EU, 2018]), yet in recent years both cities have made efforts to (re)brand themselves as cultural and/or creative cities (Chatterton, 2000; Byrne and Benneworth, 2006; Gibson and Stevenson, 2004; HK, 2015; Novy and Colomb, 2012), and have undergone significant material and spatial transformation as a result (Balke *et al.*, 2017; Jones and Evans, 2008; Läßle *et al.*, 2010; Pasquinelli, 2014). Both cities have a significant regional presence, and a strong local identity (Byrne and Wharton, 2004; Nayak, 2003b; O’Brien and Miles, 2010; Pasquinelli, 2014). At the high point of maritime trade, there was significant traffic of people and goods between the cities, and Hamburg is notable amongst German cities for being similar to the UK in both architecture and culture. As centres of commerce whose success and wealth was intimately connected with their port industry and identity, they have, at least in part, a similar industrial-cultural heritage based on their interconnected roles as sites of maritime trade and as regional commercial and transportation hubs.

Both cities have flourishing CCIs (Creative Fuse North East, 2017; EKOS, 2012; HK, 2015; HKG, 2016) which they promote, but both cities struggle to establish an identity as a ‘*cultural*’ or ‘*creative*’ city. In part because of their prominent existing identities, which are connected to their industrial histories and trajectories. The ‘Geordies’ of Newcastle derive in part from the shipbuilding tradition of the city and North East, and the city’s reputation as a party city is connected to its inhabitants’ reputation as friendly and enthusiastic about their drinking culture, and Hamburg’s identity as a commercial maritime city is inseparable from its history as a free-trade city and member of the Hanseatic League.¹⁰ They also both have reputations, albeit

¹⁰ This identity is signified in the city’s full name - *Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg* (Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg).

rather different, for their nightlife: Newcastle is frequently cited as one of the UK's top destinations for nightlife, and Hamburg is famous for its nightclub and red-light district - the *Reeperbahn*. Both cities have a national and international reputation for their music scenes and boast a number of prominent music venues regularly attracting national and international headline acts, as well as leading theatres and opera houses, and numerous alternative and independent venues. Both cities have nationally-renowned museums and galleries and a vibrant restaurant culture. They also both share an internationally-recognized cultural attachment to their football teams.¹¹

While they have related histories and points of cultural crossover, the two cities have taken different approaches to their trajectories into the postindustrial. While both cities are apart from their national capitals, these differences take widely divergent forms: Hamburg is both a city and one of the 12 German *Bundesländer*, and is, like Berlin, a city-state, with significant political and economic autonomy. Newcastle, on the other hand, is geographically, socially, economically, and culturally distant from London, but has no meaningful devolved power, and so even though it is often of marginal concern in London, it remains subject to control by Westminster. Both cities have experienced a certain amount of deindustrialization, although whereas Newcastle experienced extremely fast and radical deindustrialization from the 1970s and especially the 1980s as a result of national political decisions (Hudson, 2013), Hamburg's relative independence meant that it has, so far, been able to maintain and continue supporting (and developing) its industrial port (HPA, 2012), which is the third largest in Europe, as well as establishing a large aviation sector alongside the relative increase in the service, and cultural/creative sectors.

¹¹ For Newcastle this is their Premier League team Newcastle United FC, whereas in Hamburg, it is their Second Division team FC St. Pauli, with its iconic skull and crossbones flag and radical left-alternative political culture rather than their more competitively successful – and culturally mainstream – Hamburger SV.

V.3.3 Selection of Sites and Participants

As the research was particularly concerned with the significance of space in practices of identification, it was decided that the research would only be concerned with individuals or organizations whose needs or uses of space were other than (or at least not limited to) a standard office environment. Individuals working in advertising, computer software/games design, architecture, journalism, publishing, and similar fields, and/or those working in large organizations whose uses and experiences of space were likely to be very different were excluded. All the participants included in this study were either self-employed or part of small or micro-organizations, and worked in the fields of fashion, film, furniture-making, jewellery-making, metalworking, music, theatre and performance arts, woodworking, and visual arts. Although many of them would reject some or perhaps all of these labels, they were all artists, artisans, designers, makers, craft or cultural/creative producers, or cultural entrepreneurs involved in some way in the production of cultural or creative commodities, whether goods, services, or experiences.

Despite the variety of cultural and creative work they were involved in, the participants were in many other ways strikingly homogenous as a social group. They were overwhelmingly white, European, and educated (nearly all reported having studied at a university at some point). Only one respondent was of a non-white ethnic background. There was, however, a relatively even divide between female and male participants. Because of the nature of the research it was not always possible to gather information on age or sexuality, so this is not reported, although there was a slight tendency overall towards younger workers. While effort was made to counter this by ensuring older cultural workers were represented in the participants selected for interviews, many were still unavailable or unwilling, and only four interview participants were aged over 40. This age bias is undoubtedly reflected in the experiences and stories that underpin the arguments in this thesis, and, while it is not possible to make any specific claims, it is likely that older cultural workers, whose experiences, careers, and identities would have been shaped by

different social, cultural, and economic contexts, would have provided stories reflecting those differences

Potential sites were first identified from existing data sources showing the location of creative and cultural organizations in the cities,¹² and through contacting municipal organizations and individuals involved with creative and cultural organizations in the cities, followed up in person with 'reconnaissance visits' (Kearns, 2010: 249). Potential sites were selected in the first instance based on (presumed) comparable characteristics (i.e. location and physical characteristics of sites and buildings and the kinds of cultural and creative work being done); however, relying on pre-existing schemata or initial site selection based upon assumption of comparability would have gone against Adorno and Benjamin's insistence that negative dialectics 'cannot ... permit any insistence on logical neatness to encroach on its right to go from one *genus* to another' (Adorno, 1997: 32) in its efforts to experience the world and everything which 'falls through the conceptual net' (*ibid.*: 239.). Consequently, early on in the research process it became necessary to compromise between generating data that would enable comparison between 'similar' sites and following emerging leads. It is a strength of qualitative (and especially ethnographic) approaches to research that they can (and should) evolve and 'shift focus as interesting new data become available' (Silverman, 2014: 261), and opportunities that arose to develop connections in, and gather data from, other parts of the cities were taken, both to improve knowledge of the field and to avoid closing off understanding based on *a priori* conceptual restrictions. Moreover, social research is a human activity, and especially when it is directly concerned with the experience of places, isolating impressions gathered exclusively from specific 'sites' as opposed to the broader landscapes in which they exist is neither strictly possible nor necessarily helpful. As Hyndman (2001: 262) points out, 'as a social researcher, one

¹² These include industry sector reports (e.g. BNG, 2007; EKOS, 2012; HKG, 2016), marketing documents and websites, and existing academic research (*inter alia* Läßle, Mückenberger and Oßenbrügge, 2010; Thiel *et al.*, 2010; Twickel, 2010; Vogelpohl, 2010; Novy and Colomb, 2013; Pohl, 2008; Whiting and Hannam, 2017).

is always in the field'. This 'messy' sampling (Mellor, 2001) is consistent with both the reality of qualitative research into the complexity of the real world and the theoretical and methodological perspectives underpinning this research.

Once initial sites were selected, potential participants were contacted either by e-mail or, where possible, in person at public events and exhibitions and invited to participate. In some instances introductions were made by mutual acquaintances. After contact was made with willing participants at initial research sites, further participants were contacted in the same way, and by snowballing through these initial 'gate-keepers'. At the start of the fieldwork period it was intended that snowball sampling would make up most of the recruitment of participants, however, initial estimations of the time needed to access initial contacts and gain access to research sites and populations were overly optimistic, and actual opportunities to take advantage of networks of contacts only started to emerge (and then only in two sites) by the end of the fieldwork period.¹³ As the ethnographic work developed, and key sites and issues began to emerge, purposive sampling was again employed to select participants for the narrative interviews.

By the end of the fieldwork, ethnographic observations and narrative interviews had been carried with participants in five separate sites within three areas of Hamburg (Schanzenviertel, HafenCity, and Neustadt), and in seven sites within two areas of Newcastle (Ouseburn, City Centre).¹⁴ These sites varied considerably: some were single buildings where multiple cultural and creative workers had separate or shared work spaces while others were multiple buildings in a neighbourhood. Some were stand-alone workspaces, while one was a community spread over several buildings which were both residential and workspaces in the middle of the central business district.

¹³ Although, and in line with Hyndman's (2001) claim that the field is everywhere and all the time, these contacts still exist, and in two cases continued to inform the interpretation of fieldwork data right up until the final submission of this thesis.

¹⁴ I discuss these locations in the context of participants' narratives in the vignettes in chapters 6 and 7.

In addition to the narrative interviews and ethnographic work with cultural and creative workers (described below), 4 interviews (3 in Hamburg, 1 in Newcastle) were carried out with key informants working in local government and (in Hamburg) municipal organizations involved with local CCIs. These interviews contributed to a broader understanding of the cultural and creative economies of the two cities, and in particular the role played by these local agencies.

V.3.4 Ethnographic Observations

The term ethnography can cover a wide range of research approaches and methods (Brewer, 2000; Bryman, 2012; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007); as Willis (2007: 237) suggests, it is 'not so much a particular, well-defined method as a family of conceptual and methodological frameworks'. At its core, ethnography is concerned with understanding people's lives in their everyday cultural contexts (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007); it seeks, through various means, to gain an understanding of the cultural values, behaviours, and beliefs of a social group through close observation and interaction (Cresswell, 2007). An approach to data gathering which follows the principles of ethnography, therefore, is ideally suited to exploring postindustrial identities in their urban contexts. This research was not attempting a 'traditional' approach to ethnography that might be associated with the anthropological tradition of Malinowski or Radcliffe-Brown, which involves extended periods of immersion in cultures typically far removed (socially and geographically) from the researcher's own in an effort to understand the workings of a social group in its totality. Instead, the research aimed for 'ethnographically-informed' approach to data gathering, which sought to access the lived experience of participants in context, but which falls far short of the total immersion (Wacquant, 2006) required for ethnography in the traditional sense.

The ethnographic data were obtained by prolonged observations in and around the research sites and parts of the cities in which CCI are based and in which creative and cultural workers are active in order to gain insight into how spaces are used by cultural and creative workers and urban transformations in postindustrial cities and (re)produce place-identities. These ethnographic observations started in January 2016 and continued until December 2017, and included site visits, attendance at exhibitions, social gatherings, and events such as music festivals, street parties, and craft fairs, as well as observations of and interactions with participants at work and in public spaces such as bars and clubs. Initial observations were general and unfocused; intended to provide 'added value from time "in the field" and to provide a descriptive complement' to the more structured observations and the interviews (Kearns, 2010: 242), becoming more focused on uses and understandings of space and how it featured in practices of identity construction as more contacts were made and familiarity with sites and participants made more focused observations of people interacting with space possible.

In addition to these more 'traditional' ethnographic observations, a considerable amount of data concerning the uses and material and symbolic constructions of urban space and atmosphere were collected through my own observations and experiences of walking around the cities.

V.3.5 Experiencing Urban Space: *Stadtherumgehen* as Method

The way to get at what goes on in the seemingly mysterious and perverse behavior of cities is, I think, to look closely, and with as little previous expectation as is possible, at the most ordinary scenes and events, and attempt to see what they mean and whether any threads of principle emerge among them (Jacobs, 1961: 13).

In a seminal article, Latham (2003) argued for the need for human geographers to break out of a limited, traditional model of qualitative research. Drawing on Nigel Thrift's assertion that cultural geography had become 'wedded ... to the notion of bringing back the "data", and then re-presenting it (nicely packaged up as a few supposedly illustrative quotations), and the narrow range of sensate life they register' (Thrift, 2000, quoted in Latham, 2003: 1993), Latham suggested that the (re)turn to culture as an object of geographical study had created 'a very real need to reconsider and rework the ways in which human geographers (and cultural geographers, in particular) undertake research' (*ibid.*) (see also Denzin and Lincoln, 2018b). In attempting to rise to this challenge, I turn to the work of one of the most insightful and distinctive explorers of modern society, its culture, and the urban experience: Walter Benjamin.

In the *Passagenwerk*, Benjamin sets out, through fragments of observations and reflections concerning the Paris Arcades, both an image of 19th century urban life, and the principles of a method of geographical understanding embodied by the *flâneur* (see Tester, 1994).

For Benjamin, the *flâneur's* movement through the streets is a way of experiencing history. 'That anamnestic intoxication in which the flâneur goes about the city not only feeds on the sensory data taking shape before his eyes but often possesses itself of abstract knowledge - indeed, of dead facts - as something experienced and lived through' (Benjamin, 1999: 417 [M1,5]). For Benjamin, '[w]alking around proves ... not merely a mode of movement, but a mode of perception and knowledge' (Benjamin, in Schlögel, 2016: 135): a lived, corporeal, sensuous way of seeing the world through which thought comes to know its object. The *flâneur*, far from being a disinterested observer, represents a particular mode of perception and knowledge tied to the lived experience of *being* that comes from walking around the city - from *Stadtherumgehen*. This becomes, for Benjamin, a method of gathering sensuous and contextual data about the experience of urban environments: experiencing the city 'as it is, in and for itself' (Adorno,

1997: 240). Benjamin's methodological intention, then, was 'to give thought the density of experience without having it therefore lose any of its stringency' (*ibid.*).

In order to experience the city, the *flâneur* must become immersed in the sensations of the city. Benjamin's method, entreats us to 'get lost' in the urban landscape, in order to explore directly, first-hand, the material, socio-cultural, and symbolic urban environment. Alongside the more general ethnographic observations with participants, a significant amount of the fieldwork was time spent actively 'getting lost' in the areas around research sites and in the cities more generally. Although I had maps of the cities, I tried to use them only retrospectively to understand where I had been rather than to plan where I was going. I intentionally took unfamiliar and indirect courses around and between different areas of the cities; choosing streets and turning corners according to the impressions of sights, sounds, smells, touch, tastes, and other sense-data that I experienced, and allowing myself, as much as possible, to be 'guided' by my immediate experience of the urban landscapes rather than following 'routes', or even general, abstract, *direction*.¹⁵

To 'get lost', in Benjamin's sense, is to break free from the familiar;¹⁶ to experience urban landscapes directly, critically, and in new ways; by 'permitting thought to get, as it were, too close to its object, the object becomes as foreign as an everyday, familiar thing under a microscope' (Adorno, 1997: 240). *Stadtherumgehen*, therefore, mounts a critical challenge to established conceptualizations or interpretations of urban landscapes. The *flâneur* seeks to see things differently; and thus, '[t]o not find one's way in a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires practice' (Benjamin, quoted in

¹⁵ Sights, sounds, and smells are the most obvious guiding sense-data in exploring cities, but not the only ones, and often (because they are more obvious) not the most interesting. The feel underfoot, for example, of new streets compared to old, or the indicative change between freshly cleaned pavements and those littered with everyday debris when a 'maintained' city district borders an 'ignored' one is readily noticeable to one paying attention. Additionally, the emotional responses elicited by a range – or combination – of sense-data, while personal and subjective, are profoundly illustrative of the uses and construction of urban spaces: following streets *because* they seem 'exciting', or 'unusual', even 'unsettling' or 'intimidating', has the potential to reveal new, or novel, characteristics of urban landscapes.

¹⁶ Familiar in the sense of an already-known urban environment, or, in an unknown environment, to abandon *expected* or *pre-given* interpretations of that environment.

Sontag, 1979: 10). 'Getting lost' in this way often took several hours at a time, and sometimes resulted in walking in circles, or having to retrace my steps when I found myself in dead-ends, but took me to different and surprising places as well as to familiar or famous places in unusual ways, drawing attention to unconventional 'maps' and experiences of the cities, and challenging, or entering into dialogue with the conventional geographies of their cultural and urban landscapes. This contributed enormously to the overall appreciation of the myriad urban environments and identities of the cities, as well as drawing attention to contrasts between research sites and other parts of the cities. Like ethnography in general, *Stadtherumgehen*-as-method is concerned with experiencing the world, and, like Eberle and Maeder's description of the ethnographer entering the field 'with all of his or her senses, and takes into account the architecture, the furniture, the spatial arrangements' (2011: 54), the practice of *Stadtherumgehen* involves interpreting the urban environment through attention to sense-data. However, it is specifically the sense-data of (and the interpretation of that sense data by) the researcher themselves that is the information of value. While the ethnographer seeks primarily to present a picture of the world *of* the social group under investigation – the participants' experiences of the world being the object of study (the researcher's own being a second-order hermeneutic) - the practice Benjamin advocates centres on the researcher's own *direct experience of the objects of consciousness* as they are given to both researcher and research participants, rather than the participants' *accounts* of those objects. In this way, the role of the researcher and their interpretations are acknowledged as intrinsic to the research process. In experiencing the urban environment directly - *being in* the city - my own experiences, observations, and interpretations of the urban environment add another layer of data which can be interpreted and interrogated, and which can support, challenge, and complement the data gathered through the interviews and the ethnographic observations in order to further interpret the experience of place.

This is emphatically not to imply that the researcher, by virtue of a scientific disinterestedness, or as the result of some special skill, has *better* or *clearer* access to those objects of

consciousness than the participants: 'the detached observer,' Adorno remarked, 'is as much entangled as the active participant; the only advantage of the former, is insight into his entanglement, and the infinitesimal freedom that lies in knowledge as such' (2005: 26). Rather, it reinforces the fact that the researcher, just like any other person, experiences the world for themselves, and can never be apart from their own direct experiences. My experiences do not supersede those of the participants – as it is their stories, their identities, with which the research is concerned – but rather provide a greater insight into the contexts which inform the narratives provided by my participants.

Although much of this is active behind the scenes of the research process – informing my interpretations of respondent's stories, clarifying or reinforcing my understanding of their stories – my experiences of the various environments of Newcastle and Hamburg often tell a story in their own right. Where appropriate, I have included excerpts from my fieldnotes and research diary that pertain to my own experiences of the cities in the vignettes in chapters 6 and 7, not only to add context to the stories of the participants which make up the primary source of data, but also to remind the reader that the person reporting these accounts was (and still remains) a human being making their own, subjective and partial, interpretations - who experienced the environments referred to by the participants directly: who walked the streets, read the signs, smelt the air, and felt the cities. By acknowledging this inescapable fact, and, by embracing rather than hiding or eschewing the consequences, the information gathered through *Stadtherumgehen* provide an additional and, I believe extremely valuable, perspective to the data. This also highlights important issues of positionality, which I discuss in section V.4.2.

V.3.6 Narrative Interviews

Narrative interviews were carried out with a selection of participants purposively sampled (Bryman, 2012; Cresswell, 2007) from the participants involved in the ethnographic work to capture a range of experiences from cultural and creative workers in different parts of the cities. Again, it is important to stress that although participants were selected to provide a range of narratives from different locations, they are too few in number and too varied in character to be considered representative of cultural and creative workers living and/or working in those areas, or in the cities more generally.

In total, 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with cultural and creative workers in Newcastle ($n=14$) and Hamburg ($n=10$) between May 2016 and December 2017 (see Table 5.1 below). The qualitative interviews were semi-structured explorations, or ‘conversations with a purpose’ (Burgess, 1984: 102). They were guided by a schedule of themes but not restricted to them or to following a prescribed order. Instead, the interviews followed the participants’ narratives and topics were allowed to emerge naturally in the context of their own stories (Brinkmann, 2018; Bryman, 2012), thereby allowing the participants as much control over the content as possible. Narratives, according to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), occupy a ‘three-dimensional inquiry space’, which ‘looks backward and forward, looks inward and outward, and situates the experiences within place’ (Cresswell, 2007: 185); enabling and encouraging participants to explore their experiences and make sense of them, creating, as they do so, a compelling image of identity.

Because the interviews were kept informal, and, in many cases followed or went alongside ethnographic work, they often involved a bilateral exchange of information informed by both the participants’ experiences and impressions and my own. Although the emphasis was on ascertaining the views of the participants and their own narratives, the interviews often took the form of what Brannen (2013) calls ‘co-constructed narratives’. Such an approach is not uncommon in qualitative research (Scott, 2017), and is, in a sense, inevitable in research with an

ethnographic component in which the separation between researcher and field becomes less distinct.

Table 5.1: Narrative interview participants

Participant Name	Newcastle/Hamburg	Female/Male	Type of cultural/creative work
Bailey	Newcastle	Female	Graphic artist
Christopher	Newcastle	Male	Musician
David	Newcastle	Male	Furniture maker
Edward	Newcastle	Male	Music manager, writer, comedian
Eva	Newcastle	Female	Fashion designer
Grace	Newcastle	Female	Artist, jewellery maker
Hugo	Newcastle	Male	Musician, composer
Jonathan	Newcastle	Male	Performance artist
Lowell	Newcastle	Female	Visual artist, cultural entrepreneur
Pinta	Newcastle	Female	Artist
Robin	Newcastle	Female	Glass artist
Sarah	Newcastle	Female	Designer
Sophie	Newcastle	Female	Jewellery maker
Thomas	Newcastle	Male	Graphic artist
Andy	Hamburg	Male	Writer, activist
Anne	Hamburg	Female	Cultural entrepreneur
Gerrit	Hamburg	Male	Graphic artist
Greta	Hamburg	Female	Writer, activist
Johanna	Hamburg	Female	Painter
Markus	Hamburg	Male	Photographer, activist
Michel	Hamburg	Male	Musician
Omar	Hamburg	Male	Painter, actor
Stef	Hamburg	Female	Cultural organiser
Uwe	Hamburg	Male	Actor

The interviews in Hamburg were conducted primarily in English, although some of them contained a mix of English and German. Significant passages in German were translated by the researcher as part of transcription. In order to ensure against any mistranslation, German passages were translated a second time by a native German speaker fluent in English.

Interviews were carried out in a range of locations, but wherever possible in parts of the cities where participants worked or socialized in order that everyday spaces and surroundings could be drawn upon by participants in recounting their stories. Most ($n=17$) were carried out in participants' workspaces, while six were carried out in public places (cafés or bars), and one in an office in a university building. Where possible, interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. In two instances, audio recording was impractical because of the location of the interviews, one interview participant preferred not to be recorded, and in one instance, a technological failure meant that the audio recording was lost. Interviews lasted on average approximately 60 minutes, but due to the unstructured and participant-led approach varied in length from 45 to 120 minutes. Transcriptions of the interviews were first coded thematically, exploring participants' uses and experiences of the areas in which they worked and the urban landscape of the cities more generally. Particular attention was paid to participants' motivations and justifications in choosing locations, positive and negative features of urban environments and the broader cultural urban landscapes, and attitudes towards art and cultural and creative work in general. The emerging themes were compared with ethnographic field notes and reflections from *Stadtherumgehen* to construct a general image of the similarities and differences of experiences of place and work in the CCIs in the two cities. Transcripts were subsequently reread as narratives of identity (Riceour, 1991); interpreted according to participants' accounts of the development of their identity as an 'artist' and the role played by the meanings and experiences of urban space and place in constructing coherent life-stories (Elliot, 2005; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000). As the interviews, ethnographic observations, and *Stadtherumgehen* were all taking place in parallel, the process of data interpretation was iterative and non-linear. Information in later interviews or impressions

gathered towards the end of the fieldwork often prompted the need to revisit earlier fieldwork notes, to reinterpret elements of earlier accounts, and the re-evaluate the emerging stories and discussion which are presented in chapters 6, 7, and 8.

V.3.7 (Re-)Presenting the Data: Vignettes and Constellations

Employing innovative approaches to the collection of qualitative data is of little value if they are then (re)presented in familiar formats (Latham, 2003). The role of critical interpretation, central to Adorno's negative dialectics, was to break through conventional interpretation and the constraints of system, in order to 'unconceal' that which identity-thinking obscured. The mixed-methods approach developed in this thesis, and the addition of *Stadtherumgehen* as method in particular, demands an innovative (or, more modestly, a less conventional) approach to the analysis and interpretation of data, as it seeks to integrate traditional interview data, conversational and observational data, and the personal reflections of the researcher *experiencing* the urban environments in which the participants lived, worked, and within-and-out-of-which they constructed their post-industrial identities. Consequently, this thesis must also take an unconventional approach to displaying and interpreting findings.

In the chapters that follow, I present first (in chapters 6 and 7) a series of qualitative sketches (Amin and Graham, 1997), or illustrative vignettes, based around the stories of six participants from different areas of Newcastle and Hamburg, exploring their artistic identities, their experiences as cultural and creative workers, and the significance of urban space. These vignettes are presented as 'thematic narratives' (Emerson *et al.*, 1995), constructed so the 'crucial differences' (Adorno, 1977) that characterize the nonconceptual particularity of individuals' stories take centre stage. Recognizing the particulars in the stories of others and relating them to the particulars of our own experiences gives narrative accounts their authenticity and weight (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990), and provides access to the particular

objects, contradictions, and ambivalences which, when viewed together, make up a dialectical image through which more general themes can be glimpsed. In chapter 8, I draw on the issues emerging from these vignettes to construct a constellation of dialectical concepts through which artistic identities can be interpreted.

Like the research sites and the participants for narrative interview, the vignettes were chosen purposively in order to present a range of different experiences and perspectives obtained from the fieldwork rather than a representative sample (Amin and Graham, 1997; Clayton, 2012). They focus on the particularities of the participants and their stories, necessarily at the expense of more general applicability. They are drawn from a limited sample and should not be considered as representative even of other individuals living and working in the same city districts and/or the same fields of cultural and creative practice. My intention in selecting them has been to do justice to the variety of stories encountered through the research, and to provide illustrative examples of the construction and practice of artistic urban identities and the significance of often changing urban space.

Negative dialectics seeks to challenge the general with the particular, and reveal the truth of their nonidentity (Adorno, 1973). Yet, for Benjamin, 'where knowledge is concerned the most individual is the most general' (Adorno, 1997: 229); not because the particular can ever represent a universal, but because *particularity itself* – the truth of non-identity – *is the general*. By presenting a series of indicative vignettes based on the stories of individual participants, each of which is a particular, partial truth, from specific perspectives (dialectical images to be interpreted), and by arranging these accounts as a constellation, and developing and interpreting (as I do in chapter 8) an understanding of the similarities and differences, contradictions and ambivalences, absences and presences, at work within and between these

accounts, I aim to construct a more general image (itself limited, partial, and transitory) of how artistic urban identities are constructed and understood - and how place is implicated in this process - for people working in CCIs in Newcastle and Hamburg.

While the combination of different types of data a mixed-method approach provides strengthens the validity of qualitative data and can produce a richer picture of phenomena, it is important to remember that, from the Adornian-Benjaminian approach, a search for unity and coherence between and within data sources and different stories is not the intention. The contradictions between people's accounts in interviews and their behaviours under observation, or the differing experiences of the same places by different participants and the researcher, are themselves valuable data-objects; and the remainders, the things left behind, the contradictions and inconsistencies, *are the reality*.

Exploring identities through these various constructions, indeed, following Benjamin, through the surrealism of the mundane and everyday, does not preclude the ability to seek a broader context, only acknowledging the limits of generalisation. As Bourdieu (2008: 2) argued:

the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a "special case of what is possible," as Bachelard puts it, that is, as an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations.

The purpose of the constellation is not to provide an answer to the riddle of nonidentity, but nor is it to deny the possibility of knowledge. In contrast to what Hammersley (2008) refers to as 'Dadaist qualitative research', in which accounts of cultures are *merely* constructions with no

intrinsic connection to an underlying reality, negative dialectics does seek to uncover what lies behind surface appearances of mere phenomena – it merely seeks to emphasize the inconsistencies, contradictions, and transivity of that ‘hidden’ reality and draw attention to the impossibility of achieving complete knowledge of it. Consequently, while no attempt is made here to claim that these stories are in any sense representative of people working in CCIs in the two cities, there are noticeable similarities in the stories and the experiences of these participants, which it is argued offer some insights into some common themes of the relationships between place and identities in postindustrial cities. These are discussed more generally after the vignettes at the end of chapters 6 and 7.

V.4 Reflections on the Research and the Position and Role of the Researcher

V.4.1 Some Reflections on the Research Process

Social research is messy (Mellor, 2001). Although the research was by and large successful, it was certainly not always easy, and many aspects and avenues failed before they got started.

Accessing populations and recruiting participants, perhaps inevitably, was more challenging and took longer than expected. In several instances, participants who had agreed to participate initially later vanished. Others, though very willing, were never available - itself a reflection of the heavy time-involvement of many people working in the cultural and creative industries.

Some of the research populations approached were heavily over-researched. One artist project in Newcastle and the *Gängeviertel* in Hamburg in particular were participating in at least one other research project at the time, and had been the focus of several others before. This meant that, although willing, many potential participants were either too busy or simply too 'research weary' to take part. Not only does this raise a question over evident sampling biases which

favour the exceptional, 'sexy', or perhaps notorious (or just willing) possibly at the expense of the less exceptional majority (Collier and Mahoney, 1996), it should also be taken as a reminder of the ethical responsibilities of research. Even the best-intentioned research risks being exploitative, and it is easy to see how organizations and individuals who have interesting stories to tell and are willing to tell them can easily be taken advantage of as a result of being 'easier' than other cases perhaps requiring greater effort on the part of the researcher. Although I tried, and to some extent succeeded, in going beyond the obvious – and it reflects both the theoretical and methodological strengths of the approach taken in this research that some of the most informative contacts and insightful observations were made from chance encounters in the most unexpected places – I was also guilty of being drawn to some 'obvious targets'.

Although fewer participants were recruited for interview by the end of the fieldwork than had initially been hoped for, it does not jeopardise the value of the data for two reasons: i) the representativeness of narratives is not, in-and-of-itself, a concern, because broad generalization is not an objective of the research; and, ii) because, as a mixed-method project, the interview data, although important, is not the only source of information contributing to the findings. Moreover, the inclusion of ethnographic observations and *Stadtherumgehen* meant that many of the difficulties in accessing and recruiting participants for interviews were themselves valuable opportunities for data-gathering. As Hyndman (2001) argues, in the context of ethnographic research, the field is everywhere. In fact, to lean on a classic, it is a truth not universally acknowledged that, as a practice, social science in general is, at least for those who have undertaken a certain amount of study, an activity in which one is permanently engaged. As a consequence, even fieldwork failures can be opportunities. An interview which gets cancelled at the last minute becomes an opportunity for *Stadtherumgehen* in a hitherto unknown part of the city. Occasions such as this provided not only additional opportunities for data-gathering directly, but additional experience of other, unexplored, parts of the cities, providing new experiences, sights, sounds, and feelings, all of which added to the overall experience of *being in* the urban environment.

The homogeneity of the participants warrants consideration. While no claims of representativeness are made, and were never sought, it is nevertheless significant that the participants represent a narrow population: largely young, predominantly educated, and overwhelmingly white European. While this is in part a consequence of the choice of European cities (the north east of England is particularly ethnically homogenous), it also reflects the position of the research (a white European male), and the methodological approach of sampling through associations (see next section). At the same time, it reflects findings from other studies that have stressed the ethnic (Florida, 2014), social class (Bain, 2005; Jayne, 2016; Wilson and Keil, 2008) (although many participants and CCI workers encountered identified strongly as working class), and gender (Bain, 2004b, 2005; McRobbie, 2002, 2016b; Morgan and Nelligan, 2015) (although this was not evidenced here) distributions of people working in the CCIs and the notable contradiction between a desire for diversity in urban location and a lack of diversity amongst populations.

V.4.2 The Position of the Researcher

All research is a social product, but the emphasis in qualitative research of the validity and trustworthiness of the data means researchers must reflect closely on their activities as researcher, and the way their decisions, presence, and *they themselves* have impacted on the research (O'Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015). As I drew on my own experiences of the urban landscapes in addition to those of the participants as data objects to understand and interpret the cities and the participants' identity practices, my position as researcher was that of both producer and interpreter.

