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Citation: Bonham-Carter, C. (2019). Conceptualising cultural governance under new Labour's social value agenda: the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions on London (1997-2010). (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, City, University of London)

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**CONCEPTUALISING CULTURAL
GOVERNANCE UNDER NEW LABOUR'S
SOCIAL VALUE AGENDA:
THE PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES OF
CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS
INSTITUTIONS IN LONDON (1997-2010)**

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Thesis submitted for the qualification of
Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2019

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thank you to Professor Andy Pratt for unwavering patience and support. My induction into academia has been inspiring.

Of course, thank you to all of the interview subjects and cultural workers who were so generous with their time. And, I am grateful for my original PhD colleagues, who provided me with a community of support in this process.

And finally, I should say thank you (and sorry) to my family. Thank you for your support Talwyn, Tristan and Austin, and most of all, Becky.

Declaration

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Abstract

The thesis addresses the extent to which the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour's social value agenda provides an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010. By substantiating the discursive community of contemporary art and approaching the study of governance through the lens of cultural policy and contemporary art theory, the thesis establishes that in the dominant critical position, the interpretation of governmentality that is applied to the analysis of cultural policy is largely structural. The thesis identifies a gap in the literature taking account of the perspective and role of the skilled cultural actor in governance and capturing the nuance and variety of experiences across sectors and institutions.

Using three substantive case studies, the thesis sets out to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda. It uses a combination of research methods, including policy review, quantitative data analysis and interviews with skilled cultural actors. Findings about informal, micro-level processes, behaviours and attitudes within the institution show that the meaning of social value as a governing principle was a highly situated concept, constructed through the input of multiple discourses. The findings show that there were tensions to resolve at the interface of practice and policy that had been previously overlooked by researchers, and skilled cultural actors played an important, agentic role in decision-making, meaning-making and governance. The findings further demonstrate that the experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda was more nuanced and varied than is visible in most normative critiques.

The thesis' findings support the use of governmentality as an analytic lens for reading cultural policy under New Labour, but with caveats. The findings demonstrate the need for cultural policy studies to understand more about the critical debates informing practice, and to pay more attention to the life of policy as it moves beyond rhetoric. The thesis' approach shows the benefit of drawing a specific disciplinary perspective into the analytic framework.

List of Acronyms

ACE	Arts Council England
CEMA	Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NPM	New Public Management
NPO	National Portfolio Organisation
PAT	Policy Action Team
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RFO	Regularly Funded Organisation
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit

PART I - THE RESEARCH STIMULUS AND FOUNDATIONS

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 'Exit through the giftshop'

There has long been discussion about how 'non-core' activities such as the café, the gift shop, or indeed the car parking, cross-subsidise cultural institutions.¹ However, there is more discussion needed on the pernicious ways in which the measurement of the numbers of visitors has become not only a proxy measure for enjoyment and appreciation, but also a crucial benchmark in evaluating the worthiness of the funding of an institution. Such evaluation measures have become a new part of the DNA of institutions, ushering in a new form of governance, and have had profound implications for how institutions carry out their missions. This thesis takes us on the journey of how such measures have evolved into governance tools, and how they have been used, and resisted, in one type of cultural institution: the contemporary visual arts institution.

From 2008 - 2010, I was Curator of Visual Arts at a prominent Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) in London.² I can recall one specific moment during that time that I now look back upon as an impetus to begin this research. I was sitting in a management meeting

¹ In 1988, the Victoria and Albert Museum ran an ad campaign based on the slogan, "An ace caff, with quite a nice museum attached." The slogan came to define the phenomenon of museum cafes 'outshining' the museums themselves.

² Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) received regular funding from ACE in three-year cycles. In 2012, they were replaced with National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), which now receive regular funding from ACE in four-year cycles.

with the Director, Head of Technical, and other Curators, listening to a briefing on upcoming events. The discussion turned to the London Marathon, which finishes close by to the institution. The conversation was about whether the team should create signage to alert passers-by that the gallery's toilets were open, in an effort to funnel some of the 40,000 runners finishing the race outside the gallery, into the gallery, and most importantly, clicked into the audience numbers counter. The discussion went on, with my colleagues prevaricating about whether the institution's centuries old plumbing system could handle the expected demand.

The institution, which had begun as a private members' club, had a reputation for showing experimental work, and working with emerging artists. At the end of the noughties, it was under a great deal of financial pressure. In an effort to compete with London's free to access museums, it had scrapped its £1 a day membership fee. Despite being a modest sum, the consequential loss of revenue was further aggravation to the already dire state of the institution's finances. Some time ago, the beating heart of the experimental art world had relocated to the East End, and the institution's once envious position on a prominent central London street had become an incongruity, and a challenge. With all these conditions folding in on it, alongside the step change in cultural policy that occurred when New Labour called upon museums to act as 'centres for social change' (DCMS 2000), the institution had been forced into a period of deep, critical self-reflection about its purpose and role in the institutional landscape. The institution was nervous that the Arts Council England (ACE) might lose faith in it and was acutely aware that it was disproportionately dependent upon core funding from the ACE to survive. Hence, the need to increase footfall.

For me, this question of the public using the toilets was an encounter with an absurdity, which was that somehow these measures of success – in this case, audience numbers – had moved so far away

from the underlining principle of social value that they purported to reflect. I began to ask questions about this evaluative framework that hung over the institution, and me, as a cultural worker: What did it measure? What did it mean – to us and to our funders? How did we ‘deal’ with it? Through my research, I have gained a critical understanding of the policy context, and I have refined my questions to address specific points of contention that I see as materialising at the interface of policy and practice. However, it is important to note that my experience of policy and evaluation as a practitioner was the initial point of departure for this enquiry, which has turned up both expected and surprising results.

Accordingly, I also occupy a relatively unique analytic position moving ‘from the sector’ to academe. By far the majority of critical analysis in the policy field (as opposed to curatorial) comes from an academic sensibility. More fundamentally, few policy analyses are embedded in an understanding of the day-to-day professional concerns of practitioners and how they view the external policy challenges from their unique professional positions. In a small way, I hope that adding this ‘internal sensibility’ adds more nuance to the policy debate by including other professional understandings, as well as the normal political and policy ones. It is only through writing and researching this thesis that I have become aware of this additional, and valuable, perspective.

I was an assistant curator, and then a curator, in various contemporary visual arts institutions in London in the period 2008-2012. I experienced the end of the New Labour government and the beginning of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition in 2010. Initially, I gained an understanding of the policy context from the ‘inside out’ from filling out ACE funding reports, responding to data requests from the Development department and listening to my colleagues’ perceptions of outside agendas, including what ACE wanted from us. On reflection, my understanding of the policy context was only ever partial and

informed by 'indirect' sources. At the same time, one could argue that policy analysts seldom engage in self-critical analysis of their own positionality, hence overlooking the importance of the sometimes-competing professional ethics of practitioners. However, this is another salient point: nobody has perfect knowledge, nor a 'God's eye view' of policy or strategy. In my experience, I found that people and institutions struggle to do the best they can, with what they have, in the circumstances. Also, speaking from 'inside the whale,' I could appreciate that policy was not simply the pragmatics of implementation; sometimes it was a question of a complex conflict of professional ideologies. Again, this is something that both intrigued and frustrated me when reading about 'my sector' and 'my profession.'

1.2 Purpose and aims of this study

The opening anecdote above is just one, small and highly situated example of the variety of ways that institutions engaged with new evaluative measures that were introduced into the cultural sector under the New Labour administration. However, the example is illuminating in a number of ways. First, it shows that New Labour's social value cultural policies did encourage institutions to reflect upon their place in the landscape of contemporary art in London, and to think about their core mission in different ways, and in relation to the social value agenda. At the same time, the discussion of opening up the gallery's toilets summarily discredits the integrity of some proxy measures of social value, whilst illustrating the manner of ways in which institutions could and did manipulate indices to a desired end. Most importantly, the example challenges the basic assumption that the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) auditing techniques into the cultural sector could bring a vast and varied landscape of institutions neatly into step, without some friction, contestation and institutional variance, both in terms of social value as a governing principle, and in modes of engaging with an evidence-based evaluation framework.

Over the last six years of researching this (part-time) PhD, a number of books have been written about cultural policy under New Labour (see, for example, Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015; Hewison 2014; O'Brien 2014). As the research for this thesis developed, my initial research questions evolved into questions that surfaced from critically engaging with the conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour that emerged from these texts, as well as a number of articles by Eleonora Belfiore (2002; 2004; 2012). Each text obviously takes a distinct approach to the theorisation of cultural policy under New Labour, but collectively, they constitute a general reading of the period from a governance/NPM perspective (I explore these terms in section 2.4). Throughout the thesis, I call this the 'normative position,' the 'normative conceptualisation' or the 'dominant critical position.' The thesis engages most directly with Dave O'Brien, whose account of the period, *Cultural Policy: Management, value and modernity in the creative industries* (2014) "synthesises insights from political science and sociology to illuminate questions that are important for a cultural studies approach to cultural policy" (O'Brien: 1). Of all the authors, O'Brien is most explicit about his application of Foucault's governmentality as an analytic lens for exploring cultural policy in modernity, whereas that approach is rather more implicit in the other expositions. On the whole, the thesis supports the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, but seeks to refine it, through research led by critical questions, and particularly in regards to the use and interpretation of governmentality as an analytic lens. The dominant literature has sought to look at the system, and those creating and defining the KPIs that institutions were held accountable to. My aim was rather humbler, but nonetheless important: to explore how and where (organisationally) these new governance techniques entered, transformed or were resisted in the everyday activities of the contemporary visual arts institution.

My experience in contemporary visual arts institutions led me to the hunch that some detail, or 'local colour' was missing from the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour. In the dominant readings, cultural and creative industries are considered as a whole, with little differentiation between and amongst sectors, let alone institutions. Clive Gray points out the 'fragmented' nature of the museum sector and the need to look at "particular specificities of individual organisational forms and sectoral peculiarities" (Gray 2010b: 54). There is a lack of detailed research on the sector as a whole, let alone each type of institution or art form. The thesis redresses this gap by focusing specifically on the contemporary visual arts institution, which is largely ignored as an object of study in the field of cultural policy and even in museum studies rarely features relative to the attention given to art historical and heritage museums. In addition, as explained in further detail in the next chapter (see section 2.3.2), the contemporary art museum makes an interesting case study in relation to social value because in many ways, its content is the most challenging of the museum world (Belfiore 2002), therefore making it perhaps the least likely in the sector to realise the call for museums to act as 'centres for social change' (DCMS 2000). While the normative conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour tend to flatten differences in the sector, the approach taken here attempts to nuance these theorisations, adding detail, colour and specificity to the more general accounts of the extant literature.

In focusing on the contemporary art museum in particular, the thesis adopts a different disciplinary leaning, bringing in the literature of contemporary art theory and museum studies (that is, the understandings and professional concerns of the practitioners), alongside the interests of cultural policy and public policy studies. The thesis sets out to explore what new insights might be gained from approaching the study of cultural policy under New Labour from the dual perspective of contemporary art theory and cultural policy. The next two chapters (chapters 2 and 3) develop this dual perspective and

explain how it sheds a new light on the conceptualisation of the period. Importantly, in bringing in the literature of contemporary art theory, the thesis substantiates the discursive community of contemporary art, and shows how the discourses of art and policy came together under New Labour. At the same time, the thesis details the historical and theoretical foundations of social value in art and policy to show how rhetorical similarities belied fundamental differences in conceptions of social value. In the normative conception of cultural policy under New Labour, there is very little exploration of the friction and contestation that surrounded the meaning of social value as a governing principle. The thesis' multidisciplinary approach reveals details about the complexity of governance in contemporary arts institutions and raises question about how the meaning of social value was constructed at the interface of policy and practice.

Furthermore, by elucidating the input of the contemporary art discourse, the thesis substantiates the knowledge base of cultural actors in the institution, recasting them not as 'policy administrators' but as 'skilled cultural actors.' In the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, NPM auditing processes are assumed to operate in a simple and rational way, with little acknowledgement of the role that skilled cultural actors might play in interpreting policy, negotiating discourses and resolving value tensions. O'Brien's (2014) application of governmentality, though acknowledging the complexity and fragmentation of modernity, focuses primarily on the processes, structures and technical instruments of governance. In part, this is because these dominant positions do not fully engage with cultural actors 'on the ground' within the institution, instead referring to top-level actors, such as directors and policy makers. Therefore, these accounts do not capture the additional, micro-level processes and behaviours that shaped governance in the institution. In addition, because the dominant critical positions operate at a macro-level, and actors within the institution are not substantiated with a knowledge base that engenders "professional

power” (O’Brien 2014: 12) there is little scope in the normative conceptualisation to conceive of an agentic role for the skilled cultural worker in governance.

By critically engaging with the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, as I do in this thesis, I develop a different critique of the extant literature. The main points of this critique, summarised above and expanded in the next chapter, are that in current theorisations, there is an assumed rationality and structural simplicity to NPM as a governing framework that appears to silence the role of skilled cultural actors in governance and flatten differences across sectors and institutions. This critique leads directly to the main research question of the thesis:

Does the normative conceptualisation of cultural governance under New Labour’s social value agenda provide an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010?

Accordingly, the research aim of the thesis is to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution’s experience of governance under New Labour’s social value agenda, in order to assess the adequacy of the normative conceptualisation.

To approach the main research question, three multi-part subsidiary research questions are presented, each of which roughly corresponds to an aspect of the critique of the normative position. These questions emerged from my experience in practice, and from a wider reading of the emergent literature on new forms of cultural governance (see chapters 2 and 3). To begin with, as the thesis argues that the dominant critical position is not sector-specific, does not account for the inputs of multiple discourses and does contend with the frictions

and contestations around the meaning of social value as a governing principle, the first subsidiary research question is:

How was the meaning of social value as a governing principle constructed at the interface of policy and practice?

Following this, because the thesis argues that the dominant critical position is overly structural, and assumes there is a rationality and simplicity to NPM as a governing framework, the second subsidiary research question is:

What were the processes of governance in contemporary visual arts institutions?

Finally, the thesis argues that the normative conceptualisation is too simple and general, and tends to flatten differences between sectors and institutions. The critique leveraged in the thesis is that the dominant positions do not make visible the colour, variety and conflicts that emerged as part of the governance of contemporary visual arts under New Labour. To explore this critique in further detail, the third subsidiary research question is:

How did specific institutions manage the tensions around social value within an evidence based evaluative framework? Did the methods shape activities and decision-making in the institution?

The second part of this multi-part subsidiary research question attempts to explore O'Brien's (2014) theory of the 'social life of methods,' and the extent to which his argument that methods "constitute social reality" (O'Brien 2014: 12) might be overstated.

Collectively, the research questions guide the central research objective, to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda. In section 1.4, I explain how the thesis sets out to gather empirical evidence to fulfil this research objective. In the conclusion to the thesis (chapter 8), I explain how all of the findings build to address the main research question, ultimately concluding that the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour does not provide an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010.

Instead, I argue that we need to refine the normative conceptualisation of the period to acknowledge the role of multiple discourses in decision-making and governance; give voice to skilled cultural actors in the institution; recognise the nuance and variety of different sectors and institutions; and ultimately, to allow more agency, and less structuralism in the interpretation of governmentality as an analytic lens for reading the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions under New Labour's social value agenda. I hope that this thesis will encourage others to explore the impact of disciplinarity on the experience of cultural governance in other art forms and to look at micro-organisational changes and responses to the 'framing narratives and techniques' of governance.

In the next section, I explain the scope of this study, and rationalise the limits I placed on it to contain the research enquiry, whilst also commenting on its potential for wider applicability.

1.3 Scope of the study

The thesis is broadly situated in the field of cultural policy. However, as explained earlier in this chapter, the thesis takes a unique multidisciplinary approach to the study of governance under New

Labour, drawing in a number of discipline communities, including contemporary art theory, museology and public policy studies, alongside cultural policy studies. The point of framing the research in this way is to present a research problem that needs to be addressed: what happens when these worlds collide at the interface of policy and practice? As a multidisciplinary enquiry, my research engages with literature on social and cultural policy, arts management, socially engaged arts practices, NPM and governmentality. I demonstrate in the thesis that my unique multidisciplinary perspective, and the thesis' focus on a specific, differentiated slice of the cultural sector, make visible the specific behaviours and micro-processes that informed governance in the contemporary visual arts institution. I argue in the thesis that this perspective, and the empirical findings of the thesis, shed new light on the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda and challenge the structural application of governmentality that is applied to the study of cultural governance in the normative conceptualisation of the period.

However, despite a narrowed focus on the experience of the contemporary visual arts institution, there are still many different paths that the research enquiry could have followed, and it is worth briefly outlining what the thesis does not attempt to do. First, the thesis does not attempt to analyse in great detail the specific policies, funding agreements and key performance indicators (KPIs) that constituted the policy context. Instead, I draw upon overarching theoretical or descriptive constructs to frame general developments in the political and administrative climate in the period 1997-2010 and focus my enquiry on the *experience* of these developments, rather than the developments themselves. I accept and employ David Harvey's conception of neoliberalism (Harvey 2005) as an organising principle to explain the general decline of the welfare state in the UK from the 1970s onwards (see section 3.2.4 for more detail on this), which contextualises the 'instrumental turn' in cultural policy within a broader

political context. Similarly, I use the term ‘New Public Management’ (NPM) to explain certain changes in public sector governance from the 1970s onwards, and as a descriptive category for the introduction of new governing modalities into the cultural sector under New Labour (see section 2.5.1 for more detail on this).

By using these constructs as overarching structural frameworks for the thesis, I am able to explore in more detail the *experience* of these changes. In chapter 3, I provide an overview of cultural policy in the UK leading up to and during New Labour, but there are certainly other texts that offer a more thorough descriptive narrative of policy interventions from DCMS and ACE (see Hewison 2014; Skene 2017). My concern is to establish a general policy ‘climate,’ and then to explore how institutions and cultural workers perceived, and engaged with, this climate, and the informal processes that contributed to formal structures of governance. In chapter 4, I survey key policy documents, to take the temperature of the policy climate, and to illustrate that social value as a governing principle was never clearly defined in the ‘official’ policy guidance. This is important because it rationalises the need to explore further. In my empirical research I investigate the practical significance of ‘auditing techniques’ as proxy measures of social value. My approach is to see the policy framework as but one informative discourse amongst a multitude of other discourses and influences that intermingled with some confusion at the site of policy implementation. This approach engenders scope for the agentic role of the skilled cultural actor to emerge, which is a cornerstone of my argument for a revision of the governmentality perspective on the study of cultural policy under New Labour.

I also do not, in the research, attempt to make a judgement about the success or failure of New Labour’s cultural policies. Part of my argument is that the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour is too general, and too simplified. As I explain elsewhere in the thesis, the general conclusion of the dominant critical

positions is that New Labour's cultural policies "stifled creativity" (Hewison 2014: back cover) and the increased use of the audit in particular was "ineffective and damaging to arts and cultural practice in the UK" (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015: 101). Each of these judgements is qualified by more specific terms and criteria. For example, Hesmondhalgh et al. (2015) aim to make a judgement on cultural policy "in terms of the longstanding aspirations of the social democratic left to address the inequalities produced by capitalism" (189). Nonetheless, the general thrust of the extant literature is to begin from a point of discontent and to assess the damage, or at least the impact, of the cultural policy framework. The thesis does not share that intention, and instead focuses on nuancing these accounts, adding colour, detail and disciplinary focus to the manner of ways in which cultural policy was experienced in the time frame.

Having established what the thesis does not explore, in terms of conceptual and theoretical intentions, I will now explain the significance of the practical boundaries that contain the research enquiry. The first logical boundary imposed upon the research is a time frame. Naturally, since the investigation revolves around the New Labour administration, the critical focus of the thesis is the time period 1997-2010, or the years that New Labour were in office. Of course, the literature review covers artistic and policy developments before the New Labour administration, but these details are employed in the service of enhancing our understanding of the time period in question. More importantly, the New Labour administration is selected as a period of focus because it makes a rich subject for analysis. As explained in the thesis, it was under New Labour that instrumental valuations of culture began to incorporate narratives about the social value of culture, alongside economic contributions. And, it was under New Labour that instrumental values of culture were explicitly coupled with the need for 'hard' evidence of success (Belfiore 2004). The introduction of new governing principles and modalities marked a step

change in UK cultural policy that is still impacting upon the landscape of policy today.

The second logical restriction placed on the research enquiry to contain it is geographic. The research is naturally contained within the UK because the thesis focuses on the New Labour administration, and national cultural policies spearheaded by DCMS and ACE. I further restrict the geographic scope of the enquiry by choosing only to look at institutions within London. The reasons for doing so are two-fold. First, London and the regions operate in very different ways. Regionality no doubt has an impact on the implementation (see Stark et al. 2013) and the experience of policy. However, regionality is not the focus of the thesis. By including broadly similar institutions, I am able to focus on the importance of disciplinarity and to isolate the size of the institution as a key differentiating vector. This ensures there is a 'replication logic' (see Yin 1994: 46) to the multiple-case study design (see section 4.3.1). By achieving this, the data has greater validity and reliability, even if generalisability needs to be tested in a broader context. Second, the research is restricted to institutions in London because these institutions vie for audiences within a particularly busy and competitive institutional landscape. As the thesis is concerned with New Labour's evaluative measures of social value, and audience numbers were the most prominent of those measures, it makes sense to begin the investigation in a highly charged context, where institutions face fierce competition for audiences. Although the New Labour administration is selected as the focus of the research because of the significant policy changes it introduced, I do believe the research may have wider applicability internationally. Cultural policy under New Labour makes a rich case study for the more general study of instrumental cultural policies and evidence-based governing frameworks in the cultural sectors. I believe the conclusions from this thesis may prove useful to policy planning and research into instrumental cultural policies in other international contexts.

