Planning, Experiencing and Transforming the Urban Utopia: Local Music-Making in the New Town of Cergy-Pontoise, 1965-Present

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Solène Heinzl, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented therein is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, it is clearly stated.

Signed: Solène Heinzl

Date: 1 May, 2021

Dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Roger, thank you for your love, care and all the laughs that we shared.

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Abstract

This thesis studies the planning, development and ageing of the French new town of Cergy-Pontoise and its residents (1965-present) through the lens of local music-making. I observe the way top-down planning and bottom-up musical initiatives shape and reshape the new town through changing socio-economic and political circumstances.

I foreground musicians' voices and focus on how they experience, navigate and sometimes transcend the inadaptability of the typically one-size-fits-all cultural and urban planning regime. I explore the various ways the burden and slow pace of local government bureaucracy impacts the running of the planned facilities. Within this context, I discuss the lag between the paces of bureaucracy and planning and the rapid obsolescence of planned facilities and their equipment. I thus examine aspects of top-down cultural and urban planning and how musicians and urban communities are experiencing them on a daily basis.

Social science research focusing on new urban environments rarely explores local music scenes, despite music being interwoven within society, urban living and economics (Reyes 2012). Music is thus an insightful angle for studying the development of new urban areas and assessing their sustainability. Ethnomusicology has had limited engagement with issues of urban environment, and most of its studies remain focussed on older towns despite the current rapid urbanisation of many parts of the world (United Nations 2020). The interdisciplinarity approach of this thesis aims to address these gaps and build new bridges between ethnomusicology, urban studies and related areas of policymaking. The overarching aim of this thesis is to contribute to more sustainable urban living, cultural planning and community living. It does so by attempting to broker a conversation between residents affected by urban plans, policymakers and urban planners.

List of Figures

List of Acronyms and French words

Animation: Outreach, facilitation and mediation activities that may help: individuals' personal growth; strengthen bonds between people; and bonds between people and various entities (e.g. spaces, cultures, arts). Originally grassroots led, central government professionalised some of these initiatives in the 1960s by creating state diplomas and civil service *animation* professions.

Association: French legal status for not for profit organisations.

Communauté d'Agglomération (*Agglo/Agglomération*)*: Départements* are administratively divided into *communautés d'agglomérations.*

Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional (*CRR*)*: CRRs* are state music, dance and theatre schools with a regional outreach. They deliver state diplomas and higher-education diplomas.

Département: French administrative division. *Régions* are administratively divided into *départements.*

Direction Régionales des Affaires Culturelles (*DRAC*)*:* Offices branches for regional cultural affairs initiated by the then minister of culture André Malraux in 1963. They were generalised throughout the French territories in 1977. They are present in each *région* of France.

Locaux Communs Résidentiels (*LCRs*): Collective residential facilities.

Maisons de la Culture: Houses of culture.

Maisons de Quartier: Community centres.

Maisons de la Jeunesse et de la Culture (*MJCs*)*:* Youth clubs

Région: France is administratively divided into *régions.*

Quartiers prioritaires: The French government identify these areas as in need of state intervention. These areas typically concentrate populations with the lowest income compared to the rest of the country.

Scène Musiques Actuelles (*SMAC*) *& Scène Nationale:* These state labels are attributed by the French government to venues and theatres. These venues and theatres need to support emerging artists and help increase local residents' access to culture and arts. These venues have to be inclusive, diverse and fit within the state national cultural and artistic strategies and policies. The label *SMAC* is focussed on contemporary music venues specifically.

Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale (*SCoT*)*:* Plan of territorial coherence

Chapter One: Introduction

The on-going Covid-19 pandemic has caused many musicians to lose their income due to both the closure of music schools and the halt of live cultural events. Despite these hardships, many musicians around the world have found ways to perform offline and online through digital media, thus lifting people's spirits. When the pandemic began to noticeably impact daily life in Europe in early 2020, people in countries such as Italy and the United Kingdom would come to their windows at set times in the evening to play music to maintain social interactions, and also clap and make other noises to show their respect and thanks to essential workers. For residents in big cities, such as London, where loneliness is already prevalent for many, it was a very strange yet warming moment for some to come together to perform this solidarity through sound. These balcony and window concerts provided for some a nice distraction from the pandemic, with performers and their audience sometimes very close to one another due to the high density of certain urban areas.

At the beginning of the first European lockdowns in early 2020, borders were shut, all social activities slowed down, and local environments changed. In London, the air became less polluted, and the local urban soundscapes of the city changed as there were fewer cars and people in the streets. The city became very quiet and very loud at the same time. Organic sounds such as birds and people clapping at their windows became more pronounced, while machine- made sounds became almost extinct as there were fewer cars, construction works and planes. Digital sounds also became more noticeable, with many music performances being live-streamed and broadcast online through Zoom, Instagram, YouTube and many other platforms. More than a year after the pandemic began, the levels of traffic and air pollution have returned to their pre- Covid levels in many cities world-wide. New variants of the Covid-19 virus have increased the infection rates in some areas, many businesses have shut down, and many people who were struggling before are struggling even more. The new Covid-19 vaccines themselves, which are symbol of hope for the pandemic, are also a cruel reminder of some of the global and local divides: some countries can afford the vaccine while others cannot; ethnic minorities in the UK are hit the hardest by the pandemic; and while most British children have to study from home for extended period of times, not all of them have equal digital access or live and learn in an

adequate and safe environment. Nevertheless, some people state that the world will not come back to normal after the pandemic, and have started to imagine, plan and work toward visions for a new and more sustainable future post-Covid-19 that may involve a greener planet, better supported communities, a fairer society, and other brighter possibilities.

These utopian endeavours are similar to the utopian enterprise and spirit of the post-war new towns of the 1960s in Europe. Their architects and urban planners imagined new towns as beacons of hope for more sustainable futures with better ways of living. According to new town historian Rosemary Wakeman, this is not surprising, as when crises arise (e.g. wars, pandemics, natural disasters, etc.) utopian energies are also released into the world (2016, 4). These energies are both a reflection and a critique of the here and now. Although materialized utopias remain unachievable, utopian dialectics used as spaces of hope remain meaningful (Harvey 2000). This is because utopian dialectics help us exercise an intellectual optimism that fosters both open-mindedness and innovative thinking. This has the potential to help us envision ways out of the global capitalist system and its fatal problems (Harvey 2000, 17; Levitas 2003, 150).

Utopian dialectics is a common thread throughout this thesis, which explores local music-making within the French new town of Cergy-Pontoise, from its creation in the mid- sixties up to present-day. I focus on the dialectics between the materialised utopia that is the planned urban environment of the new town, its associated policymaking, and its confrontation with the messiness of everyday urban life, its residents and their diverging values. Throughout the thesis, I confront the idealised planned environment with how it is experienced on the ground by musicians, music professionals, local public sector workers, civil servants, and music community groups of Cergy-Pontoise. These voices and their interplay with one another provide insights into alternative urban ways of living, and alternative utopias to the one narrated by the urban planners. The thesis also aims to highlight issues of sound and music as crystallising hopes and fears for the past, present and future of the town as well as for other national and global issues such as models of citizenship performed locally, the threat of gentrification, and the potential consequences of over-planning policies and spaces.

Social science research focusing on new urban environments rarely explores local music scenes, despite music being interwoven within society, urban living and economics (Reyes 2012). For example, design and architecture scholars Yihong Jia, Hui Ma and Jian Kang state that the sound in local urban environments is crucial, and that urban soundscapes should be taken into consideration by urban planners and preserved if beneficial to the residents (2020, 8). Nevertheless, there is no mention of preserving a soundscape or creating an urban soundscape or regional sound as part of the planning of the post-war new towns, both in the historical overview of the new towns by Rosemary Wakeman, and in the personal diary of Bernard Hirsch, the urban planner of Cergy-Pontoise (Hirsch 2000; Wakeman 2016). Several urban scholars who focus on new towns also emphasise what they perceive as a divide between the planned new towns and their new residents, whom they understand as being alienated from their new town (Tanabe 1978; Eng 1996; Pazhuhan et al. 2015). They argue that this is because new towns do not have the time to forge an identity for themselves, as opposed to older towns (ibid.). However, local residents of the new towns do adapt and appropriate for themselves their new urban environments. Adaptation and appropriation processes include music-making practices, as anthropologist Ruth Finnegan observes in her 1980s ethnography of amateur music-making in her hometown, the British new town Milton Keynes (2007).

Politics, power and ideological stakes may be attached to local music-making that may or may not disrupt the town and its urban life, thus having an impact on the soundscape of the town (Street 2003). The process of music and sound negotiation and performance in the town, its positionality in a given space, the people involved in the process and its rich complexity highlight how towns are projects of mutual creation that are constantly shifting, being imagined, reimagined, made and remade (Holston 1998; Krims 2007; Taylor 2017). Music is thus an insightful angle for studying the development of new urban areas and assessing their sustainability. Reports by the United Nations have highlighted the current rapid urbanisation of many parts of the world and called for more sustainable urban developments (2019, 2020). However, Ruth Finnegan's case study of Milton Keynes aside, ethnomusicology has had limited engagement with issues of new urban environments, and most of its studies remain focussed on older towns and gentrification as will be discussed in chapter 2. The

interdisciplinary approach of this thesis aims to address these gaps and build new bridges between ethnomusicology and urban studies.

The French new town of Cergy-Pontoise, which is located thirty kilometres north-west of Paris, is an ideal case study for this thesis. This is because the town was planned and developed with a focus on cultural facilities to avoid being impersonal and to avoid repeating the mistakes of earlier post-war new urban developments that took place in France (Hirsch 2000). The town was founded in 1965, only a few years after the creation of the French Ministry of Culture in 1959. In the 1960s, cultural decentralisation policies of the new ministry developed in parallel with urban decentralisation policies. In this thesis, I explore the ways in which cultural policy, economics and urban planning have impacted Cergy- Pontoise, its residents and local music-making. I also delve into the ways that residents and local musicians' practices reflect and negotiate wider social, economic and political challenges. The overarching aim of this thesis is to contribute to existing considerations about sustainable urban living and cultural planning (Giduthuri 2015; Schippers and Grant 2016). It also hopes to contribute to the existing body of research and practices that focus on integrating ethnography as a valid source of evidence for better and more citizen-centred decision-making at various policymaking levels (Siodmok 2014; Kimbell 2015).

Methodological approach and theoretical frames

I chose an interdisciplinary approach to tackle these research questions in a more comprehensive and inclusive manner. In practice, this means that I engaged equally with urban studies, cultural policy and ethnomusicology academically by engaging with literature from all disciplines as well as with relevant past and present policymaking documents (e.g. speeches, laws, regulations, planning documents) and in practice during fieldwork by including in my interactions musicians, local policymakers, social workers, residents, historians, urban anthropologists. This approach also helps prevent the fragmentation of knowledge and disciplinary isolation (Born 2005; Dube 2021; Shenkar 2021). Interdisciplinarity is also a way to better understand our musical past and futures, and a way to expand and rethink innovatively the ways we approach the study of music (Born 2010: 242).

Throughout the thesis, I focus on establishing a dialogue between various disciplines. To do so, the thesis draws on literature from various fields such as: ethnomusicology, urban policy and cultural policy. This includes literature centred around ethnomusicology and issues of urbanism and capitalism, French cultural policy studies, urban studies focussing on new towns, and other relevant literature that focusses on music in the context of rapid global urbanisation and complex environments. This approach brings to the fore the connections between the various disciplines that this thesis tries to tie together to get a fuller picture of music-making within the total complexity of its environment. It also allows for a richer understanding of the problems of urban development by shining a light on the transient characteristics of the social, economic and political contexts of music and music-making. Additionally, this approach also attempts to not be limited by categories of people or music and tries to be as holistic as possible to get richer data with regards to the local music scenes of the town and their surrounding environments. In practice, this approach means that I chose to not focus on one specific music genre or grouping. Cergy-Pontoise as a case study was ideal as it was large enough to allow me to get a variety and depth of ethnographic data (e.g. different community groups, councillors, perspective of both the public and private music sectors) whilst remaining small enough for me to keep a hold of the bigger picture (e.g. I explored both local policymaking and central policymaking within the context of the residents and policymakers' experiences of the town). This approach aims to cover more grounds and to contribute to minimizing blind spots such as missing concepts and theories that are relevant to the research (e.g. urban, social, policy), and music practices that are not clear cut in terms of categories of genres or type of practices.

The methodology for this thesis was ethnography at home, as I am a native from Cergy-Pontoise, and stayed with my family while conducting fieldwork. However, as a resident of the UK, the fieldwork was completed through several trips to France. The trips varied in length, with some lasting a few weeks, and others a few months. The methodologies used were observation, participating in activities of grassroots music community groups, semi-structured and life story interviews, and digital ethnography (as an observer). The aim of these methods is to better understand the lived experience of local musicians from their perspectives, and within the environment in which they live. I

interviewed musicians, residents, local councillors and other individuals connected to local music practices. I also attended concerts and volunteered with local grassroots music community groups. I spent time at local music studios, venues and music schools, and discussed the local music scenes of Cergy-Pontoise with their staff. I met musicians who live or work in the town and who have very diverse views on urban living, and the role that music plays in it. Some considered that music was a private affair and that it should not be subsidised, supported, or encouraged by the town; while others valued local music-making in the community as an essential and powerful tool to both resist urban disrepair and foster what they perceive as good local urban living. Some musicians find the town inspiring and experience it as a safe cocoon, while others find it alienating, or restricting. Although I gathered a wide range of perspectives and experiences within the community of residents of Cergy-Pontoise, the community of residents itself felt relatively small at times.

I noticed that people usually knew each other, and had heard about each other and about other people who could be considered as figures of Cergy-Pontoise because they are linked to certain events, initiatives or narratives that make up the town. Even my parents who do not take much active part in the local community of Cergy-Pontoise know the names of some of the main grassroot community groups and cultural councillors, who at times sparked intense local debates (e.g. if they were involved in the cancellation of a music festival).

Within this context, I found myself interviewing and engaging with more than forty people who very often knew or knew of each other to some extent, but whose opinions could often be in tension with one another. Some of the people I talked to were very aware of both my position as the novice researcher who will write about them and of their own position within the town (e.g. as a well-known member of the local music scenes or the life of local events) and within my research (e.g. as a source of valuable information). This was often expressed by participants stating for example: 'If so and so knew I told you that, they would absolutely be cross with me. Please do not tell them [or at times 'do tell them!']', or, 'I'm sure so and so said this to you, didn't they?'. Others asked me to turn off my recording device mid-interview and asked me for anonymisation for fear of conflict with other people that they assumed I would meet and talk to. This, at times, put me in an awkward spot

especially when I was quizzed by individuals I met about my own position with regards to various matters that relate to the local politics or the local gossip about certain grassroot community groups. Some of the people I met were also suspicious of my relative quieteness and lack of opinions on certain matters. At times I felt pressurised by certain people who wanted me to take a stance. Others assumed de facto that I agreed or did not agree with them on certain matters. For example, when there was a falling out of one of the grassroot community groups that I volunteered with I found myself still being in touch with people on both sides of the divide, which put me in a difficult position in terms of the existing rapport I built with people from that group. It was also simultaneously difficult but insightful when I was given various versions of events that happened as part of the falling out. Sometimes I felt as that people saw me as a bridge for certain individuals to gather information about one-another or for people to get their point across to someone else or another organisation in the town through me.

For example, I remember a senior member of one of the grassroots community groups I spent time with asking me questions such as: 'How was it to volunteer for that other community group? How different are they from us?'. I also remember receiving various grievances from the private music sector. One of the private music studios' manager and owner that I met asked me mid-interview: 'How is it that the council opens its own public music studio with cheaper fees than mine only ten minutes away from my own private studio? You should probably ask them!'. All of these situations, meant that I found myself in the middle of various opinions and positionalities about the town, the role of music in it, and residents' perceptions of one another and how they relate themselves to the town, the local council, the towns' private sector and grasroots community groups. Although it was not easy to manage at times, these tensions gave me insights about music in a new town and how it relates to urbanity, citizenship, the right to the city, and community living.

Cergy-Pontoise has also constantly been developed throughout the fieldwork and writing phases of this thesis. Further urbanisation and regeneration of the town were happening simultaneously. I had to adapt to the fact that some of the venues that I visited prior to and during the fieldwork were either destroyed or replaced. Local elections also occurred leading to changes of councillors responsible for cultural and music fields. Additionally, a local music community group,

which I volunteered with, stopped in the midst of successfully organising free music events gathering

thousands of residents each year in Cergy-Pontoise. More recently, national lockdowns and restrictions

have closed all the music venues, causing some of the local music scenes to move online (see figure 1),

or to become completely quiet. The town and its residents are still in a state of flux. The case studies

from this thesis may have been accurate at the beginning of the thesis but then changed in a short time.

When I became aware of a change, I have highlighted it in the thesis, but there may be more changes

since then that I am not aware of.

Figure 1 Digital poster for an online music event organised by a local music community group. The poster states: 'Closed (open) mic night: You record yourself, We broadcast you, You enjoy yourself! We are counting on you!' (Screenshot from Facebook, April 2020) [1]

Thesis outline

This thesis follows simultaneously a hermeneutic spiral and a movement that goes from the

macro (e.g. institutions) to the micro (e.g. individual) levels of analysis. It ends by bringing back all

levels of analysis together and by exploring whether the initial ideals and plans have been replicated or

iterated in present times. The thesis follows a structure that starts by detailing the initial utopian

planning of Cergy-Pontoise from the perspective of its policymakers and urban planners. It then

contrasts the initial ideals and plans with how local residents involved in music practices are

experiencing it in present times. It ends by turning to the regeneration of the town, and asking

whether lessons have been learned from the lived experiences of musicians and the shortcomings of the

initial planning.

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[1] All translations from French to English are by myself unless otherwise stated. I italicize French words that I choose to use when there is no adequate English translation. All screenshots are by myself unless otherwise stated and anonymised when from private Facebook groups

In Chapter 2 I review the available literature with a particular emphasis on urban ethnomusicology, urbanism of the new town, and French cultural policy literatures, as these are the disciplines that are crosscutting throughout this interdisciplinary thesis. In Chapter 3 I detail the research methodology with a particular focus on fieldwork at home, and how I negotiated it as a native resident of Cergy-Pontoise. Both in Chapter 2 and 3, I detail the interdisciplinary approach I chose and how I navigate its opportunities and challenges throughout the thesis.

In Chapter 4 I explore both the national and local social, economic and policy-making context of Cergy-Pontoise at the time of its initial planning and later developments. In this chapter I focus on many of the early planning stages of the town, but also give relevant context about the later stages that followed from the institutionalisation of certain forms and practices of contemporary music in France (e.g. hip-hop). It also includes details about non-built planning, including *animation,* which is the planned livening-up of the new town and its facilities. This chapter also positions Cergy-Pontoise within the French administrative and geographical landscape, thus giving a relevant foundation for the rest of the chapters and highlighting that the initial planning of the town was very much top-down, functionalist, and planned for an idealised non-existent resident. This resulted in a town that reflects French society and policymaking culture at the time of its planning. Institutionalised cultural practices have their dedicated cultural facilities, while amateur and grassroots practices are relegated to the private sphere and community centres. In practice, this over-planning leaves little space for the residents themselves to organically make the town their own.

In Chapter 5 I focus on the residents themselves and their experience of the initial planning on the ground. I explore more specifically the town's music *associations* that are groups of residents and the different dynamics at play between them, musicians, residents and local authorities. The chapter aims to bring to the fore that the reality of the residents is much messier than a rigid top-down planning document. There are many ideals and realities in the town. On the one hand, the new town of Cergy-Pontoise as a concept has very little pre-existing history, the music *associations* and music events contribute to place-making, sonic memories and a public realm for the new town. On the other hand, some of these music practices also crystallise and bring to the forefront the local tensions that relate to

the segmentation of the town. These tensions reflect wider challenges such as the tensions about the French state model of secularism and the erosion of certain citizenship models as will be discussed later in this chapter. Throughout this chapter, I use Michel De Certeau's concept of strategies and tactics at play within urban life (1984). I also find helpful Émile Durkheim's concept of anomie, which is used by urban anthropologists to refer to urban disrepair and the crisis of the French republican contract (Durkheim 1984; DiCristina 2016; Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011). In additions to this, I explore ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino's concept of participatory music as a moment of communitas to negotiate local and national tensions and fragmentations (Turner 2012; Turino 2016).

In Chapter 6 I focus on the town's musicians' individual experiences and perceptions of the town, which vary from the town being experienced as a cocoon, to the town as being the anaesthesia of creativity. In this chapter I focus on different generations of musicians experiencing different developmental stages of the new town, and how they each adapt to the changing context of the town. I highlight the variety of individuals' experiences and expectations of the town as well as the shared individual experiences of the suburbs and of being categorised as suburbanites by some Parisians. These individual experiences shine a light on individuals' boundaries between amateur and professional musical status; between being authentic or non-authentic, and between Cergy-Pontoise and Paris. These boundaries are a reflection of the current state of Cergy-Pontoise in terms of its opportunities and challenges for musicians but are also a reflection of musicians' own inner boundaries of how they perceive themselves and others.

In Chapter 7 I address music in the context of the regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise from 2011 onward, within a context of a town that is still in construction, ageing, and with existing problems that the regeneration does not, or cannot fix. The town appears to be in a transitive stage from the initial new town to a much larger urban entity. I explore present impact on the local music scenes and speculate about future challenges. I specifically focus on the programme of construction of more modern and larger music facilities and explore whether they are similar to the facilities that were part of the initial planning, or whether they differ, and to what extent. I do so by exploring the first reactions of the music community groups, music professionals, and musicians toward the emerging new

developments and the existing new facilities. This provides some insights regarding new potentialities for the musicians, but also brings to the fore the difficulties and barriers experienced by musicians that I identify in Chapter 5 and 6 that the regeneration does not address or cannot resolve. This leads to considerations on whether the town is at risk of being gentrified; whether there will be remaining spontaneous spaces and times in the town, or whether some of the local music scenes and music *associations* are going to be pushed towards the outside of the town or further. Throughout the chapter, I use literature from scholars who approach dialectically both urbanisation and regeneration as parts of the capitalist cycle, and as subtle forms of disciplinary power that affect the right to the city and local music scenes (Foucault 1975; Krims 2007; Harvey 2014; Harrison 2020).

In this thesis, I focus specifically on the messiness of the planned new urban environment, and how it is experienced in practice by local musicians, music community groups, and local cultural councillors. The thesis is a feedback loop, I start with the utopian initial planning of the town and conclude with the most recent urban development of the new town. I explore whether these new developments repeat or reinforce the initial utopian ideals and I touch on potential futures of the town and the practices of its musicians and residents. I conclude that to some extent both the initial planning and the regeneration of the town repeat the initial utopian ideals because of the difficulty to plan for an inexistent future whilst tackling challenges that may rapidly become obsolete (e.g. because of the rapid develoipment of new digital tools). Nevertheless, I also argue that these utopian ideals are also constantly iterated via the dialectics between local residents and musicians' quotidian tactics and top-down strategies, which both continuously reimagine, stage, animate and renegotiate the town's urban narrative, community living and spaces.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

J'suis pas né dans le
Missouri J'suis pas
d'Oklaoma City
J'ai grandi dans le 9-5 à Cergy, Cergy
Mon petit paradis Ma sweet banlieue pourrie
Dans le coin, c'est l'Oise qui coule
l'ami Pas le Danube, ni le Mississipi
Ici c'est Cergy

I'm not born in Missouri.
I'm not from Oklahoma
City

I grew up in the 9-5 in Cergy
Cergy, my little paradise,
My sweet rotten suburb

Here, is the Oise that flows my friend
Not the Danube nor the Mississippi.
Here is Cergy.

Anis 2005 "Cergy*"*

2.0. Introduction

Cergy by resident of Cergy-Pontoise and French chanson, jazz and blues singer Anis shows the artist's attachment to his town (Anis 2005). What creates an attachment to a place, in particular in an urban context? What role does music play in this attachment? Many scholars have pondered these questions in urban contexts (Krims 2007; Cohen 1995; Reyes 2007; Finnegan 2007). Such research has analysed how music is associated with place-making and the rituals that develop city life through recurring urban events and festivals (Cohen 1995; Finnegan 2007). To what extent and how do rapid global urbanisation and neoliberalism impact music practices within the context of place-making in a new urban environment? How can urban planning contribute to creating sustainable spaces for local music-making?

As briefly discussed in the introduction, the new town of Cergy-Pontoise is an ideal case study to explore these questions. This is because it was created as part of a state urban decentralisation plan to control the Parisian urban area's growth. The new French Ministry of Culture, founded in 1959, also aimed at decentralising culture. As such, both urban and cultural policies during the initial planning and development of Cergy-Pontoise intertwined at the national and local level as both ministers had to

respond to the same national strategy of decentralisation. The impact of these policies (e.g. development of state music schools and orchestras for each *région* of France) will be explored within the context of the new town as part of chapters 4 and 5.

Cergy-Pontoise is no longer new: it now has multiple 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' venues and events, including festivals attracting more than just a local audience, such as the street and circus arts festival *'Cergy, Soit!'* (Cergy, Be!). As of September 2021, there are around seven hundred bands listed on the website of the Combo 95 (a network of musicians of the *département* Val d'Oise); half of them hail from Cergy-Pontoise. There are also many music and cultural festivals and grassroots music community groups, with some Cergy-Pontoise residents attending or volunteering for them and at their events. Some nationally famous artists come from Cergy-Pontoise such as Youssoupha (rapper) and some internationally famous, such as Von D (DJ). Some of the people I met there also assert that Cergy-Pontoise possesses its own sound, expressed in bands such as the Ogres de Barbacks (French songs with influences of Roma music) or K2R Riddim (reggae). This raises numerous questions. To what extent can state urban planning – using music, culture, and art buildings – encourage or hinder better residential urban areas? How do people liven up their new town or no-longer new town? How does a new town liven up its residents? What does it tell us about the role of music in a new town? How are residents experiencing their town? How are they filling the gaps left by top-down planning, government planned outreach and other top-down policymaking? What are the experiences of musicians in the town?

I use ethnomusicology as a frame and methodology to approach the research questions. I consider music as a creative or performative act and as a social practice (Blacking 1973; Small 1999; Reyes 2009). In the case of this thesis, I focus on music as one of the residents' ways of relating with the new town, with one another, with their local authorities and with other entities (e.g. with central government). I explore these questions more specifically through the approach of urban ethnomusicology to render visible the complex and changeable interactions between the urban environment, people and music (Schramm 1982; Krims 2007; Hicks 2012). Although new towns are becoming a global norm due to the sharp increase in urban developments, existing ethnomusicological

literature has not dealt with new towns apart from Finnegan's study of amateur music-making in the new town of Milton Keynes (2007). Ethnomusicologists have looked at how musicians map a city through music, and are concerned with urbanism (Cohen 2012), but there is no discussion of the conception of new towns and the interplay with local music life and residents. Thus, I am engaging extensively with literature on urbanism and new towns to examine the concerns and constraints of urban planners when planning the cities of tomorrow, particularly the extent to which culture and arts have been part of their planning. Urbanism has looked extensively into the lack of identity of new towns and the gap between residents and their new town (Pazhuhan et al. 2015; Casakin, Hernández, and Ruiz 2014). These studies highlight that urbanists need to be more inclusive of residents' needs, wants and ways of living.

Urban planners have to engage with cultural planning as part of their duty to include recreational and cultural facilities. French urban laws state that urban planning needs to respect a list of residents' needs, including culture and leisure facilities (Article L121-1 in *Code de l'Urbanisme*). The United Nations Habitat Programme that works toward a better urban future, considers that urban sustainability should include cultural facilities to promote social diversity and connectivity (2020). Urban planners also engage with cultural urban planning for tourism and cultural economy purposes (Landry et al. 1995; Bloomfield and Bianchini 2004; Florida 2014). Urbanist Robert C. Kloosterman notes that urban cultural planning, although originally conceived as a social need, had been planned with a top-down patronizing approach limited to high culture in the 1970s and then evolved to become only concerned with economic gains in present times (2014). Economist Ann Markusen and urbanist Anne Gadwa note that urban planners and decision-makers miss or waste cultural urban planning opportunities because the norms and goals for their rationale are not researched and clarified enough (2010). They argue that to resolve this problem a more holistic approach is needed. As they state: 'In Europe and developing countries, consultants working globally… as external catalysts on cultural strategies reinforce spatial divides and social exclusion… We hope this call for a broad and interdisciplinary research agenda will contribute to better knowledge and practice' (ibid., 388).

Ethnomusicology, and awareness of the role of music, contribute to this broader and more interdisciplinary approach. Throughout this thesis, I contribute to interdisciplinary research between urban studies, ethnomusicology and its subfield urban ethnomusicology, aiming to open more potential for such collaboration (Krüger 2009; Reyes 2012). Urban ethnomusicology was born in the last quarter of the 20th century when some ethnomusicologists decided to study urban environments and move away from traditional ethnomusicology that is characterised by the study of far-away rural music or art music traditions (Reyes 2012, 200). There have been subsequent scholarly debates about whether urban ethnomusicology should be a new field or whether it is redundant, and whether the urban prefix should be removed. According to Bruno Nettl, early ethnomusicologists were already studying urban ethnomusicology without paying attention to its urban-ness (Nettl 2015, 200). Nevertheless, if the urban is just considered as the accidental part of the field and not as an essential element of the field, then an urban ethnomusicology field is not useful and risks becoming a way to find exoticism in the urban locale (Schramm 1982, 12). Instead of considering the urban as an 'accidental part of the field', there is a potential for urbanism and urban ethnomusicology to engage dialectically and combine their data and analysis to obtain a richer evidence base to explore planning and living in new urban developments.

The case of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise also draws attention to the role that the state and cultural policy can play in urban development, as the developers of Cergy- Pontoise have used and negotiated cultural policies throughout the creation and development of the town. Urban and policymakers who are involved in planning new towns have ideologies, which are also subject to shifting social, economic and political contexts that impact the decision-making of the local authorities, urban planners and central government. However, new towns and their largely top-down planning have not necessarily been studied extensively in conjunction with local music-making, resident place-making and new urban development problems. This thesis aims to bridge some of the gaps between less visible local musical processes and cultural and urban policies. To address these gaps, the thesis attempts to bring together disciplines of urbanism, cultural policy and ethnomusicology to show the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to tackle issues in new towns that are multifaceted. In this

chapter I review the literature associated with the different disciplines that are part of this thesis. I highlight the lack of engagement of ethnomusicology with new towns and the limitations of non-interdisciplinary studies. This will position this thesis as a more holistic approach for problems such as sustainability in new urban developments and the role music can play in it. Additionally, the small body of anthropology literature specific to Cergy-Pontoise will be reviewed (Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011). This will help contextualise the new town of Cergy-Pontoise and highlight its relevance as an ideal case study.

2.1. Ethnomusicology and the holistic study of music

One of the ways Timothy Rice defines ethnomusicology is as follows: 'an academic discipline based on reasoned discourse in words about the full range, in all places, and time periods, of human music and music making' (2014, 10). This definition brings to the fore that ethnomusicologists understand music practices and people as being embedded in various communities, societies and contexts. Thus, the ethnomusicologists' field of research is broad and necessarily multidisciplinary to be able to address the complexity of the music practices ethnomusicologists wish to study. Nevertheless some scholars consider that ethnomusicologists could better engage with other disciplines in their writing and consider how they may contribute to them by encouraging more interdisciplinary conversations (for example, Reyes 2009, 2; Spiller 2014, 346). Ethnomusicologist Simone Krüger considers that ethnomusicologists could better develop the discipline's existing holistic approach by limiting the use of music categories and other types of clearly defined constructs to delimit and frame their research (2009, 162). Georgina Born uses the concept of mediation to argue for a more fluid way to look at music to address better the various and complex ways music, people and their environment interact (2005).

Additionally, although ethnomusicology is multidisciplinary in outlook, it does not necessarily engage with all disciplines equally and fully. An example is economics, something that ethnomusicologist Anna Morcom considers ethnomusicology until the 1980s was very little concerned with (forthcoming). Even from the 1980s, economy and music were not studied as a whole but in segments (e.g. commodification of music, popular music, etc.) (ibid.). Some musicologists and

ethnomusicologists are now concerned with addressing economics and capitalism as integral parts of their research for a more in-depth and broad understanding of music and music practices within their contexts. Jonathan Hicks, Michael Uy and Carina Venter, for example, wonder whether capitalism has made the ways that sound and music move and reconfigure private boundaries and properties more complex (2016, 10). Morcom, through the example of Mumbai dance bars, shows how capitalism can change culture and the way it pervades the performing arts (Morcom 2015b), and Timothy D. Taylor details how capitalism has changed the production and consumption of music (2016). These approaches may help scholars better understand music as a whole and contribute more effectively to other disciplines (Rice 2014, 205). The Digital Age and its subsequent associated crisis for music businesses has also brought new paradigms and research practices in ethnomusicology (Anderson 2014). Daniel Allington, Byron Dueck, and Anna Jordanous examine the act of valuing electronic music within the context of the London electronic music scene and the online platform SoundCloud to shine a light on the ways digital music platforms can be a mirror of the offline existing cultural economy network of cities and existing geographical inequalities (2015). Thus, this shift reinforces the need to consider music and economy together with a focus on value (Anderson 2014). In 2014, Anna Morcom set up the Economic Ethnomusicology Special Interest Group within the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) to better consider economy and capitalism within the study of music, and also to better align with other social research disciplines that are already engaging with economy and other disciplines. The aims of this new group as Morcom states are: 'to intensify focus on these topics and to forge new connections with anthropology and other social science disciplines' (forthcoming).

Some ethnomusicologists have highlighted other challenges and barriers to being able to study music practices with a more holistic approach and in ways that engage more fully with other disciplines and better align with anthropology and other relevant social sciences. Some of these barriers and challenges, amongst others, include constructed categories of people and music. Constructed categories are not specific to ethnomusicology. Nevertheless, some ethnomusicologists such as Byron Dueck write about the difficulty to manage these categories when researching and writing (2013). For example, Dueck addresses these difficulties in his introduction to his monograph about his research of

the aboriginal musical scene of the western Canadian province of Manitoba. He discusses several musical practices that are performed in English and with Western instruments. In his introduction, he indicates to the reader that while these practices may not be perceived as indigenous by some, and are also linked with colonialism and neoliberalism, some of the aboriginal musicians that he met consider these music genres to be their own.

Throughout this thesis I wish to also address these barriers and challenges by engaging robustly with the disciplines of urbanism and policymaking. I also have chosen not to focus on any particular category of music practices. Additionally, I examine a new town that is a type of urban area that is very little studied in ethnomusicology, Finnegan's case study of Milton Keynes aside (2007). I study the new town of Cergy-Pontoise within its social, economic and political context that is in a constant state of flux. My aim is to thus contribute to ethnomusicology by bringing new perspectives that are unique to new towns and their specific context. This includes sets of urban and cultural policies specific to them, and the utopian ideals of some of their planners. These are all added layers in the urban fabric that impact local music practices within new urban areas.

Some of the other barriers to holistic and interdisciplinary approaches to studying music are existing constructs that load the discipline with various biases (Witzleben 1997; Kroier 2012; Kim 2017). Martin Stokes argues that the use of certain language may be reifying, especially in the most recent debates about music and citizenship that ethnomusicologists have engaged with (2018). Stokes considers that using language such as 'authenticity' and 'communities' and constructing music as special may lead to populist or essentialist framing of music and citizenship (ibid.). Another construct that some ethnomusicologists find challenging is the persistence of music labels that are by nature problematic. Ethnomusicologist Johann Kroier, for example, takes the example of the category 'popular music' (2012). As Kroier states: 'The concept of popular music is involuntarily tied to an outdated modernization theory and seems to confirm the inevitable triumph of the Western type of cultural stratification. The "people" implied in "popular" is inherited from the nineteenth century's European national state' (ibid., 151). Numerous ethnomusicologists have similarly discussed the category of 'world music' in ethnomusicology, for example, Travis A. Jackson, who writes of how he

perceives it as potentially reinforcing eurocentrism, colonialism and reifying groups of people and music (2006). Thus, these labels and categories reflect existing structure of power and hegemonism that are also legitimized in some sections of the university teaching world where music and ethnomusicology teaching at university, and by extent music genres, are still so often subjectively divided into modules entitled: popular music; world music; sociology of music and so on (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000; Agawu 2003; Nooshin 2011; Rice 2014). Jackson, on this topic, recalls that he felt uneasy as an ethnomusicology student. As he states:

> The spectre of Western, White, largely male middle-class privilege loomed uncomfortably over me… I learned more about the importance some programmes placed on participation in "world music" ensembles, but rarely, say, rock bands or string quartets, I could not shake the impression that some of my colleagues were invested in and pedagogically reproducing an intellectualized form of cultural tourism, one that championed "outsider" research and self-renewal through the Other. (ibid., 282)

This leads us to the consideration of the position of ethnomusicologists in their field with discussions around the concept of insider versus outsider (Herndon 1993; Barz and Cooley 2008; Nettl 2015). Binaries such as outsider/insider and us-versus-them do not reveal much about the other but more about us. This is shown by Spiller in his case study of three individuals from different countries (United States, Canada, Dutch East Indies), with very different exploitations of the same Javanese song (*kinanti*) (2009). The emergence of ethnomusicology 'at home' and 'urban ethnomusicology' in the last quarter of the 20th century have offered ways to tackle these binaries and mitigate risks of intellectualised cultural tourism. They are now established trends that have been perceived as the progression of ethnomusicology: from ethnomusicologists seeking and viewing the unfamiliar as 'other', to ethnomusicologists positioning themselves as foreign to any kind of subject of study, including familiar ones like the researcher's home (Cottrell 2007; Nooshin 2011; Hornabrook 2017; Wilford 2017).

However, if the urban or home character of the chosen field is just considered as an incidental part then ethnomusicologists are at risk of still exoticizing spaces, and othering people and music. In the urban environment this may take the shape of using and focusing on categories such as 'urban sound', 'underground scenes', 'suburbanite musicians' and so on

(Schramm 1982; José 2010; Lamontagne 2020). For Timothy Rice, a way to avoid these pitfalls and encourage dialectics rather than dichotomous thinking in the discipline is for ethnomusicologists to consistently consider the political, social, economic, and ecological factors when studying music (2008; 2014). For example, participatory forms of music can simultaneously be considered as alternative forms of citizenship and as commodities utilized by festival organisers to harness free labour (Turino 2016; Toraldo, Islam, and Mangia 2019). For ethnomusicologist Adelaide Schramm-Reyes urban ethnomusicology with a specific and dedicated focus on the urban character of the field may also help with better challenging the tendency to use categories and to be more dialectical (1982; 2012). She argues that this is because categorisation cannot be satisfactory for the urban

environment (ibid.). As she states:

> The strong tendency to focus on the parts (e.g. on ethnic or minority groups, on urban neighbourhoods, or urban genres such as hip-hop), or to take the part and assume that it is the whole calls for a countervailing force … This tendency has long stood in the way of confronting fully the complex methodological problem of relations between constituent parts and wholes in the context of the urban. (2012, 202)

The interaction of music, people and the urban environment stimulates endless changes for all parties involved. By nature, the city and its residents challenge the concepts of boundaries and categories (e.g. subculture, music scenes) that some researchers use to frame and organize their work (Jurková 2012; Crossley and Bottero 2015). Jonathan Hicks examines Erik Satie's career and work through the lens of mobilities and places in turn-of-the-century Paris to shine a light on the relationship between Satie's work and the changing urban environment (2012). Thus, Hicks contributes to interdisciplinary discussions within the musicology discipline. Adam Krims researches how music is negotiated within the urban environment, and the relationship between ethnomusicology and urban geography (2007). He developed the concept of 'urban ethos' that he defines as: 'a range of urban representation and their possible modalities in any given time span' (ibid., 7). Nevertheless, Sara Cohen points out that Krims's 'urban ethos' is a limited concept of music within a changing urban

environment, and that it over-emphasises urban environment as determining the music (2012, 158). It does not include the musicians' and audience's experiences. Cohen emphasises the need for ethnomusicologists to study the human component of the music and urbaneness equation. She also points out how music reflects and produces identity in the urban environment and highlights the need for more research on how people engage with music- making especially amateur music-making in the urban environment (1995, 444; 2012, 172).

Both Sara Cohen and Ruth Finnegan explore the relationships between people, music and the urban environment via ethnographic methodologies such as observation, participation, interviews and, in the case of Cohen, musical mapping. While Cohen focusses on musicians of Liverpool and more particularly on hip hop and rock musicians, Finnegan examines the local amateur-music scenes of Milton Keynes. In her research, Finnegan focusses on a new town that does not seem to attract many musicians and that is not known for certain music genres; this type of urban environment has been less studied than older towns (2007). This has contributed to the better understanding of the kind of musical cultures that are less obvious and visible but nevertheless are an integral part of the cycle of music rituals present in English towns. Her study also challenged common assumptions that groups of musicians are necessarily linked by strong personal solidarity (ibid.). In her work, Cohen shows at the local level of a town, the complexity and fluidity of the relations between music, the urban environment, the social, economic and political context and how they link with wider regional, national, and global issues and their negotiation (e.g. citizenship models; regeneration and gentrification) (2007; 2012).

Both Cohen and Ruth Finnegan have addressed the fluidity of the music practices they observed in Liverpool and Milton Keynes respectively (Born 2005; Finnegan 2007b; Cohen 2012). Cohen uses Born's concept of mediation to address how the Liverpudlian hip hop and rock musicians she met have a more complex relation with music than the labels that are imposed on them and how they define their music genres (2012). Finnegan uses the concept of pathways to conceptualise the ebbs and flows of local amateur musicians between different music genres and local music community groups in Milton Keynes (2007, 6). Nevertheless, both Cohen and Finnegan use music genres to

structure the writing of their studies of music making in the urban environment. Cohen delimits her study on musical mapping in Liverpool to hip hop, pop and rock musicians (2012). Finnegan structures her study of amateur music- making in Milton Keynes in the 1980s with musical worlds. Her chapter entitled *Musical Worlds in Milton Keynes* regroups seven musical worlds, which are music genres (2007, 54). This highlights the persisting difficulty of finding a balance between the usefulness of categories as a research and writing tool and the unsuitability of categories to address fully music practices of cities that are generally more complex and diverse than sets of musical worlds that interact with one another (Stokes 2008; Araujo 2009).

Additionally, despite the fact that urbanisation is increasing globally, ethnomusicology (apart from Finnegan's study), has focused its research on older and usually nationally or globally significant towns. For example, Phil Alexander researches Klezmer music in Berlin and Matt Sakakeeny brass bands in New Orleans (Sakakeeny, 2013; Alexander 2021). Ethnomusicologist Andrew J. Green studied music as communicative sonic events related to spatial conflicts and public spaces claims in Mexico city (2016). Michael Bywater studied buskers' marginal performances in liminal spaces in Bath and how these kinds of performances express attempts to control space and time in the city (2007). There are also several examples of the study of diasporas within cities, such as Michalis Poupazis's research on the Cypriot diaspora in Birmingham and David Racanelli's research on the African diaspora in New York (Poupazis 2014; Racanelli 2014). While most of these studies engage extensively with human geography, many fewer also engage with literature on urbanism (Zemtsovsky 2005; Krims 2007). We can note exceptional examples such as Morcom, who engages holistically with the social, economic and urbanization changes in Tibet and the effect on Tibetan pop and folk music, and Christiano Nunes Alves who researches the link between the production of culture and urbanisation with the *manguebeat* music movement in the town of Recife in Brazil (Morcom 2015b; Alves 2016). Both these studies engage with urbanism, capitalism, political and sociological issues to present a wide and inclusive analysis of contemporary problems of music in the urban environment.

The study of new towns offers an added layer of opportunity to examine specifically the impact of central and local policy making in new urban environments and their local music

scenes. For example, Finnegan speculates that the flourishing of musical life in Milton Keynes may include reasons that are specific to public policies that were created as part of the initial planning of the new town and as part of initiatives led by its urban development new town corporation (2007, 25). This differs from older towns that are not subject to the same policies, regulations and contexts. Urban planners of the new towns are also concerned with creating towns that are not alienating and that people can enjoy and identify with. These are all matters that ethnomusicologists focus on (Absaroka 2015; Stokes 1994). There is a need to further investigate the increasing numbers of new towns and new urban areas that do not seem to attract many musicians and are not known for certain music genres. This may help with better understanding the kind of musical cultures that are present or moved away to new urban environments. Indeed, there has been little focus on studying the less obvious and visible musical practices. Thus, literature on new towns from urban studies will be explored in the next section and will be used in this thesis to bring together the disciplines of urbanism and ethnomusicology.

2.2. Urbanism and new towns

The new towns are not a particularly new idea as every town was once new (Wakeman 2016, 1). New towns are called 'new towns' and differ from large scale housing planning and suburbanisation because urban planners and states label them as such (ibid.). The act of labelling an urban development is a form of power for urban historian Rosemary Wakeman (2016). As she states: 'A new town was not unlike a flag planted in the soil… Each town acted as a brand, an image of the future, a step into a new era. How a town was designed and laid out, how it was built, how society would function inside it, could be deciphered by anyone living within or passing through its precinct' (ibid., 1). New towns also differ from large scale housing planning and suburbanisation because they are not urban extension of an existing urban area, they are planned as whole new worlds without the challenges of the existing town models. For example, Sir Ebenezer Howard developed the concept of 'garden cities' in 1898, describing garden cities as solutions to the over-crowded cities of his time (2007). Garden cities were to be self-sufficient cities that marry nature and the urban environment

together harmoniously with many planned vast green spaces. Garden cities are still global urban models, with one of the latest projects in the UK being Ebbsfleet in Kent, as described on the website of Gravesham borough council as of April 2021. Following the garden city movement, there were other generations of new town models presented as ideal solutions for the overcrowded city centres and economic crises.

According to Wakeman, the 'golden age' of the new towns was from 1945 to 1975 (2016). The first generation of new towns were the towns built in the forties and fifties. They were towns built after World War Two to create a new world on the ideal and romanticised model of the garden cities. The second generation of new towns are the new towns of the 1960s and 1970s. Cergy-Pontoise belongs to this second category. New towns' urban planners of this era conceptualised the new towns in significantly different ways to the previous generations of urban planners. The new towns' urban planning teams were very multidisciplinary and envisioned the city of the future. They were animated by the modernist ideology that social transformations could be designed through careful planning and innovative technologies, which would produce happy residents who live in harmony (ibid., 14). Urban planners thought and planned their new towns as *ex-nihilo* creations even though there were usually populations, villages and towns already present, where the new towns were built.

One of the focus areas of new town scholarship is the critique of the new town utopian planning methods and the much less utopian result of that planning. Sociologist Karl Mannheim defines the concept of utopia as follows: 'A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the immediate situation and when passed onto actions, tends to shatter the order of things' (1960, 173). The idea of defining new towns as utopian fits because they evolve in some sort of time warp. In other words, they are planned during present times for future times and needs (Wakeman 2016). Holston emphasises another reason why modernist urban planning is utopian and problematic (1998). As Holston states: 'It is utopian because its notion of alternative futures is based on absent causes and its methodology on a theory of total decontextualisation' (ibid., 41). New towns are dreamlands that are works of imagination and act as frontiers between the present and the future. As Wakeman states: 'Utopia is always made from the grist of history. The wildest dreams about what is yet to come are

derived from the here and now, the raw materials of the period in which fantasies are construed… We seek to change ourselves by changing the city' (2016, 3-4). Architect and urbanist Robert Fishman states that due to this very unique characteristic of the new towns, they are out of touch with the society (1982). Fishman gives the example of the modernist architect Le Corbusier and his urban doctrine illustrated by his model of the 'The Radiant City', and how in practice his urban principles fitted the modernist ideal, but not the ways of living of the actual people who would experience this type of architecture and urban planning. He illustrates his example with Le Corbusier's *Unités,* a modernist housing unit in the French town Marseilles, and the Indian new town Chandigarh in Punjab, which were both built in the late forties and fifties. As he states:

> The Unités and Chandigarh were the crowning achievements of Le Corbusier's career as a city planner, but also the crowning ironies. In both cases, he created masterpieces of design appropriate for the Radiant City but not for the societies in which they were actually built … In Chandigarh the opposition between the city and the society in which it existed reached the level of absurd… The Unités and Chandigarh stand as monuments to an industrial society that does not yet exist, and perhaps never will. (ibid., 254)

The gap between the urban planners' ideals and the actual reality and context resulted in many consequences for the new towns and their residents. Urban scholars from around the world regret the lack of continuity and coherence between new towns and their residents (Aharon-Gutman 2009; Pazhuhan et al. 2015; Kissfazekas 2015). Some urban scholars and geographers also state that one common symptom that characterises all these urban utopias worldwide is their lack of identity. Before discussing this lack, the concept of identity itself needs to be discussed here. I must clarify this term as many works define music as creating and contributing to identity and social inclusiveness (Stokes 1994; Bennett 2000). However, the concept of identity can be problematic, as humanities and social sciences scholars have overused it without a clear definition of the term, leading them to use it in contradictory ways (Erikson 1968; Clarke 2008; Lebow 2012). According to sociologist Rogers Brubaker and historian Frederick Cooper this renders the term 'identity' meaningless (2000). As they state:

> Social sciences and humanities have surrendered to the word 'identity'; that this has both intellectual and political costs; and that we can do better.

'Identity', we argue, tends to mean too much...too little... or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity). (ibid.,1)

Music is considered a human expression and social practice, and in the case of this thesis, one of the ways the residents' express themselves and relate to other residents, the town and with other entities (e.g. local authorities) (Reyes 2009). By considering music as human expressions and as a social practice rather than associating it directly with identity, this thesis hopes to minimize ambiguities and constructs of resident or town identity. Nevertheless, the concept of identity remains useful to express problems of place-making and a sense of belonging in new towns and new urban environments. The definition of identity within urban spaces used for this thesis is the one used by geographer Teo Siew Eng: 'qualities which enable a person to recognize and recall a place vividly because it is unique and distinct from other places' (1996, 280). Eng, in his study of Singaporean new towns Batok and Bishan, finds that residents identify very well with the important landmarks (e.g. park, skyline) that is the macro level but not with their flats and precincts at the micro level where they are supposed to feel at home (ibid.).

Similarly, Geographer Hiroshi Tanabe observes a wide gap between the Japanese new towns and Japanese citizens' actual lifestyle, concluding in his article that more emphasis needs to be given to Japanese society and culture (1978, 46). The most extreme example is a case study of the new towns of Hungary, researched by architect and urbanist Kornelia Kissfazekas (2015). These new towns were created to convey the socialist political message, but once Hungary had a change of government and shifted away from state socialism it led to great trauma for their residents. Not only did they lose their jobs, but they also remained in a town with a politically constructed identity of socialist happiness that was completely out of context (ibid., 106). Geographers Musa Pazhuhan, Keramatolah Zayyari, Behnam Ghasemzadeh and Hamid Qurbanid also highlight the lack of identity of the ten new towns they studied in Iran and stress that the lack of identity in new towns needs to be addressed in new urban development to avoid cultural homogenization and residents' lack of belonging (2015).