As an educated white British male, I generally occupy a privileged social position. Entering the spaces of participants as researcher also introduces a potential power-dynamic. While this dynamic also exists to some extent, it was offset by the fact that the majority of participants with

whom I interacted, and from whose behaviours and accounts provided the vast majority of the data draw upon here, where themselves, in at least some regards, socially powerful. They were also predominantly white in predominantly white cities, and educated. Although some worked in precarious conditions, in multiple, temporary jobs, some were also often self-employed workers in highly-skilled, liberal, and intermediate occupations, quite familiar with interacting and working with academic researchers and, in some cases, people of far greater social power. Male researchers must, as a rule, also be aware of the potential impact of their presence in female participants' spaces. With this in mind, I was conscious to approach potential respondents first via e-mail or through introduction by another participant. Most encounters – with all participants – took place in public places with other people present, at least in the first instance, and subsequent meetings were always at a place of the participants' choice. Negotiating a research field such as this, rather than being constantly overshadowed by an uneven power dynamic, required a fine-tuned approach to encounters, in which I had to be sensitive to the changing power dynamics with different and sometimes multiple participants in different locations. Moreover, as the research focused on participants' work, stories, and spaces – aspects of life in which they, as independent, educated professionals were unquestionably the experts – they were always, in some regard, the powerful party in research encounters. In addition, the use of ethnographic work and repeated encounters instead of standalone interviews went some way to countering the 'halo effect' (Bryman, 2012).

While my embodied social status potentially influenced the participants willing to talk to me and consequently from whom I could elicit stories, my perspectives – and aesthetic judgements – inevitably played a role in how sites and potential participants were identified. While the aesthetic content of participants' work is of no direct consequence to their experiences of space and identities (although the way it is received more generally potentially has a very significant impact on their success, and consequently on where they live and work and their experiences of both), it did play a role in drawing my attention at exhibitions and art festivals and providing topics of conversation with which to establish connections.

As the research took place in two cities in different countries an inevitable question of national identity entered the research, and the difference with which contacts could be made in Newcastle – my home city – and Hamburg was sometimes significant. Language and culture are particularly significant here. I have North German relatives (some having lived for many years in Hamburg) and can converse in German (although I am far from fluent), which although unnecessary for the most part as the majority of the participants I encountered could speak English to varying degrees (in part an indicator of their educated social position) did facilitate an easier entry into the field in some cases. Perhaps more importantly, however, was the advantage of having some background knowledge of the city and local culture (e.g. food, colloquialisms, local history, politics, and geography). This should be taken alongside Benjamin's insistence on 'getting lost' in cities in order to break free from the familiar. Getting lost in Hamburg was a very different experience to getting lost in Newcastle, but both were illuminating. Even in a relatively small city like Newcastle, the course of the fieldwork – the *Stadtherumgehen* in particular – took me to unknown places. Moreover, wandering even the familiar parts of the city paying attention to experience rather than destination, and 'decoding' landscapes through sense rather than association, did break with familiarity, exposing parts of the urban landscape in ways normally unnoticed. The same practice carried out in Hamburg, where so much was unfamiliar, brought about recognition not only of the very powerful differences in the experience of urban environments, but also, at times, of that which is surprisingly recognizable in the unfamiliar.

V.4.3 A Note on Ethics and Anonymity

Research ethics form an integral part of the practice of social research (Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2014). Ethical approval for the fieldwork involved in this research was obtained from the University of Northumbria Ethics Committee in March 2016, and ethical practices were maintained throughout the research period. As Marvasti (2004, quoted in Silverman, 2014: 155)

has noted, however, ethical practices, particularly concerning issues of informed consent, derive largely from quantitative survey research, where they are, to some extent, more straightforward. While strict principles structuring the design and conduct of research exist, their application in the field, like all aspects of research can be 'messy' (Mellor, 2001), and the relatively static principles upon which ethical research practices are seen to rest, are, as Miller and Boulton (2007) suggest, often inadequate in dealing with the complexities of social reality. In ethnographic work particularly, where the field is everywhere (Hyndman, 2001), and research encounters are not amenable to 'control' by the researcher but emerge in 'everyday' situations. Consequently, in practice, research ethics involve '[striking] balances between the conflicting pressures that inevitably occur in research' (Wiles *et al.*, 2008: §5.6).

In all fieldwork encounters I was open about my presence as a researcher, but in the context of ethnographic fieldwork, these encounters were sometimes too fleeting, or involved too many people, for any real explanation of the research to be given, or formal consent to be obtained. Impressions from encounters such as these contributed to the overall understanding of CCIs and of artists and cultural workers living and working in the cities, but provided no specific, identifying information that could be ethically sensitive. In contrast to the data gathered through simply 'being there', formal informed consent was obtained from participants who agreed to more involved discussions about their work or who were involved in narrative interviews. Participants were provided with an information sheet¹⁷ including details about the project and contact information, and were apprised of their rights as participants and the purposes of the research and likely destinations of the information they chose to share.

The protection of participants' identities through anonymity is a fundamental part of social research, especially in qualitative research where the nature, content, or simple depth of data gathered can be especially sensitive. In the course of carrying out this research, a number of difficulties with anonymity arose. Firstly, as the research populations in some sites are fairly

¹⁷ Available in German or English for participants in Hamburg.

small, and as a consequence of the kinds of work that artists and cultural and creative workers in these sites are involved in, there is a risk of ‘deductive disclosure’ (O’Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015: 55). Omitting a participant’s name but providing a job title, age, or description of work (such as ‘photographer’ or ‘screen printer’) would potentially make many easily identifiable with very little effort; a concern that had to be balanced against the emphasis on the context-specific particularity of the stories (see Tilley and Woodthorpe, 2011). As a consequence, some details and specifics have been omitted from the vignettes in chapters 6 and 7. Secondly, and as McRobbie (2016b) has pointed out, for people working in the CCIs their reputation is often key to their livelihood, and it is often in their interest to have their name spread: time spent establishing their ‘brand-identity’ is well spent. Several participants said they were happy for me to publicize their work and identify them by name,¹⁸ and one participant requested the use of an (abridged and edited) version of our interview for his own publicity material, raising an interesting question about the ‘ownership’ of the co-constructed products of social research.

V.5 Summary

In this chapter I have provided a discussion of the philosophical and methodological issues which underpin this research. I have discussed the negative dialectics of Adorno, which I have argued provides an appropriate epistemological and methodological approach to research into identity particularly appropriate for exploring the practices of identity construction and performance. I have discussed the methodological issues surrounding the practice of ‘light ethnography’ and narrative interviews in geographical research, and, inspired by Benjamin’s ‘urban encounters’, I have made a case for the use of *Stadtherumgehen* as a method of experiencing the urban environment in geographical research.

¹⁸ Because doing this could potentially compromise the anonymity of other participants, all participant names used in this thesis are pseudonyms.

In the next two chapters I present six illustrative vignettes based on the fieldwork discussed here. In these vignettes I seek to set out particular, context-dependent accounts from cultural and creative workers drawing out illustrative aspects of their constructions of artistic identity, their experiences of work in the CCIs in Newcastle and Hamburg, and the significance of (often changing) postindustrial urban spaces. These six stories, understood as particular, limited, partial perspectives, taken together, make up a dialectical image, which I then interpret through a constellation of dialectical concepts in chapter 8.

Chapter VI: Postindustrial Identities in the Cultural and Creative Industries I: Newcastle

VI.1 Introduction

In this chapter I recount the three vignettes, or stories, from Newcastle upon Tyne. I begin by providing a very brief and selective introduction to the city in order to provide background context for the stories that follow. I then present the three vignettes: Grace, David, and Christopher, whose stories I attempt to situate within this urban context. Although out of necessity there are some reflections and discussions in these vignettes, the purpose is to recount participants' stories and allow significant themes and ambivalences to emerge rather than discuss their implications more broadly, which I do in the discussion in chapter 8. The chapter concludes by drawing out some of the most significant themes emerging from the vignettes and Newcastle fieldwork more generally.

VI.1.1 The Newcastle-Gateshead Question

It is important to acknowledge an analytical ambiguity concerning the terms of definition regarding some of the discussions and statistics in this chapter. Newcastle and Gateshead are distinct areas separated by the river Tyne and administered by separate local authorities (Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council). They are historically separate towns, with obviously interconnected, yet distinct histories and identities. However, since 2000, and the creation of the NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI), a public-private partnership which markets

the city-region at a national and international level, and the regeneration of the quayside, the distinction in terms of marketing and branding (particularly in terms of the cultural economy and identity of the area) of the two parts of the conurbation has been blurred (see Miles, 2005).¹⁹ The location of two of the major cultural institutions (the BAL TIC Centre for Contemporary Art and the Sage Gateshead music centre) in Gateshead on the south side of the river, as well as the iconic Millennium Bridge,²⁰ which obviously is located in both authorities, further served to blur the distinction.²¹ As a result of the prominence of the NGI as a source of information on the CCIs, and the *Entgrenzung* between Newcastle and Gateshead in terms of its material, cultural, and symbolic landscapes, a significant amount of available information on the CCIs treats Newcastle-Gateshead as a single – unproblematic – entity. Where this is the case, I have endeavoured to make it clear whether the data refer to Newcastle alone or Newcastle and Gateshead collectively. More pertinently, however, the distinction between the two varied amongst the participants I spoke to: some made a point of distinguishing between them, sometimes only at certain times or for particular purposes, others made no distinction at all. This in itself is a significant insight into the evolving identities of place and the significance of place-branding to (re)construct and (re)place particular identities and discourses of place.

VI.2 Cultural and Creative Industries in Newcastle-Gateshead

Cultural and creative work is by no means a recent development to Newcastle. As a centre for the arts (particularly theatrical) and culture it has a history going back to the construction of the

¹⁹ It was Newcastle-Gateshead that made a bid to be European Capital of Culture 2008, and Newcastle-Gateshead that won and hosted the Great Exhibition of the North in 2018.

²⁰ Although this is significant, it is worth remembering that the phenomenon is not new - the original (and arguably still most famous) iconic Newcastle architecture is the Tyne Bridge which - no less than the Millennium Bridge - has one foot in Newcastle and one in Gateshead.

²¹ The use of these three iconic pieces of architecture in promotional materials for Newcastle is often a particular bugbear of local (especially Gateshead) residents.

first Theatre Royal in 1788, and the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1793. Alongside the more traditional industrial manufacturing that characterized the city and the region throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the city was noted for innovation in engineering and technology, as well as highly specialised and creative production of glass and metal wares. In the years following the rapid deindustrialization of the city and surrounding region in the latter half of the 20th century, a number of artists collective emerged in the city. Influenced by the collectivist social and political movements of the 1960s, the collectivist response to modernism (Stimson and Sholette, 2007) and the ‘artistic critique of capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005) organizations such as Live Theatre and the Amber Film Collective influenced a grass-roots cultural renaissance which fuelled the development of a ‘new’ cultural economy in the city, and ‘imprinting’, as Hollands and Vail (2015) put it, a culture of collective arts and artistic resistance in the city (see Hollands and Vail, 2012, 2015 and Vail and Hollands, 2012). Since the 1990s, cultural and creative work has formed an increasing part of the postindustrial economy of the city, and the postindustrial development of Newcastle-Gateshead since the beginning of the 21st century is frequently cited as an example of successful culture-led urban regeneration (Jones and Evans, 2008; Miles, 2005).

Recent surveys suggest that there are around 11,175 people working in the cultural and creative sector in Newcastle and Gateshead in 1,989 companies; comprising around 4% of the jobs in the city (Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi, 2016). Having grown 22.6% between 2001 and 2015, higher than the national average of 19.5% (Creative Fuse North East, 2017), the CCI sector in Newcastle, despite being small when compared nationally, is an area of high economic growth (Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi, 2016), generally seen as punching above its weight (Blackwell, 2015; EKOS, 2012).

Most of the jobs and businesses identified as part of Newcastle’s CCIs are in the software and digital sector (Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi, 2016), particularly in computer games design (Blackwell, 2015), but the city is also notable for its music and performing arts, advertising, and

design sectors (EKOS, 2012; Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi, 2016). There is considerable production overlap between the industrial and the postindustrial work in Newcastle-Gateshead, as historically significant industries, such as glass and pottery production, feature prominently in the contemporary creative sector (Comunian and England, 2018).

Although recent efforts at the cultural rebranding of the city have tended to promote the high profile cultural institutions of the BALTIC, the Sage and the Theatre Royal, the city has also developed a reputation around its always prominent night-time economy (Byrne and Wharton, 2004; Hollands and Chatterton, 2002), and alongside both traditional pubs and newer bars, the city is developing a notable restaurant scene, with fine dining eateries and restaurants becoming more frequent features. Nevertheless, there remains ambivalence in the 'kind' of culture the city offers and how, and to whom, it is (re)presented. As Peter, an employee of the city council involved in the department responsible for culture, put it: there are 'two Newcastles' – the official, formal one, which is used in city marketing and is encouraged by the council, and the other, unofficial and informal culture of the city, characterized by the night-time economy of drinking, dancing, and stag and hen parties, etc. These different cultures, it is assumed, appeal to different groups of people (different audiences), yet the spatial *entgrenzung* of the city means that they often inhabit either the same or adjacent spaces. In deference to its reputation as a 'party city', a significant amount of investment in postindustrial Newcastle has been in the night-time economy, which is increasingly dominated by a smaller number of national corporations (Hollands and Chatterton, 2002). The generic night-time 'culture' offered by these corporations, Byrne and Wharton (2004) argue, far from representing the industrial working class culture and local identity on which Newcastle's fame as a cultural city was built, is aimed at the rising service-class created by 'the networked society of global helots' (*ibid.*: 192): of which cultural and creative workers increasingly make up a part.

VI.2.1 Stories from Newcastle

The stories reported here belong to three cultural and creative workers who live and work in Newcastle. Two of the participants (Grace and David) work in the Ouseburn area of the city, although in very different sites. The experiences and identity practices of all three draw on both similarities and differences arising from their particular engagements with the city's history, its cultural economy, and its identity. Their stories are shaped by the particularities of their work, their needs and experiences of urban space, and their interpretations of their artistic practices and how they relate to Newcastle.

Grace's story touches on a number of familiar themes, including aesthetic space and gentrification, which she relates directly to her practices of identification through what she calls a 'cultural crisis' in the identity of artists. Despite the contradictions she sees in the cultural economy, her solution is not in further separating the cultural from the economic, but in seeing them as complementary.

David's story includes similar themes to Grace's as he too places a high premium on the aesthetics of space, but in a different way. His understanding of urban transformations and their impacts on his practices of identification reflect his view of artistic work as inherently 'dirty' and risky, and his struggles to combine his aesthetic values and identity as a creative person with the practical, everyday concerns of securing space and income.

Christopher's story presents a different experience of the significance of place for cultural and creative work in the city in which the history of Newcastle and its relationship to other parts of the region play a greater role. His story highlights the variety of ways in which experiences of space and place and their histories can impact on the cultural landscape of both cities and artistic identities.

VI.3 Grace's Story: Gentrification and Rebellion

Grace is an artist working in the Ouseburn, the part of Newcastle most renowned for artists and CCIs. While her story is certainly unique, it is also familiar, and her construction of artistic identity highlights many themes which reappeared frequently in participant's accounts – particularly those from within the Ouseburn.

The area around the Ouseburn and its valley has come to be considered a success story for the cultural regeneration of the city of Newcastle and, by some, as the jewel in the crown of the cultural and creative economy and 'scene' of the North East. Recent journalism (see, for example, Dyckhoff, 2018; Emms, 2009; Kelly, 2018) sings the praises of the former industrial area, described as 'the pumping heart of the north-east's creative economy, rescued from postindustrial dankness' (Dyckhoff, 2018), and the 'Shoreditch of Newcastle' (Dyckhoff, 2018; Kelly, 2018; see also BNG, 2007). Until the 1990s, the area of the Ouseburn Valley, situated about a mile east of the city centre and next to the historically deprived social housing estates of Shieldfield and Byker, was one of the most neglected parts of the city. During the city's industrial heyday from the late 1700s until the 1930s, the Ouseburn Valley had been alive with industries such as glass-making, lime works, slaughterhouses and various others; the Ouseburn itself had provided a busy transport route to and from the city, and the Victoria Tunnel (reopened as a historical and cultural attraction in 2008) facilitated the transport of coal from Leazes Quarry to the quayside. The area suffered badly from deindustrialization, and by the 1960s most of the buildings and surviving houses were abandoned or left derelict. The purchase of the Cluny Bonded Warehouse in 1983, a former flax mill built in 1848 and designed by renowned local architect John Dobson, and its designation as a space for community-led artists' studios marked the beginning of the influx of artists and cultural and creative producers to the

valley (see Figure 6.1). Since then, as Whiting and Hannam (2017: 324) suggest, ‘an increase in both public and private funding in the area [led] to a raft of new developments aimed at encouraging leisure and cultural consumption’, which has catalysed CCI growth and development in the area. Many more buildings have become home to artists’ collectives and cultural and creative enterprises, and in recent years the long-established public houses have been joined by independent coffee shops, cafés, breweries, and various small craft and specialist shops. The Ouseburn area boasts a number of art galleries and studios (including the Biscuit Factory, the UK’s largest independent commercial gallery), a cinema, as well as a vibrant local music scene, including rehearsal space, recording studios, and two of the city’s most significant independent music venues that regularly attract national and international acts. The children’s book centre Seven Stories is located in Ouseburn, as are a number of design and marketing enterprises, as well as a farm, stables, and a number of garages, which give the area an additional level of diversity, and, along with the 18th and 19th century industrial buildings and extant artefacts such as the flax chimney, an ever-present reminder of the area’s (and the city’s) industrial past.

Walking down the Ouseburn Valley is like stepping out of the city and into a parallel world. Past the back of a brick warehouse, and down a street too narrow at the corners really for cars, next to a building site slowly growing accommodation blocks for students, the sweet and heady smell of frying garlic and aromatics from the back of a bistro’s kitchen get lost in the smell of oil and hot engines; the mechanical sounds and shouts fading into the background when you turn a corner and pass a delicate patisserie. The hum of beer garden chatter and woodworking clatter - and, across the bridge, a farm – gives the valley a busy, eclectic vibrancy: things are happening here, in this intermingling of past and present – making, breaking, drinking, lazing, reading, printing, riding, living. (Research Diary, 7th September 2016)

Figure 6.1 Lime Street, where the purchase of the Cluny Bonded Warehouse in 1983 marked the beginning of the movement of artists and cultural producers to the Valley under the shadow of the 18th century flax chimney.



VI.3.1 Identity and Everyday Aesthetics

Grace identifies herself as an artist, having originally studied fine art and photography; but, like many other cultural and creative workers, works in a variety of fields, particularly as a designer and, recently, jewellery maker. Born in mainland Europe, she lived in Sweden for several years before moving to Newcastle after spending a few weeks in London. As a well-travelled seeker of cultural experiences, Grace, in part, fits Florida's description of the cosmopolitan creative class; but, unlike Florida's creative elite, she does not enjoy (nor does she particularly seek) the economic success or security of Florida's heroes of the creative economy. Like many respondents, Grace subsidizes her artistic work with additional, often 'non-creative' jobs. She works in a café, is trying to establish a creative business, and has been considering (and applied for) postgraduate study at university. Working multiple jobs is a common experience for people working as artists (Bain, 2004a, 2005; Bain and McLean, 2012; Banks *et al.*, 2017; McRobbie, 2002, 2016a; Taylor and Littleton, 2012); Bain (2005) has suggested that because of the cultural

differences between 'art' and 'work', particularly around the different forms of value (aesthetic rather than economic), that this can cause a conflict of identity, where artists feel compromised by engaging in 'mainstream' work (see also Becker, 1991). Although this was occasionally evident, the attitudes expressed by most participants working in both artistic and non-artistic jobs were often more subtle. As Grace explained:

'To me it is only a conflict in terms of time available. ... If I have to do more of waiting tables and running a business than I can do ... uh, being creative ... then I feel I'm compromising and wasting my time. ... I'm surrendering my life to earning money ... that's the only conflict I have. As an identity, I don't mind waiting tables, I don't mind doing what it takes to get the money to do what I want to do.'

For Grace, identity as an artist is about more than simply the activity of art. Art is a form of inquiry: consequently, being an artist is about asking questions about - and living - a fulfilling life. Grace explains how, for her, the practice of art and this spirit of questioning are at the forefront of her identity, and something which sets her apart from the traditional or mainstream.

'I think ... first and foremost ... it is the connection ... to the joy ... that ... happens ... when you create things ... we're all familiar with that. ... But then, very quickly, it also comes about the sense of identity as a rebel. ... Because I have to answer all those difficult questions ... and I have to live with those difficult questions ... and it is part of my identity that I dare to do that.'

Like many respondents, she sees an artistic identity as a kind of calling; one which draws her towards a certain lifestyle in many ways antithetical to the traditional or mainstream.

'[I]t is not possible for me ... to just fall into the flow of things ... and become just somebody who makes a little bit of money and has a place in our society, ... I have to ask myself what makes me happy. ... And, er, ... yeah, ... making things and looking at things that other people made makes me happy.'

Practising a life like this is not easy: much like the 'pioneering spirit' and 'frontier mentality' (Smith, 1979) that Bain (2003) identified in attracting artists to 'edgy' neighbourhoods, part of Grace's identity (as *daring* to live an artistic life) is constructed from the challenges such a life brings.

'You know, like ... my mother was asking me, "but you know that, that you're not going to make any money, and it's going to be a tough life," and I'm like, "yep, and I'm doing it anyway!" ... So there is sense of ... dignity and moral fibre in that, ... you know, I'm making a difficult choice ... but ... I feel like more of a human being for it, ... so it's invigorating!'

While her narrative is far from that of a *bon vivant* aesthete, aesthetics form an important part of Grace's identity practices. She seeks objects and experiences which complement this idea of the beautiful, and in describing her choice of living and working in Newcastle, the aesthetics of place feature prominently.

Grace's decision to move to Newcastle rather than remain in London involved striking a balance between aesthetic and practical considerations. *'I'm always looking for culture,'* Grace explains:

'is there a contemporary art museum? ... is there a big gallery? ... I look on Facebook, is there anything happening ... you know? ... And then I, I match that to my purchasing ability. ... Like, can I afford to pay the rent here? ... So it's always a balance between those two things.'

For Grace, Newcastle - and the Ouseburn in particular - satisfies not only the necessary (and specifically urban) balance between cultural provision and affordability, but, the need for a strong cultural scene with a strong community of artists.

Grace works in a former industrial building given converted into artists' studios. It is run as a collective, who lease the building from its owner, who keeps rents well below market value out of a commitment to supporting local arts. In addition to their rents, occupants are permitted to make alterations to their space as required, and are responsible, collectively, for maintaining or renovating the building. For Grace, being in space which is tied to the history of the valley is an important part of the aesthetic appeal of the place, and the ability of artists to fashion spaces in their own way is, for Grace, as much about preserving the character of the Ouseburn as it is about *'having established spaces for practice ... and fostering a culture of creativity'*.

Figure 6.2 Art and creative businesses nestled in the arches of the Byker Bridge crossing Ouseburn.



Figure 6.3 Public art installations by local artists, such as a trail of bottles – part of Lewis Robinson's *Waymarkers* – feature throughout the Ouseburn Valley.



'I think we need protected buildings that are there specifically for creative activities,' Grace argues, but the importance of artistic space goes beyond the need for studio space: it is an essential part of the culture of the local socio-spatial environment:

'not only for specific individuals, like this building where we all have our own studios ... but probably buildings that ... allow people to come in and do workshops ... for the public.'

For Grace, the everyday aesthetics of art as a mode of inquiry is not only inseparable from her own practices of identity, but also from a belief that artistic and cultural production and consumption should be intermingled with everyday life (Figures 6.2 and 6.3). These attitudes of an everyday aesthetic are paralleled in the spatial bricolage of the Ouseburn, which, in its seemingly unplanned and effortless – yet in many ways markedly self-conscious – way, exhibits a particular image of 21st century postindustrial urban life: where artists and artisans rub shoulders with professionals and students, and formerly industrial workshops become studios, bars, and family-friendly heritage attractions.

While the Ouseburn is a successfully established eclectic community generating the kind of aesthetic Grace looks for, the creation of this particular kind of artistic aesthetic generates the familiar contradiction of artistic urban living: gentrification.

VI.3.2 Gentrification: The Contradiction of Artistic Space

While much is celebrated of Ouseburn's success as a cultural and creative quarter, and the Ouseburn Trust have made consistent efforts to live up to their mission of retaining the heritage of the area, Ouseburn's revitalization is not without ambivalences and contradictions (Whiting and Hannam, 2017). Developers have been keen to invest in the area (which is becoming

increasingly sought-after and expensive) particularly as sites for student accommodation (see Figure 6.4), which has become one of the biggest areas for investment in the city. Grace, like others, is keenly aware of this creeping transformation.

'[W]e are experiencing ... um ... an invasion ... of student accommodation. ... And, er ... as, as an artists' collective slash building, we are very sceptical towards it ... Because we see developers come in ... er, take down historical buildings ... [...] And they build buildings without any respect for the ecology of the place ... I don't mean only nature but also the ecology of people. ... Um ... I don't think they build sustainably either, ... they put them up very quickly, ... they are not, ... beautiful buildings that make residents around happy for many years to come, you know, ... they seem to be, er ... things to turn around quick profit.'

Figure 6.4 Student accommodation block on edges of Ouseburn.



The 'success' of the Ouseburn as a marketable commodity for the city is, at least in part, in tension with its success as a community-led regeneration project. While the presence of artists' collectives and cultural and creative enterprises has brought new life to a largely abandoned part of the city, the area, in large part because of the community and environment the now established artists' groups have created, but also because of the use of the Ouseburn 'brand' in the city's marketing strategies, is becoming attractive to outside investment, which, from Grace's perspective, threatens the character and the sustainability of the area.

'[T]he problem might become that the area becomes more popular ... we have a new bike shop slash ... er, bar opening ... here we have a micro brewery just opened there ... we have another restaurant slash pottery [...] opening. ... So, there's a lot of things happening, a lot of places are opening, and they are popular, and then they are thriving, and that means more people will come to the area, and ... we are worried that the rents will go up and we will not be able rent in this.'

Like many artists and cultural and creative workers I encountered, Grace is familiar with the phenomenon and discussions of cultural regeneration and gentrification: *'what we're worried about is the raise of the rents,'* she explains. She sees the changes to the material, cultural, and symbolic landscape of the Ouseburn as evidence of a growing tendency, supported by the economic and political culture of the council, to place short-term economic benefit above the long-term culture and sustainability of places that artists and cultural and creative producers need, and on which Ouseburn has developed and thrived.

'[As an artist] you come in because there's a certain vibe, there's that certain interest ... people see how they can exploit that, they start

exploiting it ... and by doing that they kill the culture. And then there's nothing left.'

This exploitation of the Ouseburn's aesthetic appeal repeats a familiar pattern and represents, as many respondents echoed, an 'existential threat' to the artists and cultural and creative producers in the Ouseburn (Hodgkinson, 2016). For Grace, and others, the turnover of (especially creative) businesses in the Valley makes visible a contradiction between the discourse prominent in marketing materials that claims to support cultural and creative work in the Ouseburn and Newcastle in general, with the actual conditions of the cultural economy in which these businesses exist.

'I see more and more shops closing and opening, ... so I think there's a great, ... flow of businesses, ... but they don't seem to be sustainable ... because they still keep closing. But there's an eagerness for people to do their thing ... be active ... invest money ... but perhaps not a very good climate for it.'

The climate Grace refers to is in part the economic climate created by the UK government's policy of austerity (Rushton and Donovan, 2018), which has meant the city council has less financial power and, consequently, as Peter (a key informant working for the council) mentioned, has meant the council having to '*reshape the economic model that we operate on*' while its role has shifted from direct funding of cultural organization towards '*identifying gaps ... either in provision or engagement*'. However, the climate Grace identifies goes beyond the economic consequences of austerity, and concerns what she sees as a cultural crisis concerning the identity and value of art and artists.

VI.3.3 The Cultural Crisis of Art and Artistic Identities

When Grace describes the cultural climate in which artistic and cultural and creative work takes place, she questions the value of art (and by extension artists) in a society in which culture and the production of art is increasingly commodified, and art and cultural commodities are viewed only in instrumental or economic terms. This ambivalence is not merely one of personal identification, but is connected to questions of social value, culture in general, and the purpose and place of art in postindustrial capitalist society.

'[T]here is this ... cultural crisis, I think, ... in the identity of an artist. ... Because ... artists have been questioned for their ... usefulness ... in a way ... within society. ... And there is a trend ... [for governments/funders] to spend the money on [...] socially-engaged art. ... Which, I think, tends to turn the art away from ... inquiry ... into, say, entertainment. ... So, we are seeing less art that is interested in ... philosophical questions ... and, sort of, inquiries about the nature of art itself, or the nature of human existence, whatever. ... And ... so, it's been watered down because of this. ... And the artists are being constantly questioned, like, "what's, why are you doing this? ... what's the use of you?" basically. ... And that creates, a ... a crisis of identity ... you're not allowed to do ... what you feel like doing, there is no resources, or ... erm ... sort of support for you ... unless you're doing a specific type of art, which is socially-engaged art, at the moment.'

Grace's concern is, ultimately, with the instrumental use of art to promote, or disguise, the interests and injustices of capitalism. She takes issue with 'socially-engaged art' not because it shouldn't be done, or because it doesn't count as art – she is adamant that it is very important and valuable – but rather that what she sees as the almost exclusive promotion and funding of

art which can be passed off, justified, or marketed as 'socially-engaged' at the expense of that which is 'interested in philosophical questions' denies art the freedom of social criticism that gives it its unique quality - what Adorno (1997) referred to as *Kulturkritik*.

The conflict between art as philosophical inquiry and its instrumental (and economic) use affects Grace on a personal, existential level, both in terms of subsistence and as part of her practices of identification:

'It makes it very difficult to justify for myself, for my family and for my friends ... why I'm an artist ... why I want to be an artist. ... Because, they ask me how I'm going to pay the rent ... you know? ... And, then I also ask myself ... because there is no inherent value in ... philosophical inquiry, artistic inquiry ... in and of itself ... as it's not seen as a valuable pursuit ... so I ask myself, "do I have the right to apply for funding? ... Is it a worthwhile spend of the money?" ... So, it kind of turns back on me, and creates this anxiety that I'm actually not worthy of society's support ... and, in fact, I'm being constantly asked to justify why it is I want to do this.'

This cultural crisis of identity for artists is not 'merely' part of an aesthetic project of self, however, but is inseparable from very *material* considerations affecting the ability to do cultural and creative work and the places required to do it. The artists' collective to which Grace belongs is based in a listed building that is in need of potentially very costly renovations, in order to maintain their spaces and community by acquiring funding (such as from the Arts Council), or charitable status, the artists must create for themselves an identity - to define themselves in a way - that is compatible with the expectation (or demand) of art and artists to be 'socially useful'.

As Grace puts it:

'[W]e have to define how we are useful ... as a group, [...] without compromising what it is we are about, which is ... er ... creating a community of artists with affordable spaces to work. ... But that is not [seen as of benefit] to society, it's benefitting the artists themselves, [...] people don't seem to see that having the artists in the area is what has brought all these developments in to begin with, ... and ... that's what also allows us to create those festivals that bring in the tourists. ... Being an artist in itself is not ... a valuable thing. So we have to justify it in some other terms.'

Difficulties such as these, which manifest particularly at the spatial level, are inherent in a climate in which art and artists are 'valued' predominantly or even exclusively in directly economic terms. The challenges of resolving art and an artistic lifestyle with the demands of a postindustrial (and increasingly cultural) economy forces cultural and creative workers like Grace into precarious situations, in which it is often the (unrealized) value of the buildings or space(s) in which artists work that becomes their biggest obstacle.

While Grace keenly feels the contradictions between relying on artists to fuel the cultural revitalization of the city and valuing them in exclusively economic terms, she does not hold that culture and economy are incompatible: on the contrary, she sees them as mutually reinforcing, particularly in the context of Newcastle's identity as a city of culture.

VI.3.4 The Compatibility of Culture and Economy

When she talks about the identity and culture of Newcastle, Grace, like several others, invokes the (in)famous credentials of Newcastle as a 'party city', suggesting that the (working class) culture of the city remains vibrant not in the cultural institutions, but in the lived culture of going out. Newcastle, Grace suggests, is famous for going out, for its nightlife; and '*all this night-culture [...] attracts, er ... for example, entertainment ... musicians ... er, chefs*', which bolsters the cultural and creative landscape of the city.