As detailed throughout the thesis, the research focuses on the contemporary visual arts sector, a specific subset of the cultural industries. The contemporary visual arts sector is informed by its own discursive community and operates according to the unique economy of the art world (Becker 2008; Robertson 2005; Tawadros and Martin 2014). As I explain throughout the thesis, my sectoral approach to the study of cultural policy under New Labour makes it possible to read micro-level processes and behaviours that are simply not visible in the macro-level approaches of the dominant critical positions. I contain the research within one disciplinary community and demonstrate the benefit of bringing disciplinarity to the study of cultural policy. I have chosen to focus on contemporary visual art in particular because it is in line with my professional experience, and because it has been argued that it makes the most interesting case study in relation to museums and social value, because of the challenging nature of its displays (Belfiore 2002).

Finally, the thesis maintains a focus on 'contemporary visual arts institutions.' These days, contemporary visual arts may encompass any number of art forms from performance and music to theatre and choreography, as well as more traditional formats such as painting, sculpture, installation, etc. However, it is usually very clear which institutions identify as 'contemporary visual arts institutions' because they are plugged into the discursive community of contemporary art (as opposed to the very distinct discursive communities of theatre, dance, music, etc.), which is marked by its association with certain critics, magazines, art fairs, etc. For the avoidance of any doubt, in the selection of my case studies, I also rely upon ACE's classification of institutions by art forms and select institutions from within the 'visual arts' sub-categorisation. This is explained in further detail in chapter 4, the methodology chapter.

It is also worth paying some attention to my use of the word 'institution' and which sort of institutions I deal within in this research. In fact, the

focus of this research is more specifically quasi-public institutions in London. By 'quasi-public' I mean those institutions that sit between the state and the market, or the commercial sector.³ Whilst it is common to use the terms gallery and institution interchangeably, the gallery can often imply a private, commercially driven institution. Therefore, I stick to the term institution or occasionally organisation, for the sake of clarity. The quasi-public institutions investigated in the thesis all received regular funding from ACE during the New Labour administration but also fundraised from other public and private sources. I explain more about the selection of my case studies in chapter 4, the methodology chapter.

I have chosen to focus on quasi-public institutions because they occupy an interesting place in the ecology of arts institutions in London. In Bourdieu's terms, one of the principles of the structure of the 'field of cultural production' is the "opposition between the sub-field of restricted production and the sub-field of large-scale production", which, he says, creates "two economies, two time-scales, two audiences" (Bourdieu 1993: 53). The quasi-public institution represents the tension between the 'field of restricted production,' which is made up of producers of culture and the field of 'large-scale cultural production,' which comprises the 'the public at large' (Bourdieu 1993). As both a 'specialist' institution and a 'public' institution, the quasi-public institution makes a particularly interesting object of analysis because it is a site where tensions between the articulation of social value and discipline-focused agendas manifest.

1.4 Research design

Taking account of the scope and focus of the research explained above (section 1.3), the overall research design of the thesis is

³ By the 'state,' I mean those institutions that receive money directly from DCMS, such as Tate, British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum etc. The institutions I deal with receive funding at an 'arm's-length' from ACE.

constructed to gather evidence that is useful in approaching the research questions outlined in section 1.2. The research questions were formulated as a response to the theoretical critique of the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour that is developed in further detail in chapters 2 and 3. This critique is based upon the perceived short-comings of the normative position, which are then explored through the collection of empirical evidence in the research. The main research question is to assess through empirical evidence concerning actual practices in institutions, the adequacy of the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour as a framework for understanding the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010. The research objective is to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's practices and experience of governance. The subsidiary research questions direct the empirical investigation to the information that needs to be gathered, in order to fulfil the research objective.

The overall ontological base of the research design is anchored in constructivist explanations. This perspective enables a different approach to the more structural interpretation of governmentality that is used as an analytic framework in the normative theorisation of the time. The constructivist approach allows for an in-depth interpretation of the full complexity of cultural policy, which is informed as much by actors, attitudes and discursive inputs, as it is by structures and processes. In order to know more about the milieu of factors influencing governance in the contemporary visual arts institution, the thesis draws upon literature in the fields of cultural policy, public policy studies, arts management, contemporary art theory and museum studies. The benefits of this multidisciplinary perspective are explored and expanded throughout the thesis. The literature review (chapters 2 and 3) brings together these discipline communities. From my review of the primary and secondary literature, a research problem emerges: if social value means different things to different discipline

communities, what happens when these worlds collide at the interface of practice and policy?

In order to approach the research problem, I adopt a case study approach, which enables an in-depth and differentiated investigation (Yin 1994). Within the case studies, I gather two sets of data. First, I gather detailed quantitative data on resource allocation within each case study institution, using the attribution of funds as an indicator of decision-making practices, and as a proxy indicator of institutional values. Contrary to my initial expectations, the quantitative data does not reveal significant changes in funding allocations, but it does reveal changes to budgeting methods and practices. The significance of the latter, in terms of reflecting ideological changes in the institution, are explored in chapter 6. The quantitative data suggests that the 'numbers' don't reveal the whole story of the experience of cultural policy under New Labour (a realisation that also poignantly reflects some the arguments developed in the thesis). To investigate further, I gather additional qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with key cultural actors in the three case study institutions.

Each of these methods has its own strengths and weaknesses, which are explored in further detail in chapter 4. However, I argue that it is important to dig deep into each institution, with multiple probes, in order to move beyond the simple, rational conceptualisations that emerge from the macro-level approaches of the dominant critical positions. After the data collection, I code my findings until a number of key themes emerge. In the next section, I will give a brief overview of the thesis, including both the research foundations and the empirical contributions.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

The thesis is divided into two main parts: the Research Foundations (Part I) and the Empirical Contributions (Part II).

Part I sets out the research foundations of the thesis. It begins with **chapter 1**, this chapter, which has defined the impetus, aims and scope of thesis, as well as the research design. The next chapters, 2 and 3, survey the existing literature, in order to situate the thesis within a broader academic context, and to surface the critical debates that it engages with.

Chapter 2 juxtaposes the conceptualisation of social value as a political project with the theorisation of social value as part of the development of socially engaged practices in the 1990s, bringing together the fields of contemporary art theory and cultural policy. The chapter does not attempt to integrate these two bodies of literature, but instead, to elucidate their differences, as well as exploring the terms they share and their moments of coming together. In doing so, chapter 2 points to a gap in the literature conceptualising cultural policy under New Labour from the novel, dual perspective of cultural policy and contemporary art theory, or the 'space' that institutional practitioners occupy.

Chapter 3 begins to redress this gap by tracing the history of key developments in art leading up to the proliferation of socially engaged practices in the 1990s (the 'social turn' (Bishop 2006; 2012)), alongside the history of post-war cultural policy in the UK. The point of framing the research in this particular way is to illustrate the historical steps that contributed to the formation of two distinct (but overlapping) discursive communities, which would play a role in decision-making in contemporary arts institutions under New Labour.

Having established through the research, a theoretical critique of the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, the thesis aims to explore the normative position in more detail through the collection and analysis of empirical data. **Chapter 4** explains the methodological approach of the thesis, including the steps I took to

answer my research questions and analyse my findings. It also describes the methodological challenges and limitations of the study.

Part II of the thesis draws upon the fieldwork undertaken and illustrates the empirical contributions of the thesis.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the research question about how the meaning of social value was constructed at the interface of practice and policy. The chapter expands upon the multiple inputs, including institutional values and histories, professional identities and discursive communities that constructed the meaning of social value in practice. **Chapter 6** then explores the diffusion of social value as a governing principle into everyday practice, addressing the research questions about processes of governance and specific institutional modes of engagement with an evidence-based evaluation framework. The chapter discusses the role of cultural actors and informal processes in governance, as well as reporting on both the ideological impact of the NPM framework and the variance in institutional engagement with it.

Chapter 7 is the discussion chapter, where the findings are discussed in relation to the existing literature. In particular, the chapter considers how, taken together, the findings address the main research question, and develop an empirically based critique of the normative conceptualisation of the experience of cultural policy under New Labour.

Finally, **chapter 8** is the concluding chapter, which summarises the thesis' main findings, defines its contributions to academic literature and makes suggestions about future research.

Chapter 2: Conceptualising ‘What Happened’

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers some context for the issues set out in the introduction and lays the foundation for the thesis by framing the dominant literature on cultural policy under New Labour, identifying a gap in that body of literature and formulating a plan to address it. The following two chapters provide a foundation for my overall approach to the thesis, which is differentiated from the existing scholarship by the wider disciplinary frame of its research, as well as its methodological choices. In this chapter, I focus on the various conceptualisations of how cultural policy was constituted under New Labour. I look specifically at theorisations of social value as a governing principle, but uniquely, I do so from the dual perspectives of cultural policy and contemporary art theory. In the next chapter, I move from theorisations of ‘what happened’ to the analysis of events and developments in art history and cultural policy. As I establish in this chapter that no one has yet done the work of bringing together cultural policy and contemporary art in a satisfactory manner, I begin that work in the next chapter, by tracing parallel developments in each field, in order to add new insights to current conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour, and the specific experience of contemporary visual arts institutions.

In this chapter, I explore governmentality as the analytic framework that has arguably become the normative approach to the study of cultural policy under New Labour, and which has contributed much to the academic understanding of cultural governance generally. However, in reviewing the literature on governmentality, I identify a

theoretical critique of the governmentality perspective and its application to culture (and cultural policy). In order to substantiate and develop this critique, I bring contemporary art theory into the analytic framework for the interpretation of cultural policy under New Labour. My experiment illuminates the complexity of cultural governance and the tensions that arose from social value as a governing principle under New Labour. I argue that by framing the research in this way, we can substantiate the need for further empirical work at the interface of practice and policy, to understand more about how these 'tensions' were resolved within the NPM governing modalities. To be clear, I am not attempting a conceptual or theoretical reconfiguration of the governmentality literature. My task is humbler: to identify a relevant NPM and governmentality framework. My innovation is the critical application of this framework to both policy-making and the management of contemporary visual arts institutions.

I begin the chapter by addressing the arts management literature and outlining how my approach differs from scholarship in this area. I then contextualise the thesis within the broad field of cultural policy studies. I look in particular at the different disciplinary approaches to cultural policy and the topics these approaches engage with. I position my research within this field and identify the scholars that I am in direct dialogue with. After this, I begin the work of the thesis. Before looking at the instruments and modes of governance, I begin with the values underpinning cultural governance under New Labour. I hone in on the meaning of 'social value' as a governing principle in cultural policy. I draw upon public policy studies in order to understand how social value has been conceptualised as part of a wider political project undertaken by New Labour. I then look at theorisations of how social value was diffused into everyday practice through cultural governance structures. I focus on conceptualisations identifying NPM as an organising principle of cultural governance under New Labour, and then at governmentality as the analytic framework for the interpretation of cultural governance under New Labour. By critically engaging with

the governmentality literature, I develop a critique of the interpretation of governmentality that is applied to the analysis of cultural policy under New Labour. I show how the application of governmentality in Dave O'Brien's *Cultural Policy: Management, Value and Modernity in the Creative Industries* (2014), and more implicitly in other dominant critical accounts of the period, assume a rationality and structural simplicity to NPM as a governing modality that appears to silence the role of skilled cultural actors in the governance of contemporary arts institutions.

In order to develop and substantiate this critique, I draw upon the literature of contemporary art theory to explore the theorisation of social value as part of the development of socially engaged practices in the 1990s. I juxtapose this with conceptualisations of social value as a political project. I do not attempt to integrate these two bodies of literature, but instead, to elucidate their differences, frictions and moments of disruption, as well as exploring the terms they share and their moments of intersection. To my knowledge, this particular framing of the research has not been undertaken in this depth before. I argue that framing the research in this way sheds a new light on the specific tensions and contradictions that surround social value.

More directly, the point of framing the research in this way is to articulate a research problem that needs to be addressed: what happens when these two worlds, and conceptions of value, collide? In the next chapter, I take a step back and attempt to bring the literature of cultural policy and contemporary art theory together by conducting a parallel analysis of both. I suggest that further empirical research is needed in order to explore tensions at the interface of policy and practice, and to understand the role of skilled cultural actors in negotiating these tensions. The methodological innovation of this project is to engage directly with these skilled cultural actors, in order to interrogate this interface through local-level empirical work. I explain my methodological choices in greater detail in chapter 4.

This literature review is by no means exhaustive. As one of the innovations of this project is the pulling together of two discursive communities, I have sometimes sacrificed depth for multidisciplinary: but, there is no 'perfect' solution here. The chapter begins with a brief articulation of how my work is distinct from existing work in the field of arts management. In section 2.3 I provide an overview of conceptual frameworks used to view cultural policy, in order to position the approach taken here within the interdisciplinary field of cultural policy. In section 2.4, I explore in more detail how social value has been conceptualised as a political construct associated with New Labour, before investigating governmentality and its application to cultural policy in section 2.5. In section 2.6, I develop the concept of social value from a contemporary art theory perspective and then discuss how taking a multidisciplinary approach sheds new light on the specific contradictions and tensions that manifested from social value as a theoretical construct that was 'put into practice' during the New Labour administration. Finally, in section 2.7, I draw together the various threads of this chapter to establish the gap in the literature exploring cultural governance under New Labour from the dual perspectives of cultural policy and contemporary art theory, and outline my next steps in addressing this gap.

2.2 Recognising the importance of contributions from the literature of arts management and cultural leadership

In this section, I provide a brief overview of management, leadership and evaluation in the arts through the literature of arts management and cultural leadership. I note the significance of the field to my research, but also, importantly, how my approach differs from existing contributions in the field. In section 2.2.1 I explain how recent scholarship on the management of 'creativity,' and particularly Chris Bilton's concept of 'creative management,' provides an

important discussion of the “complexity and contradictions of creativity” (Bilton 2007: xxii). In section 2.2.2 I offer a brief summary of the literature on evaluation in the arts, in order to reiterate my intention not to offer an alternative theory of cultural value, but rather, to see what new insights might be gained from an in-depth exploration of the experience of an existing policy framework, within a specific discipline.

2.2.1 Management and creativity

There has been much written about the perceived incompatibility of management and the arts and the legitimacy of arts management as a field (see Bauman 2004; Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011; Walmsley 2013). In the arts management literature, there is a constant grappling with management discourse and how it can be applied to the arts. Equally, there is an important, though perhaps less widely recognised, view that “the visual and performing arts have made a significant contribution to critical management studies, delivering some very powerful critiques of top-down, quasi-scientific management practice” (Beirne 2012: 152). For Bilton, “creativity and management, having been positioned historically as opposing concepts, are increasingly converging in new models of cultural policy and business management” (2010: 255).

Bilton argues that creativity is a “complex, multifaceted process” that “has been reduced to a stereotype” in management discourse (Bilton 2007: xv). In business, creativity is usually defined in rather narrow terms as the capacity to innovate or to “think differently” (Bilton, 2007: xv). In Bilton’s view, there are contradictions in how creativity is understood in business, where the emphasis is either on the individual and his ‘heroic’ contributions, or on the ‘structural,’ which focuses on the “social processes and institutions through which creative ideas are realised and validated” (Bilton 2010: 265). Bilton argues that a more nuanced understanding of creativity as “a complex combination of different thinking styles” serves to “deflect

attention away from the creative individual towards the ‘system’ or ‘art world’ within which creative work takes place” (Bilton 2007: 45). He explains that this “more collaborative, more process-based model of creativity is also deeply embedded in cultural practice” (Bilton 2016: 665). Ultimately, Bilton argues that creativity is complex and ‘creative management’ requires a split focus, between “present realities and future possibilities, between individuals and teams, between organisations and systems” (Bilton 2007: 173).

Bilton’s framing of the complexity of ‘creativity’ and ‘creative management’ is a useful point of departure for my investigation into the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions. Furthermore, Bilton’s identification of the importance of the ‘system’ or the ‘art world’ is pivotal to my work. However, my research is distinct from Bilton’s in that it aims to enrich understanding of this ‘art world’ in much greater detail and through a specific disciplinary lens. My work hones in on the distinct context of the contemporary visual art world and seeks to reveal insights gained from a greater proximity, understanding and attention to localised cultural practices and artistic discourses. In their important work on charismatic leadership in the arts, Nisbett and Walmsley (2016) find that charismatic leaders in the arts are commonplace, but that they tend to reflect charisma in the Weberian sense, of “extraordinary individuals who have the ability to challenge the status quo” (Nisbett and Walmsley 2016: 9). My research explores the institutional and artistic context in detail, in order to understand more about how the principles and values of artistic practice play into the cultural worker’s ability and desire to challenge and negotiate instrumental values that are imposed upon the sector from ‘above.’ Importantly, Beirne and Knight highlight the importance of “integrating art with management” (2002: 88) so that the principles driving the art are not decoupled from the principles driving the organisation, which can create tension. It is this precisely this tension that I probe in my research.

Walmsley (2013) discusses the growing number of educational training opportunities for arts managers. However, the cultural actors that I engage with are just as likely to have come out of curatorial courses as arts management courses. This distinct educational trajectory illustrates the extent to which cultural workers are differentiated across cultural sectors and how the professional position of the contemporary visual arts worker is inextricably linked to particular art historical and curatorial traditions. While other scholars have explored the role of the cultural actor in management (see, for example, Beirne and Knight 2002; Stevenson 2013; 2014; Walmsley 2013; 2018 etc.) none, to my knowledge, pay so much attention to the professional sensibilities of the curator, the discipline of contemporary visual art, the values of contemporary visual arts practice, and ultimately, the role that disciplinarity might play in decision-making.

Furthermore, Bilton (2007; 2010) employs a more general discourse of 'creativity' across different – mainly for-profit – creative sectors. His emphasis on producers and consumers reverberates most clearly with a market-based context, driven by economic imperatives. My research focuses on the particular practices of quasi-public arts institutions, and their response to New Labour's social value decrees. Other scholars in the field of arts management have explored management practices in public and quasi-public cultural institutions. For example, David Stevenson conducts a close analysis of the publicly-funded National Galleries of Scotland and concludes that the institution generates a 'surplus' when value is determined by those who contribute to public subsidy of the museum through their taxation (Stevenson 2013). Walmsley takes an anthropological approach to the cultural value debate and emphasises the role of the audience in articulating phenomenological, as opposed to epistemological, value (Walmsley 2018). Whilst these are important contributions that resonate with my arguments around dispersed and situated notions of social value, Stevenson and Walmsley focus

mainly on audiences who do not have a *responsibility* to engage with the cultural policy context, in the way that institutions do. By focusing on the institution and the decision-makers within it, through the lens of contemporary arts theory, I show how skilled cultural actors negotiate competing value sets, and how the institution becomes a site of policy-making. Although Walmsley articulates the need for alternative methods to “assist organisations in creating, identifying and evaluating value on their own terms and in line with their artistic missions and objectives” (Walmsley 2013: 199), my research explores this notion in greater detail by developing the artistic discourses that inform and influence institutional values.

2.2.2 Evaluation in the arts

Questions of value and evaluation are of course important to my work and are a central concern of the literature of arts management and cultural policy. It is important to briefly outline that discourse here, if only to demonstrate that my intention is not to offer a new theory of value, but rather to look at how a specific policy context was experienced by cultural workers and institutions.

John Myerscough’s *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain*, published by the Policy Studies Institute in 1988, was a turning point in arts evaluation (Myerscough 1988). The report was the first serious and in-depth attempt to connect the arts to economic impact. In the context of rising debate about public subsidy to the arts predicated on market failure, Myerscough’s report situated the arts in relation to economic and social realities (Myerscough 1988). There was, and still is, much criticism of Myerscough’s report, which some claimed was really a form of advocacy, since Myerscough was fundamentally interested in making a more convincing argument to the Treasury to continue supporting the arts (Selwood 2010). Nonetheless, the report continues to be hugely influential, and has shaped the enduring turn towards instrumental cultural policies.

Equally important to this research is François Matarasso's *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts* (1997), which explained in a level of detail that had not been undertaken before, the potential for participation in art to impact society. The report identified six different themes that described the social impact of participation in the arts in relation to individuals and community change (Matarasso 1997). Matarasso's work was important in shaping future debates about the social value of art. It was also prescient. In the conclusion to the report, Matarasso remarks:

Public policy loves indicators, neat measures of success which can be applied across the board. Helpful as they may be, there is a danger that the outcomes of projects will be stretched or trimmed to fit them, like Procrustes' unfortunate guests (Matarasso 1997: 95).

Obviously, Matarasso's fear about the desire to measure social impact in terms of outcomes came to be a reality, and the methods and instruments of evaluation in the arts continue to incite debate. Matarasso had also addressed these questions in an earlier work, in which he argued that evaluation is about values, and "not an abstract, quasi-scientific process through which objective truths can be identified" (Matarasso 1996: 2).

Following on from Myerscough and Matarasso, John Holden has written extensively about evaluation in the arts, and his work for Demos in the 2000s is widely cited. Holden's 'value triangle' identifies three components of cultural value: instrumental, intrinsic and institutional (Holden 2006). As an intellectual, emotional or spiritual response, intrinsic value is aligned to the subjective experience of the individual user or participant, while instrumental value is usually expressed as the outcome or objective of policy (Holden 2006). My research explores Holden's notion of 'institutional value.' In Holden's terms "institutional value sees the role of cultural organisations not simply as mediators between politicians and the public, but as active

agents in the creation or destruction of what the public values” (Holden 2006: 18). Through the lens of disciplinarity, my research aims to illustrate, in detail, the role of the institution, and the cultural worker, as an ‘active agent.’

