Unpaid work and internships within the cultural and creative sectors: Policy, popular culture, and resistance.

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Joanna Figiel and Stevphen Shukaitis, 'The Factory of Individuation: Cultural Labor and Class Composition in the Metropolis' *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2015) 114 (3), 535-552.

Joanna Figiel, 'Theorizing Cultural Work: Labour, Continuity and Change in the Cultural and Creative Industries,' *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 8:6 (2015), 734-737

Joana Figiel, 'Chapter 5: Artists, organise? in *Czarna Ksiega Polskich Artystow* [Black Book For Polish Artists] ed. Kasia Gorna et.al (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2015)

Joanna Figiel and Sophie Hope, 'Interning and Investing: Rethinking Unpaid Work, Social Capital, and the "Human Capital Regime"' in *TripleC* Interrogating Internships: Conceptualizing Internships, Vol 13 No 2 (2015), 361-374

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Abstract

My thesis explores the interconnected issues surrounding unpaid labour, internships, and work placements within the creative and cultural sectors in order to show how the figure of the intern materialises across multiple sites and through various discourses. I extend the existing scholarship by examining how ideas about unpaid work and internships have emerged and mutated over the past decade in media, policy, and activist discourses. I examine the ways in which policy literature in the UK has dealt with the subject of internships over this same period and analyse how the question of internships is concretised in policy discourses. Following this, I undertake a close reading of the ways in which the figure of the intern is depicted in popular culture. Drawing on these insights, I locate the links between issues of gender, internships and unpaid work in the creative and arts sector and evaluate activist strategies to respond to these problems, engaging with my own experiences in the UK and in Poland. Altogether, my thesis demonstrates the variety of ways in which unpaid work and internships have become steadily normalised across the past decade or so, including by being rendered respectable as 'educational' or 'training' opportunities, and through their cooperation with highly gendered ideas of affective and creative labour. By analysing the research and activist efforts undertaken in response to this phenomenon, I outline a set of strategies for urgently required intervention against the exploitation and inequalities built into these burgeoning forms of work.

List of abbreviations

ACE Arts Council England

BECTU Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union

BIS Department of Business, Innovation and Skills

CCE Cultural Capital Exchange

CCI Creative and Cultural Industry

CCS Creative & Cultural Skills

CIPD Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

CWC Carrot Workers Collective

DLHE Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education

ECU Equality Challenge Unit

GLA Greater London Authority

GPCF Gateway to the Professions Collaborative Forum

HECSU Higher Education Careers Service Unit

HMRC Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

IPPR Institute for Public Policy Research

LCACE London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange

LLW London Living Wage

LPC Low Pay Commission

NCWE National Council for Work Experience

NIKS National Internship Kitemark Scheme

NMW National Minimum Wage

NUJ National Union of Journalists

NUS National Union of Students

OFSW Obywatelskie Forum Sztuki Współczesnej (Citizens Forum for Contemporary Art)

PWB Precarious Workers Brigade

SMF Social Market Foundation

SROI Social Return on Investment

TUC Trades Union Congress

UCU University College Union

Chapter 1

Introduction: Experiencing Theory

My thesis explores the interconnected issues surrounding unpaid labour, internships, and work placements within the creative and cultural sectors. I extend existing scholarship by examining how the figure of the unpaid worker and intern has emerged and mutated over the past decade in the media and in policy and activist discourses in the US, as well as in the UK and Poland, where I live and work. I pay particular attention to the ways in which unpaid work and internships are gendered and normalised via policy, media depictions and discourses such as that of 'employability'. Despite recent publications, such as the special issues of *Triple C* journal devoted to internships[1] and the *ephemera* journal[2], the area of unpaid work and internships, especially in the current political and economic climate, demands further urgent scholarly attention to extend our critical understanding of and responses to it. Critical issues, including the immateriality and precariousness of labour, class re-composition and social exclusion, the production of affect, and gender in relation to unpaid work and internships, are currently largely absent from academic discourse on internships. Similarly, the ways in which internships are becoming increasingly normalised as unpaid labour[3] and reframed as necessary educational work experience for students in the era of employability[4] must be systematically examined while paying far closer attention to the role of gender, race, and class in relation to internships.

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1. Greig de Peuter, Nicole S. Cohen, and Enda Brophy, eds. 'Interrogating Internships: Unpaid Work, Creative Industries, and Higher Education', special issue of *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism, and Culture* 13:2 (2015), 329-605.
2. Armin Beverungen et al., *ephemera* 'Free work' special issue, 2013
3. The European Commission estimates that beyond the EU institutions; across Europe, 4.5 million students and graduates undertake an internship each year in Europe, 59% of whom are unpaid. Quoted in: Coleen Chen, '"Getting ahead or exploitation": a comparative analysis of the rise of internships and collective actions to advance the labour rights of interns' 2015, http://internassociation.ca/tempcia/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Colleen-Chen-Article.pdf, 6
4. See, for example, Chertkovskaya, Watt, Tramer and Spoelstra, *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization – Special issue: Employability* (2013); Joanna Figiel and Sophie Hope, 'Training for Exploitation', in Greig de Peuter, Nicole S. Cohen, and Enda Brophy, eds. 'Interrogating Internships: Unpaid Work, Creative Industries, and Higher Education', special issue of *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism, and Culture* 13:2 (2015)

In this thesis, I seek to examine the representations of the emergent figure of the unpaid worker and intern, as well as the problems of normalisation and gendering of internships, through a set of intertwining research methodologies. I use a mixed methodological approach, i.e. a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods that inform my analysis — I felt that one single method would not be as productive in order to shed light on all aspects of my inquiry. This mixed approach includes a balanced combination of ethnographic research and an in-depth reading and analysis of existing academic theory, grey literature, popular publications and policy documents, as well as some records of my involvement in participatory, collective forms of research. My research has, therefore, been divided into three parts: first, researching the relevant theoretical concepts mentioned below; second, reading and analysing policy, regulations and popular media documents, testimonies and interviews with interns and employers working with interns or intentionally choosing not to do so, and cultural texts (including films and TV programmes) engaging with the figure of the intern; and third, self-reflexive, participatory ethnographic fieldwork based on an active engagement with and participation in intern groups and doing unpaid work myself. Since these three types of activities were intertwined throughout the duration of my PhD, as well as in preparation for various published and unpublished journal articles, texts, and academic and activist projects, this is reflected in this thesis. As such, my thesis does not intend to work within, contribute to, or advance one single and concrete body of literature or thought. Rather, it aims to provide a multifaceted and multilevel insight into the current / emergent nature of unpaid work in the creative and cultural sector over the past decade or so. This is a conscious choice. I recognise the fact that a longer-term or a wider perspective would avoid the elements of 'presentism' and 'exceptionalism' in regards to the history and supposed uniqueness of the CCIs, but I have made a decision to present my PhD work in this particular way and therefore I am limiting my interests for the purpose of this thesis.

The thesis makes a contribution to several bodies of work. These include the following: First, it advances critical studies of labour in the CCIs by exploring the pivotal role played by unpaid labour and internships. Second, I show the key role

played by media texts and representations in constructing the contemporary discourse around the meanings of internships. Through such work the thesis is able to contribute a novel form of cultural studies analysis, which examines the significance of the previously unstudied terrain of popular media representations of internships. Third, I offer a unique perspective on the experience of activists, thus enriching the understanding of contemporary social movements. And fourth, I discuss the limits of existing policy and bring it into a dialogue with activist discourses on the matter. In the process, the thesis offers a multifaceted approach to understanding the meaning of internship rather than a narrow, singular, constrained, analysis of one aspect of the issue. Together, and as outlined in the appendix, these combined contributions significantly advance the understanding of the use and meaning of internships in the context of the contemporary conjuncture

My background, and therefore also this thesis, is interdisciplinary. First of all, I come from a higher educational background in critical and curatorial studies (with a BA in Criticism, Curation, and Communication, Saint Martins), and cultural studies (with an MA in Culture Industry at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths), while this thesis has been undertaken in what is now called the School of Arts and Social Sciences in the Department of Sociology.

My motivations behind the writing of this thesis have not, however, been purely academic. Before I set out to pursue a PhD, I spent three months at one of London's contemporary art galleries on a work placement as part of my MA degree. I had an opportunity to experience first-hand the conditions and obstacles negotiated on a daily basis by unpaid workers in that sector. This brief period of work as an intern in the cultural sphere (a shorter duration than the usual duration of an internship in this field), bound up as it was by issues of precarity, class re-composition and social exclusion, led me to begin to think of the processes ruling this ‘new’ kind of ‘work’ graduates face – though not just graduates anymore – at the bottom rung of the employment ladder in the creative and cultural industries. The fact that the internship was part of an MA programme was significant, given the current prominence of ‘employability teaching’ in higher education and the fact that colleges and universities clearly play a role in establishing and normalising the life regimes

bound by precarious and free labour. In this sense, the origin of the PhD thesis lies in my MA thesis, later rewritten, updated, and published as an article.[5]

One could say, then, that the motivation for this piece of writing is both empirical and ethical. My position is simultaneously that of a researcher, a former intern and an activist (albeit, thanks to time dedicated to this very thesis, a less active one now). I have occupied these diverse roles both in Poland, where I come from, and in London, where I arrived in 2005 as essentially an immigrant or economic migrant that – thanks to the now non-existent privileges afforded by Poland's European Union newcomer status and the British pre-hike/low tuition university fees and grants – was able to complete a BA, and later an MA, and even gain the PhD scholarship thanks to which this thesis is produced. What this particular position affords is a certain personal insight into the life of a marginalised, precarious self, constructed by others in advance but still retaining – even insisting on – the relative privilege that comes with deep reading, the time to love literature and justice, and a modicum of competence.

A large portion of this doctoral thesis is based on research conducted, and articles published, over a number of years and in a number of settings and contexts, both academic and non-academic. Often these activities were in collaboration with others, or as reflections on collaborative and collective activities undertaken with others; for this reason, they necessarily and importantly bring together different voices and points of view. Together, these different experiences and activities have shaped my way of thinking, questioning, and proceeding with different phases of work and research. As such, the thesis is in some ways similar to theses written 'by publication' — it is necessarily, and consciously, fragmented, although I have brought together and interlinked its key themes. Throughout the thesis, I will make clear which sections of the work were conducted and published together with others, and which were my own.

It was reading – during my MA, in pre-financial crisis UK – about the supposedly positive and liberating aspects of creative and cultural work that led me to the idea of doing an unpaid internship in the first place, to investigate the veracity of

5. Joanna Figiel, 'Work Experience Without Qualities? A Documentary and Critical Account.' *ephemera* 13:1 (2012), 33–52.

such claims. This experience later turned into frustration and amazement at the injustices and unfairness of doing such precarious work in one of world's most expensive cities, while also studying full-time and working part-time in order to survive. (At the time I wasn't even able to attend political or activist meetings – they all took place on weekday evenings, while I was at my paid job, working in order to pay the rent). With my interests in feminism and Marxism emerging around the same time, I resolved to pursue the subject further, albeit with a clear resolve to avoid adopting a certain 'victim mentality' (poor, migrant, female, etc.) that rails against every perceived slight at an otherwise unexamined entitlement, instead focusing on productively drawing together my experiences as an activist, researcher, and intern, and ensuring that these were reflected in my analytic work. At the same time, rather than 'over-identifying' with the subject of my research, I have insisted on the interdisciplinary methodology, the politics, parameters and protocols of a critical cultural studies, instead of opting for an identitarian narrative which would in any case set up new margins, precarities, and anxieties.

Although I conducted active research, in the form of participant observation, for the MA thesis – taking up an unpaid internship myself – my research methods for this PhD thesis were more diverse. For each of the different sections of the thesis, I employ a combination of research methods, including discourse and content analysis, ethnography/participant observation, and interviews. The method chosen for each chapter is related closely to the theoretical approach underlying the different avenues taken to contribute to my total investigation. As in the cultural studies tradition, theory and method can often be seen as one and the same (as is evidenced in work presented, for example, in the journal *Cultural Studies <> Critical Methodologies*). As Stuart Hall writes, 'The only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency.'[6] In the same vein, I do not conceive it possible to separate theory from practice – the latter which perhaps can be understood as this fighting off. No theory without practical engagement, no practical engagement without theory; whether in research, academic labour, or non-academic practices. A scholarly contribution must necessarily involve concurrent activity on a

6. Stuart Hall, *Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies*, in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler. (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 280.

number of fronts.

Taking such insights seriously, my interest in participatory research and workers' inquiry is not unrelated to my active and ongoing interest in culture industry creative work, publishing and events, and so on, as I will attempt to demonstrate throughout the thesis. Having said that, part of my thesis is theoretical and textually based, in the form of a literature review and a critical analysis of a number of theories, as well as descriptive material. While I attempt to present a multi-faceted approach to the subject, I do not limit my engagement / contribution to a single, particular body of literature. The review therefore includes a discussion of a number of literatures reflecting on themes that I see as particularly important to the research topic. In particular, I draw upon the theories of immaterial labour, affective labour, unpaid labour and precarity, gendered and feminised domestic labour, 'employability trends' and human capital, meritocracy, class composition and subjectivation.

Finally, my own migrant, in-between status dictates the geographical orientation of this thesis. While there is no comparative dimension running through the thesis, each chapter is characterised by its own national/transnational focus. Chapters 2 and 3, which together constitute my two-part literature review – entitled 'Work in the creative and cultural sectors' and 'Unpaid work and internships in the creative and cultural sectors' respectively – are mostly organised around UK and North American scholarship (after all, as Ross Perlin has noted, when it comes to unpaid work and internships, the UK and the rest of the world tend to follow the US example). Chapter 4, entitled 'Policy: How does the question of internships materialise in policy discourse?', is chiefly concerned with policy and regulations in the UK, where I lived, worked, and closely followed developments within the sector for over a decade. An in-depth study of UK policy discourse was chosen in order to enable a fine-grained focus on the political shifts during this period, although the chapter also makes reference to broad trends in US and Polish policy where relevant. Chapter 5, entitled 'Culture: How is the figure of the intern depicted, gendered, and normalised in popular culture?' discusses examples from popular culture produced in the US and UK. However, it is worth bearing in mind that in today's connected era of online streaming, most of this content would be received globally (especially when it

comes to the examples produced in the US by HBO or MTV). This chapter intentionally foregrounds mainstream popular culture, rather than niche offerings. Finally, Chapter 6, entitled 'Activism: How are internships and unpaid work being mobilised against?' brings together accounts from both the UK and the US, as well as the discussion of Warsaw-based groups with whom I have collaborated over the years, in the area of my research interest. Such work was determined to a large degree by the issues I have sought to investigate in my thesis. What follows is a more detailed description and analysis of the purpose of these chapters, including a discussion of the specific methods I have used and their complexities.

Chapter overviews and further methodological considerations

The literature review is split across two separate sections, moving from the general to the particular, in and around current debates relating to work and employment, precarity, and unpaid workers and inters working in the cultural and creative sectors.

Chapter 2, entitled 'Literature review I: Work in the creative and cultural sectors', discusses — deliberately engaging and contributing to a number of, rather than a single body of literature — the changing nature of work in general, and work in the creative and cultural industries in particular. While the concepts of class composition[7]and the production of affect and affective labour[8], as well as the concepts of precarity and immateriality of labour[9], are at the centre of the discourse concerning creative and cultural economy workers[10], those who perform free/unpaid labour and undertake work experience placements and internships are often omitted in the discussion of the conditions and struggles of workers. This literature describes processes and circumstances affecting paid workers in the creative and cultural field in the second half of the twentieth century, whereas nowadays these same processes affect unpaid workers, including interns who are not necessarily recognised as workers. The present conditions call for a careful re-reading of work on the nature of

7. See Wright 2002, 2005; Kolinko 1999, 2005
8. See: Hardt and Negri 2000, 2005; Federici 2004; Hochschild 2003; Dowling 2007
9. Berardi 2010; Fortunati 1996; Lazzarato 1996, 2011; Ross 2008, and many others
10. Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Gill 2006, 2013, 2016; McRobbie 2014; Oakley 2009, 2014; Raunig 2011; Berardi 2010; Denning 2010; Banks 2007, 2013; Taylor 2012

labour under contemporary capitalism, which could provide a starting point for rethinking how content is being produced in the culture industry reliant on unpaid work and internships, and how — if at all — it is affected by the means through which it is produced.

Alongside a number of critical texts and theories, this chapter (as well as Chapter 6, entitled 'Activism: How are internships and unpaid work being mobilised against?') draws on empirical material gathered through my participation in two research projects.

The first of these projects called 'Metropolitan Factory' and conducted in collaboration with Stevphen Shukaitis, was an exploration of the micropolitics of creative and cultural work[11]. Taking as its point of departure the artist Carl André's identification of the artist with the factory worker, we conducted a survey and series of interviews based on the original workers' inquiry collated by Marx[12] and adapted to investigate the conditions and activities of independent cultural producers in markets like Brick Lane. Our aim behind this research activity – which consisted of around one hundred surveys and around twenty in-depth, semi-structured interviews with creative and cultural workers and artists – was to investigate the material realities of those working in this broadly-conceived sphere of creative and cultural production: their conditions of labour – including wages, precarity, rights – as well as of the social reproduction of their labour power. In sum, we attempted to illuminate the lived realities of creative workers.[13]

The second research project, and its attendant writing, that I draw on in the first part of my literature review is a report entitled 'The Art Factory', co-authored with the Free/Slow University of Warsaw. This was a broad-scale two-year study concerning the division and conditions of labour in the field of visual arts in Poland. The research methodology comprised three stages: firstly, a survey combined with a

11. See: Joanna Figiel and Shukaitis, Stevphen, 'Metropolitan Strategies, Psychogeographic Investigations' in *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 2013, Volume 13 Issue 6. 536-543*;* 'The Factory of Individuation: Cultural Labor and Class Composition in the Metropolis' in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 2013, 114 (3) 535-552

12. Karl Marx, *A Workers' Inquiry*, first published in *La Revue socialiste*, April 20, 1880, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/04/20.htm

13. Drawing on the material gathered from our interviews, Shukaitis and I went on to collaborate on a number of texts. Figiel and Shukaitis, ibid, Art, Politics and Markets' and 'Knows No Weekend: Class Composition & the Psychological Contract of Cultural Work in Precarious Times'].

semi-structured interview of nearly a hundred curators, artists, technical staff and assistants from across the country; secondly, institutional surveys; and thirdly, three focus group interviews. The purpose of these was to draw comparisons between the survey findings and more detailed accounts of the respondents' experiences. As a collaborator in this project, I was responsible (beyond the general visual and content design of the survey questionnaire) for writing the scripts, conducting, documenting, and writing up the three or semi-structured in-depth group interviews (or, to employ the terminology of marketing and social research, 'focus groups') with a number of workers from across the sector, which were designed around questions regarding gender, payment and unpaid work, and the working conditions within the field.

I also conducted and moderated these three focus group discussions. As a tool for qualitative research in social sciences, sociology and psychology, such discussions are most often conducted after the completion of quantitative research, in order to deepen the interpretation of quantitative research results. In 'Art Factory', the focus groups took place as the second phase of the project. That is to say, they were conducted following the initial analysis of the results of the quantitative survey. The aim was to investigate in more depth the threads of the questionnaires and individual interviews, to ask about some of the issues raised in the questionnaires, and to confront the participants of the interviews with the results of the survey. Interestingly, as I describe below, one of the panels showed diametrically different opinions than the results of the survey and the interview. The interviews took place in Bec Zmiana Foundation, Mokotowska 65/7, each lasting 1.5 hours.[14] The discussions were audio recorded, transcribed, and the participants' statements were anonymised. Each discussion began by introducing the participants (where they worked, in what position, for how long, their educational background and its relevance to what they do), so that the researcher (myself) and other participants knew which of the professional categories listed in the qualitative survey – artist, curator, support staff, or technician – their interlocutors belonged to.

14. Schedule of group interviews:
1. July 3, 2014 at 4 p.m. "The field of culture and art in relation to the social and working world";
2. 4 December 2014 at 5.30 pm "Money, power and prestige – redistribution of capital in the world of culture and art; 3. 4 December 2014 at 5.30 pm "Gender and work in the world of culture and art."

Like all research, this research involved challenges. First, the question of the lack of compensation for taking part in the focus groups surfaced in the recruitment of respondents. Some participants understood their participation as work; that is to say, unpaid work – one of the primary subjects the research was concerned with. It is worth mentioning that while the ethics and methodology predominant in social sciences and humanities research indicates that participants in research interviews should not be paid (in case such payment affects their responses), participants in focus groups in the commercial sector (e.g. marketing research) or in scientific sciences (e.g. psychology) are usually paid for their time spent taking part in such interviews. Given the subject matter of the research in general, and the focus groups in particular (unpaid work, payments, material realities of working in arts and cultural sector, self-exploitation, etc.), the fact that The Free/Slow University did not pay respondents for their time may have seemed, at first glance, controversial. In fact, some people I approached to take part in the focus groups protested this seeming hypocrisy and refused to participate, saying that they cannot afford to sacrifice an afternoon. In any case, such circumstances suggest that the issue of unpaid work clearly causes social tension (a fact that was hardly visible in results of the quantitative survey).

The second challenge involved in these interviews was that, given that the sector of cultural work and art is relatively small in Poland, and it is a rather hermetic environment in which one is very much dependent on the network of informal relationships between participants, some of the participants of the respective focus group interviews knew each other. Of course, such personal prior knowledge had the potential to affect the neutrality of their responses. However, I did ensure that people directly dependent on one another within their professional relationships did not take part in the same interview. I would say that such methodological challenges involved in conducting this type of research in the field of culture and art result from the very specificity of this field – including its size, its organisation around interpersonal relationships, etc. Before undertaking further research emerging from this PhD, then (and, as the overall report and the results of my focus group interviews show, a number of issues require more focused attention, such as gender issues in relation to

work and unpaid work within arts and culture), it would be necessary to undertake systematic reflection on the appropriate adaptation of other, already existing research tools, such as that of the workers' inquiry, also discussed below.

In Chapter 3, entitled ‘Literature review II: Unpaid work and internships in the creative and cultural sectors’, I move away from discussions regarding the various discourses of cultural and creative industries to focus on literature that engages directly with the issue of internships. I discuss a number of UK- and US-based academic contributions, popular publications and policy relating to unpaid work and internships. The newest and most important contribution to date to this field of academic research is the recently published special issue of *Triple C* which comprises a great deal of the most recent scholarship and debates on internships in a variety of contexts and approaches[15]. In this chapter, I also discuss the mechanisms through which unpaid work and internships are becoming normalised as necessary and unavoidable elements of education and of the process of finding a paid position within the job market. I analyse the way this normalisation operates, aside from through popular media discourses, through the regimes of ‘employability’ and ‘human capital’ that underline the importance of constantly improving and bettering one’s skills and investing in or speculating on one’s human and social capital. Part of my focus here is to evaluate the media coverage from the UK, since academic publishing has tended to lag behind media on the subject, while paying attention to the necessarily ambiguous nature of journalistic media: on the one hand, such media coverage contributes to the normalisation of the issue of internships, and on the other, it allows for critique of internships surfacing on the same news pages. One of my key questions is thus: How has the intensity and angle(s) of the media coverage changed or developed over the past five years since the initial boom of interest in the subject of internships? In responding to this, I draw on Sophie Hope’s and my own contribution to that issue[16], and an analysis of the *Ragpickers* website’s online archive of anonymous intern testimonies[17] and *Intern*, the print magazine and

15. Ibid
16. Joanna Figiel and Sophie Hope, ‘Interning and Investing: Rethinking Unpaid Work, Social Capital, and the Human Capital Regime’ in Greig de Peuter, Nicole Cohen and Enda Brophy, special issue of *tripleC*, 2015
17. Ragpickers, *Ragpickers Collection,* 2014 available: http://ragpickers.tumblr.com/collection.

platform dedicated, in the words of its editor, to creating equal opportunities for creative youth entering the creative industries.[18]

Chapter 4 is entitled 'Policy: How does the question of internships materialise in policy discourse?'. This chapter incorporates the existing policy research from the Intern Cultures report[19] and adds an update on a number of policy documents, and their subsequent development, published in the United Kingdom over the last decade. This chapter is predominantly a textual analysis of policy documents. By examining the way policy literature in the UK has dealt with the subject of internships over a decade-long period, I ask: how are shifting ideas about and discourses on internships being translated into policy discourse? What kind of language is being used to frame internships? What are the key definitions relating to issues of internships? What is the current legal position of paid and unpaid internships in the UK? Is the law being observed: have there been any court rulings in this area? How is policy changing over time? I also investigate what, if any, changes have occurred on the policy and employment law front in the intervening years.

Chapter 5, entitled 'Culture: How is the figure of the intern depicted, gendered, and normalised in popular culture?' examines a range of media constructions of the figure of the intern, using a cultural studies/media studies approach. It is a straightforward analysis of the media construction of interning, yet one that is seemingly absent in the existing literature. This chapter will discuss particular representations of the intern in popular culture, including films, scripted reality shows/contests, and TV series. I draw on critical and feminist theory in order to investigate the gendered nature of such depictions, and the implications of the fact that internships are becoming a staple of mainstream media and entertainment.

Chapter 6, entitled 'Activism: How are internships and unpaid work being mobilised against?' is based on my past engagement in groups organising around the issue of unpaid internships, as well as working conditions in the arts and the creative sector more generally – namely, the London-based Carrot Workers Collective and the Precarious Workers Brigade (PWB), and the Warsaw-based Citizens Forum for

18. Available at: http://intern-mag.com/
19. Joanna Figiel and Sophie Hope. 'Intern Culture,' Artquest 2014. http://www.artquest.org.uk/uploads/recovered_files/Intern%20Culture%20report.pdf.

Contemporary Art (Obywatelskie Forum Sztuki Współczesnej, OFSW) and the Free/Slow University of Warsaw research collective. Examining the activities of these groups, I trace a common shift – necessary, in my evaluation – towards a wider set of issues beyond the unpaid work/intern question *per se*, to include other concerns (including wider labour conditions, especially in the cultural and higher education sectors, the employability agenda, 'professional development' modules in higher education, and the institutionalised precarity and corporatisation of the arts). The chapter also counterpoises and relates the London-based initiatives to the Free/Slow University of Warsaw and the Citizen's Forum for Contemporary Arts in Warsaw, the two Polish groups I have been working with over the past few years. Given the fact that groups working around issues of precarity, unpaid labour and internships draw on the historically feminist practices, tools and approaches, and that gender regularly comes up in the discussions of these both sets of groups, I attempt to draw out the importance of gender issues in relation to unpaid work and internships activism, and the need to conduct more research on gender in this area.

Chapter 2
Literature review I: Work in the creative and cultural sectors

This chapter has two parts, moving from the general to the particular in and around some of the current debates relating to work and employment, precarity, and the depiction of unpaid work and internships in the creative and cultural industries. It works from the premise that, whether paid or legally recognised as workers or not, interns are in fact a part of, and subject to, work dynamics and work politics. The first part focuses on discussions regarding the changing nature of work in general and work in creative and cultural industries in particular, and takes into account the specificities of working within such environments where – in contrast to corporate working environments – lines of hierarchy can be blurred. The second part focuses on selected literature pertaining specifically to unpaid work and internships and the specific experiences of interns. There is of course a fair amount of overlap, and so, necessarily, I make links between these two areas. Throughout both parts I am drawing on literature ranging from grey literature, popular books, academic work and policy, as well as make references to my own work on academic and non-academic research projects.

Since the late 1990s the positive discourse surrounding the creative and cultural industries and their potential – demonstrated best, one could argue, by New Labour's 'Cool Britannia' slogans and actions – have continued to be hailed as the future of European employment, growth, and revenue streams. For example, as the 2010 European Union directives on the subject suggested, a striking shift was underway to a significant extent in Europe (as in much of the global north) from traditional manufacturing towards services and 'innovation,' where the factory floors were progressively replaced by creative communities whose raw material is their ability to imagine, create and innovate. These processes were often linked to the rapid production, roll out, and utilisation of new technologies, which were often regarded as being the future of work in the new digital economy where immaterial value

increasingly determines material value, as consumers search for new and enriching 'experiences'. To quote the authors of the European Commission's Green Paper:

> The ability to create social experiences, fostering creativity and innovation, and networking were now seen a factor of competitiveness. Europe's cultural and creative industries offer a real potential to respond to these challenges of competitiveness.[20]

In 2006, firms in the European creative and cultural industries employed a total of 6.5m people, and regions with a high concentration of such firms had the highest prosperity levels in Europe. In 2015, research by the charity Nesta[21] found that the number of people employed in EU's creative industries had risen to 11.4 million in 2013, accounting for five per cent of the EU workforce.[22] According to this research, the three largest creative industry workforces in the EU were those in countries with the largest workforces in general, with German creative industries employing 3.1 million (5.8 per cent of its workforce), the UK's creative industries employing 2.3 million (7.9 per cent) and France employing 1.4 million (5.5 per cent of the workforce). London was considered as one of the 'super clusters' concentrating such industries, with creative and cultural industries accounting for 5.95% of the regional labour market in Inner London.

In 2018, the creative and cultural industries still constitute a large sector of the European economy. In the UK, according to the latest official statistics from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), employment in the creative industries is growing at four times the rate of the UK workforce as a whole.[23] Based on new research, NESTA estimates there were 162,000 new employees in the UK creative industries between 2011-2014 and 2015-16.[24] What is interesting in regard to

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20.European Commission, Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries (2010), 3
21.Formerly NESTA, National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
22.John Davies, *Creative Europe: measuring the creative industries of the EU* (Nesta, 11 December 2015), https://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/creative-europe-measuring-the-creative-industries-of-the-eu/
23. Creative Industries, http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/uk-creative-overview/facts-and-figures/employment-figures (2018); Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport *Official Statistics* (2018), https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-2017-employment-and-trade
24.NESTA, *Creative industries are driving economic growth across the UK, on track to create one million new creative industries jobs between 2013 and 2030* (2018) retrieved from

internships and unpaid work in the creative sector debate is the fact that most of these sectors' employees have earned higher education degrees – 78 per cent, with 27 per cent holding post-graduate level degrees. When it comes to female and BAME employees this number is even higher – 81 and 83 per cent respectively. To put these figures into perspective, data from 2016 has shown that 63 per cent of job roles in the sector were filled by men and 37 per cent by women, and only 11.5 per cent of creative directors were women.[25] In 2016, BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) employees made up just 11 per cent of the 32,422 people working in the creative industries – an increase of 5.8 per cent from the previous year. Even though female and BAME candidates are expected to – and indeed do – 'try harder', i.e. get a university degree or leave university with a higher degree than their white and/or male counterparts, they are still less likely to be employed in the sector or indeed make an equal living working within the sector. This shows that women and those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities still face barriers, a subject that has been discussed at length in a recent report by Orian Brook, David O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, entitled 'Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries' (2017).

Furthermore, one recent survey of the sector found that there is a huge disparity in pay, as well as problems relating to long hours and childcare.[26] Figures from the 2016 *Women in Architecture Survey* showed salary discrepancies of up to £55,000 between female employees and their male counterparts, as well as widespread discrimination in the workplace and on site. [27] The survey also showed that 56 per cent of creative media respondents found their current or recent employment informally and that 77 per cent had done unpaid work experience.[28] Alongside gender and race, barriers associated with the limiting consequences of social class origin and

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https://www.nesta.org.uk/news/creative-industries-are-driving-economic-growth-across-the-uk-on-track-to-create-one-million-new-creative-industries-jobs-between-2013-and-2030/
25.The D&AD Foundation, *What's the Creative Industry Doing About Diversity?* (no date), https://www.dandad.org/en/d-ad-whats-creative-industry-doing-about-diversity-new-blood-advice/
26. Ali Morris, 'Lack of diversity within UK's creative industries revealed' *Dezeen*, 2017, 7 August, https://www.dezeen.com/2017/08/07/lack-diversity-uk-creative-industries-revealed-government-report-dcms-digital-culture-media-sport/
27. Tether, op.cit
28.Creative Industries, op. cit.

economic privilege are discussed in depth in the 'Panic!' report. All of this proves what anecdotal evidence has been saying all along – meritocracy in the arts, creative and cultural sectors is all but a myth, most likely perpetuated by those who have made their way to the top via other means.[29]

Many scholars argue that the mechanism of reframing what was historically known as the 'cultural industries' as 'creative industries' is simply a political move, an exercise in rebranding.[30] Moreover, the terms creative and cultural industries are widely disputed,[31] along with theories of the creative class,[32] and the ways in which both notions have been used in policy discourse in the United Kingdom.[33] In short, it is claimed that the creative economy and the creative and cultural industries (the CCIs) have been conceived of as a possible solution to the problems resulting from the disintegration of industrial sectors; the restructuring and privatisation of the 1980s; and later as a way of framing and formalizing the army of freelance and intermittent workers as a new type of recognized workforce, especially during the New Labour government in the UK.[34] One could argue that, at least according to the policy discourse, we are now immersed in what is an alternative to traditional industry: the creative 'immaterial economy,' as some would term it.[35] However, there is a vast field discussing these recent changes in the landscape of work, variously described as post-Fordism, post-industrialization, liquid modernity, information society, the network society, the 'new economy', or 'new capitalism,' or risk society.[36]

Similarly to the vast majority of the developed global north, the UK's economy has been flooded by a very large number of graduates joining the creative jobs market. This is due to the promotion by subsequent neoliberal Labour and Tory governments of higher education for all, with an emphasis on creative and art courses

29. Orian Brook, David O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries* (2018), http://createlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Panic-Social-Class-Taste-and-Inequalities-in-the-Creative-Industries1.pdf, 7-8
30.Gill and Pratt 2008; Garnham 1987; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005
31. Hesmondhalgh 2002, 2007; Lovink and Rossiter, 2007; Peck 2005; Pratt 2005, 2008
32. Peck 2005; Pratt 2008
33. Garnham 2005; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005; McRobbie 1998, 1999, 2003; Pratt 2005
34. See, among others Lovink and Rossiter 2007; Ross 2003, 2009; McRobbie 2014
35. Lazzarato 1996; Terranova 2000; Huws 2013; Hardt and Negri 2000; Raunig 2011
36. See Bauman, 2000, 2005; Beck, 2000; Beck and Ritter, 1992; Beck et al., 2000; Bell, 1973; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Castells, 2000; Reich, 2000; Sennett, 1998, 2006

leading to more and more students attending university in general. It is an economy characterized by precarity and its various facets including, among others, intermittency, opaqueness, unpredictability, exclusivity, and/or (self-) exploitation.[37] Of course, such precariousness of labour and of life in capitalism is nothing new; it is in fact one of its defining features. It relates to all forms of unstable, intermittent, unstable and unsure forms of labour and life. The word actually derives from the Latin verb, *precare*, which means to pray to someone/something upon which one's future depends, and thus relates to the constant feeling shared by many in precarious work that they are not in control of their lives. As Neilson and Rossiter stress, life and labour under capitalism were always bound up with this kind of insecurity, contingency and flexibility. We might think of the precariousness of the unpaid labour of women in the home, always dependent on the unstable male wage earner, and yet indispensable to social reproduction, and all the forms of illegal, temporary or casualised employment which have existed throughout capitalism. However, what is new is the fact that with the new forms of working, highly skilled cultural workers join the reserve army of capital's labour, for which the term 'the precariat' has been coined, conjoining the meaning of two words, precarious and the proletariat. This class of workers has been cast by some scholars as the 'new dangerous class.'[38]

The precariousness of labour is thus seen by many as unequivocally negative. However, there is a school of thought centred around thinkers in the tradition of French and Italian autonomist Marxist and post-operaist thought, such as Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, Maurizio Lazzarato, and Paolo Virno, which casts precarity as a positive force which allows workers to escape the factory walls and the drudgery of organised labour, and calls for the refusal of work, in the words of Kathi Weeks, for a 'vision of life no longer organised primarily around work.'[39] In this light, thinkers focus on the potentialities and capacities of the new post-Fordist precarious proletariat,[40] and understand precarity as the cement binding contemporary political activism, particularly the EuroMayDay movement. For some scholars and activists,

37. See, among others: Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Gill 2006, 2013, 2016; McRobbie 2014; Oakley 2009, 2014; Raunig 2011, Berardi 2010, Denning 2010; Banks 2007, 2013
38. See, for instance, Standing 2011. For critiques, see Breman 2013, and Scully 2016.
39. Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work* (2005), 133
40. See, for instance, Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004

then, shared circumstances of precarity can lead to solidarity amongst different groups of workers, giving rise to new forms of connection, subjectivity and political organisation.

The UK's economy is also defined by an expanding internship/work placement culture influenced by both public discourse and government legislation encouraging creative practice. Several years of Conservative governments, in coalition with the Liberal Democrats until 2015 and with majorities since, have produced further cuts, but also a changing socio-political climate in which unpaid work under the name of 'workfare' is used a disciplinary tool for those relying on state benefits, and in sectors that have rarely seen unpaid work before, for instance supermarket shelf-stacking).[41] Such factors have significantly influenced the way in which the culture industry functions, what is being produced and, most significantly, by *whom* it is produced, and who can gain access or participate in these processes.[42] Over the past few years, as institutions begin to run out of money and fewer paid jobs are available, free labour in the form of unpaid internships and work experience placements is becoming increasingly ubiquitous across the UK's creative sectors as well as other employment sectors. Organisations are turning to interns in order to fill staffing and programming gaps, and there are often more internships than paid positions advertised.

In the competition for paid work, previous (predominantly unpaid) work experience is necessary. On the one hand, unpaid work experience has become a requirement for entering 'properly' remunerated, stable employment. On the other hand, freelancing, with its dependence on social contacts and networking, seems to rely to the same extent on acceptance of unpaid work.[43] For some, unpaid labour will provide a way into employment 'proper,' and for others it will provide a 'rite of passage' in the form of a placement with an NGO, 'charity tourism' or other philanthrocapitalist project. For others it will serve to fulfil passions, either in addition to a paid employment, or as a pursuit of ambition in the hope of future

41. David Lee, 'Internships, Workfare, and the Cultural Industries: A British Perspective' in *TripleC* 13(2), 336–350, https://www.triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/623
42. See, *inter alia*, Rosalind Gill 2014
43. See Andrew Ross, *Nice work if you can get it: Life and labor in precarious time*s (New York: New York University Press, 2013)

returns. Others have little chance of breaking into the intern sphere, due to financial, geographical, and class/race/gender factors marking and pushing them out of the game. Moreover, in the post-Fordist, neo-capitalist, deregulated world of cultural work, it is not only paid work, but also unpaid labour, that is subject to blur the boundary with one's leisure time, even taking it over. Indeed, it can seem that throughout many of the UK's cultural institutions, in London in particular, it is mostly the unpaid labourers who provide the basis of support and ensure the smooth running of the 'show'. Yet, although the issue is increasingly discussed,[44] and various groups concerned with interns' work are being formed (Internocracy, Interns Anonymous, Carrot Workers, Intern Aware and others), there have been few studies of those involved in this practice. The experience of these workers, as well as bottom-of-the-ladder culture and art workers, remain largely absent from recent public and academic discourse. The questions of class composition,[45] the production of affect and affective labour,[46] and precarity and immateriality of labour,[47] are at the centre of discourse concerning creative and cultural economy workers.[48] However, those who perform unpaid labour and undertake work experience placements and internships are often omitted from discussions concerning the conditions and struggles of workers.

The 2013 collection of essays edited by Mark Banks, Rosalind Gill and Stephanie Taylor entitled *Theorizing Cultural Work: Labour, Continuity And Change In The Cultural And Creative Industries*, part of Routledge's *Culture, Economy and the Social* series, stands as one outcome of numerous interdisciplinary conferences and events in the field over the past several years, and as it constitutes a well-timed snapshot of the current state of the field, it is useful to outline its contents and key arguments in more detail here. Testament to the increasing depth and quality of research being done in terms of understanding the contemporary state of cultural work, events such as 'The Future of Cultural Work', or 'Moral Economies of Creative Labour' conferences, organized by the Open University and King's College

44. Ross *ibid.*
45. Wright 2002, 2005; Kolinko 1999, 2005
46. Hardt and Negri 2000, 2005; Federici 2004; Hochschild 2003; Dowling 2007
47. See, *inter alia*, Berardi 2010; Fortunati 1996; Lazzarato 2000; Ross 2008; Lorey 2006
48. Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Gill 2006, 2013, 2016; McRobbie 2014; Oakley 2009, 2014; Raunig 2011, Berardi 2010, Denning 2010; Banks 2007, 2013; Taylor 2012

London respectively, were significant in developing scholarship on the topic. Building meaningfully upon such efforts, this book presents a timely, broad and bold intervention into the lively debates concerning the changing models and nature of work in general. Moreover, it offers a crucial handle on the specific ways of understanding and depictions of cultural work specifically – the so-called 'turn to cultural work.' The emergence of this 'turn' to cultural work can largely be traced to the excitement associated with the perceived possibilities and advantages of the 'creative' or cultural' economy, and the accompanying policy initiatives designed to maximize such potentials. Tied up with this enthusiasm are the above-discussed discourses on the rise of the so-called 'creative class,' with its supposed economic and social potential. This 'turn' is also evident in a range of critical accounts of the transformation of the nature of work in general in predominantly post-industrial economies.