In linking the culture of the city to its vibrant nightlife, Grace echoes a sentiment expressed by a key informant at the council, that, culturally speaking, there are 'two Newcastles': an 'official culture' identified with iconic institutions such as the Theatre Royal and the Sage that is associated with traditional middle-class ideas of culture and widely promoted, and an 'unofficial culture' of stag and hen weekends, football, and heavy drinking.

Rather than seeing these two images as conflicting (and again displaying the complexity and ambivalence involved separating culture from the economy), Grace suggests that these seemingly contradictory identities can be complementary, and beneficial to cultural and creative work in the city, particularly in terms of space.

As she puts it,

'I think the common element there is entertainment. ... Culture and night-life has the same purposes - to entertain. It just entertains different tastes and different requirements. But, because it is the same purpose, it will already have the facilities ... so there are rooms for hire that artists can hire for exhibitions, or performances, for example ... er, there are people who want to ... say, look good ... so there will be people buying accessories, so I, as an artist, I can start making accessories as well as ... I think that's, kind of the commonality. ... So, the attracting of people for the nightlife

will attract also ... or create also ... the foundations ... that the creatives can use as well.'

For Grace, it is clear that supporting the cultural and creative work in the city is best served not by opposing culture and the economy, but by further integrating them:

'[P]eople are coming into town already ... why not provide them ... with ... entertainment ... and involve the creatives in the area in that entertainment.'

In seeking to lay a path between the artistic life she wants to live and the pressures to embrace the economics of the cultural economy, Grace has been trying to establish a creative business which will allow her to combine her creative self with *'a more applied financial model where I can actually produce something that is more palatable, like jewellery'*. This is an attempt to *'ease into the structure,'* in a way that, she says, is more readily understandable. This is about justifying art and an artistic identity: unlike the pressure to justify 'art', Grace says, *'Nobody asks me, "Why do you make jewellery?"'*

Despite her belief that art and economy can be mutually-reinforcing, Grace has struggled to combine the instrumental, economic logic of business with the values and practices of artistic production fundamental to her everyday aesthetic.

'[I]t's a constant struggle for me, as someone who wants to run a business. [...] there is a constant clash [...] if you go to a course, and learn about businesses, if you read an article that ... talks about promotion, or ... finances, or whatever, whatever, whatever ... constantly ... you're assaulted with ... er, 9 to 5 psychology. [...] But, ... as a human being, I feel guilty if I

don't put in those hours ... I'm not worth my place in this society if I just don't work hard enough ... and that's driven by profit only ... not by wellbeing, not by our learning and progression as human beings, not by kindness and how good we are, not by the community ... only profit.'

VI.3.5 Summary

Grace's story provides a number of important insights into artistic identities in Newcastle, in particular the importance of everyday aesthetics to the construction of an artistic identity, and the difficulty of maintaining these aesthetics in light of urban transformation. For Grace, and many other participants, the concerns over the transformation of urban space, particularly through gentrification, play a significant role in the experiences of people working in Newcastle's CCIs, compromising not only the aesthetic of places like the Ouseburn, but artists' access to spaces at all.

Grace's artistic identity is heavily influenced by often romantic notions of individuality and social rebellion, but while she confesses to getting a thrill out of challenging the status quo, she does not entirely reject mainstream ideas of artists and CCIs, instead seeking to integrate them with her own aesthetic values.

At the core of Grace's story is the idea of a 'cultural crisis' in the identity of artists. While artistic, cultural and creative occupations are celebrated as pioneers in the postindustrial economy, and 'creativity' lionized as a champion virtue, Grace's experiences suggest the exact opposite. For her, being an artist means constantly struggling not only for material requirements such as affordable space to work, but for validation in her occupational and lifestyle choices. This crisis is particularly felt at the spatial level, as she and the other artists with whom she shares a building face mounting pressure to justify themselves, and measure their performance according to traditional economic standards, often at the expense of their aesthetic values.

Like many participants in Newcastle and Hamburg, Grace juggles both 'creative' and 'non-creative' jobs in seeking an income to support her artistic work. Despite the difficulties she continues to experience in reconciling the conflicting demands of the critical artistic practice she values and the expectations and demands of running a business, Grace maintains that the two fields are ultimately compatible.

VI.4 David's Story: Uncertainty and Choice

David also works in the Ouseburn Valley, but his experiences, his artistic practice, and his story – while sharing certain important elements – are quite different to Grace's. As in Grace's story, the gentrification of Ouseburn and its impact on the area's spatial and cultural atmosphere is a prominent feature, but it is understood and experienced in a different way reflecting the differences between Grace and David's respective artistic practices and artistic identities. Risk and uncertainty are recurring motifs in David's story, as well as also indicates an alternative, and equally ambiguous, approach to engaging with dialectic of art and economy focusing on separation rather than resolution.

VI.4.1 Creative Spaces, Community, and Dirt

David is a furniture maker. Crammed into his workshop in a prefabricated building (similar to that shown in Figure 6.5) with probably more machines than the space is fully comfortable with, and enshrined in a din of grinding and wailing and the smell of hot metal and sawdust, David, in his well-worn overalls, is in his element. *'I'd be doing this anyway,'* he explains, *'if it wasn't my job, I'd be doing this in a shed, just making shavings'.*

Figure 6.5 Pop-up workshops and prefabricated buildings make temporary use of space in various locations around Ouseburn.



David's workshop, where he works with one apprentice, is a little way from the consumer centre at the end of Lime Street. There are artists' studios, restaurants, and other creative enterprises nearby, as well as units occupied by trades and construction. Across the road, a building site works busily on another block of student accommodation. David has moved premises several times in recent years, and, in response to changes in both the area and his own approach to his life and work, is now reluctantly considering moving out of the valley to a different ('non-creative') part of the city.

David moved to Newcastle when he came back from New Zealand. After dropping out of a Fine Art degree when he realized it really wasn't for him, and drifting through a series of unrewarding service-sector jobs, he went to New Zealand to get out and see the world, where, as he describes it, he fell into working as a pattern maker, building models for kayaks. Although

he describes the work as routine and industrial rather than creative, this experience proved formative for David's subsequent trajectory:

'that sort of gave me that drive to really enjoy making stuff again ... but I realized that ... y'know it was a good lifestyle there, but ... not really much money in it'.

Reflecting on his decision to move to Newcastle when he returned to the UK, David describes how visiting his brother, who lived in Newcastle, gave David an impression of the city, and the Ouseburn in particular, which really appealed:

'this was 2005 ... um ... there was a really good feel ... y'know, the Ouseburn was sort of ... in its prime, you know, it was ... it was great ... it still had that sort of ... dirtiness to it. ... A lot of the studios that are quite established now were setting up ... y'know, or in talks about setting up, and people were quite excited about it [...] there was money flowing ... um, y'know, ... people were probably buying art and craft and, y'know ... getting back into that ... people ... people had spare cash to support it, I guess ... so this, ... this area, I think, in particular was flourishing. ... And I met a lot of friends who were in that ... in that field ... and then when I came back it just ... seemed that Newcastle was a sensible place ... to come to'.

The 'dirtiness' David refers to is an important aspect of his aesthetic judgement of place. For David, creative spaces and places are far from the trendy coffee shops and informal working spaces typically associated with creative cities: rather, like his work, they are dirty, noisy places of material production. Unlike other participants, David does not see the aesthetic value of place

as something independent from its material function: it is beautiful *because* it is dirty; it is dirty because it is a place of production. Nevertheless, the fact that the Ouseburn offers both 'dirty' workshops and trendy bars and coffee shops is essential to the atmosphere David values. In fact, the great appeal of somewhere like Ouseburn is in the hybrid character of the place, and the diversity of the community that such places support.

Figure 6.6 Detail from building in Ouseburn.



David is largely self-taught, and has acquired his skills gradually as he has moved through various jobs. A strong sense of independence runs through his construction of identity, which is juxtaposed with his emphasis on being 'part of a community', and being around like-minded, 'creative people', which is an essential component of the kind of creative space David desires: reinforcing his identity as a creative person, and providing a source of inspiration.

'sometimes that creativity, when you go to an industrial estate ... can get lost [...] 'cos you're surrounded by people who maybe don't appreciate ... your side of things, y'know, it's very ... traditional, um, ... trading estate mentality, unfortunately, ... which isn't necessarily that creative so, ... yeah, that would be a shame to kind of have to move out there'.

David has moved premises several times in recent years – searching for suitable space and then moving on as his need for space has increased. One of the great things about Newcastle, he suggests, is that *'there's lots of these studios dotted around ... it's almost like a little incubation period, y'know ... the Ouseburn, I think, you can kind of pick your level'*. The flexibility offered by many of these studio spaces for short-term, flexible leases makes it easy for people in situations like David's to adapt easily to the demands of his work and the changing context, although, as he goes on to suggest, the availability of such spaces is under threat.

David's identity as an artist/maker mixes several sometimes contradictory ideas about art, creativity, and the significance of cultural and creative work. As may be expected from the nature of his work, he does not draw a great distinction between art and industry, and consequently rejects stereotypical attitudes towards artists and creative workers:

'I think a lot of people who are in creative industries ... y'know, the dream of ... sort of being ... y'know, [affects posh, camp, airy voice] ... like this lovely lifestyle were you come in and drink artisan coffee, and you know you just fuck about ... [returning to normal voice] Everyone would love that ... it would be brilliant, wouldn't it? You know, you'd be living the dream ... But, unfortunately, I think everyone comes to the realization, I

think quite soon, that you ... that, y'know, you need to make money to support your lifestyle'.

He rejects the (rather Floridian) image of the creative industries as soft, emphasizing instead the hard, and often physically-demanding, work it can be (Mayer, 2014). At the same time, David talks about how the (bohemian) lifestyle of artists and cultural and creative producers, often reliant on benefits in order to pursue artistic ends, had, until fairly recently, been an important part of the creative 'scene':

'that's what used to uphold a lot of creatives, y'know, like ... the dole system ... the stereotypical ... living on the dole, living in a squat, being an artist, y'know, that's becoming really hard to do now, y'know, ... like ... y'know, it used to be you could sign on to your dole and you could go and live in Thailand for three months, and just ... there was this lifestyle to it almost, y'know'.

The loss of this kind of lifestyle (or the systems of welfare which enabled it), David sees as a loss not just for those living this kind of life, but for society in general. In stark contradiction to his attitudes towards art and creative work as not dissimilar to any other business, David identifies a significant separation between the *cultures* of art and business themselves.

David argues that the benefits system should provide for these kinds of creative lifestyles, because creative work and the ability to pursue it *'is the soul of our society'*: a point that commercial interests, as well as academic and political accounts of the CCIs, often fail to appreciate. This creativity, David suggests, not only underlies the creativity underpinning the

wider economy, but also has a value greater than mere economy, entitling it, and its practitioners, to particular treatment.

This ambivalent relationship between art and economy is expressed in various ways in David's account, and is especially significant for David's understanding of the aesthetics and culture of space.

VI.4.2 'Where the magic happens': Risk, Gentrification, and Branding

Unlike a number of respondents, for whom identity as an artist was closely tied to a deep urge or calling which drove them to work, David's narrative is rather more contingent; although his passion for his work is none the less for it. Starting with the 'epiphany moment' at a wood fair which first roused an interest in woodworking, David describes several significant events in similarly contingent ways: e.g. 'falling into work' as a pattern maker, or having 'ended up' in Newcastle. In narrating his story in this way David does not understate his own agency in making the decisions that have influenced his history, but certainly does not see them as the inevitable unfolding of a personal plan or destiny. In emphasizing the contingency in his narrative of artistic work, David places the idea of risk at the centre of his view of the cultural economy - particularly where artistic success is concerned:

'creative people, especially designers, artists, y'know ... they might be picked up by a gallery, they might be picked up by a magazine, all of a sudden they can sort of be accelerated into this like really successful period ... maybe like the footballer thing, y'know, ... like, they have this grace period where they're making money, they're successful, ... and then for one reason or another, they can just get dropped ... and if you haven't made that plan for the future ... it's like, "fuck, last year I was ... I was hot shit, like, y'know, ... and now I'm nobody," y'know?'

For David, artistic success is not necessarily correlated with artistic ability, but, much more dependent on the risk and contingency of the market – particularly consumer fashions. The flexible production and accumulation strategies characteristic of the postindustrial economy (Amin, 1994; Hartley, 2005; Harvey, 1989a; Hesmondhalgh, 2013) mean CCI are often described as being more ‘risk exposed’ (Banks, *et al.*, 2000). The vicissitudes which David identifies as a prominent feature of the cultural economy are in part inevitable – a fundamental feature of the nature of artistic/creative work – but also particularly related to the interconnection between art and the economy as it features within the enculturation of the postindustrial economy more generally: notably, the symbolic value of artisanal and craft goods. ‘[M]akers,’ David notes, ‘are really popular at the moment’. He attributes this to a rejection of standardized, mass-produced goods and a return to more unique, expressive pieces:

‘they’ve bought their IKEA, they’re fed up of not finding what they want, so I think ... the creative industries are having this real nice period at the moment.’

The current popularity of artisanal goods, however, David sees as already in danger of becoming victim to its own success, as demand and expectation compromise creative producers’ abilities to retain their independence.

‘I’m kind of worried that it’s going to get ... corporatized [...] as with everything else ... the “not on the high streets” are taking the semi-bespoke items and making it a corporate thing, y’know. ... Now you think of “not on the high street”, not the individuals, y’know, [...] nobody trusts the individual anymore so people are so afraid of taking a risk.’

It is in negating the risk (inherent, in David's understanding, to what gives artistic, creative work its value and appeal) associated with artistic practices (and, as we see below - *places*), that branding and corporatization play their most significant, and damaging, role:

'everyone is now so reliant on a brand, and so reliant on a ... a thing ... that people love the, kind of ... bespoke, artisan nature ... but no one wants to deal with the risk, y'know, everyone still wants it on time, they don't want to deal with John-down-the-road who's a bit flaky, y'know, ... makes brilliant stuff, but might get it wrong every now and then, no one wants that, ... everyone wants to say, "Hey, we got John-down-the-road to make it," but no one really wants to get involved in that process. And I'm worried that that's where this bubble may burst.'

David's concern over corporatization, or of the inevitable change in fashions, either of which could easily 'burst the bubble' of creative, artisanal production, speaks to the inevitable tension between the value of artisanal or artistic products as unique, personal, authentic, and the opportunities for capital expansion. As artisanal goods become more popular, corporations and brand-identities come to meet the demand, replacing the 'dirty', and inherently risky, economy of independent artists and artisans:

'people don't want that, y'know, they want a Disneyland experience of the creative industry, y'know, ... and that's what happens when the money moves in, is you take away the risk ... and where the risk is, that's where the magic happens.'

The tendency towards corporatization and the need for a brand extends beyond the cultural economy of artists and creative producers, and into the (re)construction of artistic and creative urban spaces. David explains:

'That's one of my fears [...] the cities that we're talking about ... will become ... corporate entities in themselves, y'know. ... The Ouseburn is ... is a ... quantifiable thing now ... y'know, it's a name, it's a reputation [...] it's a brand'.

Figure 6.7 Advertising billboard for Ouseburn.



It is the place-branding of Ouseburn that David sees as directly responsible for the economic, cultural, and spatial consequences of the gentrification that has followed Ouseburn's popularity. In becoming a brand, the Valley has become a commodity, and an identity, to buy into; consequently the independent artists, producers, and businesses are in danger of becoming eclipsed (and displaced) by the brand image.

'It's the same old arguments, so ... the thing that made it popular to these people, these people are now killing, ... so then the only place there'll be space for is a corporate entity'.²²

As Ouseburn gentrifies, and developers and landlords shift focus towards student accommodation or other high-return developments, regeneration and land-banking result in the availability of space suitable for studios and especially workshops like David's diminishing:

'we can see these plots, that aren't being used, and they'd be great for us to move in and use [...] [but instead] these properties are just ... sitting vacant ... waiting for the next developer to buy.'

It is not just straightforward economic concerns involved here: the brand image and identity of the Ouseburn is pivotal to the realization of potential capital (cf. Harvey, 2006, 2013a; Smith, 1982, 1996; Zukin, 1982, 1995, 2008, 2016), and for transforming its cultural and spatial landscape. Particularly, this concerns a conflict over aesthetics of place, in which the dirtiness, noise, and 'riskiness' David sees as essential to creative, artistic places is no longer acceptable. It's not just about having artists in the area, he explains:

'people want it to look nice as well, they don't want a skip outside for your wood waste, y'know, they want it all to ... tie into this image of like nice artisan people just ... shaving nice little things off ... and the more you move into manufacturing a lot of that romance goes with it, y'know, so ... people imagine that we just sit around drinking coffee, and ... just checking the grain and things, but it's just a lot of hard work, y'know [...] I don't know whether people want to see that or not.'

²² Developments after the fieldwork was completed suggest David was right in this prediction as plans have been approved for an apart-hotel in the Ouseburn Valley despite a petition from local residents and businesses concerned about its impact on the local live music scene (see Holland, 2018).

David's difficulties in finding suitable and affordable space, and the grim prospect of having to leave the Ouseburn area and its valued community of artistic people, and move to an industrial estate, is symptomatic of what David sees as the inevitable transformation of the valley, and ultimately the displacement of creative identities like his. The aesthetics and the culture of the valley will change dramatically, he suggests:

'it will still be a very creative hub ... but for ... 'business-fied'[...] cleaner, maybe, I think ... less industry, less people like me ... um ... and more digital media ... because that kind of fits in to that Disneyland thing, doesn't it? It's like ... you've got the creative people, but there's no noise, there's no mess ... there's none of the associated problems with it ... and they're the people that have the money to afford those buildings ... a lot cleaner, nicer ... not like the new micro-breweries moving in here, and then ... yeah ... I think it's going to become like a destination.'

The cultural economy of places like the Ouseburn is capable of supporting a reasonable living, but, for David, weighing up the rewards for the amount of time and direct hands-on work required of him, combined with the emergence of an Ouseburn brand and aesthetic incongruous with his own artistic identity, is motivating him to re-evaluate his situation.

VI.4.3 The Fork in the Road

Working in the CCIs, especially as an independent artist or producer, often involves particular sacrifices: the stability of financial security being amongst the most common. While these things are not necessarily equally desirable to all cultural and creative workers, and, as Taylor and Littleton (2012) have suggested, an artistic identity can provide a defence against these

pressures, for David, like a number of other respondents, reconciling an artistic worldview with the realities of work in the CCI was a central tension in their practices of identification.

Recently a father, David has reflected on his work, particularly the time commitments and the impacts on his health, and the financial security it has the potential to offer him. He describes this as a fork in the road:

'there was definitely a fork in the road ... um ... where I felt like I had to make a decision, y'know, whether I was gonna be one guy ... that was just, like, "David's Furniture" and I was just pottering away, making nice things, and people were willing to spend the money on your time ... um ... or, if then, y'know, if you want something like a career where you can have a pension, and go on holidays, and buy a house, and have a family ... y'know ... that, that, for me, was the driving force to changing ... my approach to it, which is ... basically just about making money.'

David's response to the difficulties in securing a reliable income (and money for retirement) from his creative work, has been to separate out the demands of art and economy, and, rather than seek to integrate the tensions between the two things (as, for example, Grace does), to treat them as distinct.

David describes this as *'moving away from small makers [...] almost coming out of the creative industries as such, and going more into manufacturing'*.

'I went, "right, that's it, I'm not gonna make one-off pieces anymore ... that's mine, that's my thing, [...] but I'm going to keep that, and I'm going to go into manufacturing. [...] so, yeah, I made that decision to just like, yeah, we are gonna make things that I'm not necessarily passionate about

... um ... and ... things that are ... profitable ... so I turned it very much into a business model'.

David is removing (or rather relocating) the autonomous aspects of his creative practice: willingly foregoing the independent, expressive, and personal – the *artistic* – aspects of his work in favour of the straightforwardly economic (or, rather, is moving them to a different sphere of his work – the ‘just for me’). In so doing, David is separating *himself-as-artist* from his work.

David has recently hired a consultant to help him to develop and market his business away from individual and bespoke designs to a larger mass production system, allowing him to take a step back from the direct production process. As he describes it, this is

‘making a long-term thing that ... that really doesn't require you involved [...] looking at how you take the thing that you've been doing, but take yourself out of it, so you create a machine that doesn't need you ... like any business, I guess'.

It is perhaps important that David's entry into the creative industries, as an artisan, came out of an industrial pathway rather than a strictly artistic one. Indeed, his creative practice emerged from the rejection of the studious and esoteric realm of the Fine Art degree. From his formative experiences selling things at craft fairs, through his first jobs cutting spindles for banisters and working as a pattern maker, creative practice, for David, has always been economic. Whereas most other participants had created a job out of their art, David created an art out of his job.

Despite moving from the creative to manufacturing, and separating out the artistic from the economic concerns in the different aspects of his work, David remains reluctant to move his workshop to an industrial estate, even though, by his own admission, it is the more appropriate

setting, suggesting that he still identifies himself more as part of the creative community than the industrial manufacturing community. This is evident when he talks about his ethical view on business:

'coming from an artistic background where ... y'know, the conversations you're having with people are still ... quite subjective, y'know? ... It's about putting your slant on things, y'know, that there is no rule to ... to art creation, that kind of thing ... and talking about the problems in society, which, y'know, runs through the creative industries, y'know, tackling those and looking at them, y'know, and also being aware of them.'

David is upfront that his objectives in moving towards manufacturing are economic: 'I do want to make lots of money,' he says, 'but I don't want to do it at the cost of anybody else.' He is, therefore, adopting what he believes to be an ethical business model:

'we are looking into ... employee-owned businesses, we're looking at the John Lewis model ... um ... it's been about ... providing a service ... to people that is both ethical and ... worthwhile.'

This attitude, David insists, is fundamentally artistic:

'I think that sort of stems from that background, that sort of ... still wanting to make a mark in the world, which I think a lot of art is about, it's about leaving your ... personal view, or, y'know ... projecting something that you believe should be projected and making it stand the test of time'

VI.4.4 Summary

David's story shows another interpretation of work in the CCIs which is characterized by risk and contingency. Although David says he was drawn to woodworking, there is limited element of an artistic calling in his sense of identity; instead of pursuing a subjectively defined destiny, his story shows the interaction of personal, cultural, and socio-economic factors in constructing identity and a career in the CCIs. His story also shows how negotiations between the demands of art and economy are not static, but evolve and change over time, in response to both internal pressures (from within the cultural economy) and externally (life choices around family and health). Despite this, however, the tension between the artistic lifestyle and the material demands of making a living have been a constant feature of David's experiences, and his identity is repeatedly constructed in relation to this tension. Unlike those for whom the artistic identity is implicated in the colonization of the lifeworld, David is constantly vigilant of drawing boundaries between *work* and his personal time and space – although this is not always possible. While he is seeking to reconcile his artistic drive with material necessity by separating the two out, it is clear that this is only achievable in a narrow sense, as, despite committing to a 'business model', he still identifies with the artistic community and is loathe to either spatially or symbolically relocate, and that his worldview, generated over years of conversations germane to an artistic and creative outlook, still greatly influences his approach to the practice and objectives of business.

VI.5 Christopher's Story: Ambivalence and Authenticity

While Grace and David's artistic practices, and consequently in some ways their identities, are anchored to specific locations within Newcastle, in Christopher's story we see a relationship between place and artistic identity in which place itself is far more unspecific and ambivalent.

Christopher describes himself as a musician and songwriter, but, like many of the people I spoke to, he is involved in other activities, most recently in local theatres and organizing musical events. He has lived in Newcastle for nearly 20 years, although he is originally from the nearby city of Sunderland. Christopher's narrative, in a way that is different to those of other respondents, has ambivalence very explicitly stated from the start: *'it's very difficult for me to talk about any of this stuff,'* he explains, *'without, sort of having ... that sort of Sunderland-based context to it all really, you know, having, sort of, grown up there ... um ... and ... that city being a big part of my life, really, even though I live here.'* The North East of England is renowned for having a particular regional identity – in no small part derived from the industrial history of much of the region - but what is often overlooked is the enormous internal diversity of identities and the parochialism to which this can give rise. The long-established rivalry between Newcastle and Sunderland (most evident in the competition between their respective football teams, but for many local residents much more widely felt) is one of the most significant. Christopher explicates and draws on the ambivalences and complexities of these local, regional, and intra-regional identities frequently, and they are inseparable from his identity as an artist.

VI.5.1 Relational Cities and Ambivalent Urban Identities

Christopher moved to Newcastle to attend university when he was 18, in the same year that his band formed in Sunderland and his career as a musician began to develop. His decision to move to Newcastle cannot be understood straightforwardly as either a student's move to a local university town, or an artist's relocation to a cultural city, and yet both are implicated. For Christopher, his decision (which is different to his band-mates, all of whom remained in Sunderland) was a compromise between the excitement of a *'hunt for a new adventure in [...] new suburbs, in new areas, with new people'* and maintaining a connection with both his artistic work (with the band) and the social scene in Sunderland (which, as is discussed below, is connected to the cultural 'scene' of the city). For Christopher, moving to Newcastle was about

not giving up the place and place-identity of Sunderland as it was about gaining that of Newcastle: *'the proximity of the two cities meant that you could, kind of, have ... have both really.'*

The ambivalence of being tied to place while also seeking new adventure is a common story for people from working class backgrounds, particularly in areas like the North East with an especially strong place-based cultural identity. This is evidenced in various fields, particularly education (Brooks, 2003; Clayton *et al.*, 2009; Reay *et al.*, 2009), and has been identified as a particular obstacle to entrance into careers in the CCIs (Allen and Hollingsworth, 2013). Recently Nayak (2018) has shown that Sunderland particularly has this kind of place-anchoring. Christopher negotiates this ambivalence in part by choosing the nearest city to attend university, but also in his continued identification as being 'from Sunderland', which he has carried on as long as he has lived in Newcastle, managing to take advantage of the amenities without sacrificing his identity – having the best of both worlds.

Christopher's decision to live in Newcastle (rather than commute) is also connected to the opportunities and amenities of Newcastle as a cultural city. He was aware, he says, that moving to Newcastle was *'an opportunity to ... be ... a little bit more deeply embedded'* in the cultural world that Newcastle offered.

Although Newcastle's music scene was of principal artistic interest for Christopher, like respondents more generally, Newcastle's appeal was to do with a broader cultural landscape. He describes how the various art galleries, museums, theatres, and other cultural and creative organizations in the city represented an exciting world of opportunity for cultural exploration and development that he describes himself as being *'really only aware of the fringes of'* in Sunderland, and *'moving somewhere else, even if it was only, sort of, you know, ten miles up the road'* was a more significant move figuratively for Christopher in encountering and becoming

part of a cultural sphere - and establishing an artistic identity - than a straightforwardly geographical one.

While Newcastle can be seen in a figurative sense as a new world of cultural opportunity, this was also true in a practical sense, and the significance of Newcastle as a city where cultural work happens was always important for Christopher as an artist seeking to develop his practice:

'in the early days of the band ... the opportunities ... were, ... were generally seen as being in Newcastle ... you know, I think that that was the sort of, er ... nexus of the North East music scene'.

Being in Newcastle meant access to the established circuit of local venues, the organizers and promoters, the local music community, the rehearsal spaces, and, crucially, the audiences that the city offered; however, this is not a straightforward contrast between Newcastle, as a city with a cultural scene and cultural amenities, and Sunderland, as a city without: rather, Christopher's experiences point to a complex and ambivalent relationship between the cities and the production and consumption of live music.

For Christopher, material factors take precedence in his account of why Newcastle has had more success than neighbouring cities in reinventing itself as a cultural city. *Contra* Florida, he sees Newcastle's dominance as the result of historically established material - rather than cultural - differences: *'Newcastle's bigger, it's always been bigger,'* he says, consequently cultural and creative organizations (particularly high-profile ones) and producers have favoured Newcastle over neighbouring cities like Sunderland, bringing flagship projects (such as the Sage Gateshead and the BALTIC), attracting other organizations, generating jobs and bringing in people. The material advantages resulting from this diversity of cultural facilities (which is lacking in other cities in the region) Christopher suggests, has fostered a culture and cultural identity within the

city that is conducive to artistic and cultural production. Key to this, for Christopher – and especially in the context of music – is the audience in Newcastle. Because of Newcastle’s material and symbolic position as the ‘nexus’ of the regional music scene, people are willing to travel to Newcastle from across the region, whereas, historically, the Newcastle audience has been very reluctant to travel elsewhere (for example, to Sunderland). For Christopher, it is the absence of this audience – itself the result of Newcastle’s material advantage – rather than the artistic and cultural/creative producers or potential, that supports Newcastle’s regional success as a cultural city, often at the expense of its neighbours.

The relationship between material – often spatial – advantage and the cultural scene is contradictory and ambivalent, as Christopher explains:

‘in the first, sort of, five, six years of the band’s lifespan [...] in terms of the North East it was, it was really Sunderland that was considered to have ... the, sort of, interesting music scene, or the ... or, at least [...] in the world of music that our band existed in ... it was Sunderland. But ... the opportunities still lay in Newcastle ... you know? So ... there were no ... there were no venues in our city, whereas in Newcastle, there was this, sort of, established pub circuit, you know? ... And it just felt like if anything was going to happen to a band, it was going to be through ... playing live shows in Newcastle, that’s where the audience was.’ (His emphasis)

For Christopher, then, there is a significant difference between the ‘scene’ and the symbolic, cultural value that accompanies it, and the appeal of particular urban settings. The broader cultural background of Newcastle (in terms of the size of audiences willing and able to attend gigs), and the material facilities (such as the established pub-circuit, and more available venues)

represents a practical necessity that, at least in the case of the music scene at the time, was more important than the symbolic value of a specific cultural 'scene'.²³

VI.5.2 Carrying Place and Authenticity

Like many artists, Christopher's identity and artistic work are closely connected:

'I like doing it because I ... I like being able to tell stories ... really, y'know ... that's the truth of it ... I think the reason that I still do it now, and ... I've kept interested in that world is because ... it's an opportunity to collaborate with other artists ... and to put something into the world that can ... that can say a little bit about who I am.'

In Christopher's narrative, place is heavily implicated in the intersection of art and identity, as (despite the ambivalence mentioned above concerning Newcastle and Sunderland) the regional identity of the North East, particularly its industrial history and culture, are a key part of Christopher's identity and the role he sees for his art.

Christopher's artistic identity and practice draws strongly on place, and his art is concerned with telling stories that reflect his experiences of growing up and living in a city suffering the long aftermath of deindustrialization.

'when we started the band, it was sort of ... there were rules in place, and it was like ... you know, there were no love songs, no ... this, that and the other ... and it was all about our, you know ... day-to-day lives living in ... living in a place like this, you know, the sort of ... the ... if you like, the kind

²³ It is worth bearing in mind though, as Christopher repeats frequently, they did identify as a 'Sunderland band', and all the other members of the band did still live in Sunderland despite the majority of their gigging work taking place in Newcastle.

of ... no romance, the monotony of things, the sort of, um ... the mundane nature of like, you know ... one place to go to as a young person ... you know, one place to play music [...] operating in a very ... sheltered, small ... seemingly small world, I suppose [...] that's what it felt like growing up.'

His identity as an artist is attached to this experience of place, culture, and memory. Drawing on his upbringing as a child of working-class parents, Christopher sees a major impact of deindustrialization and subsequent urban change as a crisis of identity: *'what's happened is that those cities have ... have been forced to ... to find something new to define them,'* he suggests, and art and culture can, and – certainly in Christopher's own case – does, provide both medium and material for a reassertion, or reformulation, of identity.

When the band toured, he says, we saw ourselves as ambassadors for the North East: introducing themselves as 'from Sunderland', and singing in their own regional accents was an explicit presentation of identity: *'it was a bit of a burning desire to, kind of, er, ... express ourselves, and I do think that the, sort of, ... the regional identity plays a huge part in that'.* As he explains, this was at a time in which popular music had become generic, and the band's music

'came out as a bit of a reaction to that kind of ... non-specific [...] transatlantic accent in rock ... and a bit of a lack of identity, if you like, really ... a sort of ... generic ... British rock band that didn't really ... have much of an identity.'