Holden’s ‘value triangle’ is similar to the argument developed by Boorsma and Chiaravalloti that the arts perform different kinds of artistic functions for three main stakeholder groups: customers, communities and professionals (2010: 304). Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2010) draw upon Kaplan and Norton’s (1992) ‘balanced scorecard’ approach to argue for a mission-led approach to performance evaluation. While both Holden and Boorsma and Chiaravalloti’s contributions are important, they do not reveal in great detail how, or by what practices and under what influences, value is negotiated *within* the institution. To refer back to Beirne and Knight, “identifying the specifics, as opposed to the principles, of arts-led management – the ‘how’ in contrast to the ‘what’ – is a matter for future research” (Beirne and Knight 2002: 88). My research is differentiated from Holden (2006) and Boorsma and Chiaravalloti’s (2010) work because it investigates the influence of the principles and values of contemporary art on the interpretation and implementation of an existing value framework, from an ‘on the ground’ position within the institution. In many ways, my research is a response to Chiaravalloti and Piber’s call for more research that can “investigate the complexity of contextual factors for evaluative practices and push the limits of performance evaluation beyond definitions and decontextualised analyses” (Chiaravalloti and Piber 2011: 263).

To conclude, I have shown that the literature of arts management and cultural leadership provides a useful context for my research, however my work is differentiated from this scholarship in a number of ways. My research is grounded in the contemporary arts sector, and integrates the discourse of contemporary art theory. This

approach is unique in that the contemporary visual arts sector is underexplored in the field of arts management, and the foregrounding of discipline-specific artistic principles, traditions and values in relation to management practices is somewhat underdeveloped in the existing literature. By including the disciplinary focus of contemporary art theory in my analysis, I nuance the more generalised discussions of 'creativity' that are employed across highly differentiated sectors, and I begin to reveal the benefits of taking a more situated approach that foregrounds a specific, professional sensibility. By focusing on the institutional experience of New Labour's cultural policy regime, I explore the interface of policy and practice, and how policy 'lands' as a discourse, amongst others, within a community of practice. Whilst others challenge current models of value articulation, my work is an attempt to extend the notion of the "fragmentation of policy-making in modernity" (O'Brien 2014: 27) to include the institution and the professional self as a site of policy-making.

2.3 Situating the research within the study of cultural policy

Having recognised the contributions of the literature of arts management and cultural leadership in the last section, the aim of this section is to situate the approach taken here within the field of cultural policy. I argue that there is an orthodoxy to the study of cultural policy that needs to be challenged. By surveying the interpretative frameworks for reading cultural policy, I illustrate how the thesis, through its inclusion of literature from contemporary art theory, moves beyond the normative positions on cultural policy under New Labour. As I argue throughout this thesis, my particular framing of the research demonstrates in a way that has not been done before, the specific complexities of the policy context for contemporary arts institutions and confirms the need for more specific empirical research in the contemporary visual arts sector.

Cultural policy is a broad field, which has been problematically conceptualised over the years. As an interdisciplinary subject, it “can be identified from the perspectives of sociology, cultural studies, political science, urban planning and economics” (Gray 2010a: 218). However, in Gray’s words, there is, in fact, “an incorrigibly plural range of approaches that *can* be taken to the analysis of cultural policy” (Gray 2010a: 226). According to Gray, there is no mechanism for determining whether one approach is better than the other, but an approach is normally led by the subject matter (Gray 2010a). In such a complex arena “choices have to be made, structures imposed, boundaries drawn around the object of our study if we are ever going to partially summarise it” (Bell and Oakley 2015: 8). In this short overview of the frameworks for viewing cultural policy, I outline the key disciplinary perspectives from which the study of cultural policy has been approached, as well as dominant ‘themes’ in the study of cultural policy. My aim is to introduce the unique approach taken here, and to illustrate how the juxtaposition of literature from contemporary art and cultural policy leads to new insights, and importantly, new questions about the experience of cultural policy under New Labour.

Perhaps it goes without saying that I focus the review on texts that engage with the policies governing culture in the sense of creative texts that are “involved in the production of social meaning” (Hesmondhalgh 2013), rather than in the broader sense of culture as ‘a way of life’ (Williams 1989). I anchor the review by primarily engaging with theories and perspectives that are pertinent to an investigation of cultural policy under New Labour. However, I move from the general to the specific, ending with an explanation of ‘my fellow travellers,’ or those texts that have arguably come to define the normative reading of cultural policy under New Labour, within the subsection of literature dealing with cultural governance and NPM.

2.3.1 Conceptual frameworks for viewing cultural policy

In this section, I outline the general approaches to cultural policy that have been taken by previous scholars in the field. I make the argument for the approach taken here, which can be summarised as a governance perspective informed by the literature of contemporary art theory and public policy studies, all of which is broadly influenced by a sociological ‘new institutionalism’ approach to organisational analysis (see Powell and DiMaggio 1991), but with further attention to the role of actors in institutions. In the following pages, I will outline where this approach sits in relation to other scholars.

Cultural policy is a broad field that deals with many different ‘themes’ and can be approached from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including economics (see Throsby 2001; 2010), sociology (see O’Brien 2014), public policy studies (see Gray 2002; 2009; 2011) and cultural studies (see Bennett 1993; 1998; McGuigan 2004), to name a few. There is certainly no agreement about the natural disciplinarity of cultural policy studies nor the academic discourses it encompasses, but both Gray (2010a) and Scullion and Garcia (2005) offer a comprehensive overview of the complexity of the field.

For many years, there have been debates within cultural studies about whether the field should engage with issues of policy. An important step change in the then emergent, interdisciplinary field of cultural policy occurred when Tony Bennett presented a paper called ‘Putting Policy into Cultural Studies’ (1993), which declared that “policy-related arguments now occupy a recognisable position within the landscape of cultural studies debates” (482). Drawing upon Foucault’s (2002) notions of governmentality, Bennett argued that culture was not only an object of government intervention, but also an instrument of government (Bennett 1993). The application of Foucault’s (2002) concept of governmentality to culture and cultural policy is further developed and explored throughout this thesis, and with specific reference to the context of New Labour. In the field of cultural policy,

Bennett's contribution was important in challenging the assumed autonomy of culture, and cultural studies.

The diminishing autonomy of culture is also reflected in the tendency towards the instrumentalisation of culture as part of the developing neoliberal state. This trajectory was portended by a number of early cultural theorists. In the thesis, I do not engage significantly with the dynamics, literature or contested definitions of neoliberalism. Instead, I accept David Harvey's (2005) conceptualisation of certain characteristics of the neoliberal state (see section 3.2.4) in order to establish a context for what became known as the 'instrumental turn' in cultural policy. Here, I am most interested in how the developing neoliberal state, and a related set of conditions from the 1970s onwards – including developments in technology, politics and arguments about the value of culture – have challenged the 'special' status of culture or changed the position of culture in society (Flew 2012).

This 'special' status, or the distancing of art from commercial markets, was the foundation of early 20th century cultural policy. However, Adorno and Horkheimer and Bourdieu, arguably the most prominent early theorists of the cultural industries, saw how the autonomy of culture was threatened by the growing pervasiveness of the economic imperative (Flew 2012). The 'industrialisation' of culture was famously written about by Adorno and Horkheimer in 1944, in 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' (1993), an essay that essentially conceptualised culture as an industry in connection with capitalism. In his later work, Bourdieu, who had once defined 'high culture' by its freedom from economic interest, wrote about the economic imperative of culture, which had to do with the infiltration of free market dynamics into the cultural sphere (Gartman 2011).

Most of the literature that deals with culture after the 'instrumental turn' is rooted in analysis of the instrumentalisation of culture for economic

gain. The question that dominates this camp of literature is how culture came to be understood as part of the creative industries (Garnham 2005; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005; Pratt 2005). Scholars approaching the study of cultural policy through the lens of the 'industrialisation' of culture tend to deal mostly in non-subsided creative industries, such as John Howkins (2013), who popularised the term 'creative economy' in 2001, and Flew (2012), Davis and Sigthorsson (2013) and Hesmondhalgh (2013). This perspective tends to focus on a broad spectrum of creative industries, and there is extensive disagreement about which sectors constitute the 'creative industries.'

For Hesmondhalgh (2013), the 'core cultural industries' deal "primarily with the industrial production and circulation of texts" (Hesmondhalgh 2013: 16) whereas the 'peripheral cultural industries,' though likewise concerned with the production of texts, are "based mainly on semi-industrial or non-industrial" reproduction methods (Hesmondhalgh 2013: 18). For Throsby (2010) and others, the 'core creative arts' are those that value creativity over commerce (i.e., music, visual art, drama, etc.). Whichever way you define them, the economies of core and peripheral cultural industries are markedly different, and most of the literature investigating the industrialisation of culture gives little attention to Hesmondhalgh's 'peripheral cultural industries' (or Throsby's 'core creative arts'), which is where the contemporary visual arts sit. Furthermore, the art world has a particular uniqueness, with its own economic structures, actors and agents (Becker 2008). With the exception of Frey (2003), most of the literature engaging with the question of the impact of the industrialisation of culture has little application to the peculiarities of the art world, which is the concern of this thesis.

As the literature on the industrialisation of culture reflects on employment, or 'work,' in the creative industries, this scholarship bleeds into a related body of literature dealing with cultural labour in

the context of neo-liberalising forces, from which arguments about precarity and exploitation in the creative industries develop (see Banks et al. 2013; Gill and Pratt 2008; McRobbie 2016; Oakley 2009; 2011). This literature follows in the spirit of Boltanski and Chiapello's (2018) critique of exploitation under contemporary capitalism. Boltanski and Chiapello argue that capitalism in the late 20th century has co-opted the artistic critique and subordinated it into profit-making. Much of this literature challenges Richard Florida's important but heavily critiqued work, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2004), which linked changes to work and lifestyle patterns to the development of post-industrial cities but failed to identify most of the problematics around new forms of work, creativity and urban development. Kate Oakley (2009) offers a pointed articulation of this critique. Nonetheless, Florida's work, which was popular with policy-makers, encouraged an important debate about the role of culture in the development of cities. There is again another body of literature dealing with, and critiquing, this relationship (see Evans 2005; Pratt 2008; 2009; 2011; Vickery 2007; Zukin 2014). From a policy perspective, the role of culture in revitalising post-industrial cities was of great interest to both the Thatcher and New Labour administrations, who first saw the economic, and then the social, value of culture in regeneration.

The topic of 'cultural value' is itself a rich field of enquiry. Debates about the 'intrinsic' versus the 'instrumental value' of culture have been the focus of much attention by prominent practitioners in the cultural sector, who mainly advocate for greater support for the arts (see Tusa 2007; Henley 2016) using both 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' arguments. There is a wide range of work from a variety of political positions criticising the 'tick-box' culture of the New Labour period (see Mirza 2006). Arguments for the intrinsic value of art feature in commissioned research (see McMaster 2008) and even public statements, such as then Secretary of State Tessa Jowell's (2004) unusually explicit support for the intrinsic value of the arts in 2004. Some scholars have taken an intellectual approach to questions of value, focusing on ideas

rather than application or evaluation (see Belfiore and Bennett 2008; Carey 2005). In 2016, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) published Crossick and Kaszynska's report on cultural value, the results of a major research initiative exploring why the arts matter and how we evaluate them, furthering existing academic scholarship in this area (see Holden 2004; 2006). This thesis recognises these debates, and their complexity, but it is not the domain of this project to engage in the theorisation of cultural value. Instead, this project is concerned with the application of rhetoric in practice, and specifically, the rhetoric of social value as it was developed and employed by the New Labour administration.

As demonstrated, a variety of disciplinary leanings and conceptual frameworks can be brought to the interpretation of cultural policy, which also deals with a wide range of topics. Most of the literature broadly engaged with the field of cultural policy marks the 1970s as a turning point, as culture moved from determinations of value based on excellence and towards evaluation processes predicated on instrumental values of culture (Belfiore 2004; Hewison 1995; 2014; O'Brien 2014). This thesis explores the implications of that shift in greater detail but moves away from focusing on the economic value of culture, and instead explores the specific history, meaning and experience of social value in culture policy, and in relation to contemporary visual arts institutions.

In order to do this, I adopt a governance perspective informed by the literature of contemporary art theory and public policy studies, all of which is broadly influenced by a sociological 'new institutionalism' approach to organisational analysis, or a concern with the ways in which institutions "shape organisational structure and action" (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 1). Although my approach is differentiated from Powell and DiMaggio by my particular attention to the role of actors in institutions, the sociological 'new institutionalism' perspective is important in framing my movement away from "rational-actor or

functionalist accounts” (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 3). March and Olsen’s proclamation that “what we observe in the world is inconsistent with the ways in which contemporary theories ask us to talk” (1984: 747) is also useful as a jumping off point for the investigation of this thesis, and its interrogation of normative conceptualisations of cultural policy.

I have not yet addressed those texts specifically interpreting cultural policy under New Labour from the NPM/governmentality perspective because I engage those positions, my ‘fellow travellers,’ in section 2.5.3. I detail all those scholars that explicitly and implicitly apply a governmentality framework to the analysis of subsidised culture, New Labour and social value in the context of NPM (Belfiore 2002; 2004; 2012; Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015; Hewison 2014; O’Brien 2014). It is important to note that throughout the thesis, I call this group the ‘normative position’ or describe them as the ‘dominant critical accounts’ because they constitute the most recent, in-depth explorations of my topic from the NPM/governmentality perspective. Of course, there are other perspectives on the study of cultural policy under New Labour, including some of the approaches outlined above – cultural economy, public policy, political economy etc. However, the texts that I confront are the dominant critical positions dealing with cultural policy under New Labour from the NPM/governmentality perspective. I engage most directly with O’Brien, who is most explicit about his application of governmentality as a theoretical framework. Where necessary in the thesis, I point out when I am engaging primarily with O’Brien and when I am engaging the normative position more generally. I respect and support this ‘normative position’ but aim to add to it, through the insights I gain from my unique framing of, and methodological approach to, the research.

However, before I begin the work of investigating governance under New Labour, and critiquing the governmentality approach, I start with an exploration of social value as a governing principle in the cultural

sector. In the next section, I show how social value is conceptualised in public policy studies, and as part of a wider political project by New Labour. I then explore current conceptualisations of the application of social value as a governing principle in the cultural sector. The point of framing the literature in this way is to illustrate how political conceptions of social value 'landed' in the cultural sector, and to make the case for a more nuanced investigation and interpretation of the cultural governance landscape.

2.4 New Labour and social value

In this section, I investigate the meaning of social value as a governing principle and explore its application to culture. I begin with a summary of the political foundations of social value, in order to contextualise social value as a principle of cultural governance within a broader political landscape. After this, in section 2.4.2, I explore the application of social value as a governing principle into the cultural sector. I show some of the discomforts, difficulties and challenges that arose from the extension of New Labour's social inclusion project into the spaces of museums, galleries and arts institutions. In doing so, I point out the need to know more about the particularity of the arts sector, and the processes of governance that diffused social value into the everyday practice of the arts institution.

2.4.1 Political foundations of New Labour and social value

In this section, I investigate how social value has been conceptualised as part of the broader political project of New Labour, in order to understand more about the meaning of social value as a governing principle in cultural policy. The political project of social inclusion is vast and well-researched. To focus my enquiry, I engage with two key texts in the study of social inclusion and New Labour from a public policy studies perspective: *Social Exclusion* (2005) by David Byrne and *The Inclusive Society? Social exclusion and New Labour* (2005) by Ruth Levitas, which was first published in 1998. I use these critical

positions to illustrate the significant point that from the public policy perspective, social inclusion under New Labour is conceptualised as a process of compliance and co-option into an existing order.

The thesis uses the term 'social value' as a lexicon that encompasses social impact, objectives, outcomes and outputs – all of which are used inconsistently, or without clear differentiation, in policy rhetoric. The focus of this thesis is 'social value,' as the lowest common denominator term for understanding value to society, and which may manifest as social impact, objectives, outcomes, outputs, indicators and so on. The term 'social value' will be used throughout the thesis, unless further specification is required. In the case of New Labour, social impact is the vernacular most often used to describe initiatives with social value. Furthermore, under New Labour, there was specific and consistent reference to 'social inclusion' as a particular form of social impact. However, there was also a tendency in the interpretation of policy to lump different terms under the broader rubric of 'social value.'

To understand the aims of social inclusion, I start with an investigation of the political foundations of social exclusion. According to Byrne (2005), from the nineteenth century onwards, there have been three distinctive approaches to the issues that social exclusion attempts to address; these are: possessive individualism, traditional conservatism and socialism. Briefly, possessive individualism provides a rationale for the rights of individuals to "control their own persons" (21) and to possess their own property, emphasises the "optimising function of the market" (19) and makes some acknowledgement of the residual role of the "collective sphere" (Byrne 2005:19). Traditional conservatism emphasises the "integration of individuals into a traditionally legitimised and coherent social order" (Byrne 2005: 19). And finally, socialism, most clearly expressed by Marx, sought an alternative to the "inequality and exploitation" of capitalism (Byrne 2005: 19). Possessive individualism constitutes the basis of liberal political

philosophy, with its emphasis on ‘negative liberties,’ or “freedom of the individual *from* coercion and constraint” as opposed to ‘positive liberties,’ based on the provision of resource systems to enable “individuals who would otherwise be constrained” (Byrne 2005: 22). As such, possessive individualism is closely linked to the idea of the ‘underclass,’ or notions of poverty as self-inflicted and conceptions of unemployment as something that is either chosen, or a consequence of social differentiation and the economic division of labour (Byrne 2005). Neoliberalism, which now dominates the political system in the US and the UK, is one of the social and political doctrines that flows from possessive individualism.

The possessive individualist conception of the underclass is founded on the basis that the poor are poor through their own fault, or as a consequence of a specialised labour structure. New Labour’s rhetoric about social exclusion was predicated on a similar foundation. Fairclough (2000), an expert in language discourse and communication, analysed the language of New Labour and concluded that in the administration’s discourse “social exclusion is an outcome rather than a process – it is a condition people are in rather than something that is done to them” (2000: 54).

While the term ‘social exclusion’ was initially used by the European Union as both a verb and an adjective, Byrne (2005) finds that New Labour predominantly used the adjectival form. Like Fairclough (2000), he argues that exclusion is not a static condition, but a dynamic, multi-dimensional, exploitative process (Byrne 2005). He says that in the weak sense of the term, the excluded are “understood as marked by person deficits” (Byrne 2005: 173). In the strong sense of the term, the excluded are excluded by a system of “unequal post-industrial capitalism” (Byrne 2005: 173). Critically, this conception of social exclusion engenders the possibility of agents or institutions of exclusion, other than the excluded (Byrne 2005).

Much of New Labour's social inclusion policy rhetoric focused on 'partnerships,' or the integration of different components of society, including at the local, or 'community' level, with the aim of 'joined-up' governance. However, this discourse was based on the 'weak,' rather than the 'strong' definition of social exclusion. Consequentially, as Bryne (2005) argues, participation at the local level was more about incorporation of the community into an established order, which meant that it was subjected to decisions taken, rather than being part of a democratic processes. As a result, these kinds of partnerships avoided any real engagement with challenging, questioning or even acknowledging the perpetrators of exclusion (Bryne 2005).

The term 'social exclusion' has, in fact, taken on different meanings in UK politics at different times and by different politicians.⁴ In her work on social exclusion, Levitas creates three analytical devices and empirical descriptions for different discourses, including: redistributive discourse (RED), social integrationist (SID) and moral underclass (MUD) (Levitas 2005). In RED, the emphasis is on redistributing resources to the poor. In SID, the solution is increasing participation in paid work, and in MUD the suggestion is to change behaviour through cuts and incentives.

By the time New Labour came to power in 1997, the administration's interpretation of social inclusion had moved away from RED to draw on a mixture of SID and MUD (Levitas 2005). Many people attributed Labour's loss of the 1992 election to fear amongst voters that tax rises were the only way that the party could offset its proposed spending (Levitas 2005). As a result, by 1997, party rhetoric and policies reflected a movement away from redistribution. Policies such as the New Deal or welfare to work interpreted inclusion primarily in terms of paid work, consistent with SID (Levitas 2005). However, the Social

⁴ At the same time, the notion was key to the formation of the New Labour project in the post-1997 period, and the work of the SEU and Julian Le Grand, a senior policy advisor to Tony Blair (see Hills et. al 2002).

Exclusion Unit (SEU), an interdepartmental initiative tasked with addressing social exclusion, understood inclusion in broader terms, and its emphasis on employability, opportunity and social order was much closer to MUD (Levitas 2005). In general, the New Labour government “showed more concern with moral conformity and social order than with ending poverty” (Levitas 2005: 194), but its appropriation of different social exclusion discourses meant the term remained ambiguous, even within policy documents.

For New Labour, social value was broadly conceptualised as social impact, which was primarily considered in terms of social inclusion. As argued by Byrne, in the context of neoliberalism and New Labour, social exclusion was understood as an outcome, not a process. This interpretation made it difficult to conceptualise a perpetrator of exclusion; the socially excluded simply needed to be co-opted into the system and into moral compliance. For Levitas, this meant that the New Labour government was more interested in conformity and order than ending poverty, or presumably, in fixing a broken system.

In this section, I have developed the concept of social inclusion through its political foundations, in order to demonstrate the key point that from a public policy perspective, social value under New Labour is understood as aiding a process of compliance and co-option into an existing order. In section 2.6, I will explore the concept of social value as it developed from artistic practice and discourse, to offer a new perspective to the governmentality reading of cultural policy. First, however, in the next section, I will look at the existing literature investigating the application of New Labour’s conception of social value to culture.

2.4.2 Social value and its application to culture⁵

The last section looked at theorisations of social inclusion as part of a broad, political project undertaken by the New Labour administration. This section explores conceptualisations of that project as it filtered into the cultural sector, and even more specifically, in relation to museums and galleries. In my analysis, I draw upon cultural policy and museology perspectives because, to date, these are the primary disciplines dealing with museums and social value. However, the first question to ask about social inclusion and museums and galleries is, how and why are museums and galleries relevant to the policy objective? The story begins after the SEU established targeting social exclusion as an interdepartmental objective, and the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) responded by explicitly prioritising the social inclusion agenda, suggesting that museums and galleries should refashion themselves as ‘centres for social change’ (DCMS 2000). For museums, some acquiescence to the agenda was necessary, in order to continue receiving government support. However, there were clearly dangers for the museum in embracing the agenda entirely, because if it failed to produce anticipated results it could be deprioritised as a recipient of future funding (West and Smith 2005).