However, despite numerous critical interventions to date, as the editors of *Theorizing Cultural Work* soberly point out, this often 'affirmative and proselytizing' discourse is at times disjointed – marked by 'parallel conversations … fated never to converge.'[49] As well as unnecessarily setting up oppositions between various types of labour and engagement – between cultural work and work in general, for example – it remains a field often marred by a particular type of a misplaced optimism and a certain kind of fascination with 'newness.' This is demonstrated by what has so far been a somewhat limited critical approach to the varied types of cultural work that exist, as well as to their respective innovations and advantages, or even the potentially widely adaptable models that cultural work could bring into other fields.

As the editors explain in their opening statement, the collection is an intervention into the current situation, after a decade or so in which academic discourse around cultural labour and the nature of work has become well established. What makes this contribution particularly timely and important to my thesis, is the fact that following the 2008 financial crisis and the austerity measures and funding cuts which ensued, the initial optimism about the creative and cultural industries as a

49. Banks, Gill, Taylor 2013, 8

potential saviour for the ailing UK economy that had characterized this field of scholarship over the preceding decade has almost completely diminished. Increasingly more focus is placed upon discussions around precarity and the often-unstable nature of cultural work (as in Ross for example). This is evidenced in the interrogative notion that we might 'all be cultural workers now,'[50] discussions of the broader 'culturalization' of the economy, and the contribution of consumers, via digital technologies, to cultural production. Such developments invite an urgent reassessment of cultural work, albeit not exclusively that of the 'creative precariat' – who made the term 'precarity' as fashionable in academic and artistic discourse as 'relationality' once was. It also calls into question the experiences of workers beyond this often privileged few, as well as those successfully denied, or incapable of, entry into the sector; those whose work is invisible, as well as those situated in various marginalised geographical locations and at different points of the NIDL (New International Division of Labour).

On the one hand, this collection historicizes and map out geographically new approaches to processes of cultural work. On the other, it examines the recurring issue of whether cultural work can be considered as distinct from other types of work; and to ask, if so, then why. In line with these questions, distinctions between perceived 'good' and 'bad' work are raised, once again, throughout the volume. As such, what the publication manages to successfully achieve is to supplement these ongoing debates with a set of important new perspectives.

The main points of interests of this publication, as summarized in its subtitle – labour, continuity and change – are interwoven within the three streams or themes into which the books is divided: I. Histories, II. Specificities/Transformations, and III. Futures. As far as the labour aspect goes, various approaches to what cultural work is and what it is not are explored, constituting a nice addition to the well-rehearsed discussions of what makes such a set of practices different from other types of work. As such it considers why cultural workers should be considered different from other

50. See also Brett Neilson and Mark Coté, 'Are we all cultural workers now?' in Journal of Cultural Economy (Volume 7, 2014 - Issue 1), https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17530350.2013.864989

workers, and what different values cultural work might bring. In terms of continuity, as is neatly explained in the editors' preface, the authors are attempting to temporalize debates around cultural work. The idea of change therefore refers to potentialities and possibilities for the future of cultural work and workers.

Since the collection originates from a series of events discussing cultural work, the various chapters combine contemporary concerns from scholars working the field, as well as some new considerations on well-rehearsed issues. Articles in section I attempt to historicize the debates about cultural work and insert/reappraise particular discussions around cultural work as part of a longer narrative on the changing nature of work in general and changing ideas about what work is or should be. Susan Luckman re-evaluates discussions over meaningfulness and value, via the Victorian ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement, Ruskin and Morris, before moving straight into contemporary concerns with the relentless expansion of working time owing to new technologies and connectivities. She demonstrates that a lot of these nineteenth century political observations – regardless of them being made against the particular background of Victorian ideas regarding what culture and art might or might not be – still hold relevance for the current state of affairs, with a number of overlaps between the concerns of these movements and contemporary demands.[51] Sarah Brouillette challenges the 1950's psychological conception of the artist as a good worker – a creative, self-sufficient individual, not dependent on the wider society or collective politics. Bridget Conor examines the ways in which screenwriters experience the collective history of their profession and how they contextualize such experiences REF. Lastly, Kate Oakley looks at the ways in which historically positive notions of creative and cultural labour – as 'good work' – contributed to a creation of a cultural labour market that is less inclusive and more racist, classist and stratified and hierarchized in terms of gender than almost any other sector. While actual processes and realities of 'work' are largely excluded from public policy, so are the politics of its work; and thus Oakley points to a need for better labour organization in the sector, as well for better attention to those absent or not represented within the sphere of cultural work.

51. Luckman 2013, 28

The middle section of the book looks at various transformations occurring at the moment, whether because of new technologies, international media law, or alterations in terms of logistics and supply. Matt Stahl explores cultural work as a limit case for work in modern market society through an analysis of creative employment in relation to the British 'liberal market' system and the German coordinated market system. Jason Toynbee begins by thinking through the 'specialness claim' of cultural work. He identifies as 'new revisionist' those among theorists of cultural work who, while recognizing the values inherent in creative work, clearly situate it within social, economic and political constraints.[52] Meanwhile he also re-evaluates the contradictions in this kind of work, with particular attention to the politics of copyright. The logistics of cultural work, with references to Sohn-Rethel's analysis and the Transit Labour: Circuits, Regions, Borders research project conducted in Kolkata and Shanghai, is the subject of Brett Neilson's case study. He discusses cultural work in terms of global supply chains, logistics and management, pointing to the necessity of considering cultural workers alongside, and linking them with, other types of workers. Continuing with a global perspective, Miller and Maxwell focus on the environmental impact, as well as the forgotten, or at least invisible, manual labourers in the so-called global south. They examine how their labour – often at huge risk to health, or even life itself – guarantees the sourcing of minerals, or the disposal of obsolete items of technology, that facilitates the expansion and improvement of the so-called immaterial working processes in the north. These of course are the same technologies that in turn facilitate, in the words of Melissa Gregg, the 'structural shift in working practices that is exacerbated by online technology's extensive reach.'[53] Gregg discusses this shift in relation to what she terms 'presence bleed,' that is, 'a response to fashionable management diktats encouraging workers to "do more with less" and maintain "work/life balance."'[54]

The final section of the book focuses on possible futures and the ways in which the theorization of cultural work could be advanced. Sarah B. Proctor-

52. Toynbee 2013, 86
53. Gregg 2013, 124
54. Ibid, 129

Thompson explores the question in relation to creativity, gender, diversity and difference, via a reading of Butler's theorization of performativity, as well as a number of policy documents. Through this she examines the ways particular forms of difference are marginalized within creative work processes. Creative biographies, such as those of web designers, are often regarded as typical of processes of individualization associated with precarious or portfolio creative workers.[55] In her contribution, Lisa Adkins complicates and challenges such an assumption – instead finding it to be an ill-equipped device, suggesting that creative work should instead "be understood in terms of more complex shifts in the organisation of the economy, but also of the social.'[56] Deuze and Lewis explore how professional identities and subjectivities in media work are impacted by convergence culture, and how these are complicated by a new element in their work processes, namely that of the producers. They call for media workers to 'determine their own destiny and create an identity by inventing new institutions on their own terms,'[57] which could perhaps, even though rootless, prove more useful than the existing structures. The volume is closed by the editors' interview with Andrew Ross who assesses the current state of cultural work and it theorization, as well as also risking some predictions – including not only an increase in the volume of cultural production, but also an increase of unpaid and insecure "beyond precarious" work taking place. However, he sees this as a positive development, possibly leading to a turn, in the face of eroding social institutions and an increasingly neoliberal nation-state, towards the 'commons.'

The collection presents a broad range of existing debates within the field and firmly situates these debates within particular historical moments, redefining current conversations in relation to those from a few decades, or even centuries ago. In a way it presents a slowing-down and a refocusing on how the various issues at stake have been, and could be handled. Even the 'Futures' section, minus Ross, takes something of a look back – and quite a polemical look – in this case at more recent problems faced by the analyses of cultural work. In doing so, the authors re-orientate these

55. Proctor-Thompson, 149
56. Adkins 2013, 160
57. Deuze and Lewis 2013, 174

questions and reset the potential focus one might take in order to move forward constructively.

Elsewhere, Mark Banks has pointed out that despite the vast proliferation of research and publications on creative industries and creative labour, relatively little is known about creative workers as workers *per se*.[58] While the cultural labour process has been discussed in terms of its broader impacts, approached philosophically and managerially, there has been less of a concern with the concrete specifics of creative labour as *labour process,* at least compared to the detailed analyses of industrial labour that one finds in the history of industrial sociology and labour studies. This, for Banks, is a misstep, especially since his project explores the politics of cultural work, or "the act of labour within the industrialization process of cultural production; and it is the *politics* of this work – how it is constructed, managed, and performed."[59]

In order to do this, Banks discusses three general approaches to the politics of cultural work: that of Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School, the Neo-Foucauldian approach focusing on questions of governmentality, and the liberal democratic celebration of potential. Each of these approaches is useful, drawing attention to certain aspects of cultural work that it would be a mistake to neglect. For instance, while it might be easy for more critical writing on cultural work to dismiss arguments about how cultural work has democratizing potential and creates meaning and worth, to do so is a dangerous mistake because it entails dismissing some of the main reasons that people involved in forms of cultural work use to explain the importance of what they are doing to themselves and others. Insofar as critical scholarship is focused on developing an ongoing relationship with cultural workers, as well as understanding the politics of cultural work, it is important not to discard such understandings as ideological covers for the realities of self-exploitation, even if that is what they sometimes appear to be.

Banks points this out when he examines ways in which precarious cultural workers are themselves 'actively implicated in reproducing enterprise values through

58. See Mark Banks, *The politics of cultural work,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
59. Ibid, 3

their own strategies of economizing' even as they undermine the security and conditions of these workers precisely because they appear 'to provide the only means for establishing the precarious rewards that are being offered.'[60] This is precisely what I wanted to focus on, moving away from the more sectoral level analysis and towards what might be called the micropolitics of work, where these ambivalent kinds of justifications and balancing off of costs and libidinal investments of imagination, meaning and desire are made. If we know relatively little about cultural workers as workers, then we know even less about cultural workers as managers -- as *their own* managers -- which is to say as the administrators of themselves as forms of self-activating entrepreneurial capital, which is precisely the organizational form that is called for by current conditions of cultural labour in the metropolis. If creative workers are required to organize themselves within what Angela McRobbie has described as 'microstructures,' where risk is individualized and shifted on to the worker herself, how does this shift the relationship of these workers to their labour process and the labour process of organizing their own work?[61] The dynamics McRobbie identified more than a decade ago, the ways in which the speeding up of cultural labour leads to the decline of political culture, have only intensified since then.[62]

In my work with Stevphen Shukaitis on an updated Karl Marx-style, workers' inquiry-based research project surveying and interviewing creative workers working in an around the spaces of Brick Lane[63], I approached the above questions from what can be described as an autonomist approach, drawing on debates in contemporary theory and politics around the nature of immaterial and affective labour.[64] This is gestured to in the quote from Hardt and Negri opening this section, where they argue that the role formerly played by the factory in the production and experiences of the working class for the multitude is not being played by the metropolis itself. That is to say that productive activity is not confined to particular spaces or times, such as the

60. Ibid, 55
61.Angela McRobbie, 'From Holloway to Hollywood: Happiness at work in the new cultural economy', in P. du Gay & M. Pryke (eds), *Cultural economy*. (London: Sage, 2002), 97-114
62. See van Heur 2010; Gill and Pratt 2008
63. In collaboration with Stevphen Shukaitis, in the 'Metropolitan Factory' research project
64. Dowling et al 2007; Gorz 2010; Moulier-Boutang 2012; Lazzarato 1996

bounded walls of the factory space, or to particular regular workdays and times, but rather flows through the entire space of the city and its sociality. It puts forth an analysis taking from David Harvey's suggestion that 'the concept of work has to shift from a narrow definition attaching to industrial forms of labour to the far broader terrain of the work entailed in the production and reproduction of an increasingly urbanized daily life.'[65] This is readily the case for cultural workers in the markets off Brick Lane, as while it might seem they have filled the space of the factory with new forms of cultural labour, these labours extend far beyond the space of the market itself and through the lives and times of its producers. The metropolis is transformed by these changes in arrangements of working lives, which is partially grasped by discussions around the rise of the creative class and the creative city.[66]

While these debates have been quite fruitful in bringing another perspective to the realities of cultural work, they themselves are somewhat ambivalent. For instance the way that autonomist analysis has at times fallen back into the overly positive celebration of cultural work that Banks describes the liberal democratic analysis. At times it has been argued that forms of immaterial labour and cultural work contain an almost inherent radical political potentiality because of the way that they organize and rely upon collaboration and networks. One can look here to arguments put forth by Hardt and Negri that celebrate immaterial labour as a kind of "elementary communism."[67] While few other commentators follow the implications of such a suggestion to its conclusion, there is a marked tendency to adopt this kind of optimistic analysis of the potentials of creative labour,[68] and more broadly of the possibilities contained in cognitive capitalism.[69]

But there is a problem with this style of analysis. If it were true then logically walking through the dispersed factory spaces of the Brick Lane markets and their surrounding areas, filled as basins of immaterial labour, one could expect a constant

65. David Harvey *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012), 139
66. Florida 2005; Pasquinelli 2008; Scholz and Liu 2010
67. Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, *Empire* (2000), 294
68. Pink 2010; Gauntlett 2010; Florida 2005; Arvidsson 2006
69. Moulier-Boutang 2012; Vercellone 2007

and ongoing communist revolution taking place. And, while such a stroll could very well encounter a number of Che Guevara images, the walker in question would be much more likely to find ongoing processes of countercultural consumption, along with a supply of workers more intent on continuing to develop their projects and practices rather than communizing the means of production or ending the reign of the bourgeoisie over social life.

That these radical political outcomes have not manifested themselves, however, does not mean that the concepts and approaches these theorists develop are not valid and useful for further analysis and development. However, it does show that there are certain aspects of the functioning of cultural and creative work that have not been fully appreciated by the autonomist approach and debates on immaterial labour. For this reason I would suggest that it is especially important to pay attention to arguments that focus on what Franco 'Bifo' Berardi has described as the "dark side of immaterial labour,"[70] that is, the dynamics that, far from creating possibilities for a new radical politics, actually work to undermine the spaces and processes of animating new collective subjects as they operate as a part of 'communicative capitalism.'[71] Or, broader yet, to consider what Peter Fleming and Carl Cederstrom have described as 'dead men [and, we might add, women] working' for whom the logic of work has taken over all aspects of life.[72] The dark side of cultural work, which presents itself as freedom and autonomy but contains also the realities of self-exploitation fuelled by the desire for meaning and fulfilment in work, is where the micropolitics of the cultural worker are formed and reformed. It is in the dreams of the worker who has discovered that they are at work, even as they as they sleep, and that this is far from the liberation that they were promised.[73]

The approach of the Metropolitan Factory project was to start from recent debates on immaterial labour and the discrepancies between its theorized celebration and lived realities, taking recourse to earlier moments in autonomist theory and

70. See Berardi 2009
71. See Dean 2009
72. See Fleming and Cederstrom 2012
73. See Lucas 2010

practice. Thus, the idea was to return to the history of workers' inquiry as a practice and approach, and see how it could be updated and adapted to investigate the conditions of contemporary cultural labour. Workers' inquiries have a long and interesting history, stretching from Marx's proposal to survey working conditions in *La Revue Socialiste*, through the development of industrial sociology, research carried out within labour struggles and communist militancy by groups such as the Johnson-Forrest Tendency and *Socialisme ou Barbarie*.[74] Workers' inquiries also played a major role in the development of dissident Marxism in Italy in the 60s and 70s[75] where sociological approaches were deployed to understand the massive waves of worker militancy emerging outside and against the official party and union structures, but to do so with a desire to intensify and deepen the social antagonisms contained, rather than to control or pacify them.

Workers' inquiries have thus varied significantly in their particular methodologies, but are generally formed around several ideas: such as that one should not presume too much in advance about labour conditions, and that the tools of the social sciences can be put to use to build and strengthen radical politics. A key elaboration of workers' inquiry developed during the 60s and 70s turned its focus into understanding the changing nature of class composition, or how the current arrangement of the labour process (technical composition) either made possible or served to block the forms of politics in which the working class engaged, from refusing work to the accommodation of capitalist demands (political composition). In this sense workers' inquiries are less about trying to understand the nature of class or the labour process as fixed or unchanging, but rather to map out the forces at play within a given situation in such a way that can be utilized to further develop political and social antagonisms. While more recent projects taking up and developing workers' inquiry have often varied significantly from versions elaborated in the 70s, for instance tending to focus more on flexible forms of post-Fordist labour rather than factories, this core emphasis on utilising social sciences methods in the service of

74. See Haider and Mohandesi 2013
75. See Wright 2002

political struggles remains.[76] The Metropolitan Factory research project I worked on attempted to take up ideas from these practices of workers' inquiry and adapt them to investigating current conditions of cultural labour and production, particularly as they depart from their celebration of cultural policy and social theory. Even though my approach in this thesis is different, the methodological spirit of the Workers' Inquiry method has contributed to the job of interrogating the complex experiential realities of internships across a range of realms and perspectives. The workers' inquiry-style survey and research approach have later become one of the basis for the "Art Factory" research project run by the Free/Slow University in Poland, which I have taken part in and contributed to (described in activism chapter).

In order to shed light on the reality of the life and work of creative workers, I carried out a research project called 'Metropolitan Factory,'[77] in which, drawing on the tradition of workers inquiry[78], a colleague and I surveyed and interviewed artists and independent creative and cultural workers. We used a short questionnaire and series of interviews based on the original Karl Marx questionnaire – a hundred questions posed to factory workers in England, in 1880, in order to establish their material working conditions and potentially encourage them to take up political action in order to improve them. Based on this, workers' inquiry was formulated within autonomist movements as a sort of parallel sociology, one based on a re-reading of Marx and Weber against established parties and unions. In many ways it is close to practices of participatory action research. For the 'Metropolitan Factory' project, the questionnaire was 'updated' and in a way adapted to analyse the working conditions, the autonomy, and activities of independent cultural producers active in former trade areas, such as Brick Lane in London. Our aim was not to focus on macro-social issues of the bloom of the creative class, but to look at the micro-

76. Figiel, Shukaitis, and Walker, 'The politics of workers inquiry', *epehemera journal* special issue (2014) http://www.ephemerajournal.org/contribution/politics-workers-inquiry
77. See the methodology and origins of the project described here: http://metropolitanfactory.wordpress.com/
78. Workers' inquiry, is a research method originating with Karl Marx (1880, ibid) As a form of critical sociology, workers inquiry aims aimed to raise workers' class awareness and politically mobilise them to improve their position in the workplace. In its contemporary version, it is part of the wider militant research trend. For more, see the special issue of the *ephemera journal* (2014), coedited by Figiel, Shukaitis and Walker: http://www.ephemerajournal.org/contribution/politics-workers-inquiry

politics of artistic and cultural work, as well as issues linking this type of activity to issues related to social reproduction.[79]

We have looked at the spatial organisation of the creative process, the language used to describe the relationship between private life and work, and the understanding of work as a form of artistic and professional self-expression[80]. Among the topics that appeared in our discussions with people working in the field of culture, one of the most frequently raised was about empowerment at work and through work, i.e. the nature of attachment and relationship to work in itself. Cultural workers have repeatedly described their projects not only as forms of work, but also as deep and personal in their essence, functioning in the form of authentic self-expression. Another interesting aspect of the creative process was the way their artistic and creative work was organized and separated from other areas of existence. There was a visible trend towards spatial separation of work from the rest of their life, whether through studio work or storing materials in a specific part of the home. Despite these attempts, the spaces dedicated exclusively to work turned out to be insufficient. Moving the job outside its boundaries was alternatively celebrated (I can work anywhere!), or described in less positive terms (I end up working everywhere). The further part of the research consisted in the analysis of similarities between the work of the artist – treated as giving meaning and constituting the basis for the existence of an individual – and various forms of feminized activities undertaken in the field of social reproduction, such as housework and care work. As Silvia Federici wrote the subject of care work in the 1975 Wages Against Housework manifesto: 'They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work'.[81]

Just as work stereotypically assigned to women is dependent on a single salary (usually from a male employee), so the artist's work sometimes depends on wider social networks of support and assistance. Due to, among other reasons,

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79. For more on the project see Joanna Figiel and Stevphen Shukaitis, 'Metropolitan Strategies, Psychogeographic Investigations,' *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies* , September 2013. For more on the subject, see Graham J. & Gandini A, *Collaborative Production in the Creative Industries* (London: University of Westminster Press, 2017)

80. More on this part of research, Joanna Figiel and Stevphen Shukaitis 'The Factory of Individuation: Cultural Labor and Class Composition in the Metropolis,' *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2015) 114 (3): 535-552

81. Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework*, 1975

limitations of expenditure on cultural and artistic purposes, progressive gentrification, as well as the instability of work, creative activity often requires the support of ones partner or family.

The issues of inequality and gender – although they were not assumed to be the main part of the analyses – were also raised in the recently conducted and published studies of the 'Art Factory' report by the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, concerning the distribution of capital in the Polish world of culture and the arts.[82] My participation in the project consisted in conducting group interviews and confronting the invited guests (employees of public institutions, artists, architects and administrators) with the results of previously conducted surveys. Firstly, the results of the quantitative survey showed that although women are clearly poorer (they account for 2/3 of the lowest earners and only 1/3 of the best earners), they do not show higher dissatisfaction with their earnings than male workers do. Secondly, the respondents, both male and female, indicated that gender does not play a role in the recruitment process[83]. In addition, only two respondents of the whole survey presented themselves as conservative, so a picture emerged (as before on the basis of earnings and resource distribution analyses) of an egalitarian and fair environment, and therefore perhaps also of a more progressive one in terms of discrimination. Nevertheless, among the respondents there was an over-representation of women in support positions (a stereotypically feminised work area) and men in higher, non-support positions, i.e. working as curators and directors in cultural and art institutions. The number of male and female artists working in the tested field was approximately equal.

82. The lack of in-depth coverage of these issues in surveys and interviews was not due to the recognition that these were issues of lower importance, but also to the specific nature of work in culture and art, which takes place in a field characterised by a lack of hierarchy, informality, network structure, etc. One group interview is of course not enough to draw further conclusions, but it can be said that the problem of gender in the world of art and culture requires a separate, in-depth study.
83. See the results of the study, *Chapter 7: The division of work, prestige and profits in creative projects, the study*. 'When analyzing the interviews, we paid attention to the role of the gender factor. As is well known, gender inequality is one of the most serious challenges for egalitarianism in modern societies. Interestingly, gender does not seem to play a major role in the world of art. There are no fundamental differences between men and women. They appear sporadically, and the discrepancies are not very wide-ranging. Women are a little more likely than men to mention wage conflicts, but this issue is, as we have seen in many other moments, a general problem in the world of art.'

Of course, a few group interviews are not enough to draw serious conclusions, but it is worth noting the examples and problems mentioned in a smaller group, which are completely at odds with the quantitative part of the study. The fact that the issue of discrimination in interviews was only marginally revealed may be evidence of a wider mechanism of conflict avoidance or reluctance to disclose.[84] This, in turn, leads to the multiplication of grounds for discrimination in the world of culture and art, creates a very efficient and effective mechanism for institutionalising and concealing precarity, and encourages already vulnerable or exploited people to self-exploit[85]. In the words of Hito Steyerl, the artist and writer: "apart from domestic and care work—art is the industry with the most unpaid labour around. It sustains itself on the time and energy of unpaid interns and self-exploiting actors on pretty much every level and in almost every function. Free labour and rampant exploitation are the invisible dark matter that keeps the culture sector going"[86]

Although respondents' answers to their political convictions suggest that the field of culture and art is less conservative and more open than that of the rest of society, it does not mean that it is truly egalitarian and free from gender discrimination. The results of the focus group interviews and discussion say something very different. Therefore, the issue of inequality may be a problem, which – if it is noticed at all – the respondents wanted to hide from themselves or from the interviewers (the opinion about gender discrimination within the field itself appeared in interviews only two or three times). It seems that in the field of art – as in other sectors of work – the issue of discrimination and sexism is not an openly discussed

84. Myself and other members of Precarious Workers' Brigade think and write extensively about the micro-policy and principles of the mechanisms of self-censorship, self-censorship and exclusion in connection with the phenomenon of precariousness of art and culture employees, as well as about the problem of precariousness as a systemic and institutionalised problem. Our texts are available in electronic versions: http://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com/ texts (access: 8 January 2015).
85. As above. Further, others working on this issue include, among others, Ashley Wong, 'Work In The Creative Economy: Living Contradictions Between the Market and Creative Collaboration. In: Graham, J. and Gandini, A. (eds.). Collaborative Production in the Creative Industries (London: University of Westminster Press, 2017), pp. 197–215; Thomas F. Corrigan, 'Media and Cultural Industries Internships: A Thematic and Digital Labour Parallels,' *tripleC* 13(2): 336–350. Also, the special issue of ONCURATING, Precarious Labour In The Field Of Art: http://www.oncurating.org/files/oc/dateiverwaltung/old%20Issues/ONCURATING_Issue16.pdf
86. Hito Steyerl, 'The Politics of Art: Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy' in Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2012), 96.

topic (especially considering the level of public discussion on women's rights and gender issues in Poland, in contrast to ‘feminist debates’). Moreover, inequalities are more easily hidden due to the specificity of the field, in which there are no clearly defined hierarchies and formalised processes, and many activities in are based on a network structure and informal arrangements. Loudly expressing dissatisfaction or asserting one's rights can act as an additional stigma of exclusion from the peer group.

During the all–female focus group interview, all respondents denied the statement that ‘gender does not play a role’ in the art and culture sector. According to them, gender is important from the recruitment process, through the division of labour and responsibilities, to the visible impact on everyday life at work. In the case of culture and art work, it is difficult to search for measurable results, and it is also not a matter of subjective comparison of the ‘quality’ of artistic work of male and female artists, but of realising that due to social conditions it is more difficult for women to ‘devote themselves to’ and ‘make sacrifices’ in the name of artistic work in the same way as male artists can. Raising gender issues – for example, in regards to reproductive labour and domestic work or lack of maternity leave – can lead to exclusion and conflict. Childbearing-related issues are extremely problematic, they affect both the recruitment process and exclusion from the field, hence why there is such a low fertility rate among arts and culture workers in relation to the statistics for the rest of Polish society. For example, the fact that female workers employed on short-term or hourly-based contracts, or working on commission, are not entitled to any maternity benefit is more onerous for women, although men are also employed on similar terms. At the same time, issues of financial support from one’s family or partners have arisen in the context of traditional marital or partnership agreements, in which it is the man or one of the same-sex partners who provides for the family, or where there are at least two incomes per household.

The issue of wages is unclear, because the subject of money is taboo. In the Polish arts and culture industry, salaries are not disclosed, advertised nor discussed openly. It is therefore difficult to say whether female workers feel disadvantaged in terms of earnings and with whom they compare their earnings. For the same reason, it is not easy to assess whether they are treated equally to male workers performing the

same functions. Those who work for free are also most often silent, on the one hand, making such practices more commonly accepted within the environment, and on the other hand, contributing massively to the normalization of free professional activity and thus degrading paid workers.

The issues of wages, silencing and self-censorship are at the heart of the London-based Precarious Workers' Brigade group. The group evolved from the Carrot Workers collective, which initially focused exclusively on the problems of unpaid internships. The name of the group comes directly from the proverbial carrot and stick: the stick, the tools of punishment and exploitation, and often self-exploitation, and the carrot, the promise of future successes and rewards. I describe my work with the group in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3

Literature review II: Unpaid work and internships in the creative and cultural sectors.

In the second part of literature review I will move away from discussions about the various discourses of cultural and creative industries and work and focus on literature that engages with the issue of internships directly. For many years, internships and unpaid internships received little analysis and public attention. They are not a new phenomenon, but rather an adaptation of a centuries old system of apprenticeship into newer areas of the labour market. However, it is only for the past two decades that scholars, activists and journalists alike have begun to criticise various aspects of what was earlier thought of in a positive sense, insofar as both the employer and intern benefit, with the former able to test a potential candidate, and the latter earning some experience to add to their CV, making some industry contacts, gaining a feel for the industry, and perhaps even learn something useful.

Jim Frederick's *Internment Camp* was one of the first texts critically discussing the issues of unpaid internships. As Frederick writes, from the perspective of the US in 1997, before the 2008 financial crisis and the concomitant layoffs, cuts, and austerity measures on both sides of the pond:

> While the vagaries of the information age visit hardship and ruination on families, towns, and entire regions, the intern economy is humming along unhindered, ballooning constantly, becoming an increasingly significant yet largely invisible segment of the American workforce. […] Training may have been the paid beginning of your father's first job, but today you're supposed to get it on your own, often on your own tab.[87]

Astonishingly, these words are absolutely still valid today, almost exactly two decades later, as I and other scholars get to grips with the phenomenon of this practice. As he goes on, Frederick points to many of the reasons for which internships have since been criticised. For example, Frederick asserts that internships exclude

87. Jim Frederick, 'Internment Camp: the Intern Economy and the Culture Trust,' *The Baffler*, March 1997.

those who cannot afford to work for free, take for granted the labour of the interns, and break laws regarding the minimum wage. More recent research points to race, gender and class inequalities entangled with the privileges of working for free.[88]

One of the most prominent policy frameworks regarding the issue of unpaid labour across the cultural and creative industries is the Arts Council England's (ACE) 'Internships in the arts: A guide for arts organisations' report. It is a piece of policy that explains how the NMW legislation should be applied in relation to internship and volunteer posts. I discuss it at length because it is the most important pieces of policy regarding the matter, and has not been updated or replaced by another in the eight years since its publication. The document was published at the end of November 2011, a year which in the UK and the US saw an unprecedented amount of debate around the subject of internships and free labour, including nepotism and meritocracy, fairness and equality, as well as the fine balance between exploitation and mutual benefit. I have followed the changing legal positions of unpaid workers and debates surrounding the issue since 2008. Since then, the UK has experienced, among other events, a financial crisis followed by a continuing recession; the consequent election of a new, coalition government; a wave of public spending cuts, including a significant structural change to how the ACE itself is being funded and how it operates; a serious rise in unemployment, and especially youth unemployment; a series of public sector strikes and student demonstrations against the rising tuition fees; the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance; and new policy arguably leading to the speeding-up, commodification and marketisation of the University.[89]

At the time of the publication of ACE's report, the UK job market, and especially the arts and cultural sector, was becoming increasingly unstable in the context of the ongoing financial and economic difficulties, the corresponding public sector cuts, and the attendant increase in unemployment, all of which reflected a continuation and acceleration of a wider neoliberal economic restructuring taking place. In the creative and cultural sectors, severe funding cuts coupled with increasing numbers of graduates meant competition for even low-paid, entry-level jobs was

88. See: O'Brien 2017; Oakley, 2013; Shade and Jacobson, 2015
89.Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011

higher than ever: for every three employees in the arts there were two interns and one freelancer.[90] According to figures from ACE, its regularly funded organisations (RFOs) were 'increasingly turning to volunteer staff rather than paid staff.' There had been a 30 per cent increase in volunteering in the sector and only a three per cent increase in employment between 2008 and 2009. With such a background of changes to the public and political landscape in mind, I now see 2011 as year in which the tide turned on a number of fronts: in policy-making and legislation, in the way public discourse around the issue of unpaid work and internships in the arts and culture was being conducted, and in the attitudes, awareness, and actions of both workers and employers.

Just two years prior, in 2009, the Government had introduced an initiative to allow jobless recent graduates to remain on unemployment benefit whilst undertaking unpaid internships, perhaps to relieve the employers from the trouble of hiring paid-workers to do the work.[91] This was followed by the *Unleashing Aspiration* report of July 2009, which offered the, somewhat belated, realisation that interns – including parliamentary interns – should be remunerated for any set tasks performed within the defined hours of work. The report also stated that high costs were preventing those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds from accessing internships and hence the opportunities they facilitate. Since then, of course, the legislation has changed to account for unpaid interns' entitlement to the NMW,[92] the problem of parliamentary interns has been addressed,[93] and high-ranking politicians have increasingly discussed the subject in the media.[94] An example of the latter is an interesting debate between the PM, the Conservative David Cameron and his deputy, Nick Clegg of the Liberal Democrats, regarding social mobility. Just as the Clegg criticised the idea of 'unpaid internships, which favour the wealthy and well-connected' and announced a new scheme promoting the maxim of 'what you know,

90.AIR, 2009
91. Alistair Jamieson, Unemployed graduates to be allowed internships while on benefits to improve skills *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 April 2009
92. Following the BECTU employment tribunal ruling, the NMW legislation has been altered to include rules on payments for interns, see BECTU, 25 November 2009
93. Ben Carter, 'Are MPs guilty of freeloading as they fail to pay their office interns?, *The Guardian,* 31 July 2009
94. See, for example, Stratton 2011

not who you know,' Cameron candidly announced that he was fine with the idea of giving internships to friends and neighbours.[95] This discussion was followed by a minor scandal of MPs being exposed for using free labour in their parliamentary offices.[96] The beginning of 2011 saw the publication of Ross Perlin's *Intern Nation*, which I discuss below, and which was the first substantial and systematic monograph on the phenomenon of internships. Although focussed mainly on the US context, Perlin makes some brief links with the UK landscape, including the estimation that the UK's 'internship problem' remains five years behind that of the US.[97] The book has been featured widely in the press on both sides of the political spectrum, with the likes of both *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* reprinting sections of the book and hosting lively exchanges in their comments and blog sections.

In August 2010 ACE found itself criticised for its weekly email job bulletin, when it was revealed that most of the advertised positions – many of which were with ACE funded arts organisations – did not fulfil the national minimum wage criteria. The newsletter was promptly withdrawn and suspended, and came back a short time later having undergone a 'revamp', with the offending ads for illegal internships removed and an extra warning[98].

At this point, a number of internship interest groups that had been working and organising around the problem of exploitation of free intern work by employers in recession-hit Britain had also launched their biggest campaigns to date to address the issue – these included Intern Aware, a campaign focusing on promoting fair access to the internship system; Internocracy, a "youth-led social enterprise passionate about changing the culture of internships for the better in the UK"; Interns Anonymous, a forum for interns to share their experiences and discuss the ethics of unpaid employment; the Carrotworkers Collective and the Precarious Workers Brigade, a London-based group of current or ex interns, cultural workers and educators primarily from the creative and cultural sectors who regularly meet to think

95. Ibid; Amy Fallon, 'David Cameron gave internship to neighbour', *The Guardian*, 23 April 2011
96. Rowenna Davis, 'House of Poshos' *New Statesman* retrieved from http://www.newstatesman.com/society/2010/02/minimum-wage-interns-mps, 2010
97. Ross Perlin, *Intern Nation*, 200
98. A screenshot showing the statement from the ACE website is archived here, it has since been taken off the ACE website: http://carrotworkers.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/artsjobssuspending-unpaid-labour.jpg

together around the conditions of free labour in contemporary societies; the Pay Your Interns Campaign, whose project is to identify "cheapskate employers"; and TUC's Rights for Interns, which provides information on "what rights you have as an intern and how they can be enforced." I discuss some of these activist efforts in more detail in the Activism chapter of this thesis.

Considering all of the above, the timing, and the circumstances surrounding the publication of the ACE internships guidelines add a little more depth to the reading of what is a fairly dry, straightforward document scattered with a number of ostensibly slightly disingenuous phrases scattered throughout "We all know that internships are a popular, well-established way to get into the arts" – Indeed, we did know that already, but because the fact that something is popular and established does not mean that it is right, or even legal. In fact the legislation had been in place for a number of years prior to the publication of the report, and was often ignored. Apparently the legislation was still being ignored in 2018. Recent reports reveal that in all the years since the publication of the report, or indeed since the NMW was put into place; no prosecution has been brought against employers, including employers in the arts.[99]

'The issue of internships has been debated in the arts for some years […]' – further to the above, although discussed for some years, this discussion has only come to a head in 2011. In November 2009, Reading Employment Tribunal ruled that Nicola Vetta, a film production intern who received expenses only for work during her internships, was classed as a 'worker' and won her wages in arrears. In May 2011, Keri Hudson, a web journalism intern, won five weeks' pay from a Central London Employment Tribunal for the same reason. In addition to these employment tribunal rulings, there were promises of other legal actions – such as the ongoing NUJ Cashback for Interns campaign[100], or BECTU interventions[101].

99. Sarah Butler, 'Initiative to crack down on unpaid internships launched in UK,' *The Guardian* 8.02.2108, https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/08/initiative-to-crack-down-on-unpaid-internships-launched-in-uk
100. Information can be found on the NUJ's website, http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPagenuj.html?docid=1754&string=cashback%20for%20interns
101. See: http://www.bectu.org.uk/news/1273

The report was framed as advice to 'support arts organisations in working towards offering these kinds of high-quality employment opportunities to a new generation of future art leaders.' However, the corresponding guidelines for the 'future arts leaders', i.e. those undertaking internships and in danger of being exploited by employers attempting to avoid the NMW legislation, were missing. To date, the Carrot Workers Collectives' *Counter Internship Guide* remains the only serious and comprehensive publication dealing with the reality of undertaking an internship in the UK's arts, culture and creative sectors.[102] Besides, it seems questionable whether 'high-quality employment opportunities' would the best phrase to describe what often amounts to a short-term spell of employment 'ideally between two weeks and six months', even when paid a minimum wage salary. Included in the guidelines is the caveat that they their authors 'do not seek to preach [...] understand that circumstances are difficult, and [...] can't expect cultural change overnight when it comes to recruitment practices.' However, this phrasing seems to me fairly disingenuous, given that the existing NMW legislation was being broken on a daily basis at the time of the publication of the report, and still is in 2018, as the recent actions from the HMRC seem to prove.[103] (Not to mention the fact that the report includes quotes from the likes of Sir Nicholas Serota of the Tate and Alan Bishop of the Southbank Centre, two institutions which are known for having a long history of 'employing' unpaid interns).[104]

The ACE report distinguished an internship from volunteering, voluntary work, student placement, an apprenticeship, a traineeship and work experience. A quick look online through various commentary and opinion pieces, as well as adverts, shows that these terms are very often used interchangeably. What the ACE report appears to be attempting is to clarify this legal and semantic ambiguity, by stating in clear terms that 'worker' status is applicable in the given circumstances listed, no matter which particular terminology is used in order to exactly describe the role

102. Available free, PDF only, from here: http://carrotworkers.wordpress.com/counter-internship-guide/
103. Sarah Butler, 'Initiative to crack down on unpaid internships launched in UK.' *The Guardian*, 8.02.2018, https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/08/initiative-to-crack-down-on-unpaid-internships-launched-in-uk
104. Allegra Stratton, 'Nick Clegg's social mobility scheme targets unpaid internships', *The Guardian*, 5 April 2011

undertaken. The National Minimum Wage and the London Living Wage are explained in detail. Also included was a very clear, five-point internship checklist showing which interns must be paid:

> There is no formal, legal definition of an internship. However, for the purposes of these guidelines, we define an internship in the following ways:
> • it is short term (ideally between two weeks and six months)
> • where the intern fulfils 'worker status' through the activities they undertake and their contractual relationship with their employer, it is a paid position
> • while many interns have knowledge or skills in a relevant area, the internship should be either their first experience of a particular sector or role, or the 'next step' on from, for example, a volunteering role
> • the intern is expected to contribute to the work of the organisation, rather than taking on a purely shadowing role
> • an intern should be provided with a defined role and job title

However, the guidelines assert that, along with interns that only engage in shadowing[105], and those who are employed as part of a certain government training scheme or a European programme, employers do not have to pay wages in a situation:

> where students currently in further or higher education undertake an internship as a required part of their course, as long as it does not last more than one year. However, students undertaking internships outside of their course (for example, in their holidays) are entitled to the national minimum wage if they fulfil 'worker' status, just as with any other individual.

This is a major issue, even almost a decade after the NMW legislation and the publication of these guidelines. University education is now three times more expensive that at the time of the guideline's publication, the cost of living has shot up significantly, and some universities have begun to implement more critical career and employability (more on the subject of employability below) programmes. Yet, some

105. Although even this instance is being disputed, and there seems a good reason to dispute in case of placements that do include any other tasks beyond shadowing. For more information see Sarah Butler, 'Initiative to crack down on unpaid internships launched in UK' *The Guardian*, 8 February 2018

employers are still able to take advantage of interns' labour for free, or at the significantly reduced cost, i.e. paying just the minimum wage for their labour, instead of paying livable wages. This is a mechanism similar to that described by David Lee[106] who writes about the way in which big corporate employers are saving significant amounts thanks to being allowed to employ those on jobseekers allowance/workfare schemes.

Here it is worth noting that some universities, for example Essex University, that 'broker' internship positions and help their students in finding and completing internships (also those required by their courses) through advertising them on the website, add, in small print, that they are in no way responsible for ensuring that these internships are 'fair.' However, there are plans for the University to hire the interns themselves and then 'second' them to businesses (in order to lift the burden off the employer, not necessarily because of previous instances of interns not getting paid) (internal communications, no reference).

The five-point checklist composed by ACE is comparable to the US Department of Labor's *Fact Sheet #71*, which clarifies whether an employer is required to pay an intern in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938). If the internship meets all of the following six criteria, then no minimum wage rules apply:

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training that would be given in an educational environment.
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern.
- The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close observation of existing staff.
- The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded.