Although the artistic identity Christopher constructs and performs emphasizes his personal perspective and experience, it is highly social in outlook. He wants to tell stories so that his experiences (and those of people like him) are heard. By acting as 'ambassadors for the North

East', Christopher could, through music, position himself as a role-model for young people in a region with comparatively low aspirations and limited opportunity structures, particularly for careers in the arts. Additionally, since his career has developed in other areas, his focus is on cultural and creative work which represents North East culture and identity, community projects and arts-participation work in under-represented areas of the North East, particularly Sunderland. Christopher's choice of projects, and where and how he wants to invest his time and effort, is rooted in the attachment to place that is central to his artistic identity, and in his desire to tell the stories of postindustrial places, their histories, and their communities, and in doing so, to give something back - in part, an identity - to the communities that having lost much through deindustrialization, are now often ignored by urban development and cultural regeneration.

Walking out of a trendy coffee shop filled with hanging plants, iPads, and artfully mismatched furniture, just around the corner from [site of artists collective in the city centre] ... it is striking how, even just off the major streets of the city centre, cardboard-covered windows, broken scaffolding, long-abandoned drinks bottles, and other detritus act as reminders that the impacts of deindustrialization are not yet history in this city; and only sometimes hidden behind the obvious signs of postindustrial success. (Research Diary, 9th November 2016)

As place and the history of the region (including the '*no romance, the monotony of things*') are so significant to his artistic identity, it is unsurprising that Christopher's experiences of urban transformation and the development of the cultural economy in Newcastle and the cultural regeneration that has accompanied it are ambivalent. As (some of) his artistic practices are less place-bound than others,²⁴ gentrification and place-transformation in that regard do not feature

²⁴ As a musician, Christopher needed a number of performance venues and a network of promoters, sound engineers, and others to support his practice rather than a single, static workshop - in this way his requirements of urban space are quite different to that of many other artists and cultural producers. Although I do not focus on them here, many of his other projects were more dependent on specific,

in Christopher's narrative. What does, however, are issues of cultural and symbolic urban branding, and questions of authenticity.

Following its unsuccessful bid to become European Capital of Culture 2008, and in-keeping with the use of culture in urban branding (see, for example, Evans, 2003; Gospodini, 2001a, 2002, 2006; Jones, 2009), flagship cultural institutions (particularly the BALTIC, the Sage Gateshead, and the Theatre Royal), have defined the image of (the official) Newcastle culture. Although in recent years the Council has made notable efforts to encourage a wider variety of cultural organizations and activities, and, is now largely concerned, as Peter (a key informant working for the council) put it, with *'encouraging people to develop cultural lives who wouldn't otherwise have that opportunity,'* a noticeable fissure exists between the cultural provision, and cultural branding, of the city, and the largely industrial and working-class history and culture of the city and a large part of its population. For Christopher, while the presence of these flagship institutions put the city on the map, and *'helps to create an identity,'* the cultural branding and priorities of the cultural/creative city agenda miss the mark, diverting funding away from grassroots cultural and creative activities where it could go further. The Sage, particularly, he highlights as an expensive investment with questionable appeal to much of the local population. He also describes his frustration with the need to market the cultural worth of the city externally rather than developing things which benefit the local community:

'it's this, this dream of like, y'know, ... Turner Prize-winning artist being from the city [...] it always comes back to these kind of like outside accolades'.

permanent sites for their practice, and many of his observations about the 'cultural landscape' of Newcastle were informed by these other practices.

Christopher sees a clear contradiction between efforts to market Newcastle, often through cultural branding, and the use of iconic architecture and events, which present a particular cultural image of the city, and supporting grassroots artistic work which celebrates local culture and engages and includes the local population (rather than merely attempting to draw in people from outside the city). As Christopher sees it, top-down strategies and branding, designed in large part to attract outside recognition, while influential, are of questionable worth unless they actively engage and help support and develop local vernacular culture. This is not merely an aesthetic concern with promoting 'authentic' local culture in preference to a general, commercialized culture, but a practical concern with developing artistic work and the audiences necessary to support it: cultural development, he argues, *'has to be implemented in the sort of way that we're talking about, where it develops ... artists and it develops an audience along with it.'*

The (highly ambivalent) success of the cultural branding of the city, in particular the music scene, also highlights a tension concerning the availability of cultural and creative space emerging from the transforming material landscape. While Christopher talks about how the musical scene, and, crucially, the number of venues hosting live music has increased noticeably in the years he has been living and working in Newcastle, this success, he notes, is not necessarily representative of CCIs in the city generally, which, he notes, despite a large amount of high-quality work, are still struggling to attract funding and find usable space. It is no coincidence that the music industry, which, at a local level, can be supported with minimal effort and (at least potentially) large remuneration on the part of existing venues through ticket and food and drink sales (the proceeds of which almost always go to the venue rather than the artists), and which is easily abandoned should it not prove profitable, succeeds while other CCIs with more expensive and permanent requirements of space and less predictable returns on investments do not.

VI.5.3 Embedded in Place

Movement between places was a familiar enough feature of several stories, but Christopher's is indicative of a particular type of story in which the relationship between identity and the material and cultural significance of place takes a different form. Because music, unlike visual art, glass-blowing, etc. involves more movement for consumption (when, for example, a band is on tour), and is often less anchored to specific places for production (rehearsal spaces and recording studios, while sometimes scarce, are, unlike the spaces required for kilns, or easels, comparatively easy to access, use, and quit in short amounts of time) than is the case for other artistic and cultural/creative work, the focus is less often on space as a material resource, but certainly no less a cultural and symbolic one. Moreover, the specific artistic field which exists within in city, or a region such as the North East, has its own dynamic, which, for Christopher, is decisive in enabling him (as a specific individual with a particular, authentic, place-identity) to perform, and be successful in, his work:

'if I was in a bigger city ... maybe London, or possibly Manchester ... I don't think ... my name would mean as much in those places, do you know what I mean? ... [MD: Right ...] ... Um, ... just in the sense of, like, achievements and where the, sort of, band might sit amongst other ... other things in those cities, y'know ... I think having done the band ... and being from here ... I think it's afforded me some opportunities to do other things in ... in this region ... that it maybe wouldn't have afforded me to do in ... bigger cities.'

As Christopher's work has developed, and he no longer tours regularly with a band, it is the cultural and symbolic value of place and place-identity which is essential to his ability to do his work:

'without a doubt, I think ... If we'd been a London band ... and I ended up in Newcastle at the end of the band's career I don't think that ... it would be an authentic voice in ... in most of the situations that I find myself in, you know?'

The importance of being 'an authentic voice' reflects not only the importance of authenticity to Christopher's own artistic identity and the purpose of his artistic practice, but to the practical, instrumental importance of this authenticity to carrying it out:

'I think that ... my ... like, ... my identity as a ... y'know ... someone who lives in Newcastle and works in the North East ... is ... it's fundamental to pretty much everything that I do in that regard now. ... Whether it's ... the tone of voice and the story ... with the, sort of, theatre-type stuff ... or it's that, um, ... being embedded within a community that I recognise ... y'know ... it's absolutely fundamental. Which means that, y'know, the idea of me upping sticks and moving somewhere else would make most of the work that I do very, very difficult.'

While the importance of place and authenticity to some extent anchors Christopher's artistic practice and identity to the North East, the ambivalence and complexity of the significance of place and the authenticity of his artistic practice is not static, and as Christopher's career and work has evolved, these complexities and ambivalences have changed. Now, he tells me, although he is deeply attached to Newcastle and can't imagine living anywhere else, increasingly, his work takes place in Sunderland. Where formerly it was necessary to move, or at least focus attention on Newcastle in order to build a career, now that a career – and an

identity – is built, he has branched out in new directions which allow him to be involved in community engagement projects and other activities in his home city.

VI.5.4 Summary

Christopher's story highlights a number of different aspects concerning the ambivalences within relationships between identity, place, and art. Christopher's relationship with place is more mobile than many other artists and cultural and creative producers, and the relationality between Newcastle and neighbouring cities in the North East is consequently highlighted in his narrative. Unlike Grace and David, Christopher was born in the North East, and the relationship between his identity, and his artistic practice, and the region, including Newcastle, demonstrates the inextricability of spatial and personal histories. Although he expresses great fondness for Newcastle, and is without hesitation in praising the role of the cultural scene in enabling his own successes, he expresses it always with a certain sense of reluctance over the comparative lack of similar opportunities in other parts of the region, Sunderland in particular. While for some participants Newcastle's advantages were seen as just that, or sometimes seemingly taken for granted, for Christopher - who is consistently aware, that the particular characteristics and trajectory of place are not isolated, but, as Massey (1995, 2005) suggested, are always historically embedded in complex relations with neighbouring places, and thus appreciating the cultural landscape of Newcastle is impossible without implicating the wider context in which the city has developed.

Because his artistic practice has been more mobile, the shifting significance of places and their cultures in supporting artistic practice is also highlighted. Christopher's story is not a straightforward narrative of an artist moving to a 'more cultural city' in order to pursue their practice, but points to a more complex and ambivalent relationship between cities, their cultural landscapes, and the relations between them, and artistic identities.

VI.6 Conclusions

While they are all unique stories, casting light above all on the particularity of artistic identities and their contexts, the three vignettes presented in this chapter, as well as the other data gathered in Newcastle, speak to certain more general themes which, by no means universal, and subject to varied, context-dependent expression, suggest something about how the material, cultural, and symbolic landscape of the city of Newcastle features in the artistic identities of people working in the city's CCl's.

Many participants made frequent reference to the importance of community for their experience of artistic practice. For Grace and others working in artists' collectives, shared places of work provided artistic, social, and crucially financial support, enabling them to gain workspaces which would have been unaffordable to individual artists or organizations. Some participants mentioned artistic collaboration, or mentoring, emerging from the support networks provided by these communities, enabling artists to develop and expand their artistic practices. For others whose practices, like David's, were rather more isolated, community could mean a broader spatial experience of working, and sometimes living in places which could be defined and identified as 'creative', where 'people like us' are and are able to pursue their work, and their lifestyles, in the knowledge that the people of the community understand them, and contribute to a shared sense of identity. Christopher's story signals a broader sense of community, experienced not only as a wide network of people working in (often, but not necessarily, related) cultural and artistic fields throughout the city, whose practices enable and reinforce one another, but which produce a more general 'cultural community' whose presence as audience ultimately sustains the cultural work, and cultural identity of the city.

Related to the importance of community to artistic practices and identities in the city, for many participants, artistic identities were extremely outwardly and socially-oriented. Contrary to

images of artists as isolated individuals, or the stereotypical creative genius, most of the participants understood their work to be both embedded in the socio-spatial contexts of community and city and directed towards social goals, such as expressing local identity, renovating public spaces, or celebrating local culture and history. In this regard many were critical of, and challenged, attempts to identify, or brand, the cultural scene in the city through events such the Great Exhibition of the North²⁵ or traditional 'high art' institutions like the Sage or the Theatre Royal, or through the dominance of what were seen as neoliberal, or commercial and corporatized, 'creative industries' - such as computer software and games design - at the expense of local grassroots cultural activities.

For many, a particular strength of the cultural community was its resilience and DIY attitude. Christopher remarked that in the current economic climate, cultural organizations knew not to rely upon, or turn to, the Council or 'official' sources for support and funding, but instead to find it themselves. While the UK government's austerity politics has played a significant role in creating this context, a particular post-industrial culture and identity is also involved. Several participants made reference to a strong, united, and organized community of activist-producers; and the self-reliability of local artists was often invoked alongside references to people of the North East being 'grafters' used to getting on - resurrecting a familiar image of industrial, working-class, and masculine culture and repurposing it in the construction of postindustrial artistic identities.

Because of the importance of community, its potential loss in the face of urban transformation was a particular concern for many participants. Although it did not appear explicitly in every participant's story, the economic and cultural impacts of gentrification were never far removed from the experiences of place for artists and cultural and creative workers in Newcastle. This was particularly the case in Ouseburn, and in the city centre, where several artistic and cultural

²⁵ A 'celebration of the North of England's pioneering spirit and the impact of our inventors, artists and designers' through a series of cultural events and exhibitions centred on Newcastle and Gateshead over the summer of 2018 (see <https://getnorth2018.com>).

and creative organizations had been priced or forced out by landlords, developers, or decisions by the council. Increases in rent prohibit new artists and independent businesses from moving in, and either unsettle established communities and make it difficult for them to maintain their spaces (as in Grace's case) or force them out entirely.²⁶ The incursion of student accommodation and 'up-market' businesses (often national corporations rather than local concerns) is seen, particularly in the Ouseburn, to threaten not only the financial viability of cultural and creative organizations, but the communities and the often spatial aesthetics which they produce and rely upon.

While they are neither universal nor exhaustive, the themes emerging from these stories are indicative of the kinds of issues prominent in cultural and creative workers' experiences and identities in Newcastle. Together with those emerging from the stories from Hamburg, which are the subject of the next chapter, these themes will be revisited in chapter 9, where they form part of the constellation through which an image of urban artistic identities can be understood.

²⁶ The case of *Little Buildings*, a music venue in Ouseburn, is a much publicized example (see Meechan, 2018).

Chapter VII: Postindustrial Identities in the Cultural and Creative Industries II: Hamburg

VII.1 Introduction

As with the preceding chapter, this chapter presents three vignettes from the fieldwork undertaken in Hamburg. These vignettes present stories from three participants active in different fields of the CCIs in Hamburg and in different parts of the city. These stories draw out and indicate several themes encountered throughout the fieldwork and present them within the particular contexts of individual participants' narratives of artistic identity as they make sense of their work and the city. In the first section of the chapter I provide a very brief and selective introduction to the city of Hamburg to provide context for the stories in the vignettes. The subsequent sections explore the three vignettes of Omar, Stef, and Anne. In the final section I present some more general conclusions emerging from the vignettes and the Hamburg fieldwork more generally which, along with those from the preceding chapter, I pick up again in the discussion in chapter 8.

VII.2. Cultural and Creative Industries in Hamburg

The north German port city of Hamburg has been a prosperous centre for – especially maritime – commerce since the 13th century when it became a key member of the enormously influential

Hanseatic League, and the city of Hamburg has long enjoyed a reputation as a successful city of trade, industry, and innovation.

Recent figures suggest Hamburg's creative industries employ around 87,000 people (7.9% of the working population), and generate approximately EUR 4 billion in gross value added (4.9% of Hamburg's total); they represent 18.8% of businesses and self-employed people in Hamburg, nearly twice the national average of around 10% (HKG, 2016). The backbone of Hamburg's creative industries has always been print media, for which it has been the national centre since the Second World War. Many entrepreneurial media companies started up in the city, and consumer goods advertising and design companies have later moved to the city. Today, Hamburg is still the media capital of Germany, and the press market contributes 31.8% (EUR 3.9 billion) to the total turnover of creative industries sector. But advertising, design, film, and the software and games industries are also prominent industry sectors, contributing EUR 2.4 billion (19.6 %), EUR 1.4 billion (11.3 %), EUR 1.4 billion (11.1 %), and EUR 1.1 billion (8.8 %) respectively (HKG, 2016).

Although figures show general growth of the sector in recent years - an increase in total turnover of 6% (EUR 600 million) between 2009 and 2013, and an increase of 14.3% (5,965) in the number of employees (HK, 2015) - the picture is mixed within industry sectors. The press market, which accounts for by far the largest turnover of the sector, has suffered a fall in turnover of 5.3%, and lost 1,100 employees since 2009 as a result of the increased digitization of media, while previously smaller industry sectors such as software and games, and design - sectors which thrive on increases in digital technology, have experienced significant growth both in terms of revenue and number of employees (HK, 2015). Taken as a whole, the CCI sector shows strong growth, and the proportion of people employed in the sector overall continues to increase (HK, 2015; HKG, 2016). It is also important to remember that while Hamburg's cultural and creative sector is heavily dominated by these major industry areas, and

they play a significant role in defining the character of Hamburg's cultural and creative industry sector and identity, small and micro-organizations play a significantly larger role in the cultural and creative sector than in traditional industries (HKG, 2016; Söndermann, 2010), as well as contributing significantly to the overall cultural character of the city.

As in other cities, the emerging cultural economy and the contested relationship it has with the structure, character – and identity – of the city has been a source of conflict and resistance (some of which features prominently in Stef's story below) (see, for example, Novy and Colomb, 2013). Collective resistance groups such as *Not in Our Name! – Marke Hamburg*, whose anti-gentrification manifesto decries the cynical use of artists, their work, and alternative cultural urban spaces to market the city as a 'consistent, socially passified fantasialand' (NION, 2010: 323), have frequently raised the voices of a significant population of artists and cultural commentators in recent years, for whom the cultural policies underpinning the rise of Hamburg's cultural and creative economy entails 'siphoning cultural resources' towards urban development and brand-building (*ibid.*: 324), in order to better 'position' the city globally, at the expense of the artists, their spaces, and the lifestyles that underpin those resources (NION, 2010; Twickel, 2010).

While Hamburg's CCI sector continues to develop - and in notable distinction to the postindustrial trajectory of other many other cities, Newcastle included - Hamburg's industrial sector remains a significant part of not only the overall economy of the city, but also its identity. Hamburg's port, the third largest in Europe, has always been central to the city's Hanseatic identity, and continues, although not without difficult and controversy, to be a major source for wealth and employment for the city, as does its expanding aeronautics industry. Hamburg's vision of the future is neither as an industrial city nor a cultural one, but, as one key informant with the local government suggested, in bringing the advantages of CCIs together with traditional industries.

A significant role in developing Hamburg's cultural economy is played by the *Hamburg Kreativgesellschaft* (HKG): a publically-funded but autonomous organization with a remit to 'improve the general conditions for the creative industries in Hamburg and to act as an interface – between the different fields within the creative industries, but also to other players in business, politics and society'. The HKG were significant actors in a number of participants' accounts, and appear in two of the stories recounted below. Two key informants from Hamburg were attached to the HKG.

VII.2.1 Stories from Hamburg

The stories recounted below are from three cultural and creative workers who live and work in Hamburg. They each work in different areas of the city, work in very different artistic fields, and have different degrees and forms of relationship with the urban landscapes of Hamburg and with various branches of the city authorities involved with the cultural economy. Like the stories from Newcastle in the previous chapter, these stories relate experiences and identity practices of the three participants, and are shaped a range of similarities and differences (with each other and with those from Newcastle) arising from the particularities of their artistic practices, relationships to urban space, and identities.

Omar's story presents an artistic identity in which aesthetics and freedom are bound together, and where urban space, like art, is an important part of the everyday landscapes that make living an artistic life possible. Omar sees art and economy as entirely opposing worldviews, and sees the importance of rejecting economic logic as essential not only to producing 'true art' but in living a good life.

Stef's story also features an opposition between art and economy, but for her, this opposition is political, and centred on conflicting uses and valuations of urban space. Stef is connected to the *Gängeviertel*, an artists' collective, cultural centre, and squat near the centre of Hamburg. In her

story, politics, art, and urban space, and the conflicts over them, are inseparable, and her artistic identity is significantly shaped by experiences with the Gängeviertel project and its relationship with the city of Hamburg.

While for Stef, the City of Hamburg is, in many respects, an adversary, Anne's dealings show a different, but not unrelated, relationship between cultural and creative workers, urban space, and city authorities. Transformations to cultural and creative spaces, and the character and identity of cities play an important role in Anne's story, and it highlights how cultural and creative places, and artistic identities, can inhabit liminal spaces in relation to their environments and contexts.

VII.3 Omar's Story: Freedom and True Art

Different conceptions of freedom run through Omar's story and his construction of artistic identity centres on the idea of personal (and artistic) freedom. His experiences of the cultural economy of Hamburg, in particular the Schanzenviertel *Stadtteil* where he is based, are interpreted through these ideas of freedom and expression – something which he is in no doubt is compromised by concessions to economic logic.

At the same time that Omar's artistic identity is constructed in opposition to the economic mainstream, the area in which he lives is characterized by increasing gentrification, and his story sits uneasily on a number of contradictions and ambivalences.

The *Schanzenviertel* (or *Schanze* as it is colloquially known) – the area around *Sternschanze* park to the north-west of the centre of Hamburg and at the intersection of Altona and St. Pauli, two of

the oldest districts of the city – is generally considered to be Hamburg's 'alternative' district. A formerly industrial working-class district associated with urban variety and social marginality (Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009; Vogelpohl, 2010), it was characterized historically by its proximity to Hamburg's abattoirs. Deindustrialization and the decommissioning of the abattoirs and 'marginalization of commercial enterprises and residents' (Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009: 254) in the 1960s and 70s resulted in the neglected quarter drawing in students, artists, and economic migrants largely from South America who found affordable spaces to establish a thriving social infrastructure (Läpple *et al.*, 2010: 20-21), enabling the Schanzenviertel 'to transform into a pioneer area, and a germ cell of new urban *Lebensformen*' (Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009: 254) ideally suited to cultural and creative work and bohemian cultures.

During the 1970s, the Schanzenviertel was the site of left-wing countercultural movements, notably including the grassroots movements to protect local architecture and alternative cultural sites. The political culture of the area achieved particularly notoriety in the late 1980s due to the (often violent) resistance to the planned renovation of former Flora-Theater (Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009; Vogelpohl, 2010). Following local opposition to plans to turn the then empty building into a musical theatre, the site has been occupied and squatted since 1989, and now functions as a political and cultural centre (*Rote Flora*), and is symbolic of the prominence of left-wing subcultural groups in the Schanzenviertel (Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009; Der Spiegel, 2014; Twickel *et al.*, 2014). This left-leaning, and occasionally radical, political culture of the area broke out of its regular boundaries when the area was implicated in the anti-G20 protests and clashes with police that rattled Hamburg in July 2017 (Backes *et al.*, 2017; Oltermann, 2017; Titz, 2017).

The area seems to spread out from the Rote Flora. This former theatre now cultural centre and political landmark covered in graffiti and posters announcing the inevitable end of capitalism and staunchly condemning racism, sexism, and imperialism across the world (at the moment Turkish President Erdoğan is the prime target), with large neon lights saying 'NO G20' atop the walls, stands resolutely like the beating heart at the end of the spreading arteries

of adjoining streets. Similar graffiti and posters advertising gigs, which heavily adorn the walls of nearby streets, become less and less frequent the farther from the Rote Flora they go; its power waning as buildings become less rebellious in their facades and gentrification waits around the corner. (Research Diary, 18th April 2017)

Urban regeneration programmes in Hamburg from the late 1980s attracted larger consumer goods and various craft companies to the area (Oßenbrügge *et al.*, 2009), and since the 1990s it has undergone increasing gentrification, becoming increasingly popular with young professionals and families (Läpple *et al.*, 2010) at the expense of those who can no longer afford the trendy lifestyle (Schwarz, 2015). In addition to the *Rote Flora*, the Schanze has a variety of CCIs including galleries, publishers, record companies, and PR firms, as well as a number of restaurants, bars, clubs, and concert rooms generating a bustling night-time economy (Vogelpohl, 2010: 93). Alongside the cultural diversity of international cuisine, poetry readings, and anti-capitalist posters and street art, the Schanze is also replete with signs of gentrified consumption patterns. A high-end opticians selling designer glasses and sunglasses describing itself as 'a trend-setter in the vastness of the spectacle cosmos' and espousing a 'philosophy' in which the unique matching of spectacles to face is an expression of individual destiny and the *zeitgeist*.

Figure 7.1 *Rote Flora* cultural centre in Schanzenviertel.



VII.3.1 Searching for Free-Spiritual Art

Today, I meet Omar in a café owned by an independent Hamburg coffee company located in a high-ceilinged, concrete-floored former slaughterhouse hall (see Figure 7.2). Like many parts of the Schanzenviertel, it is a typical expression of the hybridity of space that is often found in parts of postindustrial cities popular with people working in CCIs. The industrial history of the area is both preserved in the architecture and juxtaposed with the postindustrial and bohemian feel of the area by the adjacent coffee roasting hall and micro-brewery also on site. Omar is a regular visitor here, and waves and nods to familiar people frequently. Shortly before we leave, when the café is closing, the waiter comes over and joins us. He is a friend of Omar's and a theatre studies graduate. *'I know lots of creative people here,'* Omar tells me, *'in a place like this, there are creative people everywhere – actors, artists, people doing all kinds of art.'*

Figure 7.2 The former abattoir halls in the Schanzenviertel which are now home to bars, restaurants, and cafés.



Omar, appearing every bit the quintessential artist, is dressed in black jeans and t-shirt with a grey cotton jacket. He describes himself, quite generally, as an artist. Although he is primarily a painter, he is also involved in film making as a producer/director and sometimes actor. As he tells his story he shifts effortlessly from talking about one form of art to others. Art, for Omar, encompasses a wide range of practices and, as becomes apparent, is not defined by particular activities *per se*, but rather about the mentality, worldview, or identity that underlies them.

Omar's narrative centres on his efforts in coming to find and be able to carry out what he calls his '*free-spiritual art*', which, in contrast with mainstream commercial art, he variously characterizes as 'true', 'pure', and 'from the heart'. His construction and practice of identity as an artist is intertwined with this conception of 'true art' and the social, spatial, and cultural conditions in which it can be realized.

Omar came to Hamburg some years ago from New York, although he is originally from Iran. He draws on his time in America frequently to make comparisons between there and Hamburg; particularly in terms of the 'freedom' – which takes many forms in his narrative – to create the kind of art that he values. Although he has family in America, and speaks fondly of his former home, he is frequently critical of the artistic scene and the political culture in which it exists. In America, he encountered repeated difficulties in pursuing his art. It was '*very hard*,' he says, '*to really make people see what you want to do*'. As a consequence of what Omar took to be a highly economized art-world, he experienced it as standardized and restrictive.

'[I]t was very commercialised, and closed-minded, too ... if they don't see anything - like your reputation, or your name is famous ... or it has already been done so many times that they can understand what it is - they don't really take that chance to give you the opportunity to create your own art.'

Rather than encouraging innovation and expression (essential characteristics of art in Omar's understanding), economized art he describes it, denied art and artists their particular expression, and stripped them of their identity: '*you have to pretty much minimize yourself to what the industry wants, what the media wants.*'

This climate of economized art is not exclusively aesthetic, but reflects the broader – often political – culture in which the production and consumption of art takes place. In America, Omar had been denied opportunities to develop or display his art, or, in order to do so, had to compromise his artistic autonomy. Omar gives an example of a film project that he tried unsuccessfully to do in the US and has recently started working on again in Hamburg. His concept, which he describes as attempting to create new dialogues about the Israel-Palestine conflict, was rejected because of the environment in which he was working, where certain

topics were considered unacceptable, and other people (he particularly mentions his 'producer-director', whom he describes as '*very American-minded*') were unwilling to be involved in artistic endeavours that lay outside the standard and familiar.

In contrast to the economized art-world Omar experienced in America, which '*was so closed-minded politically,*' in Hamburg, he says, '*I can do what I really want.*' Encountering this artistic freedom was enormously significant for Omar not only in developing his career, but his understanding of art and his identity with it:

'that was one of the biggest things, I feel, in Hamburg, it's really inspired me, because really you don't have to filter your mind ... especially for the artists, I think it's very important to be free-spiritual, so you can do the true art, without any rules.'

The rules to which Omar refers relate to a larger, more general opposition that plays a definitive role in his artistic identity: that between art and economy.

VII.3.2 Art and Economy

For Omar, art and economy are very different; and he positions himself, and constructs an identity that is very firmly based in the art side of the divide. Although he does see it as covering a broader range of issues, at its core, this concerns money and the motivation behind artistic practice: '*the true artist, I think, doesn't care about money really. But today, commercial art really ... I don't call it art any more. If you do something for making money, I don't think that's true art.*'

He describes this particularly as a feature of the art scene in the Schanze, where art and artistic expression is part of everyday life, and is valued as something to be experienced and enjoyed as an aesthetic rather than an economic activity. Art in this sense is completely opposed to the heavily commercialized art scene he experienced in the USA, where art was viewed according to a standard economic logic: produced primarily for the pursuit of profit, which, for Omar, places it on the other side of the divide: *'thinking of art just as making money ... to me is a business, it's not art.'*

While Omar readily dismisses 'commercial art' as being business rather than art, his separation of art and economy is not so crude as to imply art is inevitably, tainted by money, and thereby preclude any possibility of 'true art' being economically successful. There is no romanticism of the impoverished artist in Omar's account: although he does allude to suffering for one's art as a virtue, it is not essential to his understanding of true art or the artistic identity he performs. Instead, Omar sees no significant connection between being economically successful as an artist (which, to a reasonable extent, he is) and whether or not the art counts as 'true art':

'doing true art [comes] from your heart, and if somebody loves it then maybe they pay you so much money, that's different, that's just luck ... and ... it's good for them! To pay the money for the art, because then they get good art! Because there is so much shitty art out there, and people pay so much money for it.'

For Omar, then, external rewards for art are incidental; instead, it is the motivation and the attitude - the mentality - behind the practice that is critical in defining 'true art' (and, by extension, 'true' artists). This mentality, however, is also significant for art objects themselves.

'I don't see commercial art, art created in that kind of mentality, as being the kind of art that you could expect to see in the next century: it'll be forgotten and gone, before anybody knows, because they just came for making money.'

In contrast to the superficial and fleeting world of commercial art and mere economy, 'true art' and the mentality which underpins it, requires great dedication, and a higher-minded approach to life which requires nurturing and protecting. For Omar, an artistic identity is, in a sense, a calling, from which other things (specifically the mundane, even profane, concerns of economy) are but a distraction. When compared with these everyday concerns, *'really true art is, I think, quite different, and as an artist you don't give up that part of your life to making money'*.

Consequently, maintaining the purity of his free-spiritual art is fundamental to Omar's artistic identity.

'That's the difference between the honest and good artist, and the artist that just does it for the money. When you don't feel that deeply inside, you cannot create that art. So, if you want to be involved for the money, then you have to be involved with all the extra stuff that comes with the money. And then, I don't believe you can be pure. So, I gave up that part, and I'm very happy about it.'

VII.3.3 A Place for Free-Spiritual Art

Omar's artistic identity, and the mentality underpinning his conception of 'true art', is not simply an individual attitude, but is socio-cultural, and is both nurtured by and expressed

through the characteristics of place. Omar repeatedly refers to the significance of Hamburg and the Schanzenviertel in enabling and inspiring his 'free-spiritual' art.

Crucial in this, is the community of artists, and what Omar sees as the artistic culture of the city. Hamburg, he says, is a very arty city, but not just in the traditional sense of the number of galleries, or the audience for art and culture, rather, for Omar, Hamburg, and particularly the Schanze, is a place in which the 'free-spiritual art' that he values can – and does – thrive, because of the willingness of people to be involved in and support artistic endeavours.

Omar recalls the support he received working on a recent film project. Unlike his experiences in commercial art-worlds, people were willing to contribute their support and expertise for free:

'if people get interested in [your idea], they just help you. [...] Everything I did - the editing, the camera, the sound, the music - everything I used, it was offered to me for free. And actors, actresses ... and really, not just to offer you it, to really, truly, put their heart and their mind into it. And they do that because they really love to do it.'

Although not all cultural and creative production in the Schanzenviertel is carried out under such circumstances, Omar suggests that his experiences are indicative of the attitude shared by many artists in the city that the value of art is fundamentally non-economic: serving entirely different purposes and able to operate in different ways. Without such a shared culture, the kind of 'free-spiritual' art integral to Omar's artistic identity would struggle to survive.

The artistic culture is not just about community, but is closely connected to the spatiotemporal patterns and material characteristics of the places in which that culture is lived. The kind of culture that encourages free-spiritual art, and enables people to give their time to support it, he

says, *'is not possible in the US, because people's lifestyle is pretty damn busy, that they can't contribute it to someone, as free time'*: to have time to offer for free is only possible when one's time is not understood and organized exclusively according to an economic logic; when time 'spent' in pursuit of art is valued differently.

Omar identifies the artistic culture of Schanzenviertel variously expressed materially, culturally, and symbolically. He talks about 'alternative' spaces – such as underground galleries, where *'really, really good art'* can be seen in unlikely places, the everyday aesthetics of eclectically decorated restaurants, and the occupied spaces where artists meet and work – which provide physical space for art (and artistic identities) to be produced and consumed, but also provide the cultural and symbolic space that he claims has been so inspirational for him. In this way his aesthetic judgement of spaces and places in the Schanzenviertel is particularly significant.