The relationship between museums and social inclusion has been conceptualised in different ways, with most analyses questioning the appropriateness and the ability of museums to contribute to the policy priorities. According to DCMS (1999), social inclusion is indicated by better health, reduced crime and increased levels of employment and education, in the most vulnerable members of society. However, West

⁵ An earlier version of this section was published in: Bonham-Carter, C. (2017). ‘From Social Inclusion to Audience Numbers: Art museums in the New Public Management.’ in: C. Bonham-Carter and N. Mann, ed., *Rhetoric, Social Value and the Arts: But how does it work?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.35-48.

and Smith argue that such objectives are more appropriately addressed by a social worker, who would almost certainly be better qualified to respond to them (West and Smith: 2005). Similarly, Belfiore (2002) argues that it would be difficult to back the arts over other methods used to deal with social issues, as the most cost effective way of addressing such issues.

A number of theorists from the museum studies and cultural policy perspectives (see Belfiore 2002; Bennett 2004; Sandell 1998) argue that art museums in particular make the most interesting objects of analysis as they tend to offer the most 'difficult' subject matter. In many ways, this makes them the least likely sub-sector within the museum sector to have an enduring relevance to the social inclusion agenda (Belfiore 2002). Case studies cited in support of the role that museums can play in the social inclusion agenda rarely involve art museums. Richard Sandell, who has undertaken much research on the topic of museums and social value from a museums studies perspective, identifies two ways in which museums can act as agents of social inclusion: through social regeneration, involving direct project work and by exploiting the museum's potential to influence society (i.e., through exhibitions), with the aim of promoting social inclusion (Sandell 1998). However, the examples Sandell draws upon as evidence of the museum's capacity for social regeneration are often museums that have a unique focus that lends itself to social regeneration. For example, he cites work undertaken by the Galleries of Justice in Nottingham to deter young people from offending or criminal behaviour, which is perhaps not unsurprising, given the museum's remit. However, Sandell does note that "the impact an individual museum may have is likely to depend on a whole range of factors internal and external to the organisation" (Sandell 1998: 415).

There is, however, very little research available on how art museums in particular approached the social value agenda. The research that does exist on the topic of art museums and social inclusion is mainly

commissioned from within the sector (for example, that which was published by ACE, including Jermyn 2001; 2004 and Reeves 2002). This work focuses largely on participatory arts, seemingly for no other reason than because the participatory arts are easier to correlate to social inclusion than 'traditional' art museum activity based around collections and exhibitions. However, Belfiore points out that participatory arts constituted a small portion of arts funding from ACE and DCMS at the time (2002). The frequency with which they are cited in ACE literature around art museums and social inclusion was disproportionate to actual activity and funding commitments. Belfiore also cites a number of flaws in the research undertaken by the consultancy and research organisation Comedia, who made one of the first attempts to evaluate and assess the social impact of arts organisations in 1996. She concludes that "not only has the effectiveness of socially orientated arts projects not been the object of extensive study, but the little research available has far from succeeded in presenting a strong case for the social impacts of the arts" (Belfiore 2002: 104).

This section has looked at conceptualisations of the application of social value in the cultural sector. I have reviewed a number of critical positions in cultural policy and museum studies. However, I have not included the more recent literature, addressing cultural policy under New Labour from a governance perspective, because I will address this work separately, in section 2.5.

2.4.3 Summing up – social value as compliance

In this section, I have continued to shed light on the complexity of the policy landscape under New Labour. I have demonstrated how the permeation of the social value agenda into the cultural sector was shaped by a broad political project. I have shown how key conceptualisations of this project (see Byrne 2005; Levitas 2005) illustrate how social inclusion under New Labour was a process of

compliance and co-option into an existing order. In section 2.6, I demonstrate how this meaning abuts with key conceptualisations of social value in contemporary art theory. Here, I have shown that there is a gap in the literature dealing specifically with the contemporary art institution's experience of social value as a governing principle under New Labour. I have shown that the existing research addressing museums (more generally) and the New Labour social value agenda is either advocacy literature from within the sector that does not hold much critical value, or secondary literature (see Belfiore 2002; Sandell 1998; West and Smith 2005) that acknowledges 'a problem' but offers little insight into the experience or resolution of it in the sector. In the next section, I will begin to explore the literature on how governing principles diffused into activity through governance structures.

2.5 Governance in the cultural sector

In the last section I explored conceptualisations of social value as a political construct under New Labour and investigated the existing literature on the application of social value as a governing principle in the cultural sector. In this section, I critique conceptual frameworks of governance generally, and then more specifically, the application of governmentality to culture.

In section 2.5.1 I explore NPM as a term used to describe certain changes in public sector governance from the 1970s onwards, and as a descriptive category for the introduction of new governing modalities into contemporary visual arts institutions under New Labour. After this, in section 2.5.2, I explore the contested concept of governmentality, setting out what it reacted and responded to. In section 2.5.3, I review the literature that applies governmentality as a theoretical framework for viewing cultural policy. More specifically, I explain how my approach is informed by Dave O'Brien's (2014) application of governmentality, but offers a sympathetic critique of that approach, informed by the specific framing of my research and the empirical

findings of the study. In particular, I argue that O'Brien's interpretation of governmentality overstates the simplicity and rationality of New Labour governance structures, in part because his analysis does not account for the different meanings of social value constructed by different discursive communities.

2.5.1 New Public Management – the introduction of new governing modalities into the cultural sector⁶

As I argue throughout the thesis, the step change in cultural policy that occurred during the New Labour administration was defined not only by the introduction of an explicit social value agenda, but also by the infiltration of NPM auditing techniques into the sector, at the same time.

NPM is a term used to describe the rising prevalence of a certain managerial modality amongst a number of mainly English-speaking nations. Although these managerial modes varied significantly between different geographical contexts, they also shared enough common characteristics to warrant categorisation into the broad conceptual framework, 'New Public Management' (NPM). Although different scholars conceptualise NPM in different ways, broadly speaking, the main characteristics of NPM are:

“... cost control, financial transparency, the autonomisation of organisational sub-units, the decentralisation of management authority, the creation of market and quasi-market mechanisms separating purchasing and providing functions and their linkage via contracts, and the enhancement of accountability to customers for the quality of service via the creation of performance indicators” (Power 1997: 43).

⁶ An earlier version of this section was published in: Bonham-Carter, C. (2017). 'From Social Inclusion to Audience Numbers: Art museums in the New Public Management.' in: C. Bonham-Carter and N. Mann, ed., *Rhetoric, Social Value and the Arts: But how does it work?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.35-48.

NPM arose as an alternative to the once dominant modes of accountability, which were based upon systems and processes rather than results (Hood 1995). The foundation of the NPM thesis is about getting the private and public sectors to work together in a new way, by shifting emphasis away from processes and towards a results-based output, which are capable of being quantified (Hood 1995; 1998). Very simply, NPM is concerned with moving away from hierarchical bureaucracy to the supposed efficiency of markets, and applying private sector mentalities to public sector administration (Power 1997).

The turn towards the NPM and its emphasis on public accountability and best practice led to the increased prominence of the audit in public administration or what Power termed the 'audit explosion' in the 1990s (Power 1994; 1997). By many indicators, Britain became an 'audit society' (Power 1994; 1997) throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The National Audit Office and the Audit Commission were established in the early 1990s; medical and teaching facilities became subject to new auditing bodies, such as the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), now the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA); accounting, health and safety, data and scientific study audits grew rapidly (Power 1994). According to Bonham-Carter, "in many ways the New Labour approach to culture was simply a migration of these attitudes towards public sector administration onto the cultural sector" (2017b: 40).

There is a significant amount of literature on Power's (1997) 'audit explosion' and its impact on public sector organisations. However, there is a comparatively little amount of literature on the effect of NPM and the auditing culture on cultural organisations. Katja Lindqvist's 'Effects of public sector reforms on management of cultural organisations in Europe' (2011), summarises existing research from a range of disciplines on public sector reform and cultural organisations in the period 1990-2009. She finds that most literature on the subject

of public sector reform and cultural organisations “focuses on change in processes and policies, rather than impacts on the cultural organisations themselves” (Bonham-Carter 2017b: 37). I hope that this thesis makes some headway in redressing this gap by providing local-level data on the contemporary visual art institution’s experience of NPM techniques.

Not all scholars consider the introduction of NPM techniques *alongside* the ‘instrumental turn’ (a consideration of the administrative and political climate). The analyses that I outlined earlier as ‘closest’ to this thesis (Belfiore 2002; 2004; 2012; Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015; Hewison 2014; O’Brien 2014) do. As explained previously, these positions broadly take a governance/NPM view on cultural policy under New Labour and either explicitly or implicitly apply governmentality as a framework for the analysis. I will critique the application of governmentality to culture in section 2.5.3. However, here I point out some of the other ways in which the approach taken in this thesis is broadly differentiated from these works.

To begin with, Hesmondhalgh et al. (2015) adopt a political economic perspective to cultural policy under New Labour and favour a reading of governance underlined by economic value. This thesis focuses on the particular impact of the social value narrative that developed under New Labour. Belfiore takes a public policy perspective and focuses on the instrumental role of the arts in society, and links that role with the prevalence of data-collection and evidence-based policy cultivated by the NPM tendencies (Belfiore 2004). However, her analyses stop short of looking at specific forms of cultural institutions and institutional practice, within the framework of the NPM. Hewison’s (2014) text is informed by cultural studies and political economy approaches, but it is more of a journalistic account of developments at the time, than a theoretical repositioning of ideas. O’Brien’s (2014) consideration of social value, NPM and cultural organisations is closest to the investigation of this thesis. However, this thesis differs from O’Brien in

the way in which it employs governmentality as a conceptual framework for viewing governance in the cultural sector. This difference is explored in more detail in section 2.5.3.

As explained earlier, this thesis is influenced by public policy, contemporary art theory and sociology perspectives. This approach enables a different framing of, and methodological approach to, the research. In addition, while the dominant, critical accounts all set out to assess the impact of cultural policy under New Labour, and to some extent make a judgement, based on different criteria, of New Labour's legacy, this thesis does not aim to evaluate New Labour's cultural policies per se. Instead, the aim of the thesis is to add insight into the experience of policy, or to nuance conceptualisations of policy through the lens of 'practice.'

2.5.2 The definitions and debates around governmentality

The last section explored the existing literature addressing cultural policy within the context of NPM, or from a governance point of view. In this section, I move to investigate governmentality as an analytic framework. I explore the definitions and debates around governmentality before critiquing its application to culture in the next section.

The concept of governmentality is complex and contested. Before I begin to unpack it, I will make a quick distinction between the three related, but distinct terms of government, governance and governmentality, all of which are important to this thesis. Governance is used in many different ways and has been attributed many different meanings, but it is generally accepted that it is distinct from government and refers to a new process of governing (Rhodes 1996). O'Brien proffers that governance is "used to understand the importance of the blend of public, private and voluntary sector organisations administering cultural policy, along with the

fragmentation of policymaking in modernity” (2014: 27). Critically, he aligns his view with the work of Stoker (1998), who suggests that governance is an ‘organising framework,’ for research on policy and political action. However, in this thesis, I argue for the interpretational value of Rhodes’ definition of governance as “self-organising interorganisational networks”, which “complement markets and hierarchies as governing structures for authoritatively allocating resources and exercising control and coordination” (1996: 652). Rhodes’ definition adds a little more detail on the potential structures of governance, including the familiar hierarchies and markets, but also the less familiar ‘interorganisational networks,’ a concept which blurs the boundaries of the state and civil society (Rhodes: 1996).

For Rhodes (1996), while government is rooted in the state, and implies top-down hierarchies, governance involves the sharing of resources and decision making amongst different actors. This reading begins to offer the potential for the sort of interpretation, translation and negotiation by intelligent actors that is a central interest of this project. While I do not dispute O’Brien’s conception of governance as “a blend of public, private and voluntary sector organisations administering cultural policy, along with the fragmentation of policymaking in modernity” (2014: 27), I do argue that we need to know more about this ‘fragmentation of policymaking,’ in order to understand cultural policy and its implications. For both O’Brien and Rhodes, the shift from government to governance was indicative of the withdrawal of the state in British politics from the 1980s onwards (O’Brien 2014; Rhodes 1996). This explanation offers a broader context for the interpretation of developments in cultural policy, including the ‘instrumental turn.’

While governance offers a description of the possible frameworks of governing, Foucault’s concept of governmentality, developed in the late 1970s, refers to “the art of government” (Foucault 2002: 201). According to O’Brien, Foucault’s development of the term

governmentality was “an attempt to broaden the study of government beyond just the state” (O’Brien 2014: 29). Distinct from discipline and sovereignty, governmentality is an analytic perspective that recognises that the strength of the state is dependent upon its coordination of “disparate technologies of governing inhabiting many sites” and of the “proper disposition of humans and things” (Bratich et al. 2003: 4-5).

According to analysis by Bratich, Packer and McCarthy, in the Gramscian perspective, the state uses cultural institutions to perpetuate the cultural hegemony and maintain power (Bratich et al. 2003). In Gramscian cultural studies, power is a binary conception, with the leader and the led in opposition (Bratich et al. 2003). However, in the Foucauldian perspective, sometimes described as ‘neo-gramscian,’ power is dispersed and diffused (Bratich et al. 2003). As described earlier, it was Tony Bennett (1993) who brought governmentality and cultural studies together. Bennett’s first innovation in doing so was to point out that Gramscian cultural studies had brought Foucault’s notion of ‘police’ to Williams’ (1989) definition of culture as a ‘way of life,’ rather than to the less explored notion of culture as a process of intellectual development (Bratich et al. 2003). By shifting the terms of reference, Bennett opened up the possibility of understanding culture not only as an object of government policy, but also as an instrument of it (Bratich et al. 2003; O’Brien 2014).

Although Foucault recognised that the concept of power needed to be reconfigured in modern society, Rose and Miller focus this reconceptualisation on ‘problematics’ of government, including neoliberalism, in particular (Rose and Miller 2010). They describe how neoliberalism attempted the ‘autonomisation’ of the state from direct control of, or responsibility for, its entities (Rose and Miller 2010). However, for Rose and Miller, policy is more than the actions of legislative programmes; it is situated in wider networks. As a result, these networks of governance create technologies and practices

which enable 'objects' (such as culture or the economy) to be the object of intervention and regulation (Rose and Miller, 2010; O'Brien 2014). Rose and Miller argue that in the neoliberal state, the 'technologies' of autonomisation, or the instruments of regulation are aligned with "political rationalities" (Rose and Miller 2010: 298). For O'Brien, more than that, these technologies of government, or the techniques of social science, have a social life; the "tools and techniques of government, so often seen as a counterpoint, an opponent or contradiction to culture, are in fact deeply embedded in the creation of what culture is" (O'Brien 2014: 34).

2.5.3 A critique of the application of governmentality as a conceptual framework for interpreting the governance of contemporary visual arts institutions

Governmentality is undoubtedly a useful framework for the analysis of cultural policy. However, there are a number of variations to the application of governmentality, and none of them are without their limitations. This project uses governmentality as a conceptual framework, but also suggests some revisions to its application. The main critique leveraged here is that the normative readings of cultural policy under New Labour, which rely upon NPM as an organising principle of governance, apply the concept of governmentality in such a way that some of the details, contestations and varieties of experiences are obscured. In this section, I outline the theoretical applications of governmentality that act as a foundation for my approach, but I also point out where I differ from them, and how I hope that the approach taken in this thesis will offer new insights into the analysis of cultural policy under New Labour.

The first point to make about Foucault's governmentality perspective is that it focuses on the idea that "power functions according to logics" (Sterne 2003: 111). It describes how everyday practice is organised,

focusing on the “‘how’ of power” as much as “‘who’ has power” (Sterne 2003: 111-112). In its application to cultural policy, this focus on the logics of power has a tendency to over-simplify, or at least over-rationalise, the messiness of power and decision making (particularly in contemporary art museums). In this over-rationalisation, the agency of actors is somewhat lost, or obscured. Although in Foucault’s conception of power as dispersed and diffused there are supposedly sites of resistance, in the application of governmentality to cultural policy in the dominant critical accounts, we cannot see these sites of resistance because we do not see particular actors, and their contestations.

The work of Clive Gray is important in highlighting how the interpretation of governmentality can influence what is made visible in analysis. According to Gray (2010b) the choice of analytic framework determines how we understand actors in the museum. In Foucault’s terms, actors are constrained within structures and administrative apparatus (Foucault 2002). However, in Bevir and Rhodes’ interpretation, decision-making is “rooted in the beliefs and preferences of individual actors” (2004: 10). In the former approach, we may still gain a great deal of understanding about processes of governance in museums generally, but in the latter, we are more likely to see conflict, variety and the messiness of policy in practice. Although the governmentality perspective allows for the possibility of new procedures and decision-making processes (Rose and Miller 2010), the assumption of logic in governmentality somewhat obscures the myriad possible processes of governance, and the nuance of experience and conflict.

In the context of NPM, governmentality can explain the attribution of agency to methods (Miller and Rose 2008; Rose and Miller 2010), or what O’Brien (2014) calls ‘the social life of methods.’ As described above, although these methods or ‘technologies’ might be created by diffused notions of power understood as ‘networks,’ by some

accounts, they ultimately define the objects they quantify (Miller and Rose 2008; Rose and Miller 2010; O'Brien 2014). However, without recourse to the critical debates of contemporary art theory, it is possible that O'Brien's (2014) theory of the 'social life of methods,' which is an explicit foundation of his writings on New Labour and cultural policy, and an implicit foundation of others in the NPM/governance paradigm (as discussed, see Belfiore 2004; 2006; Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015; Hewison 2014), undervalues, or at least obscures, the potential agency of individual actors in decision-making processes. In part, this is because none of the texts considering New Labour and cultural policy define these individual actors or position them within a discursive community. Nor do they adopt a methodological approach that enables the surfacing of the possibility of agency in their role in governance.

Again, the work of Clive Gray (2010b) is important in understanding what can be gained from engaging in more detail with individual museum actors. Gray makes the point that it is important to know who is making decisions and how they are made, and he points to a lack of scholarship in this area:

"...the absence of detailed empirical work on the processes and mechanisms by which decisions and policies are made within the museums and galleries sector is matched by the absence of specific knowledge about the basis on which such choices are made" (Gray 2010b: 53).

Gray (2010b) argues that the museum sector is 'fragmented,' with institutions differentiated by a number of different factors and discourses. He says, at the very least, "the particular specificities of individual organisational forms and sectoral peculiarities are required to make sense of the patterns of behaviour that are being explored" (2010b: 54). This thesis aims to generate some specific insights, which may have wider applicability in addressing the knowledge gap that Gray identifies.

The research design of this thesis is constructed to achieve greater disciplinary specificity, so that we might know more about who the decision makers are within contemporary visual arts institutions, and what their discursive influences are. Although O'Brien recognises the "fragmentation of policymaking in modernity" (O'Brien 2014: 27), we do not see in his work on the period of New Labour, the micro-level actions and deliberations which constitute the full complexity of what he calls the "administering of cultural policy" (O'Brien 2014: 27). Distinct from O'Brien, and the other dominant critical analyses investigating the New Labour period, the methodological approach taken here, of engaging in detail with individual actors, creates the possibility of bringing to light insights into decision-making processes and the notions of value underpinning them, that are not visible in the normative readings, which assume there was a rationality to NPM as a governing framework.

An important contribution of this thesis is the recognition and development of 'skilled cultural actors' in the contemporary visual arts institution. In the next section, I will bring in literature from contemporary art theory in order to define the complexity of the context and to give shape to the body of knowledge which these actors brought to decision-making processes. This question of expertise, I argue, is obscured in the normative application of the governmentality framework, with its focus on the mechanics of instruction, rather than the actors of implementation.

2.6 Conceptualisations of social value from the contemporary art theory perspective

In section 2.4 I developed the concept of social value by critically engaging with key conceptualisations of New Labour's social inclusion project from a public policy perspective. I showed how the political project of social inclusion came to define social value as a governing

principle of cultural policy. In section 2.5, I explored critical analyses of cultural governance under New Labour from a governmentality perspective, looking particularly at NPM techniques as a means of diffusing the social value agenda into practice. So far, I have shown that there is a gap in the literature addressing the specific experiences and practices of contemporary arts institutions, acknowledging the potential agency of skilled cultural actors in governance and illustrating the multiple value discourses that contested the meaning of 'social value' as a governing principle under New Labour.

The aim of this section is to demonstrate what social value meant in the contemporary art world during the New Labour period. My argument developed here is that social value is a situated concept that has different meanings in different contexts (Bonham-Carter 2017a). The interpretation of social value in a political context is markedly different from that in a contemporary art context (Bonham-Carter 2017a). This discrepancy, I argue, impacted particularly on contemporary art institutions, which were influenced by both discourses. However, the process of reconciling these two discursive communities, within the institution, has not been sufficiently addressed in the available cultural policy literature. The dissonance that is made evident in this literature review lays the groundwork for some of the key methodological choices in this thesis.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part of this section summarises the key conceptual frameworks for interpreting socially engaged practices of the 1990s, in order to illustrate the development of the social value discourse, within the disciplinary community of contemporary art. The second section offers a summary of the key points of differentiation in the interpretation of 'social value' as developed in socially engaged practices from the perspective of contemporary art theory, and in New Labour politics from a public policy studies perspective. This final section points to a theoretical gap in the literature exploring how contemporary visual arts institutions

negotiated and responded to the needs of the different discursive communities that they participated in and makes the case for the micro-level collection of data that is the methodological basis of this thesis.