Some scholars also examine the lack of ease in walking around and living in new towns. Home, work and leisure areas are often planned in an awkward and very segmented way and the roads and

pedestrian areas are not convenient to use (Alexander 2009; Karimi and Vaughan 2014). Some of the new towns' design and architecture have been so impractical that they contributed to residents' unhappiness and anti-social behaviour. Some parts of the new towns had to be demolished and redeveloped because of these problems (e.g. Southgate Estate in Runcorn, England; Croix-Petit district in Cergy-Pontoise, France). Several scholars have explored the various ways residents of the new towns have modified their space in order to make their town liveable. Urban ethnographer and sociologist Meirav Aharon-Gutman gives the example of residents installing illegal shopping areas within housing units in the new town of Ashdod in Israel (2009). Urban geographer Daniel Capron writes about how residents of the new town of Chandigarh in India created their own rock garden that was not part of Le Corbusier's plans (2014). These residents' acts may be associated with what Holston calls 'spaces of insurgent citizenship'(1998):

> By insurgent, I mean to emphasize an opposition to the modernist political project that absorbs citizenship into a plan of state building… these insurgent forms are found both in organized grassroots mobilization and in everyday practices that, in different ways empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas. They are found, in other words in struggles over what it means to be a member of the modern state which is why I refer to them with the term citizenship. (ibid., 39)

Harvey considers capitalism to be one of the reasons why citizenship may, as Holston states, be absorbed in a plan of modern state building (Holston 1998; Harvey 2014). Capitalism, according to Harvey, constructs urban spaces constantly by drawing labour and economy to attractive places (2014). These places become urban and economic agglomerations. Economic agglomerations are concentrations of industries, transport networks and other resources that are necessary for the reproduction of capital. When one of these agglomerations is not as productive as it used to be because of its lag with modernisation, new technologies, or due of other crises, capital then moves to other places. This is an endless cycle that makes rich places richer and poor places poorer. This cycle is enabled by capitalist states (ibid., 151). Throughout the thesis, I will show some of the implications of capitalism at the local level of Cergy-Pontoise. For example, in chapters 4 and 5, I will discuss the two-oil crisis and how they led to a reduced amount of financial resources to finish building certain areas of Cergy-Pontoise, which subsequently became deprived. In chapter 7, I will also discuss the regeneration

of Cergy-Pontoise and how its agenda is linked with helping the town to remain attractive within the context of the ongoing development of the Grand Paris. I will show how it is associated with the destructions of local venues and spaces, which were appreciated by residents, and the constructions of newer, bigger and more modern spaces, which aim to keep Cergy-Pontoise attractive at the regional and national levels.

This section has examined literature about new towns by urbanists from all around the world. For the past forty years, all of them have been observing a lack of identity in the new towns from different parts of the world and have been calling for an urban planning that is better people-centred by design. This thesis aims to emphasize the human element for the planning of the new towns by looking at residents' music practices, urban planning strategies, and state cultural policies that attempt to create an identity for new towns and enhance the sense of belonging of their residents. These will be explored in the next section and in chapter 4. While urban ethnomusicologists have mainly remained focused on older towns, new town scholars have not studied creative cultures in the context of new towns as possibilities to explore the sense of belonging and identity specifically in new towns. This thesis contributes to urbanism by approaching the human elements of a new town via its residents' music practices. It also contributes to ethnomusicology by contributing to literature on the relationship between urbanism, state, capitalism, citizenship and music, focussing on the usually lesser object of study that is new urban areas. I do this through examining the various ways music may create spaces for the negotiation of various issues that include place- making or models of citizenship, or how it may be used as a lever of the capitalist state and its institutions. I do so within the particular context of the French new towns of the 1960s. Thus, the next section explores the existing literature about them and about Cergy-Pontoise to give insight into the wider context of French scholarship relevant to French new towns and Cergy- Pontoise.

2.3. French New Towns and Cergy-Pontoise

Wakeman gives the example of the French new towns programme to state that while many scholars fear homogenization of the urban landscape and culture with new urban development, new

town programmes can also reveal a lot about a particular nation's culture, state and society (2016). As she states:

> In the case of the French new town programme, which is considered to be among the most blatant cases of state authoritarianism, new town pioneers revelled in the sense of community and local participatory democracy. (ibid., 9-10)

Scholars of the French new towns have researched different issues that Wakeman mentions in the quotation above, such as the 'new town pioneers'; the role of the French government in the planning of the new towns locally and nationally; and the local culture and life of residents of the new towns (Merlin 1991; De Saint-Pierre 2002; Roullier et al. 2004; Vadelorge 2005; Epstein 2011). Some of these scholars were part of a French government inter-ministries programme of history and evaluation of the French new towns between 2001 and 2005. The programme was to evaluate the French new towns' planning and their history. It included scholars, civil servants and other professionals from various disciplines (sociology, urbanism, history, cultural policy, etc.). Their work is useful to understand the history of the new towns as well as failures and successes in terms of planning. The most relevant output of this programme for this thesis is the proceedings of a seminar on 3 June 2004 entitled 'Cultural Action in the New Towns' that historian Loïc Vadelorge directed (2005). According to this document, new towns and the planning of their '*animation*' are an inseparable pair that durably influenced the Ministry of Culture (ibid., 25). Cultural policy scholar Pierre Moulinier defines *animation* and other associated forms of state planned outreach actions as follows:

> Despite their polysemic character and their conceptual instability, the terms of facilitation (*animation*), pre-facilitation (*préanimation*), cultural action (*action culturelle*), socio-cultural activity (*activité socioculturelle*) or socio-educational activity (*socio-éducative*) founded, in the 1960s, a powerful school of thought and actions that pervade equally urban planning, public facilities designing, the training and recruitment of facilitators of the first housing complex grands ensembles [tower blocks built between the 1950s and 1970s in France] and land use planning, urban planning and the birth of the new towns. Animation and new towns are an inseparable pair that heavily influenced the history of cultural policy of the beginning of the Fifth Republic. (2005, 25)[2]

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[2] The Fifth Republic is the current French republican governing system since 1958 when it was created by Charles de Gaulle. One year later, the Ministry of Culture was created.

Despite the fluctuating and heavily politically and ideologically influenced definitions of the terms: *animation*; *préanimation*; *socio-culturelle*; etc., these words matter very much to the history of the new towns and the Ministry of Culture, according to scholars (ibid.). *Animation*, *préanimation* and *action culturelle* in the new towns have the objectives of literally bringing to life or livening up urban spaces and connecting residents to where they live and each other. They are used interchangeably and there are no clear-cut definitions between them. We can note that animation refers to actions on a group of people or a space that aims to develop communications and structure social life (ibid., 26). Préanimation refers to the project of reception and integration of new residents. Action culturelle refers to various definitions including: to reduce the gap between people and the most prestigious forms of culture, and to encourage people's creativity (ibid., 29). Moulinier distinguishes animation from action culturelle in the following way. As Moulinier states:

> *L'action culturelle* has the function to lead people toward culture, whereas *l'animation socio-culturelle* aims to make people bring to light the culture they have within themselves. *Action culturelle* works on creation and promotes a democratisation of culture while l'animation socio-culturelle aims to develop creativity and promote cultural democracy. (ibid., 61)

This plurality of definitions contributes to a certain confusion. Urban planners, policy makers and cultural players do not use the same words to refer to the same actions. This leads to further miscommunication and problems when implementing public policies and urban developments. This confusion also applies to the definition of culture itself that varies between the new town builders, the government and the local actors, leading to miscommunication and incomprehension. Adding to the confusion, in the 1960s and 1970s there were many different initiatives of *animation, préanimation* and *action culturelle* with various aims and delivery methods. They were led by the state, the people themselves, and *animateurs* (who are paid facilitators), to help develop projects with residents and encourage local initiatives by engaging people with their local area and public facilities (e.g. arts centres). Some of these initiatives were also led by groups of people called *associations*. I may clarify here the definition of *association* as these non-profit organisations are an important part of the thesis. *Associations* are a French right stated in the French law Waldeck-Rousseau of 1 July 1901. As of

April 2021, they are defined by the French direction of legal and administrative information's website as follows:

> A group of volunteers united for a common project or to share non-profitable activities. An association can have many diverse goals (sport, humanitarian, idea or artworks promotion, defend the interests of its members, etc.)… To create an association, at least two persons need to agree on its aim, write its statutes and indicate its head office or address. (n.p.)

Associations are usually local grassroots community groups with a legal status. It is a common practice for music bands to form an association as this allows them to have a legal status. Associations can receive state support (e.g. they can apply for subsidies). Urban planners were also determined to welcome the new residents and foster a warm and friendly atmosphere in the new town. They did so by encouraging residents' initiatives (e.g. encouraging residents to create a local association) and having staff living in the new town be readily available to welcome the residents and discuss problems with them (Vadelorge 2005, 13). The events of May 1968 created a spirit for more bottom-up decision-making and participatory democracy.[3] Bernard Hirsch himself, whom the French government had appointed to be the head of the planning and building of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise from 1965 until 1975, experienced this problem first hand when part of his team went on strike and protested for an urbanism made by the people for the people (2000, 158). Among other problems related to action culturelle in the new towns, there were many conflicts between the government, urban planners, animateurs, social workers and associations about roles and responsibilities. The conflict between these various entities may explain partly another shortcoming of the new town programme in France: the lack of participation and communication with the new residents. This is despite attempts and structures put in place in order to facilitate residents' initiatives (e.g. construction of collective residential facilities for residents) (Vermeersch 2005; Delus 2009).

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[3] May 1968 refers to a period of agitation in France (May and June 1968) characterised by national strikes and demonstration in France. It was a student, social and political movement in a rapidly changing society. The movement was a reaction to too rigid hierarchies and promoted bottom-up practices and decision-making.

To untangle this context and its effects on the new town of Cergy-Pontoise more specifically, it is important to take a closer look at the local context and the residents' testimonies. Bernard Hirsch's diary of his time as the head of the urban planning of Cergy- Pontoise and as a resident of Cergy-Pontoise, informs us about the beginning of the new town's development (the diary is from 1965 to 1975 and was published in 2000). This diary informs us about Hirsch's personal ideologies and the constraints he faced that shaped the new town. Additionally, the diary shows the various conflicts and negotiations between urban planners and local residents and mayors of local towns and villages. Hirsch had a strong desire to make the town lively and entertaining for the residents. Culture and leisure were a means to achieve this for him. In his diary, he details the visit of André Malraux, the then minister of culture, to Cergy-Pontoise and how Hirsch became the provisional director of the new music school, which later became the more prestigious Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional (state regional conservatoire) (2000, 142-143).

Bernard Hirsch's testimony as an urban planner is very personal and reflective. It is useful to parallel the testimonies of residents gathered by anthropologists Caroline De Saint Pierre and by anthropologist and resident of Cergy-Pontoise Beth Epstein (Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011). Although both Saint Pierre and Epstein had their focus and frame for their study on architecture and race respectively, their analyses of Cergy-Pontoise and its residents are enlightening with regard to the specificities of residents of the new towns and on how the residents make the new town their home. Both works also include comments on local culture and arts. Both authors emphasize the role of outdoor ephemeral events and their potential to transform the spaces residents live in and the town's shape and character (Saint Pierre 2002, 206; Epstein 2011, 23). Nevertheless, the scope of the events discussed by Saint Pierre and Epstein mainly focus on the local market, the inaugurations, community events and the *Journée des Associations* (open day where *associations* gather to promote their activities and try to attract more residents to join them). There is a need for more studies on specifically local music events as they are not explored in their studies despite many of them happening in Cergy-Pontoise. They seem important to the residents and at the heart of power struggle between the town and the *associations*. This thesis will aim to fill this gap by bringing attention to some of the town's local

music events, organisers, and audience, and how they animate the town by creating moments of togetherness that create sonic memories for residents, thus potentially contributing to creating a better sense of place in the new town that has very little pre-existing history. These local music events are also insightful because they are expressions of local tensions. This shines a light on wider societal challenges such as the crisis of the French nation and social exclusion as will be discussed in chapter 5 and touched on with individual testimonies of musicians in chapter 6.

All local music and cultural events may be organised by residents and supported by the council of Cergy-Pontoise. In other cases, the events may be organised by the town and funded by the town. Events can also be organised, funded and supported in other ways. The ways the cultural events – and more generally the cultural institutions and activities – are managed in Cergy-Pontoise (and other new towns) tend to evolve from the time the new towns were established up to the present. This is because of shifting social, economic and political contexts. The history of the French new towns is interlinked with the history of cultural policy and decentralisation in France. Both were part of the central government's policies of decentralisation and deconcentration. Scholars of French cultural policies who studied the history of the Ministry and the different state national cultural strategies from the time of its creation up to the present days give insights about national policies that have had an impact at the local level (e.g. the opening of the Ministry to more music practices and its impact at the local level with the creation of public popular music venues and studios). Chapter 4 goes into further details that are relevant to Cergy-Pontoise and its residents.

2.4. Cultural policy, French cultural policy and models of citizenship

Recent discussions in ethnomusicology have highlighted that the discipline is an ideal space to discuss music and cultural policy, and that it can also be a space of opportunity to assess the existing sustainability of policymaking, and to make recommendations for more sustainable policymaking (Harrison 2016; Rothchild 2016). In this thesis, I use sustainability as defined in 1987 by the United Brundland Commission that is as: 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' (1987, 3.27). In practice and within the

context of policymaking, this includes all areas of decision-making and how to ensure policies and strategies tackle existing present-time challenges whilst anticipating and mitigating their long-term impact in the world. In 2015, The Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) in the United States included in its strategic plan for 2010-2015 an increase in ethnomusicology's contribution to civic and public policymaking. In 2015 and 2018, The British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE) organised two conferences, the themes of which were: 'Ethnomusicology and Policy' and 'Europe and Post-Brexit Ethnomusicologies' respectively. Both conferences examined ethnomusicology's potential to contribute to more sustainable policymaking.

There are several works on the relationship between music and cultural policy. Some scholars focus on the relationship between music as an intangible heritage and the role of cultural policy to protect it (Howard 2012; Brandellero and Janssen 2014). Other scholars discuss music as a public interest and the ways cultural policies censor music or use it as propaganda (Titon 1992; Street 2003; Green 2020). Additionally, several scholars have explored music, policymaking, capitalism and the Digital Age (Street 2003; Hesmondhalgh 2005; Behr, Brennan, and Cloonan 2016; Hesmondhalgh and Meier 2018). Cultural economists have also discussed music and policymaking within music publishing, live music and streaming sectors (Anderson 2014; Towse 2020). Some music and cultural policy scholars examine the divide between 'lowbrow' and 'highbrow' arts and cultures in policymaking and how it reflects and stems from the existing social and global orders (Dyndahl, Karlsen, and Wright 2020; Kolbe 2021). For example, music and culture scholar Alan Stanbridge notes that, although this is slowly changing, the Western musical canon still dominates and significantly influences Canadian cultural policies (2007). Thus, the cultural policy discipline is an insightful frame to explore music practices and better understand the various ways policies have an effect on them. Additionally, cultural policy scholars share concerns and area of interests that are similar to ethnomusicologists. For example, both disciplines are interested in the divide between 'lowbrow' and 'highbrow' arts in policymaking and the effect of the Digital Age on cultural practices and how policymakers can better address them. The next section focusses on French cultural policymaking

specifically because it has been intertwined with the development of the French new towns from the 1960s onwards and has been having a continuing effect on the local music scenes that I research.

French cultural policy and economic scholars and sociologists observe that French cultural policy has been very much shaped by highbrow arts and cultural practices of the dominant White French higher social classes that exclude other segments of the French population, their arts and cultural practices (e.g. migrants, the working class) (Bourdieu 1979; Wittersheim 2016). To think about the impact of French cultural policy in the new town of Cergy-Pontoise and its musicians and residents is to think about the ideology of culture that shaped the French Ministry of Culture and its policies. The Ministry of Culture and its policies constantly change, depending on changing social, economic and political contexts. Nevertheless, some French cultural policy scholars consider that French cultural policies are stuck and fixed because of ideologies attached to them (Wallach 2007; Greffe and Pflieger 2009; Teillet and Négrier 2013). As French cultural economists Xavier Greffe and Sylvie Pflieger state:

> While nearby countries such as the United Kingdom, or faraway countries such as Japan have made their cultural policies tools for development, France is paralysed in its almost mystical approach to cultural policies. (2009, 11)

Some French cultural policy scholars argue that the divide between 'lowbrow' and 'highbrow' arts and culture and the mystical approach to culture in France come from the birth of cultural policies in France (Saez 2004; Greffe and Pflieger 2009). The French king Louis XIV (reign: 1643-1715), who at the time symbolised the incarnation of the divine on earth, created the arts academies and as such sacralised and segmented the arts. The monarch's decree separated and protected selected arts from commercial and business constraints and rejected others (Djian 2005). French cultural policy scholar Jean-Michel Djian, considers that the sacralisation of arts continued throughout French history and increased with the separation of religion from the state with the law of 9 December 1905 (2005). As Djian states: 'the sacralisation of arts and heritage has found in secularism an outlet for the celebration of a new republic more conformed to the idea of a great nation' (ibid., 16). For German philosopher and political scientist Karl Loewenstein, this is part of a sacralization of the secular state in many European countries where depreciated religious values have been replaced with political ideologies

(1953, 683). As he states: 'We rightly qualify as political religions many modern political ideologies' (ibid., 684).

In the case of France, the birth of the Fifth Republic in 1958 may have furthered this sacralisation of the secular state and of art. The principles of the new Constitution of France is characterised by the separation of religion from the state and the right to access to equal rights to all citizens. Within this context, the new Ministry of Culture is based on the right to access to culture to all. In other words, the Ministry is a 'public cultural service' (Moulinier 2013). The delimitations that the Ministry of Culture creates reinforce the sacralisation of art and culture because the Ministry decides what categories of art and culture are valuable enough to make them accessible to all citizens. From the creation of the Ministry and up to the present time this sacralisation of art and culture has been reinforced and goes hand in hand with the promotion of a secular French identity as part of the Fifth republic with the development of state art institutions and laws to preserve and promote the art and culture of the nation (Martigny 2016). This includes initiatives such as: regulations to ensure a minimum quota of songs in French on the radio; the construction of monumental art works, which become symbols of the French republic (e.g. the pyramid of the Louvre) and of resistance against globalisation (ibid.). Not all people living in France agree with the state creating this association of culture, art, the state and the national identity. This leads to tensions and separations between certain movements (e.g. popular education organisations) and the Ministry. Both the Ministry and these movements want to give better access to culture to people but they have different perspectives about what the words 'giving access' and 'culture' mean. It also leads to widening gaps between the Ministry and some sectors of the cultural industries, which are not included within its remit (e.g. newest form of media). At the local level some of these tensions are performed as discussed in Chapter 5 with the example of how the French model of citizenship is expressed and renegotiated at the local level during music events in Cergy-Pontoise.

In addition to having been shaped by the principles of the Fifth Republic, the Ministry of Culture has also been influenced by the individuals who became its ministers. In 1959, the creation of the Ministry of Culture and its development was very much moulded by its first minister, André

Malraux (tenure: 1959-1965), who sacralised art by instilling his own ideology into the ministry's first legal decree and subsequent policies of cultural democratisation and decentralisation throughout the country. The first legal decree that Malraux wrote is still applied and written in the same way, although slightly modified by additional decrees from successors. The article states as follows:

> The Ministry of Culture's mission is to make accessible to all, the greatest works of humanity, and firstly to France, to as many French people, as possible to ensure a wide audience for our cultural heritage and to encourage the creation of art works and of the spirit that enrich them. (Article 1 of decree 59-880, 24 July 1959)

There is no definition of what are considered to be the 'greatest works of humanity' and 'the spirit that enriches them'. This maintains a fuzziness around the Ministry of Culture and reinforces the existing social order that is expressed with the divide between 'lowbrow' and 'highbrow' culture and arts within French policymaking and its institutions (Bourdieu 1979; Dubois 2010). In the 1980s and 1990s, the left-wing minister of culture Jack Lang (tenures: 1981-1986 and 1988-1993) opened the Ministry of Culture to more fields of culture (e.g. fashion, contemporary music), that is usually referred to as the *tout culturel* (everything is culture). This was an effort to legitimise and include 'lowbrow' culture and arts, but also – for economic reasons – to defend the interests of France in the international market against what was considered by segments of the French populations and politicians as American cultural imperialism. These debates were also part of the broadening of the definition of culture in the French vocabulary. French cultural policy scholar Pierre Moulinier quotes the definition of culture from anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor to explain the broadening of the definition of culture in France in the 1980s as follows: 'Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'(2002, 12). The acceptance of this definition of culture in France, was an evolution as it included more fields such as ways of living and leisure. Jack Lang modified the decree created by Malraux and redefined the missions of the Ministry of Culture. As the new decree states:

> The Ministry of Culture's mission is to: allow all French citizens to cultivate their ability to create and think, to express freely their choices, to preserve the national cultural heritage, regional or diverse social groups for the common benefit of the entire community, to favour the creation of works of art and of

the mind and to give them the largest audience; to contribute to the diffusion of French culture and art in the free dialogue of world culture. (Article 1 *Décret* 82-394 of 10 May 1982)

This modification of the decree highlights the focus of Jack Lang's vision. Jack Lang focussed on the access to culture, creation, cultural development and French culture outreach to the rest of the world. However, some French cultural policy scholars accuse Lang of supporting contemporary music genres as a communication strategy to promote himself, the Ministry of Culture and the government rather than appreciating the aesthetic values of such genres and giving them the same considerations that the state gives to highbrow cultural practices and arts (Teillet 2007; Cusset 2013). Reports on French cultural practices published in 1989 and 1990 (after almost a decade of Lang's cultural policies) by the Research and the Prospective Studies Department of the French Ministry of Culture also showed that since 1982 (the date of the previous report about French cultural practices, which coincided with the beginning of Lang's tenure), the cultural practices of the French people evolved only a little and that cultural inequalities remained (Olivier Donnat and Cogneau 1990; Girard 1990).

These reports had an important impact on French cultural policies and on how French society perceived them. The budget of the Ministry of Culture was doubled, and policies of cultural democratisation and decentralisation improved the provision of cultural and arts facilities, public services and education throughout France. But the ensuing studies reported little discernible change or improvement in the cultural life of the French people. The government and others perceived it as problematic. Sociologist Philippe Urfalino considers that this failure to meet the needs of people living in France resided on the ostentatiousness of the Ministry of Culture and its ministers (1997). According to him, the ministry was based on André Malraux's grandiloquent personality and philosophy of arts and this attitude lasted during Jack Lang's ministry, as the word 'culture' was used to mean almost everything, was associated with identities, and was instrumentalised to oppose the left-wing to the right-wing parties (ibid.). An example of this is a speech by president François Mitterrand (tenure 1981- 1995) before his election, when he was selected as an official candidate to run for the presidential election of 1981 for the *Parti Socialiste (PS)* left-wing political party. In his speech, Mitterrand showed this association and exaltation of national identity with culture. As he states:

> Let's love France in its identity and know how to defend it. A country that assumes its greatness, it is not only weapons, although they are needed. It is also and above all a culture, a language, the meaning of its history and its continuity, the meaning of its opportunities and its future. (François Mitterrand speech at the PS extraordinary congress of Créteil 24 January 1981, quoted in Martigny 2016, 56)

For some French cultural policy scholars, this is an example of the very much criticised and potentially problematic link made between culture and national identity (which is in itself utopic and ideological) by French political parties in the late 1970s and 1980s (Oriol 1979; Gallissot 1987; Martigny 2016). This links to issues of citizenship models as discussed above and with the French model of nation and citizenship as will be discussed in chapter 5. The ideal of France and its greatness characterised by the French language and culture (that is not clearly defined in the speech) sets out a hierarchy where the French ideal of citizenship and nation have the priority over other affiliations an individual may identify with (e.g. other languages spoken, history linked with France but that is not in the education curriculum). This fosters superficial diversity and multiculturalism where French people may only express the parts of their identity that fit within the French citizenship model. As will be discussed in chapter 5, the conflation of citizenship, nation and cultural practices reinforce existing power relations between the dominant parts of the population and the dominated parts of the population. They impose a French nation and citizenship model that is, in practice, based on the French Christian and secular heritage and values without addressing French colonialism, slavery and their associated past and present damages (Boli and Elliott 2008; Epstein 2011). Throughout this thesis I aim to contribute to ethnomusicology by foregrounding issues of citizenship and cultural policies within the context of local music practices of a French new town. While issues of citizenship and cultural policies have been widely examined in ethnomusicology, they have been examined very little within the context of small suburbs and new towns in France.

2.5. Conclusion

Music, urban and cultural policies constitute a complex network that need to be addressed with a holistic approach in the urban ethnomusicology case study of Cergy-Pontoise. As discussed in this

literature review. ethnomusicology, urbanism and cultural policies all concern the ongoing formation of ideas and ideologies, which evolve within shifting economic, political and social contexts. Although these disciplines could communicate, they do not necessarily do so or not enough. This thesis thus aims to contribute to the body of work of scholars with interdisciplinary approaches. As I discuss in this thesis, this is the most useful way to engage with the question that is pondered within the various disciplines: to what extent can urbanism, cultural policy and music contribute to the sustainability of new urban environment and the inclusion of all people who reside in them?

It is crucial to rethink this question with an urban and interdisciplinary approach as the urbanization of the world is increasing rapidly. While ethnomusicology has for some time been engaging with other disciplines and applied research, it could still find more efficient and additional ways to be more agile and holistic in order to tackle the many thorny questions involved. The same goes for urbanism. While urbanism has flagged the problems of the new towns, the discipline could better include other perspectives such as ethnomusicology to go beyond challenges of 'lack of identity' within the new urban environment and bring new thinking and additional sources of robust evidence, such as local ethnographic accounts of music practices, within the discipline to better plan sustainable cities.

French cultural policies are considered very interventionist and institutionalised and have not bridged the gap between 'lowbrow' and 'highbrow'. These cultural policies, despite strategies of cultural developments and support to contemporary music, do not connect with the invisible local music scenes that culturally stimulate their local areas and surroundings. Urban ethnomusicology engages with these invisible music processes in the city. This thesis hopes to bridge the gap between less visible local musical processes and cultural policies. The next chapter will address methodology that, in a similar way to this literature review, needs to have an agile approach to be able to tackle complex environments comprising urban areas, music, public policies and citizens.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0. Introduction

As discussed in chapter 1, I aim to explore the ways in which cultural policy, economics and urban policy have impacted the creation and development of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise, its residents and local music-making; also, how the current residents and local music-making on the ground are meaningful, reflecting wider social, economic and political issues. The approach to tackle such questions is ethnomusicological ethnographic fieldwork with a hermeneutic approach. This approach focuses on the lived experience of people in a way that tackles holistically the various layers of their lived experience within shifting contexts (Rice 2001; Turino 2014; Berger 2015). This approach is dialogic, iterative and reflexive. The understanding of an object is not linear but a hermeneutic cycle between the pre-existing understanding of an object of study, that is transformed by the new understanding of the object that creates a new context for a better understanding of the initial object. This approach helps with going beyond dichotomous thinking (e.g. separation between object and subject, insider versus outsiders). As Rice states: 'The unbridgeable gulf between subject and object is mediated as the subject becomes a self through temporal arcs of understanding and experience in the world… The subject, supposedly freed from prejudice by method, is replaced by the self, who inevitably interprets and understands the world before any attempt to explain it' (ibid, 56). Hermeneutics brings to the researcher the awareness that both they and the people that they meet are experiencing hermeneutic cycles (Rice 2001; Berger 2015). As Berger states:

> We [researchers] share the same hermeneutic situation as our interlocutors: both we and they are interpreters of culture. Read through the lens of the hermeneutic circle, our job as fieldworkers is to learn how to place ourselves before the works of the cultures that we study, allow ourselves to be transformed by these works, and enter the world that these works create. (ibid. n.p.)

As such, this approach helps better one's focus on people's lived experience within shifting contexts, shining a light on the multiple layers of an individual experience that may remain invisible otherwise. It also helps better mitigate the researcher's own pre-existing biases and minimises risks of reification and generalisation. Beyond considerations of the general approach for fieldwork, fieldwork

itself is a unique experience that is shared by many ethnomusicologists (Rice 2008). Some ethnomusicologists consider fieldwork as the most critical task; as such, they also consider it to be the learning experience that transforms a student into a fully-fledged ethnomusicologist (Myers 1992; Rice 2008). There is no ultimate, unified, one-size-fits-all methodology handbook for beginner ethnomusicologists to prepare for the field. I, as a novice researcher, found myself adapting my methodology according to the fieldwork's context, my ongoing learning, my position in the field, various events, and the evolution of my PhD. Although the timeframe for the PhD and fieldwork is fixed, the rest (e.g. the PhD process, the field, and the people I met in the field) is in a constant state of change and evolution. This chapter aims to detail my approach at negotiating this fluidity. It discusses the choices, reflections and iterations that I constantly had to make to be able to delineate the field and grasp it as best I could, within the time and space that I had. First, I will introduce briefly my field trips. I will then turn to the ways I delineated the field and subsequently move to how I negotiated my positionality as an ex-resident of Cergy-Pontoise, and ethical issues in the field. Finally, I will examine the research tools that I used.

3.1. Time spent in the field: Masters and PhD fieldwork
3.1.1. Masters Fieldwork

This PhD stems from a pilot project I conducted during my Masters for my final assignment. This was my way to get a sense of the scope of the project before I officially committed to an ethnomusicology PhD. In this pilot project, I explored music as an agent of place-making in new towns, with Cergy-Pontoise as the case study. I conducted my fieldwork in the town between 28 May 2015 and 1 June 2015. It was an opportunity to conduct some of my first research interviews that focussed on the local music scenes, the town's cultural services and facilities, and the various narratives around the new town and its identity as told by a variety of residents' voices that make up the town. The people I met and interviewed were local residents, a cultural councillor of the town, the director of a charity that delivers free taster sessions of classical music to some of the local schools, and the director of a network of local music professionals. The interviews were completed via an online survey conducted between 26 May 2015 and 26 June 2015 with local residents. The focus was on the local

cultural and musical life of Cergy-Pontoise and how it was experienced by them. The 30 respondents were all local residents aged between 20 and 60 years old. Most of the questions were open-ended, to get as many voices of residents as I could in the little time that I had to do this fieldwork. I used this pilot project and its data to prepare my PhD proposal. I also use some of the raw data from this past project throughout the thesis in the form of quotations from the survey's responses and the interview transcripts. This is because this data gives insight that remains relevant to this thesis.

3.1.2. PhD Fieldwork

My PhD fieldwork was completed through four trips between March 2017 and December 2018. I resided in my childhood home in Cergy-Pontoise during all field trips. My first field trip was between 29 March and 2 May 2017; my second field trip was between 15 June and 3 July 2017; my third field trip was a four-day field trip to volunteer at *Cergy Soit!* festival (street and circus festival) between 22 and 25 of September. My last field trip occurred from 31 August until 1 December 2018. My fieldwork developed organically, in that during the first field trip, the town had changed a lot since the time I lived there. I encountered new people, music, places and events that introduced me to the local music scenes, *associations*, state cultural facilities and services. During subsequent trips, I had informal conversations and recorded interviews with musicians, music professionals, cultural councillors, civil servants and venues owners. I also volunteered with two music *associations* that are well-known in Cergy-Pontoise for their musical events. Some of these *associations'* activities include organising music festivals and delivering music workshops within schools, prisons, hospitals and deprived areas of Cergy-Pontoise. I took part in all the activities that required 'all hands- on deck'. This included, amongst other activities: assisting with setting up a photo exhibition of portraits of French hip-hop artists in a local gallery; assisting with catering at events; carrying equipment to and from storage facilities and helping with setting up stages for musical events. I was volunteering with *associations* from once a week to several times a week depending on how busy the week was, in terms of events and activities. Both *associations* were aware of my research. I also socialised with members of the *associations* outside of the *associations'* activities (e.g. going out for drinks, food, parties). I am still in touch with the *associations* and the people that I met on social media and via e-mail.

I found it difficult to end my fieldwork. This is because I know that the people that I met have more stories to tell, and that there are many more voices that I have not yet heard. Additionally, there are also more spaces and times to explore. The next section focusses on how I organically bordered my field through managing shifting spatio-temporal contexts and constraints.

3.2. Delimiting fieldwork and representativeness: space, time, humans and choice

The questions of spatial and time boundaries, delineating the field, and music have been a recurring topic in ethnomusicology and other disciplines (Agar 1996; Nettl 2005; Barz and Cooley 2008; Cohen 2012). According to ethnographers Jean J. Schensul and Margaret D. Lecompte, fieldwork is delimited by a physical space where the ethnography occurs (2013). As they state: 'the actual research tasks carried out in that setting or collation… The field is a physical setting, the boundaries of which are defined by the researcher in terms of institutions and people of interest, and their associated activities in geographic space' (ibid., 23). Although this approach seems direct and logical, in practice the questions of spatial boundaries may be trickier as delimitating the field also means thinking about the physical and conceptual boundaries of music. This was the topic of the joint conference 'Border Crossings / Boundary Maintenance' organised by the British Forum of Ethnomusicology and the Société d'Éthnomusicologie Française (Society for French Ethnomusicology) in Paris, France, in 2015.

Borders are constructs that may be spatio-temporal, social, cultural and political at the local, national and transnational levels. Nettl considers the main difficulty with understanding borders to be the ability to pinpoint when they start and when they end (Nettl 2005). Globalisation, neoliberalism and the rapid increase in communication technologies and surveillance increase the fluidification of all border constructs, making them increasingly complex to comprehend (Haselsberger 2014; Amilhat Szary 2015; Jones 2021). Although border constructs are fluid and multiple, they do exist and have real-life implications on the ground for people experiencing them (e.g. spatial boundaries, digital exclusion and social divides) (ibid.). Understanding the process that leads to borders-as-outcome brings to the fore existing power dynamics and other systemic challenges. For urban ethnomusicologist

Adelaida Reyes Schramm, ethnomusicologists researching urban environments need to address the process of delimiting their field as part of their analysis, to reflect on their own choices with regards to managing the complexity and diversity of their chosen urban field (1982, 1). As she states:

> The first [question] concerns delineating the object of study in an urban milieu… For as the study object becomes more a construction than a given, the justification for its status and choice itself becomes an analytical enterprise upon which will depend, to a significant degree, the productivity of the study that will ensue. (ibid.)

In her pioneering study, anthropologist Ruth Finnegan researches local amateur music-making in the English new town of Milton Keynes (2007). Although her field seems clearly defined as the town of Milton Keynes, Finnegan notes in her introduction and methodology sections that her field's boundaries were changing and flexible due to the fact that different institutions set different boundaries with regards to Milton Keynes (e.g. Finnegan states that the local Church organisations and the education sector use different maps) (2007, 346). As she states: 'Here, as throughout the research, what *exactly* was meant by 'Milton Keynes' was in part a relative and variable matter' (ibid.). Similarly, ethnomusicologist Sara Cohen did various research projects in the city of Liverpool (e.g. musical mapping, urban regeneration and popular music in Liverpool) but the musical maps of Liverpool she collected from Liverpudlian musicians go beyond the borders of Liverpool (e.g. a map drawn by a young White rock musician includes Southport while another one drawn by a young Black rapper includes Birkenhead) (2012). Schramm - who first set herself to research the musical life of New York - found herself so overwhelmed by the large number of events in the city, that she decided to do a preliminary research in a smaller spatial area of New-York: namely, the borough of Manhattan (1982).

My fieldwork is confined by the borders of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise. I faced the same problems that Cohen, Finnegan and Schramm experienced with delimiting their field. I observed that the borders of the town are fluid. Some of the people I interviewed did not know the exact borders of Cergy-Pontoise or identified more with one of its thirteen sub- towns rather than the new town of Cergy-Pontoise as a whole. Most people I interviewed and met also mentioned to me music artists, people and even locations that are not part of the spatial borders of the town. Additionally, I was

overwhelmed by the numbers of spaces related to music that I identified online prior to conducting fieldwork. In a more practical way, I was also limited by transportation as I do not drive and Cergy-Pontoise is not a small town with its thirteen sub-towns and its overall size of 82 km^2. This is also an issue that affects some of the residents - especially musicians, as will be discussed in chapter 5. Although there are many ways to get around Cergy-Pontoise, the frequency of buses varies greatly between the various lines and the cycling scheme stations are badly maintained or there are not enough bikes to meet demand (at least at my local station during my field trips). In some cases, it takes an extensive number of connections to get to certain places; this can make travel very time- consuming. The same journey that may take 20 minutes by car, can easily turn into a one-hour journey on the bus. Engineering works also often take place, adding another layer of time spent on alternative mode of transportations and replacement buses. The figure below depicts a rail map inside a train in Cergy-Pontoise. This train line (*RER A*) connects Cergy-Pontoise to Paris and other suburbs. It is indicated on the map that the stations located in Paris are closed from 25 July to 25 August 2017. This is a considerable strain on people who travel to Paris for work every day.

Figure 2 Rail map in the RER A train (fieldwork picture, June 2017)

As I experienced these various issues around space and mobility, I had to adopt strategies to make choices with regard to delimiting the boundaries of my field. Finnegan states that she also had to make choices, as she did not have the time nor the resources to participate in all of what she refers to as the 'music worlds' of Milton Keynes (2007, 342). To tackle the fluctuating borders of the town - as well as its great number of amateur music-making groups - Finnegan adopted what she calls a 'haphazard strategy'. Her 'haphazard strategy' consisted in developing her fieldwork organically; participating more in certain worlds than others. This approach is similar to the non-model approach, which ethnomusicologist Nicole Beaudry adopts in the context of her Subarctic and Artic fieldwork with the Dene people (2008). Beaudry chooses this approach to give herself the space to encourage her

ethnographic curiosity and open-mindedness. She prioritized the co-creation of meaningful relationships with the people she met, as a source of learning in the field. As she states: 'I feel that a more general preoccupation with ethnographic enquiry and an attitude of receptivity to whatever people want to teach me is more revealing than a very focused approach' (ibid., 230).

She found this particular approach powerful in bringing to the fore people's voices, uncovering her own blind spots, highlighting her own biases, and discovering unexpected matters that are relevant to her research. She gives the example of listening over and over again to the same story, to the point of frustration: yet at the same time, this was crucial to her understanding of the Dene and their music. It allowed her to understand that when the Dene use 'not long ago' in a sentence in the context of drumming it refers to the time of the Dene prophets. This helped her better contextualise drumming practices of the Dene. She also spent time with an Inuit family who kept teasing her. This time helped her better understand the practice of laughing and teasing and how it relates to throat singing.

Finnegan's and Beaudry's approach to the field gives insight about how fieldwork may be organically delimited and constructed. Researchers shape their fieldwork through interactions with their environment, people they meet and their own research interests. As Rice states: 'the field is the metaphorical creation of the researcher' (2008, 48). As such, for Kofi Agawu, it is difficult to assess what type of fieldwork produces the best knowledge and that what really matters is the story the fieldworker ends up telling and his audience (2003). As he states: 'In other words, where you go, how long you spend there, and what you do are not as important as the kind of story you end up telling and to whom you do so'(ibid., 45).

To address the challenge of the borders of Cergy-Pontoise - but also of the field's boundaries itself (music, time, space, people) - I also adopted the 'haphazard strategy' of Finnegan or the non-model approach method of Beaudry. I did not want to categorise people by musical genre or create any other particular form of 'people borders' in my field. My aim was to get residents' perspectives on the new town and how it hinders or enables local musicians' music practices. To achieve this aim, I set out to meet people with different perspectives on the town and its local music scenes. I initially planned to include in my ideal sample a diversity of demographics, background and sectors (public, private,

grassroots). This was to be as inclusive as possible of the various voices and spaces that make up the town. Once in the field, soon enough there was a gap between the planned and the actual experience of doing fieldwork. In practice, the town is so broad and diverse that I let my interactions with people and the town guide me, applying a snowball sampling method. This local musicians and residents-led approach allowed me to re-prioritise spaces to go to and people to meet, as well as discovering new people and spaces I did not know about while preparing for fieldwork. This approach is inevitably biased as people met in the field have their own biases and agendas (Nettl 2005, 147), though I may note here that several of the people I met or interviewed recommended that I meet with people they did not agree with, as they perceived it to be valuable for my research.

Nevertheless, my fieldwork ended up being quite inclusive in terms of race, ethnicity and social class as I engaged with different groups of people as part of my volunteering with grassroots community groups, interviews and as part of mingling with the audience at local venues and concerts. I was able to notice when I was in homogenous spaces and when I was in non-homogenous spaces as discussed with the examples of the two *associations* in chapter 5 and how they diverged in terms of diversity (one group was mostly White and working class/middle class whilst the other was a mix of ethnicities and social classes). This experience during fieldwork reflects both the existing diverse demographic of the population and existing segmentation of some of the population of Cergy-Pontoise as will be discussed in chapter 5. As discussed later in this chapter with Rupa Huq's argument with regard to social classes and reification, I tried to find a balance between avoiding categorising people into social class and ethnicity groups to avoid reifying them, but in some instances I also gave gender, age and ethnic details to mitigate risks of blindness with regards to race, age and gender.

I note here that my approach left gaps that need to be addressed. I did not spend enough time examining jazz and classical music spaces, nor did I interview many musicians who identify as solely jazz or classical musicians (some of the musicians I met simultaneously studied classical music or jazz at the Conservatoire and were part of rock bands). Additionally, most of my interviewees were male and aged above 25 years old. In future research, I wish to address these existing gaps in my fieldwork, to be more inclusive of the plurality of voices and music in Cergy-Pontoise (e.g. more music genres,

youth, women, people experiencing disabilities, people who are digitally or socially excluded). Although these gaps raise issues of representation with regard to my approach, ethnographic data remains necessarily fragmentary as social life is in flux and the space of the field is limited to a certain number of individuals and contexts (Davis 1999; Ladner 2014). Should I have adopted a more representative approach, it might have brought to the fore more perspectives about the town but a larger and more diverse sample does not always correlate with the depth of its insights (Ladner 2014).

Ethnomusicology itself has been experiencing a representation crisis since the 1970s; leading some ethnomusicologists to work on decolonising ethnomusicology (Barz and Cooley 2008, 11). Fieldwork in ethnomusicologists' own backyards and urban ethnomusicological fieldwork have been considered as ways to self-criticise ethnomusicological practice and decolonise the discipline (ibid.). Schramm notes that the high diversity of the urban environment (e.g. ethnicities, level of income, type of household and accommodations, religious and cultural affiliations) provides strong stimuli for ethnomusicology to move away from colonial ideologies, for a better awareness of one's own biases and as a reminder that all environments are heterogeneous (1982, 9). However, the urban environment itself is not shielded from risks of othering and reification. Sociologist Jorge de la Barre, in his study of music scenes and ethnicity in Lisbon, observes that there are still processes of categorisation and bordering of music genres in urban environments that may other and exoticize people, environments and music (de La Barre 2010). As he states:

> There is still an interest in preserving boundaries – or recreating them -… Potentially, the so-called 'music of the people', 'music-soul of the people', 'underground music', or 'music of the periphery', come to represent a sort of 'World music's Other'. (ibid., 148-151)

The use of these persisting boundaries may lead to omitting the multiple layers of an individual identity, instead reinforcing existing borders people may be experiencing (e.g. related to social class, ethnic, cultural, religious) (Huq 2006). Rupa Huq gives the example of the reification that may happen when people are ascribed social class labels. As she states: 'Seeing working class subcultures as absolutes precludes the possibility of class mobility or any recognition of varying degrees of subcultural affiliation' (ibid., 18). For Shweder, the ethnographer should also keep in mind that no one

is ever able to fully understand oneself and others and, as such, people should be considered as multiple layers with some of them remaining inaccessible to us (1996). As he states:

> Major aspects of your mental life are hidden from your view and direct experience and stand in desperate need of anthropological excavation. The same is true of the mental life of others… It is the principle of original multiplicity that makes true ethnography possible. An alternative way to phrase the principle, indeed its slogan, is "universalism without the uniformity". (ibid., 24)

As such, my approach and effort throughout this thesis is to try to move away from reification and limiting classifications of people, music, and spaces. My spatial borders are the administrative divisions of Cergy-Pontoise, and my temporal borders are the time I had in the field: 5 months in total. I did not set other limits such as categorising individuals, music and spaces within Cergy-Pontoise. I focused on individual and group musical experiences and perception of the town, as well, as the transformation of the field itself. These iteration and transformations include amongst others: friendships that developed; grassroots community groups that were successful but subsequently died down, and venues that were demolished whilst others were built. Additionally, the expansion of my own understanding and knowledge of the town and its residents - via taking part in activities and events organised by the local music grassroots communities - also led me to adapt and iterate my methodology throughout fieldwork, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Conducting fieldwork in a place I used to call home also brought to light some of my own boundaries and biases. There were benefits to being from Cergy-Pontoise. I was able to live in the comfort of my parents' home and as a native French speaker from that particular area, I was already in touch with some of the national and local socio-cultural contexts. This position, which may seem ideal at first, may have caveats. The native fieldworker is more culturally sensitive when interacting with people, but this native perspective may also lead to additional personal assumptions and presumptions (Qamar 2020). This may make it harder for the fieldworker to adopt an emic approach and identify his or her own biases (ibid.). In the field, I realised that I was more familiar with certain areas than others. I mostly experienced and identified with areas that are close to my family home in the new

Courdimanche (mainly the sub-towns Cergy and Vauréal)[4]. As I will discuss in chapter 5, my experience of the town is similar to other residents I met who better identify to some extent with their sub-town and home rather than the concept of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise. I have been to other sub-towns during my fieldwork, but I experienced several of them as new or foreign (e.g. Jouy-le-Moutier, Marcouville district in Pontoise). This brought to the foreground my own personal borders or my 'home borders', which influenced the spatial borders of my fieldwork. For ethnomusicologists Jonathan P. J. Stock and Chou Chiener, who both conducted fieldwork at home in Europe and Asia, the concept of home is as constructed as that of the field (2008). Thus, to address the issues of boundaries may also pose the question of the fieldworker's position around them. My own lived experience of the town inevitably shaped the field's boundaries. In the next section I will elicit what Cergy-Pontoise as a 'home' means to me, address my positionality in the field, and reflect on how I mitigated my biases and negotiated my approach to ethics.

3.3. Negotiating positionality and ethics: fieldwork at home

I was born in Cergy-Pontoise in the early 1990s and lived there for 20 years. During this time, I lived with my parents in a house in the new Courdimanche and made most of my friends there. Some of my friends have now left Cergy-Pontoise to be closer to Paris or its periphery for work reasons. Other friends remain in the town or moved somewhere else and then came back. I lived at the border between Courdimanche and the town of Cergy, next to the Hauts-de-Cergy district. I took piano and Celtic harp lessons in the small musical school of Courdimanche and then passed the entry exam at the *conservatoire* of Cergy-Pontoise, to pursue pedal harp studies, which were not available at my local school. I very briefly volunteered for the local web radio Oxyradio.net and was part of a *conservatoire* students' performance at the Pontoise hospital. I attended the local music days, neighbour's days, *associations* days and the *'100 Contests'* festival (annual free hip hop and street culture festival). I also

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[4] A lot of sub-towns of Cergy-Pontoise are split between 'the old town' and the 'new town'. The old Courdimanche refers to the pre-existing village and its surrounding rural land. The new Courdimanche refers to the village's urban expansion that was developed as part of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise in the 1980s. My family bought a house in the new Courdimanche when it did not exist yet (the house was not built when they bought it).

attended concerts and plays of all genres in local venues. Although I was not actively involved in the existing grassroots local life, I was involved in networks from my local music school, the *conservatoire* and the state schools that I attended. I left Cergy-Pontoise when I was around twenty-years old to pursue higher education in the UK (BA, MA and PhD). I subsequently started working in London too. Cergy-Pontoise is my childhood home, while London is my adult home.

This impacted my fieldwork in certain ways. I am more familiar with the UK administrative system (work, health, housing) than the French system, having lived in the UK for a decade. A lot has changed in France and Cergy-Pontoise within this time. I felt very welcomed back in my hometown and the great majority of the people I met were very enthusiastic about my research, very welcoming, and generous with their time and space for my research. Nevertheless, I came to the realisation that there was a gap between my own expectations of what fieldwork would be like and how it actually turned out. The town and its residents had changed while I was away. Several years in the UK changed me too. There were times during fieldwork when I felt like a foreigner in my own country and hometown. I did not expect to experience this at all, and it was an uneasy feeling. I had to confront the fact that most people did not understand why I was doing a PhD about Cergy-Pontoise while being based in a university in London. This felt very awkward, as this thought never crossed my mind until local residents pointed it out to me. It felt like I was not from the town anymore, and became a total tourist and outsider in the town that I grew up in. Chiener and Stock note that this is a characteristic of fieldwork-at-home (2008). As they state: 'Clearly, even those of us who carry out fieldwork in our home societies cannot take it for granted that our research aims, and methods will be well understood by those around us - in this, fieldwork at home is very much like that carried out elsewhere'. (ibid., 123).

These queries from some of the residents that I met were also coupled with the fact that I was met with hostility by a couple of people who explicitly pointed out to me my privilege as a White middle-class woman who could afford not only to move abroad but also study there, while others cannot do so. Others mentioned to me that they perceive that my French had an

English intonation and slight accent to it, even though I never asked for people's opinion on my French. I did notice that I lost some of my French and that I still spoke like a teenager although I am not far from my thirties. This was quite embarrassing at times, as I had to ask for vocabulary or people felt they had to correct my French in the same way that people correct my English in the UK. This felt quite unsettling, and I felt somewhat uncomfortable and started to doubt not just my PhD project but also my own identity as a native of Cergy-Pontoise and permanent resident of the UK.

There were, however, also many advantages to my position. As time passed and I engaged with French academic voices and natives of Cergy-Pontoise, I realised that my position as a native of Cergy-Pontoise studying in a British university was actually a great opportunity. My ex-resident identity coupled with my life and studies in the UK allowed me to have a certain distance from the town and a broader array of perspectives. My command of both the English and French languages gave me access to academic articles both in French and English. My existing connection with the town allowed me to meet informally a few musicians and music professionals through some of my local friends. Many people were curious about my life as a French citizen living in London. I was able to help out with queries related to living, working and studying in the UK and happily reviewed quite a few English *résumés* throughout my fieldwork. This helped me manage the initial awkwardness. It also helped me give something back to some of the people that I met, who made time to share their lived experience with me and made space for me to observe and take part in their activities for a little while.

This shines a light on issues of reciprocity in the field. As fieldwork progresses and friendships develops, the line between fieldworker and friend can become blurred (Owton and Allen-Collinson 2014; Tillmann-Healy 2003). Sociologists Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson and Helen Owton warn that the researcher needs to be very careful with developing friendships in the field (2014). As they state:

> Caution is needed, however, in assuming any straightforward link between depth of friendship and depth of data... It can raise a raft of complex

interactional issues and leave both researcher and participant more vulnerable
to each other, including vulnerability to loss and rejection when more of "self"
is invested in a friendship relationship that subsequently terminates. (ibid., 28)

I am not sure I share the idea that the friendship relationship subsequently terminates after fieldwork. Depending on the field site, people may have access to the Internet and may be looking forward to keeping in touch on social network sites or via email. I have been added to local music grassroots community groups on Facebook and mailing lists. I struggle to keep in touch in the same meaningful way as face-to-face, but I still like and comment on some of the Facebook posts and chat on Facebook messenger and WhatsApp. The use of the Internet as part of the field will be discussed later in this chapter. Tillmann-Healy states that friendships on the field should not be used as a manipulative tool to get more information (2003). Instead the values of friendship such as respect and care should be the ground basis of ethics in the field (Tillmann-Healy 2003; Beaudry 2008). I did my best to be honest and respectful toward the people I met. Similarly to Finnegan and Cohen - who both conducted fieldwork in the towns they live in - I introduced myself as a PhD student and did not conceal that I was conducting fieldwork. Additionally, when I conducted formal interviews that I recorded, I made sure to send information about my research and consent choices to people prior to the interview and I gave people my contact details so that they can contact me for further questions or to withdraw their consent after the interview.

Nevertheless, maintaining an honest and transparent approach at all times remains an unachievable utopia, due to practicalities and ethical conundrums. I realised early on that giving consent forms to my research participants made some of the people I met uncomfortable. I had a similar experience turning on my recorder (e.g. one of the persons I interviewed asked me to turn it off mid-interview so that she could speak more freely). I initially offered people the opportunity to read some of their interview's transcripts, but I stopped after one person I interviewed changed most of the transcript of her interview and told me to use the modified transcript and to delete the original interview. This meant that the original data was changed by the interviewee.