Omar talks particularly of the mixing of styles and the porosity of form and function that is characteristic of the everyday aesthetic in constructing artistic urban landscapes. He describes a hotel where he put on a series of exhibitions explicitly in this way:

'It's a very modern, contemporary design inside a very old, probably factory, or something [...] And the dining area is actually very unusual. It's deep down, you go through a first floor which is this kind of basement, which is very chic, and [...] it's very modern, contemporary, but at the same time it's kind of a mix of the old and new; and you see the brick walls, and at the same time you see all this contemporary furniture and the design of the building inside [...] it was artistic.'

For Omar, this use of space is 'artistic' not only because *'it was so beautifully designed,'* but because it symbolizes a place in which art, and artistic (as opposed to economic) worldviews and identities thrive. The aesthetics of place display the cultural and ethnic diversity and the bohemian lifestyle which accords with his image of art, and consequently, Omar places great stock in the social and cultural variety (and for Omar ethnicity is particularly important) in constituting an artistic place. He celebrates the diversity and particularity of places and businesses in the Schanze: *'everything is custom-made,'* he says, *'and different cultures working together - as with a different restaurant - different culture's restaurant like Turkish you see, with the Kurdish people, with the Greek, with Italian, all together and it's a beautiful atmosphere.'*

Omar is clear that the aesthetics of place have made a great impact on his artistic practice and identity: being surrounded by the diversity and artistic culture of the Schanze and its everyday aesthetic has inspired him, he says, *'to go further ... to go to the really free-spiritual art,'* with which he identifies:

'if I was not in Hamburg, if I create that in the US, that it would be at this point where I am. I really don't believe that I would be.'

Omar has lived in the Schanzenviertel for nearly ten years, although he has been travelling to and from Hamburg for more than twenty. *'It is the beauty of European cities,'* he says, that unlike cities in the US, *'they stay the same.'* Nevertheless he has noticed a change in *'the people, the social life'*. The crowds in the Schanze are younger, the area, much like the *Reeperbahn*, has lost some of its edge:

'The Schanze [is] getting much, much more ... it's going toward the money, I guess [...] And they're trying to make it something like a village, like New York, or something like Soho, maybe.'

The gentrification of the Schanzenviertel – already well established – is certainly not welcomed by Omar. He has noticed the streets being quieter in the early hours as 'normal' schedules settle in; there is less diversity about, as bars and restaurants become more predictable; *'there are fewer artists, maybe,'* he says, *'I can see there's a little bit less activity than before.'* But, for the time being, he has no plans to leave.

VII.3.4 Everyday Art and Living the Free-Spiritual Life

At the core of Omar's artistic identity is his idea of 'free-spiritual art', which goes beyond his artistic practice and influences his attitude to life more generally. He tries to eschew a strict schedule in his life, and, despite the difficulties, embrace a lifestyle and structure where he works according to the changing requirements of pursuing his art: *'I try to break that rule we have [that we should live according to] a schedule ... to see what life is like without that ... But it's very, very tough ... people tell me that I'm crazy! But so far I can do it'*. The 8-5, mortgage and bills life, he suggests, is hard - harder than the unpredictability of his own in many ways – but, as he sees it, it is also unnecessary, and moreover quite undesirable, because it traps people in a schedule (in spatiotemporal ordering) that prevents them from dedicating their time and effort to the things that matter to them – a necessary part of pursuing 'free-spiritual art' and the kind of artistic culture Omar identifies with.

Although the *art pour le art* image can be seen clearly in Omar's construction of an artistic identity, while he sees art as something separate from the mainstream pursuit of wealth (in many ways directly opposed to it), and something very personal, 'true' art, for Omar, is certainly not constructed as entirely individual, or as an essentially inward or subjective endeavour, but

something collective and profoundly social. Unlike the identity practices of artists, such as the musicians described in Becker's famous study of jazz musicians (1991: 85-100), who position themselves not only as outside the mainstream culture but also intrinsically *superior* to their non-artistic counterparts by virtue of their artistry, Omar frequently describes himself as 'lucky' to be able to live the life he has.

Moreover, as his conception of 'true' art depends upon an unfiltered expression of the self, it is in many ways a very prosaic conception of art. He does not reserve the term for high art, or even particularly specialized activities, and consequently 'true' art does not imply any special inner genius, but merely the opportunity to live life in pursuit of what is meaningful; to dedicate your time and effort – truly – to whatever is personally expressive and fulfilling. Everybody has this potential, Omar insists:

'they don't have to be artists - but even for creating whatever they like to do, I do think you need to free ... be free-minded, to, ... put all your energy on whatever you believe and whatever you like to do [...] whatever it is, maybe somebody loves to do that as a family man ... there's nothing wrong with that; or somebody wants to build some cars nobody builds again, that's fine too.'

Art, then, is mundane: it is the everyday, and fundamental to our humanity.

'I think if you limit people, limit their humanity, to like a schedule we become like soldiers. And those soldiers, they just soldier, and if they don't get the order then they don't know what to do.'

This is why, for Omar, art can, and should, serve social ends. It is Omar's *ultimate goal*, as an artist, to create art which provides new solutions to dealing with '*the mess we have in the world today*'. Art, he says, is uniquely capable of addressing social problems, because:

'the artist has a very soft language ... [a way] to show the problems with different words, in a different language, and it's a great language because you can't hurt anybody, but you can say so much about [the world] and [...] its problems.'

VII.3.5 Summary

Omar's story presents another interpretation of the relationship between art and economy. While there are things in common with both Grace's and David's assessments of the values of art and the importance of edgy, dangerous places, Omar holds that art and economy are entirely oppositional activities with irreconcilable values, and, consequently, to live a life dedicated to the production of 'true art', involves rejecting economic logic and motivations in all forms. Despite his stance on the incompatibility of art and economy, however, he is, by a reasonable standard, a commercially successful artist.

Despite seeing the Schanze transformed through gentrification, he does not intend to move, nor does he seem to expect any negative impact on his own artistic practice as a result – on the contrary, some of his recent success has been the direct result of tourism and commercialism within the city. His objections to gentrification, unlike those of many other participants in Newcastle (and, as will be seen in the next stories, also in Hamburg), are aesthetic, but not material. While he maintains the importance of places like the Schanzenviertel, where the material environment, culture, and community all reflect and support 'free-spiritual' art and lives, he can – and frequently does – travel to other places to create and exhibit his art; while he

sees the characteristics of place as important for his work, it is not a material resource and he is not bound, or fixed, in place in the same way other cultural and creative workers can be.

Art and everyday life are interwoven for Omar, and his emphasis on the 'free-spiritual' relates to everyday life and the experiences of space as much as to artistic practice. Consequently art is something everybody can, and should, be doing. Part of Omar's artistic motivation is to present art as an alternative way of living and thinking about society.

VII.4 Stef's Story: Conflict and Resistance

In contrast to Omar's very personal story, Stef's story illustrates a quite different approach to cultural and creative work, in which artistic identities and the experience of urban space are intrinsically collective and political. While several of the participants in both Newcastle and Hamburg worked individually, a number were part of artists' collectives, making use of shared space, or renting studios in bigger buildings. In Stef's case, the buildings of Hamburg's *Gängeviertel* are a squat: occupied spaces near the centre of Hamburg which serve as workspaces, community spaces, and sometimes living spaces, for artists, activists, and cultural producers. In Stef's story art, place, and politics are inseparable, and her artistic identity is constructed as much out of the fortunes of the *Gängeviertel* and the people who share it as her own creative practice.

I walked up the street, away from the water and the proud grandeur of the neoclassical architecture of Jungfernstieg towards the Gänsemarkt. The conspicuous affluence and leisurely atmosphere around the Alster quickly replaced by the bustle and urgency of a mid-week afternoon in the central business district as the noise of buses, shoppers, and office workers meets the impatient rattle of a drill where new pavement or road is being laid. This street is all office buildings: anonymous and faceless, with franchise coffee and sandwich shops and international banks taking up the street-level spaces. A little

farther along and I've reached the street I'm looking for [...] At first I don't see the Gängeviertel. I expect to see an obvious entrance way, or a sign indicating access to the alley quarter. Then I notice the buildings here look slightly out of step with the glass-fronted buildings on the other side of the street and the predictable modernist brick buildings I've passed. First the graffiti, at first glance nondescript, then, with close attention, more intricate. The buildings are older; more compact; somehow neglected and loved at the same time. I've been staring at the trees and missing the wood. (Research Diary, 25th May 2016)

Figure 7.3 *Speck Haus*, one of the Gängeviertel buildings with regular art exhibitions and, in the basement, a bicycle workshop.



'If the city is a set of dentures,' remarked Hamburg journalist and activist Christoph Twickel at the beginning of the chapter on the Gängeviertel in *Gentrifidingsbums* – his anti-gentrification call-to-arms – 'this corner is its oversized incisor' (2010: 71). Modelled, at least in part, on the Berlin *KuLe*, the Gängeviertel is a cultural centre, an anti-capitalist/gentrification squat, an artists' cooperative, a community space, a museum, and much more besides. Physically, it

consist of 12 buildings around a courtyard situated close to the centre of the city, blockaded by its large, corporate neighbours, and giving the impression of a sub-cultural Atlas with the weight of anonymous urban capitalism bearing down upon its shoulders.

It is a unique space with a unique history, and yet, in its way it is a microcosm of postindustrial urban life (at least one side of it). Benjamin argued the general is most observable in the particular; and in the particularity of the Gängeviertel and the experiences of those who live and work in it speak to much that is true of postindustrial cities in general: spatiotemporal *Entgrenzung*, hybridity, and cultural and symbolic conflict in particular.

Stef is an event organizer, curator, and student; like everyone in the Gängeviertel, she has numerous roles, as the majority of jobs that need doing around the project are shared amongst the residents and activists equally. She is also one of only a few people involved to get paid for her 'mini-job' raising funds for cultural events. She became part of the Gängeviertel project in 2011, although she lives with her family elsewhere.

VII.4.1 Culture, Space, and Politics

The buildings which comprise the Gängeviertel are the last remnants of a 19th century residential area that once spread from the port to the inner city, housing thousands of the city's industrial working class families. The area was gradually renovated following a cholera epidemic in 1892, with only the extant buildings surviving after the last development in the 1960s. Owned by the city of Hamburg until 2003 when they were sold to developers, the buildings, which were by this time mostly uninhabited, became occupied first as interim space by artists, and then, when failed development plans left them at risk of demolition, squatted by artists, cultural producers, and political activists. A campaign of demonstrations attracting high-

profile media coverage culminating in a series of cultural events held in the buildings on the 22nd August 2009 under the slogan '*Komm in die Gänge*'²⁷ resulted in them being repurchased by the city of Hamburg with the promise to protect and renovate them. The buildings and the community are administered by the Gängeviertel Genossenschaft 2010 – a cooperative of residents and activists – who are in negotiation with the city of Hamburg to buy the buildings. The area has been named by UNESCO as a site of cultural diversity, and is celebrated as a triumph of the Right to the City movement.

As I am shown around several of the buildings, Greta, a member of the cooperative board, explains to me how the ground floor rooms of most buildings are open to the public, while the floors above, which serve as living quarters and ateliers for the artists-in-residence, are private spaces, for which tenants pay modest sums towards the upkeep of the squat. ... Greta leads me on a slightly dizzying tour through some of the buildings: I climb through windows, and up narrow, bare-wood staircases; I'm led down past a semi-permanent bar area, where several residents are gathered, relaxing with beers and joints, and into a more open area with several rooms partially separated by stone walls, all adorned with multi-coloured lights, posters, and other artworks. Tonight, this area will become a nightclub. (Research Diary, 3rd February 2017)

Questions of politics - either explicit or implicit – featured in many of the narratives in both Hamburg and Newcastle, but they were most explicit in those connected with the Gängeviertel. What in other places of cultural and creative production was a (perhaps very important) feature of other stories was central to, and utterly inseparable from, questions of art and identity. As one participant neatly remarked:

'Just being here is a political statement.' (Greta, writer and activist)

²⁷ A play on words, '*Komm in die Gänge*' literally translates as come into the alleys, a reference to the area's name *Gängeviertel* (alley quarter), and is also a German idiom meaning 'to get on with it' or 'to get into gear'.

There are about 80 people living in the Gängeviertel, and upwards of 200 regularly involved in the various activities going on. Stef explains how the cultural and creative work produced and consumed in the Gängeviertel is intimately connected with the idea of a communal political project.

'People kind of pick what they like [...] because we don't have a lot of hierarchies, and we don't have a lot of written down structure, you know? [...] So people pick their jobs, what they like, so, they see they're interested in something, making their own project, maybe, so this is their kind of job, but, because of the content of the project it kind of helps everybody because it provides some public programme, or some very interesting evening [which] brings money'.

Being part of this kind of collective, in which individual cultural and artistic projects are explicitly bound up in a collective, political movement is a significant feature of identity construction, and Stef's identity as a cultural organizer is in many ways inseparable from the politics of urban transformation, in which aesthetics, art, and culture, are interwoven with critical, political activism.

As well as providing space to marginal artists, writers, and performers, the Gängeviertel regularly hosts exhibitions of art that challenges dominant capitalist discourse.. In addition to this 'formal' cultural work, the everyday activities of the residents and activists in supporting, and the egalitarian and environmentalist ethos underpinning, the various craft workshops that promote and provide space for the exchange of knowledge and the non-commercial pursuit of activities such as bicycle culture, as well as the cafés and bars, all evidence the critical and counter-cultural spirit of the project and the identities of those involved.

Counter-cultural communities and exhibitions of art with a critical social content are not so uncommon, however, and this in itself does not account for the significance of the Gängeviertel: rather, it is the intersection of this critical aesthetic and material urban space that is particularly significant for understanding urban identities. The material space is itself the art and the protest: stage and performance. *'We want to do something different,'* Stef explains. Art and culture are not lofty, disinterested, aesthetic pursuits, nor are they another aspect of an increasingly 'cultural' economy, but are imbedded in the political pursuit of an alternative urbanism.

Maintaining affordable rents for cultural spaces is at the heart of the Gängeviertel project. Hamburg is an expensive city; consequently affordable space for cultural work in the city centre is effectively nonexistent.

[W]e want the people to have room; we provide room and structures, and that's kind of our main doing, so that the people can use these structures and our resources, too - technical resources, human resources, everything - to make their ideas happen. And we invest a lot ... in that, like money, and human power, human work [...] And great things can happen when you provide people with cheap space.'

The most important building in the Gängeviertel, Stef tells me, is the *Fabrique*: the large central building, which, unlike the others which are at least in part residential spaces, is entirely given over to public, communal space. The public mission underpinning the Gängeviertel is fundamental:

'there's around 3,000 sqm. that we consider to be public space, and 5,000 sqm. that will be, when it's refurbished, kind of private space. So this is the relation, or the ratio between these two. So there's a lot of public space here, and this is what we actually do this all for. Of course, we are not this project, of course people do live here and want to live here when it's all finished and everything, but that's not our main goal. The main goal is to provide the public space, and with cultural events for everybody.'

In addition to providing space for arts and cultural activities and cheap residential space in the city centre, for Stef, as with many others, the idea of preserving space for its historical value was fundamental to her coming to the Gängeviertel. This 'heritage protection' highlights an important part of the value of the project, as well as its relationship to the city and its history in general:

'cities are, in a way, stupid, when they are going for this investment architecture thing, this, sell-out, highest bidder [...] building a cheap building, and trying to collect as much rent as they can, you know [...] because it makes the cities faceless, you know? And it makes them lose their history. And I think, if we have something going in Europe, for us, in the world, it's our history, you know?'

The 12 buildings comprising the Gängeviertel as it is today are maintained, despite renovation, as far as possible in original condition, although thoroughly repurposed and given a contemporary face-lift with bold and ambitious graffiti, they stand as part museum and part exhibition, displaying a glimpse of Hamburg's history and a social commentary against gentrification and life in late capitalism.

Figure 7.4 Part of the central courtyard of the Gängeviertel: simultaneously social space, market place and museum.



The Gängeviertel is many things, and its spaces, like the overall vision of the buildings and community, are evolving. Consequently, it is a model of hybridized space and spatial *Entgrenzung*, where commercial, personal, and social spaces blur, and are continually reshaped and redefined. Cultural production and consumption occur often simultaneously and in the same spaces – while not all residents are artists, they all participate in the collective production of the space, which is itself a work of art (in the sense that spaces are covered with graffiti and visual art, but also that the aesthetic of the space itself is deliberately cultivated to have cultural and political meaning). The public spaces are likewise consumed collectively through socializing, and, when cultural events are hosted, through the consumption of the art/cultural commodities on offer.

VII.4.2 Spaces of Conflict

As political space, which is explicitly exerting a challenge to capitalist urban development and gentrification, conflict is a significant feature of the Gängeviertel as a project, and the artistic identities connected with it. The squat itself is the result of conflict over ownership and use of space, and ongoing conflict with the city over the ownership and protection of the buildings is a major preoccupation of the Gängeviertel.

Stef's insistence on both providing public space and cultural events and in the value of retaining historical space is entirely opposed to what she understands as the city authorities' concerted efforts to regenerate the city in line with what she sees as a fundamentally commercial understanding of space.

'Hamburg, from this trade perspective, and this sales perspective [...] they don't take too much care of spaces [that don't make money] [...] The numbers are always more important.'

This highlights an important aspect of how Stef's understanding of space conflicts with that of the city. For Stef, the value of space is cultural and aesthetic, whereas she sees the city as only (or at least primarily) valuing space economically.

Not only does she reject the commodified, financialized valuation of space (*'you cannot put a number on something like this'*), Stef places particular emphasis on the importance of pressure from citizens in protecting urban space.

'[Cities] always need citizens to push them to actually ... don't sell out things, don't, you know, tear it down and build something new, you know? Value your heritage, because it's your face, it makes you distinguishable, distinctive from other cities, and this is what you have going.'

As their use of space is inseparable from their political project, the continued existence of the Gängeviertel, and their ability to preserve and construct space aesthetically is viewed as a directly political act; one which has, by virtue of demonstrating alternative cultural values around the value and purpose of art and urban space, the potential to critique and challenge dominant idea about urban development.

As a result of this central conflict between the city's economic and commercial valuation of space and her own social, cultural valuation, Stef sees the Gängeviertel resting in an uneasy alliance with the city of Hamburg. On the one hand, the city benefits from the presence of an alternative cultural centre:

'in a way they are kind of comfortable with what is taking place here, they're advertising with us, we are in at least ten tourist books'

But at the same time, Stef, like others in the Gängeviertel wonder about the long-term motivations of the city:

'they want a social, cultural space here, they want artists here, that's obvious, I think, that they're not our opponents in that respect [...] But they wouldn't mind if we would die out over the years. They wouldn't mind, because in a way they also have in the back of their heads that in 20 years, when all the credits are paid off, and all, you know, it will be a very nice place to sell for a double-digit number of millions'

Stef's scepticism over the city's ultimate motivations and her opposition to the economic, commercialized logic of urban redevelopment extends to her feelings towards what she sees as

an economic, and instrumental use of culture in urban regeneration and Hamburg's cultural or creative city agenda.

The conflict between the cultural and economic valuations of space is evident in Stef's scepticism over the creative city logic, of which she sees the city of Hamburg as clearly a part. 'They've invented a new commodity,' she explains:

'they say they do value creative people, and creative economy, they created this term "creative economy" for it, and then tried to put as much art in it as they can, but, erm, it's not really working in my eyes, because I think what we're doing, and what an artistic perspective maybe is, is that you don't do it for money, yeah? It's not for money, and it's not for the sales [...] even a basic income for these people would be, like a dream [...]
And, of course, there's this gap, which you can never really bridge, between the kinds of arts who are really able to make money and the kinds of arts who are not, and we're the latter'.

Conflicts over the meaning and value of space, however, are not just evident between the cultural producers and activists of the Gängeviertel and the city: Stef's story also highlights conflict and ambivalence within artistic and political groups. There are different people involved in the Gängeviertel with different ideas about how to use the space, and they do not all agree. These spaces have been acquired through political unrest and conflict, and the cultural and creative workers living and working in them identify very closely with these struggles. For some, this creates difficulty reconciling the idea of dedicating time and energy in constructing these spaces where they live and work with the rejection of private property and ownership; values which, for others, are fundamental to the importance and *identity* of the Gängeviertel itself.

'There is a tendency amongst people, always, to kind of... privatize ... this is such an ongoing factor of also conflict, and of interests colliding ... that people have the feeling that they're entitled to something, or that they own something that isn't really meant for private ownership.' (Markus, photographer and activist)

Stef made the decision not to live in the Gängeviertel because she doesn't want to get drawn into some of these conflicts. In an interesting inversion, being part of a cultural collective like the Gängeviertel can prove challenging for the typically cosmopolitan outlooks associated with urban living and urban identities:

'[W]hen you're here it's like a village, and people behave like in a village. So you have these, erm, sides ... on different opinions, people who like each other, people who hate each other, and, you can, kind of make something out of it. ... It's kind of good to be not part of that [because] ... it also creates conflicts, and so it's good to have this outside perspective, and not to be part of these things.'

The construction of space as art and as museum is necessarily opposed to renovations which standardize the space and erase the vernacular particularity which the Gängeviertel seeks to protect. In their struggles to maintain the authenticity of the Gängeviertel, Stef and others have encountered significant conflict with the city government. According to Stef, the city repeatedly tries to treat the Gängeviertel in the same manner as other city-owned properties, imposing 'standard' practices of upkeep and assessing them unsuitable regulations. This is particularly significant with the ongoing renovations being carried out on the buildings:

'from our perspective it's always better to do less [...] because it kind of, you know, kills the energy of the history in a place like that, when you have these people coming with their big containers, and then in the end everything is white, and then we stand there on the ladder and wash it off again.'

These conflicts reflect not only the importance of preserving the heritage of the Gängeviertel, but also speak to the importance of being culturally and aesthetically *different*: treating the buildings of the Gängeviertel *as any other*, would undermine not only their historical aesthetic, but also their cultural and political significance as *particular space*. These conflicts over space reflect not only different attitudes towards urban spaces, but, from Stef's point of view, reflect the fundamental divide between the kinds of artistic identities associated with the Gängeviertel and the mainstream identities with which they stand in contrast: that they simply don't understand them.

VII.4.3 Artistic Identity and the Cultural Other: *'They just don't get us'*

Stef constructs an identity which clearly establishes her - and by extension the *Gängeviertel* project in general - as oppositional to the socio-economic and cultural mainstream. She insists that they are doing things differently, and in doing so, constructs herself in opposition to a mainstream cultural 'other'. Stef insists that organizations such as the City of Hamburg, and the HKG, as well as individuals associated with 'mainstream' cultural or commercial activities, do not understand the motivations of the Gängeviertel.

Stef paints a vivid picture of this 'mainstream' identity when she recounts a story of how the Gängeviertel acquired a building in a different part of the city:

'they had a tenant there which they didn't like anymore, it was one of those cultural investors, which made a name for themselves buying old buildings and kicking the artists in it out ... [...] he had also that building ... and was paying very little rent, because he kind of convinced the HafenCity that he would make some great cultural things there, and would make [it] interesting, you know, as a cultural place, but he of course didn't manage, because ... he's a snob, and he doesn't really know the right people, in a way, and he would like to be in this 'high cultural' field, but I think he's not really accepted there ... So it didn't work out for him, and they were kind of annoyed with him also, because he tried to play the city with [a previous investment] and so they were pretty pissed off. And so they kicked him out and asked us if we wanted to move in ... [...] we thought that he would make a scene, you know, if he gets kicked out by the Gängeviertel, because he knows a lot of people here, and there is, kind of conflict, of course, so we tried to keep it quiet and everything, ... but in the end he moved out after a little pay-off, or whatever, I don't care, and we moved in.'

In her characterization of the 'cultural investor', Stef constructs a telling image of the 'mainstream' cultural field to which she is opposed. The cultural investor is portrayed as someone using culture instrumentally for economic ends – buying buildings and kicking artists out. Although he wants to be thought of as cultural, he, just like the mainstream attitude towards the Gängeviertel's use of and approach to space and culture, doesn't 'get it', and so is seen as inauthentic. Perhaps most tellingly, he is portrayed as repeatedly dishonest (and perhaps corrupt) in his dealings with the city: his interests are financial and selfish, in contrast to Stef's which are genuinely cultural and civic-minded.

VII.4.4 Summary

Stef's story draws attention to a particularly and explicitly political relationship between artistic identities and urban space. The cultural and creative work going on in the Gängeviertel blurs the lines between art and politics, production and consumption, and culture and economy while simultaneously making an explicit stand against the commercialization of culture and urban space, and gentrification.

Art and culture are inseparable from the politics of everyday life here. This is not space to do cultural and creative work in a straightforward fashion, the space *is the art*, and the art is the everyday: as Stef put it: *'We live our concept every day'*.

Stef's story also speaks to the challenges faced by artists and organizations that do take such oppositional positions in regards to the cities, and the political cultures, in which they are located. In seeking to secure the future of the Gängeviertel, negotiations with the city have been entered into. Additionally, the success of the Gängeviertel as an 'alternative' cultural centre has led to them becoming a tourist attraction (Fraeser, 2017):

'there are people coming here all the time, looking round, I sometimes feel like I'm in a zoo'. (Markus, photographer and activist)

In a sense, the Gängeviertel has been appropriated by the city: marketed as a part of the cultural landscape and co-opted in promotion of the creative city agenda, and, ultimately the urban regeneration which accompanies it; and while the residents and artists of the Gängeviertel reject and resist this indirect commodification of their spaces, they are also in a way dependent upon it, not only for the necessary income it generates for them, but because of the impact on their uneasy alliance with the city should they no longer be 'attractive'.

VII.5 Anne's Story: Creativity and Liminality

The creation of the HafenCity is perhaps the most indicative of the character of the trajectory from the industrial to post-industrial in Hamburg. The creation of HafenCity - a new mixed-use development on the river Elbe adjacent to the port of Hamburg and less than 1km from the centre of the city - is the biggest inner-city development project in Europe: with a budget of c.EUR 10.9bn of public and private investment,²⁸ and taking place over 30 years, it covers an area of 157 ha. and will enlarge Hamburg's central city area by approximately 40% (HafenCity Hamburg, 2017a). The HafenCity was designed as a mixed-use 'city of quarters' (HafenCity Hamburg, 2016: 14), comprising residential units, business premises, 'plus educational institutions, restaurants and bars, retail, cultural and leisure amenities, with parks, plazas and promenades' (*ibid.*: 10). Combined with flagship projects such as the Elbphilharmonie concert hall,²⁹ the Science Centre, designed by Rem Koolhaas, and the relocation of the International Maritime Museum, 'makes the HafenCity appear as a lighthouse through which the city of Hamburg wants to, and presumably will, significantly increase its visibility in the global location competition' (Thiel *et al.*, 2010: 131).

The design of HafenCity was explicitly to both maintain and promote identity (HafenCity Hamburg, 2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2018): HafenCity Hamburg was clear that in creating HafenCity, 'Hamburg's identity as a maritime port city will be underscored in the process and HafenCity itself serve as a blueprint for the development of the European city of the 21st century' (HafenCity Hamburg, 2016: 14). The symbolic mix of industrial and post-industrial - the (post-industrial) branding of the city, as well as the 'architectonic' design involved in building of such an ambitious development project (Burgers, 2000; Gospodini, 2006), which does not threaten to

²⁸ This total investment represents (approximately) EUR 2.4bn public investment (EUR 1.5bn from land revenues), and EUR 8.5bn from private investment. Estimated from current prices (HafenCity Hamburg, 2016).

²⁹ Designed by internationally renowned Swiss architect firm Herzog & de Meuron also responsible for the Tate Modern.

overwrite the industrial history, culture, and identity of Hamburg as a Hanseatic port city, but, instead to 'combine the historicity of the European city with the forward-looking sense of modernity' (Madanipour, 2004: 268).

Figure 7.5 View over the *Am Standtorkai/Dalmankai Quarter* at the western end of HafenCity from Elbphilharmonie.



If this is taken alongside Burgers's claim that 'the main message of post-industrial urban architecture is an expression of power and solidarity *vis-à-vis* the outsider and the visitor,' then HafenCity is expressing solidarity with both its history and its future. But, perhaps moreover, it is also expressing solidarity with the insider and the resident: stating that while Hamburg is changing, and evolving as a post-industrial city, it is not losing its heritage. The powerfully symbolic architecture of the Elbphilharmonie concert hall (see Figure 7.6) – built on the roof of the *Kaispeicher A* warehouse, itself a Hamburg landmark for being formerly the largest

warehouse in the Harbour,³⁰ and fashioned in the design of a wave - proclaims both the maritime history of Hamburg and its confidence as a post-industrial, creative city.

Figure 7.6 Marina at *Am Standtorkai* quarter of HafenCity overlooked by Elbphilharmonie.



At the corner of the HafenCity, lies the *Oberhafen* (upper harbour). Vestiges of the industrial port, these vast railroad storage sheds around a central hall where freight-trains used to be repaired are monuments to the significance of transport to Hamburg's past. Although it was still officially in use as railroad storage for the port until 2015, the area had been largely abandoned and, following a now familiar story, the Oberhafen, like similar areas in other cities, had begun to attract cultural and creative organizations. Like other areas of formerly industrial space connected with the harbour, it was due to be levelled to make way for the sprawling development of the HafenCity. Instead, the buildings have been kept intact, and, since 2010, the area has been designated a 'cultural and creative quarter' (HCH, 2011, 2013), administered by

³⁰ The original warehouse, the *Kaiserspeicher* (lit. Emperor Warehouse after Kaiser Wilhelm I), built in 1875, was destroyed by Allied bombing during the Second World War. It was rebuilt in 1963 and renamed *Kaispeicher*. Cocoa, tobacco and tea were still stored in the *Kaispeicher* up until the 1990s.

the Hamburg Kreativgesellschaft (HKG). Currently ‘one of the most exciting places in Hamburg for creative artists’ (Frommeyer, 2017), the area is now home to a vibrant and growing cultural and creative quarter; with event, skate, and sports halls, and a nightclub contributing to the diverse urban environment. Unusual for cultural quarters, which are, as Frommeyer (2017) puts it, ‘often elbowed out into peripheral areas’, Oberhafen ‘is growing up almost in the city centre. Close to the super-modern glass structures of the HafenCity district and the historical Deichtorhallen, now a museum of photography and international art’.

Ambivalent attitudes towards urban culture and identities are an important feature of Anne’s story, as are questions of the liminality of creative spaces. Unlike many respondents, Anne has been heavily involved in working with the city authorities in the transformation of her creative space, and her story highlights some of the contradictions of closer working relationships between CCIs and city authorities.

VII.5.1 A Bit of Colour against the Grey

Anne is reclining in the warm but shaded air of the central hall. Wearing a loose flowing, flowery dress and sunglasses, she is dressed today in the same relaxed, leisurely way she was at the street party. She tells me that she was out celebrating with her brother late last night, and is still hungover this afternoon. There is a constant buzz of activity, but there is still a very easy-going feel to the area, and Anne gives the impression of someone for whom the most important things in life are certainly not just work. (Research Diary, 31st May 2017)

Anne is a set designer and cultural entrepreneur. Along with several other cultural and creative workers and businesses, she has been involved in establishing the cultural and creative quarter in the Oberhafen. ‘*I’m always looking for a bit of something different,*’ she explains. Anne moved

to Hamburg specifically to develop her business in the Oberhafen. Having previously planned to move to Berlin - widely recognised as Germany's principal creative city (Colomb, 2012; Müller, 2013; Novy and Colomb, 2013) – Anne frequently contrasts Hamburg and Berlin in describing the city and her relationship to it.

Berlin is the obvious choice for people like her to go to, she explains:

'I find it exciting there ... because there are more places ... possibilities on offer ... more room for imagination, more places for fantasy, more places for ... ideas without money.'

Anne describes her idea of cultural and creative places as *'freestyle'* – *'a mixture of ... hippy, relaxed, a bit extroverted ... and, erm ... not financially oriented'*; something which Hamburg, with its history as a port city built firmly on commerce, and the characteristic North German stern, standoffishness, Anne sees as distinctly lacking. *'Hamburg,'* she says, *'is a business city ... not a freestyle city.'* Rather than being drawn to the city by its cultural identity, Anne has come despite it: drawn by a much stronger appeal of the particular site and the opportunities it presents. The only reason not to go to Berlin, she tells me, is the opportunities she has at the Oberhafen.