106. David Lee, 'Internships, Workfare, and the Cultural Industries: A British Perspective' in *TripleC* Vol 13 No 2 (2015), https://www.triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/623, 336–350

- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship, and the employer and the intern understand that the student is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

In comparison with the US guidelines, and arguably in keeping with the broader political culture and the backdrop of existing labour legislation, the British regulations offer a more interventionist approach, appearing to place more controls upon employers and offering more protection for those undertaking such internships. Finally, the ACE report also warns that employers flouting the NMW wage legislation face an employment tribunal or an HMRC inspection that can result in an order for repayment of the wages in arrears, backdated taxes, National Insurance contributions and a penalty. The offenders could also be named in a press release by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

At the time, the publication of the guidelines seemed on the one hand to be an almost precautionary move on the part of ACE, which would be able to use the guide to distance itself from any of its RFOs that might break the rules on internships and/or the law in the future. On the other hand, considering the way in which all possible exceptions to the rule were conveniently laid out/also included, the advice also offered organisations providing internships the opportunity to tailor their policies in order to take advantage of the significant omissions and loopholes offered by existing legislation. It is worth remembering that at the time of publication, the Arts Council and its funded organisations were also going through significant upheavals, with some of the former RFOs set to lose a high proportion or even all of their funding in the next funding cycle. In a sector where there were three interns for each employee, would this kind of collection of guidelines make any significant difference? The report was welcomed at least for its articulation of a commitment to equality of access and opportunity, which after all is the Arts Council's statutory duty as a publicly funded body. Since its publication in 2011, the ACE has published the 'Culture Change Toolkit' (2017), comprising six guides, each of them a one-page downloadable PDF. One of the six, entitled 'Developing Meaningful Apprenticeships, Internships and Work Experience' provides guidance on just that, and describes an internship as:

> A short term attachment (up to 6 months). A paid position offered to a person after being interviewed. An offer of work bound by a contract (with worker status). Internship is not a shadowing role – work should be meaningful and valuable to the role of your organisation.[107]

It also describes work experience opportunities as follows:

> An opportunity to introduce young people into the reality of having a job e.g. year 10/11 students, to support people with long term career breaks back into working life and for people interested in changing careers to experience work in a different sector. A short, unpaid attachments between 1 – 8 weeks [Job seekers are able to continue receiving their benefits and the Government will pay for any travel and childcare costs. Employers usually offer travel and lunch expenses.] [108]

However, it does not engage with volunteering opportunities at all, which might confirm the suspicions one could have in regards to the 2011 report, namely that, despite the welcome and professed aim of providing guidance and clarity on best practice for supporting equality of access and for leaning towards fair remuneration, the guidelines are a cynical exercise in covering the legal position of ACE and ACE-funded organisations whilst offering advice on how to circumnavigate the existing legislation.

At this point it is useful to return to *Intern Nation*, which remains the most comprehensive study of the issues surrounding internships to date. Perlin's generally well-received investigations, published in 2011, directly addressed the situation of many real-life interns, locating their plight within the wider frame of a new workplace paradigm and larger shifts in the overall culture of work. I would like to consider Perlin's contribution here, but also, given the time that has elapsed since the publication of this work, to take this opportunity to map out some of the developments in the struggles over internships that have transpired in the interim.

Perlin's book, which remains timely and relevant, is based on an extensive series of one-on-one interviews, conducted by the author over the two years prior to its publication. This means relying on a 'convenience sample,' as Perlin himself

107. ACE, 2017
108. Ibid

admits, rather than a full ethnography or what might be considered a sociological sample proper.[109] However, the work still makes for a crucial contribution to an area of study in which finding hard data and statistics and employers and employees willing to be named, identified or cooperate is notoriously difficult. an increasingly important, if often overlooked area of the labour market which weaves together personal stories with media examples, historical snippets, newspaper reports, as well as numerous pop-culture references, including snippets from *Seinfeld*, *The Onion*, and *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*.

The book consists of eleven chapters, each examining one aspect of the internship phenomenon, bookended by a passionate preface ('This book is meant as a step towards sanity and towards justice'[110]) and appendices, including 'The Intern Bill of Rights,' which Perlin suggests as 'a common standard by which to evaluate and improve internships for the benefit of inters, employers, and society as a whole.'[111] This forms something of a call to arms, demanding a better definition of, and respect for, internships as a category of work.

To situate his research theoretically, Perlin turns, among others, to Eve Chiapello and Luc Boltanski whose work *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005) describes the changing characteristics of contemporary employment in an era of decentralization and the self-disciplining of subjects. This is an employment paradigm to which the mode of internship seems particularly fitting, indeed a logical outgrowth. As Perlin notes, 'What structured training programs were to the bureaucratic firms of the mid-twentieth century, internships may well be to the new network capitalism of firms dealing in intangible goods.'[112] In this sense he casts the internship as a disciplinary structure perfectly befitting of a more precarious, networked and responsibilized workforce.

This condition, of the increasing disciplinary normalization of precarity, is drawn out in his discussion in chapter nine around the issue of access to various professions and the growing gap between the working-class and elites. Here, Perlin

109. We might note that such a study still has not been undertaken.
110. Perlin op.cit., xviii
111. Ibid, 239
112. Ibid, 95

engages with David Graeber's discussion of the proliferating structures of exclusion that characterize many sectors of the job market to illuminate the way in which internships have become a means to police access to certain professions to the destruction of earlier promises of social mobility.[113] Andrew Ross and Alex Foti help further inform Perlin's discussion in the subsequent chapter of precarity and its relation to interns, but on a more general and more global level. An earlier chapter focuses on the economics of internships, which draws on literature considering the future of employment, mobility in the job market, as well as the minimum wage debate in the US.

Perlin's understanding of the systematic proliferation of internships appears informed by a tentative engagement with Gary Becker's human capital theory[114] and Michael Spence's signalling theory[115] to a degree situating Perlin's account of the rise of unpaid, aspirational labour within the wider development of a neoliberal economic consensus in the US. The generalization of Becker's theory of human capital, with its 'investment approach' to human resources and the burdens and costs of investments in oneself, clearly appears to mirror the ideology of internships. Short-term sacrifice for the accumulation of, not only direct job skills, but importantly contacts, social networks and insider knowledge in the hope of future payoffs, is honed to a fine art in the practice of the intern.[116]

Perlin covers the origins, subsequent rise, and the current epidemic of internships. This includes the historical origins of the nomenclature (war zones, internment camps) and the history of apprenticeships and medical interns. He goes on to describe the subsequent explosion of this form of work and how it is increasingly supported by a fast-growing network of commercial agencies, offering to match interns to positions and vice versa. He also discusses the implication of colleges and universities in the internships' growing popularity, the legal landscape, as well as two case studies – the internship programmes at Disney (experts, one would imagine, at offering young people fairytales), and in the political sector in both the UK and US

113. Ibid, 165
114. Ibid, 127-8
115. Ibid, 130
116. Ibid, 128

(Monica). Perlin likewise endeavours to provide a brief overview of the global rise of the practice, with discussions ranging beyond the US labour market to include China, Germany, and France. Having engaged with the above, he draws inexorably towards the seemingly logical conclusion of a call to action, complete with a proposed manifesto.

Although focussed mainly on the US context, Perlin makes some brief links with the UK landscape, including the grim estimation that the UK's 'internship problem' remains five years behind that of the US.[117] The book's pertinent analysis has seen its timely necessity vindicated by significant press coverage on both sides of the Atlantic and on both sides of the political spectrum. As noted above, in the UK both the right-wing *Daily Mail* and left-liberal *Guardian* reprinted sections of the book, hosting lively exchanges in their comments and blog sections. Yet public debate of this topic was already taking place, evidenced by the above discussed exchange between Cameron and Clegg.

To continue placing this literature in its wider context, it is worth noting that the aforementioned minor scandal of MPs being exposed for using unpaid labour in their parliamentary offices was followed by the 'Let's get our house in order' campaign by Labour MP Hazel Blears with the support of the Intern Aware campaign group. The Trade Unions Congress and the National Union of Students launched a year of campaigning for fair internships in February 2012 with a 'Rights for Interns' smartphone application and the claim that 'in popular career destinations like journalism, advertising, film, television and public relations are becoming an exclusive domain for people from affluent backgrounds.'[118]

The terms 'intern' and 'internship' do not appear in National Minimum Wage legislation, and while unpaid internships can still be advertised, an individual with worker status must be paid full NMW for their age range. However, in practice at least, the law remains opaque, allowing employers to avoid prosecution and continue using free work. HMRC promises to investigate instances where the law is being broken. It admits that 'during 2012/13 it ordered nine firms to pay £200,000 to people

117. Ibid, 200
118.TUC, 2012

who had worked for them as unpaid interns.'[119] However, this figure seems somewhat low, and HMRC refuses to identify any of the companies involved. Meanwhile, there are continuing daily reports of illegal internships being advertised and in 2013, an anonymous magazine editor admitted in an interview with Graduate Fog, a portal campaigning on behalf of young journalists, that the large-scale, ongoing and organised exploitation of interns continues in that industry.[120]

In the years following the publication of Perlin's book, Hollywood movie production remains most definitely systematically reliant on the labour of unpaid interns:

> Unpaid "for credit" internships are a trap in The Industry, a loophole too devious and convenient to close. With the exception of the most competitive and impossible internships to get at major studios and companies like Disney, Fox, Universal, Warner Brothers, CAA, UTA, and the like, virtually all accessible internships in LA are fully unpaid.[121]

However, later court rulings in the US has stated that unpaid interns working on the production of the 2010 hit movie *The Black Swan* were 'classified improperly as unpaid interns' and were in fact 'employees' covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), as well as New York's labour laws and are thus entitled to minimum wages for the time that they worked for Fox Searchlight[122]. The ruling also gave the green light for a possible class action suit, meaning that it might, at best, put an end to such practices, and at the very least, force corporations to urgently re-examine their internship policies.[123] A similar class action suit against Hearst Publishing unfortunately failed, but with former interns at *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Cosmopolitan* among others now pursuing separate cases,[124] these examples demonstrate a

119. Blears 2013
120. Greenslade 2013
121. Anonymous 2017, August 8. Paying for Experience: The Reality of Unpaid Hollywood Internships https://www.thelightleaks.com/think-pieces/2018/6/8/paying-for-experience-the-reality-of-unpaid-hollywood-internships. See also Ming (no date); Shaginian 2014
122. Greenfield 2013

123. Hananel 2013; Weissman 2013
124. Greenfield op. cit.

significant shift in the debate and in the political organizing around this issue that has taken place since Perlin published his study. If one cannot claim that Perlin's book produced these developments, then struggles around the issue have nevertheless likely been aided, inspired and indeed anticipated, by its publication, the above being just one example of the positive, for the interns at least, developments since the book first emerged.

Primarily in a US context, what Perlin certainly attempts and, albeit tentatively, somewhat succeeds in doing, is to relate the continual drip-feed of legal developments, emergent loopholes and steady flow of coverage and commentary to wider debates about the future of work and the wage in general (for example, centred around authors such as Kathi Weeks or Michael Denning). In a UK context, the (post) crisis economy remains particularly marred by high youth unemployment and the state's disingenuous response in the form of the increasing introduction of workfare. The workfare debate, though dressed in the moralizing rhetoric of training, 'bettering oneself,' or being deserving of social support can of course be seen as an attempt to drive down both the government's and employers' costs, following an internship-style trajectory. Workfare, however, inverts the intern, producing a direct disciplining of the labour-force, rather than incentive-led or aspirational approach. In this sense, workfare might be the stick to the carrot described by the Carrot Workers' Collective.

In reminding us that internships are of concern beyond a generation of often-affluent youngsters, and that they are in fact very much a class issue, Perlin did highlight a direction of travel. This is to say that in considering how to fight back against the abuse of interns, one might also start to think about class, exploitation and struggle alongside, but also beyond, the limitations of the wage-relation and the increasingly played-out discourses of its attendant labour movement.

Such analysis was taken up in a more academic context, if an open-access one, by the journal Triple C in their special issue on internships: Interrogating Internships: Unpaid Work, Creative Industries, and Higher Education.[125]

This special issue identifies – in a similar spirit and very much in the way as I attempted in this thesis, and of much more thoroughly thanks to the number of

125. Edited by Greig de Peuter, Nicole S. Cohen, and Enda Brophy 'Interrogating Internships: Unpaid Work, Creative Industries, and Higher Education,' *TripleC*, Vol 13 No 2 (2015)

contributions – the issue of internships as a complex, broad set of societal and economic issues working systematically, and simultaneously, at different planes of the labour market, economy, society, and education. The editors and authors, instead of taking a clear stance "against" or "for" the practice – which, as they note, can exists under a myriad guises, arrangements, and names – instead take upon themselves the task of examining –"interrogating" – the various aspects of the growing social and economic problems resulting from "this quasi-employment arrangement."[126] These include, among others, the glamorisation and normalisation of unpaid work, the questionable ways in which both employers and the universities take advantage of unremunerated labour of the already indebted students and graduates, sometimes forced to take on further debt while working unpaid positions required by their higher education courses[127], linking the issue of internships to that of wider discourses on debt and precarity, as well as the lack of governmental involvement, or critical higher education involvement[128], with the issue; the ways in which employers, instead of creating paid entry-level positions, offer internships – often displacing paid employees already in place – that simultaneously rarely lead to paid employment[129]; the gender, class and race-based inequalities that mean that more women perform unpaid internships[130], that fewer people of colour are allowed to get in in the internship ladder, that personal contact social network and social capital are the deciding factor in being allowed to work for free (sic) etc. – in short, the issues of access and representation tied up with the way internships work to

126. Ibid, 339
127. Joanna Figiel, 'Work Experience Without Qualities? A Documentary and Critical Account,' *ephemera* 13 (1) (2012), 33–52.
128. Sophie Hope and Joanna Figiel. *Intern Culture*. (Artquest 2012) http://www.artquest.org.uk/articles/view/intern_culture.
129. See BSA,' Unpaid internships little help in getting creative graduates good jobs, research says'https://www.britsoc.co.uk/about/latest-news/2016/september/unpaid-internships-little-help-in-getting-creative-graduates-good-jobs-research-says/, September 2016
130. According to research, more women perform unpaid internships: (see Attfield and Couture 2014, Shade and Jacobson 2015). Alexandre Frenette writes (2015): '[W]omen, Black, Hispanic/Latino, and first-generation college graduate arts alumni all appear to have held a disproportionate number of unpaid internships—which… are tied to significantly weaker career payoffs than paid internships.' (8-9). This is further exacerbated in by countless accounts/media coverage of successful female entrepreneurs (as I describe in Chapter 5), often coming from already privileged – in one way or another – backgrounds, nostalgically recounting 'their first jobs'. i.e. unpaid internships, especially in the so-called glamour industries speaking of their 'journey' to 'doing what they love' via unpaid labour, and even by the likes of so-called feminists/neoliberal feminist (Peacock 2013)

'differentially include and exclude populations along intersecting lines of age, class, gender, race, and status' and the grave implications this has, and will exponentially have, on the cultural and creative production. As the editors remind us, Naomi Klein – in a quote that possibly best summarises what brought me to my own interrogations of this subject – already aptly pointed out almost two decades ago: "This racket is not only exploitative in the classic sense, it also has some very real implications for the future of cultural production: today's interns are tomorrow's managers, producers and editors… ."[131]

Throughout the four sections, contributors interrogate a different angle of "this racket": the conceptualizing of internships; internships and creative industries; internships and higher education; and intern labour activism (which I discuss in the Activism chapter.)

First, providing historical background and the origins of contemporary internships in the historical institution of apprenticeships, Alexandre Frenette considers the legal grey area of internships regulation in the US. Following an analysis of a number of historical court cases and legal rulings, and putting them in the context of the increasing number of lawsuits involving inters fighting for back pay and the growing movement of intern labour rights, the author anticipates that a legal solution, similar to the Fitzgerald Act of 1937 that formalized the legality of the institution of work-based learning, would be a way to transform the current problem of internships in the US, and perhaps globally.

Demonstrating the importance of making links between literatures engaging with paid media workers – in this case digital media workers – Thomas F. Corrigan (336-350) uses digital labour literature to engage with existing research on internships. Following a discussion of debates relating to what constitutes digital labour (which in a way mirror the debates surrounding cultural and creative work), and scholarship engaging with the lived experiences of digital workers, as well of analyses of how such work can be misrepresented and its mythology reinforced in its media and cultural portrayals. Digital workers "constantly navigate tensions between personal fulfillment, future career aspirations, and (self-) exploitation" (339) –

131. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, (Toronto: A.A. Knopf, 2007), 331

Corrigan's findings, perhaps unsurprisingly, conclude that such workers indeed share many similarities with unpaid interns in the creative and cultural sector, including the logic of rationalizing present work as future-oriented "braggable investments" (342).

Taking as theirs starting point the tragic death, in 2013, of Moritz Erhardt the intern at Bank of America Merrill Lynch Bogdan Costea, Peter Watt, and Kostas Amiridis (375-389) discuss the extreme dangers of "extreme work" and the disconcerting ways in which positive notions originating in managerial discourse – "potentiality", "self-expression", or "self-realization" (375) – can, and do become dangerous) as they turn into unattainable ideals disturbing and distorting the workers' sense of self – also pertinent to the situation of internships: highly competitive, individualistic, ambitious, with 'many other waiting" to take one's position, accompanied by the never-ending imperative to do one's best, over exert oneself (or work a paid night shift in order to be able to work for free), to learn, to improve, to perfect oneself – a devils contract, in which one is signing away one's life outside of work, over to the devil – the work itself[132], fulfilling the inherent "good" that is working in itself[133] and ultimately pursuing the illusory promises of "employability." – all in the name of "a culture of work focused intensely and unremittingly on the self." (386)

The second section is concerned with issues of inequality and discrimination. In his essay, Richard Boulton, combining his ethnographic research of the US-based advertising industry with exploration of theoretical accounts, examines the ways in which 'colour-blind' internship-based efforts to diversify the workforce instead result in 'meritocracy in theory, but race discrimination in practice" (397) and segregation of interns into 'must-hires' and 'non-must hires' alongside race lines, further marking and stigmatizing people of colour and further disguising the white privilege on the white non must-hired interns.

Beginning with Perlin's remark that reality TV's glorifies unpaid internships in the cultural industries – a topic I discuss briefly in the Cultural Representations chapter, where while I write about various TV shows and films depicting interns, I

132. Mellissa Gregg, *Works Intimacy*, (Polity, 2011)
133. Kathi Weeks *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011)

move beyond a focus on reality TV - Tanner Mirrlees goes on to perform a detail content analysis of a number of job postings for unpaid or low-paid internships in the US reality TV sector, compares the levels of skills and expertise required by employees with tasks actually performed, and concludes that as the majority of this kind of television production is reliant on the skilled ad professional labour of interns, they are not recognized as such and should be, making recommendation for a possible class action suit.

Roberto Ciccarelli discusses the institutionalization of temporary and unpaid work in Italy following the collective agreement achieved around the time of 2015 World's Fair (Expo 2015) in Milan, combining the discussions around the increasing reliance on unpaid labour of crisis stricken economies, the normalization of exploitation of unpaid labour, the legal confusion around terms such as "short working experience" or "long term volunteering" (424) and, ultimately, the failure of traditional union models vis a vis the changing economic circumstances of late neoliberal capitalism, ultimately calling for a finding a way to a social, radical break with exploitation

David Lee discusses unpaid work of interns in the UK in the context of the recent changes in British national workfare policies (jobseeker allowance, previously known as unemployment benefits, a significant shift in language reflecting the state's view on the nature and meaning of assistance for the non-working part of the population, the shift to workfarism from welfarism, as Lee terms it.) The author traces the political, economic, and social history behind the rise of internships within a new phase of neoliberalism in parallel to this shift, drawing the similarities (both exploited free labour) and differences (while both are in theory 'voluntary' there is a massive material difference between losing out on getting ones foot in the door, and effectively removing oneself from the possibility of receiving the minimal amount of subsistence in order to survive) between interns performing unpaid labour and workfare recipients performing free labour under the current regime. This is crucial and needed remarks, and as I write in regards to activist engagement with issues of unpaid labour and precarity in Chapter 6 – absolutely crucial for any possibility of a successful movement against both. What Lee also does is point to what is so often

missing from wider discussions about these issue, namely the massive "hypocrisy of politicians who are quick to condemn internships for the middle and upper classes, but happy to promote workfare programmes." (467)

The fourth section of the issue focuses on strategies, achievements, challenges, and potential directions of the global intern labour movement. Panos Kompatsiaris examines conflicts around internships in UK-based art workers' collectives against unpaid internships and abusive work and the modes in which they perform resistance. The author argues that such activism, beyond the campaign for interns' rights, is instrumental in shaping a "renewed new class consciousness" for those doing highly individualistic and competitive, ambiguously valorised and rewarded work in a field where there is little unity between workers in terms of space and time, and the lines between those who are employees and employers are often rather blurred.[134]

The following account, by the Intern Labor Rights group, reviews the judicial and legislative efforts of advocacy groups and other organizations, and the biggest achievements of 2013 and 2014, including court victories of interns classified as workers and allowed to, retrospectively, receive compensation for their work, with paid interns elsewhere fighting for an increase of intern remuneration from minimum to living wage (570-571). The group also emphasizes the importance of solidarity between interns and other workers in precarious employment. In a similar vein, William Webb reports from Ontario, Canada on social activism raising awareness about unpaid internships, a number of lawsuits against companies in an attempt to reclaim back pay, and the Ontario Ministry of Labour's positive response to the growing concerns surrounding unpaid internships.[135]

Nicole Cohen and Greig de Peuter interview some of the protagonists of intern activism in Ontario about the possibilities and challenges for transforming the intern economy in the name of greater social and economic justice, including the need of conducting further research in relation to issues of discrimination, health and safety and, especially, sexual harassment in internships. The issue is concluded with a personal account by Vera Weghman, who focuses on her involvement in a drive to end the use of unpaid internships in anti-poverty charitable organization in the UK,

134. Kompatsiaris 2015, 555
135. Webb 2015, 585

the "NoPay?NoWay!" campaign for a decent wage for all workers in the charity sector, including interns in non-profits.

In what is my own contribution to the issue, together with Sophie Hope I explore the regimes of employability and 'human capital' in relation to internships. Because for young workers, interning is a key strategy for speculating on one's asset portfolio, students and graduates undertake internships as a way of maintaining their self-appreciation and avoiding the depreciation of this 'portfolio' – they take upon themselves the self-management of human capital. On the example of cultural objects and recent representations of the issue of unpaid internships—Intern magazine, an advert for a "volunteering opportunity" student placement, and testimonies from interns— I show, together with Hope, that unpaid work in the creative industries and the neoliberal version of human capital entrepreneurship can be seen as embodied by interns. The promotion of employability and the entrepreneurial self through university courses is now a key factor in how individuals and potential employers approach unpaid internships.[136] As declared on the website of the Higher Education Academy (HEA, the national body for enhancing learning and teaching in higher education), graduate employability is at the centre of the UK's Higher Education agenda. The HEA describe graduate employability as the "need to ensure that graduates are prepared for, and able to contribute to, the economy and society".[137]

The three cultural objects discussed were: *Intern*, a magazine launched in October 2013 by Alec Dudson, once an intern himself, an advertisement by the Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London seeking a student to fill a "volunteering opportunity" role; and Ragpickers Collection, an online archive of intern testimonies maintained by the UK-based collective Ragpickers. These three examples to reflect different perspectives on the public presentation of interning, from the publicly-funded institution offering "opportunities" to the aspiring creative industry worker with a foot in the door to disillusioned individuals naming and shaming exploitative situations. *Intern*, a magazine put together by interns, for interns,

136. Chertkovskaya, Watt, Tramer and Spoelstra, *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organi*zation Special issue: Employability (2013)
137. Higher Education Academy, *Framework for embedding employability in higher education*, 2015, https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/framework-embedding-employability-higher-education

has been created to highlight the positive and rewarding aspects of unpaid internships, acting as an autoportrait of a certain section of this "workforce" in the UK. At the same time, the magazine reveals the kinds of activities interns undertake in order to get ahead in the creative and cultural industries. To complement and contrast this account, a student placement advert by the ICA provides evidence of the continuing complicity of arts organizations perpetuating conditions of unpaid work. The placement advertised was meant for students, not necessarily as part of a credited work placement, but rather as a commitment "complimentary" to academic studies. The third object was the collection of items on the website of Ragpickers collective, a London-based group raising awareness of internships and unpaid work in the arts. The material consisted of evidence and personal accounts contributed by anonymous interns revealing aspects of their experiences at work. These accounts offer alternative narratives of interning that are often self-censored, and at worst silenced, in the quest for successful maintenance of one's social capital and employability *via* an internship.

The idea was also to bring a feminist reading of social and human capital to our understanding of interning as a contemporary neoliberal phenomenon. Departing from concepts of social and human capital defined by Pierre Bourdieu[138] and James Coleman[139], I introduced a feminist challenge to the concept of human capital (and its vehicle, employability), which insists on analysing the development and maintenance of networks of social relationships involved in gaining social capital as a series of gendered labour relations. These relations involve capitalizing on networks and personal relationships and friendships while the invisible social capital required to maintain these entrepreneurial bodies goes unnoticed, unpaid, and unrecognized as labour. Developing these relationships as sets of capabilities can have positive and negative impacts on others and question the relevance or meaning of trust or strong ties that are supposedly important to gaining social capital. Turning to Michel Feher's call to inhabit the neoliberal subject[140]—the example being the intern—in order to

138. Pierre Bourdieu 'The Field of Cultural Production, or The Economic World Reversed,' *Poetics* Issue 12, (1983), 311-56.
139. James Coleman, 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital,' *American Journal of Sociology* (Vol. 94, 1988), 95-120.
140.Michael Feher, 'Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital', *Public Culture,* 21:1

think of possible ways to politicize the social relations involved in the unpaid work carried out by the intern.

As Emma Dowling points out, not included in discussions of social capital but that must be addressed are the realities of labour: perspectives of labour need to be made visible in the "analysis of social capital."[141] Dowling traces the trajectory of the concept of social capital in the service of austerity and "Big Society" discourses in the UK. In relation to these discourses, Dowling calls for a politicization of social capital by drawing attention to the material realities of the double bind in which an individual finds herself in the current political and labour market climate, where neoliberal subjectivity is:

> […] on the one hand subsuming us completely into the production machine and relying on our cooperative and communicative connections to do so, while on the other pitting us against one another, turning us into competitive utility-maximising beings caught up in the affective anxieties of a rat race that is only being intensified by austerity.[142]

How is free labour, such as the unpaid internship, harnessed at the same time as state disinvestment in "the reproduction of labour through the imposition of cuts and austerity"?[143]The labour of reproducing working bodies (e.g., the domestic work of feeding, caring, and cleaning) remains invisible and unpaid, whilst qualities of social capital are being harnessed and reproduced in an effort to prove ourselves employable.

A good example exemplifying this might be one of the items in the Ragpickers Collection: a packet of Spaghetti Cheestrings donated by an intern working at Blink Productions in Soho, London. This intern recalled spending "an entire day looking all around the area for a packet of Spaghetti Cheestrings" because one of the producers wanted to measure the length of a single Cheestring with a ruler for an advert they were making. The intern says this experience was "so utterly

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(2009), 21-41.
141. Emma Dowling, 'Tales of "Much of a Muchness": Adventures in the Land of Social Capital', *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organi*zation, 12 (4): 480–485.
142. Ibid, 484
143. Ibid, 484

degrading and pointlessly stupid," expressing the "soul destroying" nature of the mission they were sent on, as was the content of the creative work being produced by the company they were interning for[144]. For another intern, the job of interning "introduced [her] to real business" and she lists the seepage of unpaid work into her private life: "He [her supervisor] was telling me that I have to lose 15 kilos and my skirts are too short. He was cooking for me. He was washing my clothes. He was sleeping with me in one bed. Together we set up 3 shows during 2 weeks. Together we went for a couple of art fairs. Then I quitted [sic] and he deleted me on Facebook"[145]The absurd chores illustrated in the Ragpickers Collection border on complex versions of modern day slavery. Although they knowingly entered into internships, these interns seem to be experiencing a kind of entrapment involving "affective anxieties".[146] They acknowledge the absurdity of what they are doing, but sign up for it anyway…

David Lee suggests networked freelancers need to present themselves as "flexible, enthusiastic and mobile." This language is echoed in the ICA volunteer placement advert, which requires "individuals able to think and react fast [...]" in their "very busy and lively office".[147] An intern at Sprüth Magers Gallery contributed a set of emails to the Ragpickers Collection in which they were informed that their internship had been terminated after three days. The language used by the director is similar to that used by the ICA:

> We are approaching our busiest time and we need to feel confident that everyone here is fully committed and willing to muck in and I am afraid this wasn't really the impression you have given. As a consequence, we think a continuation of the internship here is not the right thing for us, nor for you.[148]

The intern responds, pointing out her disappointment and the lengths she has

144. Ragpickers 2013, Item #4
145. Ragpickers 2013, Item #5
146. Dowling ibid 485
147. ICA, *Student Placement: Creative Department - Exhibitions. Voluntary Role Description* (London: ICA, 2014)
148. Ragpickers 2013, Item #3

gone to secure the internship, including the cost of organizing child care "in order to be as flexible as possible," and points out feeling voiceless in the process of her dismissal. In another email, the director explains that every other intern they have worked with "shows an innate sensitivity and respect towards their role" and have an "immediate awareness of what is and what is not appropriate in the gallery. We don't need to tell them, they just know it from the start".[149]This level of expectation of internalized and embodied modes of behaviour at work is also evident in the ICA advert, where students are required to "deliver exceptionally high standards of front-line customer service, support public access and engagement with contemporary art and quality of visitor experience" as well as "contribute to visitors' enjoyment, understanding and opportunities for learning through narrated interpretation, guiding and communication of stories and information about the ICA[150]. The unpaid job being advertised already requires well-honed communication and affective work skills and knowledge, meaning many students would not have access to this "opportunity" to preen their human capital. In its 2010 report, *Work Placements in the Arts and Cultural Sector: Diversity, Equality and Access*, the Equality Challenge Unit found that students, especially "disabled students, black and minority ethnic students, and those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds" experience difficulties trying to access or complete a work placement or an internship. Creative Skillset's 2012 census of the creative media industries found that representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people declined from 7.4 per cent of the total workforce in 2006 to 6.7 per cent in 2009 and just 5.4 per cent in 2012[151]. "The proportion of the workforce described by their employers as disabled has remained the same since 2006, at 1.0 per cent"[152]. This implies: "[...] those who don't make it are invisible to the successful. The excluded disappear".[153] Tim Lindsay, CEO of the charity Design and Art Direction in London, writes in Intern magazine's first issue about why some might not take up an unpaid internship/work placement: "Anecdotally, women are less likely to be happy roughing it on a mate's floor.

149. Ibid
150. ICA, ibid
151. Creative Skillset 2012, 4
152. Ibid, 5
153. Lee 2011, 561

Agencies subsequently become dominated by a boisterous culture, and even less likely to attract female employees." [154] Lindsay goes on to note, "people from less well-off families may not know anyone to crash with... Seemingly unrelated problems such as cultural and gender diversity in the creative industries suddenly become a direct result of unpaid internships."[155] He asks if the banning of unpaid intern adverts might "exacerbate the already endemic nepotism."[156] The lack of equal access to internships and, as a result, to creative professions could (and perhaps should) be understood as a form of discrimination. The Sprüth Magers intern found the director's actions to exhibit a "blind allegiance to concealed chauvinism."[157] We could add to this accusation by suggesting that the gallery director discriminates against those who do not know the codes of behaviour that are a prerequisite of the job. Interning in this case is about demonstrating and donating one's existing social and human capital to the organization rather than being a space for learning new skills from them.

Finally, a speculative relationship to human capital is evident in the pages of *Intern* magazine. For the interns presenting their stories, it is as if work wraps around them like a second skin and becomes an integral part of their identity. "Each feature that tackles the [internship] debate head on offers a subjective take on things and while this structure may frustrate some, internships are by their very nature, personal experiences"[158], the editorial foreword warns, and delivers on its promise. Most case studies in the magazine are both personal and highly individualized accounts. While contributors to the magazine are paid, an overwhelming majority of features and internship reports talk about placements and internships that were unpaid. For example, one interviewee who has already made her name in the business, Jessica Walsh, says on interns: "Ours are unpaid. We pay for their lunches. I think it's on a situational basis whether people are comfortable with that, and can handle that." Her own internship, eventually leading to partnership at Sagmeister and Walsh, was

154. Tim Lindsay 'Ideas Need People', *Intern* 1, issue 1 (2013), 2-3.
155. Ibid, 3
156. Ibid, 8
157. Ragpickers 2013, Item #3
158. Dudson 2014, 5

presumably also unpaid.[159] The narratives here give various accounts of the self-investment process, for example:

> I understand just how valuable free [labour] can be. I spend around about 60% of my working life in non-fee paying work. I work for free/ [goes on to describe various activities] Everything I do for free I do because there will be, somewhere not too far down the line, a payback. […] It is a selfish act [...] to keep myself working on terms that suit my lifestyle.[160]

As a magazine focused on the creative industries, the articles in Intern embrace selfpromotion and the importance of "making a name for yourself." Articles reflect the characteristics of cultural and social capital needed to enter the profession. These "capabilities" (a mix of enthusiasm, confidence and access to networks) are learnt and built up through "middle class socialisation and life-styles."[161] There is a sense that the more you believe in yourself and the work you do, the more successful you will become. The magazine is a demonstration of this self-appreciation. In one article, OWT state: "not being paid doesn't matter if you're gaining a lot of information and contacts."[162] Such statements seem typical of those who have internalized the relentless neoliberal calls to perpetual self improvement that surrounds the subject of working for no pay, language that is echoed in the advertisements, career fairs, workfare and university prospectuses at the same time. Phoebe Moore suggests employability "requires people to use every waking minute for preparation for entering into an unpredictable job market, or for management or education of the self ... in work, meaning that everyday life is subordinated to these preparations and activities."[163]
(245).

Internships could be seen as a force for perpetuating inequalities, exploitation,

159. Quito 2014, 26
160. Germains 2014, 21
161. Lee 2011, 556
162. Bennett 2013, 9
163. Phoebe Moore, 'UK Education, Employability, and Everyday Life,' *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* (2009, 7:1), 245

and discrimination by developing a closed social system of self-serving capabilities that interns alone can excel in but that necessarily excludes others—the "disappeared majority," as Lee notes[164], that needs to be "brought back in," as discussed by Fine[165]. Rather than demonize the intern, however, could we embrace this figure and instead explore how networks of solidarity among co-workers stretch beyond the individual's self-interest towards an alternative co-appreciation that can disrupt and crack open the closed networks that perpetuate inequality in the sector? Rather than the social networks being built for personal gain, for example, can they be reconsidered as social networks of solidarity that acknowledge systemic inequalities and difference? At present, there seems to be a race towards improving the quality of exploitation for all.

164. Lee, 2011, 554
165. Ben Fine, Theories of Social Capital: Researchers Behaving Badly. (London: Pluto, 2010)

Chapter 4

Policy: How does the question of internships materialise in policy discourse?

The aim of this chapter, building on a report I conducted in 2012[166], is to examine the way policy literature in the UK has dealt with the subject of internships over a decade-long period and to analyse how the question of internships is materialised in policy discourse. Initially I mapped the literature on internships published in the UK between 2009 and 2011, focusing on the aims, audiences, and recommendations of a diverse spectrum of reports, guidelines and toolkits that have been published (mainly online) during that period. Here, I expand on that body of work by including a follow-up summary and an analysis of policy and literature published between 2012 and 2016, in order to assess how the ground is shifting around discussions of internships, which remain a live and mutable subject.

The earlier part of the 2006–16 period was marked by intense discussion and a proliferation of government reports and other policy documents that took internships as their focus. Responding to this material, this chapter presents an overview and analysis of existing definitions and recommendations around internships, with the aim of clarifying some of the conceptual confusion and highlighting some of the contradictions in that existing literature. More recent years, however, have seen a diminution of this attention and, at the same time, a solidification of the issues deemed to be of central importance in the internships debate. In the intervening years, the level of intensity of the internships debate has decreased significantly. While in 2012 the issue of internships did seem to be one of the 'hot' topics regarding young people in the UK, students and graduates alike – alongside the looming increase in tuition fees, the marketisation and ongoing corporatisation of academia, as well as the beginnings of the new austerity regime –

166. Sophie Hope and Joanna Figiel, *Intern culture: A literature review of internship reports, guidelines and toolkits from 2009-2011*, May 2012. The report was commissioned by Artquest and formed part of their research and development into establishing a paid internship programme for 'widening participation' for arts graduates with the Common Practice group of arts organisations. Available at: http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/8218/1/8218.pdf

by 2016, mainstream media, policymakers and lawmakers all seem to have lost some of their interest in the subject. Or at least, their interests lessened in intensity Similarly, informal activist groups and campaigns that had previously voiced their concerns frequently – issuing open letters and commentary on policy, law changes and practices of individual organisations functioning within the creative and cultural industries (the CCIs) – seem to have lost some of their impetus in dealing with the internship issue. Yet the latter, of course, remains a matter for concern for students and graduates seeking CCIs work and employment, as well as for those already working in these fields. Below, I present the results of a textual analysis of recent policy papers in order to show how internships have become a focus of attention for policymakers, employers, and activists over recent years. The guiding question of this analysis is: how have different modalities and forms of internships been made visible, constructed, and materialised – that is, brought into being – through policy discourse?

The ever-expanding list of cultural establishments on any arts graduate's CV is testament to the *pro bono* hours of work carried out to support the creative industries, identified by the Cameron-Clegg coalition government in 2010 as a 'growth sector' in the UK economy.[167] Over the past decade, it has become increasingly normalised for graduates -- especially in the arts, media and other creative industries -- to undertake placements whilst at college and to continue unpaid internships well after graduation. This contested space between education and employment is where graduates take on necessary and sought-after practical training, proving their commitment to their chosen career. It is also where employers can exploit the graduate's dedication and willingness to work for low pay or for free. Some of the reasons for the recent interest in this expandable zone of pre-employment include: the increasing competition between an expanding pool of graduates (the past decade has seen a 60% increase in creative arts and design graduates);[168] the active encouragement and funding from government for 'the professions' to take on interns in a bid to address the 'skills gap'; and, on the critical

167. Social Market Foundation (SMF). 2010. *Disconnected: Social mobility and the Creative Industries*. London: SMF. p.15-16
168. Oakley, K. 2009. 'Art Works' – cultural labour markets: a literature review. London: Creativity, Culture and Education. p.60.

side, attempts to tackle the causes of exclusion of working class and migrant students from the creative industries workforce (as the National Union of Students and the Universities and College Union put it: 'unpaid internships exploit those who can afford to do them, and exclude those who cannot');[169] and concerns over the lack of enforcement of employment and National Minimum Wage (NMW) laws in the UK, which makes it possible for workers to be cast, under inferior conditions, as 'interns'.

'Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access', published in 2009 by the then Labour government, and 'Surviving Internships. A Counter Guide to Free Labour in the Arts', published in 2011 by the Carrot Workers Collective, acted as bookends for the earlier report I co-produced on intern culture with Sophie Hope for ArtQuest (Hope and Figiel, 2012). These documents represented the beginning and end of the chosen timeline for this study and also the opposite ends of the spectrum of literature on this subject. 'Unleashing Aspiration' was a government initiative, while 'Surviving Internships' was a 'grassroots' collective effort written by, and aimed at, students, graduates and interns, informing them of their rights and warning them, through testimonies and tools, of the perils of exploitative internship scenarios. The selection of literature reviewed here demonstrates a range of positions, advice and proposals, from the suggestion that unpaid internships be phased out altogether,[170] to 'equalising opportunities' for access to unpaid internships.[171]

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the context and background of internships, developed via an engagement with Kate Oakley's 'Art Works. Cultural labour markets: a literature review', which was commissioned by Creativity Culture and Education.[172] While the focus of this chapter is internships, it also feeds into broader discussions on art and labour, which Oakley's review covers well. Following the introduction, the main body of this chapter analyses the policy literature and responses to it and is themed around the key issues that emerged from

169. National Union of Students and University College Union (NUS/ UCU). 2011. Internships: Advice to students unions and UCU members. London: NUS. p.3.
170. Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). July 2010. Why Interns Need a Fair Wage. London: IPPR.
171. SMF, op. cit.
172. Oakley, op.cit

the reading of the texts: social mobility, remuneration, legality and regulation. Through these themes, I have aimed to synthesise and narrate the spectrum of voices, experiences and recommendations expressed in the literature.

The first theme is that of 'social mobility', a prevalent concept in the government documents. This leads on to a review of the economic barriers to the professions and the different recommendations with regards to remuneration; here I divide the literature into documents that do not insist on paying interns and those that do. This is followed by a section outlining the ways, in which the literature makes the business case for paying interns – for example, by measuring an organisation's increased productivity. The legal case for paying interns is then considered, based on advice and suggestions regarding the enforcement of employment law, as well as practical concerns over interns being the whistleblowers to trigger legal cases against organisations outing employment law. The chapter then provides an overview of the criteria established for measuring the quality of an internship and the suggestions for an internship kitemark. The summary ends by problematising an issue inherent to internships in the arts and the CCIs: the expectation of paid, full-time, permanent employment.