As per GDPR regulations, people have a right to access their data and rectify it. This is challenging in the context of ethnographic research, when participants want to redact or change some

of what they said. Valuable insights for the research may be deleted or unusable as a result of post-interview changes. After receiving the modified transcript from that person, I still strived to respect people's rights but did not mention explicitly to interviewees that transcripts were available upon request. I'm still unclear about whether this was the right approach, as maybe this iteration in my approach led me to be less transparent.

Another ethical conundrum was when people - during socialising times and especially after a drink or two - shared with me information, which I felt, they may have not shared with me in other contexts. Sometimes it happened during larger events or parties where I also did not have the opportunity to introduce myself to everyone. As such, ethics and consent cannot rest on strict frameworks. Ethics are necessary for the safeguarding of the people met in the field but if the researcher applies it in an automatic and strict way, the process may hamper the research and intimidate people. According to management scholars Emma Bell and Alan Bryman the best approach to ethics is: honesty, fluidity, reflexivity and openness (2007, 65). As Bell and Bryman state:

> It is therefore more appropriate to adopt a reflexive engagement with the issue of informed consent, recognizing the fluid and ever-changing nature of consent rather than seeing it as achievable by getting participants to sign a consent form. (ibid., 68)

As part of the consent process, I had to think about whether I should identify or anonymise people in my thesis. In the field, I asked people whether they would like to remain anonymous or not. Some of the people I interviewed did not want to be anonymised because they want to tell the stories of Cergy-Pontoise with their own voice. Others preferred to remain anonymous, due to fear of professional and personal conflicts resulting from the nature of their testimonies. Scholars debate on the role that anonymisation plays within the power relationship between the researcher and research participants. For some scholars, to anonymise research participants is to hinder their agency within the research and to deprive them from their own voice and narratives (Somekh and Lewin 2004; Vainio 2013; Antunes and Dhoest 2019). As social psychologist scholar Annukka Vainio states: 'Non-anonymity would give 'voice' and empower the participants, allowing their words to be heard, whereas anonymity obscures this possibility' (2013, 688). Nevertheless, non-anonymisation does

not necessarily guarantee voice and empowerment for the research participants. There will always be an irreconciled unbalance between the fieldworker and the people met on the field (Markovic and Mikic 2010). Both participants and researchers have their own agency and understanding of the research in progress. On the one hand, to some extent people choose the information they would like to share with the researcher and choose the behaviour they adopt while the researcher is in sight. On the other hand, the fieldworker has agency with regards to the way the research is presented to people met in the field, the analysis of the collected data and the final research write-up. I chose anonymity because I do not want to cause any harm to people who were kind enough to take part in the research, in case I misunderstood their statements and actions. Additionally, anonymity preserves both the researcher and the people met because both may disagree later on with their statement (Somekh and Lewin 2004, 57). For all these reasons I decided to anonymize all the participants and the names of organisations. Nevertheless, and similarly to Finnegan and Cohen I suspect that people may remain identifiable in some cases as Cergy- Pontoise is a small town. As such, I did not include information that I perceive could potentially impact individuals or organisations in a way that could cause harm (e.g. reputational damage).

Additionally, the audience for the resulting write-up of the research needs to be taken into account, as the readers will have their own interpretation and understanding of the research. It may be harmful and unnecessary to identify people in the write-up as people's statements may be misunderstood by the researcher or the readers (ibid.). Research continues beyond the field. Analysis of the data and the writing stage further shape the fieldworker's understanding of the collected data. As ethnomusicologist Michelle Kisliuk states: 'There is no definable border between the field and the space of writing – we write when we are doing research, and we research while we write. An awareness, therefore, that field experience and ethnography are inseparable must infuse both' (2008, 193). Kisliuk defines her approach as being engaged in a conversation between the research participants, herself, the reader and the writing itself (ibid.). I follow this approach in an attempt to avoid too much self- reflexivity, to write respectfully about the research participants and to have a writing style that is comprehensible by all types of audience.

This approach also allows me to not write the ethnography as a fixed story. This allows the writing to represent the fluidity of the borders between past and present (Bohlman 2008, 250). My writing style aims to reflect this fluidity with regards to representation. As anthropologist Tim Ingold states:

> We can never speak with certainty of the world, as if we knew already not because our hypotheses about it might later turn out to be false or our predictions awry, as scientists would say, but because the world itself is never settled in its structure and composition. It is, rather, continually coming into being – as indeed are we ourselves, being part of it.' (2018, 21)

Additionally, when thinking about representation, I need to remind myself about my own bias as a White privileged woman studying and working in a context of systemic discriminations where the majority of people in senior positions are privileged White males. This context impacts the way people write and the narrative they produce and reproduce. As ethnomusicologist Katie Graber states:

> Representing "informants" and "culture" is still difficult and fraught; people in privileged positions are those who have the time and resources to study Others… action writer Claire Vaye Watkins describes her realization that "I have been writing to impress old White men… I am trying to understand a phenomenon that happens in my head, and maybe in yours too, whereby the White supremacist patriarchy determines what I write." (2017, 135-136)

This section discussed both my position in the field as a French migrant in the UK who researched her hometown back in France, and the choices I made in terms of my ethical approach in the field and when writing about the people that I met. I addressed my pre-existing knowledge and experience of the town and how they may lead to assumptions and presumptions. I discussed my ethical approach that I understand as fluid, reflexive and resting on friendship values such as honesty, respect and communication with the people that I met. The next section discusses more specifically the research tools that I used.

3.4. Research tools: participating, observing and interviewing local residents.

As part of my fieldwork, I have formally interviewed thirty-five people from Cergy-Pontoise, or who are - in one way or another - involved with the musical life of Cergy- Pontoise (e.g. working in the cultural field in Cergy-Pontoise but living elsewhere). On average, the interviews lasted a minimum

of one hour - sometimes more, sometimes less - depending on the energy and dynamic during the interview. I recorded these interviews and transcribed some of them. My approach for the interviews changed from the time I started fieldwork until the end of my fieldwork. During the first field trips my interviews were semi- structured interviews. I had a set list of questions, which were open prompts to encourage detailed narratives and insights, that covered the main issues relevant to my research questions (Whiting 2008). Education scholar Winsome C. Brayda and historian and popular culture scholar Travis D. Boyce consider this approach to be desirable for the novice researcher as it allows focussing on the various established issues and takes up less time of the interviewee as the interview is limited to pre-determined lines of enquiry (2014, 320). Nevertheless, this approach remains quite scripted and as such may be constraining for the researcher and the participants. During my first interviews, I felt that some of the questions I asked felt either irrelevant or uncomfortable to the participant. In my experience, the format of the formal interview may create tensions and stress both for the interviewee and the interviewer. As Boyce and Brayda states:

> Interviews have a sense of formality. Some informants may be pleased, frightened, or irritated, and answers may be influenced by the views of the researcher. Therefore, the researcher must make the interviewees feel comfortable. (ibid., 320)

As fieldwork developed, I still chose to conduct interviews but moved away from the semi-structured format. I felt more comfortable with engaging in unstructured interviews rather than semi-structured interviews. Ethnomusicologist Nicole Beaudry associates this evolution of interviewing methodology as an evolution of the interviewer from the unskilled interviewer to the more experienced one (2008). As she states:

> As time goes by, my own development as a fieldworker allows me to relax when something is discussed that seems a bit remote from my interest in songs and musical event descriptions. (ibid, 236)

Unstructured interviews helped me to better focus on listening to what people say, leaving space for them to state what they wanted to say, even though it may have seemed outside of the scope I initially set out. This opened new fields for my research and uncovered some of my blind spots and assumptions. For example, I initially made naive assumptions about the way musicians would perceive

the cancellations of major free music festivals in Cergy- Pontoise. I assumed that most local musicians and residents would perceive these cancellations as detrimental because these cancellations meant that free concerts were taken away from residents. This was not the case. Several musicians were actually happy that these festivals were cancelled and hoped that these cancellations would encourage the development of musical initiatives for local residents and musicians that are more sustainable in the long-term.

Eventually and as fieldwork progressed, the unstructured interviews became unstructured life story interviews. Life story interviewing is an approach in sociology and other humanities disciplines, which aim to discover people's perception of their own life journey (Adriansen 2012, 41). In human geography, these interviews are used to seek the oral histories of a place through its people's memories (ibid., 42). I perceive that this approach, which I developed throughout fieldwork, helped me better understand both the experiences of people living in Cergy-Pontoise and the local oral histories of Cergy-Pontoise. I found this particularly useful, as there were very few traces of some of the musical histories of Cergy-Pontoise in the local archives. This type of interview also helped me build a better rapport with the people I interviewed as, to a certain extent, I let people lead the interview and reflect on their life and musical journeys. I believe this was useful in tackling some of my research questions that are more sensitive, due to the fact that they revolve around individual attitudes towards politics and money, which may both be taboo topics of discussions in France. I rarely asked direct questions about politics or money: these issues usually came up as people reflected on their family background, their education and how their music journey started and developed.

As I reflect on my methodology, I could have completed this approach by using timeline interviews and musical maps (Adriansen 2012; Sara Cohen 2012a). This would mean asking participants, while I interview them, to mark on a timeline the different events that were significant to their musical journeys in Cergy-Pontoise. This method is used to help people better reflect on their journeys and trigger further memories. Cohen asked Liverpudlian musicians to draw maps of their musical life in Liverpool (2012). This method allowed her and the musicians she met to better reflect on the relation between urban spaces and musicality. As she states: 'The maps' detailed lines and

patterns can tell us something about the spatial aspects of that music-making, and about how and why music matters' (ibid., 170).

Nevertheless, interviews and their various formats and applications are only one of the tools of the ethnographer's toolbox. To do only interviewing would be missing some of the data and would be biasing the research. This is because there is a difference between what people say they do, and what they actually do. Participant-observation is what distinguishes ethnography from other qualitative research methods. As Shweder states:

> Superficialism insists that upon demand and "off the top of their heads" the natives tell what they know, know what they are talking about, and keep their answers short…. rather than doing the hard way, by gaining the access to the mental states of others through real time participant observation) (1996, 20)

This particularly resonates with one experience of fieldwork that particularly stuck with me while I was volunteering with grassroots music community groups. One of the groups I volunteered with was more than a decade old, I became curious about the history of this specific group its members and how the positionality and the objectives of the group evolved throughout time as the town and its residents developed. I thought that it may be insightful to conduct an in-depth interview with one of its founders, Hervé, a White male in his forties. Hervé moved to Cergy-Pontoise as a teen and made friends via his interest in hip hop, which led to the creation of the group and its focus in terms of activities and events (music workshops, festivals, events, exhibitions, etc.).

Hervé knew that I was a PhD student conducting fieldwork and that as such my volunteering with them was part of my methodology to better understand their lives as musicians and members of a grassroot music community group in a French new town. Nevertheless, he always made me feel welcome and included in the group. I spent several days a week volunteering with the group. Soon I was invited by members of the group at socials and for drinks after the events. I perceived that everything was going fairly well and sensed that Hervé might be open to the possibility of sparing an hour or so for an in-depth interview to discuss the history of the group and how he felt it evolved since the time he and some of his friends created it. I was also keen to hear his story as a resident who experienced teenagerhood, adulthood and parenthood in Cergy-Pontoise. However, I never had the

opportunity to interview him. He persistently declined my requests for interviews throughout fieldwork stating that he did not have the time and that he would not have much to say anyway. I perceived this as his polite way to tell me that he did not want to be interviewed.

I kept going with my fieldwork and had a few interviews with several members of the group instead. However a couple of times during activities and events and very unexpectedly Hervé struck conversations with me without any prompt and shared with me in-depth details and thoughts about his perception of the group, the town, local music and much more, which I may have not been able to capture in an in-depth interview or otherwise. This was often in contexts when we were either all quite tired and worn out making an event happen or when we were all pretty much relaxed at an informal gathering. For example, one time we had this particular chat together on the last night of a major festival that was organised by the town and in which the group held the main stands with music, events, activities and a bar. It rained the whole time of the festival, which had been very tiring for the group. It was around one o'clock in the morning, when we all just finished tidying up all the equipment used for the bar and music events in the communal building used to store the group's equipment. We were all sitting outside, totally exhausted and cold having a final chat and drink before parting. This is when out of the blue he came up to me and started a conversation. This was one of the most valuable chats I had throughout my fieldwork. He started asking me questions about my PhD and then unprompted went on telling me about how him and some friends started the group and how it evolved over the ten years of its existence. He stated to me that he has always been into hip-hop culture and as such, very quickly got involved with the local hip hop scene. He was part of a group of friends who were organising underground parties in the woods of Cergy-Pontoise. This group of friends evolved into becoming the present group that soon became a full-time job for some of them. He was very happy about the success of the group and its positive outreach within the local community, but reflected that he was also missing the parties that he used to organise in the past and associated the lack of possibility to do these parties with what he perceived as an on-going top-down institutionalisation of grassroots practices and popular culture. He stated that he was feeling freer at the time of the parties and when the group was smaller, but he did not know whether he felt this way because the society

changed, or, whether it is because he is getting older, or, finally whether it is because the group grew into an organisation of its own that now tends to be a cultural supplier for Cergy-Pontoise, which he did not necessarily want for the group to become. After this conversation, I was able to better notice when at times, his sentiment was shared by several members of the group and expressed at meetings and social events.

I believe that I was able to build a better rapport with Hervé and better understand some of his thoughts and his actions through participation and observation because we shared experiences together and with other members of the groups (e.g.when we all shared a sense of achievement coupled with physical and mental tiredness from long hours volunteering for an event that mattered to the group). In turn, this allowed me to better understand and prioritise certain themes in my thesis (e.g. negotiation of space and citizenship in chapter 5). For Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory Barz participant-observation is a key feature of ethnomusicological fieldwork. As they state: 'The focus on performative aspects of culture, and our ability to engage music and individuals through substantive participation, increases both the value and necessity of ethnomusicological fieldwork for cultural understanding' (2008, 5).

My first field trips were more observational. Step-by-step, and as I integrated better in grassroots music community groups, my fieldwork became more and more participative. I became engaged in activities these groups were organising, socialising at events outside of these activities and everything in between. According to Beaudry, unlike interviews, which have a start and an end point in the field, participant-observations never stop whilst in the field. As she states: 'Living in a community requires a twenty-four-hour-a-day involvement, which constitutes, in my opinion, a constant observation method' (2008, 234). This twenty-four-hour-a-day involvement can leave the researcher 'too immersed', in the sense that affinities created with people and groups may lead the fieldworker on tangents and to lose focus. At times, I lost track of my research questions and the reasons why I was in the field, as many people, events and developments in the field piqued my curiosity; I just wanted to know more about them, even though it let me to explore areas that were outside of my research scope. For example, I attended a music workshop in the local prison led by one of the local grassroots music community groups. This was very insightful in itself, but I realised afterwards that this told me more

about music in prisons and issues of the French model of citizenship, than issues of music in new planned urban environment. Nevertheless, this experience still informs some of my thinking with regards to chapter 5 as this chapter touches on models of citizenship and the French republican contract.

Additionally, I developed better affinities and rapport with certain groups of people rather than others, leading me to spend more time with them as I felt I wanted to know more about them and their activities. In retrospect, I feel I could have spent more time with other community groups, but I am also very aware that it took me a long time to integrate in that community group. The more community groups I would have gotten involved with, the less I would have been able to access the depths of layers in this specific group. In all cases, the researcher who only strives for neutral, balance and representability does not exist and is not desirable. Anthropologists Irene Guijt and Meera K. Shah, who research the Global South, note that to not consider our own feelings and emotions in the field is risky as it may lead us to consider human beings as positionalities rather than beings, losing sight of the emic perspective (1998, 155)

To limit myself in terms of the tangents I explored and to try the best I could to remain grounded, I took field notes at the end of each day. Keeping a fieldwork diary is helpful to record important information, to remember emotions that were felt, to keep a certain distance with the field and for reflexivity purposes (Hastrup 1992; Mazanderani 2017). It did make me anxious to write about my day as sometimes I wrote about situations where I embarrassed myself in the field. It was also difficult at times to be consistent with writing field notes every day as I was usually out until very late at night. To counter this issue, in additions to field notes I printed paper calendars where I wrote bullet points of what I did each day and my main take- aways from that specific day in the field. I found this approach useful because it helped me remember what I did, when I did it and what were the areas that remained to explore while I was on the field but also while writing the thesis. These calendar sheets also trigger my memories just by looking at them. However, in the future I may also consider taking voice notes in addition to writing a diary as suggested by social anthropologist Fawzia H. Mazanderani (2017, 84). Mazanderani feels that the process of writing field notes can be exhausting after a long day

in the field. She found that recording voice notes instead is easier and also particularly helpful with maintaining the spontaneity and rawness of the experience as it is lived. She perceives that this rawness and spontaneity may be lost in the process of translating the experience in a written format (ibid.).

In addition to fieldwork in-person and face-to-face, I also spent time online. Some scholars consider that the Internet is inseparable from urban fieldwork to locate relevant music places and events in the intricate, overlapping and complex urban environment (Stock 2008; Wood 2008). The Internet may be helpful for the fieldworker to get into the field and stay in the field (Stock 2008, 17). I found Facebook groups to be helpful and relevant places for me to get in the field and keep in touch with everyone, both in the field and when back in London. The members of the grassroots music community group that I met may live in various places within Cergy-Pontoise and even outside of Cergy-Pontoise, but they are all in one place in the Facebook group. This allows me to find a way to stay in contact and communicate with everyone easily. As such, ethnomusicologist Abigail Wood considers that e-fieldwork is complimentary to offline fieldwork (2008, 17). As she states:

> The Internet (and email in particular) makes getting and staying in touch with "the field" in all its multiplicity of forms – quicker, cheaper and longer lasting. It is not so much an alternative to traditional modes of fieldwork interaction but a valuable addition, enabling us – even when distant from the physical 'field' – to strengthen relationships, share experiences, and return to earlier conversation. (ibid., 17)

I perceive the Internet as more than a complementarity to 'offline' fieldwork. There is no binary of online versus offline world: both online and offline worlds are part of the same world (Cooley, Meizel, and Syed 2008). Nevertheless, online interactions do lack audio-visual cues, which are part of direct face-to-face communications. The risk is to misinterpret and misunderstand some of the comments, posts and online conversations (De Laat and Lally 2004; Popat 2008). I tried my best to mitigate risks of misunderstanding and misinterpretation by using all sources of data (interviews transcripts, field notes, online fieldwork and so on) throughout this thesis and by clarifying with people what they meant in an online post if I was not clear about it. As my understanding of the field and of the ethnographic fieldwork method throughout time progressed, I iterated my methodology and approach to the field to allow for better flexibility, reflexivity and openness. I hope this helped me get closer to

the lives and the contexts of the people that I met, while remaining aware that people and contexts have been in constant flux throughout fieldwork and beyond the time in the field.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed my methodological approach. This included detailing my choices with regards to the boundaries of the field, the research tools that I used and my approach toward ethics. I chose to carry a non-model approach methodology toward fieldwork and valued reflexivity and an iterative approach. I started with rigid organisation and structure to keep myself focused and precise. As I gained experience in the field and developed relationships, I became more comfortable and was able to become more open, flexible, reflexive and inclusive; for example, interviews were initially semi-structured and then organically turned into unstructured life story interviews. In my interactions with people, I also focussed on values associated with friendships, namely: caring, respect and transparency. Nevertheless, there were also ethical dilemmas and conundrums that made it difficult to fully achieve these values. People have different understanding of the concepts of respect and care. I am also aware that, although I did my best to get to the emic perspective, my understanding of people's experiences is my own: another fieldworker would have had a different understanding of what I have experienced in the field. My own understanding of what I experienced also evolved throughout analysing the data and writing the thesis. As such, to mitigate risks of misunderstanding and misinterpretation, I decided to anonymise the data in the writing, and I did my best to keep reflecting on this decision throughout my PhD. Consequently, this methodological approach does not aim to lead to representing accurately Cergy-Pontoise and its residents at a precise time. Instead, the methodology strives to approach the research questions in a way that is as fluid as Cergy-Pontoise and its local music scenes. This approach aims at getting closer to the lived experience of people to better understand dynamics of music, politics, economy and people in new urban environment, in order to generate deeper insights for the various disciplines that I engage with as part of this thesis.

Chapter Four: Planning of Cergy-Pontoise

4.0 Introduction

This chapter explores how urban planning, cultural policies, context (historical, social, economic and political), and music intertwine in the planning of Cergy-Pontoise and how the head of the urban planning team of Cergy- Pontoise - and a musician himself - Bernard Hirsch negotiated them.[5] The initial urban planning of the town in the mid-sixties was driven by the urban planners' fears of reproducing the failures of post-World War Two housing estates development, which are associated with a lack of social and cultural facilities, overcrowding, isolation, and youth crime (Saint-Pierre 2002). The 1960s were also characterised by a participatory turn in policymaking, urbanism and other sectors (Lefebvre 1996; Bherer, Dufour, and Montambeault 2016). Some of the urban planners and policymakers involved in the planning of Cergy-Pontoise embraced this turn (Hirsch 2000; Epstein 2011). It included taking into account the 'right to the city', which was originally conceptualised by Henry Lefebvre as a collective right to shape and reshape the process of urbanisation (Lefebvre 1996; Harvey 2008).

In practice, local authorities, urban planners and central government understood and applied these considerations in various ways. During the initial planning of Cergy-Pontoise, this included favouriting *animation* in the urban planning and development of the new town and as part of welcoming the new residents. As discussed in chapter 2, *animation* is indissociable from the new towns programme (Moulinier 2005). Simultaneously at central government level some of the policies (e.g. cultural decentralisation) were also accompanied by *animation* initiatives at the local and national levels. *Animation* means encouraging mediation between people, policymakers, urban planners in various fields and sectors (e.g. culture, arts and new urban spaces) (Augustin and Gillet 2000; Alex Willener et al. 2004; Vadelorge 2005). *Animation* stems from informal activities conducted by

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[5] There are no other details about Hirsch's music practices. One of his colleagues, Jean-Eudes Roullier - a senior civil servant at the Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing, Transport and Sea and ex- general secretary of the French New Town Central Group - writes in the foreword of Hirsch's diary: 'Musician himself, Bernard Hirsch spent a great deal of his energy on convincing the two rival towns of Pontoise and Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône to merge their two small music schools' (2000, 7).

grassroots organisations and *associations* to support people on low income with accessing education, culture, sports, work and areas that would otherwise be difficult for them to access (e.g. an *association* may set up free or low-cost sports and cultural activities). In the 1960s, the activities led by these informal forms of grassroots support were professionalised and institutionalised by the state to be used as tools to address a variety of social issues within a great array of contexts and sectors (Augustin and Gillet 2000). As popular education scholar Jean-Claude Gillet and cultural policy scholar Jean-Pierre Augustin state:

> It's at the beginning of the 1960s that interactions and negotiations between popular education and the state gave birth to the concept of *animation.* The informal grassroots network of popular education accepted to give up on some of their ideology… to agree with the necessity for a more neutral *animation* [e.g. non-political, non-religious]… *Animation* is linked to social crisis, to gaps existing between present uncertainties and past certainties. *Animation* is a tool for adaptation, integration and social transformation…It is highly unrealistic to think one can eradicate social and spatial inequalities. Nevertheless, it is still possible to imagine initiatives that encourage promoting the diversity of individuals, groups and spaces. (ibid., 14)

Nevertheless, there were tensions between top-down and bottom-up approach with regards to the participatory turn and *animation* (ibid.). In practice, French policymaking remained very much top-down and centralised. Although some of the planners of Cergy- Pontoise had participatory urbanism ideals, they were very much constrained by central government directives. This meant that urban planners of Cergy-Pontoise planned and built cultural, artistic and leisure facilities and services extensively (e.g. *conservatoire*, theatre, cinema, music venues, etc.) but in a manner that was not as collaborative as it could have been with real participatory democracy or efficient collaborations with local residents. This created a gap between the new residents and their town as will be discussed in chapter 5. Planners were limited by existing top-down conception of state culture, policymaking and urbanism. These tensions bring to the fore the central question of this chapter; namely, to what extent state urban planning using music, culture, art buildings and *animation* contribute to the better development of residents-orientated urban areas? What does the impact of this type of planning that uses arts, culture and animation on the urban environment and its residents tell us about the space music occupies in policies and urban planning.

I first discuss the social, economic and political context of Cergy-Pontoise and detail briefly the different French administrative levels as applied to Cergy-Pontoise as these will be used throughout the thesis. I then turn to the policymaking context at the time of the creation of this town, and more specifically, cultural and musical decentralisation and *animation*. Subsequently, I explore how this policymaking context played out during the creation and development of Cergy-Pontoise through examining the visions of its director Bernard Hirsch. Finally, I discuss the later developments of music facilities in Cergy- Pontoise in the 1980s and 2000s and how they are connected with the opening of the Ministry of Culture to a broader spectrum of arts and cultural practices.

4.1. Setting the scene: initial planning of Cergy-Pontoise and its social, economic and political context
4.1.1. Locating Cergy-Pontoise

Cergy-Pontoise was created as part of a national state programme to control and organise the fast development of Paris and its proximity at a time when Paris and its periphery were experiencing rapid demographic and economic growth.[6] This growth was associated with a number of concerns. Saint Pierre mentions this in her ethnography of Cergy-Pontoise and gives the example of a conversation between the director of the urban development for the Parisian area from 1961 to 1969 Paul Delouvrier and a journalist (2002, 17).[7] They discuss the development of the Parisian area with words referring to cancer. As they state:

> Journalist: To try to end the proliferation of cancer, to pierce the abscess…
> Paris… needs to stop being this congestion that leads to asphyxia.
>
> Paul Delouvrier: We are building the greater Paris of tomorrow so that growth does not become a malignant tumour. (ibid.)

The national programme of the new towns was a sort of utopia aiming at saving the overcrowded Parisian area from this 'malignant tumour', and, at getting rid of existing suburbs that were negatively connoted. The programme was part of a series of state policies of decentralisation

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[6] The name of this state programme was: *Schéma directeur d'aménagement et d'urbanisme de la région de Paris (SDAURP)* – Urban development of the Paris Region Programme.

[7] The interview is part of the documentary by Olivier Ricard - *Paris hors les murs* (1966)

from Paris to other neighbouring areas. Cergy-Pontoise was part of the national programme of the new towns, which consisted of five towns to be constructed around Paris. These towns are depicted in the following map:

Figure 3 Paris, its surrounding départements and its five new towns (clockwise from northwest: Cergy-Pontoise; Marne-la- Vallée; Sénart; Évry and St-Quentin. (Imbert, Brune, and Rozenholc 2011)

These new towns were planned in existing suburban and rural areas. They were supposed to become real cities with a unique character, which would be a sort of in-between urban and rural (Fée, Colenutt, and Schäbitz 2020). Urban planners of the new towns also believed that social mixing and community life could be planned (Epstein 2011). They planned the urban fabric as diverse by mixing together private individual home properties, rental properties and council housing (ibid.). In the case of Cergy-Pontoise, located 30km northwest from Paris, the planners developed the city with several centres around several train stations. Its city centres were planned as dense and playful with compact large shopping centres, offices, educational and cultural facilities and mixes of housing types. The leisure park and its artificial pond was supposed to also give Cergy-Pontoise a countryside feel (ibid.). This vision and the attractive low property prices aimed to attract both middle-class families looking to get on the property ladder and renters who worked in Paris but wished to live in an area that is greener and more spacious than Paris and its surrounding areas.

The creation of Cergy-Pontoise brought together several existing towns and villages in addition to the new urban areas that the urban planners created. As of April 2021, the website of the council of Cergy-Pontoise states that the new town is a *communauté d'agglomération*, which is made of 13 sub-

towns with a total of 207,000 inhabitants. A *communauté d'agglomération* is an administrative entity that was created by the French law 99-586 of 12 June 1999 to reinforce and simplify cooperation between towns. A *communauté d'agglomération* must have 50,000 residents minimum with one or more central towns of 15,000 residents. The site chosen for the new town of Cergy-Pontoise was one of the greener parts of the Parisian periphery, which includes the regional nature park of Vexin. The town was designed around the loop of the river Oise, in the middle of pre-existing villages and more important and historic towns such as the medieval town of Pontoise, cultivated fields, and natural parks and forests where the new town was to be built. There were many expropriations of people living in the area, much opposition from local people to the new town project and fierce competition between the different towns, which stood to benefit from opportunities attached to the development of the new town (Hirsch 2000; Saint-Pierre 2002). A particular competitive and tense situation was the rivalry between Pontoise (the historically more important trading town), and Cergy (the small rural village).

The following maps explain the various French administrative levels as applied to Cergy-Pontoise. This starts from the highest administrative unit, which is the *région,* and ends with the closest unit, which is the *quartier*. France is administratively divided into *régions*. Cergy- Pontoise and Paris are part of the Île-de-France *région*. French *régions* are depicted in the following map:

Figure 4 France and its régions (French Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2016)

Régions are administratively divided into départements. Cergy-Pontoise is part of the département Val-d'Oise also called 95. The town is also the administrative capital of the Val d'Oise. In practice this means that the main local government services of Val d'Oise are located in Cergy-Pontoise. The région Île-de-France and its départements are depicted in the following map:

Figure 5 Région Île-de-France and its départements. (actuacity.com, n.d.)

Départements are administratively divided into *communautés d'agglomérations*. The *département* Val d'Oise and its *communautés d'agglomérations* are depicted in the following map. Cergy-Pontoise is located between the *communautés d'agglomérations* Vexin Centre and Val Parisis in the following map:
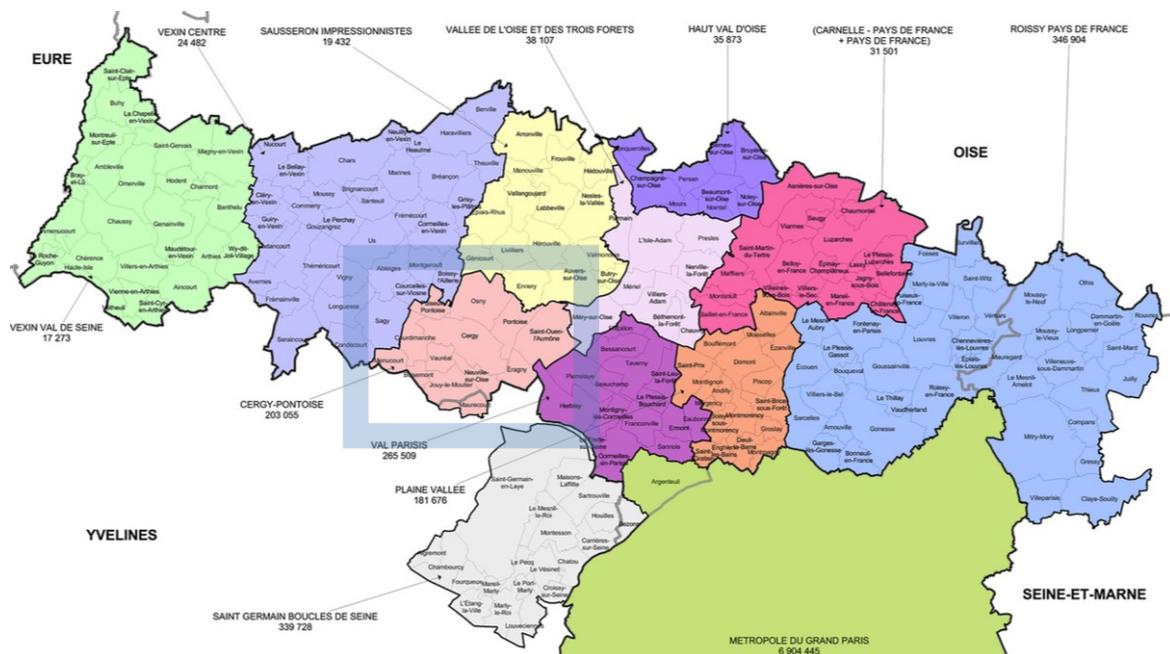
Figure 6 The département Val d'Oise (95) divided into communautés d'agglomérations. Cergy-Pontoise is the salmon-pink colour area in the square that I added for clarity. (Val d'Oise Prefect, 2016)

Communautés d'agglomérations are administratively divided into towns. Cergy-Pontoise is made of 13 pre-existing towns represented on the following map. The map also depicts the river Oise and the artificial lake that was built for the new town.
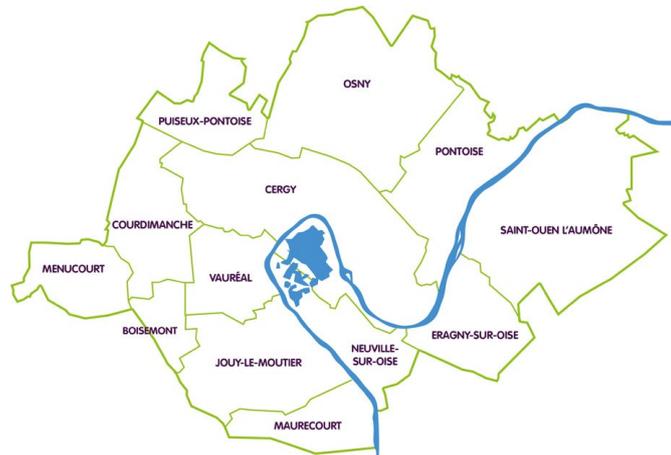
Figure 7 The 13 sub-towns of Cergy-Pontoise. (cergypontoise.fr, n.d.)

The next map represents the heart of Cergy-Pontoise, which was the small village of Cergy. This village is the area where most of the initial facilities of the new town were built including the major landmarks, the leisure park and the artificial lake. It also includes the two city centres that were part of the initial planning. These were the Grand Centre district, and the Axe Majeur and Horloge districts and their associated train stations. As of 2021, the actual main centre remains Grand Centre as there was not enough money to develop a business centre and follow the initial planning for the Axe Majeur and the Horloge districts. Both of them together were supposed to be the second centre of the new town. This second centre was meant to be a business area. The Grand Centre district is where there is currently the *conservatoire*, the council office, the shopping centre, the university of Cergy-Pontoise and the François Mitterrand park. The Horloge and Axe Majeur districts have as of 2021 the status of *quartiers prioritaires* (priority districts). The French government identify *quartiers prioritaires* as areas that concentrate populations with the lowest income and that it considers in need of state intervention. According to an article dated 2019 on the website of the government French agency for state geographical data, this is calculated by comparing an area's income with the average

income in surrounding areas and with the national level of income in France.[8] The following map is

Cergy and its districts. This includes the Axe Majeur and Horloge districts that are quartiers prioritaires:
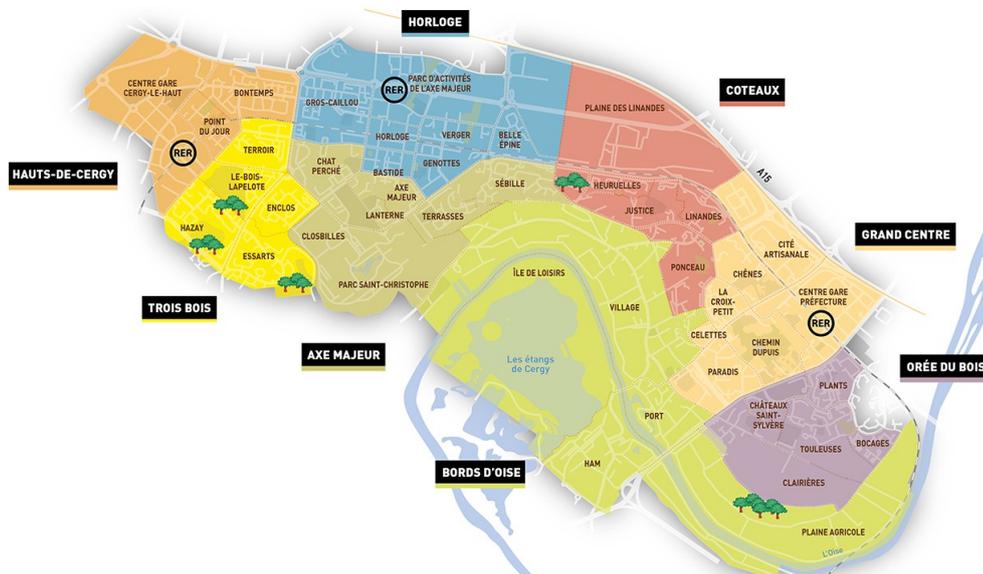
Figure 8 The town of Cergy and its districts. (cergypontoise.fr, n.d.)

The following aerial pictures show the area of Cergy-Pontoise in 1949 when the new town of

Cergy-Pontoise did not exist (left) and a recent picture of Cergy-Pontoise from 2014 (right).

Figure 9 Aerial view of Cergy-Pontoise and the river Oise in 1949 (left) and 2014 (right) (National Institute of Geographic and Forest Information (IGN), 2014)

As part of the presentation of Cergy-Pontoise and its context, it may be noted that urban

planners of Cergy-Pontoise also paid attention to is architecture and public art sites. Some architecture

and urban scholars argue that planned public site-specific artworks give a structure and meaning to the

urban space and act as markers of the new urban environment (Urlberger 2008; Suwaidi and Furlan

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[8] The name of the database is called Système d'Information Géographique (SIG). It is provided by the Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires (ANCT), which is part of Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires et des Relations avec les Collectivités Territoriales. This is the equivalent of the UK Ministry for Housing, Community & Local Government (MHCLG).

2017). Peculiar architecture contributes to making it easier for residents to orientate themselves with the new urban environment and to help them better identify with it (Bala 2016). Some areas of Cergy-Pontoise were staged with monumental public site arts and ultramodern style multi-level urbanism (e.g. pedestrian areas, roads and public transportation routes layered on top of each other and connected by various slabs and bridges) (Wakeman 2016).

In the 1980s, urban planners of the new town also commissioned international sculptor Dani Karavan and architect Ricardo Bofill to develop unique architecture and public art for Cergy-Pontoise. Some of their creations include: the *12 Colonnes*, the *Axe Majeur* and the *Passerelle*, which are located at the border of the leisure park and the artificial lake of Cergy- Pontoise in the Bords d'Oise district of Cergy. These pieces of monumental art and experimental architecture became important landmarks of Cergy-Pontoise and part of the heritage. For example, the website of the *région* Île-de-France published an article on 15 October 2020 to announce that the *région* recognizes the *Axe Majeur* as part of heritage of regional influence in July 2020 by awarding it the label: *Patrimoine d'Intérêt Régional* (heritage of regional influence). Subsequently, the unique architecture of the town has been chosen for the set of many films including Rohmer's *Boyfriends and Girlfriends* (1987) or more recently *Camille Rewind* (Lvovsky, 2012) and *Seuls* (Moreau, 2017) and for many music videos and photo shoots. Music artists who set their videos in Cergy-Pontoise include: Tame Impala (Australian rock band), Camille (French singer-songwriter) and KC L'Pirate (French rapper). As will be discussed later, the architecture and landmarks inspired some of the local musicians too and became the set for local music festivals of Cergy-Pontoise. Nevertheless, and as will be discussed in chapter 5, some of the residents of the town have been experiencing this type of urbanism as inaccessible, unsafe and disorientating.

4.1.2. Relevant general historical, social, political and economic background

Cergy-Pontoise was developed in the mid-sixties onwards, during the post-war shifting political, social and economic context. It was the result of planning by the new reformed political system for France's governance that was implemented under Charles de Gaulle's (right-wing) presidency (tenure: 1958-1969). This new system, still in place, is called the Fifth Republic. It is

characterised by more power to the executive branch of the government and less to the parliamentary branch. The constitutional council is also a creation of the Fifth Republic. The council ensures that all policymaking abides by the French Constitution.

In addition to the changes made to the French government's structure, several events influenced and shaped the planning of Cergy-Pontoise. The French civil unrest of May 1968 was characterized by protests against capitalism, consumerism, American imperialism, traditional institutions and top-down decision-making. May 68 was also a movement characterised by the ideal of a more people-centred society with more bottom-up decision- making and better participatory democracy. As discussed in chapter 2, the Director of the urban planning of Cergy-Pontoise, Bernard Hirsch, experienced May 1968 first hand when part of his own team went on strike to fight for a participatory urbanism made by the people for the people (2000, 158). Cergy-Pontoise was also developed during the end of the *Trente Glorieuses* (Thirty Glorious Years) (1945-1975) and the two oil crises of 1973 and 1979. The *Trente Glorieuses* corresponds to thirty years of economic growth and social welfare improvements, while the two oil crises correspond to times of economic downturn and austerity. The *Trente Glorieuses* in France also corresponds to an increase of its youth population. Central government addressed this change in the French population by developing policies that were youth orientated. As Gillet and Augustin state: 'The increase of young people, amplified by rural to urban migrations resulted at the time in the development of public facilities and *animation*' (2000, 65).

In practice, this meant an increase in social, cultural and sport facilities built for the youth, and the professionalisation of *animation*. As discussed earlier, *animation* is outreach, facilitation and mediation activities. These activities aim to help strengthen people's individual growth; bonds with one another; and bonds with various entities (e.g. spaces, cultures, arts). Prior to their professionalisation, *animations* were solely carried out by informal grassroots movements and networks of popular education usually organised in *associations* (Willener et al. 2004). In the 1960s, central government professionalised some of these initiatives run by grassroots networks' activities - *animations* - by creating the civil service role of *animateur* and a diploma in professional *animation*. Certified *animateurs* can work in local community centres, schools, summer camps, youth club and other public

facilities where mediation, facilitation and outreach are needed. The *animateur'*s role may include establishing contact between people; fostering relationships within an existing local community (e.g. a new town); bringing young people together to share activities (e.g. sports, culture, art); enabling people's participation, collaboration and initiatives (e.g. helping people: setting up their *associations,* organising events and applying for work, etc.); setting up community social, cultural or sports programmes and running them (e.g. setting up and running after-school clubs in local community centres).

This professionalisation of *animation*, which used to be unofficial and carried out by *associations* and informal support networks, created some tensions in the French society. In the mid-1970s onward, there were tensions between different groups of people and their perception of what the state should provide or not and what *animation* means. Some people were in favour of a stronger welfare state with nationwide clear *animation* strategies and set of policies. Others considered that people should be given more autonomy and independence; and that *animation* should be grassroots and bottom-up led (Augustin and Gillet 2000, 67). Although there were tensions with regards to the remit and frame of *animation*, *animation* and new towns were an inseparable couple and were integral parts of the planning of Cergy-Pontoise. Professional *animateurs* were hired to be present in the new facilities and to welcome the new residents. They were thought as crucial tools to help with livening up the new town and fostering the emergence of a strong local community.

Nevertheless, the changing economic, social and policymaking contexts of the 1960s and 1970s had an impact on the *animation,* planning and initial development of Cergy- Pontoise. Its initial planning in the mid-sixties was ambitious, but during the years of its construction in the 1970s onward some of its plans were downsized or changed due to the economic downturn and changes in political trends and urban planning. Cergy-Pontoise was created in 1965, only a few years after the creation of the French Ministry of Culture (1959). As discussed in chapter 2, the creation of the ministry institutionalised the historically long- established French segmentation of various forms of arts and culture by dividing them and distributing them between different ministries (Wallach 2007). This impacted the development of the new town as this particular context shaped the cultural policies that

influenced the planning of cultural facilities and their *animations,* which were planned as part of the initial creation and development of Cergy-Pontoise. The next section focusses on the vision of the first French minister of culture, André Malraux, who shaped most of the trends in terms of the initial set up of French cultural policymaking.

4.2. Policymaking context - Top-down segmentation of arts and culture and its decentralisation

As discussed in chapter 2, the first legal decree of the French Ministry of Culture, which was written by Malraux, has been criticised by scholars for not defining precisely what would be the exact remit of the Ministry of Culture. As French cultural policy scholar, Vincent Dubois states:

> A feature of state intervention in terms of culture: a persisting uncertainty in regard to its 'foundations', its aims and even its purpose…. The double face of French cultural policies in France: on one side, cultural policies are effectively set in stone with regards to the institutions, the social roles, speeches; and on the other side its definition is in a constant state of flux. (1998, 1)

Nevertheless, Malraux did detail his vision for this decree in several speeches. His speeches mystified culture and the arts. According to French cultural policy scholar Jacques Rigaud, Malraux considered arts and culture to be transcendental and beneficial to society (1995, 50). Thus, he constructed arts and culture as lay religions that people would need. Malraux stated his ideology during a speech he gave at the French parliament on 9 November 1967:

> Our civilisation wants to defend itself against these forces [media]. In the past, to do so, our civilisation had religion ordering its imagination… people have understood that what will help us to fight back the overwhelming force of the instinct is our heritage... We must permanently position preservation at the forefront to resist the attack.... Our aim must be the free access [to culture]. (1967 quoted in Poirrier 2013, 69)

Malraux's emphasis on culture-as-heritage automatically debarred newer forms of music and culture made by migrants and experimental artists. This was widely criticised by many artists of his time (e.g. raw artist Jean Dubuffet). These state exclusions were reflected in the segmentation of various categories of arts and cultures between the different ministries created as part of the Fifth Republic. Some artistic and cultural practices belonged to the Ministry of Culture (e.g. classical music),

while others were relegated to the Ministry of Youth and Sport (e.g. popular music genres and amateur music practices). This classification of arts and cultures between the ministries reinforced existing divisions within arts and culture. French historians, cultural policy scholars and artists criticized this approach for passing judgment on what should or should not be part of the Ministry of Culture (Charpentreau 1967; Wallach 2007; Fondu and Vermerie 2015; Phillippe Poirrier 2015). They also criticized it for institutionalising certain forms of culture and art (e.g. classical music), while ignoring local regional art and cultural traditions (e.g. regional folk music) and popular forms of art and culture (e.g. rock music) (ibid.). As Charpentreau states: 'The old separation, which prolonged from the Renaissance between the noble arts of the elite and the popular arts of masses, has become almost institutionalised' (1967, 10).

This divide is also applied in the way Malraux initiated, planned and applied cultural decentralisation. Cultural decentralisation and democratization policies intended to decentralise culture from Paris and to give better access to culture and arts to all the people living in France. Democratisation of culture is defined as giving direct access to French arts and cultures for everyone, regardless of any criteria (e.g. age or level of income). One of Malraux's major policies for the decentralisation and democratisation of culture was the creation of cultural facilities throughout France. This included the *Maisons de la Culture* (houses of culture), which still exist today. Malraux defined what *Maisons de la Culture* were in his speech at the French parliament to present his budget for the Ministry of Culture on 17 November 1959: '*Maisons de la Culture* in each French *département* will thrive in the same way we are trying to do in Paris, any 16 year-old child, however poor, may have a true contact with his national heritage and with the glory of humanity's spirit'. Malraux thought of them as the cathedrals of tomorrow's lay state (1966). Their initial aim was to give everyone direct access to French national heritage and to what he called the 'greatest' works of arts (ibid.). To achieve this aim, each *Maison de la Culture* is supposed to showcase a wide range of artworks from different disciplines in the same space to ignite the curiosity of local audience and spark multidisciplinary conversations (Greffe and Pflieger 2009, 3). These *Maisons de la Culture* were financed equally by central government and local authorities. The plan was to build one *Maison de la Culture* per

département, but this never happened. Only nine towns in France invested in a *Maison de la Culture*. The low number of *Maisons de la Culture* constructions may be indicative of the status of the French Ministry of Culture at the time. The project was too costly and ambitious for the new, poorly funded Ministry of Culture (Saez 2004).

The decentralisation and democratization of culture also included the decentralisation of music. The decentralisation of music was set out in the Ten-year plan of the French musical landscape that was led by the first director of music of the Ministry of Culture, the composer Marcel Landowski (tenure: 1966-1975.). This plan aimed at democratising and decentralising music from Paris to all the French *régions*. Its main objective was to modernise music education and higher education in collaboration with local authorities. In practice, the plan was to deliver, within ten years, at least one regional orchestra, one regional opera house and one *Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional* (*CRR*) per *région. CRRs* deliver state diplomas and higher-education diplomas in music, dance and theatre. The genres included in the curriculum reflect the top-down segmentation of music genres between ministries. A large focus of the teaching is the European classical canon. As time passed and the Ministry of Culture included wider fields of culture and arts, genres such as jazz and rock have also been added to the curriculum.[9] *Conservatoires* must favour a diversity of students ranging from the amateur to the higher-education music student. They also prepare students for the entry exams of national and international professional music schools and *conservatoires.* In France, state music, dance and drama schools are graded by the government. They are graded on the quality of their teaching and the level of their outreach, which may be town, *département, région* or the country as a whole. This classification of schools is made to ensure that the quality of state education is even everywhere in France.

Part of the Ten-year plan was also to modernise music facilities and infrastructure. Existing venues and theatres were refurbished, and new ones were built. Additionally, as part of the decentralisation and this plan, music professionals were sent to each *région* to develop musical

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[9] To give an idea in terms of the timescale, I may indicate here that the *conservatoire* of Cergy-Pontoise opened its department for jazz and popular music in 2011.

programmes of high quality - that is they had to align with the Ministry of Culture's set of policies and strategies relating to highbrow arts and culture - and to conduct local *animations* - to encourage the local population to engage with these programmes of events, concerts and classes. These professional musicians had to facilitate and deliver their programme to the widest audience possible in a given area with a focus on people who do not usually have access to music genres that were part of the remit of the Ministry of Culture (e.g. classical music).

However, many of these musicians felt unprepared. Their professional initial training at national and international conservatoires did not include the development of skills that would allow them to develop and deliver outreach musical programmes for people with whom they might have nothing in common with. In practice, they received very little support and experienced difficulties with setting up and leading their programmes (Lefebvre 2009). The decentralisation of music also omitted certain types of music genres (e.g. amateur music-making, folk and popular music genres), which were ignored or relegated to other ministries as discussed in chapter 2 and above (e.g. to the Ministry of Youth and Sport). This was the expression of a certain state vision about the type of music practices that should be encouraged nationally. As political scientist Noémie Lefebvre states:

> The aim to "give to the greatest number as possible of French people a music of quality as it is their right" forbids, it is true, to envisage randomness and diversity as positive values, and maintains a performative function of a central control of the decentralisation of music. (2009, 21)[10]

All these cultural decentralisation and democratisation policies were very much top-down with the installation of external branches of the Ministry of Culture throughout France to ensure policies were applied appropriately by the local authorities. These office branches for regional cultural affairs initiated by Malraux in 1963 were generalised throughout the French territories in 1977. They are present in each *région* of France and called *Direction Régionales des Affaires Culturelles* (*DRAC*). Their duties involve making sure that cultural policies are delivered and applied in each *région*. *DRAC*s

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[10] She quotes a report about music in France by Marcel Landowski entitled: 'Note sur la musique, Rapport de Monsieur Landowski, Inspecteur général de l'enseignement musical, à l'intention de Monsieur Antoine Bernard, Directeur du Cabinet de Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Culturelles, 21 April 1966'.

have a role of advisor and consultant to the local authorities and have to participate in regional cultural strategic planning and with setting up artistic and cultural education. Thus, the decentralisation of cultural policies was very much top-down and central government led via the integrations of central policymaking within local bureaucracies and authorities (Djian 2005; Dubois 2010).