2.6.1 The social turn

In this section, I do not attempt to offer any certainty on the meaning of socially engaged practices. Instead, I outline the key debates and discursive influences on social value within contemporary art theory, in order to map the terrain of critical discourse in the sector. It is also not my intent to gather this polyphonic perspective in order to ‘pit it against’ the political discourse around social value that developed under New Labour. Instead, the aim is to elucidate the complexity of understanding and achieving social value in the context of contemporary art, and to shed light on the various influences and discursive communities involved in cultural governance, in order to offer an initial challenge to the semblance of rationality in governance.

There are a number of debates around socially engaged practices – what to call them, how to evaluate them, what they should achieve and how they should engage with participants, to name a few of these debates. In this section, I refer to a number of key theorists (including Bishop 2006; 2012; Finkelppearl 2013; Harvie 2013; Helguera 2011; Jackson 2011; Kester 2004) who were the first and most visible thinkers on questions of social value in contemporary art and in relation to the resurgent interest in socially engaged practices in the 1990s. I use these scholars in order to map the range of perspectives in the field, and as a means of summarising the critical discourse. I argue that this discourse played a large part in shaping the views and actions of cultural actors in the field.

Bishop (2006; 2012) is an early contributor to the theorisation of socially engaged practices, and her work has had an enormous influence on the shape of the debate. In 2012, Bishop argued that the 'social turn' (a phrase she coined in 2006 to describe the manifestation of participatory art practices in the early 1990s) should be rephrased as the "return to the social" (2). Bishop argues that social turns in art history are linked to moments of political upheaval, and that the rise of participatory practices in the early 1990s is contextualised by the fall of communism in 1989 (Bishop 2012). For Bishop (who prefers the term 'participatory art') the artistic orientation towards the social in the 1990s includes a set of practices defined by:

"... a shared set of desires to overturn the traditional relationship between the art object, the artist and the audience. To put it simply: the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations; the work of art as a finite, portable commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder,' is now repositioned as a co-producer or participant" (Bishop 2012: 2).

Bishop's definition, which challenges "conventional modes of artistic production and consumption under capitalism" is framed by a Marxist and post-Marxist tradition (Bishop 2012: 2-3). Important to her reading of participatory practices is the reconfiguring of the audience into the participant, and the object into a process.

Kester's reading of the socially engaged work of the 1990s is differentiated by his preference for the term 'dialogic art,' which he defines as projects that "share a concern with the creative facilitation of dialogue and exchange" (Kester 2004: 8). He says:

"While it is common for a work of art to provoke dialogue among viewers, this typically occurs in response to a finished object. In

these projects, on the other hand, conversation becomes an integral part of the work itself. It is reframed as an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict” (2004: 8).

Kester (2004) and Bishop (2012) share a basic understanding of socially engaged work as a process of reconfiguring the artist-audience relationship, and prioritising process over product. However, they differ markedly in their opinion of the social value contribution of the work, what it should achieve and how it should be evaluated. Writing several years after Kester, Bishop (2012) formulated an important critique of Kester’s work. Her critique illustrates the ambiguities, contradictions and debates that constructed the social value discourse in contemporary art theory, and which influenced skilled cultural actors in shaping the meaning of social of value as a governing principal of the contemporary visual arts institution.

The key point of differentiation between Bishop (2012) and Kester (2004), is that for Bishop, it was essential that these participatory practices foregrounded social disruption or ‘dissensus’ (Bishop 2012). According to Bishop, Kester’s emphasis on “compassionate identification with the other” means that “the ethics of interpersonal interaction comes to prevail over a politics of social justice” (Bishop 2012: 25). For Bishop, Kester’s insistence on “consensual dialogue” creates a “new kind of repressive norm” in which “artistic strategies of disruption, intervention or over-identification are immediately ruled out as ‘unethical’” (Bishop 2012: 25). Bishop criticises Kester for theorising an art that “enters a realm of useful, ameliorative and ultimately modest gestures, rather than the erection of singular acts that leave behind them a troubling wake” (Bishop 2012: 23).

Bishop’s stance on socially engaged work is extremely influential, but also heavily contested. Her insistence on ‘dissensus’ positioned her

firmly against some other theorists, including Nicolas Bourriaud. Bourriaud (1998) coined the term 'relational aesthetics' to describe a set of artistic practices concerned with human relations. For Bourriaud, the work he celebrated was socially empowering because it prioritised 'human relations' as a means of critiquing the dominance of the market-based economy (Bourriaud 1998). The work, and Bourriaud's theorisation of it, made an important contribution to the rising prevalence of socially engaged practices in the 1990s. However, for Bishop, lacking 'dissensus,' relational aesthetics simply indulged a frivolous, experience economy – the kind of work that Adorno (1993) had sought to critique in his influential writings on the culture industry (Bishop 2012).

While Bishop and Bourriaud do not agree on the role of disruption in participatory art, there are a number of theorists who are positioned somewhere in between Bishop and Bourriaud's opposing views. Shannon Jackson lays out a tempered version of Bishop's demands, stating it is her aim to:

"... question models of political engagement that measure artistic radicality by its degree of anti-institutionality. While the activist orientation of some social practices displays the importance of an anti-institutional stance in political arts, I am equally interested in art forms that help us to imagine sustainable social institutions" (Jackson 2011: 14).

For Jackson (2011), the 'anti-institutional' stance is not a measure of 'radicality,' nor is it a measure of the success of a work. She suggests, instead, the possibility for a more collaborative and constructive process of change, which is closer to Kester's (2004) emphasis on conversation and dialogue, Finkelppearl's (2013) focus on cooperation and Jen Harvie's (2013) argument that social practice can provoke both consensus and 'dissensus.' The question of the role of 'dissent' in social practice has shaped debates on social value in the discourse of contemporary art. Despite some differentiation on methods (of

disruption), the key conceptualisations of social value in contemporary art theory rest on the principle that social practice inspires change. For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to note the influence of this debate, even if it remains unresolved.

Related to the 'dissensus' debate is a wide-ranging discussion in contemporary art theory about how socially engaged arts practices should be evaluated, or essentially, how to assign 'value' to social outcomes. Again, Bishop (2012) has been a prominent voice in framing what has become known as the 'ethics versus aesthetics' debate. Bishop's work draws upon Jacques Rancière, an influential theorist on the relationship between art and politics. For Bishop, his arguments are worth rehearsing "in order to make the point that, in his critique of the ethical turn, he is not opposed to ethics, only to its instrumentalisation as a strategic zone in which political and aesthetic dissensus collapses" (2012: 18). Bishop argues that:

"... at present, the discursive criteria of participatory and socially engaged art is drawn from a tacit analogy between anti-capitalism and the Christian 'good soul'; it is an ethical reasoning that fails to accommodate the aesthetic or to understand it as an autonomous realm of experience. In this perspective, there is no space for perversity, paradox and negation" (2012: 39).

Bishop's opposition to 'ethical reasoning' is developed by challenging the emancipatory claims of social practice. Her calls for an alternative to ethical criteria were important both in shaping the social value debate in contemporary art theory, and in confronting the role and function of art in the context of instrumental cultural policies. Again, Bishop's views continue to be debated, but it is the acknowledgement of the presence of a critical debate in the discursive community of contemporary art that is important for the enquiry of this thesis. The aim here is to demonstrate that the conceptualisation of social value in the context of contemporary art was shaped by critical debates

around disruption, agency and evaluation and these debates constituted a critical discourse that informed decision-making in the institution. In outlining these conceptual frameworks, I hope to have substantiated and shed light upon the specific disciplinary knowledge base of skilled cultural actors in the institution. By juxtaposing the contemporary art theory perspective on social value with the public policy perspective on social inclusion, I have laid the groundwork to explore how these perspectives met and interacted in practice.

2.6.2 Discussion – conceptions of social value in contemporary art theory and cultural policy

In reviewing literature from public policy, political science and contemporary art theory perspectives, I have shown how social value has been conceptualised and debated in different contexts, disciplines and discursive communities. In particular, I have drawn attention to the critical debates around social value in contemporary art theory, in order to illustrate what insights might be gained from incorporating these debates into an analytic framework for viewing cultural policy under New Labour. In doing so, I have also attempted to substantiate the knowledge-base and discursive influences that skilled actors in contemporary visual arts institutions brought to decision-making processes in the institution. Again, the point of doing so is to illustrate what insights might be gained from making the role of these actors in negotiating and resolving tensions and ambiguities around social value more visible in the governmentality framework.

In this section, I develop in more detail the contradictions and points of tensions that arise from trying to align different meanings of social value that are situated in different contexts. I explore the frictions between, as well as the intersections of, social value as an interest in contemporary art practice, and as part of a broad, political project undertaken by New Labour. In this analysis, I hope to make visible the complexity of the policy context, and the particular challenges that

confronted contemporary visual arts institutions. I argue that the framing of my research demonstrates the need for further empirical work, conducted at the interface of policy and practice, to add insight into how tensions and conflicts were resolved within the institution.

By drawing the social value discourse in contemporary art theory into my analysis of cultural policy, I have shown that the art world is informed by a unique set of critical debates, norms and histories, which make it difficult to relate to analyses of the 'cultural sector' at large (let alone the 'creative industries'). I argue that to understand how contemporary art institutions experienced New Labour's social value agenda, it is necessary to explore the specific interaction of cultural policies and contemporary art institutions. However, I have shown that there is a gap in the literature that explores the intersections of contemporary art and cultural policy. Bishop (2012) is one of few scholars to engage directly with the dynamic of social practice and New Labour, albeit for less than two pages in her entire treatise on social art practice. In her analysis, Bishop points out that New Labour "deployed a rhetoric almost identical to that of the practitioners of socially engaged art in order to justify public spending on the arts" (2012: 13). However, despite some rhetorical similarities, it is clear that the New Labour agenda and the aims of participatory art practices were mismatched.

To briefly recap, in section 2.4.1, I demonstrated that from a public policy perspective, the social inclusion agenda promulgated by the New Labour administration was about moral compliance and the co-option of disenfranchised members of society into an existing social order. Social exclusion was therefore understood as an individual deficit, rather than a structural issue (Bryne 2005), leaving little space to critique or disrupt the existing social order. According to Levitas (2005):

"Social inclusion now has nothing to do with distributional equality, but means lifting the poor over the boundary of a

minimum standard – or to be more accurate, inducing those who are sufficiently sound in mind and limb to jump over it – while leaving untouched the overall pattern of inequality, especially the rich“ (Levitas 2005: 156).

In this interpretation, the arts, alongside other organisations such as schools, churches, universities, sports clubs, charities and voluntary organisations, are deployed as an instrument of social engineering, to help individuals “perform their inclusion” (Levitas 2005: 57).

There is a clear disconnect between Levitas’ (2005) conceptualisation of social inclusion as a political project under New Labour and the theorisations of social value developed in contemporary art discourse. As I have established in this chapter, in contemporary art theory, social practice is underpinned by a notion of social value that aligns with activism, or at least “self-realisation and collective action” (Bishop 2012: 13). Despite sharing some key terms – participation, inclusivity, diversity – the distance between conceptualisations of social value in cultural policy and theorisations of social value in the art world is vast. The simple juxtaposition of literatures in this chapter elucidates this distance and opens up for further investigation how the implications of such contestation around core governing principles are made visible in current analyses of cultural policy under new Labour, and through the analytic lens of governmentality.

Furthermore, when the ambiguity of social value as a governing principle is considered in the context of the introduction of NPM auditing techniques into the cultural sector, the need to explore the resolution of the pursuant tensions manifests even more distinctly. As I have illustrated in this chapter, there was a lively debate within contemporary art discourse about how to evaluate socially engaged arts practices. From Bishop’s (2012) point of view, under New Labour’s cultural policies, “the production and the reception of the arts was therefore reshaped within a political logic in which audience

figures and marketing statistics became essential to securing public funding” (Bishop 2012: 13). In the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, arts institutions mostly fell into line with the evaluative criteria set for them. As discussed throughout this thesis, in O’Brien’s (2014) assessment the way culture is debated and discussed “is fundamentally shaped by the social life of the methods used to construct an understanding of culture” (33). O’Brien’s ‘theory of the social life of methods’ is part of a larger discussion about the so-called ‘reflexive turn’ in social science, or the increasing tendency of researchers to ask questions about the role of methods in constructing social reality (see, for example, Bourdieu 2010; Giddens 1984). These are, of course, valid questions, but the argument made here is that by placing so much emphasis on the omnipotence of methods, O’Brien overlooks the potential for other discourses and influences to play a role in meaning-making and governance. By drawing in critical debates in contemporary art theory about the evaluation of socially engaged practices, I situate the ‘methodological discourse’ amongst other, potentially impactful, discourses and debates. The framing of the research demonstrates friction and complexity in the governance landscape that is not made visible in the normative, governmentality readings.

Unlike cultural policy circles – where in most cases, conceptualisations of cultural policy by leading academics have little impact on practitioners – in the contemporary art world, leading theorists play a key role in shaping debates and activities in the sector. By shedding light on the critical debates on social value in contemporary art theory, I have substantiated the disciplinary knowledge of skilled cultural workers in the institution. In doing so, I have provided a necessary foundation for the development of a theoretical critique of the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour. I have shown that the dominant critical accounts do not take account of the perspective and role of skilled cultural actors in governance, nor

the multiple discursive communities that informed their decision-making processes.

In addition, I have shown that there is a gap in the literature that considers how the dual demands of the cultural policy landscape and the development of artistic practice and discourse actually ‘played out’ in the institutions whose remit it was to engage with both. According to Angela McRobbie, academic discussion of cultural policy does not “convey the micro-logical processes by which power (in the form of policy) is unfolded and played out, how it is set loose, impacting on everyday activity” (McRobbie 2016: 61). McRobbie says that this type of approach “leaves unheeded how cultural policies are implemented and responded to at the level of organisations, institutions and microenterprises” (McRobbie 2016: 61). Like McRobbie, I contend that existing approaches are ‘too general.’ The aim of this thesis is first to illustrate how a disciplinary focus adds further complexity to the interpretation of the policy landscape and then, to explore through empirical work, how that complexity was experienced by actors and institutions at the interface of policy and practice.

2.7 Conclusions – outlining the ‘gap’ in the literature and the next steps

In this chapter I have briefly reviewed the arts management literature and looked at the key conceptual frameworks for interpreting developments in arts policy and practice under New Labour. I have established, broadly, the multidisciplinary approach of this thesis, in relation to other scholars looking at cultural policy under New Labour. I suggest that the inclusion of literature from contemporary art theory, as well as public policy and cultural policy, is a unique approach to the subject matter, which holds the potential to refine the normative reading of the period. More specifically, in this chapter I have explored the rhetoric of social value as it was developed and employed as part of the political project of New Labour and as a key governing principle

of cultural policy, which was brought to the fore by NPM auditing techniques. I conclude in this chapter that in the normative reading of these developments, in which governmentality is applied as the analytic framework, there is an assumed rationality and structural simplicity to NPM as a governing framework that appears to overlook some of the tensions around the ambiguity of social value, and the role of skilled cultural actors in the governance of contemporary arts institutions.

In order to begin to explore what possible new insights might be gleaned from taking a multidisciplinary approach to the analysis of cultural policy under New Labour, I have juxtaposed conceptualisations of social value as a political project with theorisations of social value as part of the development of socially engaged practices in the 1990s. From this juxtaposition, I show that in both literature 'camps,' social value was a principle value and a key concern, and during the 1990s, there was an awkward coming together of the rhetoric of practice and policy around the concept of social value. However, this coming together is either completely ignored or only acknowledged in the vaguest of ways within each literature paradigm. By juxtaposing key conceptualisations of social value from a public policy perspective, and as part of a broad political project undertaken by New Labour, with the theorisation of social value in contemporary art, and as part of the development of social engaged practices, I reveal the distance between different conceptualisations of social value. I demonstrate that social value was the subject of a lively critical debate within the arts which largely contradicted interpretations of social value as a governing principle of New Labour. This chapter raises a number of important questions about how the meaning of social value was constructed at the interface of policy and practice, as well as the processes of governance in the institution and the role of skilled cultural actors in resolving the tensions and ambiguities that surrounded the concept of social value as a principle of cultural governance.

This chapter has established a gap in the literature exploring contemporary arts institutions and cultural policy under New Labour from the dual perspectives of cultural policy and contemporary art theory. In the next chapter, I endeavour to take the first step in bringing these two bodies of literature together by completing a parallel analysis of developments in arts practice and policy. In doing so, I do not aim to construct a single narrative of events, but rather to point out the different historical trajectories that converged under New Labour, in order sketch a broader (and at the same time, more discipline specific) context for the conceptualisation of the period and to develop my critique of governmentality as a framework for the interpretation of cultural policy under New Labour.

Chapter 3: ‘What Happened’ – Key Developments in Arts Policy and Practice

“If institutions were not to be trusted, if regulation constrained, if bureaucracy was a thing to be avoided, and if disciplining systems of subjugation were everywhere, then a generalised critique of system pervaded not only neoliberal policy circles but also avant-garde artistic circles” (Jackson 2016: 24).

3.1 Introduction

The last chapter juxtaposed key conceptualisations of social value as a political construct with theorisations of socially engaged practices in contemporary art theory. The aim of framing the research in this way is not to attempt to integrate these two bodies of literature, but instead to make apparent that there is a distinct lack of conversation between the theorisation of cultural practice and cultural policy. In marking this critical distance, I make the case for including a broader set of debates in the conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, and particularly in relation to the governmentality perspective that has become the normative means of interpreting cultural governance in this period. I argue that there is a gap in the literature exploring cultural policy under New Labour from the distinct multidisciplinary perspective of cultural policy and contemporary art theory. What follows in this chapter then, is an attempt to trace the history of developments in art leading up to the proliferation of socially engaged practices in the 1990s (the ‘social turn’), alongside the history of post-war cultural policy in the UK. While the last chapter looked at conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour from different disciplinary perspectives, this chapter will do the work of juxtaposing developments in arts policy and practice to provide an original analysis of ‘what happened.’

Again, I do not attempt to demonstrate a structured or seamless narrative of the two trajectories, but instead, to illustrate the historical steps that contributed to the formation of two distinct discursive communities, each of which would play a role in decision-making in contemporary arts institutions under New Labour. In the analysis of these histories in this chapter, I find that despite significant differences, contemporary art practice and cultural policy appeared to find some common ground under New Labour, at least in terms of social value rhetoric. However, in my analysis, I show that this ‘coming together’ also magnified tensions that arose from the different histories and values that informed each discursive community. This discord was further amplified by new auditing processes which tried to channel complex value judgments into simple, evidence-based criteria. As a result, I argue in this chapter that we need to know more about how such tensions and contradictions were resolved by skilled cultural actors within contemporary arts institutions.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section (3.2) offers an overview of key developments in cultural policy from the 1940s to the New Labour period. This section explores how arts policy moved from questions of aesthetics based upon notions of excellence, to instrumental values based on social and economic outcomes. The next section (3.3) provides an art historical outline of the development of socially engaged arts practices across the 20th century, again focusing on notions of social value that grew out of influential practices. Section 3.4 reflects upon the two parallel histories, noting how events and the literatures that describe them mostly fail to come together, despite moments of cross-over. Finally, section 3.5 establishes the policy context through a review of policy documents and primary literature.

I draw distinctly from the literature of cultural policy to explore policy developments, and from the literature of contemporary art theory to explain artistic developments, in order to present clearly the research

problem that needs to be addressed: what happens when these two 'worlds' of contemporary art and cultural policy collide? What happens at the interface of practice and policy – what were the processes of governance and how were tensions interrogated and then resolved?

3.2 An historical overview of cultural policy in the UK

In this section, I trace an arc through the recent history of cultural policy in the UK, in order to provide a contextual narrative for how social value came to be the governing principle of culture, within an evidence-based accountability framework. This narrative is important in understanding how the lineage of cultural policy in the UK weighed into the formation of a construct of social value that was particular to the policy context.

The relationship between culture and New Labour is complicated, and fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, culture was an integral part of the Labour party's rebrand, which linked into the celebration of 'Cool Britannia' and 'Creative Britain' (Smith 1998). Under New Labour, the arts made tremendous progress. The opening of Tate, the introduction of free entry to national museum collections and the embedding of the National Lottery are just a few examples of New Labour's enduring cultural legacy (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2014; Skene 2017). On the other hand, much of New Labour's cultural policy was a continuation, and in some ways, a ramping up, of the neoliberalisation of culture that had begun under Thatcher's Conservative administration (Garnham 2005). According to Hesmondhalgh et al., "it was the coming together of neoliberal, conservative and economicist conceptions of policy with the crisis of aesthetic value associated with 'postmodernism' which shaped UK cultural policy under New Labour" (2014: 11). With the benefit of some critical distance, it is clear that under New Labour, new attitudes towards, uses for and modes of governing culture were developed and expanded, as a result of cultural, economic, social and political developments shaping the

policy landscape. In the sections below, I sketch out some of these developments.

3.2.1 Consensus: 1940 - 1970

A number of scholars have surveyed cultural policy developments in post-war UK (see Hewison 1995; 2014). The obvious starting point for a formal study of cultural policy in the UK is with establishment of The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) by Royal Charter in 1940 (artscouncil.org.uk 2019). In 1945, the Council was renamed the Arts Council of Great Britain, before being subdivided into Arts Council England and other national councils in 1994 (artscouncil.org.uk 2019). Journalist and cultural critic Robert Hewison offers a thorough account of cultural policy in the UK in the post-war period in *Culture & Consensus* in which he argues that culture was part of the ‘consensus’ – that is, part of a “broad, national, political agreement that kept Britain’s social and economic institutions functioning throughout the shifts of power between Labour and Conservative governments” (Hewison 1995: xvi). In this period, the state supported culture because there was ‘consensus’ that art should be supported. In simple terms, provided by welfare economics, the rationale for supporting culture rested on market failure; as the market failed to support certain kinds of cultural goods, the state would step in to make up the shortfall (Pratt 2007). In this period, judgements about what to support were based largely upon notions of aesthetic excellence (Hewison 1995).