'I feel that with this project, in this place, I can get a bit of the freestyle that one simply misses in Hamburg.'

The aesthetics of the Oberhafen, and their relation to those of the broader landscape of Hafencity are a significant part of the area's appeal. As Anne puts it:

'we have this ... island in the Oberhafen ... and it has turned out to be absolutely ... it's has fulfilled even more ... I would never have thought it

could be so colourful ... I would have thought it would be a bit pragmatic ... but it's really getting so many crazy things ... and ... that is visually so really ... fantastic. I would not have thought ... I had no real picture in mind ... but ... erm, ... I thought it would be really more material ... and not so much about value'. (My emphasis)

For Anne, the HafenCity very clearly represents her idea of the identity of Hamburg: it is the crass, consumerist, predictable, high-art, corporate kind of culture: the exact opposite of her own. The appeal of the Oberhafen's aesthetic is in its projection of an alternative: an island of colour, of spontaneous, freestyle, cultural and creative activity. It is no coincidence that it is one of only a few instances where the HafenCity has not been built on formerly unused space or space comprehensively cleared, and consequently a rare example of where the history of place is materially visible. Unlike the rest of the HafenCity, which, by virtue of its 'newness' has no extant history – and as a result is seen by many as soulless – the Oberhafen is replete with lifeworld (Lefebvre, 1991): 'afflicted with emotion', it is 'a piece of the "true" city in the emerging HafenCity' (Brunner, 2016: 8). This is not to suggest that the HafenCity is *without* culture or signification: rather, for Anne, it is *over determined* and artificial. '*It is not naturally grown ... and you feel it,*' she explains; consequently, while place constantly evolves, there is a sense in which the HafenCity was created as *finished space*. The appeal of the Oberhafen, for Anne, is not just that it has a connection with history, but that it is a place *in progress*.

Anne's interest in places as evolving, and as an aesthetic project, is connected not only to her artistic practice as a set designer, but is also implicated in her choice of Hamburg over Berlin. '*I'm more Berlin than Hamburg ... simply by character*' she says; however:

'I've never felt that I had to do this in Berlin ... because Berlin has so many fantastic places ... so much crazy, extroverted places ... that this stiff and

very serious city of Hamburg ... is very much in need of a bit of ... loosening up'.

In a reversal of the standard logic of artists being drawn to cultural places, what Anne perceives as Hamburg's *lack* of creative identity, and its rather reserved, business attitude, becomes a key attraction because it can (and needs to be) shaken up and disturbed; Anne is in part drawn to Hamburg not because the scene is there, as in Berlin, but *because it can be created*.

VII.5.2 Creating Creative Space

The walls of the vast warehouses are covered with smatterings of colourful, artistic graffiti – the handshake of creative cultural scene. Older, less picturesque graffiti are visible in places, but as the symbolic value of the area changes with its use, these are being overwritten. ... The warehouses and the streets between them lie under the shadow of a single, high chimney, reminding me that this area - which used to be used for repairing trains, and is now itself being 'repaired' by the incoming cultural and creative community - is, like so many similar settings, not made-for-purpose, but only recently reclaimed from post-industrial neglect. (Research Diary, 18th May 2016)

The particular characteristics of the Oberhafen are essential to Anne's decision to work in Hamburg:

'[W]e wouldn't have done this in any other place ... one hundred percent due to the place ... absolutely.'

However, Anne's coming to the Oberhafen was not the result of a straightforward search for suitable space. Anne's decision to establish her business in the Oberhafen was the result of what she calls a 'magical meeting' of ideas, people, and place. *'I've had this idea somewhere in the back of my mind for ten years ... nothing like this existed before ... not in Berlin, not in Paris,'* she says, but the perfect space and circumstances had never appeared. The city of Hamburg played a crucial role here:

'the city had this plan with the Oberhafen ... to back a project for this [...] and we had ten days ... to make a pitch ... for this hall ... within ten days ... from nothing ... and we had no concept except ... it had to be done somehow ... within ten days Hamburg had made the complete concept'.

While the geographical location and the material landscape of the Oberhafen were long established, the vibrant, creative atmosphere that now characterizes the Oberhafen has been recently created. It is the result, Anne says, of a great deal of time and bureaucratic work: *'We had to do a lot of homework so that we could have this freestyle':*

'[W]hat all looks so spontaneous and colourful actually has a very solid basis [...] we had to work ... one and half years just with Excel tables, just with business plans, just with calculations'.

Figure 7.7 The former railway storage sheds now home to Oberhafen’s cultural and creative organizations.



As the Oberhafen is part of the Hafencity development – and owned by Hafencity Hamburg GmbH – its transformation into a ‘freestyle’ area attractive to artists and cultural workers has taken place not just through the actions of the cultural and creative workers themselves, but in partnership with the city, and particularly the HKG. The diversity and freestyle atmosphere was deliberately planned. As Wilhelm explains:

‘the decision was not to, like to do, like, ... a kind of mono-cultural [area] ... [with a planned] decision for everything ... like, everything arts, ... it's really, like it's really mixed ... it's planned like, um, ... like a diverse district.’

(Wilhelm, HKG)

This approach to nurturing the development of cultural areas which is conscious of artists' and cultural/creative producers' needs is fundamental to the HKG's approach, Wilhelm explains; but consciously fostering diversity was a long and difficult process.

'It took us fifteen months,' Anne says; during which time all her efforts were in renovating and transforming the spaces that were to become the first cultural and creative businesses in the Oberhafen and she was unable to earn any money. It was only through the funding provided by the city that she was able to manage.

'we had and we have ... big, big support from ... HafenCity [...] we had big support of the Department of Culture ... the Department for Urban Development ... um ... many, many people decided ... to give us support at the start.'

This support was the result of a broad consensus amongst officials in the Hamburg government and HafenCity that the development of a 'cultural quarter' in the Oberhafen was greatly desirable.

'We had great support ... from Hamburg, because everybody understood. "Great idea! Finally, finally!" Everyone understood that ... because everyone agreed that ... it's shit when beautiful things are thrown away ... everyone understood that.'

The support that Anne received from the city of Hamburg (Hamburg HafenCity GmbH, and HKG in particular) has been instrumental for Anne; however, there have been times in which the cultural and creative workers in the Oberhafen and the HafenCity have been in conflict.

In what was probably the most telling incident, Anne recalls a disagreement over the roof of the central hall (see Figure 7.8):

'[T]hey wanted to tear down this roof from the station [...] because of fire protection ... four thousand square metre there, this really, really special part of the buildings [...] and then they said, "Oh my god, there are static problems, if they put away the roof, then all this here [indicates buildings around us] ... our part, all this will have to go too." And then the Oberhafen will be like [indicates tearing down and sweeping away] ... so, it would pull the heart out of it.'

It is particularly illustrative that it was a disagreement over the significance of part of the buildings. While both parties' focus was on the materiality of the Oberhafen, the HafenCity authorities were primarily concerned with practical concerns of safety and functionality of the roof, for Anne, these issues were secondary to its aesthetic value.³¹

In the end, it was the intervention of a group of wealthy individuals who stepped in to provide new safety appraisals that swayed the HafenCity authorities and saved the roof (and, by extension, the Oberhafen quarter as it currently exists). There is a great tradition in Hamburg, Anne explains, of rich people, business people, becoming involved in poorer projects:

³¹ While the aesthetics of the roof were at the centre of Anne's argument, she did not discount concerns of safety – the roof had been deemed safe by independent evaluators months before the Hamburg authorities raised the issue.

Figure 7.8 The central hall of the Oberhafen and its 4,000sqm. roof.



'it's a kind of honour ... you find it everywhere ... I think, erm, in Hamburg, you have all these foundations [...] many people get together, rich people, ... and we have to save the little dogs ... we have to save the Oberhafen ... I think in Hamburg [...] there's a long tradition of ... rich people who help social projects ... or schools ... it's part of the social life of rich people and of business people to give money, to be involved'.

Despite the support they have received and their close relationship with the city the Oberhafen's position is still precarious and exists in a state of potential disruption. The fact that, in the case concerning the roof, the alternative 'freestyle' space and lifestyle was supported not by the city itself, but industrial capitalists, reflects the ambivalent nature of the relationship between the Oberhafen, and its alternative aesthetic values, and those of the business-minded and still heavily industrial society within and alongside which they exist. In many ways, the

Oberhafen can be seen as occupying a very liminal space in relation to the material and cultural landscape of Hamburg.

VII.5.3 Liminal Creative Spaces

In creating the vibrant freestyle place of the Oberhafen, Anne is conscious of how her ideas of culture relate to, differ from, and sometimes conflict with those of Hamburg more generally. Fundamentally, this is about a different kind of culture.

'[W]e have many big, ugly events [...] like, Schlagermove ... thousands and thousands of drunken people are costumed like 70s hippies [...] it's horrible, horrible ... really ... And we have Hafengeburtstag ... always the same, bleurgh ... yes ... and musicals, musicals, musicals, musicals, musicals'

'if I were a tourist,' Anne says, 'I would think like, "Oh, yes, we have to go to a musical, and then we have to go to the harbour ... and go with some Aida Kreuzfahrtschiff.'³² Anne is dismissive of Hamburg's claims to be a cultural and creative city:

'Lots of people who perhaps love high-culture ... love Hamburg ... or people who, I don't know if the galleries in Hamburg are better than those in Berlin ... I don't know ... to me culture is more subculture ... things that just happen ... and that's what's not so noticeable in Hamburg'

The juxtaposition of Anne's colourful, freestyle, subculture against Hamburg's traditional, organized, and commercial culture is mirrored in how the Oberhafen relates to the HafenCity:

³² Cruise ships often stop at Hamburg and luxury liners arriving are often greeted by music and crowds of spectators.

'Here we are, creative spaces, crazy things, in our workshops ... and here, hand in hand with the HafenCity ... it's a bit absurd.'

The Oberhafen exists within the HafenCity – spatially, administratively, and symbolically (through place-marketing) – and yet is other to it: it is old (formerly industrial) rather than brand new; it is informal and non-corporate; it is freestyle rather than modernist; it is vernacular and *artistic* creative rather than digital new media creative. The contrast between not only the material landscapes, but the cultures and aesthetics of the Oberhafen and the HafenCity, Anne indicates, places the two *kinds of places* in ambivalent juxtaposition:

'I think it's very interesting ... HafenCity ... and the Oberhafen ... because different is not possible for the HafenCity [...] these new buildings, with millions worth of investment ... and these challenges ... these islands [...] to have them inside ... or at the edge ... the HafenCity is suddenly confronted with these things that don't fit.'

At the same time, Anne says they are very well supported by the city, and the cultural and creative workers of the Oberhafen benefit from a good relationship with their neighbour-landlords. In consequence of the ambivalence of this 'supportive lack of fit', the Oberhafen can be read as liminal space, where the 'mainstream' everyday spatiotemporal, cultural, and symbolic patterns of the HafenCity are juxtaposed and combined with 'alternative' or 'bohemian' patterns. The *Entgrenzung* between HafenCity and Oberhafen – between business and commercial culture and the artistic and freestyle – can be seen in the everyday interactions between the cultural workers of the Oberhafen and the HafenCity and HKG.

'[W]e have a very personal contact between us,' Anne says:

*'it's always the same people appearing ... [the representative of HafenCity]
... he comes past on his bike ... "Ah! Moin! Would you like a coffee?"³³ ... it's
very friendly and informal [...] and that's grown and developed over time ...
we know each other ... and respect each other.'*

Thus, while for many cultural and creative workers local government authorities and private developers are a more-or-less significant, and more-or-less distant, 'other' – for Anne, they are a familiar part of her everyday landscape. At the weekly meeting between cultural and creative workers and the HafenCity authorities, only the HafenCity executive is wearing a suit. He sits and drinks coffee while some of the artists and cultural and creative workers outside their small cafe. They discuss internet cabling and development projections over cappuccinos and falafel.

In this liminal position the Oberhafen occupies, it represents a kind of cultural and creative economy that the authorities can understand. The area, in part because of its almost blank-slate of cultural identity (lack of established community), can exist in this liminal space. It is alternative, vernacular, colourful against the grey, in a way which gives the artists freedom and control, without being in any way dangerous. It can be included in the HafenCity's advertising – in a way which is far more inclusive than places such as the Gängeviertel – because it complements and contrasts with the rest of HafenCity without ever threatening it. Moreover, Anne remarks that in nurturing the Oberhafen, so that it acts as a relief from the growing postindustrial landscape of smart eateries and glass-fronted residential blocks, the HafenCity

³³ The greeting 'Moin!' (or sometimes 'Moin moin') and its use as a familiar, friendly alternative to the more traditionally reserved *Hochdeutsch* greeting of 'Guten Tag' is a particularly symbolic element of Hamburg culture and identity. The word itself is a feature of *Plattdeutsch* - a Low German dialect spoken in parts of Northern Germany and the Netherlands connect to the language of the Hanseatic League, and so implicitly connected with Hamburg's maritime history.

authorities have nullified the voices of many citizens of Hamburg who opposed the HafenCity development or are dissatisfied with it.

'[I]t's very clever of the city to have done it like this ... very clever ... and I think it's a kind of green-washing ... it's good for both sides ... it's a kind of green-washing to the HafenCity, because the HafenCity ... was not so popular ... it is not so popular still ... it's really empty and it's really boring'

Nevertheless, the *modus vivendi* that exists between the liminal space of the Oberhafen and the HafenCity more generally is not assumed to be everlasting. As Anne describes, they have in the past been suspicious of the city's true agenda:

'[W]e still wonder why did they want to [...] tear down [the roof] [...] I don't know ... maybe the HafenCity was ... thinking like ... "OK, we have to destroy the Oberhafen before it gets too fancy, because [...] then they will stay forever"'

As is the case with other cultural and creative spaces (in both Hamburg and Newcastle), concerns for the longevity of the area are significant features. *'[S]ometimes I think I'm a little bit naive ... and I think, "oh, they're just so nice!"'* Anne says. She wonders if in the future, when the HafenCity development is completed, and has started to become more popular, if things will change.

'[M]aybe [...] they were thinking like, "OK, in fifteen years this is done and this [indicating Oberhafen] will be really expensive here ... then, yeah, OK," and now, pfft! [gestures wiping buildings and cultural and creative workers off the area] [...] maybe that was the plan, I don't know.'

VII.5.4 Summary

Anne's story presents an important alternative to prevalent accounts of CCIs. Anne did not move to Hamburg because of its reputation as a cultural or creative city – she rejects this characterization of the city; she also did not move because of the existence of an established 'alternative' or 'subcultural' cultural scene or amenities even though she says this is the kind of thing she looks for. She relocated to do her particular job in a particular place despite what she sees as the comparative lack of desirable (for her) cultural presence and undesirable cultural landscape of Hamburg's 'business' city. Place, and the creative production of space, is central to Anne's sense and practice of identity. Like several other respondents, Anne's attachment to her particular location reflected not only the importance of place-aesthetics but the desire to play a creative role in constructing cultural and artistic spaces: a desire undoubtedly related to the nature of her creative practice.

Anne's experiences with the Oberhafen also speak to the liminality of artistic and cultural spaces. The ambivalence of Oberhafen's position within and alongside the HafenCity emphasizes the contrasting cultures, aesthetics, and identities they represent. At the same time, the supportive, hybrid way of living and working that has emerged means that the creative space is left to be 'creative' and extroverted, but, in some ways, it is designed, controlled, and mainstreamed. Anne and the other cultural and creative workers have negotiated a way of working – where the pinstripes meet the film-makers – where they are no threat to the HafenCity, but experience means that Anne is still wary of what the future might hold.

The place they are creating is a reflection of the ambivalence of CCIs – and artistic identities – in the newly developed landscape of the HafenCity. The Oberhafen is evolving as hybrid space formed at the intersection of the industrial and the postindustrial, the commercial and the freestyle, the mainstream and the alternative.

Anne's artistic identity also occupies a place between spaces – she is creative, but, despite working in CCI for many years, CCI does not see herself as an artist: her creativity, she says, is all about the transformation of space. Anne is a business woman who shuns formality and embraces freestyle subculture. She works alongside the HafenCity authorities and the HKG in planning for the development of the area, and brushes shoulders with local magnates and philanthropists, but despite the benefits the city has provided, she still sees it as lacking in the kind of culture she seeks.

Even in a city marketing itself as creative, and when CCI have a close working relationship with city authorities, their position can still be highly precarious. The fact that independent benefactors and philanthropists played an instrumental role in saving the Oberhafen when it came into conflict with the city over fire safety regulations speaks to the complexity and precarious nature of the contexts in which CCI often exist.

VII.6 Conclusions

Like those from Newcastle, the stories presented in this chapter are all unique and describe the experiences and identity practices of particular individuals in the city of Hamburg. However, there are elements in each of these stories, which, while emerging in particular and context-dependent ways, are indicative of more general trends relating to the material, cultural, political, and symbolic landscape of Hamburg and its relationship to the artistic identities of people working in the city's CCI.

As in Newcastle the artistic community of Hamburg was frequently referenced. Despite the different attitudes (and available means) of the authorities of the two cities to promote and support CCI, the grassroots, DIY-culture of arts communities was praised. Omar's story

particularly highlighted the importance not only of a varied community of artists sharing an outlook and a willingness and determination to share resources and skills in order to realize cultural projects, but in the culture generated within communities to support and encourage new and innovative projects. Similarly, the cultural and creative workers of the Gängeviertel illustrated a similar point in microcosm with their principle of 'the doers decide': by which individual (and collective) innovation and engagement with the project and the community was encouraged by the practice of supporting the people who act.

The transformation and availability of urban space was also significant for participants in Hamburg. Hamburg is a rich city, and while much of the urban centre is densely packed, it is not so densely packed as Newcastle. While city centre space, as in any city, is at a premium, Hamburg has more space, and more suitable space, for artists and CCIs. Combined with the HKG's efforts at sourcing and securing space for artists and CCIs, the questions over space in Hamburg are, in many instances, quite different to those in Newcastle – although, this does not imply suitable space is always readily available, and, as Stef's story suggests, questions of gentrification and artists being 'developed out' are certainly not unheard of (see also Twickel, 2010). Nevertheless, participants were concerned about available spaces increasingly being away from the urban centre (the rarity of Oberhafen's central location is one of its most attractive features according to a key informant with the HKG), and the gradual homogenization of urban space removing the diverse and 'subcultural' characteristics and aesthetics of spaces that make for suitable landscapes for cultural and creative work, and its implications for the 'identity' of the city or parts thereof.

The role of the HKG in Hamburg's cultural economy is significant, not only because it acts as a bridge between numerous CCIs and other industry areas, providing training and creating networks, and also in its pivotal capacity as broker of space for smaller artistic and cultural and creative enterprises, but also in its symbolic capacity signifying the city of Hamburg's attitude towards CCIs. This is not to suggest the role of the HKG is unproblematic, however. As they take

their mission from the official German definition of 'creative industries' (itself derived from the DCMS definitions), the HKG is explicitly concerned with facilitating CCIs directed at generating profit through the market. Although not intrinsically a failing, this does put it at odds with, or at least marginal to, some artistic identities and worldviews which see the tendency towards an economic logic in art and culture as allied with neoliberal capitalism and the commodification of urban space.

Hamburg's status as a city state is also of significance. Its considerable devolved power allows the city greater freedom in pursuing paths into the postindustrial, and thus better able to innovate and adapt, such as with the creation of the HKG. However it also creates an insularity which many respondents felt impeded its ability to look beyond its borders, and does little to challenge the power held by the maritime families³⁴ interested in reinforcing a dependence on the 'old ways' associated with the port in particular. However, as Anne's story indicated, philanthropic work is an established practice in Hamburg, and arts and cultural concerns are frequent beneficiaries, indicating a markedly complex and ambivalent relationship between the 'new economy' of the CCIs and the 'old guard' of Hamburg's industrial and maritime history.

There was a tendency in the accounts of participants in Hamburg to acknowledge the relationship between the industrial and the postindustrial, as well as the relationship between traditional industry and CCIs in ways which reflected the fact that traditional industry and the postindustrial economy exist in parallel in the city and its 'dual trajectory'. Whereas in Newcastle, industrial work, culture, and identity were sometimes (but certainly not always) referred to as something absent, or no longer visible, in Hamburg, the very obvious and well presented (and marketed) presence of both traditional industry (especially, but not exclusively) the port and the cultural, creative, and postindustrial featured frequently.

³⁴ The old-money families in Hamburg are sometimes referred to as *Pfeffersackers* (pepper-sackers) – a reference to the origins of their money in the traditional maritime import trade in which spices were particularly prominent.

In connection with the 'dual trajectory' of Hamburg, participants often referred to the material (and symbolic) transformations which were seen as connected to the cultural economy of the city, in particular the building of HafenCity and the image, or identity, of the city represented by the development and its (iconic) architecture, but also the implications for other, formerly alternative, areas of the city, such as the Schanzenviertel, or the city centre around the Gängeviertel, which were experiencing transformation in their material and cultural landscapes and identities through gentrification and/or regeneration.

While these themes, like those that emerged from the stories from Newcastle, are neither universal nor exhaustive, they are indicative of the kinds of issues which featured in cultural and creative worker's experiences and identities in Hamburg. There are similarities and differences between the accounts of participants in Hamburg, and the themes which emerged from the data, and those from Newcastle. In the next chapter, I draw out some of these similarities and differences, and their implications for understanding the artistic identities of people working in the CCIs by constructing a constellation of underlying contradictions.

Chapter VIII: Exploring Postindustrial Identities

VIII.1. Introduction

The stories in the previous two chapters provide insight into the variety of ways in which people working in CCIs in Newcastle and Hamburg experience and make sense of the cultural economies in which they work and the transformations of the urban spaces in which these economies operate. While these stories provide very specific accounts of the myriad ways in which issues of culture, place, and memory are implicated in processes of identification in particular contexts, they also speak to the broader context in which these practices of identification take place and to which they are related: that is, the dialectic of art and economy and the artistic identities which are constructed in relation to it.

In this chapter, I build on the stories encountered in chapters 6 and 7, as well as drawing further on data gathered from the ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and *Stadtherumgehen*, to explore some of the contradictory elements of the dialectic of art and economy and how they are implicated in the construction and performance of the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs.

As stated in the methodology, the intention of this research is not to attempt to specify, delineate, typologize, or *identify* (in the Hegelian-Adornian sense) factors characteristic of, or particular to, postindustrial identities in CCIs. These identities belong to the order of the nonidentical, and any attempt to subsume them within the identical by way of 'wretched cover concepts' would destroy their objective particularity - the very thing which we would be trying to capture. Instead, in the discussions that follow, I aim to establish *a way of looking at*

postindustrial identities while avoiding, as far as possible, any attempt to categorize or capture the inherent, contradictory dynamic of the dialectical relationship between subject and object that is identification, and the *sine qua non* of all attempts at understanding identity, within rigid conceptuality. Following Adorno and Benjamin, I approach this through the arrangement of a constellation of dialectical conceptual devices, each of which presents a transitive, partial truth of urban postindustrial identities as they exist within their social, spatial, and historical contexts, but which is by no means *necessary, exhaustive, or definitive* of those identities in general. The conceptual devices included in this constellation emerged from the fieldwork: they were issues that reappeared, in various combinations, and in multiple contexts throughout the research, appearing in both participants' own narratives and in my own observations and reflections. This is not to say that they were always present, or that they exist in any immutable hierarchy: some of these issues would be far more important than others to some participants, and others would be quite alien. Moreover, in many cases these issues are, in actuality, inseparably interconnected. They are treated here separately only in deference to the demands of explication.

This discussion, and this constellation, is not an attempt to solve the riddle of what postindustrial identities *are*, or to *identify* any characteristics that would define them, but rather an attempt to advance a picture of what emerges from all that which is *not (and cannot be) explained* by these concepts. By drawing out the contradictions and ambivalences of various dialectical factors as they are expressed and experienced in their particularity, the aim is to perceive a glimpse of the ever changing and ephemeral *nonidentical* that exists *within* the dialectic: the remainder that moves between the concepts and inhabits the interstices of urban materiality; the residual left behind by social change.

VIII.2. The Dialectic of Art and Economy

It is generally accepted that in recent decades deindustrialization, (re)urbanization, and the rise of the postindustrial cultural economy has seen a change in the way that the relationship between work and culture is viewed in many advanced economies. While some are justifiably sceptical of the claims that this indicates an entirely new form of 'culturalized' economy (or economized culture) (du Gay and Pryke, 2002), it seems beyond dispute that the significance of culture for work and identity has taken on new meaning for significant sectors of the postindustrial economy. According to the standard-bearers of this 'new economy', the CCIs – generally seen as the archetypes of this new cultural economy – indicate the reconciliation of the opposition between art and economy that has been a feature of industrial capitalism.

This opposition, Caves (2000) has suggested, goes back to the *art pour l'art* movement that emerged from 18th century romanticism in response to the rationalization of early industrial capitalism. This opposition is built on the argument that art and aesthetics represent an alternative worldview to that of industrial capitalist modernity: in which independent, individual expression and creative artistic genius are constructed as the irreconcilable polar opposites to the routinization, massification, and alienation of industrial capitalism (Banks, 2010a). It is the implication of the increased significance and visibility of CCIs in the postindustrial economy, and the accompanying shift in social and political discourse following the 'creative turn' (Kong, 2014), which has emphasized the creativity, self-expression, and independence of work in the 'new economy' (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009), implies that this opposition has collapsed, and the dialectic between art and economy embedded in industrial capitalism has been reconciled.

Despite the increasing significance of the cultural economy, the logic of the opposition between art and economy - and the images of art and artists which are associated with it - persists and

continues to both capture contemporary imaginations and inform much recent scholarship and policy on CCIs (Banks *et al.*, 2017; McRobbie, 2016a; Taylor and Littleton, 2012). The images associated with this opposition are in fact fundamental to the arguments of the loudest proponents of the creative economy (e.g. Florida, 2002b, 2014; Howkins, 2001; Leadbetter and Oakley, 1999). Moreover, it is ultimately this same distinction – between art and economy – that is so often repeated when CCIs are viewed from either side of the dichotomy of Floridian entrepreneurialism or cultural commodification (Thiel, 2017; Banks, 2006). Commentators variously argue over whether the rise of the ‘cultural economy’ (du Gay and Pryke, 2002) represents, as, for example, Florida (2002b, 2014) would have it, the rise of creative individuals revolutionizing the economy and ushering in a new field of ‘unalienated’ labour, or represents the further spread of capitalist accumulation strategies and the logic of the commodity form into the realms of the cultural and aesthetic (e.g. McRobbie, 2002, 2016a, 2016b).

Although Adorno is often uncritically (and, in my view at least, quite incorrectly) placed within this latter camp, it was not his argument that the commodification of culture and its mass, industrial production meant that *all* cultural production (even that within the cultural industries very narrowly defined) was now the same, but rather that the universalizing tendencies of capitalism (which Adorno saw as the engine of the culture industry) threatened to obscure the differences between and within cultural forms to the extent that art lost its ability to pull back the curtain and make visible the contradictions of capitalism. As art became subsumed within the relations of capitalism, and brought within its totalizing and universalizing logic, it would no longer be able to challenge that logic to which it had previously stood as other. Adorno may have been overly pessimistic about the possibility of art escaping the totalizing effects of capitalist productive logic, but nevertheless, the fact that the search for ‘creativity’, ‘authenticity’, ‘autonomy’, ‘self-expression’, etc., is no longer the exclusive domain of Romantic poets, bohemian artists, or other fringe social groups, but is now part of the everyday discourse of marketing and recruitment, service-sector work, and is seen as a commonplace desire that can be realized in almost any job in the postindustrial economy – and that this search is no

longer taken as a reason to reject capitalist relations, but to excel in them - suggests that, at least within certain dominant discourses, art is no longer associated with *Kulturkritik*, and outside of capitalist social relations, but instead art and the artistic identities with which it is associated are *expected* or even *required* by capitalism and firmly within the logic of the commodity form and represent a 'new spirit' of art and capitalism (Roberts, 2012).

O'Connor (2010) is right to say that the juxtaposition of 'culture' and 'economy' has been at the heart of the legacy of Adorno, and yet the significance of this juxtaposition has been largely ignored. For Adorno, culture and economy relate to each other (at least under prevailing conditions of capitalism) dialectically: not exclusively in diametric opposition, but in ambivalent contradiction, where they are each implicated in and essential to the other. They are opposed only insofar as they are opposite sides of the same whole.

This juxtaposition is only ever *actualized* in particular socio-spatial contexts; and the way the contradictions of this dialectic are expressed, experienced, and ultimately understood within practices of identification, are shaped by the particular characteristics of place, and, as O'Connor (2000) puts it: it is at the level of the local 'that the accommodations between culture and economies are worked out on a day to day basis'.

The accounts presented in the vignettes in chapters 6 and 7 indicate a heterogeneity of experiences and identities amongst people working in CCIs. These highly varied experiences and identities nevertheless engage, in different ways and to different degrees, with a contradictory and ambivalent context in which competing discourses of art and economy are drawn upon to construct individual aesthetic projects of self, the broader context of work and culture in postindustrial capitalism, and urban planning and development strategies. This contradictory and ambivalent context, I argue here, constitutes a changing and conflicted

landscape which people working in CCIs must negotiate in constructing and performing their identities. It is this landscape that I refer to as the dialectic of art and economy.

With this in mind, in the following discussion, I put forward a contribution to the debates concerning CCIs and postindustrial identities by engaging with the dialectical relationship between art and economy that Adorno recognized. Following the principles of Adorno's negative dialectics (1973), I aim to produce a 'dialectical image' (Benjamin, 1998; Buck-Morss, 1979) of the contradictory relationship between art and economy as it is implicated in the postindustrial identities of people working CCIs, but constructing a constellation of dialectical concepts.

VIII.2.1 Artistic Identities³⁵

Identities are understood here as dialectical practices of identification (Jenkins, 2004) through which individuals make sense of the world and their relationship to it. They are constructed through a dialectic of subject and object, and self and society, in spatially-embedded performances (Fortier, 1999). These dialectical practices takes the form of narratives (Ricoeur, 1991), constructed and maintained through practices of identity work (Beech, 2011; Beech *et al.*, 2012) that draw on both individual interpretations and social discourses in the construction and performance of managed selves. For people working in the kinds of CCIs explored in this research, this negotiation draws on, amongst other things, the dialectic between art and economy as it is expressed in artistic practice, urban development, and social and political discourses of culture and work.

³⁵ I choose the shorthand of 'artistic identity' here over its potential alternatives (e.g. cultural identity, creative identity, aesthetic identity) because the others lend themselves more readily to alternative interpretations, and because it is the notion of art as the work of an artist (in the everyday sense) which is fundamental to the understanding of work in CCIs as somehow particular and 'other' to work in all other economic sectors, and which therefore is at the core of questions of identity for people working in these industries even if 'art' is not the best description of what they actually do.

Living and working as an artist or cultural/creative producer in postindustrial capitalism necessitates engaging with, and coming to terms with, the prevailing expressions and uses of art and culture in a climate in which they have become both ubiquitous and highly commodified: in which creativity itself has become a commodified aspect of the (highly aestheticized) projects of self that not only inform our everyday lives, but are increasingly important in constructing marketable characteristics of the self-as-worker in the new (especially cultural and creative) economy (Banks, 2009, McRobbie, 2002, 2016a, 2016b). As Bain (2005: 29) has pointed out, 'In the 21st century artists are required to be experimental and innovative and to push the frontiers of art while capitalizing upon the development of a distinctive and marketable individuality' which places significant demands on cultural and creative workers' practices of identification in reconciling these competing - often contradictory - pressures. The understandings of art and culture prevalent in the highly commodified field of the contemporary postindustrial cultural economy are not detached from history, however, and draw heavily on often highly romanticized myths, stories, and superstitions concerning art and artists (Bain, 2005; Lloyd, 2017); particularly those which construct the sphere of art and culture as oppositional - in many ways antithetical - to that of the capitalist industrial economy. To be an artist - or to be taken seriously as a *legitimate* artist - necessarily involves the consumption - and performance - of certain myths and stereotypes in order to construct idealized histories and narratives through which these myths and images are integrated into one's own practices of identity. 'By variously resisting and internalizing tailored versions of reality,' Bain (2005: 42) has argued, 'artists can attempt to position themselves within the profession while scripting the degree of conformity they intend to display to it.'