The top-down policymaking approach of the ministry was criticized by the activists of the civil unrest and movement of May 1968. The efficiency of direct contact between artworks and people in the *Maisons de la Culture* was questioned and other ways to promote and mediate culture and arts were suggested. Pierre Bourdieu was a fierce critic of Malraux's policies of democratization of culture and *Maisons de la Culture* (Ahearne 2004, 13). Bourdieu criticizes the ideology of a direct contact to the work of arts as intuitive. He argues that there is a correlation between the social, cultural and educational background of an individual and their appreciation of an artwork and states that the Ministry of Culture and its *Maisons de la Culture* reinforce the existing social order and further institutionalize the segmentation of culture between legitimate 'highbrow' culture and illegitimate 'lowbrow' culture (1979). As Bourdieu states:

> Whereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading etc.), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level (measured by qualifications or length of schooling) and secondarily to social origin… To the socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes tastes to function as markers of 'class'. (ibid., 3)

The part of the society that creates this divide between illegitimate and legitimate culture and maintains as a result the social class divide is the dominant part of the society made of the higher social classes, which are also overrepresented by White people. The higher social classes regulate what is deemed legitimate culture by their consumption choices and illegitimate by what they choose not to consume. The government and the Ministry of Culture represent this legitimate culture. Music professionals sent to set up outreach music programmes in *régions* and other cultural workers demonstrated alongside other people to denounce this top-down limited conception of culture and arts; to manifest their disagreements with the ways the cultural decentralisation was led and to fight for

better working conditions (e.g. lack of appropriate training for the musicians sent in various *régions* to set up and lead music outreach programme).

Cultural workers who supported the May 1968 movements were antiauthoritarian and as such refused to be told what culture is and how it should be accessed. A permanent committee of heads of *Maisons de la Culture* and popular theatres wrote the declaration of Villeurbanne on 25 May 1968 to denounce the top-down approach of the *Maisons de la Culture* and as part of this statement created the notion of *'non-public'* (non-audience). The authors considered *non-public* to be the audience they wanted to reach but could not reach because their scope of actions and agency was too limited due to the top-down framework set up by the Ministry of Culture. This was reinforced with the top-down presence of the *DRACs*. *Non-public* according to the authors of the declaration could not come to their public cultural venues due to financial or symbolic reasons (e.g. inhibitions and prejudices) (Olivier Donnat and Octobre 2001). Although the concept of *non-public* is useful to discuss existing barriers to access to culture and to shine a light on existing social exclusions, it is sometimes used in a way that conflates certain forms of popular culture with cultural exclusion and dismiss culture that does not fit the remit of the Ministry of Culture (ibid., 183). Anthropologist Cosmina Ghebaur is also critical of the concept as she considers that it is the institutions that produce *non-public* by patronizing people and staging shows that are made by the intellectuals for the intellectuals (2013).

The declaration of Villeurbanne is also criticised by cultural policy scholars for being another form of politicisation of arts and culture. Some scholars, instead, advocate for a mediation of culture that allows people to flourish culturally without imposing terms and conditions on them (Rigaud 2011, 8). Despite the unrest and opposition, Malraux's successors in the 1970s continued to develop policies that aligned with his initial vision. This tumultuous political context and the tension between the French interventionist welfare state and its critics carried by the movement of 1968 had an impact on the planning, construction and development of Cergy-Pontoise, which was led by musician and French senior civil servant and engineer Bernard Hirsch. The next section discusses Hirsch's vision and the way it played out within the two first decades of its planning and construction.

4.3. 1960s – 1970s: A top-down democratisation and decentralisation of culture expressed in the local planning of Cergy-Pontoise

Bernard Hirsch was appointed by the French government to direct and lead the planning and development of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise from 1965 until 1975. He led the urban planning team behind the conception, creation and development of Cergy-Pontoise whilst respecting directions from Paul Delouvrier who was directing the national urban planning development policies that included the French new towns programme. Similarly to cultural policies, urban planning policies were very much top-down and constraining for the new town planners. Bernard Hirsch had a certain vision of what the new town of Cergy-Pontoise should look and feel like. However, policy and decision making about Cergy-Pontoise was very much top-down. This made the pre-existing towns of Cergy-Pontoise feel ignored and limited the actions of the local urban planning team of Cergy-Pontoise. As Wakeman states:

> Hirsch was forced to take his plans for Cergy-Pontoise in different directions, depending on the political winds in Paris. The communist mayors in the suburban districts were bitterly hostile to what they saw as a technocratic takeover of decision-making… The new town was denounced by the acclaimed urban critic Thierry Paquot… as an instrument to technocratize society in alliance with capitalism. (2016, 226).

Nevertheless, Hirsch tried to apply to the best of his ability his vision to tackle difficult situations and decisions for the urban planning of Cergy-Pontoise. Part of his vision was to use entertainment and arts to avoid the boredom usually associated with the suburbs and the new towns, and also to appease conflicts in the new urban community. The new town programme emphasised the importance of the wellbeing of the new residents as a criterion for successful new towns. Bernard Hirsch, in line with these policies, was concerned with the wellbeing of the first inhabitants, whom would live in the middle of the building works. He focused on quickly building leisure and cultural facilities, which would be easily accessible by them. This provided new residents with local places to go to and entertain themselves. Bernard Hirsch considered leisure and cultural facilities to contribute to what makes a town a town. As he states:

> We had more difficulties and we succeeded less with [obtaining] cultural facilities. Yet, I was very much attached to them and dedicated all my efforts to

them. I don't believe in functional towns where facilities are programmed by applying rules that set, per hundreds of residents the number of parking spaces the size of parks and nurseries…. I believe that it is important to give prominence to the superfluous, the unprofitable, the uncategorizable, even though it leads to costs that appear to have no direct return (2000, 198).

As part of his strategy to develop cultural facilities, Hirsch tried to take advantage of the cultural decentralisation, which was happening at the same time as the urban decentralisation. He was very persistent in attempting to obtain a *Maison de la Culture* for Cergy-Pontoise, but never succeeded. He recalled that when he met Malraux, the latter replied to his request for a *Maison de la Culture*: 'A building? Agreed, but make me culture first!' (2000, 142). Nevertheless, in 1968, a *centre d'action culturelle* (cultural action centre) opened in Cergy-Pontoise. This was a cheaper and more modest version of a *Maison de la Culture*. It remains unclear why no *Maison de la Culture* was built in Cergy-Pontoise. This was not because it was too close to Paris. There was one *Maison de la Culture* that was built around the same time, in 1966, in the town of Bobigny, which is much closer to Paris than Cergy-Pontoise. This rebuff may have been an example of the administrative and financial challenges that the new town and the new Ministry of Culture posed. The failure to obtain a *Maison de la Culture* for Cergy-Pontoise was just one failed project amongst others (e.g. the failed project of the hover train, which would have connected Cergy-Pontoise to La Défense, the business district of Paris, within ten minutes). The failure to secure a *Maison de la Culture* for Cergy-Pontoise motivated Hirsch and his team to make every effort to 'make culture' (to use the words of Malraux). As Hirsch states:

We took his [Malraux's] word and from then on considered it part of our mission to develop in all fields cultural activities up to the point that all the cultural facilities would become so overcrowded that no one would have a doubt about the necessity to build the cultural centre that we were dreaming of. (2000, 142)

Bernard Hirsch used cultural planning as a strategy to achieve his vision, which included making the small town of Cergy the centre of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise. As he states:

It was an opportunity for Cergy to develop next to towns of some significance… We decided to play the game without any reserves and to use the cultural field to create solidarities between the different towns and villages that tend to ignore and envy each other. At first, the older towns would serve as stepping stones and, later on, Cergy would become the centre of all of the urban community's activities. (ibid., 144)

Hirsch and his team lived in Cergy-Pontoise to put this strategy into practice by participating in local life. Hirsch, a musician himself, focused on music. There were two small classical music schools in Cergy-Pontoise, each in different towns of Cergy-Pontoise. These music schools did not work well as the towns were too small and poor to provide a strong and efficient structure to welcome enough students and teachers of all disciplines. Hirsch proposed to fuse both towns' funding and schools to create a new one that would work better. There were many heated arguments between the mayors of the two towns but eventually they agreed. Somebody neutral – that is to say, not from either town – was needed to direct the new school. As nobody was found, Bernard Hirsch was chosen by both mayors to direct the music school for five years until André Girard, a well-known French orchestra conductor, was appointed. The fusion was so successful that the school, which ranged from beginners to advanced training in classical music, dance and drama went from fifty to seven hundred students within a few years. As it fitted his Ten-year plan, the director of music Landowski kept a close eye on this success and supported unswervingly the merger of the schools and its subsequent follow up - the project of construction of a new larger school, which became in 1997 a *Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional* (*CRR*) (Hirsch 2000, 143).

The *CRR* is located as part of the cultural and administrative centre André Malraux, which opened in Cergy-Pontoise in 1979. This is an urban integrated facility. This means that the facility regroups various services and activities. These integrated facilities were an attempt to take into account the complexity of urban life and its changing nature; they were promoted during the new town movement to save money by clustering facilities under one roof, to encourage social intermingling, and to avoid the segmentation of public services. As French cultural policy scholar Pierre Moulinier states:

> The notion of integrated facility is born of the observation that teams responsible for the facilitation of social, cultural and educative facilities ignore each other even though the functions of these facilities are complementary: the idea is to operate a physical and administrative decompartmentalization of these facilities and services by putting them all under the same roof… encouraging social intermingling and reducing functioning costs. (2005, 30).

The architecture of the centre André Malraux allows space to stage outside performances protected from weather conditions. Parts of the building are in a u-shape and connected by a glass roof and a first-floor deck where the entrances to the library, the council of Cergy-Pontoise, the theatre and the *conservatoire* are located right next to each other. A cinema is located only at a few minutes walking distance away from the centre. The following pictures show the centre André Malraux:

Figure 10 The cultural and administrative centre André Malraux. (Mossot, 2006)

Figure 11 Inside the cultural and administrative centre André Malraux in 2017 An audience is sitting on stairs facing a courtyard where a free concert of jazz is performed by the students and staff of the conservatoire during the festival 'Les Folles Journées du Conservatoire' (The Conservatoire's Crazy Days) in June 2017 (fieldwork photo, June 2017)

In addition to these integrated facilities other facilities were built to stimulate social community life and to cater to the social needs of the residents. They were *Maisons de Quartier* (community centres), *Maisons de la Jeunesse et de la Culture* (*MJCs*) (youth clubs) and *Locaux Communs Résidentiels* (*LCRs*) (collective residential facilities). *Maisons de Quartier* are social centres. They offer

socio-cultural activities and social services. They have four missions. As the French Federation of Social Centres website states as of 2021, these are:

> To provide social activities and social services to the local community
>
> To be cross generational and encourage the development of social and family ties
>
> To listen and take into account local needs and develop 'vie associative' [community life] via residents' volunteering
>
> To do innovative social action and develop partnerships

Residents can come to the *Maisons de Quartier* to take part in activities, find space to organise their own activities, meet people, and access local social services. *LCR*s are buildings that are made available to the residents. They were developed in the 1960s to strengthen communal bounds between residents, avoid social problems and encourage bottom- up initiatives to help residents appropriate their town. The *MJC*s are facilities dedicated towards the youth. Their aim is to federate social mixing and to encourage people to engage with democratic life and their local community. As of October 2021, the website of the organisation regrouping all *MJCs* states that the *MJCs* were initiated in 1906 by a Catholic progressive movement. This movement aimed to engage young people with democratic life. Very quickly these youth clubs became secular spaces open to all and separated from the Church. Following this, more youth clubs developed in France and in 1940, the Vichy government supported youth clubs as part of its policies directed toward the youth. From 1943, youth clubs decided to distance themselves from the influence of the Vichy govenrment. After the war and especially at the beginning of the Fifth republic, the youth clubs became more closely associated with the government again when in 1959 the Ministry of Youth and Sports recommended and encouraged the creation of many more of them as a solution to problems of juvenile delinquency. .

Animateurs are present in these facilities. Their role is to welcome the residents; help them with administrative processes and direct them to available local support. *Animateurs* also work with local venues to use culture as a tool for local outreach and inclusion (e.g. taking school children to see a play or a concert). Urban planners and policymakers hoped that the presence of these facilities and their *animateurs* would help new residents connect with their town and their new facilities, thus giving some

soul to the new town, livening up existing areas and creating community life in Cergy-Pontoise. Bernard Hirsch, his team, policymakers and the local authorities of the area aimed to welcome well the new residents and to encourage them to take part in the development of a community life in Cergy-Pontoise. As discussed earlier, some of the urban planners moved to Cergy-Pontoise to be able to welcome the residents, experience their problems and discuss with them how to improve the town. Bernard Hirsch was very conscious from the start that the new residents would be uprooted from their home and family. As he states:

> I explain that in a new town, whatever we do, all residents will be uprooted because they will not have near them: their parents, the tombs of their ancestors or their childhood memories. But this is not necessarily a bad thing if residents come of their own will and have a pioneer temperament. (2000, 126)

To integrate residents to the new town and create a community, Bernard Hirsch wrote a welcome letter that was given to each new resident by an employee hired to welcome them. This letter invited residents to join *associations* and activities offered within the facilities of Cergy-Pontoise. As the letter states:

> Above all, we wish you to feel as members of a human community without borders and to participate in the activities organised in Pontoise and Cergy. Sign up to the sports associations, subscribe to the cultural bureau, which stages ten eclectic shows every season, come and hang out at the MJC, and send your children to the music school. May the older residents feel at home in the new town and may you feel at home in Pontoise and Cergy [this was before the name 'Cergy-Pontoise' for the new town was agreed]! (ibid., 225)

This type of letter was part of the initiatives encouraged by the directives from the *Secrétariat Général* of the New Town (part of the state organisation leading the new towns programme). As a note by the *Secrétariat* states:

> When the first residents arrive in the new towns, it is a necessity to prepare the prior conditions for the birth of a social and cultural life to avoid uprooting phenomenon, to facilitate the integration of the new residents in an already existing population and to promote the feeling of collective belonging to the new town'. (*Secrétariat* quoted in Vadelorge 2005, 35).[11]

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[11] *S.G.V.N Secrétariat Général des Villes Nouvelles* - Secretariat General of the New Towns. The secretariat has to apply decisions made by *the Groupe Central des Villes Nouvelles* (Central Group of the New Town). Both the group and its secretariat are state organisations.

This was fed by the ideas of 'participatory urbanism' and the 'right to the city', which were very present in France, especially during and after the popular movement of May 1968. The main idea at the time was that *animation* - outreach, mediation - had to be facilitated in all the facilities in order to succeed at creating a lively new town (Vadelorge 2005, 57). These *animations* were supposed to be participatory (co-created between residents, groups of residents and *animateurs*), human-sized and versatile (flexible to adapt to the new residents' needs that were unknown at the time of the planning) (ibid., 64). However, many of the first residents found it difficult to find their place between the different entities of Cergy-Pontoise. These entities were: the established native residents, the urban planners of Cergy-Pontoise and the local authorities. The first residents - also called pioneers by the media, people with an interest in new towns, and some of the first residents themselves - formed *associations* as a way to give themselves a stronger collective voice in the shaping of the new town, and to express and cater to some of their initial needs that were not met by the town when they first moved in. *Associations* had a wide spectrum of interests. Some of the *associations* were support groups for problems experienced in the new housings, others were groups meeting together to share a common interest or activity (e.g. spirituality, amateur music-making, etc.). Sociologist Monique Dagnaud highlights that the *associations* were essential and necessary at the beginning of the new town (1979). As she states:

> Between the urban planners of Cergy-Pontoise - who were imagining who would be the new residents - and the existing older residents and their elected representatives, there was no space for the actual new residents to exist and make their voices heard. New residents created space for themselves by forming associations to represent themselves at official meetings and to pull their resources together to be able to work out solutions to their everyday problems. (ibid., 151)

Urban sociologist Stéphanie Vermeersch notes that the attempts and structures put in place to facilitate residents' initiatives (e.g. construction of collective residential facilities for residents' collective use; partnership between the new town builders and local authorities) were also limited and obstructed by French bureaucracy and the structure of its official institutions (2005). Architect and urbanist Jean Dellus argues that the French new towns' urban planners failed to communicate and

collaborate efficiently with the new residents (2009). He goes as far as stating that this was voluntary and part of a technocratic approach. Some of the French scholars attribute the failures of participatory urbanism and of *animation* in the new towns to the approach that they analyse as too utopian and idealistic. As Moulinier states:

> It is not an exaggeration to say that the town made by its residents, like the *animation* led by people, are splendid ideals but sadly impossible to reach. Too many complicated tendencies, economic, social and cultural conditions hinder such a move (Pierre Moulinier at the Council of Europe Conference 1976 quoted in Vadelorge 2005, 68)[12]

British urban planner Michael Wellbank, who was part of the team working on the city centre of Cergy-Pontoise, considered the planning approach of Cergy-Pontoise as 'over- planning'. He argued that the French planners were more focussed on the architecture of the town itself rather than its urban living (2006, 26). Hirsch concedes in his diaries that he struggled to get an idea of who would be the typical residents of Cergy-Pontoise and what their lifestyle would be like. British architects of the British new towns Graham Shankland and Oliver Cox, who worked with the urban planning team of Cergy-Pontoise once a week, used to ask him about who the new town was built for. This made Hirsch and his team quite uncomfortable. As Hirsch states in his diaries:

> Who will live in the housings? How much will families earn? How many children will they have? Where will they work?" These were the questions asked by Shankland and Cox and we felt quite embarrassed about answering them. (2000, 161)

These questions from Shankland and Cox were slowly answered as the town was being built and the residents moved in and appropriated for themselves the town that was still in construction (and remain in construction as of 2021). This will be discussed in more depth in chapter 5 where I discuss the town as it is now experienced by musicians and residents. The next section looks at the remaining planning context of the 1980s up to the 2010s.

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[12] One may speculate whether these ideals are really impossible to reach if they are thought through appropriately (e.g. citizens assemblies, site visits with residents, focus groups, workshops about urban planning).

4.4. 1980s – 2010s: Ministry of Culture opening to new music genres and impact on the ground in Cergy-Pontoise

The previous section explored the initial planning and context of Cergy-Pontoise in the 1960s and 1970s and its first criticisms. In the 1970s and 1980s, the resulting town reflected the segmentation of cultural and musical practices between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Locally, this was visible in how classical music had its own subsidized spaces dedicated especially to it (e.g. the *conservatoire*) and how amateur music making, rock, and folk were relegated to the private sphere and more generic community centres (e.g. *MJCs*).

The 1980s and 1990s brought changes in national cultural policies that also brought changes at the local level of the town. The minister of culture of these years, Jack Lang, a left- wing politician, opened the ministry to certain forms of popular culture, arts, and new forms of amplified music. For music this opening included the development of policies and strategies supporting amateur music making and popular genres with a wide appeal, including rock, pop, reggae, and hip-hop (Berthod and Weber 2006; Teillet 2007). This period is characterized by the creation of new state music facilities (e.g. state music venues and public music studios) dedicated to popular music and amateur music making practices, and the development of music events and festivals locally and nationally (e.g. the creation of a national music day to celebrate all music and levels of practices).

During this time, Jack Lang also encouraged councils to support local venues and develop cultural events as parts of their communications strategies and to make their towns more appealing and marketable to the private sector (e.g. tourism companies, housing developers). As part of this in the 1990s, the Ministry of Culture created the labels Scène Nationale and Scène Musiques Actuelles (Rouchi 2016). These labels are awarded to small and medium artistic venues of local interest. There is a sense of prestige attached to these labels and it gives access to specific subsidies and state support. The goals of Scènes Nationales (contemporary forms of dance, music and theatre) and Scène Musiques Actuelles (specifically tailored toward certain forms of popular and contemporary music genres and amplified music such as rock, hip hop, new-folk, etc.) are twofold. They need to simultaneously foster French artistic research and creation with a focus on multidisciplinarity, innovation and present-time forms of artistic practices, and they need to contribute to better access to culture and art in their local

area. To obtain and maintain these labels venues need to be able to prove that they support emerging artists and help increase local residents' access to events, courses and shows that are qualitative, inclusive, diverse and fit within the state national cultural and artistic strategies and policies. Venues that wish to obtain a label - and then to maintain it - have to go through a competitive application process and have to attend state committees that review and assess their strategies and programming. In practice, these venues promote better access to culture in their local area by: having lower prices for their events, by dedicating some of their time and events to amateur practices and local grassroots community groups (e.g. projects with schools, hospitals, prisons) and by developing artistic residency and support programmes specifically geared toward emerging talents. (Teillet 2007; Thierry 2017).

These new policies have been reflected in the way the local planning of Cergy-Pontoise continued, shifted and adapted from the 1980s onwards. As of 2021, Cergy-Pontoise has three theatres that are part of the *scènes nationales* and one venue - initially a local community centre - that is in the process of being adapted to be labelled *Scène Musiques Actuelles*. In the 1980s and 1990s, the local authorities of Cergy-Pontoise developed music recording and rehearsal studios in the area to offer local low-cost studio facilities for the residents. All these local state facilities work with other local institutions (e.g. schools) as part of their local outreach mission. However, many of these later new developments were poorly designed as an afterthought, and the existing venues that were adapted have not always been refurbished in a suitable manner. This created a wide range of difficulties for residents and musicians (e.g. noise disturbances, rapid obsolescence of recording equipment), which will be detailed in chapters 5, 6 and 7. The following map shows the different venues of Cergy-Pontoise as of 2021.

	Community centres, *Maisons de Quartier*
	Music venues and studios.
	Arts community centres.
	Music schools.
	LCRs.
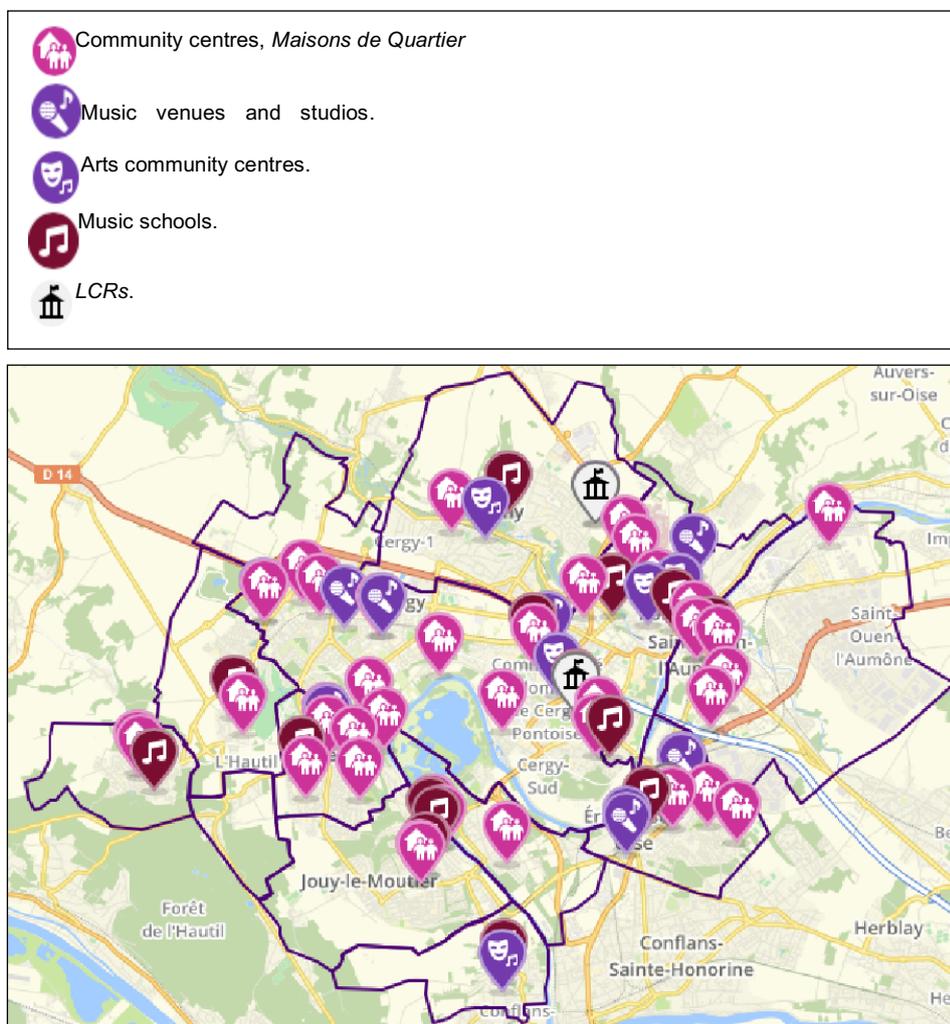
Figure 12 Cergy-Pontoise's map of cultural spaces. The purple lines show the borders of the new town of Cergy-Pontoise and its thirteen towns. (cergypontoise.fr, n.d.)

In addition to these new facilities and adaptation of existing buildings, Cergy-Pontoise also supported and still supports a network of local popular music professionals. The network of music professionals from the département Val d'Oise has its headquarters in Cergy-Pontoise and receives funding from the towns Cergy-Pontoise and Cergy. This means musicians of Cergy-Pontoise are ideally located to benefit from the network. The network offers various forms of support including advice, conferences, small grants, schemes for emerging musicians, and so on. The council of Cergy-Pontoise from the 1990s also supported festivals as a strategy to stage Cergy-Pontoise and encourage the coming together of the diversity of its residents. These festivals include standard French special days (e.g. association day, music day), as well as large free or ticketed events that attract crowds from

the town's surrounding areas and - at times - from Paris. These events usually highlight the existing architecture and public site arts of the new town. The following pictures show events that happened at the landmarks of Cergy- Pontoise and a past communication campaign from the council that aimed to highlight the cultural attractiveness of Cergy-Pontoise:

Figure 14 Audience attending a music party at the 12 Colonnes during music day on 21 June 2017 (Fieldwork photo,, June 2017)
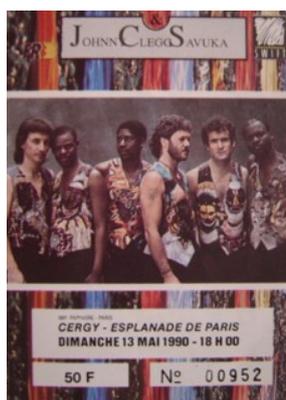
Figure 13 Ticket for a concert of Johnny Clegg (mbaqanqa and afro-pop) at the Esplanade de Paris in 1990. (priceminister.com, n.d.).

Figure 15 '100 Contests' festival (hip-hop) on the Esplanade de Paris. The 12 Colonnes, the artificial lake and Paris (top of the picture) can be seen behind the stage (axe- majeur.fr, n.d.

Figure 16 Cergy-Pontoise communication campaign of 2003: It states: 'Cergy-Pontoise, your dreams inspire us.'(cergypontoise.fr, n.d.)

As of 2021, according to the website of the council of Cergy-Pontoise, performing arts in Cergy-Pontoise are better represented than in many new towns. Cergy-Pontoise includes 11 venues on its territory representing a capacity of 3,350 seats and, according to the town's website, a total of 480 shows per year. There are a variety of music concerts happening all year round with some of the concerts at affordable prices, or free when taking place in one of the subsidized venues of Cergy-Pontoise. Although the town provides cultural and communal buildings to its residents, they do not necessarily use them or identify with their town or as being part of the local community. This brings to the foreground the gaps that top-down planning and policymaking create or cannot address. Despite an opening of culture to present- time and popular forms of arts at the national and local level in the 1980s and 1990s, central and local governments' initiatives do not necessarily appeal to the resident population as a whole. I explore these disconnections between some of the residents and these cultural

policies in chapters 5,6 and 7. These chapters shine a light on the way certain facilities and events have felt for some of the residents and musicians as uninteresting, unsuitable or exclusive. Some of these disconnections reflect the existing crisis of the French republican contract and more widely the erosion of certain models of citizenship at wider levels as will be discussed in chapter 5.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the initial context of Cergy-Pontoise and its initial urban planning. The initial planning of the town of Cergy-Pontoise was top-down, functionalist and planned for an idealised non-existent resident. Hirsch and his team had to juggle between directions from central government, competitiveness between different local authorities and shifting socio-economic political contexts. This resulted in Cergy-Pontoise as an urban environment that reflects French society and policymaking culture at the time of planning. Institutionalised cultural practices have their dedicated cultural facilities, while amateur and grassroots practices are relegated to the private sphere or community centres. *Animation* of the town remains top-down with the state providing *animateurs* in the facilities to liven them up and encourage the residents of Cergy-Pontoise to spend time at these new public facilities and to actively take part in the life of their local community. In practice, this over-planning leaves little space for the residents themselves to organically make the town their own. Nevertheless, early on, the first residents organised themselves in community groups called *associations* to cater to some of their needs that were unmet met by the town. The next chapter focuses in more details on the current lived experience of Cergy-Pontoise beyond its planning, and, how residents, *associations,* musicians and local authorities shape and reshape Cergy-Pontoise organically.

Chapter Five: Living the planning: Music *Associations*, Urban Living and the French Republican Contract

5.0. Introduction

After discussing in chapter 4 the top-down planning of the city within its social, economic, political and policymaking context, I now turn to the present-day town as experienced by the residents themselves. I focus on their experience of it more specifically through the lens of the town's grassroots music community groups and the local music events, to get a better understanding of how the planning is lived by residents. As discussed in chapters 2 and 4, the planning of the new town has been criticized as over-planning and a form of French state authoritarianism, which imposes a top-down utopian ideal of French community and urban living onto citizens, that leaves little space for them to find their place in the town (Claude 2006; Wakeman 2016). As will be discussed later in this chapter, some of these top-down notions of French community and urban living stem from the French republican contract part of the French constitution, which sets out a collective identity for all French citizens via a set of values, principles and laws, which supposedly bind all citizens together as the French nation, but in reality exclude or ignore people's multi-layered identities (e.g. cultural and religious affiliations) (Oberti 2008; Kamiejski et al. 2012; Langer et al. 2020). One may note here that exclusion suggests a social construct that delimits in a restrictive dichotomous manner who is 'in' and who is 'out' of the society (Firdion 2012; Lafaye 2012). Nevertheless it remains a useful term to better understand the various ways people's lives, identities or part of them may be ignored or kept out from society. Within the context of urban planning and the new towns the concept of exclusion is useful to better understand whether, how and to what extent a town may be planned in a way that keeps out categories of people (Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011; Wakeman 2016). For example, and as will be discussed later in this chapter, Epstein details in her ethnography of Cergy-Pontoise that migrants who live in Cergy-Pontoise have been relegated to certain districts of the new town.

In addition to exclusion, new towns are also propitious to states of anomie because of the disconnect that may happen between the town and its new residents, who do not have pre-existing social ties with the new town (Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011). Hirsch himself was aware of this potential challenge when he referred to the new residents as de facto 'uprooted' from their existing

families and friends as discussed in chapter 4 (2000). Émile Durkheim defines anomie as a state of chaos when the existing order of social ties breakdown (1984). For Durkheim both the society and the state set some of these social ties that bind people together; and are both responsible to minimise the state of anomie. As he states:

> If anomie is an evil it is above all because society suffers through it, since it cannot exist without cohesion and regulation. Thus, moral or legal rules essentially express social needs which society alone can identify. They rest upon a climate of opinion, and all opinion is a collective matter, the result of being worked out collectively. To be shot of anomie a group must thus exist or be formed within which can be drawn up the system of rules that is now lacking. Political society as a whole, or the state, clearly cannot discharge this function. (ibid., xxxvv)

Nevertheless, De Certeau and Holston argue that everyday life in the city may produce tactics, which empower, derail, parody and subvert the existing order, state agendas and other strategies; helping people reclaim and renegotiate some of the urban and community life in their own terms (De Certeau 1984; Holston 1998). Sound and music may be part of both strategies and tactics. A sound may be considered as noise (disruptive) or music (civilised, organised) (Attali 1977; Revill 2000; Turino 2016). This divide of sound into noise and music creates a binary that constructs power relations, social order, and a political economy of music (ibid.).

Music itself can be an agent of social change; it provides alternative forms of citizenship via its participatory forms, since these forms of music-making have values that differ from the capitalist ethos, as well as a voluntary aspect that leads to egalitarianism (Turino 2016). Music as an agent of social change is, in practice, an ideal that is difficult to achieve: although those engaged in participatory music activities may have a desire to follow their participatory music group's values, they still need to attend to the expectations of the current social order to survive in the existing world. In other words, in participatory music forms, participants' experience can be seen as communitas, defined by anthropologist Victor Turner as liminal moments of liberation from normative constraints, which are only transient as they cannot resist the existing structuration and order (1982, 132).

The question arises, then, of whether the ideal of the new town as well as residents' reactions to these ideals and their everyday tactics may be moments of communitas. If they are, one may wonder if

like all utopia, they are not meant to last but are nevertheless useful to constantly negotiate and mitigate states of anomie and urban disrepair. This is the central question of this chapter, in which I focus on the present-day population of Cergy-Pontoise, exploring the actual residents' lived experience of their town and the various ways they shape the town with their everyday tactics. I do so by first examining what is meant by the French republican contract, and how it relates to other models of citizenship. I then turn to the shortcomings of the town as experienced by its residents before focussing on music *associations* and their musical activities as a source of insight into residents' everyday tactics, which perform, challenge or transgress the existing order and strategies. I also focus on the town's musical events, as these crystallise and perform the various tensions at play between strategies and tactics.

5.1. The French republican contract, models of citizenship and music

The French republican contract is defined in the first article of the French constitution as follows: 'France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It guarantees the equality of all citizens before the law without distinction as to origin, race or religion' (Article 1, French Constitutions, 4 October 1958).[13] The French motto relating to this contract is: *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* (equality, liberty, solidarity). It is usually displayed in French public institutions (e.g. at the entrance of schools). On the one hand, the French republican contract aims to unite and bind all citizens into what is called the French nation, in which everyone is equal and free regardless of their individual characteristics. On the other hand, this model also sets out a hierarchy, whereby the French ideals of citizenship and republicanism take priority over other affiliations an individual may identify with or belong to. This sets out, de facto, the state's limits in terms of including individuals' rights and recognizing citizens' particular differences (Kamiejski et al. 2012). In practice, this means that the state does not recognise French organisations that are based on differentiative criteria (e.g. religious organisations). The strict French form of secularism also expects all its citizens to keep their religious

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[13] I may note that discussions about citizenship at times involve issues (e.g. bans on religious signs in French schools) that also affect people who are not citizens - either by choice or because they cannot access it - but who nevertheless are living in France (e.g. permanent residents, asylum seekers). During my fieldwork, I may have interacted with non-French citizens without realising it. For language purposes and clarity, I am using the words 'citizens' and 'citizenship' throughout the thesis, but these words may at times simply mean 'people living in France'.

affairs within the private sphere: it is prohibited for citizens to show any religious signs in official spaces and in some cases in all public spaces (e.g. it is forbidden to wear the burka or any similar piece of clothing that covers the face anywhere in the country, and displaying religious signs in state schools is banned – i.e. students cannot wear a cross, a hijab, a turban or a kippa).

This model has been criticised by scholars from various disciplines for promoting equality over equity and justice; fostering colour-blind racism; concealing existing racism; and excluding some of the citizens or denying parts of their identities (Oberti 2008; Epstein 2011; Beaman 2017). This model also denies a right to cultural citizenship to people: that is, the right to one's self-defined citizenship rather than being solely made citizen by the state (Ong et al. 1996; Beaman 2017). This fosters a French culture of toxic and superficial diversity and multiculturalism, where people - when in public - may only express their identity and what they perceive as their culture in a way that fits within the republican contract. This suppresses the referent behind the signifiers, leading to the reification of certain groups of people (Boli and Elliott 2008; Epstein 2011). Some scholars perceive this model as reinforcing existing power relations between the dominant parts of the population (e.g. the higher social classes overrepresented by White people) and the dominated parts of the population (e.g. lower social classes, migrants and their descendants) by imposing a model that is, in practice, based on the French Christian and secular heritage and values - without addressing French colonialism, slavery and their associated past and present damages (ibid.).

In addition to inequalities between citizens of different ethnicity, race, and religion, there is also a widening gap of inequalities between French social classes. Some of the people identifying with the lower social classes feel that they are being let down and treated unfairly by the French republican contract, which they perceive as favouring the higher social classes. A recent example of this is the grassroots popular movement of the 'Yellow vests' led by the lower classes; this initiative began in 2018, aiming to denounce how a disproportionate burden of the governments' taxes is placed on the working and middle classes, and to call for economic justice (Xypas and Wallenhorst 2020). The 'Yellow vests' movement and the ongoing heated debates around secularism in France make parts of French society and many scholars wonder whether this model is sustainable and capable of including

all of its citizens. As sociology and psychology scholars Rodolphe Kamiejski, Serge Guimond, Pierre De Oliveira, Abdelatif Er- rafiy, and Markus Brauer state: 'We can ask ourselves whether this model, which aims to be the guarantor of liberty, equality and fraternity, favours efficiently the acceptation, respect and integration of all of its citizens'(2012, 2).

The crisis of French citizenship is coupled with an overall erosion of models of national citizenship at the global level due to the rise of neoliberalism, which led to the fall of the welfare state in certain areas of the world (e.g. the UK) (Kourachanis 2020). This has profoundly transformed models of citizenship in capitalist countries. According to social policy scholar Nikos Kourachanis, from the post-World War Two era up to present-day, the citizenship model has evolved from social citizenship, to active citizenship, and finally to responsible citizenship (ibid.) . I will paraphrase here some of his explanation of the three models of citizenship and their contexts for clarity.

The social citizenship model is associated with the post-World War Two welfare state, which is characterised by ensuring social rights and the right to a minimum level of living conditions for all. This model's objectives are to foster social cohesion and alleviate social inequalities. In this model, the state is responsible for the provision of social support services to its citizens. These social support services are meant to reduce citizens' reliances on market forces and to reduce disparities between social classes.

The active citizenship model is associated with post-industrialism and the rise of the neoliberalist ideology from the 1970s onward, responsibilities are re-distributed between the state and the citizens. Some of the state's responsibility to provide social support services to its citizens becomes the responsibility of the citizens themselves. In this model, the focus is on the responsibilities and abilities of citizens rather than their rights. Social rights become citizens' obligations and responsibilities rather than services provided by the state. For example, citizens have to ensure that they work to be able to access healthcare and financial stability. As social support responsibilities are displaced from the state to the citizens, the state does not need to meet social needs. In this model, social needs may be met by the civil society or the free market.

The responsible citizenship model is associated with the global financial crisis of 2008 that legitimised the end of the welfare state: the transition from citizens' rights to individuals' obligations and responsibilities has intensified as social public policies are privatised. In this model, responsible citizens need to be competitive in the labor market and be able to take part in consumerism to meet their social needs. Some people can afford citizenship's rights while others cannot. In this model, the concept of citizenship is eroded, it becomes a commodity and a form of capital. According to political scientist Sara Kalm, citizenship becomes a socially-constructed resource that individuals have or do not have and in different capacities, thereby impacting their social position, their ability to act, their perceptions of self and others, and their ways in the world. (2020).

As briefly discussed in the introduction of this chapter, people are not passive toward the existing social order and may negotiate their positions via what De Certeau and Holston consider to be the everyday life practices in the urban environment (De Certeau 1984; Holston 1998). De Certeau defines strategies as the purview of power and control (e.g. institutions) and tactics as the every-day life actions that people develop in opposition to the strategies (1984). De Certeau gives the example of the city and its dwellers as examples of strategies and tactics at play, stating: 'The city serves as a totalizing and almost mythical landmark for socioeconomic and political strategies, urban life increasingly permits the re- emergence of the element that the urbanistic project excluded' (ibid., 95). De Certeau argues that everyday life tactics in the city are part of the social order and that they are part of making the city and re-instituting strategies that are suppressing or controlling. As discussed earlier, Turino considers that participatory music may be part of these 'everyday life tactics' and a way to enact alternative forms of citizenship (2016). According to anthropologist Edith Turners, a music event is in itself communitas: it exists only as long as the vibration continues (2012). As she states:

> Music in itself is like our blood flow, there and gone, fresh, used, and restored…
> It has its living existence in its performance, and its life is synonymous with communitas, which will spread to all participants and audiences when they get caught up in it. (ibid., 90)

These communitas moments may help keep anomie at bay because they create ephemeral togetherness moments that may help develop better social ties between people and better ties between

people and their space (Saint Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011; Giovine 2011). Communitas moments in the new towns may be local music events that are ephemeral moments where residents and their space-togetherness produce collective sensory memories and a sense of place. (Rodaway 1994; Cohen 1995; Saint-Pierre 2002). Urban sociologists Philippe Chaudoir and Sylvia Ostrowetsky state that ephemeral events in new urban environments fill them with what will become their history and identity (1996). As they state: 'Events overlay concrete architecture, which has geometries void of cultural memories' (ibid., 82).

Nevertheless, communitas moments may also be commodified and utilized. Management scholars Maria Laura Toraldo, Gazi Islam and Gianluigi Mangia - who conducted a study on the participation of volunteers at for-profit and non-for-profit music festivals - state that the sense of communitas, which may be felt and sought by volunteers during the liminal space of music festivals, may be planned, harnessed and used as free labour by festivals organisers (2019). The harnessing of communitas will be discussed later in this chapter within the context of events in Cergy-Pontoise and how at times local music grassroots community groups might act as low-cost suppliers for some of the larger events happening in the town. Thus, communitas is simultaneously a moment of potentiality for better living and idealisations, but to a certain extent is not representative of what the present is, and is at times commodified to serve the interest of top-down strategies and the existing order (Wakeman 2016).

This section focused on the French model of citizenship, the crisis of models of citizenship and their alternatives to highlight the ways these are at plays within new urban environments. The next section focusses more particularly on the town, its demographics and the experiences of its residents. This will shine a light on the gap between the planned town and the actual town, and the existing risks of anomie in the town.

5.2. A top-down unfinished new town, as experienced by its residents
5.2.1. A diverse but segmented population

As discussed in chapter 4, the new town of Cergy-Pontoise is still being built and will be for the foreseeable future. Planners are simultaneously constructing new parts of the town (e.g.

construction of the Hauts-de-Cergy district in Cergy), whilst regenerating its derelict parts since the 2010s. In chapter 7, I will discuss the town's ongoing urban developments and its regeneration and their effects on local musicians and music grassroots groups in more depth. The present-day residents live in an environment that includes a mix of original, innovative and experimental architecture - characteristic of the new towns of the 1960s-1970s (e.g. monumental landmarks, multi-levels and 'above the street' urbanism) – alongside more modest buildings that were built when the two oil crises hit. Similarly, there are areas being demolished, as they are maladapted or dangerous (e.g. contaminated with asbestos), whilst brand new areas with new cultural and artistic facilities gradually appear. A constant feature of the town's landscape that has not change over the years are the cranes and never-ending construction sites.

In terms of the population residing in Cergy-Pontoise, it has increased from 44,292 residents in 1968 up to 207,000 residents in 2019, according to the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) (insee.fr, 9 December 2020). This is coupled with an intensification of the density of the number of residents per km^2, which has increased from 526.3 residents per km^2 in 1968 up to 2,455.5 residents per km^2 in 2017 (ibid.). Regarding levels of income and type of profession, in the latest national census the residents aged 15 years old and older identified within the different French professional categories as follows. I translated the names of the categories into English and removed the columns that were associated with the years prior to 2017 from the charts for clarity):

	2017	%
Total	160 403	100,0
Farmers	113	0,1
Artisans, traders, business executive	3 765	2,3
Managerial and highly qualified occupations	20 233	12,6
Intermediate occupations	29 044	18,1
Administrative, Sales or Service Occupations	31 667	19,7
Worker, manual labour	16 316	10,2
Retired	25 625	16,0
Not engaged in professional activity	33 639	21,0

Figure 17 Population of 15 years old or older divided by social and professional categories. (INSEE, December 2020)

This chart shows that there is a heterogenous mix of residents, in terms of categories of employment and income levels in the town. As of April 2021, the website of the council of Cergy-Pontoise highlights on all of its communication the diversity and youthfulness of its population; it states that 37% of its residents are 25 years old or younger, and that 130 different nationalities are represented amongst the residents. Statistics regarding ethnicity are not allowed in France, so - apart from country of birth, or parents' country of birth - there are no further details about the way residents may identify with one or more ethnic group, and, what would these ethnic groups be.[14]

Although the pool of residents is diverse - in terms of nationality, age and social class - the ideal of the social mix of the residents did not happen: the existing social order has been reproduced as much in the planning of the town, as in the segmentation of the population itself within the town. Studies by scholars who research Cergy-Pontoise highlight that the town is segmented by social classes and that the location of the migrant population families is highly concentrated within specific areas of the town (Saint Pierre 2002, Epstein 2011). This segmentation causes ongoing unresolved social class and ethnic tensions in various parts of the town (Saint-Pierre 2002; Haumont and Chesneau 2005; Epstein 2011).

I will detail here the context of what led to this segmentation within the town and, more specifically, what led to the concentration of migrants in specific areas. In the 1970s and 1980s, Cergy-Pontoise attracted the French middle-class who longed for the suburban dream: that is, to own an affordable house with a garden in a healthy and green environment, with good access to local amenities and larger towns (Nio 2020). In the 1980s, the French government - on the left at that time - supported this by developing programmes to help low-income first-time buyers access the property ladder via low-interest loans and gradual mortgage payments (Epstein 2011; Savitch 2014). Some of the working-class and lower-income residents of Paris also moved to Cergy-Pontoise not by choice, but

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[14] As such - and also because personal characteristics such as age, ethnicity and money are taboo to a certain extent in France - I have, at times, assumed people's ways of identifying in certain cases. For example, I may identify a musician I quote as 'Black' and 'male' but they may identify differently. As I chose to anonymise people in my thesis, I perceive that giving more details about them - even not as accurate as they could be - was essential to address issues of racism and discrimination and mitigate risks of colour blindness.

because the gentrification of Paris made it impossible for them to afford living there. Many of the lower-class foreign workers (mainly of Maghrebi origin) who worked on building the new town, and working-class migrants from sub- Saharan Africa and the French Antilleans, were encouraged to move to Cergy-Pontoise too and the urban planners reserved some of the housing for them (Hirsch 1990; Epstein 2011). For Epstein, this shows that the assimilation of migrants was part of the new town project itself. As she states: 'The rise of the new towns shows therefore how urban planning in this period was also tied to efforts to manage and "make French" the new immigrant workforce that was becoming a part of the national *tableau'* (2011, 20).

Epstein researches the concentrated migrant areas within the town. These areas are the Axe Majeur and Horloge districts. Her case study gives initial answers about the segmentation of the town. According to Epstein, some migrants are concentrated in these areas because they were the only places where they were able to afford a home (2011, 96). She explains that this is due to the fact that many migrants' incomes were usually not stable enough to access French public housing. Additionally, there was also an added barrier to access property for them: there were tacit quotas - in terms of number of migrants per neighbourhood - to control the level of migrant population in any given neighbourhood. The sales of properties in the Horloge and Axe Majeur districts were very slow, due to the ongoing recession of the 1980s; this led loan managers and promoters to be less demanding regarding the minimum criteria people usually had to meet to access mortgages and property ownership. They sold flats to people who, in another context, would not have been able to buy these flats, as they did not have a stable economic situation to do so. This created a process of ghettoisation. Some of these residents have accumulated huge amounts of debts, as they are not able to keep up with their mortgage and loans payments. The areas are also in a state of disrepair as property owners cannot afford to pay the collective bills for the maintenance of the shared amenities of the properties (e.g. cleaning of communal areas, collective heating, collective electricity). Many residents of these specific districts as a result gave up altogether on the new town and other French ideals, as they felt they have been cheated; they are in a stalemate, with the prospect of an imminent eviction hanging over their head (2011, 114).

In 2015, Cergy-Pontoise and seven of its towns signed a contract for a duration of 5 years to agree on a set of actions (e.g. social, economic, communication actions) to address the segmentation of the town. In the contract, associated problems were listed as: the concentration of poverty in distinct areas of the new town; school dropouts; disinterest of the youth towards the existing public cultural provision, and the impoverishment of single households (*Contrat de Ville* 26 June 2015).[15] Saint Pierre, who conducted an ethnography of the residents of Cergy- Saint-Christophe (the present-day Axe Majeur and Horloge districts of Cergy) in the 1990s, argues that these identified problems stem from policy makers and urban planners submitting to the belief that social cohesion can be created by focussing on physical spaces. As she states: 'Isn't the spatial dimension put forward by the government through its urban policy a belief in a power to build solid foundations by substituting social spaces in crisis by physical space?' (2002, 85). This belief may be coupled with the belief in top-down social policymaking to organise and animate the new towns and its physical spaces (e.g. focus on programmes of highbrow forms of arts and culture for the arts facilities) as a source of good urban living and town attractivity, as discussed in chapter 4.

The next section focusses on the residents' experiences of the town in its current state. This will highlight the specific problems that residents of new towns experience and problems specifically concerning French new town residents. This will also give a sense of the disconnect between the role of the urban as reproducing a French ideal of citizenship, and the lived experience of people living in these urban areas.

5.2.2. Identified problems of the town

As detailed above, the population is diverse and segmented. As such, the present-day residents' experiences of the town may differ depending on whether they live in a deprived area or an affluent

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[15] According to the website of the *département* Val d'Oise, *Contrat de Ville* (town contract) is a contract between central government, local authorities and other relevant organisations involved in a given project for a specific urban area. The contract is an agreement for a list of actions to be conducted in a cooperative way in that area. The agreed actions may relate to housing, environment, education, transport, security, culture, sport facilities and social services. (valdoise.gouv.fr, n.d.)

area; their own relationship towards their area; their lifestyle, and their individual demographic background - where age, social class, nationality and other characteristics intersect - to produce a unique experience of the town. Residents also have to negotiate their daily life in a town that has problems specific to the new towns and to France. This includes the fact that their own expectation of the town and its fellow residents, may differ from other residents. Some of them may seek to live in a quiet suburb, while others seek the experience of the bustling urban city with its own night life. This tension between urbanity and suburbanity is a specific feature of the new towns that are spaces of in-between: neither urban nor suburban or rural (Fée, Colenutt, and Schäbitz 2020). The strategies of the planners, the tactics of the residents and the interactions between residents themselves create another type of space, which Nio refers as '(sub)urbanity' or 'urban-suburbanity' (2020, 88). This section details some of the problems associated with this tension between suburbanity and urbanity, as well as other problems experienced by the residents: the segmentation of the town, the lack of city centre, the poor sound insulation of the facilities, the mismatch between residents cultural wants and the actual state cultural facilities and programmes, as well as problems relating to mobility and access.

I begin with the problems and perceptions of the town that are common to most of the residents of Cergy-Pontoise, and were repeatedly mentioned to me during interviews and informal discussion. A recurring theme throughout my interviews and some of the literature on Cergy-Pontoise is that, although Hirsch aimed to create a real town out of several towns with the Grand Centre district of Cergy as its main centre, this did not happen; residents tend to identify with certain areas of the town only and are confused about what is meant by the new town and Cergy-Pontoise itself (Saint-Pierre 2002; Fée, Colenutt, and Schäbitz 2020). Some of the musicians I met perceive it as several towns rather than one whole town and are aware of the differences between some of the towns. Some of the musicians and music professionals stated to me that they think this is a specificity of the new towns. As a White male local senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy in his late fifties states:

> It's a problem of the new town. People live in silos and by districts. They
> struggle to represent themselves as part of a whole, that is the centre of Cergy-
> Pontoise, its central city Cergy. I don't even talk about the *agglomération*

itself. Cergy alone is segmented in districts and blocks of flats… Some of the children of Cergy, they never went to the Bords d'Oise district. (Interview, November 2018)[16]

This statement was exemplified by some of the musicians I met. Nathan and Quentin, two Arab and Black male indie rappers in their early twenties relate more to their area of Cergy- Pontoise rather than Cergy-Pontoise itself. As one of them states: 'They [residents of their town] encouraged us to make music… Three-quarters of the people who makes things happen in Cergy[-Pontoise] they either come from Cergy-Préfecture [Grand Centre district] or our area' (interview, June 2017). As discuss in chapter 2, this is similar to what Finnegan observes in her ethnography of amateur music-making in Milton Keynes in the early 1980s (2007). She notes that the boundaries and identity of the town are unclear, vary according to context and individuals, and that although local music-making in Milton Keynes is fairly similar to other British towns, it is difficult to situate its music communities onto the new town map (ibid.).