ACE’s role was to determine which initiatives were ‘excellent’ and deserving of state support. The dominant principle behind the creation of the Arts Council was the ‘arm’s-length’ approach. As a non-governmental department, the Council was set up at one remove, or an ‘arm’s-length’ from the government, to ensure the “distancing of political influence from decisions on how grant aid is awarded for artistic activity” (Hetherington 2017: 483). The intention of the ‘arm’s-length’ principle was to create an autonomous but accountable body

that could make decisions based upon artistic merit and expertise, without the interference of politics. The approach prevented politicians from having to make judgements about artistic excellence – instead notions of excellence were largely determined by a privileged few within the Arts Council (Hewison 1995). Hewison (1995) argues that this ‘consensus’ dominated the early years of post-war UK arts policy.

3.2.2 The instrumental turn

However, over the last 50 years, the state has transformed from a highly engaged welfare state to a minimally engaged neoliberal state (Pratt 2007). Since the fall of Communism in 1989, the ideology of neoliberalism and the belief in the ‘market’ has permeated all aspects of human life, including culture (Hewison 2014). With greater emphasis on market determination, there has been increasing pressure on the arts to justify their special status as recipients of state support. According to Hewison:

“the breakdown of the post-war consensus under the pressures of neoliberalism and the upsurge of a more democratic – or at least populist – consumer culture led to a crisis of aesthetic authority for the elite that spoke the language of ‘excellence.’ Any loss of that authority could lead to questions about how and why public money was being spent” (Hewison 2014: 24).

Against the backdrop of the developing neoliberal state, the spread of consumer culture and reduced funding for the arts, the post-war consensus on support for the arts began to unravel (Hewison 2014). Under the Thatcher administration, which took office in 1979, there was a “shift from state to market across the whole range of public provision” (Garnham 2005: 16). It became difficult to argue for state support for the arts within a market-based logic when many forms of culture could be sustained by market support alone (Mulgan 1996). The idea that ‘excellent’ art and culture was not market viable and therefore required state support was no longer a sustainable argument for supporting the cultural sector. As McGuigan (2005) argues, culture

had become “saturated with a market-oriented mentality, that closes out alternative ways of thinking and imagining”(229).

Under Thatcher, economic contribution and efficiency became the underlying principles of reform. And, it was under Thatcher that arguments about the economic value of culture became the main justification for spending on the arts (see Arts Council of Great Britain 1985; Myerscough 1988). For many theorists (see Belfiore 2004; Bonham-Carter 2017b; Hewison 1995; 2014; O’Brien, 2014) this shift marked the end of an era of cultural policy dedicated to cultural excellence, and the beginning of an era of cultural policy dominated by arguments about the instrumental value of culture, or the possibility of culture attaining results in non-cultural areas. As described in the last chapter, this shift has become known as the ‘instrumental turn.’ By some accounts (see Belfiore 2004; Duncan 1995), “the instrumental use of culture has always been at the core of UK cultural policy, beginning with the civilising aims of Victorian-era museums” (Bonham-Carter 2017b). However, it was during the 1980s and 1990s that instrumental cultural policies became explicit, marking a significant change in cultural policy rhetoric (Belfiore 2004).

3.2.3 Cultural policy under New Labour

The New Labour administration presided over a number of significant developments in cultural policy.⁷ First, funding for the arts increased substantially during the New Labour years. However, the impact of increased funding levels was somewhat tempered by the administration’s rising expectations of arts institutions, which included being ambitious, enterprising and entrepreneurial. Second, the Conservative administration’s movement towards the instrumentalisation of culture was reaffirmed under New Labour, but

⁷ As the focus of this thesis is the cultural (and to some extent, the social) policies of New Labour, it isn’t within the scope of this research to explore the project of New Labour in more general political terms. However, please refer to Anthony Giddens’ *The Third Way* 1998 for a broader analysis of the ambition of the New Labour project.

with greater emphasis on the social, alongside the economic, value of culture as a justification for spending on the arts. And third, a culture of evidence-based accountability was instilled in the cultural sector through the introduction of NPM techniques. I will address the first two points in this section, and the third in section 3.2.4 below.

It is difficult to state exactly how much funding for the arts increased under New Labour, because ACE and DCMS accounting practices have changed over time. According to Hesmondhalgh et al. the New Labour administration declared in 2010 that investment in the arts had increased by 83% in real terms from 1997 to 2010, but Hesmondhalgh et al. put the figure closer to 35%, by their own calculations (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2014: 100). In any case, even the more conservative estimates demonstrate a significant increase in funding for the arts under New Labour. Although they had initially been conceived during the Conservative administration, several new initiatives in the arts sector, including the continued roll-out of National Lottery funding and Millennium Funding and the launch of Tate Modern, embedded during the New Labour administration and created new opportunities for the arts sector.⁸ Blair's belief in his administration's contribution to the arts was summarised in a speech he made in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, in 2007, in which he declared that the ten years he had been in office would be looked back upon as a 'golden age' for the arts (Blair 2007, cited in Hewison 2014: 1).

However, although funding levels to museums and galleries increased under New Labour, so too did the scale of activities being undertaken. Many galleries began or went through restructured growth or

⁸ The first National Lottery draw took place in November 1994. The first ACE lottery grants were awarded in March 1995. The Millennium Dome opened to the public on 1 January 2000 (before closing again on 31 Dec 2000). Tate Modern opened on 12 May 2000.

significant capital development projects during the administration.⁹ Whereas previously galleries had defaulted to state support to meet the majority of their needs, increasingly, under New Labour, galleries were expected to be enterprising and entrepreneurial. Most developments took place under matched funding schemes with ACE. Galleries were expected to wean themselves away from dependency on the state, and towards commercial activity to generate earned income and to proactively fundraise from trusts and foundations, in order to diversify funding streams and curtail their reliance on ACE. Therefore, in spite of increasing amounts of money available to them from the National Lottery, and from ACE and DCMS directly, many institutions found themselves in a position of having to raise more money than ever before.

The expectation on arts institutions to be ‘enterprising’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ and the infiltration of this rhetoric into the subsidised cultural sector came, in large part, from New Labour’s refashioning of the cultural sector into the ‘creative industries.’ The origins of this transformation can actually be traced back to the Thatcher administration. Under Thatcher’s government, “the growth of the cultural sector was seen as a beneficent substitute for the declining manufacturing sector” (Garnham 2005: 23). The economic value of culture arguments that surfaced during the Thatcher administration developed under New Labour, as Tony Blair foregrounded the creative industries as part of the modernisation project of the Labour party. The formal beginnings of the creative industries began with the establishment of the Creative Industries Task Force (CITF) in 1997, as a central initiative of DCMS (Flew 2012: 9). The new task force “set about mapping current activity in those sectors deemed to be a part of the UK creative industries, measuring their contribution to Britain’s

⁹ As examples: Iniva moved into a new building in 2007, the Whitechapel Gallery expanded into the former Whitechapel library in 2009, and South London Gallery expanded in 2009. The Serpentine Sackler Gallery opened a few years later, in 2013.

overall economic performance and identifying policy measures that would promote their further development” (Flew 2012: 9). In Blair’s New Labour government, the creative industries promised:

“a new alignment of arts and media policies with economic policies, and by drawing attention to the contribution of these sectors to job creation, new sources of wealth and new British exports, there would now be a ‘seat at the table’ for the cultural sectors in wider economic discourse that had become hegemonic in British public policy under the previous Conservative governments” (Flew 2012: 11).

The establishment of the task force and the repositioning of culture as industry heralded in a new era of cultural policy. As discussed in the last section, these developments, and the newfound prominence of culture as an area of interest in the larger structures of government and governance, all rested on the central principle that cultural policies concerned the manner of ways in which culture could be instrumentalised for gains in non-cultural areas.

The instrumentalisation of culture for economic gain was often grounded in arguments about the role of culture in regeneration and urban renewal. From this narrative, under New Labour, culture became ‘instrumentalised’ not only in the sense of the part it could play in generating economic value, but also, importantly, its potential to have social value. In the context of regeneration, Oakley remarks that:

“The development and support of a thriving creative industries sector in many parts of the UK can enable some of those involved to fulfil their talents, aspirations and desires; it can assist in place-making and physical regeneration in many rundown inner city or rural areas; and it will provide employment” (2004: 76).

However, Oakley concludes that while these gains can be achieved, it is important to accept that culture “cannot provide the answer to the social and economic polarisation threatening the UK and other advanced economies” (2004: 18).

Despite reservations about using the creative industries as a “single weapon with which to turn around economically depressed regions” (Oakley 2004: 1) when in fact there was growing evidence to suggest that such an approach risked “creating polarised and unsustainable economic development” (Oakley 2004: 1), arguments about the social value of culture proliferated and the social value of culture became a central feature, alongside economic value, of cultural policy under New Labour.

As explained in chapter 2, the social value of culture was connected to a wider strategy, under New Labour, to tackle social exclusion. In 1997, the administration formed an interdepartmental initiative called the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). According to the SEU, social exclusion is:

“a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown” (Social Exclusion Unit 2004).

Therefore, social inclusion can be understood as providing appropriate opportunities for individuals labelled as ‘socially excluded’ to engage with social, cultural and economic institutions (Durrer and Miles 2009: 225).

After the SEU established targeting social exclusion as an interdepartmental objective, the DCMS responded by explicitly prioritising the social inclusion agenda. DCMS and ACE published a number of reports detailing the relationship between the arts and

social inclusion (see ACE 1999; Jermyn 2001; 2004; DCMS 1999; 2000; 2001). However, there was still little evidence to support the idea that museums could play a prominent role in social inclusion. In fact, according to Oakley (2004) evidence on the creative industries tends to suggest that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals are underrepresented in the sector, whilst graduate labour is overrepresented, in comparison to other sectors – characteristics that imply that the sector might have a bigger role to play in polarisation than inclusion. Despite the lack of evidence supporting the role of the arts in social inclusion, the ‘social value agenda’ came to be a defining feature of New Labour’s cultural policy and museums and galleries were called upon to act as ‘centres for social change’ (DCMS 2000).

3.2.4 NPM – measuring performance and success

The breakdown of the ‘consensus’ on culture and the turn towards instrumental cultural policies were developments that were inextricably linked to the process of ‘neoliberalisation’ in the UK. Neoliberalism, the “macro-economic paradigm that has dominated from the end of the 1970s until – at least – 2008” (Watkins 2010: 7) is a highly contested theory of political economic practices that is most clearly articulated in David Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005). In Harvey’s widely accepted definition, neoliberalism:

“...proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2005: 2).

According to Hesmondhalgh et al. (2015) the international rise of neoliberalism encouraged the “dubious view of the private sector as more efficient and effective than the public sector” and “New Labour did little or nothing to question that growing attitude” (90). New Labour’s suspicion of the public sector manifested in its adoption of NPM techniques across its policies, including its cultural policies.

As described in chapter 2, NPM is an organising principle used to describe a set of managerial developments and tendencies that arose as an alternative to the once dominant modes of accountability that were predicated on processes and hierarchies. These developments, which were drawn from private sector mentalities were identified in two articles by the influential public policy theorist Christopher Hood (1991; 1995) and usefully summarised by Lapsley (2009):

Table 3.1 New Public Management (Hood’s (1991; 1995) main characteristics summarised by Lapsley (2009))

1. Unbundling public sector into corporatized units organised by product.
2. More contract-based competitive provision, with internal markets and term contracts.
3. Stress on private sector management styles.
4. More stress on discipline and frugality in resource use.
5. Visible hands-on top management.
6. Explicit formal measurable standards and measurement of performance and success
7. Greater emphasis on output controls.

Source: Adapted from Lapsley (2009)

While aspects of all of these characteristics were visible both in New Labour’s cultural policies and in the developing managerial modes of cultural institutions under New Labour, this thesis is specifically focused on number six: “explicit formal measurable standards and measurement of performance and success.” However, number five, “visible hands-on top management” and number three, “stress on private sector management styles” naturally bleed into my enquiry, as do the implications of the characterisation of these developments as a whole.

For Hesmondhalgh et al., “these techniques embodied a lack of trust in public service workers and managers, who were implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) understood as being in need of constant vigilance and monitoring” (2015: 91). While I do not seek to refute that interpretation, I do aim to explore in more detail in the thesis, and through the collection of empirical evidence, how such an ideological shift, if it existed, was experienced by cultural actors in the institution. By substantiating the discursive community of the skilled cultural actor here, and in the last chapter, I aim to provide further insight into the extent to which professional knowledge transfused auditing structures and how skilled cultural actors balanced their professional impulses with ‘top-down’ management processes.

In this section, I have charted the development of post-war cultural policy in the UK, looking specifically at how the social value agenda, as well as new managerial modes, were introduced into the cultural sector during the New Labour administration. In the next section, I conduct a similar walk through the recent history of art to explore the development of socially engaged practices, before juxtaposing and discussing these two ‘trajectories’ in section 3.4.

3.3 The art historical lineage of socially engaged practices

In the last section (3.2) I charted the major developments in cultural policy in the UK leading up to and during the New Labour period. I began my analysis with the development of CEMA, in 1940, as a natural starting point for a reflection on cultural governance. In the following pages, I summarise a number of key developments in artistic practice in the 20th century. I aim to substantiate the art historical trajectory of socially engaged arts practices so that they are contextualised within their disciplinary community and, related to this, to illustrate in what ways the development of artistic practice has

influenced debates in the contemporary art world about the meaning of social value.

It is not at all my intention to suggest that New Labour's social value agenda somehow concocted an interest in social value that wasn't already well established in arts practice. Rather, my objective is the opposite. I aim to shed further light on how the social value rhetoric of contemporary art and New Labour collided under the administration. While the "linguistic momentum" (McRobbie 2016: 61) of cultural policy rhetoric is well established in cultural policy studies, I hope to substantiate here, a 'linguistic momentum' of the arts, in order to sketch out in further detail the discipline knowledge that cultural actors brought to their roles in cultural institutions. By repositioning these 'institutional actors' as 'skilled cultural actors,' I break away from the process driven conceptualisation of "public, private and voluntary sector organisations administering cultural policy" (O'Brien 2014: 27) and begin to fathom alternative processes of discussion, conflict and negotiation, incorporating the agency of skilled cultural workers.

The history of art and social value is long and convoluted. Plato was suspicious of all the arts because he believed that "by affecting the irrational part of the human psyche, the arts can affect both the ethical sphere and human behaviour" (Belfiore and Bennett 2010: 107). Aristotle, argued for the uncoupling of art and ethics, but agreed with Plato on the great power of arts in civil society (Belfiore and Bennett 2010). Art has a complex relationship to society and it would be impossible to detail that relationship in the limited space available here. In section 3.3.1 I acknowledge the existence of multiple art histories, but explain the reasons for taking my particular path. In sections 3.3.2-3.3.5, I identify four key moments in the history of socially engaged practices, including the 'social turn' in the 1990s, which, I argue, give shape to an art history of socially engaged art and to the discourse of social value that developed from arts practice.

3.3.1 Recognising multiple communities and histories of art

There are many art histories, and the art establishment is increasingly (though many would argue, not fast enough) opening out to the multiplicity of arts communities that have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the vibrancy of the arts in modern times. In recent years, the Tate has made a concerted effort to “explore multiple art histories from a global perspective” and through its collection, displays and exhibitions, to focus on expanding beyond Europe and North America, to reassess and reframe art historical narratives (Tate 2020). These efforts resonate with important efforts to ‘decolonise’ curriculums across arts schools and programmes in the UK.

However, differentiated art histories and communities have not received equal attention in the framing narratives of art history, nor equivalent platforms in the history of the arts establishment.

Moments such as the presentation of *Magiciens de la Terre* at the Centre George Pompidou and the Grande Halle de la Villette in 1989 – an exhibition that aimed to give equal representation to Western and non-Western artists – are unfortunately the exception rather than the norm. Scholars such as Jean Fisher, who wrote extensively about colonialism, imperialism, and globalisation in Ireland, Native America, the Black Atlantic, and Palestine throughout the 1990s, were often charting under-recognised areas of scholarship (artforum.com 2016).

The field of cultural studies, which emerged as a discipline in the UK in the 1970s and 80, has generated much more advanced scholarship on the way in which culture is related to political and economic conditions, and power structures. Stuart Hall was a particularly influential figure in the development of cultural studies and, as part of the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies, articulated the role of culture in influencing social structures, and as a mode of questioning existing power dynamics (Hall 1980; 2013).

Equally important is the work of Edward Said, who developed the idea of 'orientalism' to explore Western representations of Eastern societies (see Said 1995). Other disciplines have had their own 'awakenings.' Homi K. Bhabha has made significant contributions to english literature in the area of post-colonialism (see Bhabha 2004) and Gurminder Bhambra is continuing to develop the field of sociology (see Bhambra 2014). One could argue that art history has been comparatively slow to develop as a discipline.

That said, while I acknowledge the limits of the discipline, in the pages that follow, I analyse the history of social value in contemporary art from the perspective of art history and theory because I am interested in exploring the specific trajectory of arts practice from which the socially engaged practices of the 1990s emerged. I draw upon current theorisations (see Bourriaud 1998; Bishop 2012 etc.) that position the socially engaged practices of the 90s in relation to certain art historical moments, which are the ones that I cover in this chapter: Dada, the performance work of the 1960s and the community arts movement of the 1970s. Though I acknowledge the existence and importance of multiple and differentiated arts communities, it is not possible for me to take a 'less-travelled' path through art history within the constraints of this enquiry. The aim of this section is to know more about the confluence of practice and policy during New Labour and to shed light upon some of the critical influences informing practice and practitioners in contemporary visual arts institutions in the 1990s. In the broader reading, my thesis makes a clear point about the extent to which value discourses are shaped by multiple inputs and influences.

3.3.2 Dada

There have been various attempts to contextualise the socially engaged practices of the 90s within an art historical lineage (see, for example, Bishop 2006; 2012; Dezeuze 2006; Foster 2006; Kester 2004; Larsen 1999; Nesbit et al. 2006). Most of these attempts explore

the shifting relationship between the artist and audience, and the development of participatory art practices. Although the most well-theorised social participation practices emerged in the 1960s, it is beneficial to look a little further back into the 20th century, at Dada, to understand the shifting dynamics of artists and audiences from which the 60s participatory practices emerged. Against the backdrop of World War I, Dada “took direct aim at bourgeois culture”, which it blamed for the “butchery of the war” and Dadaists “pledged to attack all norms” (Foster et al. 2011: 135). From its inception, the work of the Dada group was collectively-produced and performance-based. The Dada group saw itself as “a collection of individuals united by opposition to the same causes (war, nationalism, etc.) but little else” (Bishop 2006: 67).

In its early days, the group sought chaos and anarchism through antagonism, and aimed to be ‘all-negating’ and ‘anti-ideological’ (Bishop 2006: 66). In 1921, André Breton and his colleagues undertook a series of now well-known manifestations, including the excursion to the church of Saint Julien-le-Pauvre, and a mock trial of the anarchist author and nationalist, Maurice Barrès which aimed not only to involve the Parisian public, but to antagonise them. The performance pieces, which garnered little attention at the time, involved the Dadaist participants shouting insults at members of the public passing by. However, in the latter days, Breton adopted a more refined stance, seeking to form “a closer connection between art and life” (Bishop 2012: 71). In Bürger’s influential reading of the historical European avant-garde (i.e., Dada, Constructivism and Surrealism), Breton’s intention typified an art that denounced the production and consumption of art by individuals and which was “an attack on the status of art in bourgeois society” (2006: 48). In Bürger’s interpretation what was negated was “not an earlier form of art (a style) but art as an institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of men” (2006: 48).

However, it is important to note that Dada did not argue for the integration of art into the existing praxis; on the contrary, it aimed to use art for the creation of a new life praxis (Bürger 2006). For the purposes of this thesis, and the understanding of socially engaged practices of the 1990s, Dada marked two significant developments: it rejected aestheticism's distance from the praxis of life (even if this rejection was predicated on the creation of a new life praxis), and through participation, it negated the disjuncture between individual production and reception (Bürger 2006) – the latter of which informed the evolving relationship between artist and audience in the 20th century.

3.3.3 The 1960s

A point of interest for the purposes of this thesis, which explores practice in the broad and varied context of neoliberal politics, is the complex and evolving relationship between art and late capitalism. Guy Debord, leader of the Situationist Internationale, addressed the issue in his seminal work, *The Society of the Spectacle* (2014), which was first published in 1967. Debord and the Situationist Internationale exposed “the workings of a new stage of capitalism centred on the image and driven by mass consumption” (Foster et al. 2011: 431). Debord analysed this society of media and mass culture in terms of the ‘spectacle,’ which he defined as “the stage at which the commodity has succeeded in total colonising social life” during which “the world we see is the world of commodity” (Debord 2014: 16). Foster et al. argue that Debord’s text “allows one to grasp the trajectory of modern culture vis-à-vis capitalist development” (2011). In order to critique this consumer capitalism, Debord called for the construction of ‘situations,’ or moments that could offer a reordering of things (Debord 2014). Debord’s critique positioned the active viewer against the passive, consumer viewer. The Situationist Internationale’s methods of activating the viewer and their critique of consumer capitalism were

significant as a precursor to the participatory methods, and political activism, of the socially engaged artists of the 1990s.