I end the chapter with what I see as the proverbial elephant in the room: the case of charities and volunteer worker status, which sit outside the current National Minimum Wage (NMW) legislation and yet make up a significant part of internships in the arts.

Almost two decades ago, the term internship was imported to the UK from the US, where it was first used to describe trainee doctors, confined to a particular hospital for the duration of their placement[173]. It had been in circulation in the US with its current meaning since the 1980s. When used in the UK, it 'denoted a structured period of experience with a guaranteed stipend'.[174] One of the documents referred to in this review is the 'Work Placement Toolkit' authored by the London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange (LCACE, now called the Cultural Capital Exchange, CCE). Written in 2008, the report uses the term 'work placement' to refer to 'a period of work in industry which is recognised as a structured period of learning

173. Perlin, R. 2001. *Intern Nation*. New York: Verso
174. ibid.

by the respective higher education and host institution of the student'. In the glossary, LCACE quote the National Council of Work Experience (NCWE), which, in 2006, described an internship as 'a phrase that is increasingly used by large companies and refers to a placement within their organisation, usually over 6-12 weeks during the summer holiday'.[175] The reference to this 2006 quotation shows that while 'work experience', 'placement' and 'work shadowing' may have been common terms at that time; the 'internship' was only just being adopted by larger companies and applied to placements outside of study time. The label 'intern' has since then become ubiquitous and interchangeable with paid or unpaid placements, work experience and even part-time work or short-term contracts. While the word implies an element of work-based training, it has become synonymous with obligatory and often unpaid work carried out in order to gain entry to a profession. There is no agreed definition, with lengths of internships ranging from two weeks to twelve months, often referred to as full time and based around set tasks.

Since the 2008 publication, the CCE – an organisation bringing together over ten UK creative and arts universities – has not followed up with a new publication. The NCWE is now part of the Higher Education Careers Service Unit – (HECSU) and works closely with Graduate Prospects[176] to produce the *Prospects Work Experience* publication[177] and the group's website. While NCWE has no recent publications or an update to the existing guidelines, together with Prospects and HECSU, it regularly publishes a quarterly, *Graduate Market Trends*.[178] Its Spring 2016 issue focused on graduate employability (a concept that I discuss in Chapter 3) with the by-line: 'How graduate careers blossom'. Tellingly – except for a passing mention of paid internships in relation to the discussion of the 'employability agenda'[179] in the context of improving the relationship between big business and

175. London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange (LCACE). February 2008. *Work Placement Toolkit*. London: LCACE. p.7
176. See: https://www.prospects.ac.uk/
177. Available at: https://www.prospects.ac.uk/
178. HECSU, 2015. *Graduate Market Trends*. Available at: http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/c06bbe6a#
179. HECSU, op.cit., p.6

universities[180] – the publication does not engage with the subject of internships, nor with unpaid work. Another publication by the group, 'What do graduates do?', from October 2015,[181] presents findings from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE). It examines first degree graduate destinations six months after they graduated. This latest instalment, while including the term 'intern' in the example *job titles* for each graduate category (including interns at a church and at a charity!),[182] does not provide any figures regarding graduates 'employed as interns'.

In the CCIs, the figures are staggering. In [year], nearly half of the creative workforce reported having at some point undertaken an unpaid internship.[183] Some studies suggest internships have been on the increase since the start of the recession.[184] As I have pointed out elsewhere, and as others have – concurrently – discussed in depth, links can and should be made between the current governmental workfare strategy and instances of unpaid work and internships, at least insofar as both exploit unpaid labour. [185] According to one study, there was a dramatic increase in the number of unpaid internships undertaken in the creative industries between 2009 and 2010, with 20% of employers planning to hire interns in summer of 2010 compared to 13% in summer of 2009.[186] The Low Pay Commission (LPC) refer to research carried out by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which found in the year 2008/9 that there was a rise in the small proportion of all graduates undertaking voluntary or unpaid work six months after graduation around the same period (increasing from 1.1% to 1.6% from 2007/8).[187] In 2014/15 (the latest figures available), this number increased to 2%.[188] LPC also quote Intern Anonymous' 2011

180. Interestingly, this discussion features the former NUS President Aaron Porter who went on to become an 'active Higher Education consultant working across a portfolio of projects. Now the Director for External Affairs at the National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB), Aaron is at the forefront of the employability agenda in the context of university-industry collaboration.' ibid.
181. HECSU, 2015. http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/wdgd_2015.pdf
182. HECSU, op.cit., p.40 and p.41 respectively.
183. SMF, op.cit., p.21.
184. NUS/UCU, op. cit., p.6
185. For example see David Lee, *Internships, Workfare, and the Cultural Industries: A British Perspective.*
186. SMF, op.cit., p.24.
187. Low Pay Commission (LPC). 2011. National Minimum Wage. Low Pay Commission Report 2011. London: LPC. p.81
188..See, https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/21-07-2016/graduate-destinations

survey of 235 ex-interns, which found that 82% of internships did not lead to employment with the organisation they interned for, and in which 83% of respondents said their employer did not help them with their search for jobs.[189] Over 40% of interns surveyed were unemployed and 37% had undertaken three or more internships.[190]

The LPC refers to evidence from NCWE that there is a growing practice of auctioning off prestigious internships and to Interns Anonymous' claim that there are agencies now charging businesses for supplying interns to companies that then pay the intern a nominal wage and take a percentage of the intern's future salary arising from subsequent employment with that business.[191] NUS/UCU also address this relatively new phenomenon of third party agencies that charge companies to find interns.[192] IPPR suggests that informal systems of unpaid internships tend to be concentrated in sectors that are 'competitive and attractive', which 'wield enormous power', which offer above-average wages and which are often associated with higher socio-economic classes – sectors such as politics, the creative and media industries, and law.[193] It is worth noting, however, that in 2005, 60% of those employed in the visual arts earned less than the national median of £18,000 per year,[194] while the average starting salary for arts graduates was reportedly £14,000 - £17,500 with a typical salary after training ranging from £20,000 - £32,000.[195]

More recently, according to data presented at the 2013 National Association of Student Employment Services conference by Charlie Bell of HECSU (the presentation was based on that year's DLHE data; however, the author agrees that the problem of obtaining hard data in relation to paid and unpaid internships prevails), there were 5,080 first degree graduates from 2011/12 known to be working unpaid after six months. These fell into two main groups – volunteers (22% of whom were working in London) and interns (60% of whom were working in London.)

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189. ibid., p.82.
190. ibid.
191. ibid., and p.98
192. NUS/UCU, op.cit.
193. IPPR, op.cit., p.6-8.
194. Creative & Cultural Skills. 2009. The Visual Arts Blueprint: A workforce development plan for the visual arts in the UK. London: CC Skills. p.33
195. See, www.grb.uk.com/ graduate-job-search/art-and- design-graduate-jobs

Interestingly, at the time, 63% of all interns were women and one third (31%) had found their job through personal contacts. Three years later, still, no clear data on specifically which industries are affected is available.[196] However, according to the Sutton Trust, in January 2018 20% of the estimated 10,000 graduates in internships six months after graduation, were unpaid.[197]

Over time, the increase in unpaid internships has become synchronous with rising youth unemployment. In 2009, the then-Labour government launched the Backing Young Britain campaign, which aimed to bring businesses, public and voluntary sectors together to tackle rising graduate unemployment and to prevent young people from becoming a 'lost generation'.[198] There was concern that as demand for unskilled labour decreased – in a move towards 'creative work' performed by 'knowledge workers' – employment 'segregation' would increase. The government was interested in increasing the amount of people entering the professions and focused on social mobility, which it saw to be an important part of the solution. This involved encouraging businesses to offer more internships to graduates and non-graduates.[199] By 2010, the LPC had been given a remit to include information and recommendations on internships as part of their reporting on the position of young people in the labour market.[200] This move was also related to the government's focus on the economic growth of professional sectors, following the demise of manufacturing industries in the UK. The 'knowledge-driven' creative industries were identified as one of these 'growth sectors' by the Coalition government due to the generation and exploitation of intellectual property, their immunity from price competition and growing overseas demand.[201]

196. The view from HECSU. Available http://hecsu.blogspot.com/2013/07/unpaid-interns.html?q=internship
197**.** See the full report, *Unpaid, Unadvertised, Unfair*: https://www.suttontrust.com/research-paper/internships-unpaid-unadvertised-unfair/
198. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). December 2009b. *Internships that work: A guide for employers.* London: CIPD. p.3.
199. ibid.
33. LPC, op.cit., p.81.
200. SMF, op. cit., p.15-16.
201. SMF, op. cit., p.15-16.

During the final stages of revising our report, *Intern Culture* (2012), the 'Wilson review' was published.[202] The review, written by Professor Sir Tim Wilson, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hertfordshire, was commissioned as part of the Government's White Paper on Higher Education, to 'undertake a review into how we make the UK the best place in the world for university-industry collaboration'.[203] The report focuses on business-university collaboration and the role universities play in the wider discussion of an innovation and knowledge-based economy, as well as student issues such as employability, sandwich courses and internships. One of the recommendations of the report is the following: '[i]deally, every full-time undergraduate student should have the opportunity to experience a structured, university-approved undergraduate internship during their period of study'.[204]

Much of the concern over the rise in internships as a necessary entry point into the professions is that the label of 'intern' often disguises exploitative labour conditions in professional working environments where a level of education is expected. Part of the problem that many of the reports reviewed here identify is the lack of information and education in the sectors as to what the employment law states in regards to paying interns, namely, that interns are entitled to National Minimum Wage – currently set at £7.50[205] – if they are classed as a 'worker'.[206] According to one 2011 report, only 10% of students were aware of the fact that unpaid internships are illegal.[207] The majority of the documents discussed here, however, are targeted at employers rather than employees, informing the former about their legal position and in some cases pointing out the existing loopholes in legislation and warning them of the risks of facing employment tribunals and/or prosecution.

The NMW Act was passed in 1998 during the Labour Government and in 2009 a new enforcement regime was introduced through the Employment Act of

202. Wilson, T. 2012. *A Review of Business–University Collaboration*. London: BIS.
203. Business, Innovation and Skills, Department of. (BIS). June 201b. *Higher Education White Paper: Putting Students at the heart of higher education.* London: BIS. Paragraph 13.
204. Ibid.
205. See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-government-accepts-minimum-wage-rate-recommendations--2
206. https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns
207. NUS/UCU, op. cit.

2008, which made it an offence for organisations not to comply with NMW legislation. Cases could now be brought to the Crown Court by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the enforcement body, without having to rely on the testimony of vulnerable workers.[208] This change also means that employers who do not pay NMW are now liable to an automatic penalty of £5,000 and compensation for workers who have had to wait for their wages by insisting that arrears are repaid at current rates.[209] The London Living Wage (LLW), introduced in 2005 as an election pledge of the then-London Mayor Ken Livingstone, is voluntary and not enforced (as of July 2018, it currently stands at £10,20 per hour).[210] While the terms 'intern' and 'internship' do not exist in NMW legislation, and while under the current legislation unpaid internships can still be advertised, an individual with worker status (for example, fixed hours and duties, meaning that most interns should be classified as workers rather than say volunteers[211]) must be paid full NMW for their age range.[212]

There are also some exemptions from the NMW law, however. Among these are students undertaking work placements of up to one year as part of a further or higher education course. According to the Wilson review, internships are more often seen as part of an extended recruitment process – a 'year-long interview and induction' – whether they are 'paid or unpaid, depending upon the employer's policy about such schemes'.[213] The new HMRC guidelines are also exempt from NMW legislation. Volunteers are defined as those who are under no obligation to perform work or carry out instructions: they have no contract or formal arrangement and so

208. BIS. 2010b. National Minimum Wage Compliance Strategy. London: BIS. p.4.
209. ibid., p.10.
210. See: http://www.livingwage.org.uk/news/new-london-living-wage-rate-has-been-announced
211. Definition of who qualifies as a worker: https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/worker
212. From October 2016, NMW per hour is £6.95 (aged 21 and above; £5.55 (ages 18-20 inclusive) and £ (ages 16-17). See: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-government-accepts-minimum-wage-rate-recommendations--2
213. Wilson, op. cit, p.38. It is worth noting here that the recent Wilson review recommends internships become compulsory for students. In my report co-authored with Sophie Hope we stated that we were not sure how this proposal would relate to the fact that these are also students who are already, or soon will be, paying around £9,000 for a year of university education. Even if undertaken during the summer holidays (when a lot of students work to save for the academic year), those internships could well be unpaid. Wilson does not engage with other HM Government reports suggesting that the NMW laws should be enforced, and indirectly suggests that the government or universities, rather than businesses, should bear some of the costs of the proposed internship schemes. The comment Wilson makes about internships constituting a part of an 'extended interview process' is also worth noting.

can come and go as they please; they have no expectation of and do not receive any reward for the work they do.[214] Voluntary workers are the third category to be exempt from the NMW[215]. This includes those who are working for charities, voluntary organisations, associated fundraising bodies or statutory bodies. This latter exemption is to allow volunteers to operate in the voluntary and charitable sectors and receive reimbursement of reasonable expenses without minimum wage liability but at the same time allows other workers in these sectors the right to be paid at least NMW.[216]

The *Intern Culture* report: Breakdown of the literature

Of the documents at the centre of the original *Intern Culture* report, seven were specifically aimed at interns, or recognised interns as a potential audience:

- NUS/UCU, *Internships: Advice to students' unions and UCU members*, 2011
- The Arts Group, *Emerging Workers: A fair future for entering the creative industries*, 2010
- Carrot Workers Collective, *Surviving Internships: A Counter Guide to Free Labour in the Arts*, 2011
- Intern Aware, *Are you free?*, 2009
- Greater London Arts, *A Fairer London: The 2011 Living Wage in London*, 2011a;
- Equality Challenge Unit, *Work placements in the arts and cultural sector: Diversity, equality and access*, 2010
- London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange, *Work Placement Toolkit*, 2008

214. Gateway to the Professions Collaborative Forum (GPCF). July 2011. *Common Best Practice Code for High-Quality Internships.* London: Trades Union Congress. p.9.
215. The official categories exempted from the NMW are: 1.Student internships: Students required to do an internship for less than one year as part of a UK-based further or higher education course aren't entitled to the National Minimum Wage. 2.School work experience placements - Work experience students of compulsory school age, ie under 16, aren't entitled to the minimum wage. 3.Voluntary workers/Volunteers: Workers aren't entitled to the minimum wage if both of the following apply: They are re working for a charity, voluntary organisation, associated fund raising body or a statutory body; they don't get paid, except for limited benefits (eg reasonable travel or lunch expenses). See: https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns
216. LPC, op. cit., p.97.

The remaining documents were targeted at policymakers, higher education staff and/or employers. It is notable that out of all of these documents, three were produced by groups of activists or collectives and all three were aimed at interns themselves.[217] As well as the reports published by the groups listed above, there were a number of initiatives and networks that have focused on challenging the unpaid internship culture, such as Interns Anonymous, the Precarious Workers Brigade and Graduate Fog.[218] Unions were also beginning to engage with the debate around internships. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) partnered with the NUS to launch a year of campaigning to 'protect interns from abuse', featuring plans for a 'Rights for Interns' smartphone application,[219] while the National Union of Journalists started a 'cash back for interns' campaign.[220]

Among the analysed documents, seven were government reports:

- Greater London Authority (GLA), *A Fairer London: The 2011 Living Wage in London*, 2011a
- Greater London Authority (GLA), *Culture and Volunteering: An introduction to volunteering across the arts and cultural sector in London*, 2011b
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), *National Minimum Wage Compliance Strategy*, 2010b
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), *Policy on HM Revenue & Customs enforcement, prosecutions and naming employers who out national minimum wage law*, 2011a
- HM Government, *Unleashing Aspiration: The Government Response to the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*, 2009
- HM Government, *Unleashing Aspiration: Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*, 2010

217. These are the documents by Intern Aware, Carrot Workers Collective and The Arts Group.
218. See, internsanonymous.co.uk; precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com and graduatefog.co.uk
219. See, www.tuc.org.uk/ workplace/tuc-20615-f0.cfm 38. See, arq.st/KFmcry
220. See, arq.st/KFmcry

- Arts Council England, *Internships in the arts: A guide for arts organisations*, 2011

Some of these reports focused on broader policy issues, such as the above-mentioned *Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access* and the government's follow-up response. Some focused on the National Minimum Wage legislation, such as the Department for Business Innovation and Skills's (BIS) two reports: *National Minimum Wage Compliance Strategy* and their *Policy on HMRC enforcement, prosecutions and naming employers who out NMW law*. *The GLA's A Fairer London: The 2011 Living Wage in London* also addresses this issue, as does the Low Pay Commission's 2011 report, which, as an independent statutory non-departmental public body, advises the government about the NMW. In this latest report, the LPC suggested the HMRC were not doing enough to enforce the NMW:

> 'We believe that stronger action needs to be taken on enforcement. It is clear this needs to be accompanied by better understanding of when a legitimate unpaid work experience opportunity becomes a work placement that should be paid at least the National Minimum Wage. We recommend that the Government takes steps to raise awareness of the rules applying to payment of the National Minimum Wage for those undertaking internships, all other forms of work experience, and volunteering opportunities. In addition, we recommend that these rules are effectively enforced by HMRC using its investigative powers."[221]

Of the documents surveyed, four addressed internships, apprenticeships and placements as part of further or higher education. These were the LCACE's *Work Placement Toolkit*; the University of the Arts' *Creative Graduate Internship Programme Report*, the Equality Challenge Unit's (ECU) *Work placements in the arts and cultural sector: Diversity, equality and access*; and the NUS/UCU's *Internships: Advice to students' unions and UCU members*.

221. LPC 2011, p.101

Ten of the documents focus specifically on the creative industries or cross-arts sectors.[222] The remainder refer more generally to all employment sectors. Skillset, for example, is the Sector Skills Council for the UK creative industries; Creative and Cultural Skills is the Sector Skills Council for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music and visual arts. ACE's *Internships in the arts. A guide for arts organisations* (2011) also focussed on advice for arts organizations, while the Greater London Authority (GLA) has produced a guide to 'Culture and Volunteering'. There are only two 'grassroots' documents published to date that specifically speak to artists: they are the Carrot Workers Collective's *Surviving internships: A counter guide to free labour in the arts*[223] and the Arts Group's *Emerging Workers: a fair future for entering the creative industries*.[224]

There have also been a number of reports on internships by think tanks and industry bodies. The Gateway to the Professions Collaborative Forum (GPCF), for example, produced its *Common Best Practice Code for High Quality Internships*,[225] while the think tank Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), together with the social enterprise Internocracy, published a briefing paper entitled *Why Interns Need a Fair Wage*.[226] Another think tank, the Social Market Foundation, wrote *Disconnected: Social mobility and the creative industries*[227] and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) have produced three documents relating to internships: *The Internship Charter*;[228] *Internships that Work*;[229] and *Internships: To pay or not to pay?*.[230]

Social mobility and/or social justice?

New Labour's commitment to 'social mobility' was demonstrated in its report of 2009, *Unleashing Aspiration: Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access*

222. These are: The Arts Group 2010, Skillset 2010, Creative and Cultural Skills 2011, ACE 2011, Carrot Workers Collective 2011, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Social Market Foundation 2010, University of the Arts London 2011, LCACE 2008 and GLA 2011b
223. Carrot Workers Collective. 2011. See carrotworkers.wordpress.com
224. The Arts Group. 2010. See *www.artsgroup.org.uk*
225. GPCF. September 2013. London: Trades Union Congress.
226. IPPR, op. cit.
227. *SMF, op. cit.*
228. CIPD. September 2009a. London: CIPD.
229. CIPD. December 2009b. London: CIPD.
230. CIPD. June 2010. London: CIPD.

to the Professions,[231] in which Alan Milburn emphasised the notion that social mobility is based on an individual's own efforts to unleash their 'pent-up' aspirations in order better themselves. An individual's ability to 'unleash their aspiration' and climb the social ladder is apparently not something that can be given to people, nor could it be done through 'just beating poverty'. Indeed, an individual's potential to succeed is presented as the answer to the 'employment segregation' that is occurring as the demand for unskilled labour falls and professional, middle-class employment accounts for a larger proportion of the UK workforce. The focus for New Labour in this, and the subsequent response from the government,[232] was on trying to get as many people 'with intellect, talent and potential' to get a foot on the ladder and to make the ascent into a professional, economically rewarding career.

These reports, and the subsequent *Common Best Practice Code for High-Quality Internships*,[233] stress the benefits to business of recruiting from as wide a 'talent pool' as possible, and argue that, in the context of economic recovery, we must 'make sure all available talent is used'. Our future, we are told, depends on not wasting any of that talent;[234] this is necessary in order to 'drive tomorrow's economy and improve social progress'.[235]

There is a general agreement among most of the authors of the literature that entry into a professional career is becoming increasingly reliant on undertaking an internship, whether paid or unpaid.[236] There is an acknowledgement in both the 2009 and 2010 *Unleashing Aspiration* documents that a barrier to entering the professions is the fact that many internships are unpaid. Those lacking resources or funds, or those who are disadvantaged geographically, are unable to take up these internship places, resulting in a less diverse workforce. GPCF argued that unpaid internships prevent some of the 'most disadvantaged individuals' from realising their aspirations.[237] IPPR, in their report *Why Interns Need a Fair Wage*, quoted the LPC's 2010 report, which concludes that 'there is systematic abuse of interns, with a

231. HM Government, 2009, op. cit
232. HM Government, 2010, op. cit.
233. GPCF, op. cit.
234. HM Government 2010, op. cit., p. 2-3
235. GPCF, op. cit., p.3.
236. *For example, HM Government 2009, op. cit., p.101.*
237. IPPR, op. cit., p. 3.

growing number of people undertaking "work"; but excluded from the minimum wage'.[238] IPPR argue that while internships are seen as 'career-changing opportunities',[239] the practice of not paying interns actively excludes young people who are unable to work for free, thus perpetuating inequality and 'dampening opportunities for social mobility'.[240] Furthermore, IPPR argue, 'unpaid internships play a small part in helping to perpetuate the exclusion of people from certain backgrounds from influential roles and continuing inequalities in power'.[241]

The ECU, in their report *Work Placements in the arts and cultural sector: Diversity, equality and access*, point to challenges that students, especially 'disabled students, black and minority ethnic students, and those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds', experience while trying to access or complete a work placement or an internship.[242] The report addresses the fact that such difficulties may have negative consequences for the arts and cultural sectors in general, for example by marginalising potential audience appeal and limiting sector expansion. SMF claim that 'evidence suggests that art and design graduates have better employment prospects if they have undergone work experience prior to entering the labour market ... generally, therefore, young people are making a sound investment doing an unpaid internship.'[243] But, they suggest, 'credit constraints prevent young people from lower socio-economic groups being able to afford to undertake unpaid internships'.[244]

Other barriers to entering the professions, alongside the obvious financial ones identified in the reports, include the issue that many of the professional industries, such as media, culture and politics (sectors in which unpaid internships are rife) are based on 'informal economies'.[245] The reports point out that those who find themselves outside of these networks will have less chance of entering those professions, as the informal 'who you know' recruitment process 'put[s] those who

238. IPPR, op. cit., p. 9.
239. ibid., p.7.
240. ibid., p.4
241. ibid., p.8.
242. ECU, op. cit.
243. SMF, op. cit., p. 26
244. ibid., p. 27
245. IPPR, op. cit.

lack the right networks at a huge disadvantage'.[246] SMF identify further reasons for poor social representation in the creative industries, such as the fact that entry to the professions is often dependent on having a degree and that there is often poor careers advice.[247] SMF also suggest that unstable and precarious employment patterns in the creative industries make such careers less viable for those without a financial safety net.[248] For example, in 2010, 34% of the creative workforce was either freelance or working on short-term employment contracts, while project-based work is commonplace.[249]

To try to tackle this inequity, most of the documents refer to the need for transparency in the recruitment of interns.[250] *Unleashing Aspiration*,[251] for example, proposes 'openly advertised positions' and suggests the government's Talent Pool Internship Portal[252] (launched in July 2009) is an ideal vehicle for this. IPPR also suggest that employers increase the transparency of the recruitment process by making sure all internships are widely advertised and appointed through a formal recruitment process. IPPR also refer to the Graduate Talent Pool, but point out that this resource does not require internships to be paid and that it is left to the employer to check whether they are complying with the NMW legislation.[253]

Economic barriers to the professions

Most of the reports acknowledge the significance of internships as a point of entry into the professions; most also recognise that there is a lack of diversity in the professions – in terms of class, economic background, ethnicity and gender, and that there are certain barriers in place, which prevent the professions from becoming more diverse. While most of the reports identify economic barriers as a factor, not all of them recommend addressing the problem by paying interns. Indeed, there is a spectrum of suggestions as to how to tackle the issue. Intern Aware's *Are you Free?* report, for example, notes that *Unleashing Aspiration* failed to link the need to ensure

246. SMF, op. cit., p. 29.
247. ibid., p. 13.
248. ibid., p.19.
249. ibid., p. 19.
250. For example, see Skillset, op. cit.
251. HM Government 2009, op. cit.
252. See, https://graduatetalentpoolsearch.direct.gov.uk/gtp/index
253. IPPR, op. cit., p.6.

social mobility through a fair internships scheme with the legal requirements of the National Minimum Wage. The government reports emphasise the individual who motivated herself into employment, undergirded by the meritocratic notion that those with talent and potential will succeed. The *Unleashing Aspiration* reports do not insist on employers paying interns the NMW and instead recommend poorer graduates take out loans if they want to enter the professions. Recommendations include: "Introducing new forms of funding to support interns, including: – changing the Student Loan system, so that interns can draw down their loan in four parts rather than three, to support summer vacation work and reviewing the case for additional support through this window; offering micro-loans, perhaps managed by the Student Loans Company, to cover short internships; extending the scope of Professional and Career Development Loans."[254] The onus here is firmly on the individual to 'invest' (in themselves) and to carry the burden of that debt, rather than on enforcing the existing NMW law.

As Mark Crawley, Director of Widening Participation, Progression and the National Arts Learning Network at University of the Arts London, pointed out in conversation, this focus on social mobility rather than social justice is somewhat problematic. A social justice approach would take a quite different approach: insisting, perhaps, on removing economic barriers by recognising internships as work, enforcing the existing NMW legislation and insisting that employers treat their interns as employees. The *National Minimum Wage Compliance Strategy*[255] and *Policy on HM Revenue & Customs enforcement, prosecutions and naming employers*[256] reflect the government's 'vision' that 'everyone who is entitled to the NMW should receive it.' The first document outlines how NMW legislation operates following the changes introduced with the Employment Act of 2008, and the priorities and processes of HMRC in terms of tracking compliance, enforcement and prosecutions. The latter document focuses on enforcement measures. It would seem that the government's reports contradict one another.

254. HM Government 2009, op. cit., p. 48
255. BIS, 2010b, op. cit.
256. BIS, 201a, op. cit

What follows is an overview of the spectrum of opinions and recommendations represented in all of the documents studied with regard to the NMW.

Arguments against the National Minimum Wage (NMW) for interns

Of the 23 reports covered in this review, six do not insist on NMW for interns.[257] These include, as mentioned above, both *Unleasing Aspiration* reports (including the Graduate Talent Pool), which suggest a loan system for interns. While the proposal that interns draw on their existing student loans was rejected by HM Government due to the projected delivery costs that would be involved, the government did voice support for the idea of loans being made available through the Professional and Career Development Loans system and suggested that means-tested micro-loans could be a future possibility.[258] Such an argument for loans for interns is synonymous with the notion of social mobility: interns would have to make an investment as individuals, because they, in the long run, would be the main beneficiaries of the internship. Such a loan system would also be reliant on an underlying premise that future (well-)paid work would exist in order for the debts to be repaid. Well-paid, permanent employment is not very common in the arts, however – as will be discussed below.

In their 'Culture and Volunteering' guidelines, published in 2011, the GLA do not mention internships, but explicitly advise charities to use volunteers to 'help you achieve your vision'.[259] The CIPD state that while 'ideally an intern should be paid a salary' of at least the NMW, the quality of the experience for the intern remains the most important factor.[260] CIPD suggest work-related expenses should be paid at a minimum.[261] They also point out that if a business has more than one intern at the

257. These are: HM Government 2009 and 2010, GLA 201b, CIPD 2009a, 2009b and 2010 and SMF 2010.
258. HM Government, 2010, op cit.
259. GLA 2011b, op. cit., p.22.
260. CIPD, 2009b, op. cit.
261. CIPD, 2010, op. cit.

same time, they should all be offered the same deal. CIPD suggest a 'training wage' for interns of the equivalent of the Apprentice NMW (currently £3.40 an hour, and £2.50 at the time of writing of the CIPD report) to 'offer young people and employers a fair deal, promote social mobility, provide young people with valuable experience and help minimise exploitation in the workplace'.[262] This proposal is rejected by IPPR, who suggest that the CIPD reports should 'contain stronger messages about intern pay' rather than only recommend that employers cover work-related expenses as a minimum.[263] IPPR stress that these CIPD documents do not make it clear that interns are eligible for NMW if they are doing 'work', regardless of how long they are working for.

The SMF focus on 'equalising opportunities' for access to unpaid internships, stating that 'the question of fairness around unpaid internships [...] is not one about whether they should be paid or not. Rather, it is about whether the lack of payment restricts opportunities to the better off'.[264] While SMF refer to evidence that 'unpaid internships could be having a detrimental impact on social mobility in the creative industries' due to 'credit constraints',[265] they highlight findings from their own survey, which discovered that 'credit constraints in particular are not decisive in preventing most young people from low-socio-economic groups undertaking unpaid internships. The majority, even among those from low-income backgrounds, are clearly finding ways to be able to afford to do unpaid work'.[266] The poll found that '57% of young people from a low socio-economic group report not being put off from a career that requires unpaid work to get into, compared to 59% of young people from high socio-economic group.'[267] The results of this survey perhaps reflect the extent to which there is a perceived need to undertake unpaid internships among this

262. ibid., p.4.
263. IPPR, op. cit., p.10.
264. SMF, op. cit., p.27.
265. ibid., p.28.
266. According to their survey, 59% of the 712 questioned 16 to 25-year-olds said they would not be put off from pursuing a career if accessing it involved unpaid work, and 28% said they would be. Ibid., pp. 35 and 38.
267. This is based on responses to the question: 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Having to do unpaid work in an industry/sector I was interested in would deter me from pursuing a career in that area', ibid., p. 32 and p. 36. One could argue this is a leading question, which suggests carrying out unpaid work demonstrates determination to pursue a career option.

age group, specifically in order to access work within the creative industries (57% perceived it as being important to undertake unpaid work to access the creative industries[268]). The essay by Stephen Overell (in SMF), for example, cites a survey by Shooting People,[269] which found that 81% of its members wanted to see advertisements for unpaid jobs on their website, with 86% prepared to work unpaid and 78% objecting to being told they should not work for free.[270] SMF take the results of their survey as evidence that 'credit constraints, or indeed any other constraint' are not deterring young people from lower socio-economic groups from participating in unpaid internships.[271] They suggest policymaking should therefore not be fixated solely on trying to address this. SMF use the results of their survey as reason enough not to recommend interns be paid. Instead they focus on recommendations to 'raise the quality and fairness of unpaid internships'.[272] They do, however, mention that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are perhaps not doing internships in the creative industries or accessing the 'right types' or 'best' internship opportunities because they lack the social networks and access to 'good information available to better-off young people'.[273]

The LPC reports on the views of one of the stakeholders, the film company Actaeon Films, who do not support the view that unpaid internships are a barrier to social mobility and have stopped offering internships since the 'recent focus on the minimum wage'.[274] The company proposed an exemption from the NMW should be made for internships lasting for up to 160 hours.[275] The LPC also mentions the British Chamber of Commerce, which proposes a new category of 'intern worker' be created, which would not be entitled to the NMW, in order to encourage more firms to offer internship opportunities. While the LPC included these views in its report, its own recommendations were ultimately to uphold the NMW for internships and to recommend its enforcement.

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268. Ibid, p. 33.
269. See: shootingpeople.org/ about
270. SMF, op. cit., p.81.
271. Ibid, p.39
272. Ibid, p.45.
273. Ibid, p.40-41.
274. LPC, op. cit., p.83
275. ibid., p.100.

Reports in favour of the NMW for interns

Ten of the reports investigated here make specific recommendations that interns, if they fulfil worker status, should be paid the NMW.[276] LPC argues that stronger action needs to be taken on enforcement of the NMW, accompanied with a better understanding of 'when a legitimate unpaid work experience opportunity becomes a work placement that should be paid at least the NMW'.[277] Similarly, Skillset argues that general internships, when they are not part of a course of full-time education, should be categorised as 'work', and therefore that employers should pay the NMW. ACE also recommends that where the intern fulfils 'worker status', they should be paid the NMW.[278] IPPR argues that employers should start from the assumption that internships should be paid.[279] They recommend the government phase out all unpaid internships in publicly funded organisations and that BIS and CIPD should ensure the private sector is fulfilling its legal obligations. GPCF state that internships must comply with current employment legislation and be paid at least the NMW, as well as be reimbursed for any necessary work-related expenses, suggesting that employers paying above the NMW are more likely to attract 'high calibre candidates'.[280] UAL, in their Graduate Internship scheme, insist hosts pay the interns at least the NMW, however, the scheme was not evaluated on its completion.[281]

The LPC calls for better enforcement of the NMW and improved guidance 'to ensure existing exceptions were not abused'.[282] Intern Aware is lobbying the government to remove the loopholes that allow companies to pay interns nothing.

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276. These are*:* LPC 201, ACE 201b, Skillset 2010, IPPR 2010, GPCF 201, NUS/UCU 201, The Arts Group 2010, UAL 201, CWC 201 and Intern Aware 2009.
277. LPC, op. cit., p.101.
278. They define student internships as being carried out by full-time students who can continue to benefit from university accommodation and student loans. These types of internships can, they suggest, be unpaid, 'even if the individual is a worker', as they are carrying out the work as part of their full-time studies; however, they suggest the student intern is paid a 'basic wage' (they don't say how much, or if this should be NMW), 'in recognition of the value the intern brings to the organisation'. Skillset, op. cit., p.3-4.
279. IPPR, op. cit., p.10.
280. GPCF, op. cit., p.9
281. UAL, op. cit.
282. LPC, op. cit., p.98.

The CWC guide does not make any concrete policy or legislation recommendations; in regards to the definition of 'workers', they state that even the NMW is too little, since it 'discriminates on the basis of age and even for its top contenders (people over 21) it amounts to between £10,000 and 12,000 per year i.e. totally unliveable!'[283]

In *Unleashing Aspiration*, the government announced that £8 million of public funding would go to support up to ten thousand undergraduates from low-income backgrounds to take up internships by giving them bursaries equivalent to the minimum wage, with matched funding from employers.[284] This seems to respond to The Arts Group's call for the creation of a fund for sponsoring interns, in which they suggest that funding and bursaries should be made available to employers so that they are able to continue to offer internships that are genuine training and development opportunities. Intern Aware, however, report that, while they support the government's internship scheme in the short-term, as a means to allow people from less privileged backgrounds access into the professions, they suggest that the scheme could lead employers to exploit unpaid work of interns at the expense of the state: 'The measures that the government suggest work to alleviate current employment problems but remove responsibility from companies to operate on the principle that work should be remunerated.'[285] There is also the issue that while there may be some subsidies for organisations to help pay staffing costs of interns, some smaller, charitable organisations are unable to make any financial contribution towards these costs. UAL's internship scheme, for example, contributed £100 a week to the employers hosting interns to help with these costs. Before embarking on the programme, however, UAL conducted a survey amongst a sample of creative sector employers and found that while 85.9% were interested in offering a 3-6 month placement, just over half said they would be able to pay the intern.[286] According to their report, UAL set up 100 internship places, 64 of which were completed or ongoing, but 36 of which were discontinued. Reasons cited for this included the employer not having a PAYE system in place, the employers no longer having funds

283. CWC, op. cit., p. 24.
284. HM Government 2010, op. cit., p.38.
285. Intern Aware, op. cit
286. UAL, op. cit.

available, the graduate not being able to complete the entire internship, that the hosts were unable to recruit before the deadline or that they went with another graduate internship scheme where the graduate salary was fully subsidised.[287]

The business case for paying interns: increasing productivity

Some of the documents refer to the benefits to business of paying interns. The then-mayor Boris Johnson echoed the words of Guy Stallard, Head of Facilities at KPMG (who have been paying their interns the London Living Wage since 2006),[288] by suggesting that adopting the LLW 'reduces staff turnover and produces a more motivated and productive workforce'.[289] Creative and Cultural Skills' (2011) report on their Creative Apprenticeships (CA) scheme found that CA's are cost effective (bearing in mind they are cheaper to hire at only £2.50 an hour), in that they increase productivity and create savings on recruitment and induction costs compared to other entrants. Based on their calculations that used Social Return on Investment (SROI) methods, 210 CAs have created income worth a grand total of £2.4 million for the UK economy.[290] CIPD also identify the 'business benefits' to having a quality internship programme, such as gaining a motivated member of staff, bringing new skills and perspectives, and potentially improving productivity.[291] In a previous survey, CIPD found that 63% of employers paid their interns at least the minimum wage, with 92% of this group of employers paying above the NMW.[292] This sample, however, focused on bigger, commercial organisations; no arts organisations were included. IPPR make a practical suggestion to help employers cut costs by pooling resources and organising training collectively. They suggest this

287. ibid.
288. GLA 201a, op. cit., p.31.
289. ibid., p.5.
290. *Creative and Cultural Skills* 2011, op. cit., p.11.
291. CIPD 2009b, p.3.
292. ibid., p.2.

could be done with sector-specific or regionally based organisations by employing 'time-share interns' between larger and smaller private/public organisations.[293]

The legal case for paying interns: law enforcement

CIPD identify a 'dilemma': do we 'allow employers not to pay interns and risk scaring off people from less affluent backgrounds, or make employers pay the NMW and risk losing a large number of internship opportunities'?[294] It is interesting that 'Unleashing Aspiration' (2010) suggests the voluntary uptake of a code of practice by employers and yet BIS's 'National Minimum Wage Compliance Strategy' explains that they (through the HMRC) will 'continue to prosecute the most serious offenders' who flout NMW legislation.[295]

A number of the documents suggest the NMW law needs (better) enforcing.[296] LPC report that NCWE, Interns Anonymous, National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU) agreed that intervention by HMRC should happen as early as at the point of the internship being advertised.[297] Evidence also suggested a lack of satisfaction with HMRC's management of complaints.[298] In their report, Intern Aware point out that LPC's previous attempts to rectify the interns' position were unsuccessful and vow to fight for removal of loopholes and implementation of the NMW law.[299] CIPD called for all unpaid internship positions, which do not pay their proposed 'training wage' (equivalent of Apprenticeship NMW of £2.60 per hour at the time), to be recognised as being in breach of NMW legislation.[300]

LPC made a recommendation in 2009 for the government to implement a 'name and shame' policy, which was put in place in January 2011.[301] The aim of this policy was to expose employers who showed a wilful disregard for the NMW in order

293. IPPR, op. cit., p.13.
294. CIPD 2009b, op. cit., p.3.
295. BIS 2010b, op. cit., p.6.
296. For example, those by IPPR, The Arts Group and Intern Aware.
297. LPC, op., cit., p.98.
298. ibid.
299. As one of the group's representatives commented during the panel session at the NUS/TUC Campaign for Fair Internships Launch on 13 February 2012, the HMRC told Intern Aware it is currently 'aspiring' to enforce the law (authors' notes).
300. CIPD 2010, op. cit.
301. LPC, op. cit., p.105.

to 'raise the profile of enforcement and to create an effective deterrent'.[302] In 2011 BIS published their 'Policy on HM Revenue & Customs enforcement, prosecutions and naming employers who flout national minimum wage law'. So far, however, I have had difficulty in finding any evidence that this 'naming and shaming' has in fact taken place in relation to paying interns. Indeed, LPC point out that the criteria for naming may have been set too tightly and mean few employers will be caught and named.[303] Still, a list of employers flouting the NMW laws is being published annually by the Department for Business, Education and Skills.[304]

1. Whistleblowing

Some of the reports point to the difficulty for individuals in coming forward to make complaints about employers. 'Internships: Advice to students' unions and UCU members' urges UCU and NUS branches to encourage students to keep records to make registering complaints about not receiving NMW possible, and mentions the successful NUJ and BECTU-backed tribunal cases.[305] IPPR suggest unions share successful cases of employment tribunals for interns. They also point out, however, that interns are unlikely to raise concerns about their employment situation (for example via the HMRC helpline) because they enter the schemes voluntarily, are unclear in the first instance whether and how the NMW applies to them and because they are keen to maintain good relations with their employer.[306] LPC state that while they have received evidence of situations where the terms internship, volunteering and work experience have been used to describe cases that were clearly classified as work, there have been few complaints to HMRC from any interns involved.[307]

Indeed, relying on interns themselves to report abuse is, according to the report, 'futile', as the interns are largely 'afraid to complain'.[308] It is worth noting here that the HMRC has the capacity to check compliance across the employers'

302. ibid.
303. ibid.
304. See, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-national-minimum-wage-offenders-named-and-shamed-february-2016
305. NUS/UCU, op. cit., p.12-14.
306. IPPR, op. cit., p.10.
307. LPC, op. cit., p.98 and 99.
308. ibid.

workforce so that many workers in an organisation can receive arrears as the result of one single complaint.[309] Furthermore, if the 'name and shame' policy is ever put into practice, it is hoped it would enable people to gain access to information that will help them make choices about who they work for or do business with and may also encourage more workers to make claims.[310]

2. Measuring quality?

Many of the documents include recommendations for quality internships. The GLA provide 'top tips' for organisations intending to set up volunteer programmes;[311] ACE has a five-point checklist showing when to pay an intern;[312] the ECU has an extensive list of recommendations;[313] LCACE's toolkits include guidelines and templates designed to help the Higher Education Institutions, students and host institutions to manage placements;[314] CIPD has a voluntary code of practice/charter;[315] and the CWC's guide includes a template contract for an ethical internship, to be agreed and signed by the employer and employee.[316] The Arts Group suggest that the 'enforcement of basic standards, and the encouragement of good practice which rewards appropriately (rather than encouraging a spiralling competitive level of self exploitation and poor practice), is the only real way to enable a dynamic job market that is truly accessible and empowering to both emerging and established workers and their employers'.[317]

The GPCF has six principles for high-quality internships. These six principles echo the majority of the other sets of criteria. They include: (1) preparation (for example, an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of both employer and intern, and the assurance that the employer has the capacity to accommodate and support the intern); (2) recruitment (for example, job advertisements should specify the expected hours and remuneration offered); (3) induction (for example, the

309. BIS 2010b, op. cit., p.8
310. BIS 2011a, op. cit., p.1.
311. GLA 2011b, op. cit.
312. ACE 201b, op. cit
313. ECU, op. cit.
314. LCACE, op. cit.
315. CIPD 2009a & 2009b, op. cit.
316. CWC, op. cit., p.33.
317. The Arts Group, op. cit., p.14.

employed should outline the structure, objectives and values of the organisation to the intern); (4) treatment (for example, the employer should provide interns with work that develops their skills and contributes to their professional and learning objectives, and consider part-time internships as means to provide opportunities for those who have responsibilities as carers); (5) supervision and mentoring (for example, the employer should agree and revise learning objectives with the intern and conduct a formal performance review with the intern); and (6) certification, references and feedback (for example, the employer should provide reference letters and opportunities for the intern to feedback to the organisation about the quality of their experience).[318] CIPD's voluntary code of practice/charter and the Carrot Worker's guide also suggest allowing interns time off to attend job interviews, and specifically request employers do not get interns to do menial tasks. CWC also remind us not to forget the need for training: 'While this designation [as worker and therefore legally entitled to the NMW] demands rights for interns as workers, it does very little in requiring internship placements to provide the very learning experience in the name of which internships were developed and by which they are frequently justified'.[319]

HM Government,[320] CIPD[321] and SMF[322] all suggest the implementation of an independently awarded kitemark for those organisations that demonstrate 'quality internships'. SMF suggest a government-backed National Internship Kitemark Scheme (NIKS) based on, for example, the 'Internocracy Star Internships Programme', an independent internship evaluation and accreditation mark launched by Internocracy.[323] The 'NIKS' would be oriented at organisations offering unpaid internships that demonstrate transparent, fair and open recruitment processes, that are time-limited (to prevent interns from 'investing any further time and money in what may turn out to be a fruitless activity'), and involve induction and performance reviews, as well as a guaranteed reference letter or an interview that could lead to

318. GPCF, op. cit., pp.10-14.
319. CWC, op. cit., p.24.
320. HM Government 2009 and 2010, op. cit.
321. CIPD 2009b, op. cit.
322. SMF, op. cit.
323. For more information on Internocracy's ISIP scheme go to: https://web.archive.org/web/20110528060251/www.internocracy.org/isip

employment in the host organisation.[324] This kitemark, they suggest, would provide 'more reassurance to young people that unpaid internships are a worthwhile investment'.[325] The kitemark would be not obligatory; indeed, it would be 'impossible to enforce'.[326] To date, however, no such scheme has been officially set up.