In the case of Cergy-Pontoise, this geographical segmentation is reinforced by its governance and associated local politics, which contribute to the lack of unification between all the towns within the new town project. The council of Cergy-Pontoise is in charge of delivering local policies, equipment and services that apply and are running in all of the towns. It is directed by a president elected by the councillors of the 13 towns; these 13 councillors, in turn, are elected by the residents of each town. The elected president and his team propose actions that are subject to vote by the councillors sitting at the council of Cergy-Pontoise. To ensure proportionality, each town has one or more of its councillors sitting at the council, depending on the number of residents in their town.

As Cergy is the town with the largest population, it has the most councillors sitting at the council. This leads to some of the towns feeling ignored and perceiving that the council of Cergy-Pontoise is mainly about Cergy rather than about Cergy-Pontoise (e.g. 65,177 people reside in Cergy, while only 6,681 reside in Courdimanche according to the latest French national census published by the INSEE in January 2020). This leads to tensions between the elected mayor of Cergy and the

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[16] All interviews are from my fieldwork unless otherwise stated.

president of Cergy-Pontoise, and between councillors of the various towns themselves. Political allegiances also vary: Cergy and Cergy-Pontoise have been on the left (*Parti Socialiste* party) since 1989, while the rest of the towns are a mix mainly between the right (mainly from *La République* party) and the left (mainly from the *Parti Socialiste* party); that said, there are also councillors that are dissidents from these two main parties, or who represent another political party. This all leads to frequent political feuds, which are extensively covered by the local press.

Musicians of Cergy-Pontoise experience the local effects of these quarrels in their interactions with the council of Cergy-Pontoise, and the councils of the individual towns. For example, Sylvain, a White male reggae musician in his forties involved with several bands and *associations* explained to me the reasons why Cergy (politically on the left) accepted a proposal to fund his CD, while Pontoise (politically on the right) did not. As he states: 'When we were looking for money to produce this CD, we went to Pontoise who said "no" and then we went to Cergy who said: "yes, if Pontoise said no to you we say yes"' (interview, June 2017). In another interview, a folk-rock band, which comprises four White males in their forties, had a similar experience. As Luc, one of its musicians' states: 'The town of Pontoise has supported us more as a town than as part of Cergy-Pontoise, the latter being a little bit impersonal. For them, on the contrary we could say, we are on a blacklist… We got an offer to do a concert for a town that has historically been politically associated with the right… the next day of the show… we were blacklisted [by towns that are politically associated with the left]' (Interview, June 2017).

This segmentation of the town - visible through the political divisions and the attachment of residents to one part of the town, rather than the whole - may be linked to pre- new town existing rivalries and to the difficulty in recreating within new towns, the rich public realm and town life that can be found in older towns, which contribute to the binding of spaces and their residents as a unit that is the town. Sociologist Lyn Lofland emphasises that the public realm is specifically what makes a town different from other settlement types: the public realm creates the social territory that allows the co-existence of strangers and their interactions (2017). In older towns, the public realm is created and

supported by the pre-existing long-term history that helps towns develop and maintain an identity and cohesion throughout time and crisis (Eng 1996; Sancar 2003; Pazhuhan et al. 2015).

As there is very little pre-existing history in new towns, apart from the history of the former towns that existed on their sites, it may be difficulty to create this public realm. Instead, the public realm is imagined and planned by top-down state planning, which is itself led by the ideologies of the state and its institutions; these are not a reflection of the population as a whole. As discussed in chapter 4, the original focus of the planning of the new town's cultural and leisure facilities was very much aligned with the cultural policies of that time, which focussed on the decentralisation and democratisation of what was considered - by the Ministry of Culture of that time - as French culture and heritage. Thus, this approach excluded certain forms of culture, arts and heritage and was very much top-down led. An example of this is Hirsch's strong determination to obtain a *Maison de la Culture* and his personal involvement in heading what later became the *Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régionale* (*CRR*) of Cergy-Pontoise, which is attended by 2,260 local, national and international students in the year 2019-2020 according to the *CRR's* website in April 2021. As discussed in chapter 4, the *CRR* trains music, dance and drama students to prepare them for the exams of music professional schools. There are also a few programmes for amateur musicians, but the spaces are very limited. Additionally, the *conservatoire* opened a department for jazz and popular music in 2011, allowing candidates with no prior classical music training to audition for its entry exam.

Hirsch thought that these state cultural institutions would unite the town, render the town more attractive to residents, and assert its position within the *région*. The present-day town reflects the top-down state segmentation of culture, between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow'. Classical music has dedicated spaces (e.g. the *conservatoire*), while popular, amateur and more grassroots music practices have mostly been relegated to the private sphere and community centres until later developments in the 1980s and the 2010s regeneration of the town, which will be discussed in chapter 7. The focus on top-down and highbrow cultural facilities in the general urban plan - and the concentration of them specifically in the centre of Cergy-Pontoise (Grand Centre district) - may have contributed to this disconnect between the residents and the public realm that was planned for them. Some of the

residents I met or who replied to the survey I conducted in June 2015 during my Masters, described both the state cultural facilities and the town's cultural programmes as too avant-garde or inaccessible. To the survey question: 'What do you think are the weak points of the cultural life of Cergy-Pontoise?' Some of the participants of the survey answered: 'Sometimes the events are too highbrow or avant-garde. (e.g. certain events in the theatres)' and 'Not very interesting, proposed events are not attractive, and the culture is not very "popular"' (ibid.).

As discussed in chapter 4, when the then minister of culture Jack Lang opened the Ministry of Culture to additional forms of amplified music (e.g. rock, hip hop), the council of Cergy-Pontoise supported the development of public music venues and studios in Cergy- Pontoise in the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless - as will be discussed in chapter 7, with the example of the Forum and L'Observatoire music venues - some of these public music facilities were planned as afterthoughts: existing communal facilities that were turned into music venues. These spaces are not always suitable and soundproofed, as they were not planned for musical activities, thus creating noise nuisance for some of the local residents. For example, the council of Cergy decided to refurbish the recycling room of an existing block of flats, to turn it into a public music studio in 1994 as a response to residents' demand for a music studio in the early 1990s. The soundproofing of this studio was so bad that it was not possible to run recording sessions and rehearsals at the same time, and the studios had to close by 10pm. The music studio closed in late 2018 and will reopen in 2022 in a brand-new facility dedicated to music as part of the regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise. I interviewed Ben and Jonathan - the managers of the studio - when the studio was still open in 2017. The two White men in their late twenties told me about the problems they were experiencing with noise. As Ben stated:

> There have been so many problems with the neighbours that the town at some point rented [the flats] above us so that we would not have problems… But one day, one guy came and entered the studio by force… He knocked on the doors and shouted to the musicians: 'Stop now!' (interview, June 2017)

It is unclear why this specific location for the studio was chosen when it caused such problems. The area itself is part of the deprived areas of Cergy-Pontoise (Horloge and Axe Majeur districts). One may speculate that it may have been set up there specifically as a way to appease local tensions, and to

reach the local youth of this specific district. However, as will be discussed in chapter 7, the users of these studios are generally not from these deprived areas and more in their thirties and forties, than in their teens or twenties. The local cultural facilities of the town cannot be compared to one another - as they require different amount of resources and staffing to maintain them. Nevertheless, the problems associated with the poor planning of the public music studios denote a gap between the respect and legitimacy assigned to classical music that has its dedicated *CRR*, versus the lack of respect and legitimacy that is given to amplified forms of popular music and grassroots practices that may be relegated to a refurbished recycling room instead of a purpose-built facility. This raises a heated debate within the town, which I witnessed during informal conversations and interviews with residents, local cultural councillors and music professionals. Several individuals, including a cultural councillor of Cergy-Pontoise, told me that they found it ludicrous that millions of euros are spent by the tax payers on the *conservatoire* -, which is attended mainly by the White middle and higher classes of the *région*, as well as international students - while very little is spent on other grassroots musical initiatives, which they perceive as better catering to the needs and wants of the vast majority of the population. This is a local expression of a national problem: that is, the disconnection between the French people's wants and needs and the actual cultural policies designed for them. This has been highlighted regularly by sociologists Olivier Donnat and Denis Cogneau, who produced several reports for the French government on the cultural practices of the French; these all conclude that there is a discrepancy between French cultural policy making and the actual cultural practices of the French. (1990; 1994; 2009). For ex-Mayor of Cergy, Isabelle Massin (tenure: 1989-1996), this dissatisfaction is due to the disconnection between people who design public policies (e.g. a new town, a state cultural facility), and their users (e.g. residents):

> We can regret that under the guise – because for me that's definitely 'under the guise'– of artistic quality, we deliberately turn away from the residents' needs… What strikes me is that we don't ask ourselves enough what are the specificities that create the identities of the new towns... In the end, we think on our own, without consulting the population. (2005, 174)

As discussed above, this disconnect between residents and top-down planning is crystallised within the centre of Cergy-Pontoise - that is, the Grand Centre district -the location of most of the

planned cultural facilities (e.g. *CRR*, theatres). Residents and councillors both agree that the centre is not really a centre and that a real centre is what the town is lacking: as some of the survey's respondents state, 'no city centre, quiet' (Masters survey, June 2015). The council of Cergy-Pontoise addresses this lack of centre as part of the regeneration of Cergy- Pontoise, as will be discussed in chapter 7. In April 2013, the council of Cergy-Pontoise published an online report about the participatory consultation that took place in the winter and spring of 2013 with local residents ahead of the regeneration of the Grand Centre district. Consulted residents identified the following negative experiences of the area: lack of good signage to orientate oneself in the district and lack of social life in the evening and on the weekends.

The lack of good signage and social life highlights other problems that are specific to new towns; these relate to their experimental architecture, as urban planners are not always able to foresee some of the difficulties the residents may have using them (Macleod 2009). The experimental planning of the town may be counter-intuitive and disorientate some of the residents. As discussed in chapter 4, the new town in some parts (including the Grand Centre district) was built with different artificial levels and pedestrian-only areas. Some of the residents I met find this confusing and experience difficulties accessing or finding some of the venues and their parking spaces. As discussed in chapter 3, this problem is coupled with an inefficient local transport system that limits access to the different parts of the town. This is characterized by a lot of delays and cancellations of trains and buses, and no transport running late at night. This may be detrimental to the development of a lively town, with social life in the evenings and at night.

Another barrier to a lively town and social life in the evenings and at night, may be noise disturbances in the town. Most of the musicians, staff of venues and some of the residents I met mentioned how this blocks the social life of the new town. One of the causes of noise disturbances is that housing areas are poorly soundproofed, and in close proximity to bars and restaurants. Local bars and restaurants are usually allotted a license to play live and amplified music until 2 am but many of them are located on the ground floor of blocks of flats. Some of these problems sound similar to the ones experienced by the local music studios as it has to do with the physical characteristics of the

building. One may wonder why soundproofing was not possible for these buildings and why were licenses allotted to businesses when the actual buildings and areas are not suitable for live music.

I discussed noise disturbances with local White male and female in their twenties and thirties who are: a bartender from a pub located in the Grand Centre district, a waitress from a restaurant and bar located in Hauts de Cergy district, as well as a punk musician. They all claimed that the local restaurants and bars cause disturbances and complaints from residents. The bartender stated to me that many bars shut down soon after they open because of noise complaints by local residents. The waitress stated to me that her restaurant and bar has a license to play music and to stay open until 2 am, but they cannot use it, as they are afraid of being closed down due to noise disturbance. Kévin, a White resident in his mid-twenties and punk musician of Cergy-Pontoise gave me an anecdote about a bar located in the Grand Centre district that stayed open for only six months, due to noise problems. As he states: 'They had the agreement from the council and so on but in the end, it was causing noise nuisance to people' (interview, June 2017).

Local cultural councillors stated to me that they identify noise as being an issue for many residents, who hope to rest in the evenings and on the weekends. I was told by a couple of them that, time and time again, residents of the Grand Centre district who live next to the university campus and the two local bars come to the council to complain about the noise that the students generate in these areas. As such, these problems of noise in the town are not only about poor planning but are also an expression of the tensions at play between residents themselves and their expectation of the new town. Some of them desire a social life in the evening that is associated with the urbanity of a town (lively, musical), while others require the quietness that is usually associated with suburbanity.

The segmentation of the town, noise disturbance, the lack of public realm and other problems that I explored in this section, reveal the everyday problems that residents have to face. Some of their problems may be associated with urban life (e.g. noise nuisance also happens in older towns) but there is an extra layer of problems that are specific to the new towns (e.g. lack of public realm, and the disconnect between experimental planning and the residents). Hirsch imagined the people coming to

live in the new town as potentially having a 'pioneer temperament' that would help them to overcome these problems, because they would be driven by the exaltation of living in a new urban space where the local history remains to be written. Supported by appropriate planning and the initial animating of the town, residents were supposed to come together to create life in the new town. This was the ideal situation for Hirsch; yet new towns do not stay new and exciting forever, neither does the enthusiasm for them. By the 1990s, it was clear that the pioneer spirit and new town atmosphere of the town had faded quite a bit. For example, Saint Pierre observed in the 1990s that the media do not refer Cergy-Pontoise as a new town but as a suburb - or worse, a ghetto (2002, 89). Several times during my fieldwork people questioned the way I called Cergy-Pontoise a new town as for them, it was not new anymore and quite ageing.

According to some scholars, the new town became a segmented space with its associated risk of stagnating in anomie and urban despair (Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011). However, as discussed in the introduction of this chapter, residents are not passive towards the environment that has been planned for the fantasized version of themselves: they actively develop tactics that challenge and renegotiate top-down strategies (De Certeau 1984; Fée, Colenutt, and Schäbitz 2020). In the next section, I focus on the tactics that groups of residents who are part of musical *associations* develop for creating a livelier town life, public realm and how these helps them negotiate the town – and, through that, the French republican contract and model of citizenship.

5.3. Responsible music citizens and tactics
5.3.1. Music *associations* and their role in the French republican model

Associations were briefly discussed in chapter 2 and 4, where I defined them as a French legal status and right that allow people to form with other people a group with a common, not-for profit project or activity. I also mentioned the first *associations* that some of the first residents created in the 1970s, to better organise themselves as one voice when they needed to interact and raise issues to the urban planners and local authorities, and to meet together to take part in activities. Present-day *associations* of Cergy-Pontoise are as diverse as its residents: many take part in one or more of them for various purposes. It could be to enjoy a specific activity; to organize charitable actions; to get help;

to meet new people; or to connect with others from a country or culture with which one feels affiliated. As of April 2021, in Cergy alone, there are more than 400 *associations* according to the website of the council of Cergy. This is not a huge number considering that it is aligned with the number of *associations* in the neighbouring towns within the same *département* (e.g. the website of the neighbouring town of Franconville lists 295 *associations* as of April 2021), and considering that there is a total of 1.3 millions *associations* registered in France as of April 2021 according to the website of the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, Cergy is particularly active in terms of the creation of *associations* as, between 2016 and 2019, 46% of new *associations* in the *département* of Val d'Oise happened in Cergy according to the same data by the Ministry of Education.

This large proportion of new *associations'* creations in Cergy may be a feature of the new towns as, according to scholars who study them, *associations,* clubs and societies are key in new towns specifically, as they contribute to the production of the public realm that they often lack as discussed above (Saint-Pierre 2002; Clapson 2004; Finnegan 2007; Fée, Colenutt, and Schäbitz 2020). Sociologists of the *associations* explain that this is because *associations* work as intermediaries that foster transitions from the private sphere to the public sphere, by giving people the opportunity to contribute to the construction of a shared world that is, in itself, an opening toward the public sphere (Laville et al. 2001; Juan and Renault-Tinacci 2019).

Although *associations,* clubs and societies are key for the creation of public realms in the new towns, new towns differ with one another in relation to the characteristics of the *associations,* clubs and societies and their roles within the public realm. Urban anthropologist Ivan Nio - who researches Dutch, British and French new towns - observes that middle class residents' expectations of the public realm and experiences of taking part in *associations,* clubs and societies differ between people who live in Milton Keynes and those who live in Cergy- Pontoise (Nio 2020). According to his interviews with middle-class residents of both Milton Keynes and Cergy-Pontoise Nio observes that middle-class British residents are more attached to the quality of their private sphere and that they tend to mix less with other social classes than their middle-class French counterparts. French residents are more attached to the quality of their public realm and tend to mix more with other social classes when

taking part in *associations.* He speculates that this may has to do with the French republican contract. As he states: 'Perhaps the principles of equality and assimilation as cornerstones of the French Republic also have their impact at the level of community life' (ibid. n.p.).

Anthropologists Caroline de Saint Pierre and Beth Epstein, who research Cergy- Pontoise and its residents, observe that *associations* are more than just being part of the local community life and public realm: they are indispensable (Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011). As Epstein states: 'Hundreds of civil organizations around the city… are considered vital partners in the effort to save the neighbourhood – and the city beyond – from urban disrepair' (2011, 53). In Cergy-Pontoise, *associations* play an important and diverse role in the town. They provide a voice for the residents; a space for individual self-realisation, and an organisation for a collective project. Their specific legal status - neither private sector nor public sector - also allows them to act as a mediator or buffer between residents and Cergy-Pontoise and vice- versa. They are in-between spaces, where both responsible citizenship and alternative forms of citizenship are performed simultaneously.

According to a local senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy, *associations* are indissociable from the on-going organisation of Cergy-Pontoise, which is made up of what he refers as its three entities: these are *associations,* residents and local authorities (interview, November 2018). *Associations* are the bridges that connect the residents between themselves and with the town. As he states: 'These are the three entities [*associations,* residents, local authorities], in my opinion, that must absolutely join up' (ibid.). These three entities need to join up, but there are tensions between them, as they may have different visions of what it means to be a responsible citizen, what good community living looks like, and what the priorities should be in the town. Sociologist Bernard Esme sees the negotiating of these tensions in a positive light. For him, they are productive of a better global civic society: they allow residents to have more inclusive model of governance and citizenship, because they take into account a multiplicity of identities and citizenship politics. As he states: 'This ability to live with tensions, which give birth to our multiple sense of belonging and loyalties, maybe define the civic virtue specific to our time and even more so the condition for an international civic society' (2001, 32).

At the local level and in practice, associations are economically fragile: they rely on the goodwill and time of their volunteers; small subsidies and private grants with their associated terms and conditions, and ultimately no possibility to budget in the long-term (Laville 2019). This may mean that an association may have to fit their project within the French republican model and the objectives of the local councillors, to get a subsidy in exchange. The council, which is also under budget restrictions, also seeks the partnership of associations not only because they contribute to social cohesion and foster a positive image of the new town, but also because they are potentially cost-effective suppliers. In practice, it is cheaper for the council to be in a partnership with an association to help with the food and beverages sales on a large-scale festival organised by them, than to hire a private contractor. As such, associations are at the heart of political, ideological, economic and civic tensions (Juan and Renault-Tinacci 2019; Laville 2019).

These tensions were a recurring theme throughout my fieldwork. They were often expressed to me during informal discussions and interviews with musicians, cultural councillors, *associations* and music professionals. I also observed them first-hand, when volunteering with two music *associations:* L'Atelier and Voyage. I was drawn to these two *associations* specifically because they are widely known amongst residents for their well- attended grassroots music festivals and events, which take place at local landmarks, such as the leisure park and the 12 Colonnes. Both *associations* were also mentioned to me multiple times by people I interviewed, people I met in Cergy-Pontoise and by my local childhood friends who all insisted I should meet their members. Although both *associations* are similar in terms of their origins, goals and activities, they diverge greatly in terms of their organisation approaches and dealing with the tensions detailed above. Both *associations* started as small groups of local residents who were friends who did not find anything that suited them in the town in terms of events. Both started to organise their own small music festivals, events and parties to enjoy themselves. L'Atelier is into hip hop and dub, while Voyage is more into rock, reggae, and French chanson. Both groups of friends grew and their events as well. They set up an *association* to formalise their activities, *de facto* passing from the somewhat less visible and more private sphere to the public sphere; this allows them to have a recognised legal status when interacting with the council and to organise their

events. It also gives them the right to apply for specific subventions and to hire employees, as long as they remain not-for-profit. This is the stage where both groups of friends - now *associations* - differ in their approach of running their *association*.

L'Atelier has two types of projects - pedagogic and artistic - which take the form of cultural events, workshops and participatory activities. The remit of their initiatives fits different categories: musical events, social and cultural actions, and participatory activities that aim at fostering positive local community development, as well as supporting the local youth. The *association* presents itself on its website as a group of people from Cergy-Pontoise who want to participate in the local cultural life. Meanwhile, the members of the *association* Voyage define themselves as small producers of local cultural events. Voyage aims to make culture more accessible and freer to the local residents of Cergy-Pontoise and beyond, as well as to bring local residents, artists and local artisans closer together. At first, Voyage was a community café located in one of the sub-towns of Cergy-Pontoise. Due to noise disturbance and difficult relations with the local authorities, the café closed down. After the café closed, Voyage started organising music festivals with the same aim as the café: that is, to organise events that give better access to culture and music to the local population and foster a rich local community life.

Both *associations* are torn between maintaining their independence and remaining sustainable, finding it difficult to reconcile both. This tension has increased as much as their popularity: with larger crowds attending their events and activities each year, they need to spend more energy, time and money on them. The *associations* have different approaches in terms of dealing with this tension. The members of Voyage have chosen not to apply for subsidies. They value their independence; as such, they cannot see themselves having to change their *association* and projects to make them fit within the local council's tick boxes for an application for subsidies. They also believe this helps them remain sustainable, as subsidies are subject to the goodwill of the institutions and elected officials, who may change after each local election. Choosing not to rely on subsidies has been one of their core principles, to keep their independence and remain an *association* by the residents for the residents. They rely solely on volunteers, sales of drinks and food at their music events, and donations. The *association*

seemed to be working on a shoestring while I was volunteering - they eventually could not sustain their activities - and in 2018, after 10 years of existence, they died down as did their musical events, which drew thousands of residents every year in the leisure park. These festivals and events are greatly missed by all the people that I met and interviewed (but maybe not so much by some of the local residents that live in the village beside the leisure park).

L'Atelier relies on the sale of drinks and beverages at music events, donations, and subsidies. Subsidies may make them more sustainable but not necessarily more stable: subsidies are usually awarded once a year and attached to specific projects, meaning it may not be used for other purposes than the projects, nor can any of the allotted money be saved for future projects or spent in the next financial year. If the *association* would save money or not use the whole allocated pot of funding, they would find themselves in a difficult situation when applying for future subsidies. The council would likely deduce that they do not need as much money as they are asking for. This may mean less independence for L'Atelier because they cannot plan far ahead in terms of projects and because of the reciprocity that getting subsidies involve. The *association* has to fit its projects and activities in a way that meets with the objectives and aims of the town and the French Republican model of citizenship too - both may align or not with their own objectives and aims, as discussed above. In practice, I noticed that the core members of the *association* (mainly its two employees and a few core volunteers) are quite burnt out (e.g. visibly extremely tired and at times even ill or injured, but still working or present at most events and activities). They find themselves spending a great amount of time dealing with the bureaucracy of subsidies (which themselves are decreasing every year), achieving all the commitments that are linked to the different subsidies they are awarded (e.g. outreach music events in the local schools and the local prison), and dealing with the logistics of their food and beverage sales that are complementary to the other incomes.

This leaves them with very little time or even no time to do what they started the *association* for in the first place: that is, organising parties with live music, rappers and DJs for the local residents. All members of the *association* greatly value their roles as responsible citizens in the community. It was clear when I attended the team meetings: these involved heated and passionate debates about the

associations' activities; how they could better engage with the town and residents; debriefs of past events, with discussions on how they could improve; what did not work (e.g. trying to understand why an event attracted a lot of residents while another did not); and the planning of future events, as well as the reinforcement of existing networks of music and cultural *associations* in Cergy-Pontoise.

However, some of the members are concerned about turning into suppliers for the council, as they have so many commitments and partnership with them. At team meetings and other times, it was also clear that all of them feel that the time allocated to organising parties and live music events is decreasing consistently, while the time allocated to activities that allowed them to remain sustainable is also increasing consistently. At team meetings, very often members discussed ways to bring back the 'party' element that had been the core and origin of their *association*. Some of the members of the *association* stated to me that they felt freer at the time of the parties and when the *association* was smaller, but do not know whether they feel this way because the society has changed, or, whether it is because they are getting older (the founding members met in their teens and are now fast-approaching their forties and often have to juggle with their family and work obligations on top of their commitment to the *association*). It could also be argued whether it is because the *association* grew into an organisation of its own that now tends to be a cultural supplier for Cergy-Pontoise, which they did not necessarily want the *association* to become.

Associations that take private grants are also in a difficult position, with an added ethical dilemma. Another music *association* that I met in Cergy-Pontoise (not L'Atelier or Voyage) acknowledged to me that they took a private grant. Each year, this *association* receives a few thousands euros from a local bank. In order to get the same grant, the next year, they have to ensure that a certain number of the musicians they support open a 'musician bank account', which the bank offers to musicians. If there are not enough 'musician bank accounts' open that are linked to their referrals, the *association* loses its grant. The director of the *association* told me that she took the grant because she has no choice for the survival of the *association,* but that she felt that it was ethically not right as the *association* was meant to support young musicians - not sell them something that they do

not need (she did not find the bank account cost-effective for musicians). She found herself in an impossible position.

These tensions and dilemmas that *associations* experience are part of the interplay of the three entities (residents, *associations* and the town) that constitute a process of the renegotiations of the town and *associations'* governance and model of citizenship, at the local level. These negotiations are crystallised via the town's musical events because these are moments of communitas where the three entities come together temporarily to perform Cergy- Pontoise and its residents sonically and visually. During these communitas moments, the responsible citizenship model is performed and challenged at the same time. The next section discusses these events, their relevance in the urban spaces and the tensions at play via the examples of a few large festivals and their cancellations, in some cases; also, other music events that are smaller but quite representative, in terms of the tensions and spaces of citizenship negotiation.

5.3.2. Music events: spaces to negotiate the town and what it should feel like

As mentioned briefly in chapter 2 and above, music events may be considered as moments of communitas that keep phenomena of anomie at bay by temporarily creating moments of togetherness, with the potential for better ties between residents themselves, and residents and their town (Saint Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011; Giovine 2011). As discussed above ethnomusicologists and human geographers observe that music events help with process of place-making in urban environments (Rodaway 1994; Cohen 1995; Saint-Pierre 2002; Turino 2016). Events produce sensuous memories that create the historical layers that are missing in the public realm of the new town (Chaudoir and Ostrowetsky 1996; Klaic et al. 2002, Saint- Pierre 2002; Finnegan 2007; Epstein 2011). If a given musical event is repeated regularly, it can also become part of a town's yearly ritual cycle, thus marking the town's identity (Finnegan 2007). This also contributes to the development of a public realm, as well as local urban and social ties.

Music events are occasions for the residents, the town and the *associations* to stage the city, allowing them to develop new imaginaries of their living spaces (Raibaud 2006). According to events

scholar Greg Richards, the association of music festivals with local landmarks can help create an identity for a town (2015). As he states: '[events are] the new building blocks of the intangible city' (ibid., 4). Marketing scholars Steve Oakes and Gary Warnaby note that sonic events are particularly efficient at changing an urban space rapidly, as people cannot avoid sound (unless they are hard of hearing), whereas they can ignore or not notice public site arts and street arts (2011). They take the example of the Manchester jazz festival in St Ann's Square. As they state: 'many people deliberately stayed longer… than they originally anticipated, enjoying the atmosphere arising from the serendipity resulting from the unexpected intrusion of music' (ibid., 411-413).

Music events in Cergy-Pontoise are usually staged around local landmarks, which are relatively easy to access and highly visible from far away. For example, many free music events happen on the Esplanade de Paris piazza that is located where the 12 Colonnes also are. As discussed in chapter 4, the council of Cergy-Pontoise from the 1990s onward has supported festivals, as it was part of the state orientation at the time for local urban development; it was also a local strategy to re-stage the city, as the enthusiasm for the new town faded and its initial problems became more and more apparent (e.g. segmentation of the towns, ghettoisation). The communications around the local music festivals on the council's website and by the town's magazine, reflect the objectives of the local authorities. These communications emphasise that music events in the town contribute to the coming together of residents, the various towns of Cergy-Pontoise, and the *associations.* It is also highlighted that some of the music festivals are not just temporary moments, but linked to other events and initiatives around the theme of the festival run by the town and the *associations* throughout the year. A cultural councillor of Cergy - interviewed for the council magazine of Cergy, *Cergy Ma Ville* - emphasises the potential of the last existing free large-scale street and circus arts festival called 'Cergy, Soit!' (Cergy, Be!) as an opportunity to liven up the town throughout the year by focussing the local *associations'* activities on those relating to the festival (*Cergy Ma Ville,* June 2009, 15). As he states:

"a prestigious and integrating festival" … stated Joël Motyl [Cultural councillor for Cergy] … who insists on the necessity to connect with *associations* throughout the year on the theme of 'Cergy, Soit!' festival. 'Cergy, Soit!' is a key feature of the social and cultural policy of the town "and not a cultural marketing tool.".' (ibid.,15)

The then-president of Cergy-Pontoise, Dominique Lefebvre tends to slightly contradict the statement that the festival is 'not a cultural marketing tool' as he emphasises in the programme of the festival, that it is prestigious on a national scale. As he wrote in his foreword on the programme booklet for the 'Cergy, Soit!' festival of 2009:

In Cergy, we are proud to have managed to transform this generous idea, which at first was meant to gift residents of Cergy a moment of celebration, into a festival of national reputation. Today, the faithful audience of 'Cergy, Soit!' will come largely from Cergy- Pontoise, but also… from everywhere in France. (2009, n.p.)

The council uses several narratives to frame the town's events. One of the narratives is about integration: that is, to create a sense of community in Cergy-Pontoise whereby the town and its residents' segmentation disappear, and the preparation of these festivals - throughout the year, with the *associations* - contribute to better community living and the livening up of the town. Another narrative is the association of events with prestige. Events become tourist and marketing strategies to put Cergy-Pontoise on the national cultural map, linking it with something more attractive than the so-called boring or bland suburbia - or worse, the ghetto image, which media have portrayed about Cergy-Pontoise and other suburbs as discussed above (Saint-Pierre 2002; Huq 2013).

Nevertheless, 'Cergy, Soit!' has been criticised by some of its local performers for performing a top-down self-serving narrative that emphasizes elitism in music and arts, which does not necessarily match with the themes of the festival that are street and circus arts. One of the performers - a local White rapper and resident in his thirties   during his performance at the festival, noted in ironic fashion the fact that most of the local, national and international performers of the festival went to *conservatoires* and other similar institutions. As he stated between two of his songs at the Festival in September 2018: 'Street art [main theme of 'Cergy, Soit!'] but with people who went to the

conservatoire… it is subsidised so of course there should be a little bit of jazz going on'. (quote written in fieldwork diary from memory in September 2018).

Concerns about 'lowbrow' versus 'highbrow' arts and the institutionalisation of street arts are not the only concerns of the local performers and residents. The organisation of some of the large-scale music festivals of Cergy-Pontoise involves the council of Cergy- Pontoise investing large sums of money to book famous artists and scaling up their events to attract a wider audience - even though the events themselves remain free or at a low-rate pricing. Some of the large-scale events cause concern to local residents and *associations*, and are subject to many debates that came up quite often during informal discussions I had with residents, musicians and *associations* throughout fieldwork; these concerns are about whether local large-scale events supported by the town can actually contribute to the residents connecting with one another better, or whether they just act as marketing tools without making a difference to the local residents. This in turn leads to other debates about whether local subsidies and other resources should be focussed on a few costly major events, or, whether it should be split between various smaller initiatives happening throughout the year.

The rise and fall of two large scale music festivals - '100 Contests' and 'Furia Sound Festival' - are often used during these discussions. Both festivals are still very present in the memory of residents who attended them, and the news of their cancellation came as a shock, as they were very popular at the local and regional level. '100 Contests' was a free urban cultures festival co-produced in 2003 by Cergy-Pontoise and an *association* called Longues Focales, with annual financial support from Cergy-Pontoise of up to €500,000 each year according to the regional newspaper *Le Parisien* in an online article published on 25 January 2011. The festival was branded as the first free international festival of urban culture and drew large crowds from surrounding suburbs and Paris, who came to attend the free live concerts and extreme sports competitions. The 'Furia Sound Festival' was a rock festival, which was not free to attend. It was created by a local *association* in 1997 and was subsequently supported by Cergy-Pontoise from 2005 onwards, with an annual financial contribution of €400,000 according to a more recent article by the same newspaper (Ménard, 6 March 2019).

Both festivals usually attracted a wide audience of 45,000 to 50,000 attendees over a two- to three-day period, with the audience coming from Cergy-Pontoise and other suburbs, as well as Paris and other parts of France. Both staged famous artists such as Steel Pulse (British roots reggae band), Joey Starr and Kool Shen (French rappers who used to be a nationally famous duo called NTM), and to a lesser extent local artists such as Courir les Rues (French chanson), Bukowski (rock) and Lula Fortune (rock). These festivals showcased music and culture in the main landmarks of Cergy-Pontoise: the leisure park, the park *François Mitterrand* and the *12 Colonnes*. The latter is featured in some of the promotional material for the '100 Contests' festival as depicted in the following figure, where the *12 Colonnes* and an arched dark blue rooftop typical of the buildings from the Hauts-de-Cergy district can be spotted in the background.

Figure 18 Poster for the '100 Contests' 2009 featuring architecture of Cergy-Pontoise in the background (tribalzine.com, 13 June 2009

However, the 'Furia Sound Festival' was cancelled in 2010 and '100 Contests' was cancelled in 2011. It remains unclear why both festivals ended, although one might link these cancellations to government austerity measures post-2008 global economic crisis. There were overall council budget restrictions, including a decrease of government funding and the suppression of local taxes (which represented around half of local councils' budgets). At the same time, councils were requested to cut their expenses by €13 billion by 2022. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that this may have contributed to both festivals being cancelled.

I heard various explanations and rumours about these festivals' cancellation throughout my fieldwork. With regards to the 'Furia Sound Festival', it seems that the town decided to support extensively the 'Furia Sound Festival' and the *association* that created it, as they thought it would become of national importance and become an asset for Cergy-Pontoise. However, budget restrictions and conflicts within the *association*, and between the *association* and the council, led to its cancellation. A rumour running amongst the musicians and *associations* that I met was that the *association* that organised the festival breached the trust of the council by diverting the subsidies the council had allocated to them. The *association* itself argues that they were betrayed by the council that left them hanging dry a few months before the event when all artists were already booked, and many tickets sold. They state this on one of their Facebook page's posts dated 20 March 2010:

> Less than four months before the beginning of the festival, Pierre Bouchacourt, chief of staff informed us of the decision voted by the agglomération [used to refer to the council of Cergy-Pontoise] "to not renew its funding" for the organisation of the 'Furia Sound Festival' 2010. The planning of such an event requires months of preparation and the planning of a provisional budget within which, we integrated the subsidy allocated by the agglomération in the context of the agglomération's commitment to support the festival for the editions of 2008, 2009 and 2010. (ibid.)

The cancellation of the urban culture festival, '100 Contests' in 2011 was different and more dramatic for the image of the town and its organisers: it was cancelled a few years after riots erupted in the middle of the festival during its 2007 run. I have no evidence about the following, but some of the musicians and residents of Cergy-Pontoise that I met during my fieldwork - and who attended the festivals either as audience and or as performers (DJs and rappers) - told me that they perceived the riots as quite unfair on the town and its youth as, although some of the youth of Cergy-Pontoise took part in them, initially the riot was a confrontation between youth groups of two different suburbs who decided to meet at the event to fight. The organisers of the festivals had to stop the concerts for safety reasons and people were evacuated. The riots continued in the closest train station, located in Horloge and Axe Majeur - districts that are, as discussed above, already associated with disrepair and ghettoisation. The riots left a lot of street furniture damaged, and the town and its residents were left to

pay for all the repairs and furniture replacements. This led to complaints from some of the local residents, who considered that the town acted very irresponsibly by making it a free festival with no security checks. Cergy-Pontoise and the festival also suffered from national negative media coverage that reported on the riots in a way that fed into the stereotypical image of the dangerous suburb that the town has tried to move away from, as discussed above.

The media and part of the public - including residents - specifically blamed the rap concerts, which they considered too hard-core for a local free festival. As part of a report for the French Ministry of Culture on urban cultures in France and local cultural policymaking, sociologists Loïc Lafargue de Grangeneuve, Isabelle Kauffman and Roberta Shapiro reported these racist and discriminatory assumptions about hip hop in the French society and in French cultural planning (2008). Hip hop and rap are assumed by policymakers to be simultaneously what deprived young people like - and as such a tool for social cohesion - and a genre that risks inciting violence and delinquency (ibid.). They give the examples of the problems and riots associated with the festival '100 Contests' in Cergy-Pontoise and how local authorities tried to balance their maybe well-meaning but damaging intents and their assumptions about music and people that led to negative impacts and further stereotyping of the local population and of rap and hip hop. As the report states:

> We come to the notion that hip-hop culture constitutes, in a way or another, an incitement to violence. Facing these accusations, the left-wing mayor of Cergy responded that, it is the opposite: the acknowledgement of urban cultures constitutes the best way to fight delinquency, he then expressed his firm intention to renew the experience of this festival for the next year. (ibid., 92)

In the following years, there were fewer rap concerts during the festival. It was even highlighted in an article of *Cergy Ma Ville* (*Cergy Ma Ville* June 2009,15). As the article states in its description of the programming of the 2009 '100 Contests' festival: 'Always more shows: dance, hip hop, double Dutch, skating, BMX, graffitis… but no rap or metal concert' (ibid.). The riots were not the only issue as, in the same article, Joël Motyl states that the festival relies too much on the support from the council to carry on. As he states: 'the festival must liberate itself from the council tutelage within the next two years' (ibid.). '100 Contests' was cancelled shortly after this statement and Dominique Lefebvre explained to the local press that the festival was cancelled for financial reasons (LeParisien.fr,

25 January 2011). As he states: 'Without the support of the *région* and the *département* it is too much [for Cergy-Pontoise to finance it]' (ibid).

Some of the residents and musicians that I met state that they feel the town took on too much with '100 Contests', leading to the unsustainability of the festival and to what they consider a large waste of public money. Such finances, they state, could have been invested in less-risky musical initiatives than music festivals; they feel this would have contributed to better social ties in the town throughout the year. As a member of a musical *association* states in an interview with the local magazine *La Liaison* (2007): 'I find it ludicrous that we put so much money into a simple showcase [large scale music event] that is, on the face of it, not sustainable' (ibid., 9). These criticisms are not new, nor local, to Cergy-Pontoise. French cultural scholars criticise subsidised large-scale festivals for their lack of sustainability (Négrier and Jourda 2007). As of 2020, the town is not ready to renew the experience, although it still invests in the more family-friendly last large-scale festival of Cergy-Pontoise that is 'Cergy, Soit!'. A senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy acknowledges that the town does not have the funds to renew and support initiatives similar to the 'Furia Sound Festival' and '100 Contests' As he states: ''100 Contests' had the advantage of assembling and bringing together the audiences, but we do not have today €1 million to gather and unite audiences' (interview, November 2018)

For some of the local cultural professionals and *associations*, the problems of '100 Contests' were not just money problems. For Paul, a Black male reggae musician and manager of a public music studio of Cergy-Pontoise in his fifties, the problem of '100 contests' that led to its cancellation resided in the fact that the local council used hip-hop and rap music as a marketing tool, and as such, indulged in a populism that backfired on them. As he states: 'My criticism for '100 Contests' is that we wanted to indulge in populism but without popular music artists. In the end, to bet it all on hip-hop created stereotypes and a lack of social diversity and that's not what '100 Contests' was aiming for. It became too ghetto' (interview, June 2017). Back in 2007 before the cancellation of '100 Contests', Sylvain made a comment similar to Paul's one about the event in an interview with a local education magazine

where he states that he perceives the '100 Contests' festival itself as a top-down exercise of dominance by the local institutions over the local youth (*La Liaison* Magazine, September 2007). As he states:

> Hip hop is what they [the council] will put on the front of the stage because it's trendy and it attracts a so called 'disadvantaged' audience. We shut them up [the vulnerable youth] by stating, we do things for you! (ibid., 7)

Both Paul and Sylvain's comments about the free festival gives insight into the potentiality that the free festival may have served a populist strategy of the council. This strategy seemed to have aimed at both bridging the gap between the local authorities and the youth, as well as fostering a young and dynamic image for the town. However, it was done so with top-down assumptions about what the youth is and needs and the council made sure to make these assumptions fit with their own communication strategy for the town. They did this by organising a free festival with famous headliners to attract people from other towns and Paris. In practice, this approach homogenized and stereotyped the local youth by assuming their interests and tastes to be confined to the remit of commercial hip hop and extreme sports. It also missed an opportunity to include well-known local hip hop artists as headliners, which could have helped support local talent and scenes. The council's strategy resulted in a somewhat stereotypical event, 'too ghetto' because it performed and presented an 'us' versus 'them' divide between the local authorities, the nationally famous artists who were the face of the event and the young people who came to attend the event. These reified categories of the population (e.g. the youth, Black people, and suburbanites) in an area of the town that was already associated with actual ghettoisation and disrepair too. This may have contributed to triggering the riots. The subsequent cancellation of the event may have also fed existing racist and discriminatory discourses and narratives toward hip hop itself (e.g. the narrative about hip hop causing violence).

Communication scholar Mathew F. Jordan who researched Barack Obama's use of music in populist strategies argues that for populism to be able to bring people together under the same political agenda it has to take into consideration people's heterogeneity and foster a shared goal rather than top-down planned aesthetics centred around empty signifiers, which appeal to people's intense feelings (ibid.; 114). This is because these intense feelings may turn quickly towards other attractive settings for narcissistic subjective projections (ibid.). Within the context of the '100 Contests', perhaps a more participatory and bottom-up approach with the

local residents to organise the festival may have resulted in a festival more representative of the diverse tastes and interests of the youth. This approach may have also better federated local residents by actively engaging them with strategies to improve the town's image.

Nevertheless, both 'Furia Sound Festival' and '100 Contests' are missed by some of the residents. A comment by a worried local resident below an online news article of *Le Parisien* about the cancellation of '100 Contests' is quite telling:

> If they keep cancelling our festivals... Just one more push and Cergy will become as attractive as some towns of the 93 [suburb of Paris with a bad reputation]. (leparisien.fr, January 2011)

This comment may simultaneously highlight the resident's biases, internalized stereotypical and negative narratives about the town and its residents, and reflect an existing disconnect between some of the local cultural actors of Cergy-Pontoise and the residents. Both Paul and Sylvain consider these events as fostering populism and shutting off the youth by patronising them; yet these comments themselves may be patronising to the person whose comments to the news article I quoted above. It denies her view and potentially the view of other residents who, like her, may think the contrary: that these events were of quality and valuable investment to meet residents' needs and wants, and that their cancellations represent a removal of social and urban ties that put the town at risk of further anomie and urban disrepair. As such, a false consensus effect, which leads people to think that the majority of people think like them, may be at play there (Selart et al., 2020).

This false consensus effect could lead some of the *associations* focused on local outreach, to think and act for the residents without realising that residents outside their group of residents - that is, the *association* - do not think or act like them. During interviews and discussions, some of the members of *associations* I met often referred to their *association's* mission as 'giving access to music and culture to local residents' and 'facilitating opportunities for residents to connect with one and another and start doing music and cultural event themselves.' These statements assume that what the *associations* identify as needs and wants (which inevitably stemmed from their own needs that were not met by the town, leading them to create the *association* in the first place) are aligned with the needs

and wants of other residents. This reproduces the exact same top-down narratives from the institutions and the town towards the residents - but this time it comes from the *associations*, which are groups of residents, toward other residents. This may not be the case of all *associations* as many do not have for mission to 'give access' or 'encourage people to do things' and other *associations* are aware of this effect and trying to mitigate it too if they have these specific aims. Applications for subsidies also have the pernicious effect of pushing *associations* to create narratives about their impact on the local residents and the town, that may encourage and reinforce this false consensus effect.

I wondered about this while volunteering at the alternative festivals organised by Voyage. Voyage as I explained above, refused to rely on public funding in order to remain independent and sustainable. I wondered whether their festivals were achieving their aim of giving free access to culture to the local residents and bringing closer the local communities, artists and local artisans. Cécile, a White female in her forties and member of Voyage feels very passionately about free outdoor music festivals, which she considers to be an essential need of the residents. As she states:

> What is the point in building beautiful social housing if people cannot 'live' outside? We have nothing, and then what do we do? Stare at screens, inside all day? I find it so crazy to make it secondary [free outdoor music festivals] when it is actually the places where we meet, discover and exchange. (Interview, June 2017)

The festival organised by Voyage itself was very eclectic and participatory. It included music concerts of various genres (rock, folk, reggae, etc.), artistic performances (juggling, fire spitting) and what they called the *associations* village, which included local food stalls, free musical instruments for people to borrow and play, free shops to drop items and/or take others for free. The festival itself was a local success as, without any funding, it attracted an audience of 5,000 to 8,000 people over a two- to three-day period. There were no security staff, no barriers, and families and pets were welcome. The festival was free and in the leisure park of Cergy-Pontoise, so passers-by could potentially stop by to enjoy the event.

While volunteering with this *association*, I observed that this free space remained predominantly occupied by a homogenous group of people; this was especially true regarding the

cohort of the volunteers, who were all White, had similar ideals and all valued the importance of residents' participation in local life. Ethnomusicologist Linda Wilks - who studied social capital at three small to medium scale music festivals (rock, pop, opera) in the UK - and Thomas Turino - who studied his own participation and research in the participatory contra dance movement in America - also observe that people attending the festivals they research were also quite homogeneous (Wilks 2011; Turino 2016). Turino noticed in his participatory case study that most of the participants were alike in terms of their shared values (ibid., 298). Musicologist Robert Adlington points out in his review of Turino's article that, as such, we may not conflate a group's shared ideal with a real potential for social change (2019). As Adlington states:

> It is important to keep this 'democratic', inclusive structure distinct from the suggestion that such art practices function to unite a wider social body or to make a more dramatic intervention upon social divisions. If anything, the contra dance, in embodying values of a relatively liberal, well-educated and ecologically inclined group, highlights a key social division in modern America, rather than overcoming it. (ibid, 196)

Associations I met are usually aware of this and often ask themselves about what the actual needs and wants of the residents are. L'Atelier itself may have had a broader perspective than some of the other *associations* aiming to deliver outreach, because the *association* itself is more diverse than Voyage in terms of age, ethnicity and social class.[17] As such, although they may not represent the residents as such, some of the members may have lived experience of being considered as 'vulnerable' youth, being Black, being Arab, being working class and so on; sometimes they may also have experiences of the various stigma and discriminations associated with these categories. As such, this *association* may be more inclusive than a mostly White *association*, because they have a broader spectrum of lived experience and background. This was reflected in terms of the rich and heated discussions and the great variety of opinions expressed during the *association's* team meetings.

How to better understand the residents, their needs and wants was a regular topic at the team meetings of L'Atelier, who critically assessed and adjusted their events accordingly. For example, they

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[17] Although mostly White, Voyage did have a diversity in terms of age, gender, and to a certain extent social class

noticed that one of their small-scale hip hop festivals, which they ran for the past 10 years, was not attracting big crowds of residents anymore; instead, the event became more of a space attended by people in their thirties and forties where the older members of the *associations* themselves met with their own friends. There was nothing wrong with this, but the original aim of the festival was to provide cultural events around hip hop, which were initially lacking in the town. They identified that maybe there was no need for this type of event anymore in the town, and that they may need to adapt the festival or cancel it altogether. Nevertheless, the *association* had music events that were well-attended by young people, including youth from deprived areas of the town. Their ability to access the youth and interact appropriately with them is perceived as very valuable by the town and its institutions: they are praised for being one of the rare *associations* being able to reach them effectively.

The town and various top-down cultural institutions (such as the *scènes nationales*) ardently court L'Atelier with the aim of rejuvenating the audiences of these local prestigious state institutions and helping them with outreach activities aimed at the local youth. I remember two specific events that were well-attended by the youth and more specifically, by people from the deprived area of the town. These events were more low-key and smaller scale. The first one was a small event that was a partnership between the *association* and a social worker in an area of Cergy-Pontoise that mainly consists of social housing estates, with nothing else apart from a corner shop and a basketball pitch. This area is notorious for knife crimes. The event showcases a music workshop initiative led by Laurent, an Asian male social worker in his late forties, who is also an amateur musician himself. He can play many instruments but is mostly a guitarist. He decided to create a music workshop, as it was a need for some of the children and young people he was helping. From his own initiative and with the approval from his manager, he installed his workshop in an empty flat in the area. He installed a drumkit, a guitar, keyboard, and also a rhythm keyboard (he thought a rhythm keyboard would be quite playful and easy to use for the youngsters who have never played music before). He told me that, so far, the neighbours do not complain about the noise and he thinks that the neighbours are understanding for now, as they can see that the workshop has a positive impact on the local youth. He

initially started with a few boys and girls, who were interested, but via word of mouth, more young people joined the workshop. He is delighted about this snowball effect, especially as a young person he is very worried about - but who clearly did not want to interact with him - has now joined the workshop via a friend.

Once every few months the music workshop co-organises a performance with L'Atelier. The event consists of residents bringing soft drinks and cakes and sharing them while music performances by the youth who attend the music workshop are taking place. The event happens in a courtyard, which is in the middle of one of the estates. The event is meant to be very informal and relaxed. There were children playing football not far away and their ball reached the stage at times. People were watching the event from their flats' windows and balconies. Some people came out of their building to attend for a bit. The event I attended was not very structured and the social worker kept his role to a minimum. People from all ages were coming and going to the stage and trying out different instruments and giving performances, which included many performances by adults and small children who were not part of the workshop. This resulted in a sort of jam or open mic night type of a session, where various performances happened, including poetry, soul, rock, pop and hip hop. It included a five-year-old boy coming out of nowhere; he reached the stage and started rapping lyrics from an existing trendy rap song with offensive lyrics. The little boy was not scolded but eventually - after he overstayed his welcome and kept repeating over and over the same lyrics for several minutes - Laurent invited him to make room for other performers. Alvaro, a Hispanic male member of L'Atelier in his mid-twenties, a musician and also a social worker who attended the event, was not particularly impressed and regretted this performance. He felt it was wrong to let this happen in an area that was already considered one of the most sensitive and socially-at-risk areas of Cergy- Pontoise. Nevertheless, he remained satisfied about the event and stated to me that L'Atelier was trying to develop other events with social workers in other deprived areas of Cergy- Pontoise, with the hope that these types of events take off in these areas with residents appropriating the event for themselves and maintaining it, resulting in better social community ties and fewer crimes in these areas. This was the ideal and there was no evidence that this would work.

Another event I volunteered at that was well-attended by the local youth was an open mic night focused on rap battles. Organised by L'Atelier, the event was free and happened in the small campus bar of the university of Cergy-Pontoise. The audience was quite diverse in terms of ethnicities although it remained quite a masculine and young space (people were mostly in their twenties and thirties). There were no rules on the performances themselves, people could be as offensive as they wanted to be in their rap battles. Nevertheless, the MC and DJ who were running the show adapted their choice of music (more or less difficult to rap on) and announcements (more or less teasing the performers) depending on the quality of the battles and individual performances.