Indeed, many of the participatory and performative practices of the 1960s provide a strong lineage to the socially engaged practices of the 1990s. In his essay 'Social Aesthetics: 11 Examples to Begin with, in the Light of Parallel History' (1999) the prominent contemporary art theorist, Lars Bang Larsen, explores the work of eleven Scandinavian artists working in the 60s alongside the work of eleven Scandinavian artists active in the 1990s who work with "a productive revisitation of 1960s strategies in the visual arts" (78). His analysis illustrates how common to the understanding of his eleven examples in both time periods is that "the dynamic between artistic activity and the realms that are traditionally relegated to the fabric of the social fails to properly describe a dialectic" (Larsen 1999: 77). Larsen's study, which was based on a small 'scene' of Scandinavian artists, turned out to be largely indicative of wider phenomena, and his text was influential in drawing connections between the performative and participatory work of the 60s and the socially engaged work of the 1990s. This work from the 1960s and 70s, including in particular, Allan Kaprow's happenings and performance-based actions, helped to confirm an artistic tradition that denied the fabrication of a dichotomous divide between the artistic and social realms, and instead, linked "new forms of intersubjective experience with social and political activism" (Kester 2004: 9). Stephan Willats, Artists Placement Group, Suzanne Lacy and Helen and Newton Harrison are all examples of 1960s and 70s performance and participatory work that worked in the spaces between art, politics and social action.

3.3.4 Community Arts Movement

The last example of 'artistic lineage' that is pertinent to the development of socially engaged practices of the 1990s that I will mention here is the community arts movement of the 1970s, in the UK.

This movement is given rare attention (in the art theory canon) in Claire Bishop's *Artificial Hells* (2012). According to Bishop, the community arts movement aimed to "democratise and facilitate lay creativity, and to increase accessibility to the arts for less privileged audiences" (Bishop 2012: 163). The movement was defined by its grassroots basis, eschewal of the hierarchies of the art world, attention to people from low socio-economic groups and belief in collective authorship (Bishop 2012). It was a movement that was very connected to community-activism. However, these commitments made it difficult for the movement to generate a public critical discourse about the work (which also emphasised process over product) and the movement was, and has been, largely ignored by the arts establishment. While the Community Arts Movement of the 1970s shared many principles with the socially engaged practices of the 1990s, the key difference is that the socially engaged practices of the 1990s were very much accepted into the mainstream arts establishment. However, as I argue here, this 'acceptance' created particular tensions, as the work negotiated the influences of the discursive community of contemporary art, within a policy landscape defined by its instrumental approach to culture.

3.3.5 Socially engaged practices

The 1990s saw the vast proliferation and recognition of socially engaged practices. There are numerous terms for art that is 'socially turned' (Harvie 2013). There is socially engaged art, relational art, interactive art, dialogical art, social practice, new genre public art, participatory art, relational art, activist art, community art, and others too. Some of these terms are used interchangeably, others are nuanced by different scholars, but there is certainly no agreement about the meaning of each of these terms. To manage this disagreement, I tend to use the terms 'socially engaged practices,' or simply, 'social practice' and I settle on the Tate's textbook definition of

“art that is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium or material of the work” (Tate 2019).

The beginning of the return of socially engaged practice is commonly traced back to the publication of Nicolas Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics*, in 1998. The text focuses on a number of artists that Bourriaud included in *Traffic* (1996), an exhibition curated by Bourriaud at the Bordeaux Museum of Contemporary Art. As explained in section 2.6.1, relational aesthetics describes a tendency in artistic practice to foreground people, conversation and intersubjectivity over materials and representation. The works in the exhibition generally resisted ‘pictoriality’ and ‘objecthood’ and “pushed Minimalist and time-based art to create aesthetic spheres of inter-subjective exchange” (Jackson 2011: 45). Artists such as Rirkrit Tiravanija, Liam Gillick, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Carsten Höller, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres were included in the show (Jackson 2011: 45). Many of the artists Bourriaud wrote about and included in the exhibition went on to have prominent careers, which were often initially framed by the ‘relational aesthetics’ label.

However, attempting to understand Bourriaud’s conceptualisation of this ‘new’ form of artistic practice as the beginning of the return of socially engaged practice is complicated. To begin with, the term socially engaged practice encompasses extreme “aesthetic heterogeneity” as well as “social heterogeneity”, or variations in social models (Jackson 2011: 14). As I explained in chapter 2, the theorisation of social practice has sparked a number of debates in contemporary art theory and practice. To briefly recap, for some practitioners and theorists (see Bourriaud 1998; Kester 2004), social engagement is equivalent to collaboration and is about the creation of spaces of ‘harmonious’ encounters and conviviality, as in the sorts of work made by Bourriaud’s relational artists. However, for others, including, most notably, Bishop (2006; 2012), the social model is predicated on the desire to disrupt social bonds (Jackson 2011). As

I demonstrated in chapter 2, debates about the relative importance of ‘artistic radicality’ in socially engaged practices, as well as by what criteria such work should be judged, came to dominate the critical discourse on social value in the contemporary art community.

These debates were encouraged by the fact that throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, socially engaged practices, including the wide variety of social models encompassed by that term, became noticeably visible in and outside of major exhibition venues, in critical discourse and even as part of art school curriculums. In 2012, the influential curator Nato Thompson described the rise of socially engaged practice as a “global phenomenon” and declared there was an “inevitable tide of cultural producers who are frustrated with art’s impotence and who are eager to make a tangible change in the world” (Thompson 2012). Following Bourriaud’s seminal exhibition, *Traffic* (1998), other high-profile exhibitions focusing on socially engaged practices followed, including Hans Ulrich Obrist’s *Utopia Station* at the Venice Biennale in 2003, and Thompson’s *The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere* (2004) at MASS MoCA and later, *Living as Form* (2012). Each of these influential exhibitions helped shape the discourse on social practice, and importantly moved critical debate on socially engaged practices, and social value in contemporary art, further to the forefront of discussion in the art world.

In this section, I have conducted a brief review of the history of socially engaged practices in art. First and most importantly, I have illustrated that there *is* a history of social value in the practice of art. This point is critical to my argument that skilled cultural actors working in contemporary visual arts institutions were informed and influenced by a specific disciplinary knowledge, shaped by the discursive community of their sector. Second, I have laid the groundwork to explore how the historical trajectory of socially engaged practice intersects with the history of social value in cultural policy, particularly leading up to, and during, the New Labour administration. By illustrating the values that

underpinned Dada, the performative and participatory practices of the 1960s, the Community Arts Movement of the 1970s and the socially engaged practices of the 1990s, I have shown how the history of socially engaged practice is one defined by questions about the connection of art to life, the audience/artist relationship and the role of art in a consumer capitalist society. In the section below, I discuss how these questions intersect with, and relate to, developments in cultural policy.

3.4 Developments in artistic practice and cultural policy – a comparative discussion

As I argue throughout this thesis, the historical narrative of cultural policy is rarely considered alongside the historical narrative of the cultural activity it governs. In fact, as a form of public policy, cultural policy and the experts who analyse it often only consider cultural activity in the broadest and vaguest of terms. In this chapter I have juxtaposed the disciplinary histories of both socially engaged art practices and cultural policy in the UK. The framing of the research in this way provides a basis for a comparative analysis of these histories. The point of putting these ‘histories’ together is to flesh out in greater detail the tensions and contradictions that surface at the interface of practice and policy, and particularly as the rhetoric of practice and policy collided under the aims of the New Labour administration. My intention is to offer a broad frame for the research problem of the thesis – what happens when these two worlds collide? – before approaching that problem with greater specificity in the empirical work.

In this chapter I have laid a critical foundation for the research enquiry of this thesis. I have shown that social value has different meanings in different contexts, and that the discourse of New Labour’s social value agenda rested upon a very different set of assumptions than the discourse of social value in contemporary art. I have shown that each discourse is informed by different histories, lexicons, values and

objectives and this – coupled with the introduction of evidence-based accountability techniques into the cultural sector under New Labour – created a complex landscape for the cultural actors tasked with making decisions and implementing policy within the institution. However, despite the distance between the two ‘histories’ outlined in this chapter, and the apparent impossibility of creating a seamless narrative between them, by juxtaposing key developments in arts practice and policy in the UK in the period leading up to and during New Labour, I reveal some important convergences and divergences. In this section, I identify and explore a number of developments from the dual perspectives of contemporary art theory and cultural policy. I look specifically at questions around aesthetics in art and the relationship of art to the ‘everyday,’ the potentiality of participation and the role of the artist in late capitalism. By exploring these questions from a multidisciplinary perspective, I expose some of ‘the grit’ in the relationship between practice and policy, and in relation to the broader question of the meaning of social value, at the interface of practice and policy. My analysis provides a context that illustrates, in a way that is not visible in dominant critical analyses of the period, the complexity of cultural governance under New Labour.

As outlined in this chapter, the central ‘narrative’ of post-war cultural policy in the UK concerns the disintegration of the ‘consensus’ on state support for the arts based upon arguments about the aesthetic excellence of art (Belfiore 2002; 2004; Hewison 1995; O’Brien 2014). This overarching development bears an interesting relationship to the project of the post-war artistic avant-garde, as it moved away from debates about the aesthetics of representation and moved towards discussions about the relationship between art and everyday life, or the utility of art. As demonstrated in this chapter, the relationship between art and everyday life has been a recurring trope of artistic practices in the 20th century (Danto 1981). Much of the European avant-garde was informed by a model of anti-aesthetics which sought to bring art closer to everyday life and it is now “widely acknowledged

that the opening of art to life in the 1960s radically changed the definition of art” (Dezeuze 2006: 143). In his influential essay *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (1981) the prominent art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto explores the difference between ‘things’ and artworks that look like ‘things’. Dezeuze (2006) argues that for Danto, the critical distance between ‘mere things’ and artworks was born from both the mode of representing ‘things’ in art, and from the stripping away, in art, of the material object’s “relation to use and habit” (146), or its usefulness.

However, throughout the 1960s, performance and participatory artists such as Allan Kaprow and the Fluxus artists, became increasingly concerned with “shifting the emphasis from object to performance” and emphasising the “use and habit” of art (Dezeuze 2006: 146). Once antithetical to the definition of art and aesthetics, ‘everydayness’ and ‘utility’ were foregrounded as critical concerns of the post-1960s performative and participatory practices and resurfaced as visible tropes in the community arts projects of the 1970s and the socially engaged work of the 1990s. I have already established that the trajectory of post-war cultural policy is defined by its movement away from judgements of art based upon notions of aesthetic ‘excellence’ and towards a more instrumental positioning of the value of art. Although I do not intend to make this argument, for the reasons explained below, this trajectory can be read as a mirror of artistic developments, or the call for art to be ‘useful’ or even ‘functional.’ On the surface, it does appear that both post-1960s artistic practices and cultural policies after the breakdown of the consensus under neoliberal politics moved away from questions of aesthetics and towards questions of utility. However, there were critical differences in how each community conceived the ‘functions’ of art. As I have argued throughout this chapter and the last, these differences are largely encapsulated by different conceptions of art’s relationship to society. The Dada artists asked whether the role of art was to move closer to an existing praxis or to develop a new life praxis. Similarly, debates in

the interpretation of socially engaged work revolve around whether the work should aim to bring participants into an existing social order or seek to disrupt that order. My argument developed here is that in both instances, the history and values of policy point to the former, while the history and values of contemporary art practice point to the latter. The point of illustrating these connections and fissures is to demonstrate how the rhetorical similarities between practice and policy are complicated by underlying differences in the histories and values of each discursive community.

A similar point of contention arises in relation to the concept of participation, which emerged as a critical concern of the socially engaged artists of the 1990s, at the same time that it became a central focus of New Labour's cultural governance strategy for museums. As artists in the 20th century sought to diminish the distance between art and everyday life, they experimented with breaking down the binary of audience-consumer and artist-producer by engaging people as participants in the making of the work. In the 1960s, the Situationist Internationale, and artists such as Allan Kaprow, constructed situations involving people as a means of challenging the construct of the passive viewer. Whilst cultural policy gave little attention to the notion of participatory art in the years leading up to New Labour, under the New Labour social value agenda, participatory art projects became a focus of policy studies and documents (see, for example, CASE 2010; Centre for Leisure and Sport Research 2002; GLLAM 2000; Jermyn 2004). In both practice and policy, participation was seen as a means of engaging audiences in new ways, and challenging the elitism of art. However, as I have argued above, this 'shared interest' glossed over fundamentally different conceptions of participation, which were aligned with either compliance or disruption depending on the context. While there was a certain amount of opportunity afforded by the 'coming together' of the rhetoric of practice and policy under New Labour, at the same time, this opportunity also magnified the different value sets informing each community.

With the increasing prominence of participatory art practices in the 1990s, debates about the relationship between audiences and artists continued. As explained in section 2.3.1, in 1944, Adorno famously framed the passive viewer and the active producer as a reflection of the consumption patterns of a capitalist society (1993). In different ways, the participatory and performance works of the 1960s, the Situationist Internationale, the community arts movement of the 1970s and the socially engaged practices of the 1990s all formulated an aesthetic critique that was based upon the rejection of the passive consumption and commodification of art.

Despite a shared interest in the potentiality of participation, New Labour's position on the consumption and commodification of art, and its relationship to capitalist ideologies was ambivalent. On the one hand, as explained in section 3.2.3, New Labour advocated for greater participation in art, equal access to the arts and encouraged non-commercial art forms through increased subsidies to the arts. On the other hand, it was under New Labour that the vocabulary of the creative industries first developed. Whilst the administration championed the social value of art, it also saw made strong arguments about the economic value of art. In the New Labour discourse of creative industries, the artist was presented as the ideal late-capitalist worker, enjoying flexible, rewarding, varied and creative work. However, as many theorists (see, for example, Gill 2002; Hesmondhalgh 2010; Jackson 2011; McRobbie 2016; O'Brien 2014; Terranova 2000) have argued, work in the creative industries is often blighted by inequality and exploitation. McRobbie argues that because there was a wide population of young people willing to embrace the excitement of the artist's lifestyle in lieu of the security of mainstream employment, with its associated protections and benefits – and presumed cost to the state and employer – in reality, this was “labour reform by stealth” (McRobbie 2016: 13).

New Labour's conception of the artist was contradictory to other aspects of the administration's cultural policy programme, and to developments in artistic practice. To begin with, the image of the artist as the ideal late capitalist worker had "the myth of the romantic artist or creative genius at its heart" (McRobbie 2016: 71). At the same time, as I have argued throughout this chapter, the entire thrust of policy developments in the post-war period and leading up to and including the 1990s, had been about moving away from notions of aesthetic excellence, which were associated with the romantic myth of the creative genius. In the very notion of an enterprising, entrepreneurial artist "work emerges as the site for the generation of economic value by the process of managing and creating the individual him – or herself" (O'Brien, 2014, 82). This conception contradicts the artistic project that developed throughout the 20th century and which led to the proliferation of socially engaged arts practices of the 1990s. According to McRobbie, these artists "seek to be part of a wider dialogue about cultural politics and they tend to emphasise co-operation and solidarity rather than competition" (McRobbie 2016: 80-81).

The historical lineage of socially engaged practices suggests the formation of a dissident artistic figure, opposed to processes of commodification, individualisation and competition, which appears as nearly the exact opposite of the ideal artist figure presented as part of the New Labour ideology, and of the market-based neoliberal values which permeated cultural policies in the 1990s. However, at the same time, Jackson argues that the relationship between the discourse of artistic practices and neoliberal policy circles was complex, and confounded by their interaction and overlap:

"In art worlds and other contexts of the critical humanities, lay discourses of individual choice and flexibility interacted unevenly with critical discourses that valued agency and resistance. Indeed, sometimes a discourse of flexibility and a discourse of critical resistance would work in unwitting mutual support. If institutions were not to be trusted, if regulation

constrained, if bureaucracy was a thing to be avoided, and if disciplining systems of subjugation were everywhere, then a generalised critique of system pervaded not only neoliberal policy circles but also avant-garde artistic circles and critical intellectual ones where freedom was increasingly equated with systematic independence” (Jackson 2016: 24).

Jackson’s comments substantiate the argument that I make in this chapter, which is that despite different histories and value sets, the rhetoric of practice and policy did collide under New Labour. However, the point of interaction, at the institutional level, between artistic practice and policy under New Labour is so complex precisely because this rhetorical ‘coming together’ was underpinned by such conflicting values. Possibly spurred on by the ‘policies of survival,’ or the need to respond to policy directives in order to sustain further funding (Belfiore 2004), institutions sometimes operated in ‘unwitting mutual support’ of cultural policy developments. On the surface, these ‘shared interests’ benefitted the artists, the institutions and the funders. However, as I have demonstrated in this chapter, they also magnified differences and tensions.

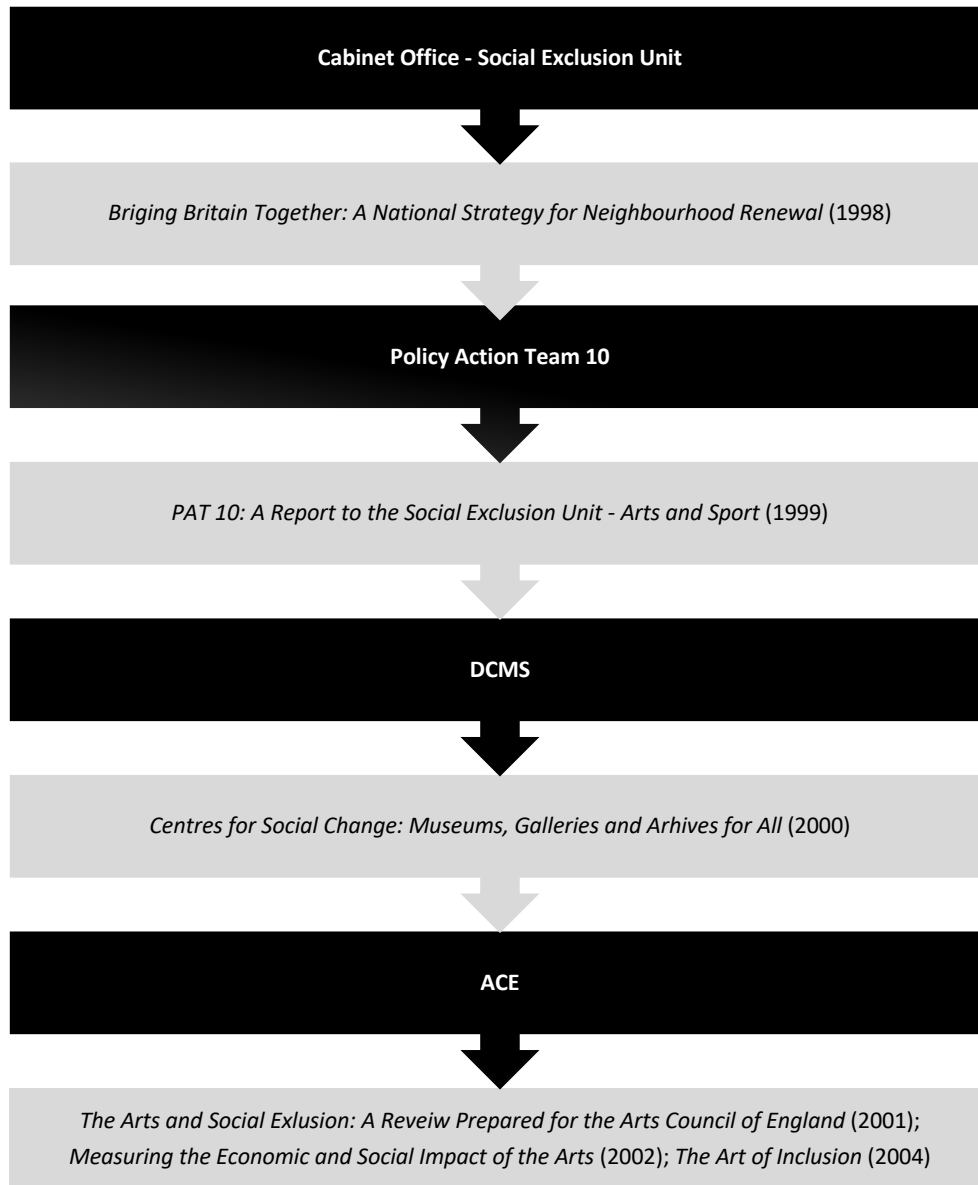
3.5 Interrogating the policy landscape

In this chapter and the last, I have identified a gap in the literature exploring the contemporary visual arts institution’s experience of governance under New Labour’s social value agenda and I have developed a theoretical critique of the normative conceptualisation of the time period. Having reviewed the secondary literature, and before embarking upon an empirical investigation, I now conduct a review of primary literature, in order to establish the policy context generally, and to see if key policy documents offer any further clarity on what social value meant in practice, as a governing principle in cultural policy. The review shows that in the policy discourse, social value was still an ambiguous term that could mean different things in different contexts.

This conclusion substantiates the need to explore further and guides the empirical investigation towards a case study approach, in order to gather information at the interface of policy and practice.

In this section, I detail my review of the policy landscape. In the review, I highlight those documents that initially developed the concept of 'social value,' in the 'official' policy discourse. I illustrate how that concept 'flowed' from the Cabinet Office 'down to' ACE, in the early years of the New Labour administration. In the diagram on the next page, I show each intervening government body, and the documents they produced. ACE is the last 'rung' in the diagram, and I include a number of reports published by the Council which specifically address the topic of social value and its evaluation. ACE (and DCMS) went on to produce more reports over the period of the New Labour administration, but the intention here is to show how the policy rhetoric initially developed from an idea in the Cabinet Office, to ACE policy guidance.

Table 3.2 The initial development of the rhetoric of social value in policy documentation under New Labour (1998-2004)



In my review of the policy landscape, I present a simple narrative of the concept of social value as it was developed in ‘official’ policy documents. The point of presenting the development of policy rhetoric in this way is, in part, to illustrate the implausibility of such a ‘tidy flow.’ The policy discourse developed as it did, but as I demonstrate in this thesis, there were all sorts of influences that contributed to the development of the rhetoric, and to the meaning of social value in practice. All of the documents I discuss are publicly available. Some

were accessible online, whilst others were available in the library. Section 3.5.1 focuses on surveying the policy landscape through policy documents. In section 3.5.2, I discuss my observations from the review, which I conduct from a practitioner's perspective, focusing on how the documents function as guidance on practice.