It was also suggested in some of the reports that university careers services should be fully up to speed on internships and the legal status of interns.[327] The NUS/UCU report also points to the significant role played by universities, colleges and university careers services in advising on and facilitating internships. While some such schemes provide meaningful and accessible opportunities, others are criticised for their complicity in 'advertising unpaid opportunities, creating unpaid opportunities internally for graduates, and working with third parties who charge employers to find unpaid interns'.[328] Some of the reports also call for more research into the subject of internships in order to understand the landscape. IPPR, for example, recommend a national intern audit be carried out. They suggest ESRC or the European Commission as possible or appropriate funders for this audit.

3. The carrot: expectations of paid, full-time, permanent employment

There is an assumption in some of the documents that internships are a necessary step into paid, permanent, professional employment.[329] CIPD suggests the argument for not paying or poorly paying interns is based on the fact that the intern will accept lower pay in anticipation of an increase to their earnings and secure employment in the future.[330] That the delayed payment should therefore 'outweigh the short-term costs of taking on an unpaid position' is reliant on there being a long-term increase to someone's earnings. Yet, there is a question regarding to what extent such paid, permanent positions in the Creative Industries and the arts are available. The name of

324. SMF, op cit., p.44.
325. ibid., p.43
326. ibid., p.44.
327. IPPR, op. cit.
328. NUS/UCU, op. cit., p.14.
329. HM Government 2009 and 2010, op. cit.
330. CIPD 2010, op. cit., p.2.

the Carrot Workers Collective comes from the metaphor of the proverbial carrot dangled in front of (emerging) art and cultural workers and graduates, who enter internships on the premise that working for free (or accepting unremunerated work) will eventually lead to them being offered a paid position.[331]

Recent statistics from ACE based on the staff composition of their Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO) show that during 2010/11 there was only a 1% increase in permanent staff and a 3% increase in contractual staff, while an 18% increase in volunteers compared to the previous year's figures.[332] Respondents reported employing a total of 69,590 staff in 2010/11. However, only 25% (17,682) were permanent staff, and the remaining 75% (51,908) were contractual staff. Of the permanent staff, 58% (10,331) worked full time, while the remaining 42% (7,351) worked part time. This is in addition to the 41,914 volunteers who gave their time to support the work of regularly funded organisations in 2010/11. In the previous year, of all the 147 documented small- to medium-sized visual arts RFOs (receiving under £1 million from ACE), only approximately 15 permanent staff were employed. There were 40 contracted or freelance staff and, on average, 131 volunteers working across these organisations.[333] Research conducted by Creative & Cultural Skills for the Visual Arts Blueprint found that the visual arts sector employs 37,480 people, of which 46% are freelance. They also found that 75% of visual arts businesses employ fewer than five people.[334]

In their report *Creative Apprenticeships*, Creative and Cultural Skills also report that the creative and cultural industries are predominantly made up of smaller organisations (94% employ ten people or fewer). They found that the cost of employing an apprentice was too high for some of these smaller organisations.[335]

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331. CWC, op. cit
332. ACE. 2011c. *Regularly funded organisations: Key data from the 2010/11 annual submission*. London: ACE. p.13.
333. ACE. 2011a. Regularly funded organisations: Key data from the 2009/10 annual submission. London: ACE. p.82.
334. Incidentally, while the Visual Arts Blueprint recommends that "internships are fair and offer high quality career development opportunities" and that a cross-sector Code of Practice for internships in the creative industries be implemented and that best practice be shared at all levels they do not mention paying interns. Creative and Cultural Skills. 2009. The Visual Arts Blueprint: A workforce development plan for the visual arts in the UK. London: CC Skills. p.14.
335. Creative and Cultural Skills. October 2011. *Creative Apprenticeships: Assessing the return on investment, evaluation and impact. London: Creative and Cultural Skills. p.4 and 16.*

There was also an issue for those who did work with CAs in terms of the administrative burden and amount of bureaucracy that the scheme involved.[336] The report points out that there is a culture in much of the sector of taking on unpaid interns, generally educated to higher levels. The survey notes: 'it is challenging to convince employers why they should recruit an apprentice instead of an [unpaid] intern'.[337] Furthermore, the requirement for apprentices to be in employment 'does not sit well in a sector where many employees are self-employed or very small employers'.[338]

4. The elephant in the room: charities and volunteer worker status

While many of the documents point to the need for interns to be recognised as workers and for NMW law to be enforced, there is always the caveat that NMW legislation does not cover volunteer workers and that it is therefore harder to enforce the law in the case of unpaid interns working for charities, of which there are many in the arts sector. Perhaps one of the most unusual documents to have been published in recent years is the GLA's *Culture and Volunteering: An Introduction to volunteering across the arts and cultural sector in London*.[339] Despite the fact that this guide followed *A Fairer London*,[340] *Unleashing Aspiration*[341] and the BIS's instructions on NMW law enforcement,[342] the publication celebrates the voluntary work in London that keeps many charities afloat. There is no mention of the NMW or the distinction between the term 'volunteer' and 'volunteer worker' in the document, but most of the cases cited seem to be using the latter, with the directors of organisations saying that they would not be able to operate without the work of volunteers, who take on jobs such as fundraisers, leaflet distributors, events stewards, tour guides, experienced curators and board members.[343]

336. ibid., p.16
337. ibid., p.50
338. ibid., p.54.
339. GLA 2011b, op. cit.
340. GLA 2011a, op. cit.
341. HM Government 2010, op. cit.
342. BIS 2010 and 2011, op. cit.
343. GLA 2011b, op. cit.

The category of 'voluntary worker' allows charities, voluntary organisations and associated fundraising bodies of a statutory body to benefit from unpaid labour without outing NMW legislation. This means that those who are able and willing can volunteer their time, skills and expertise, often working 'pro bono' on specific, specialised projects. For those wanting to pursue cultural work as a career rather than a hobby, however, the exemption of volunteer workers from NMW legislation means that charities are able to take on professional, skilled workers, or those training to become professional (i.e., those expecting to or already relying on this activity as their paid work), without remunerating their workers.[344] This brings us back, therefore, to the original issue of the workforce remaining exclusive and lacking in diversity as it excludes those who cannot afford to work for free. Furthermore, charities (including those in the arts) can legally exploit the notion that they are perceived and marketed as a 'good cause' and, due to underfunding, proudly rely on volunteer workers to carry out their core work, especially now in times of austerity and 'the big society.'

Intern Aware state that their campaign for the minimum wage for interns is not intended to prevent people from offering their services for free at NGOs or charitable organisations as volunteers.[345] IPPR, on the other hand, point out that while charities do not have a legal obligation to pay interns, the authors argue that they have a 'social obligation … to play their part in ensuring valuable employment opportunities are available to young people from different backgrounds'.[346] CWC also point out the problem with the 'volunteer worker' status, which means those working for the public sector or charities 'have very few rights, including those of learning, training and pay'.[347] IPPR point out that a charitable objective, such as reducing inequality or improving opportunities for disadvantaged people, 'cannot be squared with employment policies and practices that actively exclude the very people

344. Oakley quotes Leadbeater and Miller's definition of 'pro-ams' as enthusiastic amateurs working to professional standards. Oakley, op. cit., p.51.
345. Intern Aware, op. cit., p. 2
346. IPPR, op. cit., p.1.
347. CWC, op. cit., p.23.

who are supposed to be an organisation's beneficiaries'.[348] They suggest charities should lead the way by looking into phasing out unpaid internships.

Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed information, statistics and positions on internships, including mapping a number of underlying motives and concerns around the increasing connection of internships to employment in the arts and creative industries. While some reports focused on improving and equalising the 'gateways' into employment, others were more sceptical about the internship, which they considered to be an extended period of pseudo-education that entices work-ready graduates with promises of permanent contracts and access to influential networks. The ideological positions in the reports range from those concerned with social mobility to those more focused on social justice, illustrating a set of moralistic tensions between the individual's responsibility to aspire to self-improvement (indeed, some of the reports suggest prospective interns take out a loan in order to do unpaid internships) and the systemic changes needed to tackle social inequalities, such as enforcing the NMW.

This spectrum of positions is reflected in the fact that only 10 of the reports specifically recommend that interns who fulfil worker status should be paid the NMW. Surprisingly, the previous Labour government was not one of these, preferring instead a loan system for interns. Perhaps less surprisingly, the Conservative-led GLA guidelines on 'culture and volunteering' celebrate and promote volunteering in London's arts organisations with no mention of the London Living Wage. These positions co-exist alongside parallel reports acclaiming the business case for paying interns in terms of increased productivity and profits, and other reports warning employers of the legal ramifications of outing employment law. In the current climate – and I discuss this elsewhere in this thesis – discussions of unpaid labour continue, often in relation to sectors beyond media and culture and instead in the context of national workfare policy, benefit cuts and welfare provision.

Despite growing awareness of the extent of illegal employment practices, some of the reports express frustration over the lack of enforcement by HMRC and

348. IPPR, op. cit., p.1.

that, in spite of a few high-profile cases, whistleblowing on employers is proving difficult, since interns are afraid to complain (an issue I also discuss elsewhere in this thesis – see Chapter 6). Perhaps one way forward would be to enact HMRC's 'name and shame' policy and a variation of a kitemark scheme in order to raise awareness of the different employment practices that do exist in the visual arts. This might encourage interns to make claims and encourage organisations to improve their employment practices. Institutions of further and higher education could share this information with students and develop policies to prevent, for example, the advertising of illegal internships.

The plethora of so-called internships in the arts seems particularly nonsensical given the lack of permanent employment in these sectors. Whereas traditionally an internship was part of a recruitment drive for a large company (based on the apprenticeship model), the arts and creative industries are predominantly made up of smaller organisations and a freelance workforce. The growing use of the term and the practice of internships is perhaps a new means of concealing and perpetuating those more fundamental unresolved issues of elitism, inequality, bad management, bullying and underfunding in the arts.

While the literature discussed here draws on data from surveys and national statistics, there is still little research on the numbers of people carrying out internships in the visual arts and on the experiences they have had. While the law is clear on the distinction between the worker and volunteer status, the label 'intern' seems at times to provide a convenient smokescreen for hiring cheap or unpaid labour. The charity sector often proudly asserts its reliance on free labour (through the legal 'voluntary worker' status of their employees) as a way of validating the work they do. Businesses are following suit by offering opportunities of unpaid internships to graduates who then demonstrate their gratitude by recommending friends do the same. All this contributes to the growing normalisation of internships and unpaid work, which I discuss in relation to popular culture and media in the next chapter. Free labour props up many visual arts organisations (commercial and non-profit) whilst (supposedly) benefitting interns by training them up for a career in what seems to be a perpetual series of short-term contracts, underpaid 'opportunities' and a precarious

working life. Raising awareness of the diversity of practices and positions on these issues is necessary to encourage more people to recognise their varied forms of complicity surrounding the issue of internships.

Chapter 5: Culture: How is the figure of the intern depicted, gendered, and normalised in popular culture?

This chapter discusses a range of cultural constructions of the figure of the intern from a cultural studies and media studies standpoint. In the pages that follow, I will discuss representations of the intern in two of the most important media in contemporary Anglo-American popular culture: films and television programmes. The sources I have selected are typical examples of popular, mainstream entertainment: blockbuster Hollywood comedies and television entertainment shows. And yet, what they show and do not show, as well as the ways in which they tackle their subjects, is highly significant. These media channels produce the references to internships that most people, and perhaps most importantly, young people, become familiar with. Such depictions play a role in creating and perpetuating stereotypes about unpaid work, and in glamorizing and normalising internships.

What follows is intended to be a straightforward analysis of the media construction of interning, yet one which is surprisingly absent in the existing literature, which identifies particular themes, tropes and figurations, and seeks to draw out recurring patterns in the development of the intern discourse in popular culture. I start with the depictions of girls and women and move into representations of men, walking the reader through a number of different tropes related to intern work.

It is notable that many of these depictions use the figure of 'a young girl' as the stereotypical intern. Within patriarchy young girls are often positioned as particularly vulnerable. Despite, or perhaps because of, the many recent theoretical analyses of precarity, this girl is often white, privileged, middle- to upper class, glamorous, and metropolitan. It is an image recently 'set' in the figure of Hannah Horvath, played by Lena Dunham, who in the first episode of *Girls* (April 2012) gets cut off by her parents, who will not support her financially anymore; and is later 'fired' from her unpaid internship when she demands to be paid for the work she does. In the process, unfortunately, Hannah's character solidifies the image of an intern as

that of a 'poor-little-rich-girl', bringing to mind the misrepresentation of most interns as 'bratty if they expect their parents to support them, but equally bratty if they ask their bosses to pay them'.[349]

It is evident that close links can be made between the various recent discussions of precarity[350] and the casting of the figure of a girl as a symbol of consumer culture, presented as – seemingly – emancipatory for women.[351] Underlying this conjunction of precarity with the figure of the young girl are is the way in which women are conditioned to fulfil certain roles – both in the workplace and at home[352]and even more so at a time of the retreat of the (neoliberal) state, which often means pushing women back into such gendered roles. The depictions of female interns in the film and television examples I have chosen are emblematic of this particular conjuncture of social relations. They also exemplify what Angela McRobbie terms 'commodity feminism', involving: '(a) consumer culture as a regime of truth and its problematic status within feminist media and cultural studies; (b) the recent, extraordinary, prominence of young women in consumer culture; (c) the making and shaping of new markets for very young girls; (d) the encroachment by commercial forces on the role and authority of the various institutions which have, in the past, presided over the lives and conduct of young women and girls'.[353]

Yet despite the prevalence of this construction of the figure of the intern as a young, white, middle- to upper-class girl, many significant discussions of precarity and precarious labour in the academic literature have a tendency to omit gender inequalities.[354] Indeed, for Standing or Jan Sowa, and certain others, the precariat is

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349. Phoebe Maltz Bovy, 'Unpaid Internships Are A Rich-Girl Problem – And Also A Real Problem', *Business Insider*, 14 February 2013, www.businessinsider.com/unpaid-internships-are-rich-girl-problem-2013-2/lightbox?r=AU&IR=T.
350. For example, Guy Standing 2011, Kathi Weeks 2011, Isabell Lorey 2015
351. Tiqqun (Collective) and Ariana Reines, *Preliminary materials for a theory of the young girl*. (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2012)
352. Federici, Fantone, ibid.
353. Angela McRobbie on the glamorous commodity feminism of SATC , 'Young Women and Consumer Culture: An Intervention', *Cultural Studies* 2 (5) (2008) 531–550.
354. See, for example, Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Jan Sowa, *Prekariat – globalny proletariat w epoce pracy niematerialnej* [Precariat – global proletariat in the immaterial labour era] [in:] J. Sokołowska (ed.), *Robotnicy opuszczają miejsca pracy* [Workers leaving the workplace] (Łódź 2010).

practically sexless/genderless.[355] Furthermore, discourses of precarity often leave the discussion of (social) class and race out of the equation. How do media portrayals of unpaid workers and interns compare in this regard? Probing the relationship between popular culture and apparently more critical academic discourse can reveal surprising homologies, leading to questions regarding the role of popular culture – and media studies scholarship itself – in either reproducing, or contesting dominant social relations. There are, for instance, far fewer examples of films and television shows that depict the intern as male (the recent BBC production *W1A*) would be one example). It seems that within popular culture, as in the 'real' world, most unpaid work is still performed by women.

What are the most characteristic depictions of interns and their predicament that would first spring into mind? Where should one start? Paradoxically, it is perhaps best to start with the one film on my list that actually does not feature an internship at all.

The Devil Wears Prada (2006, dir. D. Frankel)

Ironically, both in online coverage and a number of conducted informal discussions (anecdotal evidence), people often refer to their internship experiences, and expectations, in relation to the Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway film, *The Devil Wears Prada*.[356] The irony lies in the fact that the film depicts neither interns, nor internships. And yet, the workplace struggles and office politics surrounding Hathaway's Andrea seem to fit the stereotypical description – or, again, an expectation? – of a typical intern experience. It is telling that many people's first association would be this film; it is because of this fact that I include it here.

Streep plays the eponymous 'devil', the stylish, steely, harsh, and dismissive fashion magazine editor, Miranda Priestly (apparently based on the real-life character of Anna Wintour), giving orders to terrified employees from her ivory-tower, editor-in-chief's office. Hathaway plays the ambitious Andrea – a young woman dreaming

355. See for example a critique of this by Polish feminist philosopher Ewa Majewska, https://pressto.amu.edu.pl/index.php/prt/article/view/4682, accessed 20 June 2018.
356. For one example, see: Megan Lasher, 'Why I'll Never Regret My "Devil Wears Prada" Internship', *Huffpost*, 24 June 2015, www.huffingtonpost.com/megan-lasher/why-ill-never-regret-my-d_b_7648606.html.

of pursuing a job in writing, the epitome of the 'glamour industries' – who is in fact an employee at the magazine, working as one of Priestly's right hands, her junior assistant. Although not technically an intern, Hathaway's character decides to gain experience at the magazine in the hope of later securing employment as a journalist or reporter elsewhere. In the meantime, she takes on duties that go well beyond what most employees would be contracted to do, and yet often perform for free (tasks, that is, that unpaid interns would typically perform). She copes with her tyrannical boss's – often humiliating – treatment and excessive, unrealistic demands (such as the impossible task of securing an unpublished copy of a bestselling author's new book for her boss's children), putting in long hours that slowly destroy her private and romantic life, dealing with cut-throat competition from colleagues that are visibly wary of becoming displaced, or even replaced, by her (as they would be by an unpaid intern in the workplace).

As is often the case with precarious, creative work, Andrea's tasks cross into the territory of emotional and care work so often performed by women. She listens to her boss's marital problems and comforts her; she ensures her boss's kids get the book; but she also allows her job to seep into her private life (for example, when she uses information gleaned during pillow-talk to save her boss from being replaced by another employee). All the while, Andrea slowly gives in to demands and changes her external appearance – as well as her internal beliefs and value system – in order to fit in at work and convince her boss that she is worthy of keeping the job, i.e., to go on to do better things, or simply avoid redundancy. In the end, morality prevails and Andrea does nothing to willingly sabotage her equally hardworking and invested colleague, Emily.

Were she not getting paid to go through all of this 'work experience', Andrea would be the epitome of the millennial intern as we see her in popular culture: she is white, she is (at least visibly) wealthy enough to appear to be middle-to-upper class, and she somehow manages to survive, financially, in one of the most expensive cities in the world. Although she has a Bachelor's degree and realises that her duties at work should extend beyond coffee runs, delivering gowns, and hunting down leaked manuscripts, she goes ahead with everything that is unreasonably demanded of her –

presumably because, as is clearly stated in the film, Priestly has the power and influence to land her subordinates 'any job they want' (and isn't this precisely one of the main complaints about the widespread practice of internships – that it is not what you know, but *who* you know, that matters?). To consolidate this, Andrea is repeatedly told that she is lucky to be in position 'a million girls would kill for' – or indeed, 'would get killed for', as the example of Emily (overworked, overstressed and, in consequence, ran over by a taxi) proves.

Perhaps what adds to the persistent common opinion that *The Devil…* is indeed a depiction of an internship experience is the fact that Hathaway talked about her own experiences as an intern in numerous publicity interviews published around the time of the film's release.[357] Instead of finding a real-life job as a junior assistant at some magazine, however, the actor chose a real-life internship at a fine arts auction house to prepare for her role. Summarizing her time there, and conceivably giving a clue as to what some internships in the arts and creative industries might boil down to (fetching coffee, seeing art), Hathaway said: 'I did work at Christie's for a couple of weeks, getting ready for *The Devil Wears Prada*, getting people coffee and doing whatever they needed around the office. It was amazing. I got to see some wonderful art and everybody was really nice. It was great.'[358] Imagine: a famous actress, fetching coffee and making photocopies at Christies, one of the world's major auction houses! There is no single quote that would better summarise the way internships are intertwined with (often white and male) privilege, as well as with the capturing of cultural capital. Indeed, the film – although it is not about interns *per se* – contains within itself a highly apposite summary of the interrelations between privilege and unpaid labour under contemporary neoliberalism. It also reproduces, to powerful effect, the discourse of the intern as a 'poor-little-rich-girl'.

Girls (2012-2017, dir. Lena Dunham)

357. For example, see: Raphael Chestang, 'Anne Hathaway Was An Intern After She Got Famous: Find Out Why', *ET Online*, 22 September 2015, www.etonline.com/news/172470_anne_hathaway_was_an_intern_after_she_got_famous_find_out_wh
358. Kristina Rodulfo, 'Anne Hathaway on Being a Real-Life, Coffee-Fetchin Intern', *Elle*, 23 September 2015, www.elle.com/culture/celebrities/news/a30664/anne-hathaway-interned-at-christies.

The theme of art galleries and internships is continued in the next position I discuss, although with a different framing of the 'privilege' of the intern, Lena Dunham's TV series, *Girls*. The show follows four friends and recent college graduates beginning their adult lives in Brooklyn, as they try to pursue creative employment, support themselves with a succession of low-paying jobs, and deal with numerous struggles around relationships, careers, and friendships. While *Girls* has been referred to as the '*Sex and the City* for millennial women',[359] it is uncertain how much the two shows have in common, beyond being set in the same city and following the lives of four white women, and – arguably – featuring a central protagonist who struggles financially and seemingly lives beyond her means. While *SATC* presents a tale of an enduring friendship, *Girls*, over its run of six-seasons, shows the slow process of decay, derailment, and ultimate failure of the characters' relationships. The series begins in 2012 and seems to be, in its portrayal of ('meaningful') work, or lack thereof, a commentary on the state of employment and the creative world in the aftermath of the financial crisis – where the only possible points of entry into creative employment were the illusions (delusions?) provided by unpaid internships from companies relying on free labour to compensate for the financial strife of the time. It is also a poignant commentary on the divide between the millennial generation and its parents. Hannah's parents, for example, have different views of what her work entails, and how the unpaid gig might turn into full employment. Although at times it is deliberately ironic, it gives a rather accurate account of precarity faced by young adults entering the job market; at least as seen through the eyes of white, middle-class (and therefore, already relatively privileged and starting from a better position), university debt-ridden college graduates. Simultaneously, the show is guilty of normalising, romanticising and glamorising that 'ideal of creative work' – the notion of '"Cool" Jobs in "Hot" Industries', as Gina Neff, Elizabeth Wissinger and Sharon Zukin (2005) titled an article about entrepreneurial labour and cultural production.[360] Ramon Lobato and Julian Thomas

359. Jonathan Bernstein, 'Lena Dunham's Girls: the show that turned TV upside down', *The Guardian*, 2 February 2017, www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2017/feb/04/how-lena-dunham-show-girls-turned-tv-upside-down.
360. Gina Neff, Elizabeth Wissinger and Sharon Zukin, 'Entrepreneurial Labor among Cultural Producers: "Cool" Jobs in "Hot" Industries', *Social Semiotics* 15 (3), 2005, pp. 307–334.

(2015) offer an apt description of why the character of Hannah in *Girls* should be so compelling:

> The unemployable Hannah had few useful skills but is willingly humiliated in the hope of landing a real media job, while her parents pay the bills. She seems oblivious to the fact that she has no prospect of a creative career, despite her many months of free labour. Poking fun at Manhattan's trust-fund creative wannabes, the character of Hannah captures the experience of many aspiring media workers with working lives full of uncertainty and (self-) exploitation.[361]

In fact, all four eponymous characters strive for creative employment, with varying degrees of success; but ultimately, accompanied by the show's constant glamorisation of the figure of 'the starving artist', they continue with their creative and artistic pursuits, even in the face of subsequent failures and ever-increasing competition for the few jobs available in their respective fields. We might note that at least in *SATC*, only the main character (as it is in *Girls*) was an (aspiring) writer; the others had more 'stable' careers (as a lawyer, a PR executive, and a gallerist/auctioneer).

What also distinguishes Dunham's show from *SATC*, and from most other films and TV shows depicting lives and struggles of young women, is the fact that it was not written and produced by older – and often male rather than female – writers and executives, but by a representative of the very millennial generation whose lives it portrays: i.e., Dunham herself. This seemingly renders the depiction of *Girls*' generational struggle more realistic – despite numerous criticisms directed, among other things listed above, at the persisting *whiteness* of the show. At the same time, much criticism of the show zooms in on the character and personal circumstances of Dunham herself. This makes sense in so far as, indeed, her persona saturates the show and is quite defining of the – so often foregrounded – struggles of the liberal middle-class graduate who feels entitled to everything, but today receives less than this entitlement would suggest. This deficit between the middle-class expectations and

361. Ramon Lobato and Julian Thomas, *The Informal Media Economy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015).

reality would not seem to be the main problem, however, when considered in a broader class context, its foregrounding seems to flatten the crisis-era struggle into a classless, raceless, undifferentiated 'precariat' – a point, as I have already suggested, which makes its way into the academic literature.

The first episode of *Girls* begins with a scene depicting Dunham's character having a family dinner at a restaurant, during the course of which she finds out that her academic parents have decided to stop supporting her financially. We learn that Hannah 'works' as an unpaid intern at a trendy Manhattan publishing house, as such embodying the cultural archetype of a precarious twenty-something. This is 'a job' that her parents imagine will sooner or later turn into a paid position. The parents are delivering 'a final push' – while literally stopping her from ordering further dishes from the waiters – for Hannah to take financial responsibility for her life and for her career. 'Do you know how crazy the economy is? All my friends get help from their parents,' Hannah says during the scene, providing further comment on the state of employment in the creative world, and the position in which many graduates seeking employment in the cultural and creative industries still find themselves today.[362] Of course, Dunham's character is a white woman from a (tenured) academic family, so the comment is limited to that social class, a certain demographic excluding those young people whose parents are not able to support them and their 'groovy lifestyles' while they strive to become 'the voice of [their] generation, or at least, the voice of *a* generation' (as it is in Hannah's case). Here, it is also interesting to note the way in which Hannah has to, or chooses to, commodify her own experience – i.e. her life as source of material – 'take coke and write about it.' In her writing throughout the show Hannah routinely dissolves the line between her professional and personal life, self-commodifying the latter.[363]

It is clear that Hannah's parents do not see her attempts at a career in writing (or, as they term it, her 'groovy lifestyle') as real work. Neither, it appears, does her

362. As I write this, in February 2018, a story breaks about Vivienne Westwood regularly exploiting unpaid interns at her London-based business. See Angela McRobbie, *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016) for more on the exploitations of the fashion industry.

363. Although it is primarily focused on social media work, Duffy's book discusses this self-commodification strategy at length: Brooke Erin Duffy, *(Not) Getting Paid To Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

employer at the publishing house. Advised by her roommate and best friend Marnie that she should demand a full-time, paid position, Hannah talks to her boss. Instead of a pay offer, she hears that while she is 'invaluable to the operation,' the publisher 'will be sorry to lose her.' Hannah's attempt at negotiating a salary – she is hungry, and must eat – is met with a cold, calculated response: 'Do you know how many internship requests I get every day, in this economy? I practically route them into my spam filter.' She is easily replaceable, and there are many others, competing for her position, her 'job', every day. Still, the manager reassures Hannah: 'When you get hungry enough, you'll figure it out.' To which she responds: 'Do you mean like physically hungry or like hungry for the job?' Getting a paid job clearly is reliant on working for free, indefinitely. As it transpires, the paid position is instead offered to the other unpaid intern at the company, a young East Asian-American, thanks to her apparent, implied – in a stereotypical depiction of a racialised minority – over-achieving nature and technological knowledge (she knows Photoshop!).

Later, as Hannah restates her plea, or perhaps her demand for further help – one thousand-plus dollars per month for the following two years – her mother laughs and instead suggests she gets paid work at a university (sic) and start a blog (sic!). Even Hannah's comparisons to Flaubert, Picasso and other artists starving for their art (a strategy suggested by another friend, the aspiring artist, Jessa) do not convince her parents. Finally, Hannah tells her boyfriend about being fired. He retorts: '[Do] you mean they don't want you hanging out there any more?' Just like her parents, the boyfriend does not perceive what Hannah does as work, or at least not as work in the traditional sense.

Elsewhere in this opening episode, Marnie – who dreams of becoming a curator – loses her job as an art gallery assistant ('gallerina'), when the institution she works at goes through layoffs. The owner, who cannot afford to pay two employees, decides to keep the other one because she has slept with him. Marnie fails an interview for another, similar position and is forced instead to take on a job that is clearly only dependent only on her good looks. She begins working as a hostess, a low skilled, service job, while Hannah considers getting a job at a McDonald's. Nevertheless, Marnie's entitled attitude and readiness to give up 'struggling' on the

path to a curatorial career lead other characters to question her – as well as Hannah's – attitude towards creative employment.

A number of key theoretical questions arise from these instances of popular culture. These include the issue of how privilege, race, and class composition are figured in representations of internships. The internships in *Devil.*. and *Girls* – two of the most well-known representations of the intern in circulation in recent years – are coded as white, middle-class, and highly gendered. We can ask: what does this do to the idea of work, and of the working class or 'precariat', which is being developed through such representations? Which kinds of labour are 'legitimate', which kinds are dismissed? How critical or celebratory of exploited labour are they?

And, finally, to return to the question posed at the beginning: how does the academic literature compare? Does such literature merely reproduce a celebratory characterisation of internships, or even of work in general, or is it capable of offering a more critical angle?

***The Hills* (scripted reality TV series, MTV, 2006-2010)**

While *Girls* is definitely guilty of normalising, romanticising and glamorizing the ideal of creative work and the notion of 'cool jobs in cool industries', as well as the figure of 'the starving artist', two other television shows (one preceding and the other overlapping with *Girls*: *The Hills* and *Gossip Girl* respectively) take the first trope to an extreme, without wasting any time at all on the latter idea.

The scripted reality TV show, *The Hills*, focuses on the personal and professional lives of several young women living in Los Angeles, California. All of the characters come from extremely privileged, white, affluent families and the programme presents their fairy-tale, shiny lives without spending as much as a second interrogating its economic context or considering any problematic money-related issues. For the four girls depicted here, unlike in *Girls*, internships are as far removed from any real-life struggles as it is possible to imagine. The main focus is on family money and drama, scandals and arguments between the girls and their boyfriends, and the girls themselves. In fact, the show is so vapid, shallow, and delusional that it may seem pointless to even describe it in much detail. And yet, it

has achieved quite high viewer ratings[364] among the young generation of MTV viewers, becoming an unmitigated hit and registering as one of the most loved 'guilty pleasure' shows,[365] and, thanks to this popularity, in turn has broadcast its sugar-coated and unrealistic version of creative world employment and internships far and wide. At the same time, one could watch *The Hills* as a kind of a modern-day period drama. Depicting the lives of the aristocracy or the rich and famous has, of course a long history. However vapid or delusional, the show is a cultural expression and hence of inherent interest in its own terms in relation to the social formations that produced it.[366]

Some of the protagonists (such as Lauren Conrad and Whitney Port) did end up becoming 'it-girls'/TV personalities in their own right and continue their lives as minor celebrities and influencers – though it is rather clear that this is not thanks to the internships they undertook while on the show, but thanks to their background.

The Hills's main protagonist, Lauren Conrad, moves from to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the fashion industry. She takes up an internship at *Teen Vogue*, ultimately rejecting it to reunite with her former boyfriend instead; another character, Whitney Port, steps into her shoes. Even though Conrad's anguish and excitement ahead of finding out whether or not she has secured the coveted internship position did appear quite convincing, it was later revealed, off the show, that – as is often the case with internship positions – it does not matter what you know, but *who* you know. Conrad's position as an unpaid intern in the fashion closet, later passed on to Port, was in fact secured beforehand. The internships were arranged only for the purposes

364. Joanna Wess, 'A reality check on "The Hills"', *The Boston Globe*, 6 April 2008.
365. 'TV's Biggest Guilty Pleasures', The Huffington Post. AOL. January 2, 2008. Retrieved 14 February, 2018, http://archive.li/XMKUu#selection-3653.0-3653.29
366. Anita Biressi and Heather Nunn, *Reality TV: Realism and Revelation* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2005); June Deery and Andrea Press, *Media and Class: TV, Film, and Digital Culture* (London: Routledge, 2018); Beverley Skeggs and Helen Wood, *Reacting to Reality Television: Performance, Audience and Value* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

of the show, and none of the 'work' they did there was in fact real: 'We were very much part-time interns,' Port admitted. 'I was a student, as well as filming a TV show, and Lauren […] had a full-time job filming a TV show. So, we weren't able to be full-time interns, but we were called in for various projects they wanted us to film.'[367] The show – while scripted – is posed as reality and is able to do a lot of normalising work for this very reason.[368] Port suggests that the show was about real people having real reactions, but in semi-produced situations: 'The drama, and the things that happened, were really real,' she said. 'It just had to really extend and have to be so drawn out, and we had to really dramatize things for the sake of a TV show.'[369] Yet it turned out that in fact the series' production team had already set up her *Teen Vogue* internship, so the interview was a formality for the cameras.[370]

This context explains the wildly exaggerated scenes depicting how fantastic, pleasant, and rewarding being an unpaid intern is: their experiences were nothing like what most interns might have to deal with. Throughout the episodes, the protagonists are shown hand-delivering items of clothing to famous clients, often by plane, rather than arranging couriers or picking up coffees for their boss; appearing at work events with numerous friends and causing scenes and dramas in front of their bosses, without ever being fired or even reprimanded. They befriend well-known designers and are allowed to leave their duties at the magazine in order to be seconded to said designers' studios in order 'to help' with fittings ahead of fashion shows (when it is well known that the fashion houses have their own interns); they spend most of their time in the fashion closet sifting through racks of clothes and gossiping while casually steaming dresses, or sitting calmly at a desk, instead of frantically receiving or picking items, or packing and organising returns. Amazingly, a year after the show's premiere, both protagonists did appear on the cover of (the real-life) *Teen*

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367. See Brice Sander, 'EXCLUSIVE: Whitney Port Gives The Real Story Behind Her Time At "Teen Vogue" on "The Hills"', *ET Online*, 26 May 2016, www.etonline.com/tv/189592_hills_week_whitney_port_exclusive.
368. See, for example, Kim Allen and Heather Mendick, 'Keeping it Real? Social Class, Young People and "Authenticity" in Reality TV', *Sociology* 47 (3), pp. 460–476; David S. Escoffery (ed.), *How Real Is Reality TV?: Essays on Representation and Truth* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2006).
369. Lobato and Thomas, *The Informal Media Economy*.
370. Neha Prakash, '"The Hills": 9 Secrets We Learned From the 10-Year Anniversary Special, "That Was Then, This Is Now"', *Teen Vogue*, 2 August 2016, www.teenvogue.com/story/the-hills-that-was-then-this-is-now-secrets.

Vogue magazine, further feeding unrealistic expectations about interning to their viewership. Conrad was also a star of the magazine's feature, entitled 'The Real World,' which took the readers through a day in the life of a Teen Vogue intern – involving, among other tasks, 'taking photos of models, talking on the phone, and ordering "literally 100 pairs of skinny jeans" for a shoot.'[371] The reality of being a fashion intern, or indeed a creative worker within the fashion industry, is of course harshly different (McRobbie 2002, 2013 Angela McRobbie, Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries.). The livelihoods of its predominantly female workforce are often untenable.[372]

The only part of the show that was apparently not scripted or fabricated for the purposes of the show was the inclusion in three of its 2007 episodes of Emily Weiss, *Teen Vogue*'s New York-based intern. Organized and ambitious, Weiss apparently intimidated the other two girls and was subsequently criticized for being a 'superintern' (sic), as if a strong work ethic and dedication could ever be seen as a bad thing (or can it?). As Shaumus Khan's writes in his book, *Privilege*, the rich have to show they work hard – but not *too* hard, as that's gauche.[373]

Within a decade, Weiss has gone on to create the hugely successful *Into the Gloss* online beauty platform and later, having raised funds with a help of a female venture capitalist, the beauty and make-up brand, Glossier. While Weiss can be seen as an example of someone who secured her career thanks to her previous unpaid work – her platform began publishing interviews about beauty and self-care conducted with female entrepreneurs, creatives, and models that she met during her numerous internships – in interviews she admits that she got 'her foot in the door' by

371. *Teen Vogue*, June/July 2006. See Maeve Keirans, 'Lauren Conrad's First "Teen Vogue" Cover Has Us Thankful It's Not Still 2006', *MTV News*, 23 April 2015, www.mtv.com/news/2141811/lauren-conrad-teen-vogue-2006-cover.
372. Angela McRobbie, 'Fashion culture: Creative work, female individualization', *Feminist Review* 71(1), 2002, pp. 52-62. See also Angela McRobbie, *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Tansy E. Hoskins on the 'dangerous trick' of 'vampiric' fashion industry, *Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion* (London: Pluto, 2014).
373. Shamus Rahman Khan, *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

babysitting for an employee at a high fashion company.[374] The graft of internship has turned out less important than who she and her parents already knew from other spheres of life.[375]

***Gossip Girl* (TV series, 2007-2017)**

The characters romanticising interning at '*W Magazine*' in *Gossip Girl*, Blair Waldorf and Dan Humphrey, join the array of pop culture characters presenting internships as aspirational – which, as we have seen, includes the protagonists of *The Hills* and Hannah Horvath in *Girls*. While normalising intern exploitation, this group of characters is unlikely to feel disgruntled with the dreary conditions of unpaid fashion internships: as demonstrated, they sacrifice very little for the experience. In the intrinsically exclusive and self-preserving culture of the 'hot jobs' in the creative industries, those who are already privileged continue to benefit, because they are often given a head start via their 'respectable' credentials. Essentially, these fictions replicate the issues analysed in Chapters 2 and 3, but without critiquing them – and are therefore in part responsible for their normalisation.