Alvaro also attended this event. He did leave in the middle of the event as he could physically not stand some of the performances any longer. He had a headache and seemed visibly upset. He excused himself to the rest of the members of L'Atelier and left. He is a very well-appreciated member of the *association* and came to help at the event, even though he knew he would not like it. Other members of the *associations* were not surprised and actually were expecting him to leave at some point or another because of the performances, as they told me. He left after hearing one of the rap battles where a young teenage boy rapped very offensive lyrics that targeted Muslim women who wear the veil and are at the same time promiscuous, calling them fake Muslims and other much more offensive insults. Although the DJ and MC were not impressed, they did not interrupt the teenager. Nevertheless, after he finished his performance, they both teased him and pointed out to him in a sarcastic manner that they did not approve of the lyrics and asked him about whether he himself met the standards that he sets for women.[18] I am unsure about the performer's reaction but judging from the clamours and claps of the audience, it seems that many may have sided with the DJ and MC. Members of the *associations* found this specific performance appalling but did not seem to be surprised by it. Nevertheless, this was a one-off: the rest of the performances were as harsh as rap battles can be, but they were no other performance specifically targeting insults toward a group of people or a type of lifestyle. I may note here that one of the other performances that stood out was the performance by a

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[18] One may speculate that the sarcastic comments about sexual behaviour 'standards' could have better addressed existing sexism and slut shaming.

White British male in his 60s who is poet and lecturer who has lived in Cergy-Pontoise for several decades. I don't remember whether he won his rap battle or not but his performance - half in English and half in French - as well as his fast and precise diction, delighted the whole crowd.

Both events were less structured, more permissive and less top-down than the rest of the events and initiatives discussed in this chapter. I may speculate that this may be why these events were better at reaching the youth because, although they were set up in the public sphere and organised by a well-known *association* that often worked with the town, people attending the event were not expected to behave in a way that fit with the model of the ideal citizen and resident (e.g. no ban on using insults and so on). These moments were sort of communitas moments in the sense that all participants shared the experience that was the music performances but the reactions to the performance were diverse: while most of the attendees and the *associations* performed the responsible French citizens, the two boys mentioned did not. Their performances were not aligned with the rest of the performers. The actual reality of the segmentation and fragmentation of the town and the French society in general emerged through the performance. The two boys performed a version of themselves that was not the one that is expected of them in the public sphere by the French republican contract.

I may speculate that this is why Alvaro, a dedicated social worker became upset and physically ill during the event. The core of his work and values are to address social and urban disrepair and support youth who are socially at risk of exclusion. I think that this type of incident may have made him feel powerless, because they allowed the performance of what he is fighting against in his day-to-day work as a social worker and member of the *association*: violence, misogyny and so on. Although it may be argued that the expression of this violence within the frame of creativity may act as a catalyst that prevents it from erupting in a more harmful way outside of the creative space, these incidents may remain unbearable because they bring to the fore the failure and crisis of the French republican contract and its promises of equality. It may make one feel powerless towards the reality of the youth, their anger and more widely the wide gaps between different segments of the French populations.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the town as experienced by its residents and more specifically, its groups of residents and the different dynamics at play between the three entities that are the town, the *associations* and the residents. The lived experience of the residents reveal that their reality is much messier than a neat top-down plan and its objectives. There are many ideals and realities at play in the town and although music *associations* and music events contribute to sonic memory and the development of a sense of place and public realm in new towns with very little pre-existing history, they also crystallise and bring to the fore the local tensions that relate to the segmentation of the town and the crisis of the French nation and its identity.

The small or larger ephemeral music events and gathering happening in the town are all communitas moments that help mitigate anomie as well as local and national tensions. Nevertheless, they are not moments when all residents become one united voice. These ephemeral events may be simultaneously a performance of the French republican contract and an occasion to challenge and renegotiate this contract, as well as an opportunity to express existing social difficulties and frustrations. These are shared from residents to other residents, *associations* and the policymakers who may differ in opinions at best or feel strongly repulsed by what is expressed at worst. This type of sometimes - brutal and abrupt - renegotiation of the urban and citizenship spaces would be more difficult to happen in the non- musical and creative space where residents have to perform certain ways of being in the world that fit within the French republican contract to be able to get on with their everyday life and work. Thus, these ephemeral moments are key because people who come willingly to perform or attend are able to come together to musically debate, reclaim and renegotiate what it means to be a French citizen, to live in the changing new urban environment and to live together as *Cergy-Pontains* (residents of Cergy-Pontoise) who are very diverse in terms of their ethnicities, levels of income, spirituality, background and so on.

Sometime this happens in a safe creative space, sometimes in a less safe space as in the case of the riots that happened in 2007. This highlights that the struggle against anomie never ends and that local ephemeral musical events in new urban environment have a continuing and never-ending role to

play as sort of modern agora or citizens assemblies. Not everyone in the new town takes part in these local events, some people state that they do not engage with the town as they feel excluded or are simply uninterested. The next chapter turns to some of them by focussing on the individual experiences of the local musicians and music professionals. They find themselves in the middle of the three entities (*association,* local authorities, residents) and the local events and their associated politics, when they themselves may not want to be involved in any sort of politics or groups of residents, and just want to focus on their music instead.

Chapter Six: Musicians' Individual Experiences of the New Town

6.0. Introduction

In chapter 4, I detailed the initial planning of the town, the difficulty of the urban planners to plan for the inexistent residents, and the resulting over planning of the town that reinforces existing societal and institutional segmentation of people and music, leaving little space for residents to make the town their own. In chapter 5, I then turned to the residents themselves and their experience of the town on the ground, the problems with the existing facilities (e.g. noise disturbance, inappropriate space), as well as the dynamics at play between the residents, music *associations* and the council. Through the lens of local music events, and music *associations'* activities, I examined how these dynamics and the messiness of quotidian local urban life crystallise the constantly shifting negotiations of local and national spaces and models of the French nation and its citizens.

After discussing the local music *associations* and the town's politics, and how musicians and other residents are embedded in it, I now turn to local musicians' individual experiences and perceptions of their practice in the town in flux. Although individuals may be parts of what educational theorist Etienne Wenger refers to as different constellations of communities of practices, they are also inevitably parts of the more individualist, impersonal and anonymous sides of urban life (Wenger 1998; Finnegan 2007; Sara Cohen 2012). Additionally, according to Zigmund Bauman, the period from the mid-Twentieth century onwards is an era of 'liquid modernity', which is characterised by an overall sense of lack of stability and an emphasis on the individual rather than the collective (Bauman 2000). Community, locality and citizenship are eroding (ibid.). Liquid modernity simultaneously creates a sense of greater individual freedom for some people, but also more uncertainty and exclusion from certain forms of support for others, as responsibility is placed on the individual rather than the collective (ibid.). People experience multiple shifts throughout their life and with regards to their identity (e.g. changing partners, jobs, etc.) rather than having an unchanging mindset about life. According to Bauman, this contributes to people experiencing a heightened sense of loneliness, as it is difficult to stay in one position and to grasp solidly or associate with someone, a space or a group on the long-term (ibid.; 184).

As discussed in chapter 2, in their respective ethnographies of musicians of Liverpool and Milton Keynes, Cohen and Finnegan focus on the individuality of the musician's experience and how it changes throughout the life of the musician and their town. Finnegan considers that people's individual experiences and perceptions that are more mundane and hidden need to be better addressed by scholars, to challenge common assumptions that all groups of people are necessarily linked by strong personal solidarity (2007, 302). She gives the examples of musicians who do not necessarily know each other well in the music groups that she observed, and uses the idea of pathways to keep the reader aware that music-making in many cases, such as amateur music-making, in a British new town is not an essential activity to be able to survive in the urban environment (e.g. as opposed to shelter and food). Thus, people are not tied to music groups by necessity. They may come in and out of music groups - or musical pathways - constantly (ibid.). This framing may allow a better understanding of people situationally and within shifting contexts. It helps with better taking into account people's whole humanity rather than taking into consideration only a small part of their life and identity (e.g. only focussing on their connection with a community of practice or their connection with a given space alone).

Cohen focusses on the individual experience of musicians through the use of map sketching exercises with rock and hip-hop musicians of Liverpool. Her fieldwork and analysis bring to light the micro-topographies of local music-making of the town and how each of the musicians interviewed has very different ways to define Liverpool and interact with it and with the other local residents. This allows in-depth insights about how musicians relate to their urban environment, their music genre and how intersectionality (social, economic and historical circumstances) shapes their experiences and perceptions of space and music (Cohen 2012; 146). In turn, the data that stem from these maps bring to the fore the play between urban fabric, musicians, histories and shifting contexts. This reveals aspects of wider systemic issues that may relate to urban planning, place-making, policymaking, communities and citizenship. For example, the musicians' maps highlight gentrification, racism and discrimination, as well as the great disparities between rich and poor districts of Liverpool. In addition to this wider spectrum of insights, as both Cohen and Finnegan argue, this micro-approach also encourages more

dialectical and flexible thinking about music by moving beyond dichotomous thinking, determinism, constructions of locality and narratives of agency.

Similarly, this chapter attempts to capture the individual experiences and perceptions of various generations of musicians in Cergy-Pontoise at the micro-level to try to get more layers and a broader set of perceptions and experiences of the town and its development at different times and within its different types of spaces; legal, illegal, top-down, private, public, grassroots and so on. This approach enables me to better understand how musicians experience the existing local facilities, as well as to uncover a variety of spaces beyond the existing planned facilities. This brings to the fore several spaces that I have not yet discussed in chapters 4 and 5. For example, I will discuss in this chapter the space of the Caserne, a multi-disciplinary artistic residency that happened in a large disused military compound owned by the town and managed by a charity. This specific space, which was not part of the original planning, was experienced by some musicians as a catalyst of creative talents that propelled them to new horizons and creative and social spheres. The Caserne itself left a lasting legacy for Cergy-Pontoise arts and culture too, as I will discuss below. This space may have acted at a certain point in time as what Foucault refers as a 'temporal heterotopia' (1984, 7). Foucault defines heterotopia as follows: 'There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society— which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (ibid., 4). The *Caserne* may have been a heterotopia due to its fleeting temporality, its simultaneous isolation and opening to the rest of the world, and because it has acted as a multiplicity of spaces within one space: an artistic residency, a sort of squat, a military compound, a space that fosters collective creativity but also excludes some of the local community. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

The aim of this chapter is to explore urban planners' challenges with regard to planning facilities that are suitable for residents' music practices. To do this, this chapter delves into the individual experiences of different generations of musicians that associate with different genres. Their individual experiences and perspectives shine a light about wider issues such as sustainable urban

planning and urban living. The musicians discussed in this chapter are either born in the town or moved to the town as children, teenagers or adults. They also have different types of occupations including full-time freelance musician, school administrator, nurse, studio manager, software engineer, waiter, or civil servant. They live in different type of households – such as living with their family, as single, as lone parent with children. They all have different ethnic backgrounds: Arab, Asian, Black, mixed-race, White. They also have affinities for different music genres - such as hip hop, electro, rock, Celtic rock-folk, pop and rap. They live in different locations of the town; Cergy, Pontoise, Osny, Vauréal, Jouy-le-Moutier, Courdimanche and rural areas adjacent to Cergy- Pontoise. Some of the musicians that I met are in their late twenties, thirties, forties and fifties. They grew up and evolved in Cergy-Pontoise when the Ministry of Culture opened up to a wider spectrum of popular music genres in France (e.g. rock, hip-hop). This had an effect in the evolution of the new town itself from the mid-1980s and 1990s onwards, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5. New public music studios and other facilities geared toward certain forms of popular and contemporary music genres have mushroomed in the town. Some musicians in their twenties and early to mid-thirties have only experienced the town in its more recent form in the 2000s and 2010s that is associated with the ageing of the town and its facilities, as well as the town's regeneration, which will be discussed in chapter 7.

As such, all musicians have been experiencing the urban development of the town and its changes at different times, within different spaces and from their individual specific perspectives and experiences of the town. Older and newer generations of musicians of Cergy- Pontoise are witnesses to the constant urban developments of the town that are associated with music spaces opening and closing. This brings to the fore the experience of individual musicians and whether they experience the town as a new town and whether the town's layout and its facilities hinder or enable their music practices. One may wonder as well whether musicians' practices are well embedded in the public or whether these practices confine themselves to the private sphere, and what this may mean for areas of governance and planning such as: sustainable planning, policymaking, urban living and the digitalization of music and everyday life.

To address these questions, I first discuss the experience of musicians in relation to Cergy-Pontoise in the 1990s up to 2003. This includes a focus on the large artistic residency at the *Caserne*. I then move onto discussing the post-*Caserne* era and the various individual music experiences of musicians. I focus more specifically on the local musician experiencing his or her town as a 'cocoon' that is a safe space to learn, develop and create, but that can also be maladapted, stifling or limiting. The last section discusses Cergy-Pontoise as experienced by musicians who do not perceive nor experience Cergy-Pontoise as either a 'cocoon' or a 'catalyst' of talents. Parts of this section focus on the context of the Digital Age and how this period changes local musical practices.

6.1. 1980s - 2003: From a sense of nothingness to the Caserne catalyst era

As I discussed in chapter 4, initially the urban planning of Cergy-Pontoise was very much top-down. The local state venues of Cergy-Pontoise before the 1990s remained top-down and geared toward a state elitist vision of culture, with popular music genres and grassroots music practices not included in the public realm or relegated to community centres that were not necessarily fit for the purpose of popular music and grassroots music practices. As I explored in chapter 4 and 5, in the late 1980s and 1990s with the change of political wind and the affirmation of certain amplified forms of music in France, policymakers started to tackle certain music genres associated with popular music. Following these policies, public music studios and music facilities started appearing in Cergy-Pontoise.

Some of the musicians I interviewed who grew up in the town while this was happening during the 1980s and 1990s, and who are now in their thirties, forties and fifties, very often use the word 'nothingness' or 'void' to describe to me what they feel was going on in terms of local musician network and support in Cergy-Pontoise at that time. Paul, a Black male reggae musician in his mid-fifties and studio manager of one of the public music studios owned by one of the sub-towns of Cergy-Pontoise, remembers experiencing a void as a young musician in terms of local support and facilities. He recalls that local councils were not paying much attention to local young musicians. As he states:

At that time there was no network of music professionals. There was no real mediator and music was not a very important topic, at least for the towns. With

time, towns started to be aware that music was a little like sport, that you needed
to put a bit of support so that it could be developed. (Interview, October 2018)

He later states in the same interview an anecdote about an interaction he had with a local cultural councillor when he was a teenager that stuck with him throughout his life. His local public music studio closed. He and his friends wanted to find a new space to rehearse and record but were struggling to find an alternative. They went to the council who turned them down and suggested that they contact the French national rail to enquire about whether they would have a disused train carriage for them to use to be able to continue rehearsing and recording their music. Reflecting on it during the interview, he perceives that the council at the time had an inappropriate response to his request for support as a young teenager and perceives this as dismissive and disrespectful. As he states:

> There was a type of answer from the state and policy makers that was instead of telling me "we have nothing for you" to tell me to go to the *SNCF* [French national rail company], it was the same as telling me to piss off basically. (Interview, October 2018)

Saint Pierre, who met hip hop artists of Cergy-Pontoise in the 1990s, observes that local young hip-hop musicians had difficulties in accessing spaces to rehearse and record their music (2002, 140). During my own interviews with musicians, some of them reflected that this lack of support, nothingness and void acted as an inspiration and a form of stimulation for them. As Jérémie, a well-known White male percussionist and DJ in his forties, states: 'I think that the nothingness motivates' (interview October 2018); Nicolas, a White male rock musician in his forties, agrees: 'It was a mindset… to sum it up: at that time there was nothing' (interview October 2018). The sense of nothingness perceived as a source of motivation or creativity echoes Hirsch's ideologies, which I discussed in chapter 4. Hirsch imagines the new residents as pioneers making the new town their town by bringing it to life through their endeavours. Although Hirsch's projection is to a certain extent naïve, self-serving and predicated upon imagined ideal but inexistent residents, some of the musicians that I met did perceive a sense of nothingness in relation to the new towns in the 1980s that was, for them, a source of motivation to create rather than a driver of disengagement and indifference towards the town. Nevertheless, this sense of nothingness experienced by individuals may also be associated with the

more general state of the 'liquid modern person' who cannot associate durably with a space or community and as such may also experience a sense of nothingness (Bauman 2000).

In addition to the sense of nothingness, for some of the musicians that I met, the peculiar architecture and atmosphere of the new town itself was intriguing and inspiring. The peculiar architecture stimulated their creativity and continues to do so today. This is the case for Jérémie, who grew up in Cergy-Pontoise and still lives there when he is not on tour in various parts of the globe. He explained to me that, in his adolescence, he did not associate at all with the public sphere and cultural amenities of the town: he was not interested in the available support, nor was he seeking it. Jérémie emphasized to me that his musical experience and development happened by chance and through making friends. This included attending music classes at school (French national curriculum includes music from what the UK national curriculum would consider Key Stage Early Years up to Key Stage 3) and socialising with friends who set up a local underground mobile music studio that changed location every six months. Although he was not interested in the existing local music services, events and facilities, or the lack of them, in the 1980s, he states that the new town itself has always been a source of inspiration for his music, because of its architecture and the utopian narratives associated with the concept of the new towns. He particularly feels inspired by the *12 Colonnes* and chose to live in a flat that is located near them. This gives him quick access to them, and the 360-degree view one can get from standing next to them (the view includes Paris, other towns and rural areas). Jérémie is also intrigued by the symbols associated with the local architecture and public site arts of the town:

> I am very open musically so in this town, there was a lot of esotericism… For example, the *12 Colonnes*, have a lot of different readings. There are official and unofficial readings of these places. So, this town always intrigued me. I was wondering: why did they chose this architecture? Why did they spend so much money? Why these street names?... I talk about it because it is a great source of inspiration. I have done many tracks here. I am in my studio and then I go to the *12 Colonnes*. You see there is an opening. It's one of the rare places you can see almost 360 degrees… There are no obstacles, so it is very inspiring. (interview, June 2017)

Some of the other musicians who grew up in the 1980s and 1990s do not necessarily find the town appealing because of its built environment, yet they feel that, while growing up, they were stimulated by its human elements, the local residents and the musical talents that they perceive the

town oozes. For example, Przemysław, a well-known White male rapper in his forties, has mixed feelings about the town that he perceives as too top-down and culturally bureaucratic. Nevertheless he still has positive memories about the town that revolve around spotting local and nationally famous rappers in the Axe Majeur and the Horloge districts where he grew up. As he states:

> I knew rappers from various places in Cergy-Saint-Christophe [Axe Majeur and Horloge districts]. The hero when I was young was Diable Rouge [red devil]. When people showed him to me in the street, he was dressed all in red… Rappers were heroes for me, they were almost like mutants to me! (Interview, November 2018).

Other musicians that I met remember fondly growing up in Cergy-Pontoise before the advent of the Internet. They state that this particular time and space allowed them to benefit from a close-knit local network of musicians in Cergy-Pontoise while simultaneously benefiting from the town's proximity to Paris and, as such, access to its record shops, and the ability to bring back records from Paris to the town. As Jérémie states: 'The good thing about Cergy is that we are close to Paris and, at the same time, it is not Paris' (interview, June 2017). The access to Parisian shops and the ability to bring back to Cergy-Pontoise these records had the potentiality for musicians to network better locally and earn more interest and respect from other local musicians. Some of the DJs (all in their mid-thirties to early forties) that I met longed and had nostalgia for the era where they had to travel all the way from Cergy-Pontoise to Paris to get records. This was their way to get access to particular sounds and music as there was no Internet. It was described to me by one of the DJs Jules, a Black male in his thirties, as a 'treasure hunt' where he had to know the right places and the right people. This echoes Sarah Thornton's concept of 'subcultural capital' in club culture gained from owning 'rare groove' and having a sizable collection of records (Sara Cohen 2012b; Thornton 2013).

Jules recalls that it was a difficult and expensive process. The journey from Cergy- Pontoise to Paris lasts 45 minutes minimum by car or train. Vinyl and CDs were also expensive to buy, especially for younger people, who were still at school with no fixed income. This investment of time and money for DJing meant other DJs respected you more according to some of the DJs I talked to. As Jules states:

I think, that's why we respected the DJ… You know, before there was no Internet.... So, you had to sort it out yourself. Guys who could do that were going to Paris left and right to bring discs that we were waiting for. We were only waiting for that, for the guy to come back from his trips. And then we'd be like: "so what did you bring back? Come on can we borrow them? Let us borrow them!" You know we did not have CD burners before so we were like: "Could you [referring to a well-known local youth facilitator and DJ of Cergy-Pontoise] please let us borrow your CD collections?" and he was letting us borrow them! incredible! We were organising our own parties. That was pretty cool. (Interview, November 2018).

Additionally, Cédric, a Black male DJ in his late thirties, appreciated not only the network in the town and the proximity with Paris, but also his local public music studio, where he met Paul, who taught him computer music when he was a teenager. As he states: 'And there was Paul. in the music studio, many thanks to him because thanks to him we learned computer music [in the 2000s] and, more than that, we were able to touch the logical next steps of DJing, even though I don't like the term DJing. We learned how to produce music and sound for the local artists' (Interview, November 2018). Paul is the same Paul that I mentioned earlier who experienced negative interactions with his local council when he was a teen. He later became a sound engineer and manager of a local public studio of Cergy-Pontoise, the place where he and Cédric met. Throughout our interview Paul emphasizes his role as a facilitator for the local youth and compares it with his past experience as a private studio manager, a time when his sole focus was to manage the studio well and make sure the customers were happy with their recordings. One may speculate that his negative interactions with the council as a young person may have motivated him to go the extra mile with Cédric and other young musicians, so that they might avoid the self-same negative interactions he endured as a teenager.

Musicians now in their thirties, forties and fifties have a variety of experiences and perceptions of the town depending on their genre, contexts and own affinities. Nevertheless, all of them mentioned to me the era of the *Caserne*. Whether they liked this era or not, many identify the era of the Caserne as the golden age of music in Cergy-Pontoise. The Caserne was an artistic residency at a disused military compound of Cergy-Pontoise from 1999 until 2003. Many of the musicians I met, regardless of whether they took part in the artistic residency, made the point that I must talk about this period in my thesis. Most musicians who knew about this artistic residency reminisced about it with a sense of nostalgia and talked about it using mystical terms such as 'magic', 'legendary' and so on. I was often

told that the music that was made there still represents the sound of Cergy-Pontoise. The next section discusses the Caserne era.

The Caserne era – 1999 - 2003

The Caserne dated back to 1914 and comprised 44,000m^2 of military accommodation, artillery workshops and hangars on a total surface of 140,000m^2. When urban planners of Cergy-Pontoise designed the new town in the mid-1960s and 1970s, this space was considered a strategic location between Cergy-Pontoise and its historical centre in Pontoise. However, it was being used as a military compound at the time, so it became an obstacle for the urban planners because housing and roads had to be built around it. The Ministry of Defence stopped using the compound and put it for sale in the 1990s. Cergy-Pontoise bought it in 1996 and rejoiced in its new acquisition. As Claude Garreau, the juridical and financial director of the urban planning team of Cergy-Pontoise, confirmed to the national newspaper *Libération*: 'This land reserve prepares the urban planning of the sector that will link the centre of Cergy-Pontoise with the historical centre of Pontoise. It is the heart of the *agglomération* of the 21st century that is being prepared here' (Dupaquier, 1996).

After buying the military compound, the urban planners of Cergy-Pontoise needed to find for five years an organisation to manage, guardian and liven up the site in a cost-effective manner. One of the aims was to familiarise the local residents with the site. They chose the Parisian *association* the Usines Éphémères (Ephemeral Factories) to do this until 31 December 2003. Local officials of Cergy-Pontoise chose that *association* because it was specialised in urban wastelands and their conversion into artistic spaces. In 1999, the Caserne became the biggest artistic residency centre of the Île-de-France *région* according to the website of the charity and think tank - Art Factories. The charity focusses on French creative initiatives and experimentations that take into account and engage with the local spaces where they take place and the residents of these spaces. The Caserne was reconverted into a centre regrouping various types of artistic facilities. This included twelve music studios and one concert venue with a capacity of 150 people. The Caserne was subsidized by Cergy-Pontoise, the *région*, the *département*, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other forms of national and

local subsidies (Lextrait 2001). Artists, including musicians, could rent 80m^2 of space for F1,000 (€152.45) per month.[19] The rent was a contribution toward the utility bills and the maintenance of the compound.

The Parisian *association* had to face two kinds of difficulties: the space of the Caserne itself and the *association's* identity. The very large size of the space, and the imposing surrounding thick walls protecting it, did not make the space welcoming to the public. Some of the local residents of Cergy-Pontoise denounced the Parisian character of the *association* managing it and disapproved of the way the *association* was running the project. One of the residents' criticisms was that many artists who came to the Caserne were not from Cergy- Pontoise. However, the *association* received subsidies on the basis that the Caserne should have a *régional* outreach not just a Cergy-Pontoise outreach. In 2001, the *association* participated in a report led by cultural professional Fabrice Lextrait. The report discusses the state of French urban wastelands and their reconversion into artistic and cultural spaces. It was published and presented to Michel Duffour who was the French state secretary to heritage and cultural decentralisation in 2001 (Lextrait 2001). One of the case studies of this report is the Caserne. As part of this case study, the *association* the Usines Éphémères details the difficulties that they were experiencing. Some of the difficulties experienced relate to the fact that the building was of a very large size and surrounded by uninviting defensive walls. As such, it was not very welcoming to the local community despite the *association's* effort to network with the local residents, artists and local arts school and venues. As one member of the *association* states in the report:

> We were called 'Parisians' so we had to re-explain and maybe re-balance, valorise our actions towards low-income visual artists and communicate more about the network that we are building. (ibid.)

Although the *association* tried to better engage with local residents and organisations, some musicians who spent some time at the Caserne, explained to me that this private space that was not very open to the public was specifically the strength of the Caserne. They appreciated that it was quite exclusive. It was a strength because it allowed them to be totally free, creative, to mingle with other

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[19] In France, the currency prior to the euros (€) was the *Francs (F)* until 2002

artists from many disciplines and to develop their careers as musicians. As Bastien, a White male session bass player in his forties, who plays in various music bands from all genres in Cergy-Pontoise, and stayed at the Caserne, remembers:

> The friends of musicians were allowed to come but it was not an open space, it was not a tavern, you had to have an interest to come in, I got in thanks to a friend… It was a no man's land; it was total liberty. We could do anything we wanted. Most of the people thanks to whom I can live from my music today I met them there because the *Caserne* was like a catalyst, a catapult to propel you to other musical spheres… that was also the aim of the *Caserne*… I met musicians but I didn't only stay with them [he explained that he mingled with other disciplines]. I met everyone and it was great, very warm, friendly… It was the golden age of the cultural gatherings of Cergy-Pontoise'. (interview, November 2018).

Many local and nationally famous bands from Cergy-Pontoise emerged from the *Caserne*. The most famous examples are the Ogres de Barbacks (French chanson and Roma music), K2R (reggae, ska), Orange Street (reggae, ska) who recorded some of their albums in the *Caserne*, and the singer Anis (French chanson, jazz and blues) whose song about Cergy propelled him and Cergy-Pontoise on national television during the summer of 2006. Some of the musicians I met perceived that the Caserne was able to produce these successful artists and projects because of the community of artists present in the space. Some musicians perceive the Caserne and its residents as federative, free, interdisciplinary, convivial and friendly. Sylvain, a White male reggae musician in his forties, who was part of a band, which became nationally famous, reflected to me about how his band experienced their time at the Caserne: 'It really opened up our mind, this place, with all the disciplines we encountered there; and then, step by step, our band became more and more professional between 2000 and 2003' (interview, June 2017).

According to some of the musicians who attended the Caserne, the space itself was the reason for its success. The fact that it was a large military compound gave it a particular ambience. This included new sonic opportunities, and a magical atmosphere for some of the musicians who spent time there. As Jérémie, who stayed at the Caserne, states: 'The Caserne was really a magical place, it was the same feeling as when you go to a squat that is you have this kind of abstract zone where everything is permitted, in a manner of speaking. It didn't mean we could do everything we wanted, but there was

a certain mindset that I find very creative in these kind of spaces… that is what marked me about this space' (interview, June 2017). Nicolas who now leads one of the networks of musicians and venues of the Val d'Oise *département*, experienced at the Caserne a sense of freedom that made this space very special to him:

> The typology of that space was very precious, because it was a place where you could do so many things… because it was not the gilding of the Théâtre 95, you see: you could set up a stage, you could do graffiti on the walls; and that's what's missing for people now, you see, it was not necessarily the project of the space…. but the urban wasteland itself, there, you could do anything from scratch'. (interview, October 2018).[20]

In 2003, the five years of the guardianship came to an end, the Caserne was closed after its final event happened. This was the festival, 'La Quille', that gathered all artists from the Caserne and their audience, that was around 3,000 people according to the website of the Art Factories and my interview with Sylvain. The Caserne's closure was not necessarily unavoidable, according to some of the musicians I met. Some of the artists wanted to keep the space for longer but there was a difficulty for the artists themselves to federate together and to have efficient discussions with the local authorities. As Sylvain states: 'Artists didn't come together, even though we carried a strong political weight at the time [because of the success of some of the artists of the *Caserne*]. It [the initiative from some of the artists to maintain the Caserne open] was dead on arrival' (interview, June 2017). Some of those who were at the Caserne believe that the very exclusivity of the space is where its weakness lied: they felt that it did not connect with its local neighbourhood and residents. As such, when it was time for the artists to resist its closure, they had no traction from local residents, *associations* and other local organisations. As Sylvain states: 'This space was not well known… So, it was a space that was quite self-contained. It's maybe what I would regret about this experience, to not have opened it to the public, but then it was also a choice' (interview, June 2017). This is similar to Nicolas's opinion who notes that the space did not meet all of the public needs: 'It was a very exclusive network… and as such it did not necessarily meet all the public needs' (interview, October 2018). Additionally, I may

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[20] He is referring to the new theatre Théâtre 95, which was inaugurated in 2012. It is very visible from afar because it has the shape of a crown and its outside walls are gold coloured. This led to criticisms and mockery by some of the residents and cultural professionals.

note here that Przemysław commented about the Caserne, suggesting that the space was mostly White and exclusive. Although I am not able to verify this claim, this may point out to issues of White privilege that may have fostered an environment more favourable to over advantaged and White artists, while excluding artists from ethnic minorities and lower social classes. This links to more systemic issues of racism and discrimination, which were discussed in chapter 5, within the context of the negotiation of the French republican contract and models of citizenship.

Nevertheless, many musicians I met consider the Caserne to have been an exceptional space that filled a void at the time. Some of them consider it as a rare, subsidised space that managed to remain a haven for artistic creativity and freedom while it lasted. The characteristic of the space, an urban wasteland, allowed them to experience it as a space to be explored, played with and modified. Thus, the space may be considered as what Foucault refers as heterotopia as discussed above (1984). The Caserne may have been a sort of heterotopia because this space was still indirectly public and subsidized, yet it flexed to artists' practices and allowed a certain mingling that other planned spaces could not, because of their location within the public sphere that made them more public faced and generic, their newness that had to be preserved, and the rigidity of the way they were planned to cater for certain practices and to last throughout time. At the Caserne artists' creativity could run free. They did not have to worry about damaging the building as it was not used for any other purpose than the artistic residency and would most likely be demolished anyway.

When the Caserne ended, very much like the major festivals in Cergy-Pontoise (as discussed in chapter 5), it created a void for some musicians and residents. I asked the musicians who spent time at the *Caserne* whether they found similar spaces after its closure. Many mentioned a space they were not part of that was the artistic squat at the old slaughterhouse of Pontoise during the early 2010s. The squat was fully illegal as opposed to the subsidized artistic residency at the *Caserne*. At the slaughterhouse there were underground parties. Access to these parties were very exclusive and via invites only to a secret Facebook group. I had an informal conversation about the various existing urban wastelands of Cergy- Pontoise with Ludovic, a White male musician and employee of the *association* L'Atelier in his thirties. He feels that musicians of Cergy-Pontoise are missing out on many

existing available urban disused spaces of Cergy-Pontoise because artists do not necessarily feel legitimate to squat a space, or to stand up to politicians and local authorities. He also believes that when musicians actually do attempt to negotiate with local authorities to get or keep a space, they often fail, because musicians and local authorities use very different language and, as a result, there are communication problems between both parties. This bring to the foreground the present-day interactions between local music scenes and the local public support network and creative spaces of Cergy-Pontoise, as well as potential gaps between what the local authorities think the musicians do, want and need and what their actual needs and practices are. The next section discusses more recent individual experiences of music-making in Cergy-Pontoise since the mid 2000s.

6.2. 2000s - Present: A protective but limited musical 'cocoon'

Several of the musicians I interviewed in Cergy-Pontoise, native or not, referred to Cergy-Pontoise as a 'cocoon' or a 'home'. A cocoon can mean for some musicians a peaceful and safe space for experimenting. Some of the musicians that I met associate the idea of the cocoon with the level of support and mentoring they access from the local private, public and *associations* sectors in Cergy-Pontoise. Several of the musicians I interviewed benefit or benefitted from some form of local support from the local council of Cergy-Pontoise, or from local music *associations,* private venues and studios. A local Celtic folk/rock band, comprised of White female and male students from the *conservatoire* in their twenties, who met during their music studies, consider Cergy-Pontoise and its *conservatoire* as a cocoon and a big family that is well connected to the available local facilities and services. Lucie, one of the lead vocalists argues:

> Even just the *conservatoire* is like a cocoon, like we're really good there, everybody knows each other, we are really cocooned ... The *conservatoire* is in partnership with the *33 Tour* [student bar and music venue of the university of Cergy-Pontoise], the *Forum* in Vauréal and all the facilities and organisations of Cergy… It is lively everywhere in the Val d'Oise [*département*], but it is a thing that there is a concentration in Cergy-Pontoise, because evidently there are many *associations* and institutional structures... So, there is a network, it's a big family. (interview, June 2017)

These *associations* and institutional networks including the university and the *conservatoire*, that act together as a cocoon, also act as a sort of incubator of musical talent by allowing some of the musicians I met to successfully launch their creative initiatives. I met another folk-rock band comprised of White males in their forties who are also running their own music festival in Pontoise. When I asked them about funding and finances for their band and the festival, they told me that what helped them the most was their existing local social network. As Mathieu the drummer states:

> Frank [staff at the contemporary music *département* Val d'Oise] and all these people we met them before doing this scheme [a local programme that supports emerging musicians]. For me, what helped us the most was our network of contacts and knowledge more than the institutions and the cultural policies of Cergy-Pontoise. (Interview, June 2018).

Another successful initiative by local resident and musician Romain, a mixed-race male in his thirties, is the creation of one of the local popular musicians' hang-out spots of Cergy-Pontoise that is called The Spot, a small private bar and music venue, which opened in 2018, located in a small hidden industrial and commercial zone of Cergy-Pontoise. Located within 25 minutes walking distance from the Grand Centre district, The Spot is also close to the motorways and other primary roads coming into and out of the town, which also stand between Cergy and Pontoise. Very much like the Caserne, The Spot was mentioned multiple times by musicians and *associations'* members that I interviewed. I was told that it was a great space to witness local music life and to meet more local musicians. During my fieldwork, I spent quite a few evenings at The Spot. The first night I came Romain welcomed me with what I remember were the following words: 'Oh I didn't see you before, nice to see a new face'. I kept coming every week or so and noticed that it was the same people coming again and again to the small venue (mostly people I knew because I volunteered with them or interviewed them). Very often, while I was volunteering, people would suggest going to The Spot for a beer or two in the evenings to socialise. People at the venue were coming here to jam together at the end of the week, to have a drink and to socialise inside with board games or on the patio.

To access The Spot by public transport is not very easy, and it usually took me an hour to get there from my home (Courdimanche). The same trip would only take 20 minutes by car. Car-pooling is very common, and musicians and friends organise themselves to help each other get to the venue or

to get home at night, especially when the transport system in Cergy-Pontoise is non-existent or extremely limited past midnight. I was often carpooled by friends I made to go back home. This points out issues of access and transportation I discussed in chapters 3 and 5, and it confirms the ways that some of the local residents have been coping with them and helping each other, especially for people who do not drive or own a car. I met a White male in his early twenties who aspired to become a backline technician, roadie and assistant for rock bands, and who was already assisting one punk rock band of Cergy-Pontoise (even though he did not drive), who told me that since he does not drive, and as the transport system is not effective, he sometimes sleeps in some of the local venues after the shows when the staff allow him to do so.

Despite potential issues of access, all the nights I spent at The Spot were quite busy, especially on jam nights. I decided to interview Romain and to ask him about what he thinks are the reasons for The Spot's success despite being somewhat hidden in the middle of a suburban industrial and commercial zone. He states that his social network has played a major role with attracting his first clients:

> So, we were the first franchise from an existing bar in Rouen… The two business owners of the bar in Rouen are from Vauréal [sub-town of Cergy-Pontoise] and we have a lot of friends in common even though weirdly enough we never met!… I knew the dad of one of the owners a bit thanks to open mic nights I used to organise …. It helped me a lot at the beginning, because he helped me with his network; and I have my own network too… and then we also have some networks in common. These networks are made of musicians, relations, friends, family etc… (interview, October 2018).

I observed that most of the clients seem to know each other and the owner well. Many of the clients also engage actively rather than as passive consumers. Most clients give Romain a hand with closing time at night. Clients who sit outside stack the chairs and take tables, ash trays, empty glasses, trays and chairs back inside. This attitude is not necessarily a common one in other venues of Cergy-Pontoise, according to some of the musicians I met and as I noticed too. As Nicolas states: 'I know I am exaggerating here, but many people kind of go to the concerts like they go to work… They go, they consume, and then they leave. They do not participate' (interview October 2018).

The Spot has become so popular with musicians that it has its own vintage cars and rock festival once a year for a day and *associations* such as L'Atelier, the *association*, which I mentioned in chapter 5, and whose members are missing organising parties have started to co-organise their own parties at The Spot with Romain and some of the local DJs on a regular basis. The venue itself usually closes later than its official closing times, which is fine with the owner. However, the owner has to deal fairly often with outbreaks of anti-social behaviour. These behaviours include the damaging of the music instruments Romain makes available for the jam sessions, fights between customers, people refusing to leave the premises after closing time, and noise disturbances. Romain explained to me that at some point it turned so bad that he had to suspend the jam sessions for a few months to give himself a break, and make a point to customers that these type of behaviours are damaging to the space, the clients, himself, and the neighbours. I personally perceive Romain as very passionate about his business, and welcoming, but I also worry for him (a worry that was also expressed to me by other customers), as he also seems under a lot of stress and fatigue. This raises concerns with regards to the sustainability of the venue and highlights issues of live venues and bars usually having a short life span in Cergy-Pontoise, due to complaints from residents about noise disturbance (as discussed in chapter 5).

Despite issues of noise and anti-social behaviour, the conviviality that can be found at The Spot and other spaces in Cergy-Pontoise is one of the reasons that some of the non- native musicians of Cergy-Pontoise use to explain their choice for moving to the town (this is in addition to the fact that the town is close to Paris, and more affordable than the capital). The musicians that I met who moved to Cergy-Pontoise state to me that they prefer this suburb over others because of its atmosphere, to benefit from the local support for local music making and to benefit from its artistic vibrancy. Rosemarie, a White female rapper and singer-songwriter in her forties, explained to me that she found a cocoon for herself in Cergy-Pontoise. Originally from another suburb of Paris, she has been an active music professional since the 1990s, with a period of her career focused in Paris. She found her home in Cergy-Pontoise and feels that the town allows her to develop further her musical career while both

taking care of her children and working at an administrative job. She believes that the strong music-related networks present in Cergy-Pontoise help her thrive:

> The management of the network of music professionals of the previous place I was living in told me: 'if you have a foot in Cergy… go for it… There, they are extremely productive and efficient. So, I arrived, and I was like, hallucinating…. From the moment, I arrived in Cergy everything flourished, something tangible…. There is a dynamic… It's not sleeping like in some other towns and also there are risks that are taken [she refers to the council supporting *associations* and music initiatives] … there is an audience that comes [to the local music events]. I think it's really a philosophy that settled here. (interview, June 2017)

The network of popular music professionals of the *département* Val d'Oise was created in 1999 by a collective of music professionals and *associations* from the *département*. This network provides support to musicians and music professionals of the Val d'Oise. It is partly funded by Cergy-Pontoise and other towns of the Val d'Oise. Its office is located in Cergy-Pontoise. This makes Cergy-Pontoise the centre of local music resources for all musicians from the Val d'Oise *département*. An example of support from this network is its scheme to support emerging talents. This scheme consists of a one-year special support from the network to a few emerging musical talents who are carefully selected by a jury once a year. Selected musicians discuss their objective with the jury, and the support is matched with their needs and the network's available resources. Musicians on the scheme may get help with funding for album recordings, free singing lessons, artistic residency, and slots in venues around the Val d'Oise.

Some of the musicians I met have beneficiated from this kind of support or auditioned for one of the other local support schemes available (e.g. some of the public music studios of Cergy-Pontoise and local *associations* offer similar programmes). The opinions of musicians about the scheme by this particular network varied. I met bands who benefitted from the scheme but whose members have very divergent opinions about it. Some of the musicians I met consider the programme to be badly organised, and not flexible enough for bands whose members usually have different needs and varying schedules due to work and family commitments (e.g. the network offered to members of a band singing lesson at 2pm on week days even though most of the members work full-time office hours). However, some of the musicians consider the scheme to be for proactive musicians only, and that only

so much can be done with what they admit are the limited funds of the network. Similarly, a rock

band, which comprises of Arab, Black and White males in their early to mid-twenties who met in high

school, explained to me that they feel that, in general, the local available support for musicians in

Cergy-Pontoise remains limited to beginner groups and is not aimed at young professional musicians.

They told me that they benefitted from support from the local networks of Cergy- Pontoise but that,

ultimately, they decided to record their album elsewhere for this reason, even though it was not cost-

effective to do so. As Ali, the lead vocalist, explains:

> There was no one to meet our needs. We thought so but no… You cannot ask
> a council that relies on partnerships with volunteering structures to be… with
> complete professionalism at all levels. They are not the show business. They
> are associations, local authorities, etc… You can't ask your local council to
> make you become the next Metallica! But it depends on the genre. If you're a
> band of French chansons genre then you can get very far with Cergy-Pontoise
> because you can be sent to schools to facilitate music workshops to do social
> and cultural outreach work and so on. (interview, June 2017)

The part of the statement about the French chanson music genre highlights the persisting

segmentation of music genres and practices between various government departments and their

associated subsidies and policies. This might allow musicians from certain genres legitimised by the

government to 'get very far' (to use Ali's words) as professional musicians at the local level compared

to other musicians. Ali's band considers the local network of music support in Cergy-Pontoise

including the public facilities managed by the council of Cergy-Pontoise as not being professional

enough. This may point toward wider issues with regard to the public facilities and the planning of the

town, which were discussed in chapter 5. As discussed in that chapter, some of the music studios are

associated with noise disturbances and unsuitability, which make it difficult for the staff to run them

effectively. This is problematic, as the aim of these public studios is to be an asset for the local

residents. They are meant to be accessible, practical and useful tools to engage the local youth and

emergent music talents. As Ben and Jonathan, two White male public music studio managers in their

thirties, told me: 'The recordings do not belong to us… We truly are a public service… Our mission is

to work with local *associations*… We are here to do good for the town's culture and emerging artists'

(Interview, November 2018). Paul states to me that he understands his work in the public studio as very different from working for a private studio:

> There is a social role… There is 95% chance that at some point I will stop the recording because there are French grammatical and spelling mistakes that are too unbearable for my ears… I would be in a private studio… I wouldn't care… But here, there are little ones. If they have lyrics that says: 'I'll put a bullet through your head'. I just stop the whole thing. We are here to give structure and limits. (Interview, October 2018)

Although these public music facilities aim at reaching and supporting the local youth and emerging music artists, Ben and Jonathan identify that their current client base does not match the targeted audience as they are mainly amateur rock musicians in their late thirties, forties and fifties. They perceive that they need to put in more effort in order to attract and reach the youth:

> [We need] to let them [the youth] know that they can come and use the studio and not necessarily with the intent to record something. We need to do a bit of pedagogy. We need to attract them [young people], find a way. (Interview, October 2018)

Some of the musicians in their twenties and thirties that I met expressed to me some of the reasons why they do not use the public studios or, if they do use them, they discussed the challenges that they face while using them. Some of them explain that they do not like the constraining and unusual opening hours of the public music studios. They consider the working hours to be too short and too unconventional for a music studio. For example, some of the public music studios close early in the evening, as opposed to private music studios that usually close much later at night. Two Black and Arab male rappers in their twenties explain that it is also impossible for them to book a time slot at their local public music studio to rehearse and prepare prior to a performance because the rooms are usually always fully booked by people who book consistently and in advance for the whole week, leaving no spaces for ad- hoc and irregular bookings. As Nathan an Arab male indie rapper in his early twenties states: 'When we want to book a time slot to rehearse at the public music studio, it's already fully booked. Some people book the whole week in advance; even for us local musicians it's hard to establish ourselves. If you are a rapper and you need rehearsal time to prepare for a show…You're not going to rehearse in Cergy-Pontoise, as the music studios are fully booked' (Interview, June 2017).

Some of the musicians I met also think that these public music studios do not necessarily have the appropriate pieces of equipment or kind of space for them to find interest in using them. I am referring here to a discussion I had with Ludovic and Néo, two White male DJs in their thirties, that I met when I was volunteering with them at the *association* L'Atelier. They mentioned to me that, for them, the local public music studios are outdated and have none of the digital equipment needed for their practice. Néo states that, when he needs to record or rehearse a set in a music studio space, he makes the deliberate choice to travel all the way to Paris for a music studio that fits with his DJing practices. This specific problem relates to the obsolescence of the existing local facilities, their equipment and the difficulty for the council to address the ageing of the facilities. This will be discussed in greater length in chapter 7.

As such, some of the local musicians I interviewed do find themselves cooped up and stifled in the cocoon of Cergy-Pontoise when it does not meet their expectations (e.g. to find space and support to develop as professional musicians). Some of them consider going outside of the cocoon of Cergy-Pontoise to better develop their music. Many of the emerging musicians I met also consider Paris to be the logical next step to take for their career, but also state that they experience being othered by Parisians. Some of them state that going to Paris brings to the fore their status of *banlieusard* (suburbanite) as often times they are labelled as such by Parisians who tease them about it. Some of the musicians I met described Paris as a very aggressive place and the Parisians as condescending toward them. As Ali states:

> When people [Parisians] see our faces, they know we come from the suburbs. A Parisian band told us that. When you speak with Parisians, they realise that you come from the suburbs. Apparently, we speak slowly. Even the attitudes, phrases… There are habits that are unmistakable signs, the slowness, the phrases most of all. We are authentic people, we're not trying to look like the others, but it really shows. (interview, June 2017)

Ali's band indicates on their Facebook page that they are from Paris and on their Bandcamp page that there are from a suburb of Paris rather than stating the town of Cergy- Pontoise. The band justified their choice to me by explaining that it makes more sense for them to not add Cergy-Pontoise, as they think people would not be able to quickly locate them. On the contrary, Jérémie states on his

Facebook page that he is from Cergy-Pontoise. He also poses in front of landmarks of Cergy-Pontoise on his artist's profile picture on social media and chooses pictures of local landmarks to illustrate some of his tracks on Apple Music and SoundCloud. Nevertheless, he remembers that, before he became famous, he did experience the same problem as the young rock band. He recalls being often reduced to his condition of 'suburbanite', but that it motivated him to make the best music he can:

> I had this a lot, so that's why I gently assert the fact that I'm from the suburb of Cergy-Pontoise so that people from Paris change their mentality… Sometimes, I had resentment but let's say that I never expressed it in a violent way. It motivated me, gave me energy... If I'm asked [during interviews] where I come from, I won't say that I come from Paris but that I come from Cergy and that it's a town like this and like that… a little bit as a rebellious act with the status that I may have had in the past. (interview, June 2017)

This section discussed Cergy-Pontoise from the perspectives of some musicians who experience it as cocoon. In this cocoon, musicians are able to be part of local music networks, and to access support to develop as musicians. However, some of them perceive this cocoon as limited to amateur music making, or as maladapted. This results in some musicians making the decision to move away from the town in order to professionalize themselves, or to be able to access what they deem appropriate in terms of music facilities and equipment. In that context, Paris seems to represent the land of the possible, a place of unlimited resources and also a rite of passage from amateur music making to professional music making for some of the musicians that I met. The capital is also ruthless for some musicians who feel othered by some Parisian musicians who focus on their differences rather than their music. While this section focussed mostly on younger generation of musicians of Cergy-Pontoise and how they engage and perceive the local support network of the town and the town itself, the next section turns to musicians of all ages who do not perceive themselves as fitting in with local musician networks or as engaging in a visible way with the town. Some of these musicians perceive that they are excluded at times because of their music genres, social class, ethnicity or for other reasons, or are just disinterested altogether by the town as a unit and live their musical life outside of it. Some of them may be better engaged online and with other parts of France than with the town. This points towards the Digital Age, and how it has contributed to changes in the way local musicians experience their town and network with other local and non-local musicians.

6.3 Beyond the borders of Cergy-Pontoise: musicians of the outside and the Digital Age

Some of the musicians I met in Cergy-Pontoise state to me that they are not part of the town's local residents or musicians' networks, and that they do not want to engage with the available public support aimed at them; or, they perceive this support as not applicable to them. Przemysław detailed to me how he got into rap and hip-hop at the age of 16 in the 1990s in Cergy-Pontoise, and how he then fled from Cergy-Pontoise because it was too top-down for him in terms of cultural life (he does have links with the *association* L'Atelier as some of his friends are part of this *association*). Przemysław identifies himself as a White working-class son of Polish migrants and believes that because he is a son of migrants, when he was a child he quickly connected and made friends with children of North African migrants who lived in his home district (Axe Majeur and Horloge districts). He explains that, as a teenager, he and his friends perceived the initiatives by the council and the local *associations* organised for the youth and the local residents as not meant for them. Thus, they never engaged with the public sphere of the town in general because they felt they did not belong to it. He remembers that they felt there was nothing to do in the town and recalls being constantly pestered by the local police although their only crime was to hang out in the street all day long doing nothing. As he states:

> Me, I was a guy of the 'outside'. For me, Cergy that was the anaesthesia of my motivation… There was nothing to do… When there were [public] events like that... We didn't feel comfortable… if you do free concerts… we saw that, there were shootings [referring to riots happening at free music events]… Cergy, it's not just opening and culture… During these times the town does not exist… It was not a reality that concerned us. We were complaining that nothing was happening, but we didn't look for anything as well… There is a part [of the population] that is doomed… You can put all the programmes that you want, it will not change his [a child's] reality because when he comes home in the evening, he is living hell and he doesn't even know it so he adapts and he becomes… uninterested of everything. (Interview, November 2018)

For residents to identify or to not identify - as in the quote above - with the town and its local community, may relate to wider systemic social issues, phenomena of anomie and issues of model of citizenship, which were discussed in chapter 5. Other musicians, who may or may not have experienced the same difficulties that Przesmysław details, assert that they consciously do not want to be associated with the town's support networks. Some of them argue that music should be separate from the public sphere (e.g. no public support for music) and use British indie music scenes and DIY

punk culture as examples of their ideal. Others do not want to be associated with the town because they consider that it would be detrimental to their reputation. As Marc, a Black male DJ in his late thirties who grew up as a child in Cergy-Pontoise and is part of the local hip-hop scene of Cergy-Pontoise, puts it: 'There is a hip hop spirit that is very tough in relation to that during a certain era [1990s-2000s]. Not now. But there was that thing that "Ah you are helped by the council? You're a council rapper then!" [meaning you work for the council]. There is a lot of this. You need to be a self-made man' (Interview, November 2018). Nevertheless, not all rappers agree. Sam, a Black male hardcore rapper in his early twenties, would like to access some of the support and network of Cergy-Pontoise, but finds it difficult due to his music genre:

> For us artists it is difficult, because of our style of rap that is hardcore… so it closes some doors for us… I need more opportunities to perform and I need more access to music facilities for my style of rap. There isn't enough space for us. When people are organising open mic nights, let's be honest it is more for singers with guitars, French pop. When they get people like us it is more difficult, but it can work. You can go do an open-mic night with L'Atelier and it works. (Interview, October 2018)

This artist refers to L'Atelier, the *association* I mentioned in chapter 5, that organises some of their events in a way that allows participants to express themselves more freely than in other such events or in events organised by other *associations*, or the town, that are geared toward the residents of Cergy-Pontoise as a whole. For this type of more generic event, certain forms of rap that are not hardcore seem to be better accepted by the council. I interviewed Thomas and Maxime, a duo of White male rappers in their early twenties that I saw perform at several of these local events organised by the council and local *associations.* The content of their texts did not contain insults or violence. Parents with their children were attending these performances. It seems that the duo fitted the council's acceptable form of rap. The duo stated to me that they initially experienced a bit of resistance from the council when the staff did not know them at first. According to them, the council was a bit anxious about booking them for local events. After their first performance at a local small village fest, the council felt more at ease with them as they realised that their rap is not hardcore at all (Interview, October 2018). As Maxime states: 'At the festival the lady who was organising it, she was not really up

for a rap artist at the event… In the end, she was happy with our performance. It is because our rap is a bit soft, so it went ok' (ibid.).