These scripted performances, however, take place within the broader field of the dialectic of art and economy, and consequently narratives of artistic identities are not solely the province of artists or cultural and creative workers themselves, but are frequently employed in popular and policy discourses concerning CCIs and urban development (e.g. Florida, 2002b, 2005, 2014; Leadbetter and Oakley, 1999; DCMS, 1998, 2001, 2008), as well as in everyday lay

understandings of 'art' and 'artists'. Cultural and creative workers' practices of identification, therefore, inevitably draw upon, and must negotiate, a range of self- and socially-constructed understandings of the relationship between art and economy. These rather abstract notions manifest in the particularities of material experience: the negotiations are spatially-embedded historical products carried out on multiple, interconnected levels, from lofty questions of the nature of art and beauty to the everyday experiences and interactions of urban living.

This was the case for all of the participants with whom I spoke, and although some were far more explicit about how they view these two forces, the significance of identification and positioning of artists in relation to both the material conditions of the cultural economy and the discourses constructed around them, was a significant feature throughout.

Artistic identity, then, as I use the term here, refers to the practices of identification by which people working in CCIs understand and negotiate the contradictions and ambivalences inherent to the dialectic of art and economy. Consequently, it is through the contradictions that emerge in these everyday practices of identification that the *reality of the nonidentical* can be glimpsed.

VIII.3 Art and Economy in Dialectic: A Constellation

In the following sections I discuss the contradictions of the dialectic of art and economy through five sets of dialectical concepts: culture and industry; autonomy and interdependence; industrial and postindustrial; vernacular and universal; and, resistance and compromise. These dialectical concepts are illustrative of the different ways in which the contradictions of the dialectic of art and economy are expressed in the experiences and artistic identities of people working in CCIs in Newcastle and Hamburg. They are not exhaustive, nor are they discrete: they

are intended only as indicative of the myriad forms in which the dialectic of art and economy can be expressed. While the concepts I have chosen here are illustrative of the expressions encountered in Newcastle and Hamburg, they speak to a broader picture of the dialectic of art and economy. The intention is not to specify or identify components of these identities as such, but to provide a perspective through which to understand the dialectic of art and economy and the negotiations within it that constitute artistic identities.

VIII.3.1 Culture and Industry

In its most direct expression, the dialectic of art and economy emerges as a conflict between artistic and economic value systems. The myth, or image, of the independent artist is typically associated with the artists being guided by the 'higher' 'cultural' objectives of art as beauty, and unconcerned with the mundane activities of 'mere economy'; consequently, negotiating culture and industry involves contradictory and ambivalent relationships with money and the commercial practice of art within a capitalist economy (Bain, 2005; Taylor and Littleton, 2008).

For Adorno (2002; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997), what made art 'cultural' – and what was lost as it became commodified and standardized – was its ability to challenge and critique society and the conditions it (re)produced: this 'cultural' character of art featured frequently in artistic identities.

Both Grace and Omar suggested that their understandings of culture, and their artistic motivations, were centred on a desire to 'ask new questions' or try to 'change the conversation' about society: these motivations explicitly challenged the economic logic of capitalism.

However, as the economic significance of CCIs (and awareness thereof) has increased, so has the recognition of the economic value of artistic, or cultural and creative work and the people who carry it out; and at the same time cultural and aesthetic objects have become more important as

markers and signifiers consumed and deployed in the construction aesthetic projects of self (Featherstone, 1992). This culturalization of the economy means that artistic and cultural commodities and practices are increasingly valued (evaluated) in economic terms (Markusen, 2010), and simultaneously, that traditional commodities and practices are valued (evaluated) in aesthetic or creative terms; ultimately raising questions as to how, if at all, the two spheres are really different (du Gay and Pryke, 2002). Consequently, maintaining an artistic identity as 'culturally' rather than 'industrially' motivated positions artists as 'other' to a cultural economy increasingly defined by their integration: a contradictory position which is often difficult to achieve in practice.

David highlighted how the possibility of being committed to art (without the aim of making money) had been compromised by changes to the welfare system, which had forced artists into either conforming, and aligning their cultural values with that of the system, and 'industrializing' their art, or abandoning art (at least a full-time practice) and joining the 'industrial' labour force.

Many participants conceded this, and had made efforts to bring their artistic practices in line with the expectation of the economy – by setting up companies and following 'mainstream' business practices – whilst still seeking to maintain their 'cultural' motivation. However, as Bontje and Musterd (2009) have suggested, bohemian artists are often less supported than established, and profit-oriented CCIs, and some artists, like Grace, often found attempting to align artistic practice with the mainstream economy meant abandoning the cultural motivations of their work, removing the 'challenging' or 'critical' elements in favour of easily marketable, understandable, and justifiable products that were *industrially produced* (in Adorno's sense).

Other artists responded differently. While some saw themselves as social actors within an economic system who drew on their artistic, creative skills to produce cultural commodities whose cultural value was intrinsic, and, like Florida (2002b, 2014), saw entrepreneurial and

artistic identities as entirely compatible if not equivocal (Bass, 2017), for others this was not so easily accepted.

'That's what's different about doing something like this ... art or a creative thing ... it's not really about the money, you, sort of, ... you do it because you want to ... it's not really like a normal job.' (Jonathan, performance artist, Newcastle)

Omar, for example, made it very clear that for him, art (true art) and economy were highly oppositional:

'If you do something for making money, I don't think that's true art.'
(Omar, painter and actor, Hamburg)

Indeed for many, the concept of CCIs itself was symbolic of the tension between artistic cultural/creative work and the economic conditions in which that work took place, and it was frequently dismissed or rejected as a feature of a discourse which robbed artistic or cultural/creative work of its character and purpose.

Although maintaining an artistic identity involved, to some extent, the performance of artistic – cultural – values and a certain indifference to economic self-interest, in reality this can rarely be more than a performance. Not only do artists, like everyone else, have to earn a living in order to survive, but in a culturalized economy in which 'creativity' is constructed as the prime mover of the economy, artists struggle to maintain a commitment to 'cultural' values, because it is *expected* of them to seek to profit from their creativity (Sholette, 2011). Indeed, the 'moral imperative' (Osborne, 2003) of the 'creative fetish' (Banks, 2007) is such that artists can sometimes feel that although they are seen as a *poor artist* if they are not committed to their work, they are seen as a *bad artist* if they are not profiting from it.

Artists and cultural producers negotiated the contradictions of culture and industry in different ways. For some, the contradictions around not making money out of art were side-stepped by working in non-artistic jobs to pay rent and support their (independent) artistic practice. Most participants had multiple jobs; and in most cases this involved jobs that were not in the cultural or creative sector. Some, like Hugo and Sarah, who taught alongside their main work, managed to keep their other jobs within a related field, but for others these other jobs were typically non-artistic, and often casual, temporary, and routine – indicative not only of the challenges faced by artists and cultural workers seeking to maintain the independent cultural value of their artistic practice, but of the employment conditions of the ‘gig economy’ (Coles, 2015) more generally. While it has been suggested spending time in non-artistic occupations can negatively impact upon artistic identities (Bain, 2005; Taylor and Littleton, 2008), this was not generally the case: instead, participants embraced more flexible, ‘creative’, and hybrid identity practices.

Earning money through non-artistic jobs meant that artistic practice and the ‘mundane’ necessity of earning a living could be kept separate; and, therefore, earning money enabled rather than compromised artistic practice and an artistic identity.

For David, the separation was not between types of work, but between particular jobs within it; and by industrializing some elements of his practice for the purposes of profit, he was able to keep the creative, expressive line ‘just for himself’.

A further contradiction was evident from David’s story. David maintained that cultural and creative work and business were essentially the same thing; yet he described not only the different requirements of – particularly space – and, crucially, attitudes towards creative work compared with ‘non-creative’ business, but also the difficulties he had encountered in getting support to grow his business despite trying to carry out his practice more-or-less as a traditional business. Ultimately, he encountered the ‘fork in the road’, suggesting that, despite his efforts, CCIs and traditional economy could only go together up to a point, at which point it was necessary to pick one of two conflicting paths.

In other instances, the economic motivation for work was accepted selectively, and rejected when it threatened to engulf, or displace the cultural motivation it was intended to support. Anne, for whom creative work is a business, decided to restrict expanding on the street party when it no longer satisfied her 'creative' interests (because it had become too commercial): sacrificing economic gain in order to maintain 'cultural' integrity.

While negotiating between culture and industry involved, for many artists, taking a position concerning the conditions of neoliberal capitalism in which their work was carried out, for cultural and creative workers in the Gängeviertel, such questions were not just a part of identification, but were of central importance. The general rejection of capitalist values, particularly over economic logic and the commodification of space, exists in (sometimes uneasy) ambivalence with the need to pay rent and organize cultural events. Strategies to generate income (a significant amount of which are connected with social events and the night-time economy) are a necessary corollary to socially-conscious cultural events. The identity work involved in negotiating these contradictions can be glimpsed, for example, in the way that Greta, who worked part-time in a bar and as a guide at a local tourist attraction in addition to her work as a writer and activist at the Gängeviertel, described her part-time work, and her previous career as a copywriter, as 'jobs', but her artistic and creative activities as 'projects'; a distinction necessary to making sense of simultaneously rejecting and participating in the relations of capitalism.

Negotiating the ambivalent demands to pursue artistic work and make money was evident in many forms, and while patterns were present, the particular approach taken varied by the particular circumstances of participants' context. While these were varied, and gave rise to correspondingly varied approaches, no participant, including those who made reference to Florida, implied that getting rich in the new cultural and creative economy was their prime motivation.

While the key value of culture was important for most participants, even for Omar, whose notion of ‘true art’ drew the starkest contrast between culture and industry, the contradictory and dialectical nature was clear. There was no inevitable sacrifice of culture to industry in earning money from art: art *could* be economic(ally successful), and economic activities *could* embrace the values of art and culture. What mattered were the conditions in which artistic practices are carried out, and the motivations behind them; that is to say, whether artistic practice can be considered autonomous.

VIII.3.2 Autonomy and Interdependence

The autonomous nature of art and the artist, Banks (2010a) has argued, is at the centre of the artistic identity, and a foundational aspect of the ‘myths’ that are key to constructing an artistic identity (Bain, 2005) in which art is constructed in opposition to the economy of industrial capitalism. Broadly speaking, autonomy can be understood as the capacity for self-governance, or self-determination, and there were two interconnected dimensions in which this was commonly expressed in relation to artistic identities: (i) in the authentic self-expressive character of creative work (viz. the autonomous work of art), and (ii) independence from the relations of capital, and the associated spatiotemporal ordering of industrial capitalism (viz. the autonomy of art-as-practice).

Expressing self is fundamental to any practice of identity (Jenkins, 2004; Lawler, 2014); for artists and people working in CCIs, this can be especially true, as artistic work is constructed to be far more expressive of individuality and individual creativity than routine, industrial, non-artistic work – indeed this, it is argued, is its appeal (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009; McRobbie, 2016a, 2016b). Consequently, having autonomous control of one’s practice, and that

practice being tied to the expression of personal identity, formed an important part of artistic identity practices:

'It's important to me that I'm able to do the kind of thing that I want to do [...] things like this ... that matter to me'. (Markus, photographer and activist, Hamburg)

'it gives me an opportunity [...]to put something into the world that can ... that can say a little bit about who I am'. (Christopher, musician, Newcastle)

While autonomy as self-expression was an ideal – and key to the image of artist – for many it was not, or not regularly, achievable. Artists frequently felt pressure from customers or employers to sacrifice expression (and thus autonomy) in order to conform:

'they say they want new, and express yourself, but really they want the same thing.' (Sarah, designer, Newcastle)

Consequently, artists frequently engaged in what Banks (2010a: 262-265) describes as practices of 'negotiated autonomy', which allow artists to adapt to pressures to conform without compromising artistic integrity. Sarah, for example, while frustrated at having her 'creativity' and 'artistic freedom' suspended by the demands of employers/customers, incorporated the infringement into her artistic identity, suggesting *that work wasn't 'really art' and wasn't who she was.*

The desire for self-expression through the autonomy of works of art throws up a key contradiction. In order to have any impact, art requires an audience – and a commercial audience for those whose art is a source of income. While for most this involves customers willing to pay to consume artistic objects or experiences, in other contexts, selling food, drinks, or other products alongside cultural events or experiences means artists and cultural producers can generate necessary income without their creative works being directly commodified.

For many participants, autonomy could be realized in work that was not personally-directed, when the resulting artworks served a purpose with which the artist personally agreed or identified. A number of participants produced art by commission, and while these were not necessarily ‘autonomous’ works of art, they were nevertheless valued as self-expressive.

‘I really love doing commissions for community projects and schools in the local area ... it feels good to be able to contribute to the community and ... well, be part of something’. (Robin, glass artist, Newcastle)

Spatiotemporal autonomy is a particularly significant feature of the practices of artistic identification. The cultural and artistic autonomy at the heart of Bohemia was explicitly spatial (Lloyd, 2005), and represented a rejection of industrial capitalist values *and* spatiotemporal structures. Studies such as Bain’s (2003, 2004a, 2004b) indicate the importance of dedicated space not only for the practicalities of artist’s work, but their sense of legitimacy as an artist.

For many participants, accessing dedicated space was crucially important, but it was rarely autonomous space that was sought: participants in both Newcastle and Hamburg expressed preferences for communal, shared, and sometimes public spaces. Nevertheless, it was space

where they could be 'free' to carry out their artistic practices, which often involved freedom from mainstream spatiotemporal structures and the 'expectations' of 'regular' society.

In part then, the attraction of urban space(s) that have been ignored, or forgotten (Markusen, 2004) by capitalist development can be seen as the search for communal working spaces/creative spaces, to encourage collaborative creative work, or buildings/collectives where 'people like us' can work in conditions not bound by 9-5 arrangements. Contrary to the image of the 'independent' and 'isolated' artist, artistic and cultural producers commonly sought safety in numbers. While this was certainly in large part social, this also reflects a significant material – and *economic* – necessity of sharing spaces in order to make them affordable.

Autonomous spaces imply that they are unconnected with their urban surroundings, whereas, in fact, it is only through the existence of 'mainstream', 'economic' places and their juxtaposition with them that autonomous spaces have the distinct identity upon which their character and (cultural) value rest. Additionally, the spatial *Entgrenzung* means that spaces are not clearly delineated, and urban spaces may be shared between artistic and entirely commercial activities. In Hamburg particularly, the spaces where much cultural and artistic production takes place are owned by commercial (or at least profit-oriented) organizations: the vibrant, artistic spaces of the Oberhafen, for example, *depend* upon the commercial viability of the HafenCity. Moreover, as Anne described, it was the intervention of private interest groups whose power and wealth derive from traditional capitalist industries that allowed the creative space in which she and others work to continue to exist in the form they both desired and required. The contradiction, almost unimaginable in Newcastle where culture and urban development still experience little crossover, is the result of the centrality of issues of art and culture both to Hamburg's economic and urban development policy and established culture of cultural philanthropy, both of which are tied to the city's particular postindustrial trajectory.

Even when artistic and cultural spaces have legal or spatial autonomy, they are still, symbolically interrelated with the broader urban landscape. Both the Gängeviertel and the Ouseburn have increasingly become part of marketing material for Hamburg and Newcastle respectively. This raises several issues, not only because the promotion of places is ambivalent in that it drives the notoriety which leads to increased creative presence, and bolsters the economy which artists and creative and cultural producers require in order to survive, but also, as has already largely happened in Schanze and is evident in Ouseburn, by the same token increases the pace of gentrification and land-banking which ultimately undermines and destroys the alternative culture of these places, but also because, if autonomy and an opposition to capitalism is an integral, or even merely significant part of the artistic identity, then this co-opting of alternative cultural and creative space is an act of colonization.

Consequently then, the practice – and the idea – of artistic autonomy – particularly as it relates to the creative (re)construction of urban space – is deeply contradictory. The more successful ‘autonomous’ places become, the more they are drawn into the material and symbolic economy of the broader urban environment. At the same time, autonomy, like authenticity, becomes itself a symbolic commodity, used in the marketing and branding of cities and urban spaces, and something which is consumed along with urban landscapes both by capital (and tourists), and by artists and cultural producers in their quests for urban space and in the construction of their artistic identities.

While the image of the independent artist hinges on the ideal of artistic autonomy, in practice, this autonomy cannot exist without the structures, processes, and relations of capitalist production against which it is positioned. It is largely through the philanthropy (albeit possibly self-interested) that, historically, many works of art were produced, and the increasing interconnection between art and culture and the economy has in many ways deepened this dynamic. This inherent contradiction, however, makes more sense if autonomy is understood

not as separation from the economy, but rather, as art created under different conditions and with a different (critical) logic, as Adorno understood it to be. For Adorno (2001; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997), and Benjamin (2008), it was the fact that critical, autonomous art *was* a product of its particular spatiotemporal context – bound up in, and so able to reflect, the conditions and ideology of the society of which it was a product – that it could be critical at all. It was the very denial of the social, spatial, and historical particularity of art and culture – both as object and as practice – that Adorno saw resulting from the commodification and standardization of the culture industry.

VIII.3.3 Industrial and Postindustrial

CCIs are often held up as archetypes of the postindustrial economy (Gill and Pratt, 2008; Ross, 2009). The rise of the postindustrial cultural economy, it is suggested, indicates that the characteristics of creative and ‘artistic’ work are becoming more fundamental to the economy and work in general (Thiel, 2008; Wing-Fai, Gill and Randle, 2015). At the same time, it is suggested that in postindustrial society, the consumption of cultural commodities are particularly implicated in the construction and performance of aesthetic projects of self (Bauman, 2004, 2005; Featherstone, 1991, 1992). Accordingly, CCIs are positioned as ‘other’ to industrial work and culture, and consequently, art and artistic identities, although not necessarily *post*-industrial, are also often constructed, by artists themselves as well as others, as ‘other’ to the industrial.

Contrary to accounts which see artists and cultural and creative workers as a global, transnational (Sklair, 2001, 2005) or place-less class (Rofe, 2003), the particular social, historical, and spatial contexts in which artistic identities are constructed and performed has tremendous implications on how artistic identities are shaped and, in return, help shape urban

space, and artists and cultural producers, far from being a class of aesthetic global wanderers, are often deeply committed to specific localities and their histories, cultures, and identities.

The markers of industrial society – including culture and identity – are still to be found in postindustrial cities (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Byrne, 2001) and in the cultural memories (Brockmeier, 2002b) which inhabit the remnants of industrial society (Edensor, 2005a, 2005b; Mah, 2010). The shift from industrial to postindustrial society is often most clearly expressed spatially (Mah, 2010; Miles, 2004; Rhodes, 2013), and it is telling that CCIs are often located not in the planned and pristine developments which typically house the postindustrial service economy, but in the marginal, forgotten spaces (Markusen, 2004) marked by deindustrialization.

The spaces inhabited by the cultural and creative workers in this study invariably had some connection to the industrial past. In the case of several, the buildings themselves were industrial heritage, repurposed for artistic work, for others they were areas of the cities previously associated with industry. This material connection with industrial history was also reflected culturally and aesthetically, with many participants expressing their pleasure at working (and in some cases living) in these buildings because of their beauty, or because they were monuments to a bygone age. In addition to their practical use as spaces in which artists and producers could carry out their work, they represented spaces classified as ‘free’, ‘expressive’, ‘creative’ and ‘autonomous’. Thus, despite being associated with, and constructed around, decidedly postindustrial images of liberating, expressive work, artistic identities can be seen to be very significantly constructed in reference to the particular characteristics of the (industrial) urban past, attracted by the echoes, or ruins (Edensor, 2005a, 2005b) of the industrial past (Mah, 2010). However, it is easy to overstate the aesthetic appeal of many of these spaces. While it is most certainly true that the aesthetics of place, and its potential for development as an object of

art itself, was important for artists, they were also drawn to these spaces out of practical need (often for large spaces), and crucially because they were both available and affordable.

The echoes and remnants of industrial society are written into the culture and the material landscape of cities, and the memories (either first-hand or collective) of industrial society are frequently drawn upon to make sense of contemporary experiences, and as such are significant aspects of (postindustrial) artistic identities. In both Newcastle and Hamburg the 'place imprinting' (Hollands and Vail, 2015) of the industrial heritage of the city was significantly implicated in structuring the material and cultural urban environment and the industrial identities of the cities were closely interwoven with the artistic identities of people working in CCIs in myriad ways.

While for Edward, being from Newcastle meant carrying a Geordie identity with him all around the world, often feeling tied to (and in some ways held back by) his working-class and industrial heritage. For Bluey, a furniture-maker Grace knew, it meant conscious effort – against the economic imperative of the cultural economy – to express a local identity in his work and choice of location:

'he could be doing his work in London and selling it for five times what he sells it for here, but ... he doesn't, because he's from Newcastle, and he wants the people of Newcastle to be able to afford the things he makes ... that's why he keeps the prices down.' (Grace, artist and designer, Newcastle)

There was a sense in which the traditional (masculine and working-class) industrial image of 'grafters' was carried through into the CCIs in Newcastle (Nayak, 2003b; Rhodes, 2013) in what Christopher described as a '*do it yourself culture*', in which local artists would work together to realize projects when support and funding from the council was unavailable or not forthcoming,

which contributed a sense in which the city authorities, and their 'inauthentic' (in the sense of Benjamin's 'auratic' art which is rooted in history and place) image of culture was viewed as oppositional to the 'real culture' of (particularly local) artists.

While the echoes of industrial society and culture in urban spaces held aesthetic appeal for artists and cultural producers, remnants of industrial culture were not always viewed favourably. In Newcastle, industrial culture was sometimes seen as a barrier to artistic work. Artists complained about other people (especially employers, neighbours, and, in Newcastle particularly, the government) not understanding cultural and creative work or the needs of artists.

'Newcastle is very invested in its industrial history, and ... that's great ... but it can be very difficult trying to get things done and ... do new things when everyone's got that kind of ... retrospective outlook.' (Bailey, graphic designer, Newcastle)

'I think Newcastle [council] has been guilty of having like, quite an old, working-class ... male-dominated ... department that have just, ... y'know, don't quite understand the ... the need for [art and culture]'. (David, furniture-maker, Newcastle)

'People think of Hamburg as ... it's the harbour, ships, and ... business people ... Sometimes [people] don't think of it as being a city for the arts.' (Johanna, painter, Hamburg)

CCIs, and the artistic identities of people who work in them, then, inhabit an ambivalent place in relation to industrial and postindustrial society: simultaneously archetypes and trailblazers of the latter and protectors and celebrants of the former. This ambivalence seeps through into identity practices, particularly in relation to the liminal and hybrid urban spaces produced through urban transformation, drawing attention to the cracks and contradictions which otherwise go unobserved. That (formerly) industrial landscapes are judged to be aesthetically beautiful is telling in itself (and it is worth noting that in Hamburg, where industrial work was still a significant feature of the landscape and identity of the city, not a single participant made reference to the port itself as being aesthetically pleasing).

Creative practice takes place in the interstices between art and industry. Artistic and creative work, despite being associated with the postindustrial, often entails much laborious, repetitive and physically and emotionally demanding work behind the scenes (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009), and in many ways is not always very different to the industrial work that is apparently its antithesis (Mayer, 2014): taking place in the same places, sometimes with the same machinery. Some participants even remarked upon the impact their work had on their physical health.

The claim that the CCIs mark a 'detraditionalization' of work does not just imply a break with the industrial in the sense of the nature of work, but because it is seen as liberating and fulfilling in a way that industrial work was not. This, too, is questionable. As others have argued, creative work is still work (Mayer, 2014); and the *Entgrenzung* and subjectivization associated with work in CCIs is at best a double-edged sword.

The flexibility of the 'gig economy' enables artists to be free of the more rigid spatiotemporal ordering of mainstream work, but replaced them with unreliability and inconsistency (Shorthose and Strange, 2004). Most participants worked in multiple jobs, and many felt dual

pressures of being financially insecure and struggling to keep on top of multiple demands on their time.

'This is breakfast time for me. I have two different jobs in the evenings, and sometimes in the afternoon ... so I go to bed at ... 4 in the morning, then I'm up for about 2 in the afternoon before I start work here'. (Greta, writer and activist, Hamburg)

David explained how he'd tried (unsuccessfully) to keep to a strict schedule so he made sure he had time for his family. And Edward lamented the impact being on tour and having to work all hours had taken on his relationships (particularly marriage):

'The time thing is big. Particularly as you get older, and you think about the broken relationships behind you, you realise the cost. The demand on your time from this kind of work ... I'm not saying I wasn't complicit, because I was, but nowadays I'm not prepared to be as complicit.'
(Edward, music manager, writer, and comedian, Newcastle)

The fact that the spaces of the industrial are suitable can hardly be considered coincidental, particularly in the cases of furniture makers, glass-blowers, and screen-printers, whose work involves industrial machinery and equipment. But the attraction of places where industrial work was once carried out – and in some cases still is (either as traditional industry or creative artisanal work) – for artists and cultural workers more generally is telling.

In part the attraction of formerly industrial spaces and the significance of industrial culture for artistic practices and identities is connected to its 'authenticity' (Benz, 2014; Peterson, 2005; Zukin, 2008, 2009) as not only as real and materially embedded history (as opposed to the

fleeting and often very heavily symbolic culture of the postindustrial), but as something particular: inseparable, like the auratic quality of art (Benjamin, 2008) from its spatial, historical, and material context.

VIII.3.4 Vernacular and Universal

The transformations to urban spaces which both enable and constrain cultural and creative practices and identities reflect one of the prime contradictions of capitalism: the conflicting tendency between the particular and the universal (Smith, 1996). As capital strives to produce ever new kinds of commodities in order to further the growth of profit, it simultaneously incorporates everything which is other into itself, transforming them in the process into objects after its own image that work in its interest: viz. commodities. This contradictory tendency to both seek and generate the particular and in the same motion universalize it is of considerable importance for CCIs. The emergence of the postindustrial cultural economy displays this contradiction fully: while the demand for ever more niche, bespoke, particular cultural commodities within the cultural economy drives further diversification, it simultaneously spreads the economic logic of the commodity form, gathering up all forms of culture into commodities, and urging producers and production processes towards further standardization. As this tension is directly concerned with their practice and livelihoods, this contradiction has particular significance for cultural and creative producers and their artistic identities.

This was most clearly observed spatially, in the homogenization of urban landscapes brought about by cultural regeneration and the 'hard-branding' of particular urban identities. Attempts to 'reinvigorate' urban economies through culture-led regeneration do so under the logic that they create material – but more importantly cultural and symbolic – landscapes that appeal to artists, cultural workers, and urbanites who seek aesthetic urban lifestyles, by bolstering the cultural environment of the city, and by fostering a distinctive – and 'authentic' – urban brand

(Benz, 2016). The use of the local, the vernacular, to assert a distinctive urban identity is seen as a solution to the universalization of urban space, but this is contradictory. The use of public art and cultural work to hard-brand urban landscapes (Cameron and Coaffee, 2006), and the gentrification which is closely associated, make it difficult for artists and cultural producers to find and keep vernacular spaces (Zukin, 1995). Encouraged to find and transform space, but ultimately punished for their success by being displaced by the gentrification that follows them. Several respondents echoed Hugo's concern over the ability to maintain the building he and other artists and cultural producers share.

'It's great being here, and we're actually really lucky ... there aren't many buildings as good as this around ... but, it's always a bit ... uncertain, and bit worrying ... there's lots of developments, student accommodation, and other things going up around here ... at some point this place might become unaffordable for us.' (Hugo, musician, Newcastle)

Likewise in Hamburg, several participants, currently in suitable and secure sites, were wary of what appeared as an ever-present threat that development would arrive on the doorstep.

While the standardization of urban space speaks to a very overt, spatial manifestation of the universalizing tendency of capitalism, standardization threatened artist's practices and identities in more subtle and everyday ways: particularly in protecting the 'vernacular' (and autonomous) character of their work. Adorno (2001; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997) maintained that as culture comes more and more to resemble industry (to be organized and governed by the logic of the commodity form) the ability of works of art to maintain their independence and particularity is gradually eroded, as the universalizing weight of the culture industry 'crushes their insubordination and makes them subserve the formula, which replaces

the work. The same fate is inflicted on whole and parts alike' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997: 126).

A number of cultural and creative workers felt this tension keenly; and several commented on the disjuncture between what customers, employers, or partner organizations said they wanted when asking for artists' work, and then what they expected of the commodities themselves.

'[T]he hardest part of working in the fashion industry, in particular, was you would go in, you'd get given a brief, they'd tell you what they want, ... and then they would say, "But, put your own spin on it, do what you want, put your own identity into it!" And so you would do that, and then, ... you put a part of you ... and you put a lot of work into it, ... and then they would turn around, every time, at the last minute, and say, "Ah, well, it's not commercial enough, it's not enough, like, ... what so-and-so's done, or what blah-blah-blah's done"' (Eva, fashion designer, Newcastle)

While this can, to an extent, be interpreted as artists' protectiveness over the autonomy of their work, it is also indicative of the contradictory relations that govern the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural commodities within the dialectic of art and economy; and especially the tendency towards standardization, universalization, and the erasure of the particular and vernacular character of artistic works and the spaces in which they are produced.

Eva especially saw this standardization as the result of the economic logic of the commodity form, expressing angrily her frustration at artistic and creative undertakings (and the artists themselves) being appropriated for purely economic purposes: claiming to desire (and produce) creative, artistic, expressive goods, when in reality creativity is denied and what the fashion industry wants is for designers,

'to do exactly the same reproduction as someone else has done already, ... except just slightly different, ... enough, different enough so that they can market it as being their own'. (Eva, fashion designer, Newcastle)

Importantly, the tendency towards standardization was pervasive and difficult to avoid. Several respondents reported experiencing pressure, not just from big industries, but within local art communities and markets to standardize artistic practices and conform to established expectations.

In their dealing with the city of Hamburg, the artists and activists in the Gängeviertel experienced a constant pressure towards universalization, in terms of how they carry out their practices, and, as described in Stef's story (section 7.4.2) how they understand and use urban space.

'They wish we were more like other places, and ... doing things like the other places, like their exhibitions ... but that's not what we're about, that's not why we do things here. ... If it's not about money, about making money, then they don't really understand.' (Greta, writer and activist, Hamburg)

Cultural regeneration, gentrification, and urban branding, can all be seen as efforts at universalizing urban space (Pratt, 2011; Shorthose, 2004b), and the conversion of vernacular space into the mainstream (Zukin, 1992).

Anne, for example, supports her argument that Hamburg is not a creative city by reference to the city's cultural scene, which she sees as monotonous, predictable, and *'always the same ...*

musicals, musicals, musicals, musicals'. The city's events, such as *Hafengeburtstag* as well as its standard offerings of museums and galleries are, for Anne and others, representative of a decidedly uniform and standard mass culture far removed from the eclectic, 'freestyle', vernacular creativity with which they identify.

This is also reflected in cultural and creative workers' responses to the spatial transformations associated with culture-led regeneration and urban branding, including iconic architecture, which were viewed, albeit sometimes with reservations, as at best tokenism by people who 'didn't get it', and worst as a deliberate attack against artists and their places and practices of vernacular creativity.

'If they want a piece of artwork to symbolize the culture of the city, they should have the rotting hull of a ship ... not a model, an actual ship, with an effigy of Thatcher hanging in it and put it right at the top of Northumberland Street.' (Jonathan, performance artist, Newcastle)

Cultural and creative city agenda come under particular attention in this regard, as the cultural and spatial imagineering (Yeoh, 2015) which accompanies urban branding strategies are often seen as deliberate attempts to impose universalizing tendencies on the cultural economy whilst claiming to celebrate the people and the work that they are undermining.

Concerns over the use (or misuse) of cultural areas and artist's work in furtherance of cultural regeneration and urban branding was a concern for many participants. Culture, in the sense of culture-led regeneration is often an excuse, a veneer, for the universalizing tendency within capitalism. Not only did participants resent this because they themselves (and the communities with which they ally themselves) directly suffer as a result of gentrification, but because it is read as an assault on their values and chosen lives that is carried out ostensibly in their name. While not all artists and cultural producers saw urban transformations in this way – and indeed

some did benefit as a result of them – for many, this was the key contradiction of the art-economy dialectic.