The show follows the fictional lives of upper class, privileged, public-school educated adolescents living in Manhattan, as told through the eyes of the eponymous Gossip Girl – the author of an anonymous blog and the narrator of the story, who gradually reveals secrets of each of the show's protagonists. Most episodes feature social events of some kind, taking place at affluent establishments and locations throughout New York and the Hamptons, giving the viewer a wealth-eye view of the city;[376] it has been described as one of the most consumerism-oriented scripted TV programmes. While being, in essence, a superficial teen drama, *Gossip Girl* manages

374. Courtney Connley, 'A babysitting gig helped Glossier founder Emil Weiss launch her career, *CNBC*, 18 January 2018, www.cnbc.com/2018/01/18/babysitting-helped-glossier-founder-emily-weiss-launch-her-career.html.
375. Khan, *Privilege*; Jo Littler, 'Meritocracy: the great delusion that ingrains inequality', *The Guardian*, 20 March 2017, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/mar/20/meritocracy-inequality-theresa-may-donald-trump; Jo Littler, *Against Meritocracy: Culture, power and myths of mobility* (London: Routledge, 2018).
376. Diana Elizabeth Kendall describes this in terms of 'emulation framing': 'You too can get ahead (like that person) if you try hard enough. If you are not successful, you have no one to blame but yourself. […] Emulation framing not only creates unrealistic expectations given economic and social realities in the 2000s but provides an excuse for those who are better off financially to deride those who are not.' See her *Framing Class: Media Representations of Poverty in America* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

to produce an effective social satire, presenting the world, in its cartoonish-ness, more accurately that a reality TV programme ever could. As [author name] has argued: 'The show mocks our superficial fantasies while satisfying them, allowing us to partake in the over-the-top pleasures of the irresponsible superrich without anxiety or guilt or moralizing. It's class warfare as blood sport'.[377] It is truly a show about 'the 1%', and one that does its best to underline the widening gap between that and the rest of the society.[378] Characters from the other side of the wealth gap seem to appear only in order to be shunned by the main protagonists, cast out from the group, or simply teased about 'the chip on their shoulder'. Even so – or because of this – the show has become culturally significant: in honour of its 100th episode, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg visited the set and proclaimed the date Gossip Girl Day, citing the show's cultural influence and its impact on the economy of the city.[379]

It is in this vein of aspirational fantasies lived out by the fictional super-rich that *Gossip Girl* handles the subject of internships. It begins by satirising the real struggle that is getting one's foot in the door to begin with: 'Turns out it's easier to get a guy paroled than it is to get a magazine internship in this town,' says Dan, one of the two protagonists that undertake an internship at *W* in the show. Dan is the one main character that is introduced as an outsider (who eventually is revealed to be the eponymous author of the blog) – he comes from a 'working class' family from Brooklyn; his parents are both artists who struggle in order to send their children to a prestigious private school in the Upper East Side of New York City. Gossip Girl refers to Dan Humphrey as 'Lonely Boy,' indicating the interconnections between (his) social status and identity formation. Nevertheless, Dan does get his foot in the door – his father's affluent girlfriend Lily manages to get him the position ('She did pull every string she had on my behalf!).[380] Whether or not such nepotism is in reality

377. Pressler, Jessica; Rovzar, Chris (April 21, 2008) "The Genius of Gossip Girl". New York Magazine, http://nymag.com/arts/tv/features/46225/index5.html. Retrieved 16 February, 2018
378. Deery and Press, *Media and Class*; Littler, *Against Meritocracy*, especially Chapter 2; Khan, *Privilege*.
379. Sam Levin (January 26, 2012). "Mike Bloomberg Hangs with 'Gossip Girl' Cast". From villagevoice.com,https://web.archive.org/web/20120128222327/http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2012/01/mike_bloomberg_42.php. Retrieved 16 February, 2018
380. For others, the financial hardship accrued through unpaid labour restricts them from entering the intern community at all. This discrimination highlights a growing outsider majority of non-interns, those who find themselves within the widening gap between outsider status and industry

an important element of breaking into the industry, the show does its best to perpetuate the myth of exclusivity reserved for the rich and the well connected. Dan dreams of becoming a serious writer, and when Lily mentions the publishing house Condé Nast, Dan assumes he will work at a different type of publication, such as the *Vanity Fair* or *The New Yorker*. Instead, he is hired at the fashion-oriented *W* and soon he and Blair Waldorf eagerly begin their first day as 'lowly' interns at the high-fashion glossy. Dan and Blair thus begin the series confident and self-assured, yet entitled: they have both assumed they would be the only interns at the publication. Blair is not keen on working alongside Dan, who then retorts: 'I'm sure you can have your mom call and get you a new one in a second.' They realise there are not only numerous other candidates keen to take on their places, but that they are also just as qualified, well-educated and hungry for the job as the protagonists – and this might be the only point at which their internship experience rings true. What follows is yet another romanticized depiction of what it is like to work and intern in the fashion industry, further glamorizing unpaid internships, even if the boss – the mockingly named Epperly Lawrence – jokes that the experience will be 'nothing like that film, *Devil Wears Prada*' (sic!). Rather than getting coffee or performing basic or menial tasks, on their first day the characters are asked for their original input and opinions, make crucial decisions about an upcoming fashion shoot and are even asked to 'write something special for the blog'. Later, they attend, instead of work at, an industry party; survive multiple attempts to sabotage each other (Dan and Blair) as well as their boss (Blair); and eventually – despite creating unnecessary drama and burning their bridges – they get to keep their internships and ultimately, a paid position at the publication (Blair).

While Dan's internship storyline is short-lived, the script spends more time on Blair's time as an intern. And, interestingly, even though she demonstrates her privilege and entitlement throughout, the show offers some good 'examples' of how to act in an internship. In short – despite, or thanks to, her privilege – Blair is always

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involvement. Pressured by limited entry-level alternatives and intern experience as a prerequisite, not undertaking an unpaid fashion internship is considered more detrimental than the unfavourable circumstances such internships present. See Emily McGuire, 'Interns Make the World Go 'Round', *Vestoj*, n.d., http://vestoj.com/interns-make-the-world-go-round/#fn11-1257.

confident, composed and unflappable;[381] she is convinced that she is the best, irreplaceable; she knows what she wants and she never gives up before achieving her goal.

This, in a somewhat twisted way, makes Blair Waldorf the perfect role model for young girls entering the workplace. There is a number of websites dedicated to promoting the benefits of completing an internship, as well as finding and applying for such positions. They are often aimed at young women in the US – *Gossip Girl*'s main target audience and viewership. The websites often use Blair's character and storyline as an illustration of how to succeed at an internship. One such portal, run by Lauren Berger, the internships expert and CEO of Intern Queen, Inc and the author of *All Work, No Pay: Finding an Internship, Building Your Resume, Making Connections, and Gaining Job Experience*, a 'next-generation internship manual [that] provides all the cutting-edge information students and recent grads will need to get a competitive edge in the job market.' On her website, one of Berger's 'campus ambassadors' writes:

> It doesn't matter if you were (or still are, like me) a *Gossip Girl* fan or not, you know who Blair Waldorf is. One of the most well-known fictional Upper East siders, [who is] famous for wearing a headband, is also an inspirational woman. […] Whether she is trying out a new fashion trend, or trying to get ahead in the work place […] Remember when she interned for *W* magazine? […] Next time you are in a messy situation, or things are not going the way you planned, just ask yourself one question: What Would Blair Waldorf Do?[382]

381. Suvi Salmenniemi and Maria Adamson talk about manuals for success for women being based today around 3 'C's – no longer cooking, cleaning and caring, but rather confidence, courage and control; see their 'New Heroines of Labour: Domesticating Post-feminism nd Neoliberal Capitalism in Russia', *Sociology* 49 (1), 88–105. See also Rosalind Gill and Shani Orgad (2017), 'Confidence culture and the remaking of feminism', *New Formations* 91, 16–34.
382. See, for example: "What would Blair Waldorf do?" published at www.internqueen.com/what-would-blair-waldorf-do. Also: Alyssa, 'Gossip Girl Takes on Fashion Internships: Blair Does W', *Stylecaster*, http://stylecaster.com/gossip-girl-takes-on-internships-blair-does-w/#ixzz54TTLxCK7.

The fact that such websites and publications not only exist, but sell, only shows the cultural traction and ideological power of these narratives, and their power to normalise, glamorise and promulgate an unattainable vision of what an internship in the creative industries might look like. We can discern here and ideological entwinement between popular culture and the neoliberal self-improvement industry, which reproduces these narratives literally for its own profit.[383] Moreover, the apparent precarity that these shows depict is universally conditioned by extreme privilege.[384]

Gallery Girls (reality TV series, 2012)

Gallery Girls was a short-lived reality TV programme following several weeks in the lives of seven ambitious young women in New York City. The girls struggle with the intense environment of the art world while trying to find their 'dream jobs'. While they share a passion for art, the girls are divided between their Manhattan and Brooklyn lifestyles, with different views and tastes. *Gallery Girls* opens with the words 'NYC' then 'GRLZ' in a particular sans serif font, bringing to mind Lena Dunham's substantially wittier HBO show, *Girls*. It's difficult not to relate the girls of the Bravo show to Marnie Michaels, the gallery assistant in Dunham's series.[385] Here, however, the protagonists do not have to struggle as much as Marnie and Hannah did in order to get a foot in the proverbial door – all of the show's characters are not only white, affluent young ladies, but also the epitome of

383. See also Angela McRobbie, Notes on the Perfect. Competitive Femininity in Neoliberal Times, 28 April 2015, available https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08164649.2015.1011485

384.'"In order to be an intern for longer than a day, a person has to come from a place of privilege – they have to have their own funding to live off," points out artist Tobaron Waxman. [...] "It's not about anyone being trained for a position," and many situations are chaotic and poorly organized, a haphazard response to short-term needs. "Too often an employer is actually just an artist who is disorganized. They need help, and so they offer an internship'," says Waxman. "It takes time to be organized enough to delegate tasks, feasibly, to someone who isn't inside your head. There are no formal standards of practice [for internships]."'Quoted in Ross Perlin, *Hunger Artists and Internships in the Arts,* accessed 8 June 2018*:* http://www.artandeducation.net/paper/hunger-artists-or-internships-and-the-arts/

385. Interestingly, Lena Dunham has previously created *Delusional Downtown Divas*, a scripted comedy webseries originally commissioned by *Index Magazine* (founded by Isabel Halley's father, the artist Peter Halley). It was first shown in January 2009, at Art Production Fund Lab, and revolves around three young women who were raised amidst the New York art world. Throughout the course of the show, they try to establish themselves in the art community with mixed success. The series heavily parodies the New York art world; numerous art industry insiders have cameos.

favouritism, since they all come from families that are, in one way or another, already established in New York. In their introduction, the girls openly talk about coming from money, living on allowances from their parents and in the apartments their parents pay for. However exaggerated the depictions of fashion and journalism internships were in *The Hills* and *Gossip Girl*, Gallery Girls takes it one step further in relation to the art world. It is all hyper-glamorizing, while making such conditions appear normal, and aspirational; while the show introduces obstacles that the girls need to 'endure' in order to get ahead, it is obvious that this is on a completely different scale to those that a less affluent, less socially privileged young person would have to 'endure.' The art world is presented as an amazing job market everyone wants to be a part of, and 'has' to be in; everyone must work for free until someone 'takes a chance' on them, there are hundreds of graduates with equally perfect CVs and previous – numerous – internships under their belt competing for the limited number of unpaid positions, and so on.

And yet, there is one part in the pilot that feels more authentic and conveys the difficulties and genuine struggles faced by unpaid interns. In the scene, one of the girls, Maggie Schaffer, complains to her employer, the smarmy gallerist Eli Klein: 'I just can't keep doing these internships for you…' 'I don't want you to intern forever, and we would never ask for more than a thirty-day commitment from our interns,' Klein responds. 'Do you think it's been thirty total?' 'I've done this since college,' Maggie mutters, and starts to weep silently. She's been out of college for three years. 'That's all I wanted to say,' she concludes. 'O.K., well, I appreciate your hard work and dedication,' Klein says. 'I will see you on Monday.'

In the end, this kind of dedication does not prove enough even for the well-connected Maggie, who eventually loses the coveted paid position to another one of the girls in the tear-filled series finale of the show. Later, she took some time out to reassess her feelings about remaining in the art world: 'I don't know if this shady, every-man-for-themselves environment is too much for me. I'll be the first to say I don't know if I'm cut out for it and it breaks my heart to think that.' Interestingly, despite the high gloss presentation, some problems seem to leak through the frame.

Even within this hyper privileged world, is this normal? The leakage is interesting, but is just drama stirred up for the enhancement of viewing figures?

***The Intern* (scripted reality TV series, 6 episodes, Channel 4, 2013)**

Channel 4's scripted reality TV series, *The Intern*, follows the former *Apprentice* 'star' Hillary Devey (pronounced 'de vil', as in Cruella de Vil, on whom her behaviour and persona in this show may, or may not, be based). In each episode, Devey 'coaches' three young people who are looking for jobs in different industries. Devey employs a 'radical recruitment method', or, in her own words, an ethos meaning that 'by putting people under pressure you find out what they're made of'. This show is not exclusively focused on 'hot jobs in cool industries', but it does feature the fashion and publishing industries. In each episode we see three young hopefuls competing for a one-week unpaid trial (!) at, respectively: one of Britain's top hotel chains, the exclusive Red Carnation Collection; the online fashion retailer *my-wardrobe.com*; the national newspaper *The Sunday Sport*; one of the UK's most exclusive property developers, Manhattan Loft Corporation; the publisher Mills & Boon; and the global ad agency TBWA. As one reviewer noted, '*The Intern* is *The Apprentice* for a generation facing the grim prospect that more than a million 18–24 year-olds are unemployed. This means goodbye blue-sky thinkers and 10-trick ponies, hello *naive, well-balanced and intelligent individuals* competing for one decent job.'[386]

After its initial three episodes had aired, the six-episode series was moved to an 11PM slot – or, in the industry language, the show has been was 'buried'[387] – for the remainder of the series. This suggested a certain quality of the programme, and the viewing confirms that despite the promises that 'the show aimed to tackle the

386. My own emphasis

387. The first three episodes averaged 964k (4.27%) after the first episode launched with 1.3m (5.64%). The second episode attracted 879k (3.86%) and the third episode was watched by 684k (3.16%). All three episodes fell below the 12 month slot average of 1.7m (7.62%). Baliha Khalsar, 'C4's The Intern bumped to 11pm', *Broadcast*, 24 April 2013, www.broadcastnow.co.uk/c4s-the-intern-bumped-to-11pm/5054221.article.

subject of youth unemployment'[388] or indeed to be 'about locating talent and blocked opportunity and giving that person the chance to get the job of their dreams – but … done through hugely entertaining scenarios',[389] the series was anything but. Instead, it offered a number of ridiculous and embarrassing scenarios, in the style of 'hidden camera' entertainment programming, during which the intern hopefuls were put under pressure, shamed and humiliated into jumping through fairly pointless hoops and performing tasks that any actual paid employee would shudder to undertake. The would-be interns are simply being *made fun of* – as is so often the case with interns in entertainment shows, whether this is reality TV or scripted programming. 'Entertainment' and cheap laughs are provided at their expense in exchange for fulfilling their need to gain experience, or indeed, a job.

Interestingly, Devey, after signing an exclusive deal with the broadcaster, has gone on to front another reality show based on a rather cruel premise: *Dole Office*, in which she takes unemployment/jobseeker allowance claimants back in time to 1949 in order for them to experience the welfare state in its tough, no-nonsense original form.[390] This brings to mind the comparisons that can be made between the premise of *The Intern* and the current workings of the welfare system, Jobseekers, which was previously called the Unemployment Office (or simply 'the benefit'), but in which today 'jobseeking claimants' are forced to perform unpaid labour such as stacking supermarket shelves in exchange for their benefits.[391] What is at stake here is a shifting notion of the relation between work and unemployment, and in particular the construction of newly manipulative and punitive relations between those lucky enough to be wage-earners and the expanding 'surplus population' without work.

The crux of *The Intern* is, of course, that the contestants are not in the slightest bit aware that numerous hidden actors and cameras are being employed to see how each of them might respond when faced with some unexpected scenario.

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388. At the time, the chief creative officer of C4 Jay Hunt said the show aimed to tackle the subject of youth unemployment.
389. Baliha Khalsar, 'Liam Humphreys, C4', *Broadcast*, 27 September 2012, www.broadcastnow.co.uk/in-depth/liam-humphreys-c4/5047054.article.
390. See Tom Cole, 'Former Dragons' Den Star Hilary Devey to open a Dole Office on Channel 4', *RadioTimes*, 24 August 2012, www.radiotimes.com/news/2012-08-24/former-dragons-den-star-hilary-devey-to-open-a-dole-office-on-channel-4/.
391. See Shiv Malik, 'Iain Duncan Smith: shelf-stacking as important as a degree, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2013, www.theguardian.com/society/2013/feb/17/iain-duncan-smith-shelf-stacking.

Meanwhile, each of the employers benefits from three weeks' unpaid labour from three more or less competent people, along with some free publicity, as well as providing a free hour of TV programming – all for a 'a unique chance', as Devey said, for the young people 'to prove they had what it took in a week-long interview.'[392] As it is the case with any other unpaid internship, the deal seems decidedly less weighted towards the contestants/interns than the employers. While Devey says she hates waste and wants to help young people to get their foot on the career ladder ('We are wasting so much talent', she protested at the beginning of *The Intern*), she obviously means she hates to waste free television content. Of course, why waste all this motivation and the despondency at her disposal? As one reviewer noted: 'All those eager young people, so desperate that they'll do pretty much anything to get a job, represent a resource not a problem. You can make telly out of them. Think of it.'[393] Indeed, a genius new idea – consuming precarity, a new form of demonization of the precariat. The material conditions and profit motivations that drive the construction of the figure of the intern, the premise also underlying all of the other examples in this chapter, could not be expressed more clearly and directly. It is a graphic example of what Milly Williamson highlights as the exploitation of labour within reality TV.[394]

Throughout the entire programme, the young people appear gullible, if not completely oblivious, to the real terms of their engagement. While they are told they would be judged on the basis of their performance over the entire week, this turns out not to be the case at all – their chances of 'winning' turn out to be solely dependent on how they coped with a number of half-hour exploits, thought up by the show's host and then secretly filmed. For example, one of the interns had to free a hotel guest from a set of handcuffs; another was forced to deal with a customer caught *in flagrante* with his lover, while hiding this fact from the guest's wife; another was sent on a mission to quickly organize and deliver a suit, a cake and a luxury car; another

392. See Milly Williamson, *Celebrity: Capitalism and the Making of Fame* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2016).
393. Tom Sutcliffe, 'TV review: The Intern (Channel 4) and Dogging Tales (Channel 4), *The Independent*, 5 April 2013, www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/tv-review-the-intern-channel-4-and-dogging-tales-channel-4-8560689.html.
394.Williamson, *ibid.*

had to deal with an unexpected situation of a large amount of guests arriving without prior reservation; and so on. While one could say that some of these scenes were at times moderately entertaining, none of this left even the slightest sense of creating a 'level field' on which the youngsters might compete, or on which to judge their actual credentials. Whoever eventually got the job seemed to be based on pure luck – no matter who won each episode, it could have been just as easily the other two contestants.

'Hilarious' masculinity: The male middle-aged intern

> 'Do the interns get Glocks?'
> 'No, they all share one.'
> – *The Life Aquatic* with Steve Zissou (dir. Wes Anderson, 2004)

In *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, male college interns are treated perhaps worse than any of the other fictional interns I have described in this chapter. They are referred to by 'intern!' rather than by name; they all appear the same; they are forced to compete for a good grade and to perform all of the most pointless, but also all of the worst jobs on the ship. For all their hard work, Zissou sends them back home marking their evaluation forms 'incomplete.' Apparently he neither wants them to fail them nor to pass. The critical perspective, in other words, is far more acute in this media frame, and we should ask to what extent this is connected to gender.

While many of the above depictions focus on the figure of the stereotypical intern as 'the young girl', or even the poor-little-rich-girl, there do exist examples in popular culture in which the stereotypical intern portrayed is in fact male – as if in order to enable another set of gendered stereotypes to be explored. Yet the depictions of male interns in the media and popular culture tend often to serve as forms of comic relief, but of a very different nature than that offered by the female intern.

As we will see, in some examples, the expression of masculine exploitation can serves as the punch line; wouldn't it be simply unimaginable for a man to behave, or be treated, in such a way in the workplace? After all, capitalist exploitation has

been gendered since its beginnings. Its ideological apparatus is organised to produce the expectation that a female might well behave in such a way, because women are usually portrayed as more likely to be less experienced, more likely to be working in these kinds of lowly positions, and more likely to be pushed around or pushovers. It is simply hilarious to imagine that a man would play such a role.

Yet the representation of masculine interns is itself also nuanced and varied in interesting ways connected to class and privilege. The BBC series/sitcom, *W1A*, follows the inner working of the broadcasting house on the verge of an existential crisis. As one reviewer termed it: 'The show is a metamockumentary about the BBC shown on the BBC … [which] might seem as ghoulish as funeral selfies'.[395]

The programme is hilarious and often cringe-worthy, portraying an organisation in an utter managerial and organisational disarray as it faces new challenges – digital developments and competition from social media platforms, the rise of political correctness paired with the government and the public's desire that its programming pleases everyone, and so on. Against such a backdrop, it is perhaps unsurprising that the character of the intern within the show is an inept, hapless, bumbling mess of a human. The intern Will, played by Hugh Skinner, behaves in a completely puzzling manner. He is well intentioned, but not particularly bright, and gives a distinct impression that he might simply be working at the BBC because he is in fact 'someone's nephew'; as this implies, he is distinctly privileged, even 'posh'.[396] Will's response to anything anyone says to is: 'Yeah, sure. No, cool. Say again?' (in a terribly posh accent, of course) and he spends most of his time walking around aimlessly, headphones in his ears, seemingly trying to find out what it is that he is meant to be doing, or trying to find something, anything, to do. Occasionally, various superiors give him menial tasks – such as stuffing envelopes – whenever they remember that he is actually there. His presence appears to be invisible to his colleagues and the management – after a few episodes, it transpires that no one at the BBC remembered to tell him his that his internship was over. It is unclear whether he

395. Filipa Jodelka, 'W1A, the new warts-and-all mockumentary of the BBC', *The Guardian*, 14 March 2014, www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2014/mar/14/w1a-new-show-from-bbc-filipa-jodelka.
396. See: 'Will Humphreys: Intern', *BBC* profile: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/2ZSy582ZFV8gDyQblVw6twT/will-humphries.

received any compensation for his 'work' at all; yet it is implied that he did not in fact get paid. He certainly did not show any surprise at the sudden lack of compensation, and instead, continued to turn up every day despite his entry card no longer working. Eventually, and rather accidentally, Will becomes an assistant to the main protagonist of the show, the 'Head of Values', and strikes up, or rather fails at striking up, a romance with his immediate superior, Izzy. In the words of the actor who portrays Will: 'He's almost completely useless but he tries so hard. He just means so well, he is incredibly stupid but he tries hard.'[397]

Towards the end of the series, one of the plotlines concerns an idea for a BBC show that Will comes up with. When the idea gets blatantly poached by one of the producers, Will does not even attempt to protest; in fact it is Izzy who attempts to do something about it. On the one hand, there is comedy in the way in which Will does not notice, or pretends to not have noticed this (the idea getting poached), and perhaps also in the way in which Izzy reacts – first, she is simply aghast that someone would have the audacity to steal something from someone, in broad daylight, as it were, and then continue to protest that the hand caught stealing was not in fact their hand. This, too, is of course gendered: Izzy is almost maternal in the care she shows towards the idea and to Will, returning us to the idea of feminised forms of labour – the tasks associated with caring, nurturing, conflict solving, etc. – that are distributed to women in the workplace. At the same time, it is often the case that emotional labour, including actions dedicated to conflict solving, negotiating and 'buffering' in the workplace, falls on female employees, as these are the kinds of skills that are associated with female workers.[398] This is nothing unusual in any workplace – as is stealing other people's ideas, perhaps. But as with women when it comes to internships – both paid and unpaid – this is also a frequent occurrence.[399]

397.'Interview with Hugh Skinner', *British Comedy Guide*, 18 September 2017, www.comedy.co.uk/tv/w1a/interview/hugh_skinner_series3/.

398. See, for example, Rosse Hackman, 'Women are just better at this stuff': is emotional labor feminism's next frontier?,16 November 2015, available https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/08/women-gender-roles-sexism-emotional-labor-feminism: "[Emotional Labour] It also includes influencing office harmony, being pleasant, present but not too much, charming and tolerant and volunteering to do menial tasks (such as making coffee or printing documents)."

399. For the seminal discussion on women's emotional labour see Arlie Hochschild (1983).

In terms of comedy, Will's character is likely the funniest portrayal of an internship among all of the examples I have cited. At the same time, in this one character, the writer manages to portray, simultaneously, a number of the worst stereotypes and prejudices around the subject of internships from the point of view of both the employer and the intern herself. First, there are the subjects of nepotism affecting entry into professions – the show is certainly critical of how interns are often privileged, depicting Will as specifically very posh – and the suggested lack of reimbursement, which is especially jarring in relation to a taxpayer funded, public organisation (apparently this shouldn't be surprising, however, since now even the police force is looking to 'employ' 'volunteers'[400]). Then there are the superiors who are not necessarily keen on providing any guidance or advice, or even to entrust the intern with adequate, meaningful tasks, making the entire exercise useless for everyone involved.

Regardless of gender, Will's character in *W1A* is the perfect embodiment of the invisible character of the intern, whether this invisibility is subjective – a sense of worthlessness and disposability exemplary of the mental health crisis facing precarious workers today – or whether it is evident in the objective relations between the intern and her co-workers. Often, the internship in itself is of invisible quality: in the sense that it is focused on pseudo-activity and lacking any meaningful qualities.[401]

The Internship (feature film, dir. Shawn Levy, 2013)

But not all male interns are portrayed in the same way. Featuring the Georgia Institute of Technology, alongside Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn, *The Internship* was intended to be a Hollywood blockbuster of Summer 2013. The movie portrays a couple of recently laid-off salesmen of watches that have become obsolete: two middle-aged men in crisis, who arrive at the corporation in the hope of securing a job in the creative industries – reflecting the wider circumstance of male working

400. See the 'job vacancy' announcement for the Surrey police: www.surrey.police.uk/jobs/current-vacancies/vacancydetails?nPostingID=5084&nPostingTargetID=16692&option=52&sort=DESC&respnr=1&ID=PQQFK026203F3VBQB8NV78M7O&LOV21=9465&Resultsperpage=20&lg=UK&mask=surpolext

401. See Joanna Figiel (2013), 'Work experience without qualities? A documentary and critical account of an internship', *ephemera* 13 (1): 33–52.

class following the post-2008 economic crisis.[402] While their experiences as interns are arguably somewhat less traumatic than those which the hapless protagonist of *The Devil Wears Prada* has to endure in a similar scenario, the two are nevertheless forced to compete with an army of other prospective employees – i.e., interns – in fulfilling various office- and non-office-related tasks, some more pointless than others, in order to literally *win* the possibility of future employment. In this case, art follows life – the framing of the internship as something one might win, that one has to compete for, or even bid for and/or buy (i.e., pay for the privilege of working for free), The movie offers a fascinating glimpse into the inner working of the tech giant (indeed, one might wonder whether it is not in fact a feature-length advertorial or outdated recruitment video), with its Google-branded blurring of work, play and life. This provides the backdrop for the protagonists' quest for promised future possibilities, golden opportunities and (in)valuable life-experiences, as they, the 'dinosaurs', as their previous boss called them, compete against geeky young, tech-savvy competitors, better versed in digital than in real language or human communication. Ultimately, it emerges that the two groups might actually be able to help one another. The main protagonists learn the new language of a brand new technological universe taking over the shrinking economy that lost them their stable jobs in an outdated industry, while they impress the (stereotypical) young geeks, whizz kids lacking in social skills, with their (stereotypical) worldliness, experience, and real-life skills! The issues at hand are worth exploring – including that of the mid-life career change coupled with a mid-life crisis, and the existential crises of the younger, nerdy workers leading sheltered, privileged lives (even if, as in the discussion of *Gossip Girl* above, there are leakages at the seams of their privilege – overbearing parents, insecurities, bullying: poor little rich nerds). And yet, the film makes little critical use of them use of these themes. Instead, it presents a glamorised version of what unpaid work at one of the richest companies could look like, sugar-coated and topped out with a happy ending. Apparently, actual Google employees confirmed that the film depicts the Google environs really well, while it is less

402. For an analysis of crisis masculinity, see Diane Negra and Yvonne Tasker, Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

accurate in its depiction of the actual recruitment process: 'When they portray it as a *Hunger Games*-style competition, it's really the exact opposite feel.'[403]
has been present for a while, first in the US, and now also in the UK[404]. Often, auctions for internships are ostensibly, and ironically, for a 'good cause' – for example, one could buy a two-week internship at a TV production company for £2,051.90[405].

Spoiler alert: the main protagonists win the jobs; technology and old school sales values are successfully married together; everyone's personal problems are magically and seamlessly resolved; romances abound. Perhaps the one non-stereotypical aspect of this Hollywood film is that women play marginal roles, again, as support: as romantic interests propelling the protagonist's interest into technological developments, and so on.

The premise of *The Internship* is a fitting example of the gendered nature of interns: the presumable comedic value provided by a simple inversion, whereby the figure of the intern takes the body of a middle-aged man rather than the ubiquitous young-girl, certainly does little do disrupt, but in fact only further confirms, the ideological stability of the trope of the young, female intern in the public consciousness. For the joke always relies on an inversion of a presumably naturally given order: that is, on the breaking of rules.[406]

That *The Internship* in fact hardly raises a smile, however, is made conversely somewhat amusing – in a sardonic sense – by the movie's own obliviousness to the potentially bleak irony inherent in its own double exploitation of the intern phenomenon. It mines the proceeds of the interns' unpaid labour, not only on the level of content, but likewise from within its own 'hidden abode' – after all, the Hollywood movie industry is systematically reliant on the labour of unpaid interns! What adds an element of humour is that, finally, the joke might be on the production

403. Brian Anthrony Hernandez, 'Real Google Interns: "The Internship" Movie Kind of Nails It', *Mashable* (10 June 2013) https://mashable.com/2013/06/09/google-the-internship/?europe=true#OOyN1EDvGSq8.
404. See: Daniel Kurtzleben, 'Need an Internship? Try Bidding for It', US News, 6 June 2013;
405. Libby Page, 'Auctioning unpaid internships for charity is wrong', The Guardian, 8 May 2014; Sadie Whitelocks (2012), '$10,000 to be an unpaid fashion intern?'

406. See also: Paolo Virno (2008) on jokes, available: https://www.scribd.com/document/137844239/VIRNO-P-2008-Jokes-and-Innovative-Action

companies and the big studios. A recent court ruling in the US has stated that two interns working on the production of the hit movie, *Black Swan*, were 'classified improperly as unpaid interns' and are in fact 'employees' covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), as well as New York's labour laws, and are thus entitled to minimum wages for the time that they worked for Fox Searchlight.[407] The ruling also gave the green light for a possible class action suit, meaning that it might, at best, put an end to such practices, and at the very least, force corporations to urgently re-examine their internship policies.[408] A similar class action suit against Hearst Publishing unfortunately failed; yet, with former interns at *Harper's Bazaar* and *Cosmopolitan*, among others, now pursuing separate cases, [409]these examples demonstrate a significant shift in the debate and in the political organisation around this issue.

What is also useful, for our purposes, in an analysis of *The Internship*, is its depiction of male characters at the point when their career has broken down. If the male character were female, she would perhaps be grappling with the dilemma of returning to work after raising her family or looking after elderly relatives… In this respect, the depiction of the middle-aged intern is in fact spot on: it touches on the displacement and precarity that might now stand in the face of the previously stable, white, male and privileged liberal worker secure in his place in a stable economy. Coupled with other social problems, in the past few years there has been a significant rise in the number of middle-aged interns, due to the need for people to change their career track as they get older, to return to work after raising their families or after their circumstances change. Moreover, the availability of internships signals a lack of workforce in certain new areas, due to shifts in the economy and industry. As life expectancy grows, non-profit organisations have begun to pair experienced retirees with suitable internship responsibilities.[410]

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407. See: Greenfield, Rebecca (2013, 9 May) 'Class Action or Not, the Unpaid Intern Lawsuit at Hearst Will Go On', *The Atlantic*
408. See: Hananel, Sam (2013) 'Unpaid internships jeopardized by federal court ruling'; Weissman, Jordan (2013, 12 June) 'The court ruling that could end unpaid internships for good', *The Atlantic*.
409. Greenfield, *ibid*.
410. Kate Stanton (2016), 'The rise of the middle-aged intern', 26 April, *BBC News*, www.bbc.com/news/business-36129892.

The Internship follows the capers of two white middle-aged men – unemployed as technological development wipes out their jobs, but also, tacitly, as the result or in the aftermath of the financial crisis – and as such, its representation of gender and internships in a recession context illustrates how, while it is often white men who are represented as the victims of economic crisis, it is in fact the non-white, non-male who suffers most during times of economic crisis.[411] In her chapter in the 2014 collection edited by Diane Negra and Yvonne Tasker, *Gendering the Recession*, Suzanne Leonard shows how popular media in the recession era perpetuate the narrative of men as disproportionally disadvantaged.[412] *The Internship* illustrates this at the same time that it reveals the way in which post-recession era popular culture, in the words of Leonard, 'promotes affective normalcy and transformative individual enterprise under duress while avoiding meaningful critique of the privileged white male or the destructive aspects of Western capitalism.'[413]

***The Intern* (feature film, dir. Nancy Meyers, 2015)**

While *The Internship* was one of the first films to address the problem of middle-aged interns, or even to reverse the typical gender roles, *The Intern* (2015) takes these issues even further by casting a younger woman as the supervisor rather than the young female intern *vis-a-vis* an older male supervisor. It manages to do so, however, while at the same time being essentially anti-feminist, or even misogynist (as I explain/show below). And yet the film's existence is an important testament to the fact that the problem of unpaid internships, beyond the 'millenials', also affects the older generations: internships, though often regarded as entry-level employment programmes for young people new to the working world, are a now a way for middle-aged professionals to re-market themselves or to change careers after redundancy and start a new phase of their working lives.

As *The Intern* shows, there is indeed a place for such interns in the workplace. In this case, an older, retired and widowed white male protagonist is at the centre

411. See Diane Negra and Yvonne Tasker (eds), *Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014).
412. Suzanne Leonard, 'Escaping the Recession? The New Vitality of the Woman Worker', in Negra and Tasker, *Gendering the Recession*.
413. Ibid. [book sleeve]

(Robert De Niro's Ben), while he is being bossed around, initially mistreated and treated as if he was invisible (in relation to the standard invisible intern, this is an interesting nod to ageism and sexism that treat women 'of a certain' age as invisible, or rather renders them invisible, to any kind of gaze, as they get older[414]) by the young, glamorous, picture-perfect stereotype of white privilege, but also third-wave liberal white feminist: the I-can-have-it-all CEO of a fashion company, Anne Hathaway's Jules. Her character is essentially a film illustration, or instruction manual, telling us, just as Cheryl Sandberg does in her *Lean In*, that any woman willing to work hard can climb the employment ladder all the way to the top (and if anything goes wrong, it might be her fault, as the film's predictable plotline about Hathaway's character being romantically betrayed by her stay at home, sacrificing husband, suggests). Indeed, one of the film's reviewers titled their piece: '"The Intern" Should Be Called "Lean In: The Movie"'.[415] It is interesting, but perhaps beyond the point, that the husband character is portrayed as completely feeble, seemingly showing the viewer that only a certain type of masculinity can be played for laughs or comedic value in these kinds of movies and shows.

On the other hand, De Niro's character steps in and slowly, but surely – despite initial rejections and doubts that he, an old man who has worked for the same company his entire life, could possibly find his way around a too-successful-for-its-own-good-start-up – inserts himself into the company and Jules's schedule and eventually wins over Jules's heart as a friendly, wise, dependable, reliable father-figure. Or, we could say that it is Jules that eventually finds what she was searching for throughout the movie – male approval!

While *The Intern* flips the gender and age dynamic so often portrayed in the examples throughout this chapter – and, similarly to *The Internship*, makes the main protagonist a successful applicant to the senior citizen internship programme – just like *The Internship*, it makes little critical use of this reversal. In the end, as is

414. Deborah Jermyn (ed.), Female Celebrity and Ageing: Back in the Spotlight (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); Su Holmes and Diane Negra (eds), In the Limelight and Under the Microscope: Forms and Functions of Female Celebrity (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).
415. Grace Manger (2015), '"The Intern" Should Be Called "Lean In: The Movie"', *BitchMedia*, 5 October, www.bitchmedia.org/article/intern-stars-anne-hathaway-robert-de-niro-and-corporate-lean-culture.

expected – but not necessary – in mainstream film, the reversal serves more to reinforce dominant ideological tropes than to subvert them. The film parodies the generational gap, including both the shabbiness of the young male employees (if I am not mistaken, there are no speaking roles for persons of colour in this film – only white, heterosexual characters are permitted to speak) and Ben's old-time masculinity, to which the former flock in the hope of increasing their chances at winning over the (of course!) opposite sex. Beyond the fact that Jules seeks male approval in Ben – whose habit of carrying a handkerchief is praised by a number of other characters, because 'women cry', as he says in one scene – she does seem to be a textbook portrayal of Sandberg's book, and depicts the corporate variety where women get ahead by acting more like men, in the traditional sense, would act. At the same time, disapproval of working mothers is displayed (we see Jules not making her own condiments for a school party, and spending too little time with her daughter), as well as the aforementioned responsibility for her husband's cheating on her.

Conclusion

In order to construct a schematic overview of representations of the intern in contemporary Anglo-American popular culture, this chapter has focused on a number of portrayals of internships in mainstream film and television programmes. What emerges is, on the one hand, a distorted view of the experience of doing an internship: whether this is derived from the example of a (white) 'poor-little-rich-girl', or from the comedic version of a white middle-class (or posh) male. When confronted with the realities of performing an internship or otherwise precarious labour in the so-called creative and cultural industries, this can be registered as a serious cognitive dissonance; a gaping disjunction between popular culture and the realities known by so many young people today. This means that an entire generation of viewers get their own conditions of labour reflected back at them in a distorted form. On the one hand, the examples discussed above serve to normalise the experience of internships (in case anyone was unsure whether it was still possible to get onto the career ladder without doing one). On the other hand, they serve to depict

a hyper-accelerated form of neoliberal self-enhancement and to bolster the pressure to identify with one's labour (to 'be your brand' or love your job).

In this way, this chapter has given concrete resonance to a number of the issues discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). Neoliberal technologies of self-enhancement is one of these; discourses of the 'precariat' which rarely address gender or race is another. This chapter has illustrated a range of examples in which the stereotypical intern is presented either as a (white) 'young girl', or as a white male (here the demand to be young does not seem to apply). Through the use of comedy, the examples discussed above reaffirm the gendered nature of the internships. In the shows I have discussed, it is always the females, even the wealthy and well-positioned ones, who are struggling or who need to reassert themselves in order to succeed or survive, while the male characters 'have it easy', and are only played for laughs on a fast track to a happy ending. Male interns serve as comedy characters, as if it were in itself hilarious that they would even find themselves in the position of an intern in the first place – while it is perfectly normal, indeed expected, of the females to find them in such a position.

Finally, the emergence of the middle-aged intern serves to signal an important change in the post-crisis economy that is witnessing the growth of an ageing population bereft of retirement funds. This figure operates in a dual, and seemingly paradoxical, way: as we have seen, while the comic reversal serves to cement the idea of the intern as young-girl, a certain truth about the changing working class and the post-crisis economy cannot help but leak through. Once again, any person in unpaid work or who are unemployed but *not* a white young-girl are demonised, abjected, or rendered comic. Or, in the end, alternative figures of the intern – capable of more accurately reflecting the way work and unemployment, or paid and unpaid labour, are distributed under contemporary capitalism – are simply considered unthinkable.

Chapter 6

Activism: How are internships and unpaid work being mobilised against?

'It is all for love and honour and no money is included at all.'[416]

Debates and discussions concerning the place and value of art in society and the possible ways of valuing and rewarding the activities of artists are not new in the academy or the field of legislation and policymaking, at least in the West.[417] Equally, much attention has been paid to the relationship between art and politics, the art market and its economy, and the specific nature of creative work *vis-à-vis* other types of employment. This has especially been the case in recent years, in the context of increased interest in gentrification, the changing urban politics of neoliberal cities, and the so-called Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs), in which hopes have been placed in the face of deindustrialisation and the global migration of production and services. Yet, although cultural and artistic creators are often at the heart of, and dependent on, these processes and discussions, the issues around their actual existence and real, material aspects of their work often seem to be overshadowed or omitted from discussion.