Some of the public music studios and venues may also be more reticent about hosting hip hop artists. Jean, a White male manager of a public studio in his fifties and venue of Cergy- Pontoise, details his perceptions of hip-hop artists, and gives examples of his own past experience organising shows with them at a venue he used to manage. He states that he finds it difficult to work with them and believes that 'real' hip hop artists do not need stages nor studios; Jean thinks that staged performance and music studios are not part of the 'authentic' hip-hop culture:

> We do not programme hip-hop much because its practices are not adapted. When you organise a hip-hop event, you need to triple security staff. The artists themselves are sometimes a bit dodgy. From my own experience, an example I can give you, is that I had five rap artists for an event and in the end, there were twenty-five people in the dressing room, and I did not know how they entered and where they came from. So, it's a management and attitude problem. Hip- hop you see performed in the [local] venues, is not the one that comes from the suburbs or gangsta rap. (Interview, November 2018).

I may note here that this music professional was not from the rap or hip-hop scene. His statement seems to reflect his own biases. His understanding of rap and hip hop seems to be limited to a few subgenres that he defines and associates with personal perceptions and biases. He creates a binary between what he refers to as gangsta rap that he associates with problematic behaviours versus what he considers venue-friendly rap without defining what type of rap is venue-friendly. His statement also conflates the suburbs with gangsta rap and conflates the incident that happened at his venue with hip hop rather than judging the incident on the basis of evidence, which in this case showed that a group of people behaved inappropriately at the event. His statement stereotypes hip hop culture and reifies musicians' identities in a way that is discriminatory and racist. Some of the rappers I met would like to access local music studios and venues, and they struggle to get access to some of them. Nevertheless, they consider that using the Internet is a good work-around to find appropriate studios and venues. Additionally, they consider that the Digital Age also means that they rely less on local performing and canvassing to establish themselves and get better known than their older peers. Nathan

explains that the Internet offers a new foundation on which to build status within the hip-hop scene. As he states:

> It's easier than before now to get into music. In the past…you needed to film in every single district and street to do your promotion. Nowadays, you only need to do one video clip that is passed around on a social media platform that is well-known… There is much more competition today…You release your music on YouTube and then it's the music that speaks for itself. That means that a guy in Hong Kong may be listening to you. Some people contacted us on Facebook and were like: 'Hey do you want to do a gig in Montpellier?' So, we are very lucky at the moment. (Interview, June 2017).

The Digital Age changed deeply local music scenes according to Marc. He considers that the concept of underground music scenes does not exist anymore because of the Internet:

> You need to do underground, but there is no more underground. Everybody is on the Internet now… Everyone has their own audience. It is not like before where there was a community of artists who was a community much more discrete. Now, the artist releases something. He will not be underground because he will have his audience and now everybody is mainstream... Everyone is more or less exposed. (Interview, November 2018)

Some scholars who research underground music scenes claim that these scenes are not dead and, rather, that they are thriving, as they always strive in the margins of capitalism irrespective of technological advances (Graham 2016; Tofalvy and Barna 2020). Instead, what has changed is the ways by which musicians interact with each other and the world (ibid.). The Internet did not kill the underground, but it reconfigured the ways people experience space, time, social relationships and how they engage with music. People may relate to and experience differently their town and its local music scenes. For example, I discussed above DJs, now in their late thirties and forties, who describe the importance of their trips to Paris record stores to bring back new sounds to the town as a way to network, be respected and appreciated within the local community of musicians and DJs; the Digital Age has changed this ritual. New generations of DJs of Cergy-Pontoise do not need to go all the way to Paris to find records, as all kinds of sounds and records are one click away on the Internet. Jules confides that he does not like the way some DJs call themselves 'DJ 2.0', but he attributes his distaste to his own ageing, and to his nostalgia for the pre-Digital Age era. I did not have the opportunity to meet with younger DJs during my fieldwork, but it would have been interesting to gain an insight in

the way they practise DJing and local networking with other musicians compared with their older peers, to get insight about how they are experiencing the local urban space of Cergy- Pontoise, how they relate to the town and to other musicians.

Although the Digital Age expanded opportunities for some musicians, some of the musicians and music professionals I met regret some of its impact on the local musical life of Cergy-Pontoise. They perceive that fewer people go nowadays to the concerts or mingle at their local music studios and venues. Przemysław explains to me that he likes and uses the Internet extensively (he is quite active on Instagram), and collaborates with younger generations of rappers in their early twenties who use the Internet too. At the time of our Interview he had just released on YouTube a mini-series he created, which features him as the hero of his self-exploratory and discovery journey, mixing up music, humour, philosophy, symbolism and the oneiric world. Nevertheless, he describes the Digital Age society in a way that I perceive as rather dark and dystopian. We were talking about an event of a hip-hop festival we both attended that is organised every year by L'Atelier. We both were disappointed by the fact that a smaller audience than expected attended the event despite famous rap front-liners. As he states:

> You get to think wow I only see people I know at the event, but then you know we are in 2018, and people…. do Instagram stories; they don't go out you see. They have PlayStation 4... They have Tinder... You see they don't need to go out anymore. It's almost, like the gaze of the other scares, you… Individualism, comfort, you don't go out if you don't have a good reason to do so. (Interview, November 2018).

Staff from public music studios and other local social and cultural professionals also notice the impact of the Digital Age. Paul observes that prior to the 2010s he had many more high school students who used to come to his studios than now. He perceives that the Digital Age democratised computer music and bedroom producers and, as such, rendered music studios obsolete for the amateur and emerging musicians. As he states:

> Most of the time when I asked the people who came to talk to me [during a local music network event] about the reasons why they are not looking for a studio to record, they told me that they already have their own spaces to rehearse and record. So, we're thinking that everything is extremely

democratised now and that today there are less people who need a studio. (Interview, October 2018)

Most of the people working in public music studios that I met mentioned to me their difficulties for them to remain attractive during the Digital Age to local residents. As public facilities they also find it difficult to keep up with evolving technologies, as they are part of a much bigger machinery that is the council and the local authorities of the area, which manage not just public music studios but other public infrastructure, both of which are often prioritized over them, according to some of their staff. This issue of studios' obsolescence will be discussed in Chapter 7. As such, the individual music experiences of musicians that do not relate to the town, or are evolving partly or fully outside the town, shine a light about potential wider social issues (discrimination, racism). Going away from the town, for some of these musicians, allows them to access broader horizons, opportunities and find spaces where the focus is on their music, rather than the way people may fit them into reifying categories such as: 'harder to reach youth', 'suburbanites', 'dodgy rappers', 'Black', 'working-class' and so on.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter discussed individual experiences of musicians that give insight about how musicians from various backgrounds, music genres, and generations experience the town, its planned facilities and other urban spaces. All of these musicians have distinct perceptions and experiences of the town. Some of them perceive the town as too top-down and planned, while others experience it as an inspiring space or safe space in which to live and thrive as a musician. Depending on musicians' expectations of the town and their own needs and wants, they may perceive the town as over-planned at times and at other times inspiring and intriguing. Some of the musicians are also very aware of the boundaries within Cergy-Pontoise itself, and of the boundaries between Cergy-Pontoise and Paris. These perceptions reflect the changing state of the town in terms of its opportunities and challenges, and reflect musicians' inner internalized boundaries of how they perceive themselves and others. The boundaries of the town may embody the limen between what some of them perceive as amateur music-making (Cergy-Pontoise) versus professional music-making (Paris); between being authentic

(not engaging with local public support for musicians) or not being authentic (being a 'council rapper'), between being included (Internet platforms) or excluded (not being able to access facilities).

These insights reveal how wider systemic issues discussed in chapter 5 are experienced on the ground, and from the perspective of a variety of individuals, rather than groups of residents and musicians. This highlights the social fragmentation within the town that is representative of the wider crises of the French republican contract and of models of citizenship, the difficulties in creating new urban environments that are lively, inclusive and sustainable, and the transformation of time and space associated with liquid modernity and the Digital Age. Beyond having effects on individual musical lives, these wider issues also impact the urban development of the town. The town is in a constant state of flux while simultaneously experiencing its own ageing. rapid obsolescence and regeneration. The regeneration of the town means the closure of, or disruptions to, music spaces and networks for local musicians, because parts of the town are being demolished or reorganised. The next chapter tackles the ageing and obsolescence of the town, and its cultural regeneration. It focusses on its impact on the local music *associations*, musicians and others, and will explore how the future of the town is apprehended and imagined.

Chapter Seven: Local Music Scenes Navigating the Obsolescence, Ageing and Regeneration of the New Town

7.0. Introduction

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 I have discussed Cergy-Pontoise from top-down perspectives to microlevels. I first discussed in chapter 4 the initial planning process, ideological perspectives that shaped these plans, and the place of music within these developments. I then turned to the town's urban life at the scale of the residents as a group and groups of residents who are engaged with the local music scenes in chapter 5. Finally, in chapter 6, I discussed individual experiences of some local musicians and how they navigate and practice the new town. Nevertheless, this thesis so far has been a snapshot of present-day Cergy-Pontoise and its music scenes within the context of its initial planning. I have not yet discussed the on-going regeneration of the town and its impact on the local music scenes. As briefly discussed in chapter 4 and 5, the town's urban developments never stopped.

The regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise seems to be inevitable: as the town is ageing, some facilities are not accessible or safe, and the population of the town itself is increasing. The creation of the Grand Paris Metropolis (equivalent of The Greater London Authority) adds further pressures for the town to still exist as a hub of the *département* Val d'Oise and the *région* Île-de-France. In the local press and media, members of the council of Cergy-Pontoise present the regeneration as an operation to render the town more attractive as a regional hub; a way to deal with the lack of centre; and an opportunity to tackle the town's fragmentation by better uniting its 13 sub-towns and their residents (Allezy 2018; Mikaël 2020). Some of the operations of this regeneration include the demolitions of existing ageing cultural facilities and constructions of new and more spacious ones. According to the local news, as well as discussions I had with music professionals, and my experience as an attendee to some of these new venues, it seems that there is a time lag between the size of these new venues, which are being constructed or already operating, and the reality of the size of their present-day audience, which is still not large enough to fill their capacity (Cavaretta 2020). Additionally, some of the other problems associated with the existing music facilities that require attention, such as the burden of bureaucracy and the rapid obsolescence of equipment that I touched on in chapter 5 and 6, seem to not

be addressed as part of the regeneration plans with some of these challenges also arising in some of the new facilities.

This highlights the challenges around lags already part of the initial town planning that persist during the regeneration process. The different elements that are part of the regeneration, or the elements that regeneration has to work with or around work at various paces. For example, the evolution of technologies and the Digital Age are fast paced whilst the local government bureaucracy is slow paced and the events that are part of the ebb and flow of a town's life have impacts on the pace of planning (e.g. elections). Additionally, and similarly to the initial planning of the town, regeneration is also planning for what is not present yet (e.g. planning facilities for a growing population, or demolishing an ageing facility to build a larger one next to a road that does not exist yet). In practice these lags create spaces that may not be appropriate for present and future use of these planned spaces, which may become rapidly obsolete as discussed in chapters 5 and 6. These lags and the disparity between space and time may also be intensified by the compression of time and space due to globalisation and technological advances (Harvey 1989). This compression of time means that there is less and less time for individuals to understand, analyse and make decisions during arising events and situations: we react instantly and not always with the most appropriate response (ibid., 306). Within the context of the regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise this brings to the fore the lack of time and space to better address challenges associated with the regeneration of the town (e.g. lack of appropriate length of time to engage meaningfully during participatory consultations with residents). Within this context, one may speculate that the regeneration may yield similar problems to the ones the initial planning created.

Some residents I interviewed and some of the residents that participated in the town's consultation about the regeneration have already expressed negative feedback about the on-going regeneration of the town. Some perceive the latest urban developments of Cergy- Pontoise as an overurbanisation that infringes upon green spaces and spaces of pleasant urban living (Council of Cergy-Pontoise 2013). Others consider that the latest urban developments are breaking with the original ideal of the new towns. As spaces become more concentrated, venues more spacious and more guarded by additional security guards, it becomes more difficult for local residents and musicians to

find smaller and cosier spaces to experience the town as a 'cocoon' as discussed in chapter 6. This urbanisation process may never stop, as everything is in a constant state of flux, when other parts of the town will be deemed old and unsuitable, the process of regeneration may also start tackling them. Scholars from various disciplines have widely engaged with issues of regeneration focusing on various themes such as sustainable and innovative regeneration and themes around gentrification and capitalism (Raco 2003; Alpopi and Manole 2013; Thompson 2016). Ethnomusicologists particularly have engaged with issues of regeneration and how urban planners and policymakers utilise local music as branding, how this impacts the livelihood of musicians and how musicians themselves navigate their changing town (Sara Cohen 2005; Keeffe 2009; Harrison 2020; Vavva 2020). This brings the question of who can negotiate the right to the city, including a right for people to reclaim the co-creation of the urban space and the right to a self-determined urban life, as was discussed in chapter 2, 5 and 6 (H. Lefebvre 1996; 2003). This also brings the question of whether regeneration planning allows spaces for smaller scale grassroots cafés and other cosier spaces. If it does not leave spaces for these smaller and not necessarily profitable spaces, where will the local music scenes meet and socialise, aside from their homes and the underground spheres?

This chapter examines these questions through the frame of cultural regeneration within the specific context of a new town that is still in construction. I do so by focussing particularly on the music facilities that have become obsolete, the newer ones that are appearing and how local music scenes are experiencing them. As part of this chapter, I highlight the disparity between the planning of the cultural regeneration of the town and its issues of obsolescence with existing older venues that spread to the newer venues without being addressed as part of the regeneration. To tackle regeneration and the challenges that it does not fix, I will first turn to the existing literature on regeneration and music. Subsequently, I will examine the cultural regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise and finally, I will discuss present experiences of the regeneration on the ground by local musicians and residents.

7.1. Regeneration, gentrification and music

Regeneration is usually defined as a set of principles and actions aimed at fixing urban problems in a sustainable manner (Roberts and Sykes 2000; Alpopi and Manole 2013). Nevertheless, similar to the vagueness of the terms 'new town', the term regeneration is something of a free-floating signifier used by urban planners, promoters and governments to make claims and promises that are not evidence-based and that lack clearly defined outcomes (Lovering 2007). Regeneration may be repeating the utopian moment that is associated with the new town movement because it is a moment that is again a potentiality that neither sits in past, present nor future. Nevertheless, regeneration is unavoidable as urban areas get old and unsafe. Regeneration is also inevitable as a part of capitalism: the construction, expansion, and regeneration of urban spaces keep capital flowing, reproducing and they absorb surpluses of capital by generating profitable outlets to do so (Harvey 2014; Reuten 2019). Additionally, some scholars assimilate regeneration with gentrification because regeneration is an urban development practice that is designed in a way that maintains the social order that capitalism needs to maintain to be able to sustain itself (Lovering 2007; Harvey 2008; 2014; Reuten 2019). Urban sociologist Ruth Glass who coined the term gentrification explains that it is a process whereby areas of urban disrepair are destroyed and reconstructed in a way that displaces the lower social classes who cannot afford their area anymore as the value of the area increases and so do the rents, while the middle and upper social classes move into these areas as they are pushed away from city centres that they cannot afford anymore (2010).

To increase the value of a given area and attract the middle and upper social classes, urban planners, promoters and policymakers who are in charge of regenerating an area create new signs that foster a new narrative of the town that aligns with these classes' values. The movement of the middle and upper social classes to these areas allow them to regain and reinforce their social class as they become *de facto* part of the higher social classes of these deprived areas where they can reproduce their social and cultural capitals, which constitute in themselves a new mean of capital production (e.g. via the commodification of their lifestyles) (Zukin 1995; Florida 2002; Brown-Saracino 2010; Wittersheim 2016). In the 21st century, David Yencken and Richard Florida contributed to the co-creation of these new narratives that planners, promoters and decision-makers use to reframe a deprived area by

popularising the concept of the creative class and the creative city (Yencken 1988; Florida 2014). Florida frames this social economic class as knowledge-based workers and people who occupy innovative or creative jobs and encourages planners and decision-makers to focus on delivering cities that cater to the needs of this class, which values consuming and participating in street level culture (e.g. trendy cafés, antique shops, small galleries, street musicians) (2002). Culture (including music) is at the heart of these new imaginaries and rebranding strategies (Harrison 2020; Lamontagne 2020). These narratives, which rebrand towns, maintain the existing social order and carve new spaces of accumulation of capital that are necessary for the continuation of capitalism. In doing so, they dispossess the working class from their 'right to the city' (that is according to Lefebvre, their right to an urban life that is free of the effects of capitalism) (Lefebvre 1996, 2003; Harvey 2008).

Some scholars argue that the working class is also discouraged from protesting and reclaiming their 'right to the city' as gentrification also shapes and to use Foucault's words - 'disciplines' - the town and its residents by default and by design as part of the urban planning of towns and their regeneration (Foucault 1975; Cahill 2006; Lees, Shin, and Lopez-Morales 2015; Hickman et al. 2021). Foucault considers that power pervades our society and that mechanisms of its disciplinary form distribute, order, monitor and control bodies, time and space in such a way that people automatically self-regulate their behaviour in accordance with the disciplinary regime (1975; 1985). These disciplinary forms of power include the control of the public space via urbanisation, institutionalisation and privatisation. They lead to the reduction of spontaneous space and increase social cleansing and urban sanitization of the area where it happens (ibid.).

Ethnomusicologists have been researching gentrification and its associated issues such as the surveillance and control of the urban space and their impact on local music scenes and local musicians in the context of older towns (Sara Cohen 2005; Keeffe 2009; Green 2016; Harrison 2020; Vavva 2020). Cohen examines urban cultural regeneration in Liverpool via the development of cultural quarters around the landmarks associated with the Beatles: The Cavern Club and the RopeWalks (2007). She observes the negative impacts on the local music scenes, such as the closing of music venues and record shops due to rent increases and commercial developments. She also quotes

musicians criticising the regeneration and calling it a sort of touristic Disneyland for fans of the Beatles. Although the council promotes the regeneration as socially inclusive, she considers that it polarizes urban inequalities as well as reinforces regulation and control of the urban space in Liverpool. Krims emphasises that one shall be aware of cognitive distortions and binary thinking (2007). He considers that both foster dichotomous views of music (e.g. music as a tool for dominance versus music as a resistant act) and the romanticising of place and place-making (ibid.). He argues that instead music, capitalism, space and place should be analysed dialectically (ibid.). Dialectics help minimize cognitive biases, contribute to a better mapping of capitalism and of the different relationships at play between different entities observed at the micro, local and global level. Krims illustrates his point with the case of local music scenes stating that they can be analysed both as compliance and resistance. He gives the example of the top-down relationships between corporations and places, which are both embraced by capitalism (2007, 57). As he states:

> Nor would one strengthen such a position by drawing a distinction between corporate players and genuinely popular cathexis of place; such an intellectually fragile distinction elides the systematic force that embraces all players, large and small, in the same economy of place. (ibid., 59)

Ethnomusicologist Klisala Harrison, who researches the cultural gentrification of Vancouver's downtown east-side in Canada notes that participatory and presentational music is simultaneously a form of place-marketing (from the perspective of officials and private sectors turning to culture to make a location attractive) and a form of place-keeping and place guarding (from the perspectives of musicians who feel that they are resisting gentrification by musicking in a way that for them respect their location's history and integrity) (2020). Ethnomusicologist Samuel Lamontagne researches the way electronic music is used as a tool for the gentrification of the Parisian suburbs (2020). He analyses how the institutionalisation and expansion of the Parisian electronic music scenes into the suburbs both gentrify the scene and the suburbs and also offers more space and financial stability for some music professionals. This is because this expansion releases musicians from the pressure that they experience in Paris with the overconcentration of the electronic scenes in it and the lack of space for events.

Nevertheless, he also argues that this process of the gentrification of the suburbs and institutionalisation of the electronic scenes produces an aesthetic of the suburbs that reinforces its othering:

> Contrasting with the poor and unsafe spaces associated with the suburbs, the development of festive spaces in the suburbs goes hand in hand with its discursive reinvention. For a great number of Parisians, the suburbs start to represent a free zone, a playground full of quirky spaces to explore or party in new ways. (ibid., n.p.)

As discussed in chapter 4 and 5, Cergy-Pontoise is a new town, it is not urban, neither suburban, nor rural (Fée, Colenutt, and Schäbitz 2020). The strategies and branding of the regeneration and its cultural regeneration and potential gentrification may be different from phenomena happening in well-established and older suburbs or towns as I have discussed above. This next section identifies and examines the various stakeholders and narratives at play within the cultural regeneration of the new town and how they change the local landscape that the music scenes of Cergy-Pontoise have to adapt to.

7.2. The cultural regeneration: restructuring and revamping the town as a key cultural hub in the Grand Paris Metropolis

As briefly discussed in chapter 4 and 5, the urban planning and development of Cergy-Pontoise never really stopped. Urban development and regeneration are happening simultaneously. On 29 March 2011, the urban planning supplier of Cergy-Pontoise, Cergy- Pontoise Aménagement, published a document called the *Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale* (*SCoT*), which is plan of territorial coherence for the town. This document both establishes a diagnostic of the current state of urbanisation of Cergy-Pontoise and sets out the objectives for its urban planning for the next 15 to 20 years (local authorities and their suppliers review the document every ten years). The focus seems to be on simultaneously managing the continuations of the urban development of the town and its regeneration *(Cergy-Pontoise Aménagement* 2011). As the document states:

> Cergy-Pontoise was developed via the new town project initiated by the state in the 1960s. Today its housing, its university and campus, and its economic facilities, which are managed mostly by the council of Cergy-Pontoise or councils of its towns, are now faced with problems of urban renewal for

several of its districts. We are experiencing a rebalancing act between urban growth and the renewal of the town on the town. (ibid., 13)

As part of the rebalancing act between urban growth and the renewal of the town, the document establishes diagnosis and recommendations for various sectors (e.g. sports, nature, etc.). As part of this, the *SCoT* document lists some of the existing problems regarding the existing town's provision of cultural and musical facilities. The document establishes that the main problems with the existing provision is that although the town in comparison to other similar towns has more small-scale venues (up to 300 seats) per resident, Cergy-Pontoise has fewer large-scale venues (600-2,000 seats) per resident than similar towns elsewhere (ibid., 53). The biggest venue in Cergy-Pontoise can host 600 people. In comparison, the towns Ermont, Créteil or Epinay, which are similar to Cergy-Pontoise, have at least one venue that can host 1,200 people. The *SCoT* also notes that compared to other towns Cergy-Pontoise is above the average in terms of access to music education with 7 residents per 1,000 residents having access to music education in music schools. However, Cergy-Pontoise has fewer state music schools than the average town apart from the *Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional* (*CRR*), which has a regional, national and international outreach as discussed in chapter 5. Although the *CRR* counts 2,260 students according to its website as of April 2021, Cergy-Pontoise has fewer local residents enrolled in a state music school compared to the national average. The two charts below show how Cergy-Pontoise compares with similar towns with regards to access to musical education and state musical education. The first chart shows that Cergy-Pontoise is above the average in comparison to other towns in terms of numbers of music schools. The second chart shows that Cergy-Pontoise is below the average in comparison to similar towns for the number of state music schools and the proportion of music students enrolled in them.
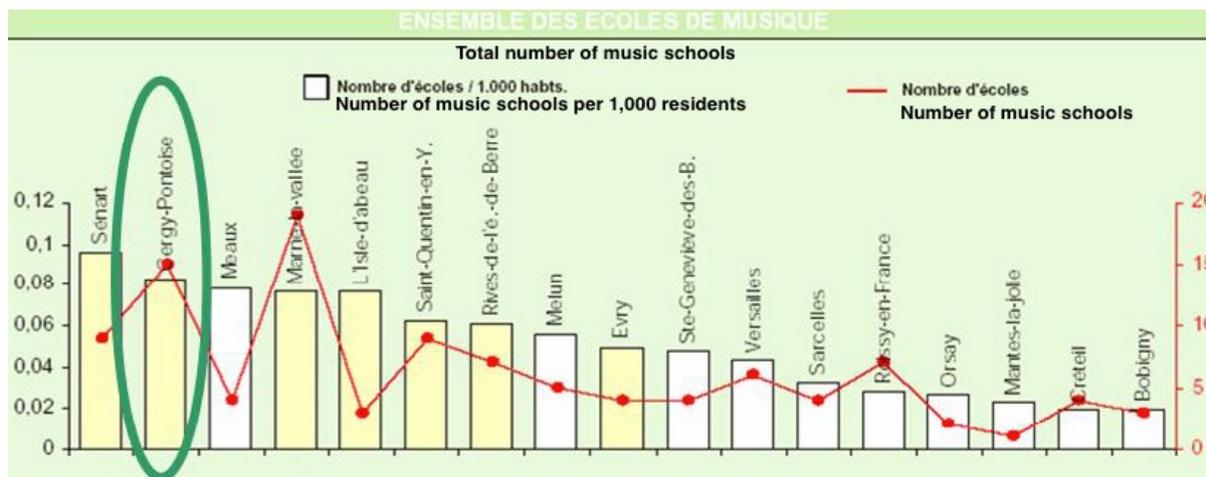
Figure 19 Chart representing the total number of music schools (state and non-state music schools) and the number for music schools per 1,000 residents. (Cergy-Pontoise Aménagement 2011, 60)
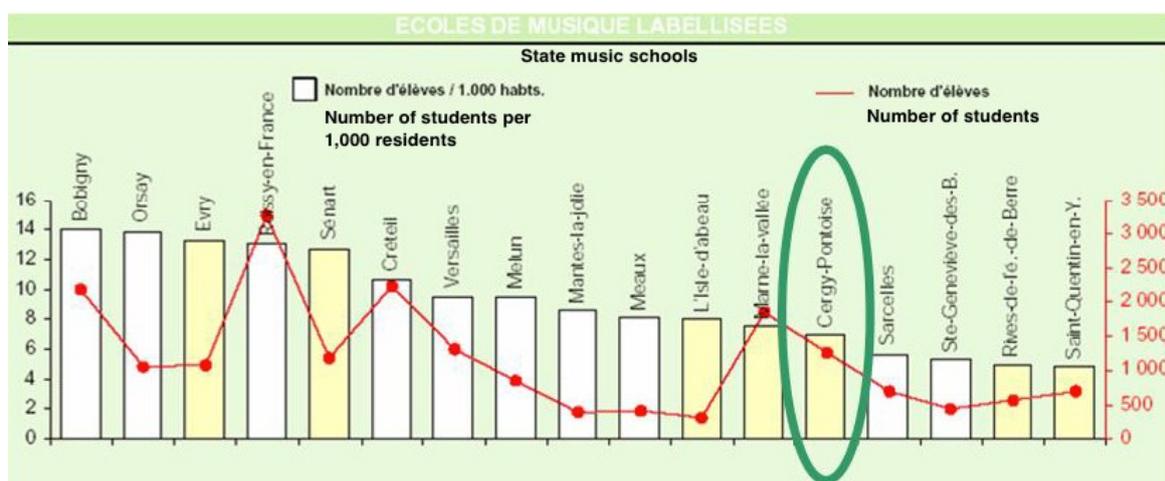

Figure 20 Chart representing the number of students enrolled in state music schools per 1,000 residents and the total number of students enrolled in state music schools (ibid.).

The cultural regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise seems to address the gaps highlighted by the *SCoT* as part of its planning. At the time of my fieldwork, the director of the arts and culture of Cergy was in the process of developing a network with all the music schools of Cergy-Pontoise. The aim was to set all the local schools at the same level of educational standards and to pool all of their resources together (e.g. sharing music instruments and facilities). The hope was to get them approved and labelled by the state as state music schools. This seems to address the lack of state music school and the lack of residents enrolling in them and at the *CRR* as highlighted by the *SCoT*. Nevertheless, the director expressed to me some of the difficulties that he was experiencing with the creation of the network: one of the local music schools refused to be part of the network and some of the teachers refused to complete further training to align their qualifications to the standard state musical education certifications.

The regeneration plans also include increasing the capacity of the town's venues to tackle the lack of large-scale venues as highlighted by the *SCoT*. This seems to have been fixed with the construction of an Olympic ice rink, which can be reconfigured to host shows with a capacity of up to 4,500 people and the development of five other venues with a capacity of 300 or more. Several of the existing venues have also been extended to increase their capacity. As part of the refurbishment of existing facilities and the creation of new ones, urban planners and decision-makers of Cergy-Pontoise have also decided to restructure, cluster and segment arts and cultural facilities of the town into three hubs (dance, music and theatre) with three new mixed-uses facilities. Mixed-use means that there are different types of activities happening in the facility. One may access local administrative services and take piano lessons in the same building for example. These three hubs will be located in the three main transport hubs of Cergy-Pontoise that are its train stations: Cergy-Le-Haut station (Hauts de Cergy district), which is focussed on dance, Cergy-Préfecture station (Grand Centre district), which is focussed on theatre and Cergy-Saint-Christophe station (Horloge district), which is focused on music.

A local senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy hopes that the segmentation of the three disciplines between the three hubs will encourage residents to engage with different parts of the town and not just the district where their home is (interview, November 2018). He imagines that these hubs and associated facilities will become third and holistic spaces where different people (social workers, *associations*, residents, artists) and public services and policies (e.g. social policies, cultural policies, education policies, social services) meet and learn to co-exist and live together better. He explained to me that he envisages that a resident may enjoy a dance show in the new facility *Visages du Monde* in the Hauts de Cergy district (dance hub) after attending his piano lesson at the planned new facility the *Douze* in the Horloge district (music hub) (ibid.). Additionally, these hubs are also planned as potential centres of excellence to strengthen the town's position as a key cultural hub of the *région*. For example, the senior civil servant mentioned above believes that the dance school part of the dance hub in Hauts-de-Cergy district will become a lead innovator in the sector for France. As he states: 'We're setting up a hip-hop dance teacher diploma that tomorrow will become a precursor I think… for the establishment at the Ministry of Culture of a 4th

discipline for dance that will be hip hop… I think that Cergy will be a model in terms of feasibility.' (ibid.).

An example of this type of regeneration in the town is the demolition of an existing community centre, which was located both in Axe Majeur and Horloge districts (districts are small) to replace it with a new music hub called the Douze, which is supposed to be completed by February 2022 according to the website of the council of Cergy as of April 2021. The community centre was not initially orientated toward music at its beginnings in the 1980s. It was a community centre with the offices of some of the local public social and administrative services and multi- function rooms for residents and *associations* to use. Throughout the years, local residents and *associations* have held contemporary music events and activities in the facility. So much, that the large multi-function room was refurbished into a music venue called the Observatoire in 1998. Following this refurbishment, the council invited the contemporary music *associations* of Cergy and the network of music professionals for the *département* Val d'Oise to gather in the offices of the facility to work in better synergy with one another, and with the new venue. Nevertheless, the centre was too small, not accessible, not sound proofed and contained asbestos. The new facility, the Douze*,* will be fully accessible and more spacious.

The demolition of the centre and the construction of the Douze is an opportunity for Cergy-Pontoise to fix existing problems associated with the current layout of the town's music facilities. The public music studios of Cergy that cause noise disturbances because they are located in a refurbished recycling room of a housing building will be moved to this new facility. A local small music school located too close to the *CRR* will also be moved inside it. The facility itself will be soundproofed, fully accessible and will have a performance space with a larger capacity than the previous facility. The local senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy is very satisfied with this clustering of existing services that will solve some of the problems he had to juggle with as part of his work. As he states:

> The music studios will finally find their fulfilment, not in this stuffy thingy [recycling room] that we know… the local music school will blossom, influence, exist again. It will have dealt with its problem that was: "I live in

the shadow of the *CRR*, what am I even here for?" (Interview, November 2018)

The figure below shows the planned layout for the Douze with the clustering of the music studios, which were in the recycling room, the local music school, which was too close to the *CRR*, the new version of the Observatoire, which will be appropriately soundproofed and with an increased capacity, the creation of a large event space and the maintenance of a space for *associations* and some of the local services.
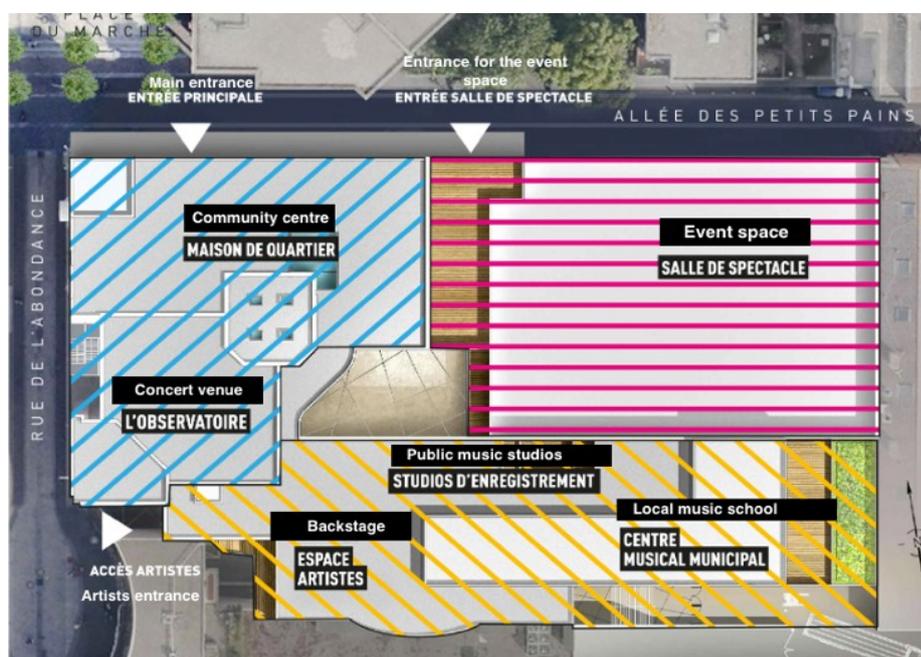

Figure 21   Interior layout of the Douze. I added the English translations of the different spaces. (cergy.fr, n.d.)

The remit of this thesis does not allow me to go into the details of the histories and stories of the other cultural facilities that are being regenerated even though their past, present and planned regeneration are insightful in terms of the development of the new town and the development of the local music scenes, as well as the evolving cultural practices of the residents. Instead, I designed a table below that summarises the rest of the urban development linked to the cultural regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise. The first column from the left indicates the name, location and whether the venue is part of one of the three hubs (music, dance and theatre). The second column details the history and characteristics of the venue that will be replaced or has been replaced by a new urban development.

The before versus after approach of the chart aims to highlight the evolution for some of the community centres into new contemporary arts facilities. It also gives an element of comparison with

the older provision of facilities by indicating the capacity of the past and new venues. Finally, it shows the strategy with regards to some of the new venues that is to give them a regional or national outreach by developing ambitious programmes such as the first French hip-hop professional school at Visages du Monde (dance hub in Hauts-de-Cergy district). Finally, I have also included pictures of both past and new or upcoming venues to show the increasing use of overlength windows and the removal of anything that may obstruct the view from inside and outside of the facilities. This type of design, which is called designing the crime out by default or natural surveillance, aims to increase the self-regulations of behaviours of people who attend these venues. (Amiri et al. 2019; Silva and Li 2020). The new facilities of Cergy-Pontoise illustrate this design in practice and contrast greatly with the older or demolished facilities, which are mainly made of bricks and surrounded by trees and bushes. Although this may lead to a safer environment, this may also lead to the loss of sense of cosiness and cocoon that some musicians and residents enjoyed, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Name and location	History and characteristics of venue to be replaced	Characteristics of new venue
Venue: *Aren'Ice* **Location:** Cergy (Coteaux district)	N/A	 *Aren'Ice by night (www.cergypontoise.fr, n.d.)* **Olympic ice rink** with modular design that can transform the ice rink into a venue. Venue capacity: **4,500** Delivered: **2016**
Venue: *Forum & Forum 2* **Location:** Vauréal (sub-town of Cergy-Pontoise)	 *The Forum venue in 2017 (Ménard 2017)* 1 stage - capacity - **400** 1 bar 3 music studios **1994** - Originally a community centre for the youth managed by an *association*. It quickly stood out for its musical events (rock genre mainly) **2002** - Management of the venue is handed over to the town Vauréal. **2011** - The *Forum* becomes a state approved venue with the label *scène conventionnée* (label that recognises venues with a local outreach. The label gives access to state subsidies). **2019** - Management of the venue is handed over to Cergy-Pontoise. A few meters away the construction of the *Forum 2* starts. The *Forum* will be demolished when the *Forum 2* is complete.	 *Visual of the planned Forum 2 (www.tetrarc.fr, n.d.)* 2 stages: capacity - **250** and **800** 2 bars 3 music studios Delivery: **2022** The council of Cergy-Pontoise and the Val d'Oise *département* hope that this new venue will become a new contemporary music hub of the *région* and that it will get the state label *Scènes Musiques Actuelles*.

The Music Hub **Venues:** Community centre/*L'Observatoire* & the *Douze* **Location:** Cergy (Axe Majeur and Horloge districts)	 *Community centre of the Horloge district before its demolition. (fieldwork picture, April 2017)* **1983**: Opening of a local **community centre** with communal spaces, social and cultural services offices. **1993**: First concerts organised in one of the communal rooms. **1998**: The communal room is refurbished into a public concert venue called the *Observatoire* (**Capacity: 500**) **2003**: The *département* Val d'Oise provides subsidies to the venue. **2009**: A contemporary music hub is created in the facility. The offices of the network of music professionals of the *département* Val d'Oise and some of the local music *associations* are moved in the venue. **2017**: Demolition of the facility and beginning of the construction of the *Douze*	 *Visual of the planned Douze from outside (www.cergy.fr, n.d.)* The council of Cergy and Cergy-Pontoise plan the *Douze* as the music hub of Cergy. It will **regroup music facilities that are currently scattered in Cergy**: the local music school (currently too close to the *CRR*), and the **public music studios that are in a recycling room.** The *Observatoire* will be purpose-built with an increased **capacity.** **An event space** will be added with a capacity **of 1,500** Delivery: **2022**
The Dance and Digital Hub **Venue:** *Visages du Monde* **Location:** Cergy (Hauts de Cergy District)	N/A	 *Visages du Monde (Shimmura 2013)* Focus on dance and digital arts **Contemporary dance school** for amateur and professionals. It **aims to become the first school in France to deliver a higher education diploma in Hip Hop teaching** (as of April 2021, this diploma does not exist in France). Media library & Computer room. Social and administrative services offices. Community spaces for *associations* and conferences. Dance studio. Bar/restaurant Performance space Capacity **300** Delivered: **February 2013**
The Theatre Hub **Venue:** *Théâtre 95* & new *Théâtre 95* **Location:** Cergy (Grand Centre district)	 *Théâtre 95 before its refurbishment. (www.youtube.com, 2010)* **1989** - A disuse state art school is reallocated to the *Théâtre 95* (contemporary theatre labelled *scène conventionné*) **1990** - The facility is refurbished to become a purpose-built theatre. **1 stage :** capacity **146** **2010**: Start of the refurbishment and extension of the theatre.	 *The new Théâtre 95. (www.archilovers.com, n.d.)* **June 2012:** The new extended theatre opens. **2019**: The other state theatres of Cergy-Pontoise are gathered with the **Théâtre 95**. Together they form the *Théâtre 95/Points Communs* theatre that is labelled *scène nationale*. **2 Stages**: capacity: **319 and 146** **1 bar/restaurant with stage**: capacity **140**

Figure 22 Table with pictures of old and newer venues of Cergy-Pontoise and their descriptions (table by myself, photos credits in table).

Apart from the new built facilities and hubs, the regeneration also involves non-built development. This includes the creation of a series of events around the regeneration as well as the creation of partnerships between *associations* and the town to liven up the new venues, the events and to tackle the lack of a real centre and evening life in the town. The local senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy believes that these partnerships foster better efficiency toward meeting the needs and wants of the residents. He gives the example of the Douze:

> The *associations* they will need to gravitate around our project of facility [the Douze] so that it is a success and that tomorrow we are all winners between public policy that is carried by the local services and the bridging that will be operated by the *associations* without them having to give up their values. (Interview, November 2018)

An example of partnership between the council and the local *associations* is an initiative as part of the regeneration of the existing Théâtre 95 theatre (located in the Grand Centre district). The theatre's new bar and restaurant has an event space called Café de la Plage. The event space is focused on contemporary music and owned by the council of Cergy-Pontoise. It replaced the much smaller previous theatre's cafe. The picture below depicts an event happening at the Café de la Plage.

Figure 23 View of the stage of the restaurant Café de la Plage that is part of the Théâtre 95. (Thérèse L., 2019)

The town hopes that this new bar and restaurant will create more liveliness in the evening in the district. The council worked in partnership with local existing trusted partners that are well known by some of the residents, in order to better engage with local residents and one may speculate because it is cheaper as well. These partners are a music association, the CRR and the Forum venue. These three organisations together have been put in charge by the council to design and organise music events for the new bar and restaurant. As the introduction in the programme of the bar and restaurant states:

> The Café de la Plage has been "reinvented" in 2017 by the council of Cergy-Pontoise that owns the space, to become a space that livens up the Grand Centredistrict… The musical programming for the venue is designed by the local contemporary music scene of Cergy-Pontoise with a partnership that involves the Forum of Vauréal [sub-town of Cergy-Pontoise], the *CRR* of Cergy- Pontoise and a music *association.* (Café de la Plage programme, 2020)

This is part of an annual programme of multi-disciplinary events called 'Generations' that the theatre organises to better engage with the residents and build bridges between the various existing venues. The 2020/2021 programme description on the theatre website emphasises that 'Generations' is participatory, designed for the residents and is orientated toward the youth (points-communs.com, n.d.). As the programme states:

> At the heart of the Points Communs project, the high points of 'Generations' invite audience and residents of all ages to come together around questions that preoccupy the youth of today… The ritual of partying is shared with the participative project 'Listening Party' open to 30 local young people, the invitation to our stage to a clubber of the Val D'Oise in the show '*Fête'*… Like every year, multiple festive events will be high points of 'Generation' with the loyal participations of [music] *associations,* students *associations*… and in this season 20/21 will be offered a hip hop journey in partnership with Visages du Monde and Cergy, Hip Hop Brunch, sensory walk… (ibid., p.1)

Members of the L'Atelier told me that the new theatre's team contacted them often and were very keen on getting them involved as the new theatre aims to reach a younger audience through the *associations*. However, L'Atelier and other *associations* perceive that there is the risk of them being used too much as inexpensive suppliers by the council and other state institutions leaving them with very little space to develop their own creativity and identity. Nevertheless, members of L'Atelier mentioned to me that they did enjoy organising their own events, parties and concerts at the Café de la Plage, which are usually well-attended (e.g. electro night, local talent nights). Some musicians and

residents also stated to me that they did enjoy the events organised by L'Atelier at the venue. The events that I attended there were usually free and happening before main events of the theatre. They were well attended but I noticed that the audience was usually made up of the same usual suspects and their friends, which I also met at The Spot and at other events organised by the local *associations.* This made me wonder about whether these partnerships with existing trusted partners of the council (the well-known *associations* and venues) may be reproducing the audience of the older existing venues and initiatives instead of solving what it set out to do: addressing the town's fragmentation and better uniting the residents by reaching those who are not engaging with the pre-regeneration cultural provision (e.g. the youth).

In addition to organising events at the Café de la Plage, L'Atelier alongside other *associations* participate in a series of events that the council of Cergy-Pontoise created to support the regeneration. The aim of these events is to tackle the challenges of the town's fragmentation, better unite the towns and its residents by rendering the town more visible and accessible via events. Although these events happen, not many residents attend them from my own observations and the observations of the people that I met in the field. Many music professionals and local officials who I met identify the lack of attendance at these events as stemming from the lack of efficient communication about them from the council. Some of these events are the '*Folles Journées du Grand Centre'* (Crazy Days of the Grand Centre district). These crazy days aim to tighten residents' community bounds, to liven up the Grand Centre district, and to encourage residents to use the less frequented state cultural venues by linking them with more frequented ones. One example of them is the 'Pool Party' event, which aims to make the *CRR* more accessible and desirable to the local population. As part of this event, local musicians, *associations,* and also staff and students of the *CRR* perform concerts in the well-attended local swimming pool, its garden and between both facilities, which are located only a few meters away from each other in the Grand Centre district. The following pictures show some of the events that took place during the 'Pool Party' event.

Figure 24 Band performing inside the pool at the 'Pool Party' (Fieldwork photo, June 2017)

Figure 25 'Pool Party' view from the garden of the swimming pool. DJs from L'Atelier are performing sets. (Fieldwork photo, June 2017)

Figure 26 Banner inviting people to enrol at the CRR. The banner states: 'Dare! The CRR. Enrolment open between 5 and 8 September'. (fieldwork photo, September 2018)

The last picture shows a banner that the council hung by the *CRR* to encourage residents to enrol on its courses. The banner states: 'Dare! [but it could also be translated as: 'Be bold!'] the *CRR*. Enrolment open between 5 and 8 September'. One may speculate, that the use of the words 'Dare!' or 'Be bold!' may be a nudge specifically toward some of the residents who may feel that the *CRR* is not for them or too expensive. As an example, I personally remember that my family initially did not enrol me at the *CRR* (this was in the late 1990s) although they specifically wanted me to learn classical music. Instead they enrolled me at the local non-state music school. This was because they perceived the *CRR* as an elite and prestigious regional institution and as such, assumed it would be more expensive than a non- state local small school and that it was more for music students gearing toward a professional pathway anyway, so not for their children.

On the contrary, the *CRR* educates musicians from beginner levels up to higher education and as it is subsidised, the fees are also much cheaper than non-state music schools (although they may still be too expensive for many households). There are nine bands of yearly fees, which vary depending on the income of the student or on the income of his or her parent or legal guardian. For example, for the year 2020 a family with very little income pays €70 (band 1) for a whole year of education at beginner level for one child, while a family with more income may pay up to €180 (band 9) for the same level

according to the website of the *CRR* as of April 2021. The fees are also more expensive for non-residents of Cergy-Pontoise and increase depending on the level of education of the student.

When I joined the *CRR* aged 16, my parents realized that the *CRR* was much cheaper and better value than the non-state music school they enrolled me on for many years. Not only was the *CRR* more affordable, but I was also attending more modules (e.g. collective music practice, history of music, seminars) that were all included in the yearly fees. I also had access to three free concerts of the *CRR* per year and to the music library that is part of the *CRR*. At the non-state music school, the fees were higher, but only included one-to-ones with a teacher and music theory classes. The non-state school was also lacking resources. The lessons happened in a tiny and damp backstage room where my harp teacher sat me on two plastic chairs stacked together with a pile of phone books to get me at the right height level for me to be able to play on the Celtic harp. Nevertheless, my teachers transmitted to me their love for music and did miracles with the little that they had in terms of resources. The small music school is also benefiting from the regeneration too as it now has moved to a brand-new small communal facility that has been designed with the music school in mind (the school used to be in an old small rural community centre of the old town of Courdimanche that is not soundproofed and is consistently humid).

While this example represents the lived experience of my family only, it remains similar to what sociologist Aurélien Djakouane observed with residents of another town and their perception and experience of their local theatre that is labelled *scène nationale* theatre (2014). He observes that some of the local residents of the French town Cavaillon state that their local theatre – labelled *scène nationale* – is not for them; at the same time, they are surprised to hear that this state theatre organises some of the outdoor events that they enjoy every year (ibid.). Djakouane argues that these paradoxes in terms of uses and perceptions of labelled state cultural facilities and their activities are an expression of the strong hold that certain narratives used by cultural and political players about subsidized culture have on people. These ongoing narratives foster dichotomous thinking and discourse that may reinforce residents' sense of alienation from these local facilities (e.g. while broader discourse concerning subsidising culture is perceived as 'good' as it affords better access to culture for all, within the French

context, subsidising culture can also be perceived as too top-down, highbrow and prestige-centred, which may be perceived as 'bad' for some). Djakouane argues that these narratives contribute to cultural players and policymakers having blind spots in terms of understanding better the needs and wants of residents, as well as the existing barriers to accessing culture (ibid.).

Policy and design scholar Andrea Siodmok, argues that to avoid blind spots and to ensure less biased decision making, policy-makers need to gather their evidence both from big data (e.g. statistics) and thick data (e.g. ethnographic insights), rather than relying on big data alone (2020). For example, the *SCoT* document highlights that Cergy-Pontoise is behind other towns in terms of number of residents enrolled in state music schools (big data), but the document does not address why this might be (thick data), which could inform how to best fix this imbalance (if it needs to be fixed). Insight such as the case of my parents being intimidated by the *CRR,* as well as other insights from different residents' perspective may have been useful at better informing the local regeneration and addressing assumptions that residents, local authorities, musicians, *associations* and so on may have. As such, one may wonder whether local authorities, urban planners and policymakers may be aware of their own biases, narratives and potential blind spots with regards to the regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise. To be aware of these blind spots will be important for the continuation of the development of local state music schools and to increase the onboarding of local residents onto state-music education at the *CRR*. A banner that states 'dare the *CRR'* and a couple of poorly attended multi-disciplinary events may not be enough for the *CRR* or the new contemporary facilities to attract the local residents.

The risk of developing narratives leading to assumptions is also a potential threat to the success of some of the newly built or planned music facilities that replace older existing or demolished one. One may wonder whether the local residents and audience of the existing venues that are being regenerated will adopt their brand new upgraded and bigger versions. For example, the small contemporary music venue the Forum will be moved to a new facility, the Forum 2*,* which will be much larger than the existing one. The Forum 2 will have the label *Scène Musiques Actuelles* (*SMAC).* The label recognises venues that contribute to the development of contemporary music in France and like the *CRR,* it is meant to have a regional and national outreach. The label is prestigious and gives

access to state subsidies. The Forum 2 will still be managed by the same team that manage the Forum. The team told me (and this is also part of the terms and conditions of the *SMAC* label), that they are still committed to continue their outreach activities with the local schools and the hospitals and will still work with *associations* (e.g. organising open mic nights and other local events with them), but their new status may lead to new narratives and assumptions made about them (e.g. institutionalisation and sanitization of various forms of contemporary music). Most of the local residents and musicians I met are happy for the team that manage the Forum and their success at securing the label and a much bigger venue, but they are also concerned that the conviviality, festive atmosphere and the cosiness they associate with the Forum will be lost in the much bigger venue.