The particular, vernacular qualities of art and urban space are often of great significance to artistic identities. The tension and the significance of universalization went beyond its immediate impact on participants own art and art practices, and was seen as a signal feature of conditions of art and life in postindustrial society. Faced with the universalizing tendencies of capitalism and the homogenization of urban landscapes which is often connected to cultural regeneration, urban branding, and gentrification, it is unsurprising that artists and cultural producers are often implicated and embroiled in spatial and political conflicts which resist universalization through artistic and everyday practices.

VIII.3.5 Resistance and Compromise

An enduring feature of the romantic myths concerning artists is that their independence and autonomy are intrinsically tied to a marginal, and often rebellious, otherness (Ley, 2003): an outsider status in which artists are constructed as not only apart from, but oppositional to, the social and cultural mainstream. Consequently, artists and cultural workers are often caught within a terrain of conflict where they must negotiate when, where, and how to respond to the challenges and contradictions of the dialectic of art and economy: and whether to resist these opposing tendencies, and when to compromise.

For artists and cultural workers, these conflicts overwhelmingly concerned the access to, use, and classification of urban space (Lees and Melhuish, 2015).

The Gängeviertel makes these contradictions most clearly visible. Having emerged as a focal point for the Right to the City (*Recht auf Stadt*) movement in Hamburg (see Twickel, 2010), the Gängeviertel project, and the cultural space and community, were born out of conflict and urban

resistance. Consequently, the cultural use and public designation of the space is deeply embedded in the identities and activities of the cultural and creative workers and residents.

While the message, and mission, of the Gängeviertel is in resisting neoliberal urban development and promoting alternative, collective, and social understandings and uses of space, which 'stand apart' from the broader urban developments of the city of Hamburg its continued existence is, in part, the result of negotiated compromises with the city authorities to maintain the buildings.

As mentioned above, in actuality, autonomy generally implies interdependence, and for a number of sites, the survival of CCIs has been dependent on working with local government in some form, either closely, as with Oberhafen, or conflictingly, such as Gängeviertel, or in Lowell or Jonathan's narratives, where conflict and negotiation with the council have gone together in efforts to secure suitable spaces. In such instances, independence – even as an ideal – is compromised, and the alternative, edgy, oppositional aspect of these artistic spaces and identities is brought into line and becomes, to some extent, assimilated. Thus, cultural spaces, even those as explicitly 'other' to the commodification of space and the instrumental use of culture become 'normalized'; often included in official marketing material for the city, or, through their own success, contribute to the brand imagery, and the 'selling of place' (Gibson, 2005; Philo and Kearns, 1993) which they ostensibly reject.

While some cultural and creative sites, or 'quarters', manage to establish themselves and - often by finding a *modus vivendi* with neighbouring parts of the city and the authorities – survive, others find themselves casualties of urban regeneration. A number of participants in Newcastle had been involved with artistic groups or sites that had closed due to urban development; and others experienced daily battles with the impacts of the gentrification of urban spaces in which

artists and cultural producers work and lives is often a major source of conflict not only in the broader sense of artists' displacement, but expressed in everyday, often mundane conflicts.

'We've been doing this for a while now, and we want to put on more events and provide more opportunities for people to play music and do these interesting things ... but now people are starting to complain, and we're getting restricted more and more' (Lowell, visual artist and cultural entrepreneur, Newcastle)

Similarly in Hamburg, Anne worried that as HafenCity development closed in around the Oberhafen, the freedom the space provided for the street parties and late-night music events would be compromised.

Rivalries with neighbours and city authorities were not exclusively about noise, however, and the residents of the Gängeviertel were consistently at odds with the businesses in neighbouring buildings who frequently complained about the appearance and use of the spaces. The hybrid space of the central courtyard of the Gängeviertel is, for the residents and activists, museum, public space, and an area for leisure and socializing, which, Greta suggested:

'annoys the people [in the adjacent buildings] because they're sitting there doing their dull jobs ... and they look out and see us drinking in the middle of the day, chatting, being happy ... and they hate it ... and us'. (Greta, writer and activist, Hamburg)

While direct conflicts over use, designation and boundaries of urban spaces were not at all uncommon, neither were more general concerns over the value of urban space more generally. These conflicts can be seen through the rejection of the use of urban space and cultural events

in strategies of urban branding. For a number of artists and cultural producers, cultural events, such as Hamburg's *Hafengeburtstag*, or the Great Exhibition of the North hosted in Newcastle in the summer of 2018, which claim to celebrate the history (often industrial history) of the cities and their cultures are seen not as a celebration of local history and culture but of its erasure by standardized and commodified forms of culture encapsulated in creative city discourses.

Assimilation of cultural events and spaces is not without resistance (d'Ovidio and Morató, 2017; Hollands, 2009, 2010; Novy and Colomb, 2014). In Hamburg, the Gängeviertel have resisted the city's efforts to renovate the buildings in a way which the residents saw as inappropriate to their uses, to the extent that renovation processes have stopped and returned to negotiations. The Schanzenviertel was the scene of the anti-G20 protests (and clashes with police) in June 2017, and while this encompassed more than just the residents of the area, it reinforced symbolically the importance of the area around the *Rote Flora* for alternative worldviews capable of criticizing the *status quo*. In the Ouseburn, where the 'invasion' of student accommodation and other developments is such a cause for concern, some participants have actively resisted the further development and gentrification of the area: Lowell resisted the council's efforts to encourage development in the backyard of her building; and a community of local artists has arisen to resist the 'art-washing' of the Great Exhibition of the North.

Conflict is crucially linked to the practice of identification and the construction of aesthetic identities which emphasize the difference between 'art' and 'artistic work' (including politically autonomous spaces like the Gängeviertel) and the economic mainstream. The construction of difference (between 'artists' and 'non-artists') is certainly not inevitable, however, and while for some respondents being different to the mainstream was key to their identities and their artistic practices, it was not for others. For some, artistic or cultural production was seen as in no significant way different to any other kind of work, and many cultural and creative workers distanced themselves from the 'creative genius' and similar images which emphasized the

difference, or particularity of art and artists, preferring instead to see artistic, creative, or cultural production as something more mundane.

While in this way cultural and creative workers do not identify themselves as other, instead seeking a compromise between artistic and non-artistic activities and identities rather than resistance, this is not necessarily a defence, as it is not just cultural and creative workers' own practices of identification that are implicated in these conflicts.

The myths and stories of independent artists (Bain, 2005) and the counter-culture of the neo-bohemia (Lloyd, 2005) are powerful. Despite maintaining that artistic and creative work were no different to 'non-artistic' work, and compromising and 'accommodating' his practice to an economic model, David found himself 'othered' by the council and the local economy when he was unable to find the support he needed to grow his business. Being identified as an 'artist' even in the broadest sense, can invoke the myths and stories which reinforce the image of 'the artist' as other, with implications for how they are received in the cultural economy (Bontje and Musterd (2009).

A crucial contradiction in artistic identities, therefore, is that the image of the independent artist which often underpins the conflicts between cultural and creative workers and city authorities and other 'non-artistic' groups, is (re)produced by the discourses and images of cultural and creative work propagated by the cultural economy and is in a significant sense brought about by the desire to conform to the romantic image of the independent artist living and working in socially marginal places and ways.

VIII.4 Conclusion

In this discussion chapter, I have attempted to show that artistic identities are constructed through negotiated practices engaging with the contradictions inherent in the dialectic between art and economy. These practices draw on a variety of features and themes, only a few of which space has allowed me to raise here. In drawing attention to some of the ways in which the contradictions and ambivalences inherent in the dialectic of art and economy are expressed and feature in the experiences and artistic identities of people working in CCIs, the intention has not been to provide characteristics of artistic identities as such, but to make it clear that the construction of artistic identities involves a complex and highly varied process of negotiation of the dialectic of art and economy (at the same time subjective and objective) in which changing urban space and place are significantly implicated. Consequently, artistic identities are particular practices of negotiation which shape and are shaped by the particular conditions of the dialectic of art and economy as it is expressed in particular place and time.

I have suggested that image of the independent artist and what Bain (2005) describes as ‘myths’ that surround it are particularly implicated in the dialectic of art and economy and its different expressions. And while these images and discourses may be most significant for cultural and creative workers whose practices are closely related to traditional images of art (as is the case of the participants in this research), these images underpin the discourses of creativity, self-expression, and autonomy which, it is argued, increasingly characterize work in the postindustrial economy. As a consequence, the need to negotiate this dialectic is a feature of CCIs in general, as they all exist within the socio-cultural model, or logic, of postindustrial capitalism in which culture and creativity are becoming not only more ubiquitous, but increasingly fetishized, and expected aspects of how individuals relate to the economy. As Thiel (2008) remarked, what was once the case for only a small number of individuals working in specific fields, is now becoming a common requirement across the economy (McRobbie, 2016b).

In the next and final chapter, I reflect on some of the issues raised in this thesis, and consider some conclusions that can be drawn from this research.

Chapter IX: Conclusions

IX.1 Introduction

In his seminal essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (2008[1936]), Walter Benjamin argued that what gives works of art their significance – their *aura* – is that their uniqueness as objects is inseparable from their production within history; and what is lost in the age where works of art can be reproduced technologically is that genuine connection to their social, geographical, and historical context. Mass (re)produced artworks (pictures, film, music recordings, etc.) are abstractions, denied the context of the genuine. Yet all objects, directly cultural or not, are objects *of (a) culture*, and express the conditions of that culture. The same can be said of the identities of those who produce artistic and cultural objects: they express the conditions under which art and cultural objects are produced that pervade in the society in which they exist.

In this thesis I have explored the postindustrial urban identities of people working in the cultural and creative industries in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK and Hamburg, Germany in an effort to answer the following questions:

- 1) How are postindustrial identities constructed and performed by people working in cultural and creative industries in Newcastle and Hamburg?
- 2) How are these identities influenced by transformations to the urban environments in which they are constructed and performed?

In answer to these questions, I have advanced an argument, built on the results of mixed-methods qualitative fieldwork, for understanding what I have called 'artistic identities' constructed in relation to the dialectical relationship between art and economy within postindustrial capitalism. Such identities, I have suggested, negotiate paths within this dialectic, which, like the dialectical relationship between art and economy, are contradictory and ambivalent, and subject to significant variation as they are (re)written, (re)configured, and (re)constructed in relation to the changing conditions of the dialectic as it is expressed in specific places and times. Particularly, I have argued that these artistic identities are significantly influenced by the particularities of urban space: drawing on changing material and cultural landscapes, and the discourses of, and struggles over, the use and classification (or identification) of urban spaces and places.

In developing this argument, I have drawn significantly on the work of Adorno to provide both a theoretical approach to understanding identities and CCIs, and a methodological approach to their investigation. The thesis I have produced has necessarily been shaped by this approach, and consequently is as much a piece of theoretical exploration as an empirical one. In seeking to remain true to this theoretical approach, I have emphasized the importance of the particularities, ambivalences, and contradictions inherent to postindustrial identities, which I have explored through a methodology intended to be sensitive to these varieties, ambivalences, and contingencies. The vignettes in chapters 6 and 7 provide illuminating insights into the myriad practices and negotiations which people working in CCIs undergo on an everyday basis to make sense of their work, their cities, and their identities. I have emphasized throughout that it is not simply that these identity practices have things in common, or that they differ in many ways (both of which are, of course, true), but, critically, that these varied, and nuanced practices draw attention to the more fundamental insight that the world these identity practices are constructed and carried out in relation to is fundamentally *nonidentical*: forever existing beyond

the conceptual. Consequently, a significant contribution of this thesis is not only an effort to reinvigorate Adorno's *Kulturkritik* approach to understanding CCIs, but also to introduce to the broader conversation concerning CCIs and postindustrial urban development an element of Adorno's work widely ignored in the cultural and urban geography and sociology literature: the irreconcilability of our knowledge of objects, and the objects of knowledge.

This thesis straddles the disciplines of human geography and sociology. While I see it principally as a work of cultural-urban geography, it draws from and contributes to debates in a number of fields. In addition to the irreconcilability of identity and non-identity derived from Adorno's negative dialectics, this research makes an important contribution to methodology by emphasizing importance of research that engages with the particularities of the phenomena it seeks to investigate, and also in the form of *Statherumgehen*-as-method I derived from the work of Walter Benjamin. The formal practice of social science is often overly attached to strict tenets concerning method and procedure often derived from discipline-specific traditions. Although there can be much value in these approaches, strict adherence to protocols can be far more hindrance than help; this is especially true when the objects of study are particular and contextual. Benjamin's insistence on a lived and sensuous approach to gathering data about the urban environment, however, urges us to engage with that particularity, and provides an innovative – and distinctly geographical – approach to data gathering that challenges our assumptions as researchers about our own practices, the objects we are studying, and the impact upon our impressions when we immerse ourselves in the particularities of our objects and their contexts: when we strive to 'get lost' in cities, to break with the familiar, and 'give thought the density of experience' so that we might gain insight into all that which has 'slipped through the conventional conceptual net' (Adorno, 1997: 239-240).

In emphasizing the particular and the contextual aspects of identity and the dialectic of art and economy, I have of necessity avoided entering into an exploration of the broader economic and urban geographies of the cities in which participants' stories exist. To have done so would have resulted in an equally valuable, but very different, thesis - one which in gaining a better understanding of the *cities*, would have lost its focus on the particularity of the dialectical process of identification, and with that its critical theoretical cohesion. While this thesis lacks a broader frame, I don't believe it is any the worse for the absence. The thesis I have produced tells a particular story - a critical and important story - about the postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs, and the dialectic of art and economy in which they are constructed and performed, from which I draw the following conclusions.

IX.2 Conclusions

In being guided by Adorno's negative dialectics, I have intentionally tried to avoid invoking the tyranny of classification wherever possible. I have, as far as I have been able, sought to avoid the uncritical application of general concepts which would obscure the ambivalence and contradictions in the nonidentical conditions of the world. It would be incongruous to this theoretical and epistemological position to seek, in the final act, to extrapolate general conclusions or typologies from the data, and such is not my intention. Nevertheless, there are some tentative conclusions which can be drawn, not in a spirit of finality, or fixedness, but as contributions to the wider debates concerning identities, CCIs, and postindustrial urban change.

IX.2.1 A (Negative) Dialectic of Art and Economy

Dialectics, fundamentally, are concerned with tensions, contradictions, ambivalences, and differences. By arguing, as I have in this thesis, that the social, cultural, and spatial landscapes in which postindustrial identities of people working in CCIs are constructed and performed should be understood as a dialectic – the dialectic of art and economy – I am arguing that tensions, contradictions, ambivalences, and differences are fundamental to the experiences of people working in CCIs and the urban environments in which they live and work.

In the discussion in chapter 8 I developed a ‘constellation’ of five sets of interrelated dialectical concepts (culture and industry, autonomy and interdependence, industrial and postindustrial, vernacular and universal, and resistance and compromise). These concepts are not to be thought of as labels or signposts marking out key territories or characteristics of artistic identities, but more as lenses or prisms (Adorno, 1997) through which to view artistic identities and the dialectic of art and economy alongside and in relation to which they are constructed and performed. The dialectic I have emphasized in this thesis is not composed of fixed relations or conditions, but is dynamic and evolutionary. It is the error of those who either celebrate or decry the relationship between culture and the postindustrial economy (as it currently stands) wholesale that they, at least on some level, consider the duality between them to be static and fixed: to be subject to universal valuation. It is my contention that the only way to conceive of the relationship between art and economy, and of the artistic identities which this relationship necessitates, is dialectically: as a conflicted and contradictory interdependence. While others (e.g. Caves, 2000; Gablik, 1991; O’Connor, 2010) have drawn attention to the tensions and negotiations between art and commerce implicated in the way in which art and CCIs are understood, they have fallen short of explicitly acknowledging the dialectical character of this relationship: a dynamic interdependence constantly shifting, collapsing and reforming, and expressing itself in varied, multiple, and context-specific ways in different times and places. Recent arguments concerning the relationship between culture and economy characterized by

'creativity' claim to describe a fundamental shift in the relationship between culture and economy – in which the economy as a whole has become 'cultural' (or that culture is being entirely absorbed into the commercial); such claims, I argue, rather than describing the purported revolution in the relationship between art and the economy, merely describe a re-articulation of the dialectic of art and economy, drawing on the same 'myths' and stories (Bain, 2005), and invoke the familiar images of the independent, autonomous artist, simply reclassified and repurposed to suit the changing postindustrial economy. These discourses, in fact, are rather more a reflection of the universalizing tendency within capitalism.

This should, of course, not be taken to suggest that universalization under capitalist logic is the inevitable conclusion: while postindustrial capitalism inevitably seeks out new objects and experiences to commodify and standardize, it simultaneously produces new conditions for *kritik*, new spaces and interstices for innovation and expression, and new opportunities for negotiation and resistance, which become increasingly significant features of the aesthetic projects of self (Featherstone, 1991, 1992) through which people working in the CCIs make sense of their relationships to the dialectic of art and economy.

Following Adorno's negative dialectics (1973, 2008), I do not see the 'end result' of the dialectic of art and economy being reconciliation, or 'identity' between culture and industry. The process of (negative) dialectics is not solution but negation of the false unity of the non-identical object with its concept, and the contradictions and tensions within the dialectic of art and economy are not 'resolved' but renewed in different ways and with different local expressions. Consequently, there will always be contradictions and conflicts between art and economy. While efforts to facilitate artistic and cultural production – and to provide and protect, wherever possible, suitable spaces for artists – should be an important part of urban cultural strategy, it should always be remembered that attempts to facilitate the creation of artistic spaces are as likely to undermine as to nurture.

IX.2.2 One Size Does not Fit All

Artistic identities emerge from the negotiations made by people working in CCI as they make sense of the ideas and material conditions of the dialectic of art and economy and the various ways in which it is expressed in particular contexts, and consequently are highly varied. While they do not necessarily take a position in direct conflict with capitalism, the particularity that is key to the 'auratic' quality of art and culture are in inevitable opposition with the universalizing tendency within capitalism which seeks to transform everything – including, as Adorno (2001, Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997) argued, art and culture – to standardized commodities. This tendency towards the commodification of culture – and of artistic expression – can be seen in the demand to produce aesthetic projects of self (Featherstone, 1991), in the 'creative fetish' (Banks, 2007) discourse of work in the cultural economy, and the homogenization of urban space through cultural regeneration and urban branding in line with creative city logics (Florida, 2005).

It is now widely accepted that the generic application of cultural regeneration and creative city strategies does not yield guaranteed urban revitalization, and instead often promotes uneven and contradictory transformations, which, as Peck (2005) maintains, ultimately reproduce neoliberal development strategies, marginalizing particular peoples, cultures, and identities in favour of the valorization of urban land capital. Nevertheless, the hard branding of urban landscapes with iconic architecture and other symbols of the cultural power of capital continues to reproduce landscapes already classified in the interests of capitalism in which space for vernacular artistic work and identities to develop and thrive are decreasing. Despite the creative city discourses that suggest culture-led regeneration serves to create urban landscapes which attract and encourage artistic identities to flourish, the stories I have presented here speak to a far more complex and ambivalent relationship, in which the universalizing logic of capitalism displaces and undermines artistic spaces and identities.

Accordingly, it follows that city authorities seeking to encourage CCIs of the kind with which this thesis is concerned should be very wary of applying 'creative city' strategies, and certainly resistant to strategies or explanations which imply a one-size-fits-all approach to encouraging and supporting artistic and cultural spaces. Despite claiming to support the vernacular character of cities and urban spaces largely valued by CCI workers, such strategies have an inherent tendency towards the homogenization and universalization of place. The claims of commentators like Richard Florida, and the promises of CCIs (to solve the issues of alienation and universalization, etc. within capitalism) are ultimately an attempt to reconcile the dialectic of art and economy through what Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) have identified as a 'new spirit of capitalism' in which 'artistic critique' is seen to hold the solutions to the contradictions of capitalism. This amounts to a grand, universalizing conceptualization of the character of postindustrial economies and urban spaces, and of culture and artistic identities. Like all concepts, such accounts and programmes cannot do justice to the nonconceptual; and in attempting to achieve *identity* between the identical and the nonidentical, destroy the particularity which, for urban space and works of art alike, is the source of their value. Even when they describe the variety within the cultural economy, they treat it as a coherent entity and therefore always fail to appreciate the conflict, contradiction, and ambivalence which are inherent in every particularity. Consequently, any attempt to provide 'one size fits all' answers to question of culture should be treated with grave scepticism. For, as Adorno (2005: 88-89) remarked: 'The attempt to deduce the world in words from a principle, is the behaviour of someone who would like to usurp power instead of resisting it'.

IX.2.3 The Geography of the Dialectic of Art and Economy

I have used the term artistic identities to refer to those practices of identification which relate to the dialectic of art and economy. This is not to suggest that they are not all unique, and influenced by a multitude of other factors: identities, after all, are ongoing processes, and are always multiple. While I have suggested that these identities relate to, draw on, and influence the same aggregation of issues – the dialectic of art and economy – these identity practices are not the same everywhere, but instead shape, and are shaped by, the ways in which the dialectic of art and economy is expressed in geographically-specific ways. The expressions of the dialectic of art and economy, and artists and cultural producers' experiences and practices of identification, are interwoven with the material, cultural, spatial, and historical characteristics of place, and consequently the everyday negotiations which make up the identity practices of people working in CCIs differ both between and within cities. The contradictions of the industrial and postindustrial expression differ considerably between Newcastle and Hamburg, because of the different trajectories the cities have taken, and the multiple and interconnected forces of local history, geography, and culture on the one hand, and global political economy and the implications of the porosity of cities and systems in the global network society (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Byrne, 2001; Castells, 1996), which take place beyond, but intertwined with, the particular complexities of the local on the other. Such considerations have been beyond the scope of this thesis, but nevertheless have significant bearing upon the issues it has addressed. The decision to focus this thesis on the constructions and practices of identity and the variety thereof has come at the expense of an analysis of the broader contexts in which these identities are played out. By focusing on the construction of postindustrial identities and the everyday experiences of participants, and in choosing to (re)present them through illustrative vignettes, I have necessarily neglected a more comprehensive exploration of the urban and broader economic contexts of the cultural and creative economies of Newcastle and Hamburg, which are obviously of considerable importance in structuring those practices of identity. While I have tried to ensure the stories are understood in context, and not read simply as individual and

exclusively subjective accounts, there is inevitably a limit to the extent to which context can be provided.

Geographical differences between and within the cities were highly significant, and even in areas with considerable aspects in common (history, buildings, use, etc.) the cultural economies, and artistic identities were very highly influenced by particular, local, characteristics. The vignettes exposed what are highly heterogeneous experiences and practices of identification both between and within the cities. While certain characteristics of the cities – such as the troubled history of deindustrialization in Newcastle, or Hamburg’s reputation as a stuffy merchant city – formed important backdrops to the construction and practices of artistic identities, they were nevertheless subject to various negotiations and interpretations as cultural and creative workers incorporated, rejected, and reconstructed the multiple meanings of culture, place, and memory within their everyday practices of identification.

Likewise the variation in material and economic contexts of the two cities, whilst highlighting some far-reaching issues, were incorporated, and in turn (re)articulated and (re)constructed in various, and often conflicting and ambivalent ways. The problems Newcastle has experienced in terms of a political context are significant: austerity measures have had a noticeable impact on the city council’s ability to provide arts funding, and, crucially, appropriate space, but while for some artists and cultural workers this contributed to a negative environment where arts and culture were sacrificed under the march of neoliberal development, for others, this climate reinforced a meaningful, and highly positive, DIY identity as ‘grafters’, through which artistic identities could be related to the industrial identities of the past. In Hamburg, the existence of the *Hamburg Kreativgesellschaft* is particularly significant in facilitating the meeting of artists and creative spaces and, while this is by no means a simple success story, the differences in this regard between Hamburg and Newcastle, where no such organization exists, are stark. Nevertheless, artists’ and cultural producers’ attitudes towards, and experiences of, the HKG

were variable, influenced significantly by other aspects of artistic identities and how other contradictions and ambivalences of the dialectic of art and economy – including, but not limited to, the access to appropriate space – featured in artists’ narratives.

While artistic identities inevitably, on some level, are individual constructions – and this individualism is fed particularly by the issues of independence and autonomy which are crucially implicated in the dialectic of art and economy – in accounts from both Newcastle and Hamburg collectivism and collective artistic identities were deeply implicated, and the relationship between individual and collective experiences, practices, spaces, and identities is itself a territory through which the dialectic of art and economy is negotiated. Shared and collective artistic practice or spaces, particularly in enabling people working in CCIs to ‘get on’ (particularly, in Newcastle, within the economic context of austerity), and often constituted an important aesthetic aspect of artistic urban landscapes. In the access and protections of artistic spaces, formal and informal collectives can play a particularly important role in what Pritchard (2018) calls ‘place guarding’, enabling collective art and activism to potentially resist the instrumentalization of CCIs and the ‘art-washing’ which increasingly features in neoliberal urban regeneration strategies.

The difficulties artists and cultural producers faced in each city are related, but not the same; and consequently the solutions are not directly transferable. While the benefits of an organization like the HKG are obvious, such an organization alone would be unlikely to solve the challenges of finding suitable space for CCIs in Newcastle. While the significant difference in size and density of the cities would impact on the ability of such an organization to locate and be able to afford space, the creation and success of the HKG has come on the back of significant political will and while such a will is not entirely lacking in Newcastle, the resources and influence wielded by the department responsible for culture suggest that the political – and commercial – motivation to support such an ambitious move in facilitating a supportive climate

for CCIs in the city, is perhaps not, under the prevailing conditions of austerity, a likely development.

The HKG was also created in response to a particular crisis of urban development and the Right to the City movement, which mobilized not only a large population of artists, cultural producers, and activists, but journalists, politicians, and captured the public spirit. The culture of the city of Hamburg – which has been nurtured through its trajectory into the postindustrial, unlike the ruptures that characterize Newcastle’s – is such that investment in CCIs is, while not without opposition, seen as less of a direct assault on the ‘vernacular’ culture of the city. While even in Hamburg many cultural and creative workers see the urban branding of the *Elbphilharmonie* or the *Hafengeburtstag* as the commercialization of culture and very different to their own identities (NION, 2010), it does not arouse the same kind of condemnation and opposition that artists in Newcastle sometimes expressed regarding events like the Great Exhibition of the North, or other attempts to culturally ‘brand’ the city, which, are typically seen not only as the commercialization of culture, but cynical art-washing designed to appropriate public art and cultural work in furtherance of neoliberal development strategies and the erasure of industrial, vernacular cultures and spaces.

IX.2.4 Beyond the Cultural and Creative Industries?

While it is the argument of this thesis that people working in the CCIs engage in the construction and practice of what I have - in the interests of economy of space - called artistic identities in order to negotiate the dialectical relationship between art, or culture, and economy in postindustrial capitalism, it is worth concluding with the observation that negotiating this dialectic is not reserved exclusively for people working in CCIs.

Identities are spatially-located, and materially-embodied dialectical practices of identification, through which people construct narratives of meaning in understanding the world they inhabit

and their relationship to it. They are ongoing projects through which understandings of the world are (re)constructed, (re)interpreted, and (re)negotiated. As the material, social, spatial, cultural, and economic landscapes of people's worlds change, these narratives become subject to revision: rejected, reevaluated, amended, or retracted through new forms of interpretation and identity work. The vignettes in chapters 6 and 7 give insights into such practices and negotiations as artists and cultural producers reinterpret their relationships to a contradictory, ambivalent, and ever-changing world in which the contradictions and ambivalences associated with the dialectic of art and economy represent an increasingly important part.

The dialectic of art and economy is tied to the evolution of capitalism and to the social relations and contradictions generated by that socioeconomic system. Culture and economy, and their relationship to each other and to capitalism, permeate everybody's everyday lives in myriad ways, and are inescapable features of all our identification practices. It is only their relative centrality to practices of identity for people working in the CCIs that makes them more immanent and explicit. Moreover, the processes by which CCIs have become more significant and ubiquitous features of the postindustrial economic landscape – the economy of signs and space (Lash and Urry, 1994), the liquidity of cultural forms, *Entgrenzung* and subjectivization and the aestheticization of everyday life – are not restricted to CCIs and their contexts, but are seen to be more general features of emerging postindustrial society. CCIs are seen as archetypes of the 'new' postindustrial cultural economy because they have been the first to incorporate the aesthetic traits associated with art and artistic production; however, if the arguments upon which these claims are based prove accurate, then it follows that as cultural forms and aesthetic practices become more fundamental to all aspects of social life, and the relations of the commodity form, in turn, permeate more and more areas of culture, that more industry sectors will follow the trajectory of the CCIs, and the need to negotiate the dialectic of culture and economy will become a more fundamental and explicit requirement for the identity practices of more and more people.

This was absolutely central to Adorno's (and Horkheimer's) and Benjamin's concerns when they sought to explore the changing role and forms of art and culture in the society of the 20th century. Adorno's concern with the auratic, autonomous, character of art and the potential for *Kulturkritik* in the face of the emerging culture industries was not about defending or salvaging the remote, rarefied, esoteric character of art, but about the consequences of its absence for people's everyday lives. In the emerging postindustrial society of the early 21st century, there have been many new and different changes to the relationship between art and economy (technological advancements particularly, and not least the extent to which the multiplicity of cultural commodities are themselves ubiquitous, everyday objects, and the impact of that on our everyday lives) which Adorno and Benjamin could never have predicted, and it would be foolish to assume that these changes have not had profound effects which, had they witnessed them, would have impacted on their arguments. Nevertheless, it is equally foolish to assume that because some things are different that everything is different, and it is precisely the strength of Adorno's negative dialectics that it rejects the possibility of completeness of thought; emphasizing always the need for change, revision, and criticism.

IX.3 Further Research

Although the findings of this research, I believe, as I have set out above, reflect conditions quite fundamental to the ways in which art and CCIs exist in postindustrial society, and in how they are implicated in practices of identification, they relate specifically to a very limited set of experiences of a small sample of artists, makers, 'creatives', and cultural producers, working either independently or in small/micro-enterprises in Newcastle and Hamburg – two very different, and quite atypical European cities. As discussed in the methodology, in seeking depth of insight into the lived experiences of particular participants representativeness has

necessarily been sacrificed. On the other hand, in seeking to explore the variety of experiences in different cities, the depth that could have been achieved from a fully immersive ethnography has also been missed. Compromises such as these are inevitable in any research project.

This is not a weakness, however, as it reinforces the argument advanced here, that it is in the contradictions and ambivalences that are expressed at the level of the particularities that are the most significant in coming to understand the nonidentical. A study which had attempted to generate universal statements – or identity definitive characteristics of either the urban cultural economies or the artistic identities which operate within them – would, from the perspective of negative dialectics take here, have entirely missed the point, and resulted in yet another conceptual generalization that would have done more damage to what it was trying to describe.

Alongside developing a theoretical argument concerning the practices of identification of people working in CCIs, this research has also made some important claims concerning methodology. Adorno's negative dialectics urges research towards questions of the particular and the contradictory, concerns which marry nicely with some established ideas in urban sociology, and to ideas in post-representational geography. Here the insights from Benjamin's work make significant contributions, and the practice of *Stadtherumgehen* as an immersive, experiential method of urban research I have tested in this research has significant value, and warrants application in other settings.

Further research into the topic of postindustrial identities and CCIs should continue to investigate the contradictions and ambivalences of the dialectic of art and economy as they are expressed in particular environments. Any number of other cities would provide further examples of the significance of local history, culture, identity, and urban transformation on practices of identification, and it would be valuable to see how the expressions of the dialectic of art and economy and artistic identities differ both in cities similar in size and history to both Newcastle and Hamburg and in cities with different kinds of urban identities and geographies. Additionally, as other studies have implied, the contradictions and ambivalences would likely be

very different for people working in different organizations and at different levels within larger organizations, and these would provide valuable insights.

Also, the sample of participants in this study, while representative of the population it was investigating, was not representative of people working in the CCIs more generally (particularly in terms of ethnicity), and further research, perhaps conducted by researchers who are themselves not white, male, and European (and possibly better positioned to access other cultural and creative networks), could explore what would undoubtedly be additional layers of contradiction and ambivalence where other ethnic identities intersects with the spatial, historical, and cultural.

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