In the introduction to her book, *Art Workers*, Julia Bryan-Wilson presents a brief trajectory of a number of relationships, similarities and differences between the process of creating works of art and other goods.[418] Wilson recalls the words of Carl Andre, who compared the role of the artist in society to that of an employee of a factory production line, and the history of the artists' trade unions in America in the

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416.In 1972, Donald Ritchie, the then film curator of The Museum of Modern Art in New York, invited the filmmaker Hollis Frampton to organise a retrospective of his work, without offering remuneration. Unwilling to dedicate his time and effort for free, Frampton replied with a lengthy email in which he stipulated the conditions under which he would be willing to take part. Frampton quotes the above from Ritchie's original proposal. Hollis Frampton, 'Letter to Donald Ritchie' in Bruce Jenkins, ed. *On the Camera Arts and Consecutive Matters: The Writings of Hollis Frampton*, 159-162

417. For some recent writing and analysis of the shifting relations between art and labour see the following, included in the bibliography: Aranda et al. 2011; Diederichsen 2008*;* Klamer 1996; Abbing 2004; Sholette & Ressler 2013; Siebert and Wilson 2013; Siegelbaum 2013; Rita and Sevic 2010; Wherry 2012.

418. Julia Bryan-Wilson *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009)

1930s and 1940s, referenced by artists in the 1960s and 1970s (who, in turn, are often referenced by contemporary activists and organisers engaging with issues of work in the cultural sector). The rest of the text comprises a set of historical discussions on the origins of the term 'art workers'. This concept, in a key way, redefines the figure of the artist — and for my purposes here in the thesis, also the intern, both paid and unpaid, in the creative and cultural sector — as an employee, as well as an activist and an active participant in political and social life. It is precisely this revised figure of the artist as 'art worker', positioned between the worlds of art, politics and capital, that constitutes the starting point for many of the activities of the groups of artists and cultural workers that I discuss in this chapter. Having followed the activities of and collaborated with these groups in Poland and the UK for the better part of the past decade, in this chapter I aim to describe and summarise their origins, rationale and activities. While I do make reference to some international examples, I do not focus in detail on those in North America because, as I summarise in the literature review section of this thesis, others have already engaged with these groups at length.

What is the role of art in contemporary society? Is the work of artists and cultural creators any different from other types of work? If so, how is it different? How should it be remunerated? Where does the boundary lie between work undertaken for free and work that should be paid? What risks are artists able and willing to take in the name of such work? What criteria are important in cooperation with institutions? How to find oneself in the labour market? What other problems, apart from economic ones, do contemporary artists and cultural producers face? These are just some of the questions that artists and cultural workers deal with on an everyday basis.

In Poland, problems of this kind affecting the world of art and culture, and above all the artists who create this world, have appeared in public discussion thanks to the Citizens' Forum of Contemporary Art [Obywatelskie Forum Sztuki Współczesnej, OFSW]. Being a Polish academic working in the UK on issues similar to those faced by many in Poland, I have been asked to participate in group

discussions and collaborate on research and texts with the Forum, contributing a chapter to a book published on the group's initiative.[419]

The questions of social benefits, insurance,[420] the lack of access to the pension system,[421] as well as the daily struggles of artists and cultural workers — including those taking part in unpaid internships, or prolonged 'probationary' periods in which they essentially work full time for lower wages, while never being employed at the end of the stint — have finally come to light. It seems that, little by little, the Forum has made these issues a permanent point of public debate, even if certain parts of the sector are reluctant to follow in this example, and suggest instead that cultural workers should accept the situation and trust in the processes of the art market.[422] Both in Poland[423] and in the UK, the public remains dominated by many untrue myths and stereotypes about artistic work and work in culture and art – associating creativity with necessity and shortage and perceiving the artist as a romantic, sometimes tragic, figure. The artist's actions are seen to depend mainly on her talent, hard work, or selfless dedication to the implementation of lofty ideas. Within the framework of these myths, this is rarely combined with a realistic assessment of the material requirements thanks to which the work can be realised. According to the same myth, the artist creates her works in isolation; she is an individualist. Indeed, this is sometimes the case. Many artists – and especially those who see their activities as work rather than labour – underestimate the potential benefits of creating a community with other artists. In fact, artists often openly compete with each other for

419.The main findings of the report, which have not, as yet, been translated into English in its entirety, can be found here: Free/Slow University of Warsaw (2015) *Art Factory Report Findings.* http://beczmiana.pl/fabryka-sztuki/. My chapter, Joanna Figiel, 'Summary of focus groups,' in Free/Slow University of Warsaw *Art Factory* (Fundacja Bec Zmiana, 2015), 274-304.

420. There is no equivalent to the NHS in Poland; one could compare the healthcare system to the American one, where healthcare is largely user-funded.

421. The impossibility of making high, regular, monthly contributions when one is in precarious working conditions or without regular wages equals, in my and OFSW's view, a lack of access to the pension system.

422. See: Zofia Płoska, Łukasz Ronduda "Ekwiwalent pieniężny. Artyści mówią o ekonomii podczas Warsaw Gallery Weekend", 26 September 2014.

423. It is worth noting than in Poland before 1989, cultural and artistic production did operate under what was essentially the Soviet system and in very different circumstances to those in place today. See, for example, Piotr Piotrowski *Awangarda w cieniu Jałty. Sztuka w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w latach 1945-1989*, (2005) Poznań, Rebis; Dekada. O syndromie lat siedemdziesiątych, kulturze artystycznej, krytyce, sztuce – wybiórczo i subiektywnie(1991) Poznań, Obserwator

curators' and gallerists' attention, invitations to public institutions, grants, subsidies, and social prestige. Perhaps for this reason they do not see the systemic causes of their deteriorating situation: neoliberalisation, decreasing public investment in art and culture, precarity and unpaid work and internships.

The art market often eagerly celebrates the works of individual artists that criticise capitalism, state structures or the activity of those in power. In many cases, it can indeed appreciate the market value of certain political beliefs and forms of engagement, precisely because they can increase further interest in the activity (and the commercial value) of the artist. Especially in recent years, the value and social visibility of interventionism and political art would appear to have increased significantly. As Hans Abbing has commented, there is nothing more commercial than an anti-commercial artist.[424] In these cases, 'politics' is frequently reduced to the content of the work itself – something to be admired, rather than something to be practiced, or an activity which reveals, for example, the relationships present in the process of artistic production or the types of labour that produce the work.

It is for this reason that the world of art so eagerly organises and conducts discussions on the topics of precariousness, creativity, and art, which appear to have little relation to political practice or, indeed, little desire to lead to any concrete conclusions that might end the discussions themselves. Perhaps unpaid internships will be next. Taking part in such discussions, the world of art and culture simultaneously recreates and replicates the same conditions of precarious work and life, in terms of financing events, work practices, contracts, and formal and informal arrangements, that it seeks to talk about. The problem of precariousness is addressed at the level of the subject and content of works, and not at the level of actual circumstances or working conditions in the world of art and culture, in which this discussion takes place. It is therefore not surprising that, for example, the Bust Card, a labour rights tool developed by one of the groups I have collaborated with and

424. See: Hans Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004) For an earlier iteration of this argument, see Bourdieu, Pierre (1983). 'The Field of Cultural Production, or The Economic World Reversed.' *Poetics* (12): 311-56.

describe below, has been placed on the cover of *Art Monthly* as an illustration, but was not included in the discussion within the magazine.[425]

Why the conversation about precarity now? One reason may be that, compared to what are often misleadingly labelled as 'unskilled' jobs, working in art is still often seen as a specific, different, or superior kind of work. Creative work in art and culture – under a freelance model, at least – brings with it a certain level of independence, freedom of expression, and escape from the direction of a factory or corporation. Under the aegis of these forms of freedom and flexibility, such work often has a positive, if not liberating, appearance. On the other hand, it leads to the same uncertainty of day-to-day existence that workers in other sectors have to bear. While it is possible (and indeed necessary) to challenge facile comparisons between the real working conditions of cleaners, for example, and artists and creative workers, one cannot argue with the fact that both cleaners and artists suffer from the same processes currently shaping the global division of labour and local labour markets around the world.[426]

Undoubtedly, organising artists and cultural workers around, for example, the issue of precarity carries the risk of strengthening myths and misconceptions about artistic and creative work, as well as beliefs about the unique concept of creative labour. But it need not be that way. Artists and cultural workers do not require 'special' rights and need not campaign solely within the sector of art and culture. Rather, like all other workers, it is possible for them to organise their activities in solidarity with other struggles around specific labour market practices and wider systemic issues. While raising awareness and fighting unpaid labour in one sector, a conscious effort might be made to connect the discussion and struggle across with other sectors. Further, any organising or activism surrounding the issues of unpaid work and internships in arts and culture might work towards dispelling the myths and misconceptions (that often discourage individuals from, for example, less advantaged

425. See: https://goo.gl/images/TG2csC
426. As Mikołaj Iwański has noted: 'a small and barely statistically significant group of artists has inadvertently become an avant-garde of the consequences of changes in the labour market. A situation that is perceived as a problem of a small environment by the power of outdated stereotypes is in fact an imminent problem of a non-Codex contract worker'. Mikołaj Iwański "Kaszel artysty", May 2012 http://iwanski.natemat.pl/15187,kaszel-artysty

backgrounds from even considering entering the field) surrounding these kinds of work. This might be done, for example, by designing and executing relevant research projects shedding light on the material circumstances of unpaid and underpaid workers and interns in these sectors. These are some of the sentiments I share, expressed by the groups I have collaborated with and been a part of in the past, and whose work – and mine, as their collaborator – I describe in this chapter. These groups include the UK-based Precarious Workers Brigade, and the Poland-based OFSW and the Free/Slow University.

While the establishment of the OFSW and its current operations may seem highly unusual in the Polish reality, this is absolutely not the case on a global scale. In recent years, many groups have been established both in Europe and the US in order to deal with issues of art, labour and value. The following pages contain descriptions and brief analyses of the work and tools developed by some of these groups, with a focus on PWB tools and actions and the research collaboration with the Free/Slow University. This undoubtedly rather limited collection focuses mainly on examples from other European countries, as well as the United States and Ukraine. This selection reflects my own geographically limited activity and network; there are of course many more groups working on practical solutions to many of the issues mentioned above elsewhere.

The Carrotworkers' Collective and the Precarious Workers Brigade (PWB)

In the UK, the Precarious Workers Brigade (PWB) emerged from the Carrotworkers' Collective, which worked specifically around challenging the exploitation of interns and unpaid workers within the art, culture and education sectors. PWB expanded to deal with wider issues of unpaid work and precarious conditions of work, before going on an indefinite hiatus. Throughout its existence, the group mainly consisted of women, which ensured that questions of the gender dimensions of unpaid work and precarity were a firm and constant element of our focus. For a number of years I collaborated with the group and describe some of the tools I helped develop below. Our praxis sprung from a shared commitment to developing research and actions that would be practical, relevant and easily shared

and applied. While putting an end to precarity and unpaid work was our main aim, our project involved developing tactics, strategies, formats, practices, dispositions, knowledges, and tools for making this happen. For the purposes of PWB research, actions and workshops, we jointly created the 'working definitions' of the main terms relating to our engagement:

> *Free labour,* also known as unpaid work. A widespread syndrome in the arts and the cultural sector. Its negative symptoms include, but are not limited to: the drive or compulsion to undertake unpaid internships and voluntary work placements; the tendency to work beyond one's physical and mental limits; the incapacity to resist unpaid overtime, as well as a generalised sense of frustration, isolation, worthlessness and insecurity. Early diagnosis is often made difficult by the positive sensations that accompany the desire to work for free: aspirations, hopes, promises, an ephemeral sense of belonging to a world of glamour and disinterested intellectual and artistic beauty. Subjects experiencing early symptoms of the free labour syndrome are often unable to identify the source of their anxiety due to their education and their rejection of empathic identification with workers in similar situations across other sectors. Some specialists have called this denial of subjects' own material and immaterial needs, such as food, shelter and emotional support, the 'labour of love' – with reference, presumably, to the proverbial blindness that is associated with this feeling. Environmental factors determine the development of the syndrome in those who are culturally predisposed. Due to the withdrawal of public funds from both the education and the cultural system, unpaid work in the guise of internships is perceived and promoted as the only way into paid employment and/or meaningful occupations.
>
> *Carrot* (as in the Carrot Workers' Collective and the Precarious Workers' Brigade logo) usually spotted alongside a donkey, and a stick. An ambivalent image that represents both a false promise and a genuine desire prevalent in free labour. It marks the subtle but important shift that occurs in going from

‘working for a very bad salary’ to ‘working for free’ (or for symbolic or in-kind reimbursements), as the economy of the exchange becomes increasingly based on social capital. The carrot symbolises the promise of paid work, meaningful experience, success and stability that in the cultural and creative sectors, more often than not, is never actually kept. The carrot signifies the hope that we might organise our work around ‘creativity’ rather than drudgery; an aspiration that is used to prompt, cajole and sometimes blackmail workers into long-term and recurring periods of free work and precarious labour. The carrot becomes a disciplinary device that taps into our aspiration to live and produce creatively, to manage our own time, to be social, in order to string us along. The carrot, in short, is the compound of promises and hopes that mobilise subjective and collective becomings when they are put to work as a tool of governance and production of surplus value. To examine how it operates as a device is compelling, because it forces us to scrutinise the ways in which our own desires are traversed by the forces we want to combat. To do so, however, is not to engage in an exercise of self-blame; nor does it mean ending our critique with a cynical posture that laments that everything can and will be recuperated. On the contrary: it demands that we seek collective solutions to the conditions of life and work that we share to begin with, but that we often confront in isolation.

Intern. The figure of the intern negotiates the collapse of boundaries between Education, Work and Life. Whilst remaining a very specific example of a worker, the intern has come to expose the broader economic tendency of free labour conditions and precarity beyond the cultural sector, in which the carrot and the stick increasingly regulate our present. The internship in itself embodies a certain reversal that is at work within the cultural and artistic sectors, the creative industries, and more broadly in a number of professions where labour of passion comes about through a desire to be emancipated from the drudgery of labour itself. Interns have become the norm, but also a structural necessity, de facto masking the collapse of the cultural sector,

> hiding the exodus of public resources from these activities and thus preventing the general public from perceiving the unsustainability of the situation. In this landscape, interns offer both a solution and a threat. They fill in the ever-widening gaps between ambitions and cash, but they also legitimise the exploitative nature of cultural work – reminding those who are employed in the sector that there is always someone ready to do their job for free. As such, in addition to all other tasks, the intern performs a great deal of affective labour, both positive and negative in kind. Interning is normalised as an access filter to professions perceived as desirable, a regulatory valve that replicates the most classic lines of class division. The intern/volunteer must have the necessary economic provision to be able to work for free. Increasingly, internships are reiterated and repeated not to satisfy a desire for further training, but to postpone the moment of unemployment and eviction from 'the scene'. The affiliation with cultural institutions, even when not remunerated, allows for the carrot to be preserved.[427]

The group has put out a number of publications. The first, while still under the name Carrotworkers' Collective, was 'Surviving Internships: A Counter Guide to Free Labour in the Arts' (2010), an alternative internship guide addressing the growing phenomenon of unpaid or underpaid labour that was being undertaken under the categories of internship schemes, volunteering, job placements and trainee positions. The guide itself was a toolbox that included information about internships, statistics and tips across several sections, each addressing a different reader group: those thinking about doing an internship; those currently in an internship; employers who have interns or those thinking of taking on interns. Finally, there was a section that asked how interns can organise, fight back and/or exit the internship and look for alternatives to it.

The most recent publication put out by the PWB is the 2017 'Training for

427. Entries by the Precarious Workers Brigade from the 'Free Labour Syndrome. Volunteer Work or Unpaid Overtime in the Creative and Cultural Sector', Carrot Workers Collective/Precarious Workers Brigade, in *Maps of Precariousness*, vol. II. eds. Emiliana Armano and Annalisa Murgia. (2012) Bologna: Odoya..

Exploitation? Towards an Alternative Curriculum.'[428] This resource pack argues that mainstream curriculum in schools, universities, academies and colleges can often train students to become exploited cultural workers. The publication critically examines the relationship between education, work and the cultural economy and critically engages with subjects including unpaid work, unpaid internships and precarity, university courses featuring compulsory work placements and the increasing prevalence of discourses of employability within higher education. Also included are a number of tools for alternative educational and organising practices, which can be recognised from past and contemporary feminist practices of consciousness raising.

Between these two guides, PWB have created a number of smaller projects. The *The Working Woman* phototromance (2011) was produced through a three-day workshop entitled 'Photoromance for Precarious Workers', at the Wyspa Institute of Art in Gdansk, Poland. As the Carrotworkers' Collective, we facilitated the workshop, during which Wyspa's all-female staff and intern mapped and discussed their working lives and sought solutions to improve them. As PWB, our 'Bust Your Boss card' (2012) was a resource for artists and creative workers, borrowing the format of the 'Bust Card' often handed out during protests, giving legal information to activists and demonstrators to use in case of an arrest. With our own 'Bust Your Boss card' we aimed to remind art and cultural workers of their rights to address issues of payment and work when meeting with potential clients or employers, despite taboo surrounds discussing issues of payment. The card also encouraged the reader to consider her own complicity in working for free, or the self-exploitation involved in being one's own boss. In this vein, and very much in the vein of the historical feminist campaigns inspiring our efforts – such as the feminist *Precarias a la deriva* movement[429] or the earlier the Wages for Housework campaign alongside Silvia Federici's texts and manifestoes[430] – we made it our policy to disclose information about the context in which our work appeared, the work that went into our collective contribution and the

428. See: https://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com/TrainingForExploitation
429. For more, see Precarias a la deriva 'Adrift through the circuits of feminized precarious work', 2004, available: http://eipcp.net/transversal/0704/precarias1/en
430. Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework* (1975)available https://monoskop.org/images/2/23/Federici_Silvia_Wages_Against_Housework_1975.pdf

payment that was received (or not received) for that labour. This 'Free Labour info box' intended to bring attention to, and challenge, the apparent culture of silence around payment and working conditions in the arts and the creative sector, which allows exploitation to continue to take place. While eradicating unpaid and low-paid work surely is a longer process, breaking this silence, encouraging transparency and refusing to be complicit in perpetuating exploitation in this way was something we could do immediately. For this purpose, we included such an 'info box' alongside all our published work and read out its contents at the beginning of presentations and workshops. To further address the issues of unpaid work, we created a template for open letters to art and cultural institutions that advertised unpaid internships; this could be adjusted to the specific status of the organisation in question – charitable or not, publicly funded or not. The letters we sent – strongly resembling the practices of 'naming and shaming', albeit anonymously, by the ArtLeaks collective or the public certification system proposed by W.A.G.E – were then made public, published online.[431]

People's tribunals can be applied in work-related situations where systemic injustice, normalised to the point of intractability, lies beyond the reach of existing labour and employment legislation and policy.[432] In an effort to speak out, collectively listen and discuss remedies and verdicts, we staged a People's Tribunal on Precarity.[433] In separate sections, we examined four aspects of precarity, as we then saw it: the underpaid and the unpaid work in the creative and cultural sector (the casualisation of the labour force, the misconception that one can and should contribute unpaid work); institutionalised precarity (the role of institutions in the production and self-replication of different aspects of precarious life, for example, poor or no pay; the exploitation of cultural workers' willingness to work for free; the false promise of future opportunities; the lack of resources for production and artists'

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432. All tools can be found here: https://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com/Toolbox
432. Historically, employed in cases were the state legal system would not or could not bring an adequate sense of 'justice being served' people tribunals have a long history of serving disadvantaged or excluded groups, as well as women, an important tool in civil justice efforts. See: "People's tribunals, and the roots of civil society justice," Richard Falk, 2015; PWB, 'Tools for Collective Action - Precarity: The People's Tribunal' by the PWB, published in DIS Magazine, 2011.
433. A detailed description can be found here: http://dismagazine.com/discussion/21416/tools-for-collective-action-precarity-the-peoples-tribunal/

fees); immigration (how visa and residency issues intersect with the other themes and compound the difficulties faced by individuals); and affect (the impact of precarity on the body, mind and soul).

Artleaks

Artleaks is an international collective platform for artists and curators, which derives its name and inspiration from Wikileaks, the international non-profit organisation which releases classified information from anonymous sources. Artleaks is focused on making public, in a safe and anonymous manner, the instances of exploitation, slander, censorship, intimidation, or even blackmail taking place within the art world and cultural sector. Much of Artleaks' activity takes place online, where these denunciations are published, but the group also publishes its own print publication and once or twice a year organises assemblies and public speeches.[434] The work ArtLeaks do is crucial, because it gives voice to those afraid to raise issues for fear of being excluded from the field of artistic and cultural work, and connects the accounts of workers from across different contexts and places in the hierarchy – from unpaid interns to well-known artists and curators.

Working Artists for the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E)

Founded in 2008, the Working Artists for the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E)[435] is based in the USA. Initially, the group completed an extensive study of the economic experiences of visual and performing artists who work with non-profit cultural and art organisations. The survey showed that 58 percent of New York artists exhibiting in non-profit organizations between 2005 and 2010 did not receive any fee payments or even refunds for expenses incurred in their work, including for materials, transport, and so on. Following the results of the survey, the group developed a certification system for New York institutions, as well as an artist remuneration calculator, both of which are used by artists and institutions to shape a new, more sustainable model of interaction between them. The latest development from the group is a digital tool, WAGENCY, that facilitates transaction and fair remuneration.

434. See: https://art-leaks.org/about/
435. See: http://wageforwork.com/about#top

It ‘supplies artists with digital tools and the necessary collective agency to negotiate W.A.G.E. fees or withhold content from art institutions when they decline to pay according to W.A.G.E. standards. Instead of a coordinated strike mechanism, WAGENCY enables a matrix of individual boycotts that can and will happen at any given time.’[436]

Europe: UKK (Denmark); the Ukrainian Self-Defense of Art Workers Initiative (Ukraine); Haben und Brauchen (Germany)

In Denmark, the Unge Kunstnere og Kunstformidlere (UKK), or Young Artists and Workers, also founded by female artists, have devised a questionnaire assessing the professional situation of its members. The group brought together young and unestablished visual artists on a membership basis resembling traditional union membership. UKK has presented model agreements/contracts according to which artists, curators and institutions can define their obligations towards each other in a transparent and standardised manner.

The Ukrainian Self-Defense of Art Workers Initiative, which has been operating since 2013, engages in protests and boycotts of public institutions in Ukraine. In doing so it strives to rid institutions of the ideology imposed by the authorities, and demands transparency in the conduct, financing and management of institutions. Similarly, a series of assemblies examining cultural processes occurring in Ukraine, the Culture Assembly of Ukraine – stemming from the protests in Kiev’s Majdan, in accordance with the conviction that cultural reform is at the root of any social, political or economic change – consistently, but unpredictably, engages in discussions on the changes needed in the art and cultural sectors in Ukraine.

In Berlin, the more informal group Haben und Brauchen, or To Have and To Need, was created to develop a discussion on the conditions for granting funding for art and culture and paying artists and cultural producers, as well as the conditions for the production and valuation of art and culture, in a city that prides itself on both a flourishing art scene and a large number of cultural producers/CCIs. Similarly to the PWB, which has been involved in discussions about gentrification and London’s

436. See: WAGENCY manifesto here: http://wageforwork.com/wagency#top

housing situation, Haben und Brauchen engages in debates surrounding the city's creativity policies.

Artistic Trade Unions

Finally, in this contextual section, I would like to introduce the artistic trade unions. The Scottish Artist Union (SAU) was founded in Scotland in 2001 after five years of research and development as, in their own words, the 'first trade union of the 21st century'.[437] While the other groups mentioned above (except the UKK) organise themselves in a rather informal, horizontal, bottom-up way, SAU and Artist Union England (AUE) operate in a more traditional way, based on membership fees and a number of criteria for union membership. These unions represent interesting responses to the issue of who is and who is not considered to be an artist in the face of tax and legal systems where this professional category is not officially determined on the basis of official sources of income. The Artists' Union England, in turn, is an entirely new organisation, established in London at the same time as the OFSW signed its first agreements on payments for exhibitions in Poland. This only confirms that the exchange of information, experience, solidarity and support should take place in both directions: the discussed groups can and should be drawing on the experiences, tactics and strategies of their foreign professional colleagues, and vice versa.

Poland: Citizen Forum for Contemporary Arts (OFSW) and the Free/Slow University of Warsaw

Undoubtedly, due to historical and political circumstances, activist groups operating in Poland find themselves in different circumstances than their peers organising in other countries in the European Union. The 1990s in Eastern Europe saw a hasty implementation of neoliberal policies, and in the case of Poland this period was also characterised by a shameless expression of admiration towards Margaret Thatcher. The paradigm of decentralisation[438] as the fundamental principle

437. More here: https://www.artistsunion.scot/about
438. For a discussion of Poland, Eastern Europe and neoliberalism see: Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Toronto: A.A. Knopf Canada, 2007

for organising the public sector introduced in that period was, and still is, particularly damaging to arts and cultural institutions. Continuing this logic of neoliberal politics, formerly state-run art centres and galleries are now under management of local governments, and simultaneously pushed into a never-ending conflict with the latter. These conflicts – concerning, for example, the rules specifying criteria for directorial competitions – have been intensifying since 2012, when a new amendment was introduced to the law on cultural institutions allowing local governments to outsource management of cultural institutions to private companies selected via an open tender process – a procedure identical to that used when contracting a supplier of, say, concrete or tarmac.[439] The so-called 'Polish Thatcherism', which insisted on privatising every part of the public sector in the name of neoliberal ideology;[440] the decentralisation of management of cultural institutions; and a lack of coherent legal culture all create a lethally destructive combination for those working within these sectors.[441] This approach first and foremost affects democratic procedures, fairness and transparency when it comes to management and appointments, as well as labour relations in the cultural sector, with working conditions deteriorating at an increasing rate over the past decade.[442]

When most of the Ministry of Culture funds were allocated to the Euro 2012 football championship, drawing attention to the generally poor, day-to-day financial situation of Polish artists and cultural workers, the various artists, curators, critics and

439. More about the new legislation on public tenders and cultural institutions is here http://www.przetargipubliczne.pl/archiwum/art,4997,instytucja-kultury-jako-zamawiajacy.html and here http://www.zamowienia-publiczne.lex.pl/czytaj/-/artykul/instytucje-kulturalne-moga-nie-stosowac-przetargow

440. Or, as Mikołaj Iwański terms it in his commentary on the recently aborted directorship competition at Poznan's Arsenal, "Slavic Tatcherism"– see: Mikolaj Iwanski, '"Słowiański thatcheryzm". Komentarz do unieważnienia konkursu na dyrektora Arsenału," available at: http://obieg.home.pl/test/tek-sty/29351

441. Since this new legislation, the relationship between underfunded galleries and art centres, the arts community and local governments has been steadily deteriorating. Local councilors are now armed with a new tool for disciplining what are in their view expensive and unnecessary art and cultural institutions. Worryingly, some of them are able to exploit the new laws to the full advantage of personal and political agendas. The issue is further complicated by the steady stream of structural EU funding, part of which reaches the cultural sector in the form of one-off infrastructural investments. This EU funding means that it is not unusual to find new state of the art brick and mortar infrastructures for art and cultural institutions, which then remain empty for the lack of funds for programming, or 'forget' to budget in payment for artists, cultural programmers and producers.

442. For a lengthy account of such outsourcing of public services, or the so called 'secondary primitive accumulation' in neoliberalism, mainly in relation to the UK situation, see Huws 2013, 2014.

writers formed the Obywatelskie Forum Sztuki Współczesnej, or the Citizen Forum for Contemporary Arts (OFSW), and staged a one-day art strike – a day without art and culture. The aim of the strike was to influence public discussion of cultural matters, including their symbolic and political aspects, as well as the economic place of artists and cultural producers within the public sphere and social hierarchies. Around the same time, a proposed change to tax law was announced, which sought to reduce or eliminate flat rate tax allowances in order to reclaim up to fifty per cent of costs from revenue on contracts. Such a change would further harm the majority of artists and cultural producers, who are often reliant on commission contracts and need to subsequently recoup the costs of their production and materials. This provided further impetus for the OFSW action.

While it was the first action of its kind to take place in Poland, the art strike followed a well established, if sporadically enacted and relatively little-known, tradition of the refusal of work among artists. We might trace such actions back to the activity in the 1960s by the US-based Art Workers Coalition (AWC), which focused mainly on institutional critique, followed by the artist Gustav Metzger's three-year art strike between 1977 and 1980, during which he produced no work whatsoever, thus drawing attention to his position in the art world and his relationships to galleries and institutions. In the early 1990s, art strike strategies were taken up again, this time by Stewart Home and various adherents of the Neoist movement.[443] In recent years, Redas Dirzys and Temporary Art Strike Committee have been calling for an art strike in Lithuania. Even more recently, in 2012, the London-based Precarious Workers Brigade, a group organising for several years around the issue of precarity within cultural and creative work, called for a Cultural Workers Walkout,[444] in solidarity with other casual and public sector workers taking part in a national strike on the same day. Such actions all sought to disrupt the role and position of artists themselves, or to address issues in the cultural economy and creative industries in more general terms.

443.For an overview and examples, please see: https://www.stewarthomesociety.org/neoism/neoneg.htm, Stewart Home 1993, April
444. See Precarious Workers Brigade 2011, June 29.

The OFSW art strike was, by all accounts, quite a small and seemingly insignificant event, relatively speaking. A number of galleries and institutions did however express solidarity, and some did indeed close their doors for the day, in addition to a handful of protesting OFSW members, some bystanders, and one banner.[445] In terms of media coverage or turnout, it certainly did not stand out amongst demonstrations and strike actions staged that year by workers in other sectors. However, the strike did kickstart an ongoing debate about cultural and artistic production in Poland. It brought, once and for all, the often-invisible working conditions in the arts and culture into the public domain. Most importantly, it cemented the credentials of the autonomous, horizontally organised OFSW as an effective and credible model for artists and cultural producers to represent themselves and each other in a field that is unstable, mostly reliant on decreasing amounts of public funding, and characterised by increasing levels of competition and individualism.

Crucially, this first public action of OFSW not only brought the economic conditions of artistic and cultural work into open discussion, but also into the streets of Warsaw, where contemporaneous protests, be they by nurses or taxi drivers, were simultaneously taking place. Thus, not only were their often obscured working conditions and labour made visible, but also the ideological distance between the labour of artists and cultural producers, and that of workers in general, was dramatically reduced. Artists and cultural producers on contingent, casual and temporary contracts, without health insurance or pensions, increasingly without the ability to own a home or afford a mortgage, in many cases unable to even afford to be burdened with debt, can, in terms of employment law and economic survival, often be seen as leading the way for workers in other sectors. Therefore, when artists and cultural workers are cast as new models of employment in an increasingly deregulated, neoliberal job market, an erasure of the ideological gap between art and labour, and the dismantling of the myth of artistic genius could be an important political strategy. Almost six years on from the art strike, OFSW is continuing to shape the struggle for changes to economic and social aspects of the Polish art scene.

445. Around 90 in total, including, beyond Warsaw, in Poznan, Krakow, Wroclaw, and Trojmiasto; as well as in smaller towns like Bytom, Slupsk, Torun

To enumerate some elements of its programme, the OFSW is dedicated to ensuring artists receive payment from art institutions; that remuneration is included in the rules of the Ministry of Culture grant programs; that artists' labour rights are included in Polish employment legislation; and that artists and precarious cultural workers are allowed access to pension and health insurance schemes. Furthermore, the OFSW has published a *Black Book for Artists in Poland*, with an aim of defining the status of artists and cultural production in Poland. Interestingly, in defiance of the old, failing union models, OFSW has joined forces with the new trade union movement, the recently formed Inicjatywa Pracownicza (IP, Workers'Initiative), which began in 2001 as a continuation of various self-organised grassroots and anarcho-syndicalist groups active mainly in and around Poznan.[446] In 2004, it became an officially recognised union. The IP was formed not only as a reaction to the crisis of Poland's official union movement — its bureaucracy, passivity and links with the anti-social and anti-worker governments — but also as a union that recognises new forms of employment and contracts not recognised by traditional unions (zero-hours contract workers and freelancers without fulltime employment are prohibited by law from joining trade unions even if, in a given institution another trade union, for example for cleaners, is already present in the workplace), and pays attention to specific issues concerning gendered and migrant labour. IP allows for the formation of autonomous collegial commissions that can then support workers on casual contracts, or those who are self-employed. Thanks to the affiliation, the OFSW is able to receive formal support from a nationally and legally recognised union in negotiations around the guaranteed minimum artist's fee payment and issues concerning social security and pension contributions. In addition, it allows representation for freelancers, project-based workers and the self-employed who, for lack of a physical and fixed workplace, are often unable to even recognise who their colleagues are, let alone to struggle alongside them or cooperate with arts and cultural employees on permanent contracts. While there is no precise data available that would say something more about people doing internships in Poland (Such data is not available to the Central Statistical Office, nor is it available to the National Labour

446. See: http://ozzip.pl/inicjatywa-pracownicza/item/10-about-inicjatywa-pracownicza-workers-initiative

Inspectorate) what is certain, is that a liberal law allows employers to take on free three-month internships

When it comes to the arts and cultural sector, a recent research project I worked on with the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, 'Fabryka Sztuki/Art Factory',[447] has shed some light on the material conditions – including unpaid work and gender discrimination - of those working within the field. (I include a discussion of the methodology for this research in the introduction to this thesis).

The Polish field of culture and art is a rather small, closed environment. One's introduction to the field is largely based on personal networks of acquaintance as well as working for free – either to get one's foot in the door, or to keep one's professional contacts through providing unpaid work – favour as and when needed. As the results of the first part of the research show, the field participants come mainly from higher social classes (at least if parents' education is the criterion). It is also a strongly punished professional group. Apart from the fact whether precarisation[448] translates into greater or lesser poverty or financial difficulties of the respondents, it is certainly connected, at least for the majority of the respondents not employed on a full-time basis, with a more intensified, unregulated and periodically intensified mode of work. As part of the second phase of the research project I conducted three focus group interviews. The aim was to investigate in more depth the threads drawn from the first phase of research. Interestingly, as described below, one of the panels showed diametrically different opinions than the results of the survey and the interview. Three interviews, each lasting 1.5 hours took place.

Group interview on the relationship between the field of art and culture and the social world of work

The discussion was attended by seven people — four females and three males— among them employees of institutions, freelancers, artists, curators and administrators. This was, of all three, the most general interview, mainly due to the

447. Free/Slow University of Warsaw, Art Factory, Fundacja Bec Zmiana 2015.
448. The Frassanito Network 'Precarious, precarisation, precariat? Mute Magazine, January 2006, available: http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/precarious-precarisation-precariat

fact that it took place at the time when the work on the surveys took place, before the survey results were obtained. The interview focused primarily on the personal feelings of individuals in the field in relation to various theories and ideological interpretations of the issue of work in culture and art, and the ways in which it is compared to work in other sectors of the economy.

The main observation resulting from the discussion was that, in the opinion of the respondents, in Poland there is a rather schizophrenic approach to work in culture and art. On the one hand, such work enjoys social prestige and respect, but on the other hand the legal situation contradicts it, e.g. the fact that the issue of contracts and insurance for artists is not regulated by law. On the one hand, Polish language and art classes are taught in schools, but on the other hand, according to the respondents, a large part of society is not educated enough to be able to get involved in the social domain of 'contemporary art'. In this sense, contemporary art acts as an element in opposition to which a part of society is able to unite, against which a part of society is able to protest together; for example there have been protests against the play Golgotha Picnic (2014), protests at the Centre for Contemporary Art Zamek in Warsaw (2015), and opposition to Julita Wojcik's rainbow sculpture (or, an artistic construction in the form of a giant rainbow made of artificial flowers, 2012-2015) at Saviour Square. In this sense, paradoxically, contemporary art is socially important and useful. The problem of an adequate level of education, as well as the way in which institutions engage with contemporary art audiences, are emphasized as elements necessary for contemporary art to achieve its goals — forcing its audience to think, reflect on reality, and work through social problems, etc. The respondents point to the fact that it is possible to work out social problems, as well as their 'personal need, or even the necessity" to create, which governs their choices and professional life, even if it equals unpaid work.

In many respects, work in culture and art can be very similar in character to office and administrative work; it often differs only in terms of social status and/or lack of economic status. As one of the respondents says, "the economic status is the opposite of high (social) status, nonexistent." The lack of money combined with the desire for this higher social status is another problem. Sometimes artists, in order not

to lose this high status, do not want to admit that they simply do ordinary work for which they should be paid, but pretend that what they do is something more important which is so enigmatic that it cannot be reduced to an ordinary eight or ten hour working day. And certainly, artists often constantly think about whatever project they are working on, disregarding any division between work and non-work.

Often the work of an artist and work in culture takes place in many fields — research, artistic research, writing, creation — but this diversity is underestimated/not taken into account at the time of payment:

> "The economic issues should be reformulated anew, not only because of the artists, because it is already happening thanks to [....] the initiative, while I am annoyed and frustrated that you write a text you are sitting on for four days and that is writing, leaving it and coming back, and it is known that you still have this knowledge from the past and you get 500 PLN for it anyway. At least. I sometimes get 150 PLN for text up to 8 thousand characters."

These are tragically low amounts [500PLN is ca 100£, 150PLN is ca.30£]. The majority of the respondents work in design, or for foundations, cultural organizations, and art institutions, and outside these jobs they carry out their artistic activities.

Creative work can be different from traditionally understood work on a permanent basis also because it has a more complex nature:

> As if to draw it, it would be a few lines of those things you work on in parallel. On the other hand, the working time that your friends would tell you that you are really working now is relatively short because you probably spend a lot of time in front of this computer or write less time in front of it. But most of the time you're learning, educating yourself.

At the same time, creative workers were more likely to define themselves through their work. The respondents claimed that 'identity is very strongly linked to what you do. Your professional activity defines you,' and identified the field of culture and art as an industry which 'is very strongly rooted in social relations and concrete people and their concrete decisions, and is very much arbitrary.'

As another problem, a trend towards 'measurability' was identified, both in relation to the evaluation of the activities of cultural and artistic institutions, personal

successes, the self, and the criteria for selecting potential employees or participants in potential collaborations. The issue of sacrifice also arose regularly within the interviews. For some respondents, sacrifice is affirmative, i.e. sacrifices come easily, because they are for something you love and need to do. For others, sacrifice was viewed less positively, because due to professional and time requirements, relationships with people from outside the industry are sacrificed, as well as a certain economic status.

The prestige of the profession of an artist or culture worker is highly rated - but it is only social prestige:

> I say I am an artist; they have no idea about what I am doing, because you know they have never heard of someone like that, because I am not such a well-known artist. But they already treat me "oh," something more fun, something better in life than the ones who stand at the till.

Group interview on: money, power and prestige – the redistribution of capital in the art world.

The discussion was attended by seven people—three female and four male—including employees of public institutions, gallerist, artists, curators and administrators. The interview was aimed at confronting the participants with the, albeit partial, results of the quantitative survey which showed that the distribution of resources—money or earnings, but also recognition, respect, prestige—in the field of culture and art was considered to be fair. Although it is not a very egalitarian economic environment (metric of income per capita), the idea that there was a fair distribution of both tangible and intangible resources prevailed. An image thus emerged of an environment characterised by a stable moral economy in which people belonging to different occupational categories did not feel, as representatives of these groups, harmed by people from other occupational categories. The only professional category in which most people believe that they should earn better—according to the results of the survey—is the category of the artist. The results also showed that the level of satisfaction in the field of culture and art is not correlated with factors such as

earnings or (professional, living conditions) uncertainty. Moreover, the results of the survey showed a large percentage of people working for free.

The discussion largely confirmed the results of our survey. In an interesting way, the discussion drew attention to other problems related to the issue of wages in art and culture. Firstly, in the sector, similarly to other sectors of the Polish economy, wages are simply not discussed. Salaries are not made public at the time of publishing advertisements for jobs in public institutions. Secondly, some people working full-time in public institutions have a clause in their employment contracts stating that they are not allowed to disclose how much they earn, which is problematic in terms of conflict with management and general attempts to build solidarity in the workplace. The fact that individual salaries are kept secret is also associated with a wider problem of the lack of transparency in relation to individual project budgets. Before starting work on a project, it is not clear if and how much money will be 'found', if at all, and often turns out to be 'found' only at the moment of renegotiation or the active intervention of a private gallery representing a given artist, which will source, for example, fees for artists, which are notoriously accounted for as the last item in the settlement of budgets. One of the focus group participants, talking about not rewarding artists' work, states that: "Apart from that, there are probably such professions more exposed to such treatment – for example the profession of an artist, it is known that she should do everything for free and jump with joy at all, that someone wants to show her things. Recently we had a phone call from an institution in Poland, which invited three artists to the exhibition, a great catalogue, documentation, production and so on, and the only thing for which there was not enough money in the budget —which stretched to translating the material into seven languages —was remuneration for the artist, I mean we sent them an answer saying that if the security staff, the gallery assistants, and the cleaners all get paid, and only one person, i.e. the artist, would not get paid, then we probably cannot agree to it; and again – suddenly, they found the money."