During conversations and interviews, residents and musicians often associate larger spaces with less conviviality. In addition to this, these new facilities need to be cost effective and profitable for the town to have a return on their investment. Some of the existing new venues are not as successful as planned. Some of the forecast revenues are not happening. For example, the largest venue of Cergy-Pontoise, the *Aren'Ice*, for the year 2019 predicted a forecast of €497,000 in revenues achieved from cultural events, but only achieved €84,000 in revenues from cultural events (Cavaretta, 2020). Some of the musicians, music professionals and residents that I met are not surprised by the lack of revenues from cultural events for the Aren'Ice as they feel that it does not make sense to have such a large venue so close to Paris. This is because some of them perceive that people from the suburbs tend to go to Paris to attend large events rather than travel to Cergy-Pontoise. In practice, it might make sense as travelling between suburbs takes more time and is more difficult than travelling from the suburbs to Paris, which usually takes less time and is more direct. One of the aims of the Grand Paris Metropolis is to better connect the various Parisian suburbs with each other, so one may speculate that the Aren'Ice will get better revenues from cultural events once the transport network development from suburbs to suburbs will be completed (societedugrandparis.fr, 2021).

Additionally, some of the people I met considered some of the facilities to be too similar and too close to each other. Nicolas, a White rock musician in his forties, music professional and musician who is part of the network of music professionals of the Val d'Oise was puzzled as to why both the

Forum 2 and the Observatoire, which are both contemporary music venues, were developed and refurbished when there is only a distance of 5 kilometres between them. As he states: 'What is the purpose to have a Forum 2 of this size, with an Observatoire of this size there. You see, that's not really logical… In terms of space development and structure, to invest millions of euros in two venues that are within a few kms of distance. This is dumb' (interview, November 2018). Nevertheless, from looking at the plans for both venues as detailed in the chart above, one may speculate that although both venues promote contemporary music, they seem to have a different outreach. The Forum 2 seems to be focussed on regional and national outreach while the Observatoire seemed to be structured as part of a facility with a more local outreach than the Forum 2 (although the Douze has a performance space that can host up to 1,500 people, which is much higher than the capacity of the Forum 2).

Throughout my fieldwork, a lack of audiences in new venues was a common topic of conversation. For example, the facilities with labels such as *scène nationale, scène conventionnée* and *SMAC* need to have a local outreach and impact to continue receiving subsidies from the local authorities and the state, but they struggle to fill up their capacity or when they do, their audience is not necessarily mixed or local. Some people of the well- established *associations* that are in touch with the local youth often joked about one specific director of one of these new venues who unsubtly tried to make friends with them in order to help increase and diversify the audience of his new facility.

Associations themselves recognise that they only reach youth to a certain extent as discussed in chapter 5 and 6. All cultural actors of the town: music professionals, *associations,* local councillors and civil servants that I met believe that beyond cultural and urban regeneration, there needs to be a deeper regeneration of ways-of-working and being together in the town in order to better cater to the needs and wants of the residents. For example, the heavy burden of state bureaucracy that is experienced by public music studios and their staff (and potentially other local state venues and their staff) is not addressed by the regeneration. The three main difficulties that seemed to be experienced by the public studios and that may continue once they move to the *Douze* are as follows: lack of ability to use appropriate channels of communication, rapid obsolescence of constantly shifting new

technologies, and being tied up within the heavy cogs of the local council's machinery that employs them. One may speculate that these difficulties may also develop in the new facilities that are owned and managed by the town.

In the case of the studios, it is difficult to speculate ways that the regeneration could address them. These difficulties are day-to-day barriers for the music studios operations. It is difficult for the public music studios to communicate to residents directly because they need to respect specific codes of conduct, communication and branding. Most importantly, the staff need to first request and obtain an authorisation from the council to create and share communications. As Ben and Jonathan, the managers of one of the local public music studios stated to me: 'We used to communicate a lot via Facebook, Instagram, but we had to stop because it was not authorised. We need an authorisation from the council' (interview, October 2018). Paul observed the same difficulty in his studios regarding digital communication. As he states:

> The lowest blow truly is the communication… Facebook could be useful, but if we want to communicate with social networking sites, we have to ask for permission from the council so already there is an obstacle. (interview, October 2018).

This quotation not only highlights the constraints from the council to communicate on the online social networking sites, but also highlights the digital inter-generational divide between the existing facilities and their staff and the younger residents. Paul mentions Facebook while younger people are abandoning Facebook for other online social networking sites such as Tik Tok, Snapchat, Instagram and others, and are more attracted to pictures and audio-visual driven platforms than written-based ones (Clarke 2008; Antonio 2012). So even though staff from public music studios may be able to pass the institutional obstacles of bureaucracy and are authorised to communicate on social media, they may fail at it if they pick the wrong social networking sites. New apps and social networking sites are also constantly developed while existing ones are updated. As a result, communication can become a cat and mouse game regarding selecting the right platform at the right time. Some of the music professionals consider that more than anything this reflects a widening intergenerational gap between them and their audience. As Nicolas states:

It has to be said, the average age of our audience for contemporary and popular music is 35-40 years old. It's not around 20 years old so we really need to start questioning our actions toward this changing audience and not forget a whole part of the residents who have different consumption habits from my generation and the generation of people who own and manage the music facilities. (interview, November 2018)

Additionally, updating equipment is not as easily accessible to public music studios that work with very limited budgets, on a cost-recovery basis, and within the heavy burden of the bureaucracy associated with public procurement. They live in the present moment with no ways to plan ahead in terms of budget. The process to obtain new equipment is very bureaucratic and counterintuitive. The whole process to get new equipment seems to take more time than the time it takes for a piece of equipment to become obsolete. I witnessed two public music studio managers in their twenties having a lengthy and somewhat frustrated conversation together about the process of ordering new equipment. I later asked them more details about the process and why it was taking so long. As they stated to me: 'What we set up here in several months, it would only take us a week to do in the private sector [both members of staff used to work in private music studios]' (Interview, October 2018).

Public music studios themselves are not open at the same times as the council. As such, the communication between the council and the public music studios are also slow because staff from the public music studios cannot spontaneously call the council to track their procurement requests as administrative services are usually closed during their hours of operations. This whole tedious bureaucratic process seems outdated and overwhelming for the Digital Age. Employees of public music studios that I met cannot act fast to develop easy and cost-effective actions that apply to their present reality. For example, during my fieldwork two employees of a public music studio wanted to make USB-recording devices available, so that the local youth could borrow and play around with these devices, in order to learn to record on their own without being intimidated by bigger pieces of equipment and the presence of sound engineers. However, the studio does not have the equipment yet, and it may take months to get it; the staff is also not allowed to use social media. As such, at the time of the interview, this seemingly simple and potentially beneficial project could not be set up because of various barriers.

Paul believed these difficulties to be the result of: a lack of real legitimacy and recognition for contemporary music and grassroots practices by the institutions, a difficulty for the council to keep up with the times, and a lack of efficiency in the way council and public studios work together. He does not think that the new changes associated with the regeneration are addressing these issues. As he states:

> It's true that there is much more legitimacy for contemporary music, but this is a surface legitimacy…. I'd like it to be taken a bit more seriously... That is to say practices are changing but the support put in place is not in accordance with these changes. They are new practices put in place, but within an existing old way of working you see. So, we always have done stuff but aren't we constantly still lagging several steps? The things that will be put in place will be obsolete very rapidly. (Interview, October 2018)

Some people that I met in their forties and fifties who work for the town as local civil servants within the cultural and music sector indicated to me that previously Cergy-Pontoise had the space and money to appropriately support new and emerging practices, and to experiment with and encourage more innovative and spontaneous initiatives. They perceive the recent focus to be on subsidising fewer, bigger and trusted initiatives (e.g. developing partnership with an *association* with many years of experience and well implanted in the town, creating a series of events about the regeneration) rather than spreading thinly subsidies on a multiplicity of initiatives that could potentially bring something innovative but that is too risky to invest in. For Olivier, a White male in his mid-fifties who is a music scheduler and head of a public music venue in Cergy and who has been part of the local rock music scene as a musician, professional and audience member since the 1980s, this tendency to focus on efficient, safe investment has killed the potential of the town for innovation and creativity within the town, which does a disservice to the local music scenes. He perceives this tendency as worsening with the context of austerity in the country. As he states:

> There is less space for the emerging of a certain form of spontaneity, that is less support to accompany spontaneity, finance diversity, the little initiatives, which local authorities call 'to spread thinly', local authorities state: Ah but it's not good to spread thinly, it is not efficient. But that's very debatable because on what we spread thinly on, there may be a real emergence of something strong. (Interview, November 2018)

This concern is coupled with another concern from local civil servants and *associations* that the existing musical and cultural initiatives are very fragile because they are resting only on the shoulders of a handful of highly self-motivated people and the good will of the existing elected politicians who may not be there anymore after the next election. Some of the existing actors of the local musical life in Cergy-Pontoise worry that no one will take over when these highly motivated people will go or stop their involvement in local life. As the director of the network of music professionals' states: 'There is a massive drop in activism… For many people we are like disposable tissues: if our professional music network exists, people use our services and resources. If the network disappears because of lack of funding, people will not care about fighting for us. They will just go and seek that support somewhere else' (Interview, November 2018). Others state that these are the ebbs and flows part of a town life, nothing is fixed or permanent. As the local senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy states: 'Politicians come with intentions, expertise… and then they leave. Politicians after them they either continue the project… or they do something else…and that is the life of a local area' (Fieldwork interview, November 2018).

Nevertheless, one may speculate that if the council's risk-averse attitude, local bureaucracy, rapid obsolescence and lack of flexibility persist and are not addressed as part of the cultural regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise then the new facilities may not be able to reach their full potential as larger facility with wider outreach. One example of this is Visages du Monde, which opened in 2014 as part of the regeneration. The facility has computers that do not all work and it also has a very bad WIFI signal (my phone lost all of its signal bars every time I was in the building and I was told by people from the building that it was normal and that it is just how it is with some phones in the venue). Additionally, there is also a computer music course led by local talents from the town, but the spaces are very limited, and it only happens once every few months. It seems that the capability and resources of this brand-new facility that focusses on dance and the digital arts do not match its ambitions.

Musicians, music professionals, *associations,* local councillors and civil servants all recognise that an in-depth and constant self-reflection and self-examination is needed to address the challenges of a world that is in flux. Beyond cultural and urban regeneration, there needs to be a regeneration of

ways-of-working and being together in the same local area (*association,* councils, music professionals and musicians), economic models, institutional bureaucracy and approaches to better meet the needs of the residents. As such, similar to the initial planning of the new town, cultural regeneration is not only about these new state buildings, but also about what happens in them, the way they are operated and the type of audience that they are able to reach. The next section focusses on the regeneration of the town on the ground as experienced by local residents, musicians, music professional, *associations* and local authorities.

7.3. The regeneration experienced on the ground: lessons learnt or continuation of existing issues?

Some of the residents, local music *associations* and musicians consider the cultural regeneration as too top-down, gentrifying environmental conditions for community living and suppressing spontaneous time and space, as well as being out of touch with the reality of some of the local residents. As Nicolas states:

> Visually it's very pretty [the new Théâtre 95, which has been redesigned as a golden crown] but it's totally disconnected from the population of Cergy-Pontoise. When I saw that it was being refurbished and all in gold… What a stupidity… Were you obliged to do it in gold when within 5 kilometres you have *quartiers prioritaires…*? For me it's disrespectful…. There will be many beautiful venues where people will go and consume, but at the same time people will not say hi to their local neighbours… if we end up with a gentrification of the Parisian suburbs, it will be incredibly rough, for pity's sake please let's not make happen to the suburbs what has happened to Paris. (Interview November 2018)

One may note here that some of these negative perceptions, worries and connection of various elements (e.g. associating urbanisation with crime and gentrification) may in some cases be the expression of a declinist cognitive bias rather than expressing the reality on the ground (Elchardus 2017; Liveley, Slocombe, and Spiers 2021). The declinist bias is the tendency for humans to think that the past was better than the present and to predict the future negatively. For example, Cédric was concerned about the new segmentation of cultural facilities into three hubs. He would have preferred a mix of disciplines in each district as he personally benefitted from having access to multi-disciplinary spaces when he was a teen. As he states:

> For me, I was in the social and cultural centre, its music studios and its theatre, all three spaces of the centre [of Jouy-le-Moutier in the early 2000s]… if you remove these links. What access is there in the end? The new young person will not have this link... So how can the local music scene develop? (Interview, November 2018)

In practice, this may or may not be true, but what is certain is that the aforementioned cultural centre is no longer attracting young musicians, even though it has not been refurbished and remains a multi-disciplinary facility as the director of its music studio explained to me. He observed that when the youth do come to the public music studio that he manages and is part of the cultural centre the DJ refers to, that the cultural practices of the young people he meets are very different from the youth of 10 or 20 years ago. As he states: 'I see people that come to the studio without wonder because everything is already spoon-fed, almost complete... [referring to digital music making and the wide availability of samples and software] It is true that practices have changed. We see it' (interview October 2018). As such, it may be difficult at times to understand whether the negative perspectives are actual signals of a challenging situation developing in the town or whether they are an expression of negative narratives that may turn into self-fulling prophecies that actively shape the future of the town (Elchardus 2017; Liveley, Slocombe, and Spiers 2021). Nevertheless, throughout my fieldwork there were already weak signals of changes, which seemed to align with some of the opinions and perceptions I gave as examples.

For example, the music *association* L'Atelier was forced to adapt to radical changes due to the regeneration of the town. Their day-to-day experiences of the town as an *association* changed since they were forced to move out of their offices in the community centre located in the the Horloge district, which was demolished to make space for the Douze. In the community centre that was demolished, L'Atelier was part of an ecosystem that existed between the various music organisations present in the building as well as its venue: L'Observatoire, for which, L'Atelier acted as food and drink provider during events. This allowed them to generate some of their income. They also used to organise small music events at the bar. The facility was an ideal environment for them because other musical *associations* were present, and the Observatoire venue and its bar were there too. As such, it was easy for L'Atelier to manage all their activities from this single building. The atmosphere was also

relaxed and convivial, and they were able to decorate the bar and the building itself as they pleased. Other artistic *associations* present in the building contributed with decorating the bar too. After closing the bar in the evening, they were usually able to stay late in the venue to share a convivial and social time together. This involved at times DJs of the *association* performing sets, turning the socials into private parties.

After the demolition of the building, L'Atelier and other *associations'* offices were moved to a disused school, the social services offices were moved to another community space, and the *Observatoire* became nomadic, its concerts moved to the new social and cultural centre of the Hauts-de-Cergy district, Visages du Monde. The choice of moving the concerts to Visages du Monde was criticised by some of the musicians and *associations* that I met who felt that the performance space of Visages du Monde was unsuitable as the stage was designed for dance performances specifically and as such was too wide for music performances according to them. This hints at the potential lack of flexibility that three hubs focussed on three distinct art disciplines may cause for situations that require adaptability and malleability. This seems to be repeating some of the patterns of the initial urban planning of the town in the 1960s, which have been described by urban scholars as 'over planning', as discussed in chapters 4 and 5 (Wakeman 2016).

L'Atelier still provides a bar service for the concerts at the venue Visages du Monde, but their experience of doing it is very different from what they were used to in the previous building. They only bring the minimum equipment for the bar, which they have to collect from another facility where it is stored (they also have to bring it back to the storage straight away after the concert unless there is another concert happening the next day). In the previous venue, everything was within the building, and as such they did not experience having to spend money in petrol and spending time doing multiple journeys between their office, Visages du Monde and the facility where their material is stored. At Visages du Monde, they are also not allowed to decorate the area where they install the bar, which does not make it look very attractive as without decorations it consists of the bare minimum (a fridge, tables and black cloths to cover the tables). I was told that this is due to the rules of the new building that are in place for health and safety, and to keep it in its new condition for as long as possible. I did not take

pictures of the nomadic bar unfortunately, but the picture below depicts the area where the bar was set up. The bookshelves are moved, and a couple of tables are set up in lieu of them.

Figure 27 Ground floor of Visages du Monde. The bar is set up where the bookshelves are (the bookshelves are moved out of the way) (Shimmura 2013)

Additionally, there are stricter security norms than in the demolished facility and several security guards are present inside and outside the building during events. This means that the association also has to evacuate the building promptly. Additionally, the security guards finish their shift around 11.30pm. As such, it is much more difficult for them to stay late and socialise together after the events, although it did happen a couple of times when I volunteered with them. It was usually by chance (e.g. when a member of staff of Visages du Monde who knows well the association was on shift and let the *association* stay a little bit longer than another member of staff would). Nevertheless, the proximity of housing very close to the facility (from what I remember one may literally be able to pass the salt from their balcony to the window of the first floor of the venue) and the fact that most of the walls are glass (everybody can see inside and outside of the building at all times) do not allow for much social time to happen after the concerts like it used to happen at the facility that was

demolished (the old facility had brick walls with only a few windows, which gave them more privacy).

I volunteered on the bar team throughout my fieldwork, providing an occasion to ask members of the *association* about how they felt about hosting the bar at Visages du Monde compared to the venue they used to host the bar in. From what I was told and observed, in the past, hosting the bar was a fun opportunity to be creative, and a nice social occasion. Now it seems to have become a dull chore for most of the people who are part of the *association*. It seems the volunteers and members only join to help at the bar reluctantly and out of a sense of duty now. As such, the bar is often short-staffed and relies on the same few highly motivated individuals. Members of the *association* were thinking about stopping providing this service for the Observatoire for this reason, and also because they were not making as much money from the drinks sales as they used to in the previous venue where concerts were better attended than at Visage du Monde.

I noticed while I was there that concerts (an eclectic mix of contemporary music, which included afro-pop, rap, rock, pop amongst others) at Visages du Monde were either poorly attended, or when well attended, the audience (mainly White and in their mid-twenties up to their mid-fifties depending on the artist(s) performing) that came to attend the concerts did not socialise at the bar before or after concerts. As discussed in chapter 6, some of the musicians and cultural actors perceive this as passive consumption behaviour that they observe in several venues of the town. I, and other members of the *associations,* felt that the bar looked sad with no decorations at all and was clashing with the venue itself. It felt very small in the wide space of the venue. Additionally, the fact that the venue closes by 11.30pm and the presence of several security guards may not encourage the audience to stay to socialise too. As such, one may speculate that the bar may not be as inviting compared to the previous bar in the older venue and compared to much smaller and cosier venues with bars - such as the The Spot- that close later than their official closing time as discussed in chapter 6.

Nevertheless, this situation will change as the Observatoire will move back to the Douze after its completion. There will be a bar at the Douze but it is unclear whether this will be operated by L'Atelier or not. As for the *associations,* they will not all move to the Douze. There is a plan for some

of the *associations* to move to the Douze while others will stay in the disused school building that may become a facility dedicated to these *associations* and their activities. L'Atelier and other artistic *associations* that were in the demolished facility and moved to that disused school formed an interdisciplinary artistic collective to hopefully set up a project within the disused school to turn it into a multidisciplinary artistic third space, which is also welcoming and educational for the local residents. The aims of the collective are listed on L'Atelier website as follows:

> To develop a dynamic of projects toward the residents of Axe Majeur and Horloge districts.
>
> To increase the cultural and artistic attractiveness of the area via popular education To set up a unique and shared approach.

However, at the time of my fieldwork, the collective was in its early stages and there was no guarantee that the *associations* would be able to stay in the disused school (I could not find any official document to confirm this, but I heard during conversations that there are plans to demolish the disused school in a few years). The director of arts and heritage of Cergy perceives the collective in a positive light and envisions that this regeneration might help *associations* to work better together (as he perceives them as currently working in silos). Ludovic, a musician and employee of L'Atelier, worries that this way of working coupled with the new state facilities could lead to the over-institutionalisation of local music events by cleansing the remaining spontaneous spaces that exist outside the sphere of the council and its venues. As he states:

> People want to feel a bit outlaw, enter spaces where they can smoke without the constraint to leave by 11.30pm, kicked out by security [referring to Visages du Monde and other venues of Cergy-Pontoise]. The institutionalisation of [music] events clearly makes them lose their charm. (interview, November 2018)

Some other constraints associated with the new venues and their lack of space for spontaneity are constraints of health and safety imposed by the council, constraints imposed by the architecture of the facilities that design the crime out by default, both suppressing spontaneity and giving an overall sense of sanitisation and control of the event and the creative space. Spontaneous alternatives to institutionalised events and facilities may be some of the private venues and bars of the town as

discussed with the example of the The Spot in chapter 6. Some of the private venues are attractive to the local residents because they can foster more music spaces that are free from the constraints associated with the new venues. However, and as discussed in chapter 4, small private companies such as bars, restaurants, venues, and music studios struggle to exist in Cergy-Pontoise. They are not even included as part of the entities (*associations,* the local authorities and the residents) regularly mentioned by the local senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy that I interviewed. Some of the private music professionals I met feel at a disadvantage in comparison to public music facilities that they perceive as unfair competition at times. For example, all studio managers that I met from private music studios felt quite aggrieved by the town in one way or another due to the fact that the council open local public music studios only a few kilometres from their studios, and with rates that are much cheaper than theirs. Staff from private music venues that I met consider this as unfair competition, not supportive and disrespectful of the local private music sector. Additionally, they consider that this unfair competition will only worsen with the regeneration and the development of several new and larger music studios and venues. One of the latest examples of what is perceived as unfair competition due to the regeneration has happened with the opening of the Café de la Plage. The previous café had a small capacity and was only open when there were events at the theatre. The restaurant the Atelier opposite the theatre thinks that it is unfair competition because of the type of agreement the restaurant owner of the Café de la Plage has with the town. The new owner has a management agreement with the council of Cergy-Pontoise who owns the Café de la Plage. The council justifies that for this reason the owner will pay only a third of the rent that the restaurant opposite the theatre pays. This is perceived as unfair competition by the owner of the Atelier (Ménard 2017). As he states:

> 'It's mad! They're using public money for a private operator. I'm not hostile to competition as it contributes to improvement, but here we can't fight. It's unfair competition. The future restaurant owner will pay a rent that is three times less than ours! (€324 euros per m^2 per year versus €108 euros per m^2 per year)' (ibid.)

One may wonder whether the council could have better supported the local businesses as part of the regeneration in addition to or instead of developing its own café. One may speculate that this

might have fostered various types of space with different purposes for the local music scenes to evolve. It might have also been a way to maintain existing pockets of 'cocoon-ness'. The private sector, the *associations,* and existing public facilities and their staff are confronted by very top-down ways of being together and quite a lot of political meddling that interfere with their own initiatives, which could potentially be effective as regenerative acts for the town.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the regeneration of the new town, what it creates and what it carries on and perpetuates for the local residents and music scenes. The regeneration plans attempt to strike a fine balance between developing Cergy-Pontoise as a key cultural hub next to the *Grand Paris,* while both tackling the fragmentation of the town and of its residents and maintaining some of its 'New Town-ness'. The regeneration addresses various recommendations of the diagnosis from the *SCoT* without addressing the *why* of the issues raised by the document. This includes providing more spacious venues, giving better access to state music education for the resident and attempting to give the town a real centre that is lively in the evening, but the 'how can we fix what has been diagnosed' is not informed by the 'why is this problem present in the first place'.

The regeneration and its management seem to be an over-regeneration and over- planning that repeats some of the errors from the initial planning and spreads bureaucracy and obsolescence to the new developments. Additionally, the council's lack of risk appetite and available amount of resources means that the council may only be able (or may choose deliberately) to work with existing trusted well-known partners rather than investing in local lesser known and emerging initiatives, which could be alternatives to some of the existing inefficient ways of working and inefficient attempts at reaching the local residents.

This results in some of the local musicians, local music *associations* and music professionals finding themselves with new and more spacious facilities that have potential but without being provided with appropriate new ways of working, sufficient resources and other enablers that could potentially help them to make the most of these facilities for themselves and their local communities.

This over-planned regeneration also destroyed some of the existing small pockets of 'cocoons' spaces, such as the community centre that will be replaced by the Douze. These may just be the ebbs and flows of the city and other pockets of cocoons will be created elsewhere, but in the meantime there is also a real risk that the expansion of the town from a small new town to a large economic hub does not allow anymore for these types of spaces at all and make the town lose all of its initial appeal as a new town to some of the musicians who specifically enjoy the town because it is neither suburbs, neither city but an inspiring, green, human size and cosy town, as discussed in chapter 6. This may also create further risks of anomie in the town as discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.0. Introduction

This thesis has explored local music-making in the French new town of Cergy- Pontoise from its creation in the mid-1960s up to the present. I examined the dialectics between the initial utopian planning of the new town and how it has been experienced on-the- ground by people involved in music practices (e.g. musicians, music professionals, grassroots music community groups, cultural councillors). The original 'utopian' plans for Cergy- Pontoise were juxtaposed with the actual messiness of everyday life and local music practices in the town. From the time of the initial planning of the town up to the present-day, both planning and living were characterised by their fluidity and their multiple adaptations and iterations. In this thesis, I examined the extent to which urban and cultural policymaking and planning at the local and national levels at times hindered and at other times enabled music- making practices in new urban areas. I also explored how local musicians' practices are embedded within quotidian tactics and top-down strategies, which simultaneously stage and animate the town, renegotiate, adapt, and shape the towns' urban spaces and facilities.

This thesis contributes to ethnomusicology in several ways: first, the thesis adds new perspectives to existing ethnomusicological work on urbanism, policymaking and citizenship by presenting the case study of music and urban planning in a French new town (Finnegan 2007; Cohen 2007; Stokes 2018; Lamontagne 2020); second, the thesis engages with the intersections of ethnomusicology and urban studies by bringing to the fore the potential of music as an insightful lens to assess the sustainability of new urban environments. Part of this endeavour includes highlighting less visible local musical processes and how they relate to state cultural and urban planning policies; finally, the thesis contributes to discourses on the methodological value of ethnography in people-centred policy research and as a robust source of evidence for policymakers (Kimbell 2014; Siodmok 2014; 2020).

To achieve these aims, I used both hermeneutic ethnomusicological ethnography and an interdisciplinary approach. Both helped me mitigate some of my own biases, iterate the research approach throughout the Ph.D. process, and cover more ground than would have been otherwise

possible had I focussed solely on a few disciplines. The research process, the structure of the thesis, and the town's development are not linear but resemble a hermeneutic spiral. By this I mean that my analysis went through various iterations that led back to the initial issues with a renewed perspective. For example, experiencing incidents that happened at music events that I attended led to the realisation that music events are opportunities for sonic memories, communitas, and rituals for new urban environments; they are also moments where existing local, national and global tensions may be performed. Music events are potential ways for residents to carve discursive spaces where diverging visions for urban, community living, and other issues can be expressed and debated.

The initial planning, development and regeneration of the town have also been iterative. The towns' local music practices and residents' tactics are constantly evolving. For example, the regeneration of the town has, to some extent, represented a significant iteration where decision-makers have been in a position to learn from the lessons of the initial planning and apply these new perspectives when designing new sustainable urban development plans for the town. Meanwhile, local musicians have had to adapt their practices as some of their spaces have been shut down or altered. All of these states of flux are part of the ebb and flow of the city; they also shed light on wider issues, such as the potential gentrification of the suburbs.

The structure of the thesis reflects an evolving understanding and ensuing iterations of the research process and the town from the macro level to the micro level of analysis, with a chronological order applied when applicable (e.g. in chapters 4 and 6). In practice, I first tackled the macro level by discussing the top-down planning of the town and the relevant cultural policies. I then moved to the meso level by focusing on how the planning is lived, via the lens of music *associations*, their activities and music events that are part of the town's everyday life. I then turned to the micro level of analysis by examining individual musicians' life journeys, from the unique perspectives of different generations of local musicians from different backgrounds who have experienced the town at different stages of its development. Finally, in chapter 7, I brought together chapters 4, 5 and 6 by exploring how the planning of the town's regeneration perpetuates some of the utopian discourses and visions of the town's initial planning. I explored the extent to which the regeneration crystallises music *associations,*

musicians and music professionals' expectations, hopes and fears for the town's future, which all stemmed from past and present perceptions and experiences of the town.

Throughout the thesis, I argued that the musical practices of local residents provide insights into opportunities, challenges, gaps, tensions and creative workarounds people experience and enact when living in new urban developments. Local music practices in new urban environments provide further insight into local, national and global issues. For example, in all chapters, I examined how local and national policymaking (especially those related to culture, social and the urban) reveal some of the ways musical practices are supported or hindered in new towns. At the same time, local musicians and music scenes also have the potential to renegotiate spaces and contexts that local and national decision-making have imposed on them. For example, in chapter 4, I discussed the democratisation of some forms of popular music in France in the 1980s that led to policymakers institutionalising some of them. This led to the creation of new spaces for certain forms of popular music practices at the local level with the emergence of public music studios.

I will now reflect on the overarching theoretical perspectives of the thesis and the arguments articulated throughout this thesis, chapter by chapter. Finally, I will turn to the thesis's contributions to ethnomusicology and other disciplines and explore areas for further research.

8.1. Theoretical frame

Throughout the thesis, I used literature and theory that span across several disciplines that included but were not limited to ethnomusicology, urban studies, and French cultural policies. I have used utopian dialectics as an overarching concept across the thesis as I found it helpful to mitigate dichotomous thinking. The various utopian ideals concerning music, the urban environment and community living have been at play with one another in the field and beyond at the local, national and global level. For example, this frame allowed me to confront the planners' ideals with the music *associations'* ideals and the individual choices that local musicians have made. The various ideals, choices, and interplay between them have brought to the fore insights about the development of the new town, its music spaces, and broader systemic issues. For example, the music *associations'* ideals

and visions for community and urban living have offered spaces of hope and negotiation that critique and, in some cases, offer alternatives to the existing top-down planning and current capitalist system (Harvey 2000; Levitas 2003; Wakeman 2016). Chapter 5 discussed an example of this with the case study of the *association* Voyage, which refused to receive any sort of public funding and had an approach that was participatory and not-for-profit for all of their music festivals.

In the same way that I used utopian dialectics, I considered music practices as human voices in a dialogue with one another rather than associating them as part of a necessarily reductive constructed identity for the town or its residents. This approach stemmed from Finnegan and Cohen's ways of tackling local music-making and musicians at the micro level. They both use this approach to challenge the assumption that people are necessarily linked by strong personal solidarity (Cohen 2007; Finnegan 2007). Finnegan and Cohen's use of concepts such as mediation and pathways have also been fruitful tools to attempt to move away from pigeonholing local musicians and their practices into neat and fixed categories (ibid.). I used their approach to minimize and mitigate potential risks of reification of residents, generalisations about the town and its music scenes. This method was also suitable for uncovering less visible musical practices of the town. It was helpful in particular, when in chapters 5 and 6, I confronted the utopian urban planning of the town with the actual lived experience of people on the ground. Both chapters shone a light on the multiplicity of voices of musicians and music professionals (amateurs, professionals and those in-between) that crossed several music genres and assumed a great variety of roles and positionalities in the town and beyond. This approach also allowed me to uncover some of the musicians that do not associate at all, or very little, with the town and its initiatives. These cases highlighted further gaps between planning and actual lived experiences of people, bringing to the fore spaces and people that are not directly associated with the town. All might have been less visible to me if I had chosen to focus on groups of people or a type of space only.

I used theories about insurgent citizenship, right to the city, capitalism and Foucault's theory about power and his heterotopia concept because they were valuable tools in framing and understanding dialectics between planning, living and musicking in the town, within their broader contexts and the systemic issues they were embedded within (Foucault 1975; Lefebvre 1996; Holston

1998). The thesis focussed on local music practices, which were part of the everyday life tactics or forms of insurgent citizenship, that contribute to the renegotiation and reclaiming of what has been excluded by urban planning strategies amongst other strategies (Holston 1998; De Certeau 1984; Harvey 2008). I used the concept of the 'right to the city' as defined by Henry Lefebvre and used by David Harvey, as a right for people to reclaim the co-creation of the urban space and the right to a self-determined urban life free from the constraints of capitalism, to better understand top-down planning and policymaking and their impact on local musicians (Lefebvre 1996; 2003; Harvey 2008). Foucault's theories of power as subtle and panoptical were helpful as a tool to better understand the way music practices, urban living, and community living are disciplined to maintain the existing capitalistic order and tend to undermine practices of ways of being that are not beneficial to it.

For example, in chapter 7, I gave the example of the differences between the older and newer venues to explore how the architecture of music venues may be a form of disciplinary power to order the town and its residents. Chapter 6 also discussed the Caserne artistic residency, a legally squatted piece of urban wasteland, which was a catalyst of talents and creative collaborations between various artistic disciplines between 1998 and 2003. I argue that this space might briefly have acted for musicians, local authorities, and an *association* as a temporal heterotopia. This is because this one space was simultaneously exclusive (toward some of the residents) and inclusive (of many artistic disciplines). It centralised multiple sites of convergences (local authorities, the *association,* and musicians were in synergy for a while) and divergences (musicians specifically appreciated this space as it was different from the typical state cultural and artistic facilities of the town). This continued until the town replaced the venue with housing, thus repeating the cycles of urban destruction and construction that are part of the necessary crisis for capitalism. This absorption of surplus labour and capital, creating new conditions for capital accumulation, highlights how capitalism still forms and controls people's right to their cities and creative spaces.

Additionally, I used the concept of anomie as defined by Émile Durkheim and used by Beth Epstein and Caroline de Saint Pierre to better comprehend and conceptualise the past, present and future risks of fragmentation of the new town, its residents and how this relates to larger-scale risks of

anomie (Durkheim 1984; Saint-Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011). I gave the example of music events and activities in Cergy-Pontoise and how they were simultaneously performances of the crisis of the model of the French republican contract in France, and coping strategies to manage this crisis. This led to considering music events and activities as potential communitas moments and participatory activities that may act as agents of social change (Di Giovine 2011; Turner 2012; Turino 2016). Ephemeral music events and music activities in the new town have the potential to create moments of togetherness, where an ideal sense of community and urban living might be briefly experienced by those in attendance, leading to the creation of shared sonic memories for residents (Saint-Pierre 2002; Cohen 2007; Turino 2016). Nevertheless, these moments are not necessarily moments of 'oneness', nor are they free of tensions. Some of them might be opportunities for some of the residents' marginalized or less audible voices to be heard and expressed in the town's public sphere. I gave examples of incidents happening at local music events and examples of music events themselves and responses to them as not aligning with the initial visions and plans of the organisers – be it the town or its music *associations.* Some of the residents and musicians who did not attend or participate in these music events and activities also highlighted existing fragmentation and anomie, as some residents felt that the events did not concern them or otherwise felt excluded from them. I gave the example of local musicians who perceive the local music events organised by *associations* and the council as unappealing or exclusionary.

8.2. Research Summary: music practices and the shifting lifecycle of a new town.

In this thesis, the chapters form a sort of spiral that starts at the stage of the initial planning of the town, its iterations and finally back to a programme of urbanisation and regeneration development, which is informed by past and present failures of the initial planning. The concepts and theories that I have detailed in the previous section run throughout the thesis. A focus on local music practices also links all chapters. Across chapters 5, 6 and 7, I showed how local musical practices relate to the given built environment, local and national policymaking, and residents' voices involved in music-making and musical events. In Chapters 1, 2 and 3, I surveyed the existing literature and detailed the theoretical and methodological approach discussed above.

In Chapter 4, I set the scene for the rest of the thesis by focussing on the initial planning of the town: the hopes, fears and ideals of its planners and policymakers. I also examined the social, economic and political contexts of the initial planning and other critical relevant contexts for the later stages of the towns' development. I argued that the initial planning of Cergy-Pontoise was too top-down and not flexible enough for the iterations that have happened during its development and as a result of urban living. The initial town and its music facilities mirrored the division between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' music and other cultural practices taking place at the state level. Amateur, grassroots music practices were poorly considered in the initial planning and relegated to the private sphere or considered an after-thought in later development stages, while 'highbrow' and professional music practices had dedicated facilities, to begin with. I considered this type of planning reinforced existing fragmentations of music and other practices and left little space for residents and musicians to appropriate the town as their own and make space for some of their practices that may not fit with the towns' facilities.

In Chapter 5, I brought the initial planning discussed in chapter 4 into dialogue with the actual experiences of present-day residents. I examined the existing failures of the initial planning from the perspective of residents who face a series of challenges, including the lack of a real centre and lively town life, the noise and accessibility problems, and the fragmentation of the town. I argued that music *associations,* their music events and activities produce communitas moments that help negotiate states of anomie by creating ephemeral togetherness moments and collective sonic memories in the town. These musical moments may help with fostering better social ties between people and better ties between people and their space (Saint Pierre 2002; Epstein 2011; Giovine 2011). These communitas moments and sonic memories are also tactics that renegotiate existing top-down planning and strategies for the town (De Certeau 1984).

Nevertheless, these tactics are not homogeneous. Music *associations,* activities, and events are diverse, and the residents' responses to them are also heterogeneous. The interplay between the events, the activities and their audiences' responses express a wide range of utopian ideals and local tensions and negotiations about community and urban living. I argued that these dialectics are useful in better

understanding broader tensions such as the crisis of the French nation and its identity and the global erosion of models of citizenship.

While chapter 5 focussed on residents' perspectives and their various ideals about urban and community living as well as the activities organised by the music *associations*, in chapter 6, I turned to the micro level of individual experiences and perceptions. I gave concrete examples of how wider systemic issues discussed in chapter 5 at group levels are experienced on the micro-level by various individual musicians with different backgrounds and perspectives. By focussing on individuals' life stories, the chapter uncovers some of the less visible musical practices and more atypical, unplanned spaces (e.g. illegal, private, urban wastelands) that were not covered in chapters 4 and 5. Depending on their background, age, generation, and individual expectations of the town and their own needs and wants, musicians, perceive and experience the town differently. I argued that these diverse lived experiences are a reflection of the changing state of the town, in terms of its opportunities and challenges for musicians. I noticed the musicians' internalized boundaries of how they perceive themselves and others, and position themselves in the town and the world. For example, the town's boundaries may represent the limits between what some of them perceive as being authentic (not engaging with local public support for musicians) or not being authentic (being a 'council rapper'). The example of the *Caserne* framed as a temporal heterotopia was, for a short period, a space where these boundaries blurred or were renegotiated because - while it lasted - it was a successful project stemming from efficient synergies between musicians, *associations* and local authorities. Thus, the case study of the Caserne was helpful in highlighting the importance of planning and developing urban spaces that are flexible and malleable for potential alternative spaces and productive synergies between artists, *associations* and local authorities to emerge.

Finally, in chapter 7, I explored the ageing, obsolescence and regeneration of the new town. I argued that although regeneration is inevitable as the town is ageing, it is also a difficulty for the regeneration process to address and mitigate lags between various existing spaces in the town, and I explored how this in turn impacts space planning (e.g. fast pace of obsolescence versus slow pace of bureaucracy). I illustrated this by examining local government bureaucracy and how it affects local

state music venues and studios. I also examined the plans for the cultural regeneration of the town: what it creates, what it destroys, and what it carries on and perpetuates for the residents and music scenes. I argued that some of these plans and emerging outcomes are subtle forms of disciplinary power that perpetuate existing top-down dynamics. I gave the example of some of the new facilities that are assigned a clearly defined purpose and a discipline (e.g. the three hubs). Compared to the older facilities, these new facilities also have an increased and reinforced security. I considered that the regeneration may be over-planned and destroys some of the existing small pockets of 'cocoon' spaces, which were developed over time by musicians who carved them through their practices and events. This poses the question: are such changes part of the inevitable ebb and flow of the town in flux? Alternatively, is there a greater risk from gentrification in the suburbs, with some of the local music scenes pushed outside or once again relegated to the non-public sphere if not profitable or considered not as valuable?

In all the chapters of this thesis, I have tried to manage the different levels and entities that impact each other: local, national and global policymaking, political, social and economic contexts, and the lived experience of musicians, both at the collective (resident-group and music *associations)* level and individual musician level. In all chapters, I argued for a more people-centred, flexible and open approach to urbanism and policymaking. I argued that the everyday life experiences of people involved in musical practices help to inform better planning and policymaking that relate to new urban environments and their cultural and leisure facilities, policies and services.

8.3. Core contributions

The core contributions of this thesis span interdisciplinary research and various individual disciplines, including ethnomusicology, urbanism and policymaking. The thesis contributes to the field of interdisciplinary studies by exploring methods and ways of researching that aim to be more agile and holistic to address better a given object of study (e.g. a new town's local music scene) within shifting contexts of multiple ongoing challenges that include globalisation, neo-liberalism and rapid urbanisation, amongst others. These challenges may be difficult to tackle if focussing solely on a few

disciplines and fixed theoretical and methodological approaches. The thesis pursues a more holistic and agile way of researching within these ongoing challenges, by engaging with literature from disciplines other than ethnomusicology (e.g. cultural policy and urbanism), which all have different analysis and unique ways of framing and understanding these challenges. I also did so by approaching my ethnographic fieldwork iteratively and reflexively and by focussing the focus of my ethnography of Cergy-Pontoise on the different spaces and people (e.g. local policymaker, musician) that shape, enable, hinder or have an effect in some way on local urban musicking rather than focussing solely on a particular music genre and its musicians. This approach also allowed me to contribute to creating further links between ethnomusicology, cultural policy and urban studies, as well as to contribute to current debates in policymaking with regards to the use of ethnography as a source of robust evidence for policymaking and as a way to develop better people-centred policies.

The thesis aims to build further bridges between ethnomusicology and cultural policy by focussing on French cultural policy and its relation to local music practices. I have explored how everyday music practices in new urban environments relate to French cultural policymaking and urban planning. I gave a brief overview of French cultural policymaking, the institutionalisation of specific popular music genres in France, and the creation of public music studios and local subsidized schemes to support local emerging musicians. The ethnomusicology research is enhanced by detailing other relevant French social and urban policymaking and initiatives related to these practices. For example, most of the local music practices I discussed in this thesis are embedded within the French concept of *animation*, which is part of French policymaking, urban planning, popular education and community studies, as I have detailed in chapter 4. This research also contributes to creating bridges between ethnomusicology and urban anthropology and other fields of urban studies by engaging with theories and concepts from urban studies, and how these relate to the local practices of musicians of the new towns. I explore the potentiality for local music practices in new towns to be valuable lenses to assess the sustainability of an urban area. I also argue for the need to go beyond scholarly debates about 'lack of identity' and 'place-making' common in urban studies about new towns, as discussed in chapter 2. Instead, I present the study of local music practices as a helpful tool to better understand and negotiate

situations of fragmentation and states of anomie that are at a higher risk of happening in new urban environments than in older towns.

Finally, I have responded to the call for better integration of ethnographic data as a valid source of evidence for policymakers, by relating the everyday music practices I observed to past and present local and national policymaking. I presented these local music practices, which are often considered non-essential and mundane, as insightful to how existing cultural and urban policies are experienced on the ground by people involved in them. Throughout this thesis, I argued that the ethnography of local music scenes might assist with assessing the degree of sustainability of past, present and future cultural, urban and social policymaking. For example, I have detailed in chapters 5 and 6 how some local music professionals and musicians have experienced local public music studios. The focus on these spaces and how they are experienced has highlighted that they are unsuitable and unsustainable due to the slowness and rigidity of local government bureaucracy and machinery that lead to their difficult maintenance, the rapid obsolescence of their music equipment, and the barriers that prevent their staff from organising initiatives, which could be beneficial to people. It also highlighted the change of local music practices due to the Digital Age. For these studios to adapt to the changing times and respond appropriately to the present and future changing needs of the local musicians; policymaker makers might carefully rethink these studios, their equipment, and their role toward the residents in collaboration with residents.

8.4. Further Research

This thesis opens new gaps and scope for further research. One may research other new towns, their initial planning and policymaking context and how they relate to their local music scenes; for example, to compare Cergy-Pontoise and Milton Keynes with other towns and see the similarities and differences between them. It may be that, similar to the diversity of people living in the same town, there is also a wide diversity among new towns and local music practices. Cergy-Pontoise could be compared with other French new towns in the periphery of Paris. This could be insightful in terms of how local musicians relate to their new town and Paris. Would musicians in other new towns have as

clear-cut boundaries between Paris and their town as some of the musicians of Cergy-Pontoise did, as discussed in chapter 6?

Stemming from chapter 7 and the regeneration of Cergy-Pontoise, there needs to be more research on the local music scenes of new towns experiencing regeneration, be it in France or other countries such as the UK. It may be insightful for Ruth Finnegan to return to Milton Keynes as the town is now at the heart of a significant urban development set out in a government vision for the spatial framework of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.[21] One may speculate that this major urban development may impact the existing local amateur music- making practices that Finnegan researches. A further area of exploration could be about exploring interdisciplinarity further. It could be valuable to bridge the gap between design, anticipatory anthropology and ethnomusicology by exploring speculative future of local music-making practices in new (and older) urban environments (Strzelecka 2013; Smith et al. 2016). This seems pertinent to tackle issues that I have discussed in chapter 6 and 7. In these chapters, I have touched on the Digital Age, the obsolescence of state music facilities and approaches and the burden of local bureaucracy. I observed how some musicians engage less with the local life and prefer to use the Internet's convenience, efficiency and low cost, even using it to find spaces to practice and perform, when the given facilities of the town exclude them or are not suitable. These ways of living may have intensified with Covid-19 and the stay-at-home rule in the UK. When much can be achieved from home and remotely by some (including musicians), how can we strike a balance between inclusivity, sustainability and visions for the future in terms of cultural planning? This includes achieving a balance both in terms of urban planning but also in all kinds of sets of policies that aim to support local musicians, music businesses and the 'livening up' and '*animation*' of towns and their residents. How will local musical practices and events organised by local grassroots music *associations* of Cergy-Pontoise (and other new towns) adapt to (and following) the pandemic? How

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[21] According to the Ministry of Housing, Local Community and Government as of April 2021, this vision sets out a long-term urban development planning up to 2050 that aims to contribute to the levelling up of the area and for a better social, economic and environmental future in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.

similar or different will these practices be during the recovery of Covid-19, post-pandemic and potentially during and after another crisis?

In order to tackle these questions, innovative approaches such as anticipatory anthropology, which combine both situated and grounded approach with more critical and speculative thinking, could help better understand issues related to music practices and the changing urban environment. It may involve more research focusing on the future of urban areas, music practices, and how musicians and other people involved in music apprehend the future and set narratives and trends. In practice, this could be done in a light-touch way in the field by using tools such as probing 'speculative scenarios' during interviews with people met on the field when appropriate. Such research could provide insight about the sustainability of future planning of new urban environments and their public music and other communal facilities while also being a creative way to stimulate other ways for the person interviewed to provide insights about their present lived experience. Developing this 'future' focus on research and method might potentially benefit several fields and disciplines and help them contribute further and more effectively with one another: ethnomusicology, urbanism, cultural policy studies, user-centred design and policymaking. This approach may help with better understanding musicians' hopes and fears for the future; capturing early signal of music practices changes and how these shapes musicians present practices and experiences of policies and the urban environment, ultimately contributing to better informed decision-making for urban and cultural planners.

Appendix A List of Interviews

This is a table of all the interviews I conducted between March 2017 and December 2018. I have also included 4 interviews that I conducted as part of my Masters between May and June 2015 because they have provided useful insight for the present thesis. I highlighted them in a darker colour (orange).

Categories	Pseudonyms	Position/role
Local Authorities		
	n/a	Project lead for cultural and artistic projects in highschool and universités of *région* Île-de-France
	n/a	Local Lab for students, start-ups and residents. Interested in urban *animation* and participation.
	n/a	Senior civil servant working for *animation* in Cergy-Pontoie
	n/a	Senior civil servant working for culture and sports at the council of Cergy
	n/a	Senior civil servant working for culture and heritage at the council of Cergy
	Franck	Senior civil servant working for contemporary music, artistic & digital creation and cultural outreach for *département* Val d'Oise
Music *Associations*		
	Cécile	Member of a music *association (Voyage)*
	n/a	Interview with several members of a music *association (L'Atelier)*
	n/a	Interview with a volunteer of a music *association (L'Atelier)*
	Loic	Employee at a music *association* and musician (Dub) *(L'Atelier)*
	Sylvain	Member of a music *association,* musician (reggae) and working in an artistic residence
Musicians		
	n/a	Singer in a band (chanson Française)
	Luc, Mathieu	All members of a Band (folk-rock).
	Ali	All members of a Band (rock).
	Lucie	All members of a Band (Celtic, folk-rock).
	n/a	All members of a (Punk)
	Rosemarie	Singer-songwriter and Rapper
	Bastien	Session bassist for multiple bands of various music genres
	Nathan	Rapper
	Tom & Max	Rappers
	Przemysław	Rapper
	Sam	Rapper
	Cédric	Dj
	Jérémy	Dj
	Jules	Dj
	Marc	Dj

Other cultural & artistic associations		
	n/a	Employee of a cultural *association* that gives access to culture to socially and excluded individuals in Val d'Oise
	n/a	Created an audio-guide of Cergy-Pontoise with residents.
Private music professionals, studios & venues		
	n/a	Owner of a private rock music venue, bar and studio.
	n/a	Owner of a private music studio.
	n/a	Owner of a private music studio.
	n/a	Owner of a private music studio.
	n/a	Band manager and promoter (metal music)
	Romain	Owner of a private rock music venue, bar and studio (*The Spot*)
	n/a	Backliner of a punk band
Public music schools (include *CRR*)		
	n/a	Performance teacher
	n/a	Performance teacher
	n/a	Directors of one of the local state music schools
	n/a	Pedagogical and cultural outreach lead
Public Music Studios & venues		
	n/a	Ex-Senior lead of the network of music professionals and musicians
	Nicolas	Senior lead of the network of music professionals and musicians
	n/a	Communication and cultural development lead at a local concert venue
	n/a	Public studio manager and contemporary music lead at the council of Pontoise
	n/a	Staff of a public music studio
	Ben and Jonathan	Staff of a public music studio
	Olivier	music scheduler and head of a public music venue
	Jean	manager of a public studio and venue
	m/a	Senior lead for Student and Music life at Cergy-Pontoise University
	Paul	manager of a public music studio
Residents		
	n/a	Attended *Classes Orchestres* (programme run in some of the local state schools by a charity inspired by El Sistema) while in highschool in Cergy-Pontoise
	n/a	One of the 'pioneers' of Cergy-Pontoise
	n/a	My Parents
	n/a	Two of my friends
	n/a	One of my parents' friends
Academics		
Auclair	Elizabeth	Geographer
De Saint Pierre	Caroline	Anthropologist
Epstein	Beth	Anthropologist
Vadelorge	Loïc	Historian

Appendix B List of Events

This is a table of the events I attended or volunteered at between March 2017 and December 2018.

Organiser	Event
Voyage association	Free music Festivals
Le Forum venue	Concerts at Le Forum
L'Atelier association	Youth Concert - theme 'fighting discriminations'
CRR & Cergy-Pontoise University	Concerts performed at Cergy-Pontoise by students of the *CRR* and the university
L'Atelier association	Open mic nights
Voyage & L'Atelier	*Associations'* Team Meetings & Volunteers meeting
Local authorities, *associations,* musicians	Fête de la Musique
music *association*	Music festival celebrating Gypsies, Romany, and Travellers' culture
Local authorities, *CRR*, *associations*	Pool Party
Solidarity *association*	Music Festival organised by a charity focussing on social exclusion
Local authorities	Cergy Soit!
The Spot	Jam Sessions
Local authorities, *associations,* residents	Village Fest & Parade of Cergy Village
Network of music professionals of Val d'Oise, *associations*, musicians	Music Network of Val d'Oise Networking Event
Festival organiser, Local authorities (*régional level*)	Launch of festival 'Jazz au fil-de-l'Oise'
L'Atelier association	Small music workshops and events targeting the youth and deprived areas of the town
L'Atelier association	Hip Hop festival (several events)
L'Atelier association	Various Concerts organised by a local venue
Music associations & Points Communs	Concerts at *Théâtre 95* or at its *Café de la Plage*

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