This problem of remuneration of artists is reflected in the work of OFSW towards securing an agreement guaranteeing payments to artists working with institutions, discussed in the earlier part of this chapter. Artists wanting to 'get on the

career ladder' – not unlike those completing unpaid internships in the creative and cultural field – contribute their unpaid labour in the hope of becoming visible and eventually making a living from their work. Here, it is worth noting the useful distinction the US-based W.A.G.E (Working Artists in the Greater Economy) make in relation to the work of artists and the payment of fees:

> "Our demand has never been for a wage – it has been for fees, and it follows in the tradition of artists organizing around remuneration for cultural work in the United States that dates back to the 1930s. We see the contemporary fight for non-wage compensation as part of a wider struggle by all gig workers who supply content without payment standards or an effective means to organize. An artist fee is just a price for labor. It does not and cannot account for the time or materials involved in making art. We define it as the expected remuneration for an artist's temporary transactional relationship with an institution to provide content. The fee is not for the work of producing content and it isn't for the content itself – it is for its provision. It is for the work of working with an institution."[449]

Such approach to the issue allows sidestepping the myriad discussions about the nature and essence of artistic and creative work and focus on the arguably most important aspect, that is fair payment for contribution, in a way that parallels the discussion about paying unpaid interns in fair remuneration rather the speculation on future chances for employment, promises of exposure or experience. It is useful to consider all these kinds of unpaid work and internships from the perspective of 1970's feminist work (Wages For Housework, Federici's ideas and so on)– in order to be paid for, they need to be thought of in the same way that Wages of Housework applied in relation to housework in the home – they must first be considered *as work*.

Another issue concerning money in the budgets of institutions is related to the personal responsibility on the part of the staff of the institution:

449. See: http://wageforwork.com/about#top

> As a person who often employs people to work, I am often in a situation where I order work without a 100% certainty that my institution will be able to react on time with payment, to carry out a formal procedure, so that - and this is just a matter of my personal involvement in the projects, that I know that the money will be found, it means doing everything to get the money, but if you follow the procedures and the pace of the institution, I suspect that very often it would be the case that [the money] would simply not be found.

In the words of another participant:

> But in general, in publicly funded institutions, it should not be allowed to plan for, and spend, money that is not there, right? Meanwhile, in Poland, and especially among curators, it is notorious. That people simply order something, and promise they will settle it in the future, and then they never do, or it is hostile when you ask.

The limit on the number of contracts the institutions can sign within a given year is also an problematic issue: "... recently there was the case that we could no longer sign more [work] contracts, because we reached some limit, which, according to the ministry, we exceeded this year, and all the institutions had this problem. The total amount of money for employment contracts was not exceeded – It turns out that it is not the lack of funds, but the lack of possibility to sign contracts is a problem." Moreover, the system of accounting for grants, already mentioned above, which is currently in operation, is problematic. As one participant recounted:

> When a grant to my festival, for example, is received by me at the end of August and we planned to open in October, it is simply a total disaster for me as a curator, and [curators at all different institutions] have it. From outside of the institutions, this problem is not visible. We cannot plan because the money is coming late and we have no fiscal fluidity. How to work with a foreign artist, for example, who must have two visits, must get acquainted, think

about something? We cannot plan in advance. This is the main [problem] [...] the lack of cash flow, and these projects can never be extended, because we are immediately treated both by the Ministry, and by various other donors, as criminals.

Unpaid work —volunteering, internships, getting involved in projects in which there is not enough funds to pay for all those who take part in them —is seen in two ways. On the one hand, it is seen as a good way to enter the environment. On the other hand, it is seen as unnecessary exploitation:

> For example, we almost never take volunteers or apprentices because, firstly, we do not have money for them and, secondly, there are people who we cannot keep with us for more than a month, three months, a year, and very often there is no point in introducing them into a project if we know, that this person will not be there in a moment, and besides, we are all from Poznań, and you take money for the work done with us, so if someone has not received money, it means that he does not work there, but comes there for fun and may not show up the next day, for example – I would understand it completely. My definition of work, for example, is that it is an activity for which you get paid, if there is no remuneration, it is another form of help, recreation, spending time, but also I have never had a good experience with work – and I say about myself that when I worked for free, I never did it, I did not manage to put even the best intentions to work as when I was paid for it. And the people whom we asked for help or maybe who applied for help did not do the work as solidly as if they had received money for it, and on the other hand I did not dare to put more pressure on them or demand more, because this is not a job, but some form of spending time.

In other circumstances, working for free is seen as a positive:

> Well, sometimes you do something for free, I do something for free, something that could be my work and for which I could get money, but it

> gives me so much pleasure that I do it 200 per cent and not 100 per cent, as usual, well but because this is my choice, and nobody can push me to do it.

Unpaid work is also seen in economic terms, in the sense of "conversion of capital":

> […] Thinking in a strictly capitalist way, I feel – you convert it [this unpaid work] into money, but into money that will appear in a while, in the future, you speculate that it will be useful to you at some point.

The discussed hypothesis that working for free determines the possibility of later paid work was not confirmed in the discussion, albeit in a nuanced way:

> I think that in this perspective it is impossible to give up working for free because, for example, you would stop having friends, or you would be considered to be a person who thinks only about money, and in the field there is a very strong vocational motivation, there is a strong emphasis on "missionary" motivation in work in the field of art.

So, it would seem that in the eyes of my interviewees, unpaid work and internships can help visibility in the field, but it is not necessary to maintain it. Trainees, as well as students doing research, in public institutions are often seen as a burden on an already overworked team. The grant system is poorly organized and causes problems and disturbs the rhythm of work, with annual grants ending at the end of the calendar year. Respondents are dissatisfied with it. The fact that a large percentage of the contracts signed are zero hours contracts (often referred to by media commentators as 'junk' contracts) is a clear problem, as is the lack of uniformity between contracts used across various institutions – "It is easy to see when you take four contracts from different institutions in Poland – each one is entirely different, and actually, why is that?"

Group interview on gender and work in the field of art and culture

Due to the specificity of the research topic and the preliminary results of the qualitative part of the research, it was decided that only women would be invited to the final group interview. This interview was aimed at confronting two observations from the quantitative part of the gender-related research. First of all, the survey results show that despite the fact that women are clearly poorer —they account for 2/3 of the lowest earners, and only 1/3 of the highest earners —they do not show greater dissatisfaction with their earnings than men. Secondly, the quantitative part of the survey has shown that, regardless of their gender, the respondents indicated that "gender does not play a role" in recruitment within the field.[450] Moreover, only two people participating in the entire survey identified themselves as people with conservative views. Again – similarly to the topics discussed above, salaries and distribution of resources – an image of an egalitarian and fair environment emerges from the survey - perhaps also more progressive in the issues of discrimination. However, among the respondents women were over-represented in support positions, and underrepresented among curators, although among artists the number of women and men is more or less equal.[451]

I decided to invite exclusively women to participate in this part of the study, hoping for greater openness and freedom for respondents to express themselves on gender-related issues. At the same time, it is possible that those who accepted the invitation to participate in the focus group study already held the belief that gender-based discrimination is a social problem, related to the wider problems with the recruitment of respondents I described, as well as the fact of a certain 'passivity and fragmentation' of the field - of course, it may seem more likely that those who recognize gender issues as worth discussing / perceive the problem of discrimination

450. 'When analyzing the interviews, we paid attention to the role of the gender factor. As we know, gender inequality is one of the most serious challenges for egalitarianism in modern societies. Interestingly, in the world of art, the gender does not seem to play a major role. There are no fundamental differences in the statements of women and men on the topics discussed. They appear sporadically, and the discrepancies are not very pronounced. Women mention wage conflicts a little more often than men, but this issue is, as we have shown in many other moments, a general problem in the art world'. Free/Slow University of Warsaw, *Fabryka Sztuki*, 6

451. Free/Slow University of Warsaw *Fabryka Sztuki*, 7

as existing, would be more likely to accept the invitation. (But on the other hand, the fact that the term gender itself is publicly stigmatized[452], may have discouraged other invitees).

In the words of one participant, the results of the survey indicating that gender does not play a role when it comes to working conditions and unpaid work in the field, "have angered" the focus group participants. However, some of their respondents' statements from the discussion, were not based on 'objective data', but made in error. For example, the participant's general knowledge was that there were fewer female directors and curators than there in fact are. The fact that issues of discrimination came across as insignificant in individual interviews may be evidence of the broader mechanism for avoiding conflict or avoiding the disclosure of conflict within the field of art and culture (as Anna Zawadzka writes in the report, pp88-102), as well as the widely-distributed postfeminist sense that gender equality has improved, even when it has not, which in turn then reproduces the reasons for such discrimination in the field.

Although the results of the qualitative study would suggest (based on the answers to the question of political beliefs) that culture and art are less conservative and more open when compared to the rest of the society, it does not necessarily follow that it is in fact a more egalitarian field, and that there is actually less discrimination on the gender grounds compared to the rest of society. According to the participants of the focus group discussion, unlike those surveyed, this is not the case at all. In contrast, some claimed that this was "only the common impression, and not the truth."

In the individual interviews, the issues relating to gender discrimination within the field itself appeared sporadically (2-3 times, p7.). It may be that the respondents did not wat to admit this is an issue – both to themselves, and/or to the interviewers? It seems that, as in other sectors of the world of work, the issues of discrimination and sexism are not openly discussed. This is especially noticeable considering the broader level of public discussion on women's rights and gender

452. For more on "gender wars" in Poland see: Gillian Kane 'Gender ideology': big, bogus and coming to a fear campaign near you' *The Guardian*, 30 March 2018; Agata Pyzik 'Poland is having a sexual revolution in reverse' *The Guardian*, 11 February 2014

issues in Poland, in contrast to the public discourse and "feminist debates" in Western Europe/majority of EU countries:

> "I have the impression that sexism in the art world is not something obvious, nobody will tell you directly that you will not have an exhibition, because you are a girl, and your colleague who is a worse artist and male, will have this exhibition.. Besides, we bear children, this is our problem, this is exclusively our problem, there is no social support for female artists, because you work on [zero hour and commission] contracts, therefore there is no support, and this is sexism in my opinion, this is exactly what I think. And the fact that you will be gently patted on your back and told 'good, you are doing very well' it usually ends at the moment of your diploma/graduation. I know very few people that would be so determined to be able to withstand it, because it is simply a super-unpleasant world. The way I see it, the field of art is no more egalitarian, no more leftist-sensitive, and so on - not at all."

All participants in the group interview argued that gender did play a role in the art world. According to them, gender is central to both the recruitment process and the process of division of labour and duties, in ways that are visible every day at work – for example, when it comes to the distribution of the additional invisible and unpaid, traditionally gendered as female, tasks of support or conflict management at work. Clear gender issues, e.g. the approach to reproductive work, can lead to exclusion, conflict:

> One famous curator, also very important, on whom a lot depends, so to speak, she made such a remark – like, why do I have this child [....] why are you not at home with this child? Well, I got a little nervous because I knew that she has three children herself and I asked: you also have three children, why don't you sit at home? I was never invited to a project with her for the next 20 years, and I will never be, I was simply excluded, for that one response I couldn't give because I thought I was being humiliated with such a question.

As far as fine art is concerned, the fact that there is just 'one' [again – there are actually more than one, albeit still a few] master's studio run by a woman was

indicated as a problem. The participants also noted that proportionally there are more female art students and often – which mimics statistics from other disciplines – they have better results than men:

> Speaking from the perspective of the Academy [Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw] I have the impression that this has a lot in common [with gender discrimination], because there is a huge disproportion between the number of female students at the Academy and the number of female professors, I do not know if you ever noticed that there are very many talented girls who finish school and also end their artistic careers at this moment? Research shows that in artistic professions about 2 per cent of graduates of the Academy remain [in the field], while the rest begin doing different things outside of art., For me it has always been puzzling that when it comes to professorship, there are faculties in which there are sometimes diploma committees, when they defend themselves, when students defend their diplomas, and there is not a single female, there are twenty men there, and there are professors who treat the girls who defend themselves there from above, they patronize them."

As far as the problem of equal treatment of women in art is concerned:

> No, no, no, no, there is absolutely no [....] equal treatment, starting from the level of studies and then it continues to just grow all the time, and what Professor X once said before this debate, which we did about women in visual arts, that emancipation is impossible in the Academy, because there is a crowd of polite ladies and the professors who will always look down on them, so they will never emancipate, and so the girls can never emancipate and the professors will never change their attitude towards [the female students], and then, how are these girls supposed to work in the world of art?

As with other sectors of the labour market, and Polish society in general, comments on the appearance of female clothing are the order of the day: "Non-stop

questions about shoes, skirts, blouses. I've never heard a boy being asked about their clothes, or something like that."

However, if in the case of art and cultural work it is difficult to talk about measurable results, the problem is not a subjective comparison of the 'quality' of the artistic work of female and male artists, but rather with social conditions in general.

Women find it more difficult to devote themselves to artistic work in the same way as men and often give it up early ion in their careers. Maternity and social reproduction issues are extremely problematic, both in recruitment and in connection with the so-called 'fallout' from the field. For example, the fact that women employed on zero hours/ commission work contract are not entitled to maternity pay, despite the fact that both men and women are employed in this way, is more burdensome for women: "I had to make my boss aware of the fact – although he is a person of sixty years of age, and it is not his first business - about the conditions one must meet to receive maternity pay, he did not realize that when he hires me on a zero hour contract, I will receive nothing…" And in the words of a respondent working for another private company:

"For eight years at my office, an office like many others, nothing special – during this time we counted that fifteen guys had children and only one girl had a child."

Similar examples were also given from public institutions controlled by women:

> I was shocked that in an institution of such a large state like a museum, where there are trade unions that operate, the norm is that a woman, maybe the norm is an exaggeration, but there are often cases of women returning after maternity leave and being laid off. [...] And the men who become fathers get congratulations, go to celebrate with other male colleagues and drink to death, it is super [....] and this is something that shocked me, because it is a state-run institution, and the director is a woman.

The issues regarding earnings are unclear because, as emerged from previous group surveys, questionnaires and interviews, the subject of money is taboo in art and cultural work. It is difficult to say whether women feel disadvantaged in terms of earnings and to whom they compare their earnings to because no one knows who makes what in this field. Salaries are not disclosed. You simply do not discuss money

matters with colleagues. You might not even know that you are working with people who are working for free. In this respect, the interview did not provide much insight.

> Because in public institutions the earnings are secret, so we are not really able to verify various things, and just as I did not know about discretion for a moment while in the National Museum, there I met with the most transparent form. It was somehow explained to me, so that I knew why, when I could get promoted, it seemed at least logical to me, but in the museum where I am now, it is completely arbitrary, secret, so I can't compare it to men or anything at all.

This makes it more difficult for women to determine whether they are treated on an equal footing with men who perform the same functions as them. At the same time, issues of financial support from family members have emerged in the discussion with a focus on traditional marital/partnership arrangements where it is the man who supports the family or there are at least two incomes per household:

> In my institution we earn so little that I often wonder how others are doing, how they survive, if I can barely survive. And I realized that - like in the whole of our society - that most of those women who work there simply have rich husbands, and this is true, they have very rich husbands or quite rich husbands or at least husbands! And this is a nice job, relevant to their education and and they accept it despite the low salary because they can, because they have the support. Again, I realized that I am actually in a minority of people here, minory who do not have such support, and now I can understand how these women are able to work there for fifteen years or longer.

"Having a rich husband" is one thing, but having a partner, in general, is another: "The partner doesn't need to be rich, it's enough two have a two income-household." "If the husband makes enough, the woman's salary is just an extra – and nobody is fighting for it [an increase in salaries], because in total there's no need for it [if] there are women willing to do the job for nothing and they don't see a problem with this."

According to the respondents working in a public institution where the director is a man, gender can also have an impact on the process of awarding salaries when there are so-called "salary brackets" and a separate, discretionary process of

awarding promotions/processing applications for promotions, but, as above, these opinions may testify more to the beliefs of the respondents than to the actual state of affairs, however impossible to measure objectively:

> Not only how much you earn, but even what you say about promotion is very discretionary, because the promotion does not entirely depend on these procedures, only on whether your boss signs it, and it depends entirely on his humour, and whether he likes you or not, or whether he wants to or not, or whether he wants to, or *recognises* that you deserved it or not [...] But the 'brackets' are very wide […] so huge that I could theoretically earn five thousand more if I wanted to, if it was possible, but these are only 'brackets', suggestions, and then there is the so-called reality, namely you can't get a bigger salary and you don't know why or when, that means everything is unclear.

It should be noted that the above statement refers more to the lack of transparency in budgetary matters and salary levels, which are reflected in the results of surveys and interviews, than to the issue of gender *per se*.

During the discussion, the questions of solidarity and the raising of gender and feminist issues in the cultural and artistic circles were also raised. In the context of the general level of feminist discourse in Poland and the issue of women's rights and gender equality on the one hand, and the perception of the art and culture environment as a laboratory for change and at the same time the field of intervention in public debate on the other, it would seem that this is where some kind of intervention could be expected:

> So if one can say about this feminism, it seems to me that it is a hot potato, and it is very dangerous, and it is true, but now, recently, for the last five years, the last years in Poland, after 2012, this feminism in a new form is coming back, and one has to admit it, it has to be admitted, and this is already a new feminism I would say. It is also very important to be able to say: 'I am a feminist', but for example, my works are not necessarily and not all feminists, and to be able to defend it, and to have a language for it, because it has to be a general confrontation and not a gender confrontation.

From the results of this interview, then, it is clear that women's representatives of the world of art and culture —even if it is only a small/self-selected group —want to talk about issues related to discrimination on the grounds of gender, feminism and women's rights, and consider such conversations necessary. In my opinion, the fact that these issues are not addressed in surveys and interviews results from the specific nature of work in culture and art, a field characterised by informality, lack of hierarchy, networking etc., and not from the fact that these are issues of lesser importance. Whilst one group interview is of course not enough to draw ' final' conclusions, the trends are very apparent, and this, combined with the research results of the entire 'Art Factory' project, and the rest of my PhD enquiry, clearly shows that the gendering of internships and unpaid labour in the world of art and culture is a vital and frequently overlooked issue. As I suggest later, it requires future in-depth study.

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Conclusion

In this chapter I have brought together various aspects of activism regarding the issues of unpaid work and internships within the creative and cultural sectors and some of my own experiences and engagement in the field. I have shown different approaches, strategies and tools developed by a number of groups, in particular the Poland-based OFSW and the UK-based PWB with whom I have collaborated and discussed the finding from focus groups conducted as part of the Free/Slow investigation into the material condition of working in arts and culture in Poland. In my discussion I attempted to draw out the links between unpaid work and unpaid internships as conceptually linked to the traditionally female-gendered unpaid work of women, between the ostensible post-feminist contestations surrounding the relationship between gender and unpaid work and internships, as well as the often-female led (again, gendered) activisms on the issues of unpaid work, unpaid internships and precarity in the field of artistic and cultural work.

Chapter 7

Call you when I get there: Conclusions and further directions

Throughout the preceding chapters of this thesis I have examined issues relating to both paid and unpaid work and internships in the cultural and artistic sector. I sought to examine the various representations of the emergent figure of the unpaid worker and intern, as well as the ways in which the figure of the intern is gendered and normalized in media and policy discourses. I have done so via a set of intertwining, mixed research methodologies and reflections. These latter are neatly encapsulated in Małgorzata Goliszewska's video entitled *I'll call you when I get there* (2013).[453] In a perverse way, perhaps even contrary to the intentions of the author, who describes it as an analysis of the media's influence on our lives, I see it as one of the most apt images created in recent years to represent not only the material reality of paid and unpaid artistic and cultural work, but also the traces of the reception of this work by others, and even of the art market/cultural labour market itself. I use this works as an entry point to reflecting on the contributions of this this thesis. Goliszewska's work also provokes reflection on the issues I discuss, especially in the context of female artists and their remunerated, but also free, invisible, emotional, and unpaid forms of labour that are among the thematic threads running throughout this entire thesis.

Goliszewska is a young documentary film director and artist.[454] The 20-minute video relays the young woman's trip from Szczecin to Rotterdam to meet the owner of a small Dutch gallery, where she is to take part in an exhibition. As Goliszewska travels by train, the accompanying camera records a slowly changing landscape, monotonous and blurred outside the window. During the video, the artist has successive telephone conversations with her increasingly frantic mother, during which the artist gets increasingly irritated and her mother gets increasingly anxious.

453. Małgorzata Goliszewska, *I'll call you when I get there*. Video work (2013) Available https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r80kN98Jzx0, accessed 25 August 2018.
454. For the artist's bio, see: http://europeanfilmfestival.szczecin.pl/en/artist/Malgorzata-Goliszewska

The artist also has telephone conversations with her calm grandmother, and a professionally untrusting but cool-headed policeman.

The artist is travelling to a meeting with the gallerist, with whom she has exchanged emails and text messages, but never made personal contact. Concerned about this, the artist's mother has visions of kidnapping, repeatedly warns Goliszewska about properly taking care of her safety, and by implication her work and business. The mother is suspicious; she suggests that the people associated with the gallery might at best be fraudsters, and at worst human traffickers, who may intoxicate and forcefully kidnap Goliszewska. Her mother is convinced that the gallerists have bad intentions, and plan to exploit a naive and defenceless girl. The artist tries to explain, with growing impatience and frustration, the situation in which she finds herself; she protests the accusations and defends the gallery, and even asks the policeman calling her at the request of her mother not to intervene, because it might frighten the gallerist and put her whole project at risk. Goliszewska implicitly defends the unspoken rules and principles according to which she functions as an artist, but also as a precarious worker and participant in the field of contemporary art and cultural work — paradoxically, for all its showiness and appearances, one of the most blurred and murky areas of the contemporary labour market.

I understand Goliszewska's video on several levels. First of all, I view it as a brilliant commentary on the specificity of the artist's work and on how this work is perceived by others. The art market is presented as prestigious, where many transactions are based on parties pledging their 'word of honour,' even though everyone does not in fact believe in this 'prestige'. The artist's mother does not seem to understand what the essence of her daughter's work is; in fact she does not even see her work as work. She does not believe that an art gallery — which is called, incidentally, 'The Gift' [*Podarek*] — can exist in reality, just as some people do not believe in (do not know about) the existence of an art market and/or refuse to see the unpaid work of artists, cultural workers and interns as real work. The mother predicts the worst exploitation of her daughter on this particular trip, but in a way she does indeed prefigure a myriad of issues that Goliszewska may or may not encounter as a female artist while working and doing unpaid work in the field of art and culture.

The point is — in what I consider to be a perverse message of this video work — that work in the area of culture and art is, in fact, associated with exploitation, but in a completely different shape than that imagined by the older Goliszewska. Exploitation often exists and appears in an invisible and silent, or rather silenced, form and is experienced both by those who are at the receiving end and by researchers working on the subject.[455] The video reminds us that the ideas about the realities of the work of artists, cultural producers and both paid and unpaid interns within the field often differ diametrically from the actual situation, and at the same time are based on long-outdated myths and stereotypes. This ties in with my discussion and review of the literature in Chapter 2 concerning the evolving nature of work in general and work in the creative and cultural industries in particular, taking into account the specificities of working within such environments, in which the lines of hierarchy can be extremely blurred.

Goliszewska's trip to Rotterdam is rather haphazard, in the way blind dates can be. She admits that she will work for free and will spend the night at the gallery. She does not make it clear whether this is part of her project or whether it is simply a matter of saving money since the gallery has rented no accommodation for her. In a neat way, this leads to her discussing a series of real and material aspects of her work, which are just as vague and hazy as the landscape passing by the windows of the train on which she is travelling. She admits that there are certainly things to be wary about and to pay attention to when making decisions about everyday activities in the field of culture and art. Goliszewska indirectly points to inflammatory areas related to work in art and culture in a broad sense, such as, among others, the issues of precarity and of immaterial and affective labour, and of remuneration and gender inequality or inequality based on the social and class origin of people active in the field. The need and necessity to work for free are linked, among other things, to the increasing blurring of the boundaries between the private and the public spheres (although one could ask whether these divisions are still in place at all). These problem areas resonate with the themes I discussed in Chapter 3, in which I focused on literature

455. Experience and research by the Carrotworkers Collective and Precarious Workers' Brigade groups have shown that exploitation often takes the form of self-exploitation. See: http://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com/texts

directly related to unpaid work and internships, as well as in Chapter 7 in the section discussing the all-female focus group reflecting on the gendered nature of unpaid work in the arts and in Chapter 5. My thesis has demonstrated the ways in which issues of gender, affective labour, and class or social based inequality are being made light of, normalised and further gendered in popular media depictions of unpaid interns and workers in the fields of art and culture.

At one point in the video, there is a subtle allusion to the subject of reproductive rights – one of the areas in which female precarious and unpaid workers and interns are most disadvantaged – when the policeman patronises the artist with his claim that once she has her 'own children, [she] will understand'. The issues of female precarious work, reproductive rights, access to maternity leave and pay, healthcare and the related care work, and the often connected issues of falling out of one's job or field of work are among the gendered issues I discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, particularly in relation to the all-female focus group that I conducted, which discussed gender in relation to work and internships in field of art and culture. As the boundaries between private and public work and home life collapse[456], women not only take more and more of their work home, but simultaneously bring their home skills to the workplace. Much of this work is by its nature invisible – be it affective or care work – and their unpaid work performed after-hours is often not accounted for[457].

As I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3, the debates about the place and value of art in society and the possible ways of valuing and rewarding the activities of artists and creative work are not a new phenomenon. Equally, much attention has been paid to the subject of the relationship between art and politics, the art market and its economy, as well as to the (allegedly) specific nature of creative work in relation to other types of employment. However, the issue of artists' working conditions, or the working conditions of unpaid workers and interns in the creative and cultural sectors, do not necessarily arouse such interest. As Mark Banks rightly points out[458], despite the huge amount of research and publications on creative industries and creative work, relatively little is still known about female art and sector workers as workers *per se*. I

456. Weeks, 2011, as well as my discussion in Chapters 2, 5 and 6.
457. Hochschild, 2013
458. Mark Banks, 2007

discuss the literature related to these themes in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, and throughout the thesis I engage with these issues, in relation to popular media portrayals (Chapter 5), in relation to existing activism and resistance strategies (Chapter 6), and in terms of how they are being addressed in academic research projects (Chapter 6) and existing policy and regulations (Chapter 4). However, as is hopefully clear from my investigations, more research is needed across all of these planes, especially to cover the intersection of gender and the issues involved in unpaid work and internships.

The metaphor of the carrot and stick that I return to across Chapters 3–6 — a symbol of the stubborn pursuit of a desired goal and of self-realisation (often under the guise of self-exploitation or 'employability'), but also of the constant and ongoing endurance and negotiation of the negative aspects of unpaid work of both artists and interns in the cultural and creative fields – comes to mind again when watching the video by Goliszewska. The artist, intentionally or unintentionally, draws attention to the huge amount of affective labour inextricably linked to work in the CCIs. Affective labour operates here, however, not only in a positive sense — for the purposes of creating a positive affect or playing at or projecting enthusiasm, dedication, commitment or success – but also in the sense of negotiating negative affect, which is to say, incurring the mental, and sometimes physical,[459] consequences of sacrifice and eliminating inconveniences, sometimes to justify not even the content, but the very activity *of working as an artist* or a cultural worker or intern.

How much time and energy does Goliszewska have to spend to convince her own mother (let alone others in the field, such as collaborators and colleagues, employers and prospective employers, and clients) of the legitimacy of her journey and its proper, intended purpose? How many assurances and explanations can one give to legitimate one's labour — both in the sense of its immeasurable creative and cultural value, but also simply in the sense of legitimating it *as* work, and thus a task that should be properly remunerated? The artist takes on a huge effort of invisible, affective work, which is also a contributing element of her artistic work. Such

459. Gill 2002, 2009; Gill and Pratt 2008

invisible labour is also the effort that paid and unpaid workers and interns in the field of art and culture are required to take on.

This other kind of invisible, unpaid, affective labour is the kind that takes place in workplace conversations, negotiations, and meetings in which female workers must try harder than male counterparts to appear competent, 'fit for the job' or efficient and dedicated.[460] Just as in the home, women often volunteer their work and skills to other co-workers or collaborators. As Hochshild writes of the role of family in the work of male academics: 'While books have been typed, if not partly written, by wives, the family in the university has never been the productive unit.'[461]This formulation also makes sense when we replace the notion of a male academic with that of an artist.

As Goliszewska's video ends, we are never shown the final outcome of the artist's efforts. Did the journey, and all her additional work and efforts undertaken once she arrived at her destination, bring the intended and desired effect? In a way, just as Goliszewska observes the monotonous landscape outside the train window and explains, seemingly ad infinitum, the validity and purpose of her journey, so the unpaid workers and interns of the world of culture and art follow the carrot: slowly, in the hope of making it, or at least of creating stable, less precarious working conditions for their practice, thanks to which they could continue on their 'mission' and fulfil both their creative subjectivity and financial autonomy.

Throughout this thesis I have looked at different aspects of discourses and discussions on topics relating to precarity, policy and resistance in regards to unpaid work and internships in the cultural and creative sectors. I have addressed a number of gaps in the existing scholarship in regard to ways in which the figure of the unpaid worker and the intern have emerged over the past decades in Western media and in policy and activist discourses in the UK and Poland, I have looked at the ways in which unpaid work in creative and cultural sectors is gendered, as well as normalised — both in media and policy discourses.

460.This argument can of course be extended to include, in differentiated but equally important ways, people of colour and people of working-class origin; see Hochschild and Barbara Ehrenreich 2002; Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2018.
461. Arlie Hochschild *The Managed Heart* (2003), 242

In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed the existing literature covering the current debates relating to work and employment in these sectors and the depiction of unpaid work and internships in the creative and cultural industries in particular. I have identified some under-researched areas and lacunae in the scholarship on these subjects – especially the gaps that exist in relation to the material conditions and lived experiences, the normalization and distortion of the intern experiences, as well as the invisible and affective labour of interns and unpaid workers in relation to gender. I have included in this discussion my own work on internships in relation to the 'human capital' and 'employability' regimes, as well as the useful concept of workers' inquiry that I have worked on in the past and used in my work on the Metropolitan Factory project.

In Chapter 4, I examined the way policy literature in the UK has dealt with the subject of internships over a decade-long period and analysed how the question of internships is materialised in policy discourse. I concluded that while policy documents draw on data from surveys and national statistics, there is still very little research on the numbers of people carrying out internships in the visual arts and culture and, in particular, on the experiences they have had, as well as the gender, race and class barriers they might have faced. More academic research, both quantitative and qualitative, and national statistics in these areas is needed, as is raising awareness of the diversity of practices and positions on the issue of internships and other forms of unpaid work. The existing policy does not seem to actively engage with limiting the phenomenon of unpaid work and internships in these sectors. Rather, it delineates the field in which the practices described throughout this thesis can continue uninterrupted and perpetuates the current state. Further research in this area could suggest ways in which to make suggestions to improve policy and ensure limiting exploitation in the field of internships.

In Chapter 5, I looked at the figure of the intern as depicted, gendered, and normalised in popular culture – a straightforward analysis of the media construction of interning, yet one that is curiously absent in the existing literature. I found that the media examples served to normalise the experience of internships while

simultaneously gendering unpaid work and internships and presenting a rather distorted view of the experience of doing an internship, chiefly serving to depict a hyper-accelerated form of neoliberal self-enhancement and to bolster the pressure to identify with one's labour. I concluded that such depictions are misleading and dangerous because they present a distorted view of work within the creative and cultural industries. This analysis is an important and unprecedented exploration of the way in which the figure of the intern materialised across various public and media discourses. It would follow that further work deconstructing such media strategies could be fruitfully extended in the future.

In Chapter 6, I attempted to trace some of the links between issues of gender, internships and unpaid work in the creative and arts sector and activism and engaged with my experiences of working on these issues in the UK, as part of my past involvement with the Precarious Workers Brigade, and in Poland, as part of the OFSW and the Free/Slow University. With the latter, I worked on a large research project regarding the distribution of capital in the arts and cultural sector. In the chapter I described the research and conducted an analysis of the findings, and I recommend that a similar wide-ranging, quantitative and qualitative scholarly research project taking into account the material, lived experiences of working within the field, especially in relation to unpaid work and gender – as well as class and race based exclusions – should be carried out in the UK context and its result should inform existing policy. How, in an uncertain and volatile international climate, and unstable moment of capitalism, might we mobilize against the exploitation of the intern? There is by no means a straightforward or predictable answer to this question and it is it is beyond the scope of the thesis to provide one singular solution in such a complex landscape. However, it remains both extremely necessary and urgent problem, and in providing a more expansive and multifaceted diagnosis of this problem and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a range of preferred solutions, I have contributed to pushing this debate forward.

In conclusion, then, this thesis has shown how the figure of the intern materialises and how its representations circulate across multiple sites and through

various discourses, including academic and grey literature, policy and regulation, media and popular culture, activist and research efforts. As ongoing contestation and critique of unpaid internships co-exist with their growing respectabilisation and normalisation as necessary 'educational' or 'training' opportunities, scholarly and policy intervention is urgently needed to challenge the exploitation and inequalities that are built into this system. Spanning a long period, my work has shown that the subject of unpaid work and internships remains extremely urgent, both in terms of scholarly and policy writing, as well as activism around internships and social justice. As my thesis has shown, this absence of attention is particularly acute, in relation to firstly, the gendered nature of internships and unpaid work, and secondly in relation to the widespread normalisation and distortion of the image of unpaid work and internships in the media and popular culture. The unique contribution of the this work is to expand existing understandings of how the dominance of this form of free labour has come to percolate through the social, inform common sense and be subject to challenge.

Appendix

My thesis explores the current cultural politics of internships and unpaid work within cultural and creative industries from a multidisciplinary cultural studies approach. Therefore, I employ a certain cultural studies methodology, a mixed methods approach, that utilises a wide range of theoretical tools to explore the subject — in this case, internship culture and the construction of the figure of the intern — across multiple sites and from a range of different angles in order to illuminate and understand its contemporary significance and the role it plays in the current conjuncture.

This mode of approach has been used and developed in cultural studies over several decades.[462] Perhaps the most well known usage of it has been in the book *Policing The Crisis*, produced through collaborative work at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the 1970s, which examined what was then a moral panic over 'mugging' from a range of different perspectives — including studies of media, racialization and politics — to consider how common sense was changing in relation to the politics of the moment, or 'the conjuncture'.[463] As Jo Littler reminds us, the analysis of conjuncture as the central contribution of cultural studies, is simultaneously 'continually evoked and often maddeningly methodologically elusive', and points to the means of describing the 'specificity of economic, political and cultural forces at a given moment, in which both long-term organic and short-term changes in power relations are present, and as the place where political and cultural struggles are fought.'[464]

In this spirit, I am interested in precisely such cultural studies approach and my work seeks to share this 'conjunctural' character — in other words, my thesis

462. See for example Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*, Duke University Press, 2010; Gilbert Rodman, *Why Cultural Studies*? Wiley 2014.
463. Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, London, Macmillan, 1978
464. Jo Littler, 'On not being at CCCS' in *Cultural Studies 50 Years On* (2016) edited by Kieran Connell and Matthew Hilton, Rowman and Littlefield; see also 'Consumer culture and cultural studies' in Deirdre Shaw et al (ed) (2016) *Ethics and Morality in Consumption: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Routledge.

seeks to contribute a multifaceted investigation in order to present a rounded view on the configuration of circumstances and power that constitute the contemporary internship culture across different fields and realms.

This approach manifest in my work in ways that are twofold. Firstly, in the spirit of cultural studies' investigation and my academic experience at Goldsmith's CCS I combine my experience, insights and lived knowledge of academic and activist practice in my explorations of the subject. It is my aspiration that all kinds of my previous experience come through in the work — especially, as they are often intertwined. As a side-note, it is worth mentioning that in a way, the neo-liberal academia itself steered me in this very direction when as part of my MA course I was required to undertake and document an unpaid internship in the art world.

This type of linkage, as a form of mutual learning between forms of activism and academic practice has a longer history, which has been written about by a number of theorists. As a mode of 'reflexive practice', includes for example, practitioners involved in the realms of both social movement studies and feminist cultural methodology.[465] In similar vein, I do not see academic and activist experiences as necessarily separate from each other. In fact, I think that the conscious and innovative mixing of activism and academic insight is a strong aspect of the thesis and therefore constitutes a significant contribution to academic writing on internships and unpaid work.

To this end, I consciously draw on the various positions I occupy or have occupied over the past decade along the key axis of advocate/activist work as well as my analysis of policy and my use of academic research. These combined and reflexive forms of practice lie at the core of the mixed methods approaches characteristic of cultural studies scholarship.[466]

Similarly, my incorporation of my experiences of advocacy and activism are entirely compatible with this cultural studies approach. It is also fitting because a large portion of the work conducted as part of a number of collectives — the

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465. See Beverley Skeggs, *Feminist Cultural Theory: Process and Production*, Manchester University Press, 1995; and the journal *Social Movement Studies* (Taylor and Francis).
466. See Kieran Connell and Matthew Hilton (2016) eds *Cultural Studies 50 Years On* Rowman and Littlefield;

Precarious Workers Brigade, the Citizens Forum for Contemporary Art, and the Free/Slow University of Warsaw — was overwhelmingly focused on research, co-research, and inquiry into the nature of unpaid work in art and culture, as well as the lived experiences of the often unpaid workers and interns within these fields.

When it comes to academic and policy research, using a multiple lens approach, I take a largely literature and textual-based approach to analysing internships and the ways in which the figure of the intern materialises across different field and realms of contemporary discourse. I draw on a wide range of resources and bodies of knowledge including previous researches and surveys.

Below I list the different forms of analysis I undertook, and the approach taken to each:

- Chapter 4: Policy: How does the question of internships materialise in policy discourse? : I conduct a textual analysis of policy documents and literature on internships published in the UK between 2009 and 2018, focusing on the aims, audiences, and recommendations of a diverse spectrum of reports, guidelines, and toolkits that have been published during that period and assess how the ground is shifting around discussions of internships, which remain a live and mutable subject.
- Chapter 5: Culture: How is the figure of the intern depicted, gendered, and normalised in popular culture? : I conduct a textual analysis of films and TV programmes in order to analyse range of cultural constructions of the figure of the intern from a cultural studies and media studies standpoint. I select several typical examples of popular, mainstream entertainment. Films discussed include: *The Devil Wears Prada* (feature film, dir. D. Frankel, 2006), *The Internship* (feature film, dir. Shawn Levy, 2013) *The Intern* (feature film, dir. Nancy Meyers, 2015), TV series include: *Girls* (2012-2017, dir. Lena Dunham) and Gossip *Girl* (TV series, 2007-2017) and reality TV series include: *Gallery Girls* (reality TV series, 2012), *The Hills* (scripted reality TV series, MTV, 2006-2010), *The Intern* (scripted reality TV series, 6 episodes, Channel 4, 2013). What emerges is, on the one hand, a distorted view of the

experience of doing an internship: whether this is derived from the example of a (white) 'poor-little-rich-girl', or from the comedic version of a white middle-class (or posh) male. On the one hand, the examples discussed above serve to normalise the experience of internships and on the other hand, they serve to depict a hyper-accelerated form of neoliberal self-enhancement and to bolster the pressure to identify with one's labour.

- Chapter 6: Activism: How are internships and unpaid work being mobilised against? : I conduct an analysis of the activities of various collectives, also including the ones I have worked with: the UK-based Precarious Workers Brigade (including events such as Tribunal on Precarity and tools we have developed such as Bust Cards, and publications, including 'Surviving Internships: A Counter Guide to Free Labour in the Arts' and 'Training for Exploitation? Towards an Alternative Curriculum' — a resource pack providing alternatives to the mainstream curriculum in schools, universities, academies, and colleges that can often train students to become exploited cultural workers; the Poland-based Citizen Forum for Contemporary Arts (OFSW) (activities such as Art Strike and the publication of the book 'Black Book of Polish Artists') and the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, with whom I worked on the research project 'Fabryka Sztuki/Art Factory' (publication of the report in book form including a chapter by me, a series of focus group interviews with cultural workers on gender, money, and unpaid work). I do not see academic and activist work as exclusive from one another and I have brought my academic skills and critical reflexive engagement[467] to the projects I chose to get engaged with – it was certainly a two-way exchange. As Routledge writes: 'Certainly no simple opposition exists between academia and activism. Rather, occupying a third space of critical engagement enables research to become a personal and reflexive project of resistance.

467. See Maxey, Ian. (2005), Beyond Boundaries? Activism, Academia, Reflexivity and Research. Area. 31. 199 - 208.

> Clearly such a space must be one's own, not one prescribed, ordered, expected, enforced.' (Routledge 1996, 411)[468]

With the both academic and activist lenses applied, the thesis presents quite a unique, cultural studies approach-based perspective on a subject that, despite a decade of policy and organising efforts, remains urgent and under researched. As such — beyond contributing to the academic fields of cultural studies, cultural industries and creative labour studies, I have attempted to make it accessible to readers outside of academia and policy. The thesis is therefore a useful resource for anyone who is affected by the issue of unpaid work and internships: its audience can be interns and activists themselves, but also those who are responsible for running internships programmes at universities, those who are responsible for hiring interns at institutions and companies, as well as those who work alongside interns within companies and institutions in the creative and cultural industries.

468 Paul Routledge (1996), 'The third space as critical engagement', Antipode 28(4), pp. 399-419

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