3.5.1 Policy Review

As explained in chapter 2, policy directives sometimes used the term social inclusion, whilst at other times they referred to social impact, outcomes and objectives. It is difficult to clearly align different meanings to each of these terms as they are used in the policy discourse, which may have contributed to the ambiguity of the concept of social value. In the brief review below, I look at policy documents which intend to pursue social value in some form, either as linked to social inclusion, or as an objective or outcome, or in the form of impact. I use social value as an overarching concept, and to encapsulate the different terminologies that were employed in the social value lexicon.

Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Cabinet Office 1998) was a seminal report in heralding in New Labour's social inclusion agenda. The report was the SEU's briefing to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, on how to "develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown, and bad schools etc" (Cabinet Office 1998: 1). According to Bonham-Carter (2017b), the foundations for the report had been set out in previous government initiatives from the 1960s onwards, including "the Urban Programme, the Urban Development Corporations and task Forces in the 1980s, the Single Regeneration Budget in the 1990s, and the New Deal for Communities" (41). The report aimed to lay the groundwork for policies that would benefit the poorest communities.

Bringing Britain Together established eighteen teams from different government departments. The teams were tasked with addressing the problem of social exclusion in a joined-up manner (Bonham-Carter 2017b). The teams were organised around five themes: getting the people to work, getting the place to work, building a future for young people, access to services and making the government work better (Cabinet Office 1998: 6). Policy Action Team 10 (PAT 10) was appointed to address art and sport and was grouped into the 'getting the place to work' theme (Bonham-Carter 2017b). The team was charged with developing strategies to develop orderly and sustainable communities, and to foster stronger communities by promoting self-help and maximising the contribution of arts and sport (Cabinet Office 1998: 56). PAT 10 included members from the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), and was led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The 18 teams were part of a fast track policy-making process, and were tasked with building up a national strategy by December 1999 (Cabinet Office, 1998: 70).¹⁰

Accordingly, PAT 10 produced *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit* in 1999. The report included a foreword by the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Chris Smith, establishing the remit of the report, which was to consider how to maximise the impact of Government spending and policies on arts, sport and leisure on poor neighbourhoods (DCMS 1999: 2). Smith acknowledged the significance of the report for his department:

"I welcome the recommendations the PAT has made to my own Department, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. They represent a step change in the development of social

¹⁰ PAT 10 was asked to complete their review by April 1999, not December, or July, as was the case for most other Policy Action Teams.

inclusion policy not only in the context of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal but also in the new focus of DCMS policy and funding to promote social inclusion” (DCMS 1999: 3).

PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit confirmed the contribution art and sport could make to lowering long-term unemployment, decreasing crime, improving health and fostering individual pride and community spirit, as well as enabling communities to run regeneration programmes themselves (DCMS 1999: 3). The report suggested drawing up a plan, with targets, to maximise the impact of arts on neighbourhood regeneration and local participation (DCMS 1999:3). In order to tighten DCMS social inclusion targets, the report suggested asking the newly established Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team (QUEST) to examine the impact of sponsored bodies’ social inclusion policies (DCMS 1999: 14). Recommendations about establishing a social inclusion agenda were made to DCMS, ACE and its funded clients, Regional Arts Boards, National Lottery Distributors and a number of sports organisations.

The report assumed a broad interpretation of art (including children’s play, for example) and drew a distinction between artistic (and sporting) activity that could be consumed by spectators, and that which requires participation. Although the report suggested that all spectator activities should make an effort to be relevant to as wide a public as possible, it admitted that the primary focus of the report was on participation (DCMS 1999). Numerous case studies were cited as evidence of the impact art and culture could have on health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities (DCMS 1999). The report established a number of principles to indicate best practice work in social inclusion:

“1. Valuing diversity 2. Embedding local control 3. Supporting local commitment 4. Promoting equitable partnerships 5. Defining common objectives 6. Working flexibly with change 7.

*Securing sustainability 8. Pursuing quality across the spectrum
9. Connecting with the mainstream” (1999: 8)*

It was advised that these principles were not funding criteria, but could summarise best practice approaches to community development and social inclusion work.

Finally, *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit* went some length to establishing groups at risk of social exclusion, including the elderly, lower socio-economic groups, people with disabilities and minority and ethnic groups. The report suggested that an equal opportunities element should be incorporated into policy for all funding bodies (DCMS 1999).

Following the recommendations of *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit* in 1999, in May 2000, DCMS published *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All*, which offered policy guidance on social inclusion for DCMS funded and local authority museums, galleries and archives in England. The report emphasised the significant role that museums and galleries could play in combatting social exclusion (DCMS 2000), and encouraged a strategic approach to social inclusion within museums. It reiterated the overall aim for the recommendations:

“To promote the involvement in culture and leisure activities of those at risk of social disadvantage or marginalisation, particularly by virtue of the area they live in; their disability, poverty, age, racial or ethnic origin. To improve the quality of people’s lives by those means” (DCMS 2000: 3).

The report included a six-point process by which organisations could implement policy and review action. Importantly, it noted that the aim was not only for museums to encourage under-represented groups to come in, but to act as “vehicles for positive social change” (DCMS 2000: 9) and agents of “social regeneration” (DCMS 2000: 12).

Following the step change in cultural policy that began in 1998, with the focus on combatting social exclusion in *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* and the DCMS reports that then ensued, ACE published a number of reports reviewing the social inclusion agenda. In 2001, ACE published, *The Arts and Social Exclusion: A Review Prepared for the Arts Council England* (Jermyn 2001). In 2002 it produced *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts: A Review* (Reeves) and in 2004, it published *The Art of Inclusion* (Jermyn).

The Arts and Social Exclusion (Jermyn 2001) drew upon research into 18 different arts and community projects that could be seen as models of social inclusion work in the arts and aimed to place the research into a policy context. The report addressed the question of what social exclusion actually meant, pointing out that confusion regarding this question was impacting organisations' abilities to combat it (Jermyn 2001). The report noted that while widening access had long been a core commitment for most museums, addressing social exclusion was indeed a new departure for most organisations (Jermyn 2001). *The Arts and Social Exclusion* addressed the difficulties in monitoring and evaluating the social impact of the arts, and explored a number of different methodologies, including a literature review, case studies and impact studies, that attempted to work in this area. The report was followed up soon after by *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts* (Reeves), which was published by ACE in 2002. The aim of this report was to provide an overview of arts impact research, to support evidence-based policy making by ACE and explore concepts and definitions of impact, social impact and economic impact as they relate to the arts (Reeves 2002: 2).

In 2004, ACE commissioned *The Art of Inclusion*, a follow-up report to the 2001 report, *The Arts and Social Exclusion*. The later report articulated a number of key findings resulting from the exploration of

practice, and outcomes of ACE's 2001 research into social inclusion and the arts. In the end, the report raised more questions than it answered, primarily asking whether ACE could offer a clearer definition of social exclusion, how good work in this area could be described and disseminated as best practice, the best strategies for securing sustainable activity, how to support partnerships with non-arts organisation and whether an indicator-based approach was really a viable way of measuring the success of a project.

Taken together, these key policy documents provide an overview of the policy landscape and illustrate how the policy rhetoric developed in 'official' policy documents. However, it is important to note that this is but one 'narrative' of events, which is very much situated within the context of ACE and DCMS governance. One of the aims of this thesis is in fact to problematise the assumption of rationality and simplicity in cultural governance by illustrating the multiple discourses that played a role in governance. In the next section, I review the documents from a practitioner's perspective to explore their function as a vehicle for the implementation of policy. I make a number of observations about the rhetoric in relation to the construction of the meaning of social value as a governing principle in practice.

3.5.2 Observations from the policy review

Despite the plethora of policy documents put out by the New Labour administration on the arts and social value, it is difficult to determine from the policy discourse exactly what institutions were expected to achieve, how they could achieve it and by what means they could evidence their achievement.

To begin with, the reports from DCMS and ACE offered little clarity on who, or which group of people, institutions were expected to 'impact.' In *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit (1999)*, for example, the report calls for "best practice in using sport and art to engage

people in poor neighbourhoods particularly those who may feel most excluded, such as disaffected young people and people from ethnic minorities” (DCMS 1999: 5). On the same page, however, the report suggests “engaging those who have been excluded in the past”. In the former, the stated aim is clearly to engage people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds while in the latter, the aim is more ambiguous, and it is unclear whether the directive is simply to reach out to new audiences, or to engage people from disadvantaged backgrounds specifically. In fact, the two intentions are not the same. In *The Arts and Social Exclusion* (2001), Jermyn, the author of the report, admits that expanding access (which has been a long-standing objective for many museums) does not constitute social inclusion. In the later report, *The Art of Inclusion*, Jermyn notes that working with socially excluded groups without a social objective also does not constitute social inclusion (2004: 10).

Furthermore, *Bringing Britain Together* claims that “ethnic minorities are more likely to live in poor areas, be unemployed, have low incomes, live in poor housing, have poor health and be the victims of crime” (Cabinet Office 1998: 24). However, ethnic minorities are not necessarily socially excluded, and promoting cultural diversity is not the same thing as working towards social inclusion. The documents appear to conflate these two ambitions, and as policy guidance, lack clarity about the differences between access, cultural diversity and social impact, and which of these constitute ‘social value.’

Taken together, the documents portray an uncertainty about who, or which groups of people, arts institutions should be reaching out to and offer little guidance on how this might be done. Throughout the policy documents, it is suggested that communities should be empowered to make decisions for themselves. *Bringing Britain Together* declares the administration’s ambition to develop a ten and twenty-year national strategy to “reduce dependency, and empower local communities to shape a better future for themselves” and stipulates that “success

depends on communities having the power to make themselves better.” (Cabinet Office 1998: 2). However, beyond the rhetoric, the policy documents offer no real guidance on how this ‘empowerment’ might actually be achieved.

My review of the policy documents shows that as policy guidance, the ‘official’ policy rhetoric offered little clarification on what social value meant within the context of the arts institution, who was included in ‘social inclusion’ and how this hazy notion of museums as ‘centres for social change’ (DCMS 2000) could actually be achieved. Equally, my review illustrates that there was very little guidance on how arts institutions could evidence social value. The documents show that even the ‘official’ discourse was fraught and fractured, and nuanced at every stage of development by different actors and agencies with different interests.

The initial arts and sport PAT was situated within the ‘getting the place to work’ theme, linking the contribution of the arts to regeneration. Subsequent documents, including *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit*, claimed that the arts could “contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities” (DCMS 1999: 8). However, it is unclear in the policy documents whether arts institutions were expected to demonstrate impact through these specific ‘indicators.’ As Jermyn notes, most of the outcomes from participation in the arts are ‘soft outcomes’ (increased self-confidence, pleasure and enjoyment, increased self-esteem, etc.) which may (or may not) lead to hard outcomes (such as employment) (Jermyn 2004: 9). Consequently, it was very difficult for arts institutions to draw a direct correlation between participation in the arts and social value. There was no concrete guidance on either what the expectation was, or how arts institutions could demonstrate it.

I also found that the policy documents gave little attention to how social

value could inform the core activities of museum practice. As mentioned earlier, *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit* establishes a clear distinction between art that requires ‘participation’ and art that is intended to be ‘consumed’ by spectators (Bonham-Carter 2017b). According to Bonham-Carter, the “early policy documents regarding social inclusion, including *Bringing Britain Together* and *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit*, were explicit about the fact that they were primarily addressing art that requires participation” (Bonham-Carter 2017b: 42). However, *Centres for Social Change* (DCMS: 2000) published one year later, laid out the social inclusion agenda for museums, galleries and archives and made little mention of how social inclusion “could be balanced against other responsibilities, such as acquisitions, conservation, interpretation, scholarship and education in practical terms, with limitations including budget and staffing resources” (Bonham-Carter 2017b: 42).

As I have argued elsewhere, “it does not help that nearly all case studies within the policy reports (including the research commissioned by ACE) refer to community and participatory arts projects. The reports make little or no mention of core museum functions, such as programming, the creation of exhibitions and the maintenance of a collection” (Bonham-Carter 2017b: 42). When museums are addressed in *Centres for Social Change* they are discussed in such a way that it becomes difficult to distinguish them from community centres. Museums are described as “venues for community activities” and “a building people can enter without being challenged” (DCMS 2000:8). It was even imagined that museums could provide access to Information Communication Technology (ICT) and could encourage the use of their buildings as neutral meeting spaces (DCMS 2000: 8). With these kinds of imaginations of the future function of the museum, it is difficult to fathom how the museum might also, simultaneously, fulfil its traditional, core functions.

Amongst all the suggestions of the roles that museums could play in generating social value, there was a surprising level of agreement about the difficulty that museums might have in demonstrating that value. *PAT 10: A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit* noted that there was “little hard evidence of the benefit of art to community development” (DCMS 1999: 37). While the ACE reports *The Art of Inclusion* (Jermyn 2004) and *The Arts and Social Exclusion* (Jermyn 2001) draw upon a number of case studies to explore impact, nearly all of the evidence is anecdotal and involves a relatively small sample size. It is surprising that the policy directives could, on the one hand indicate that arts institutions must demonstrate social value, and, on the other hand, admit uncertainty about their ability to do so.

My review of the ‘official’ policy rhetoric as it was developed in policy documentation from the SEU, PAT 10, DCMS and ACE shows that guidance offered to arts institutions appeared to be conflicted and vague. Cultural institutions were effectively asked to address a wide range of social policy agendas, from neighborhood renewal to cultural diversity and from health to regeneration (Bonham-Carter 2017b; Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015). According to Bonham-Carter, “different priorities were laid out in different documents, and it was often unclear to organisations in the sector what they were being asked to do” (2017b: 42). Moreover, “museums grappled with how they could take on new roles, whilst continuing existing responsibilities, without increased resources” (Bonham-Carter 2017b: 42).

The observations that I have presented from this brief policy review add further detail to the complexity of the policy landscape that I have developed in this chapter. In this section I have explored the ‘official’ policy rhetoric, as it was developed in the initial policy documents that flowed from the SEU ‘down to’ ACE. I have investigated the ‘official’ rhetoric in detail partly to discredit the notion of an absolute truth, stemming from an authoritative position. I have illustrated that even the ‘official’ discourse was informed by multiple actors with multiple

agendas. As guidance, the 'official' discourse appeared to be conflicted, contested and vague. The intention of the thesis is to move beyond the 'official' discourse and to explore the practice and experience of governance.

As I have explained throughout this literature review, the complexity of cultural governance under New Labour is underpinned by the fact that in addition to the conflicted policy discourse, which vaguely coalesces around the idea that the arts should play a role in maintaining the status quo, arts institutions also had to contend with the contemporary art discourse, which generally speaks to the role of art in disrupting the status quo. How contemporary visual arts institutions navigated this complex terrain – which I have now outlined both theoretically, and in the concrete terms of the policy environment – has not been investigated in detail. Taken together, the observations from my review of secondary and primary literature substantiate the need to undertake a focused and in-depth empirical investigation at the interface of policy and practice, in order to understand how these issues were resolved.

3.6 Conclusion and next steps

In the last chapter, I explored existing conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour. I concluded that in the normative reading, in which governmentality is applied as the analytic framework, there is an assumed rationality and structural simplicity to NPM as a governing framework which appears to silence the role of skilled cultural actors in the governance of contemporary arts institutions. I identified a gap in the literature exploring contemporary arts institutions and cultural policy under New Labour from the dual perspectives of cultural policy and contemporary art theory. I suggested that such an exploration might substantiate the role of skilled cultural actors in the governance of the institution, by illustrating their knowledge base and values, and the multiple discursive communities that informed their decision-

making processes, as well as the tensions and ambiguities around social value that they had to resolve.

In order to further this exploration, this chapter has traced the history of developments in art leading up to the proliferation of socially engaged practices in the 1990s alongside the history of post-war cultural policy in the UK. While the last chapter looked at existing conceptualisations of what happened from different perspectives, this chapter has done the work of investigating the interface of policy and practice, in order to provide an original analysis of events.

I have shown that in the 1990s cultural policy and contemporary arts practice were engaged with debates on many of the same issues, including questions around aesthetics in art and the relationship of art to the 'everyday,' the potentiality of participation and the role of the artist in late capitalism. These shared concerns meant the two discursive communities also shared some of the same rhetoric. However, in this chapter, I have demonstrated that the coming together of the rhetoric of practice and policy under New Labour actually magnified the different values and histories that informed each discursive community. This discord was augmented by new auditing processes which brought questions of social value to the fore and tried to channel complex value judgments into simple, evidence-based criteria. Given the complexity of the policy landscape that I have established, I argue that there is a lack of attention in the dominant critical accounts of cultural policy under New Labour to either the disciplinary knowledge of skilled cultural actors in the institution, or their role in mediating the multiple discourses that influenced cultural governance. Therefore, the overarching question that I ask in this thesis is whether the normative conceptualisation of cultural governance under New Labour's social value agenda provides an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010?

In order to approach this question in more detail, I have formulated three specific subsidiary research questions, to explore in my empirical work, which I recap here:

- 1. How was the meaning of social value as a governing principle constructed at the interface of policy and practice?**
- 2. What were the processes of governance in contemporary visual arts institutions?**
- 3. How did specific institutions manage the tensions around social value within an evidence-based evaluative framework? Did the methods shape decision-making and activities within the institution?**

In the next chapter, I will explain the methodological design of this thesis, developed to approach these research questions and to add new empirical evidence to the research enquiry.

Chapter 4: Research Process and Methods

4.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have situated this study within the existing literature, brought together the disciplinary perspectives of contemporary art theory and cultural policy and developed a theoretical critique of the normative reading of cultural policy under New Labour. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the research design and methods of the thesis, including an elaboration of the research process, a step-by-step explanation of the methods employed and the methodological dilemmas faced, and how they were resolved, as well as setting out my approach to the data analysis. My discussion in the chapter also demonstrates how the data collection methods used in the thesis have a different focus from methods employed in the dominant critical positions, and consequentially, have the potential to surface new insights that contribute to the normative reading of cultural policy under the New Labour administration.

As explained in the previous chapters, through engaging with the extant literature on cultural policy under New Labour, I establish that in the dominant critical positions, the interpretation of governmentality that is applied to the analysis of cultural policy is largely structural, and there is an assumed rationality and structural simplicity to NPM as a governing framework which appears to overlook some of the tensions that emerged from the ambiguity of social value as a governing principle. By substantiating the discursive community of contemporary art and approaching the study of governance through the lens of contemporary art theory, I have established that there is a gap in the literature taking account of the perspective and role of the skilled cultural actor in governance and capturing the nuance and variety of experiences across sectors and institutions. The task now is to investigate whether the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy

under New Labour provides an adequate framework for understanding the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda.

To address the research question, the thesis provides a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda. I have argued that in order to enhance our understanding of this experience, we need to know more about what social value as a governing principle actually meant in practice, and how this meaning was constructed; what the formal and informal processes of governance were in the institution; how institutions managed and resolved tensions within an evidence-based framework and finally, the extent to which methods influenced decision-making. The next step in the research process is to gather empirical evidence to explore this critique, and ultimately, to unpick whether and how the thesis can offer a revision, or at least some caveats, to the normative position, based upon empirical evidence.

The experience of the contemporary art institution is seldom considered in the cultural policy literature, and the policy landscape is rarely dealt with in much depth in contemporary art theory. My overarching argument is that the thesis' dual perspective enables a unique approach to the research and also facilitates a different methodological approach. A key concern is to move beyond methodological choices in the existing literature that have kept the critical enquiry at the macro-level and focused on processes, rather than actors. Therefore, the guiding principles of the research design are that the methods employed should be discipline-focused, capable of gathering micro-level data and focused on actors as well as structures and processes.

I begin this chapter with a brief explanation of the thesis' ontological and epistemological positions. After this, in section, 4.3, I detail how

particular data collection methods are used and the methodological decisions I made. I also describe some of the challenges and limitations of each method. In section 4.4, I explain my approach to data analysis, including both what I did, and why I did it. Finally, in section 4.5, I conclude the chapter, pointing out the methodological steps I have taken to corroborate the findings.

4.2 Ontological and epistemological approaches

Ontological assumptions play an important part in determining the approach to the design of the research and the collection of data. As stated in the introduction, the thesis is rooted in constructivist explanations. According to Bryman, constructivism is an ontological position “that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” and that “social phenomena are not only produced through social interaction but are in a constant state of revision” (Bryman 2016: 29). As example, in Becker’s sociological examination of culture, people construct culture continuously (Becker 2008). According to Bryman, this approach shows “an intellectual preference for stressing the active role of individuals in the construction of social reality” (Bryman 2016: 30). The constructivist position provides an initial orientation for the thesis’ approach to the study of institutions, governance and policy.

The epistemological position of the thesis developed with the research. According to Bryman, in the social sciences, epistemology concerns the question of “whether the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the nature sciences” (Bryman 2016: 24). Employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research approach of this thesis can best be described as one that moves towards an interpretivist epistemology. Epistemological approaches are often divided between qualitative and quantitative research. As I explain in more detail below (4.4.1), the thesis initially took a quantitative approach to data

collection, which generated some significant findings, but not where I had not been looking for them. This triggered a more interpretivist stance, and an opening up to qualitative methods, in order to ‘dig deeper’ into the quantitative results, which appeared not to tell the whole story. Once I had collected data on resource allocation within the institution as a proxy indicator of value sets, I realised I needed a more nuanced and reflective measure of value and engagement with NPM structures. Given the multidisciplinary nature of my enquiry, my subject required a methodological approach that incorporated both social science and humanities style approaches. My experience confirmed the suggestion that quantitative measures “often say relatively little about the processes by which decisions are made or implemented” (Peters et al. 2010: 329), which was an important part of the information I needed in order to answer my research questions. However, my use of both quantitative and qualitative methods served as a means of verifying my data. In addition, my movement from quantitative to qualitative methods also rather neatly reflects the enquiry of the thesis – in terms of how we engage with ‘numbers’ and what they reveal to us.

The ontological and epistemological approaches outlined above provide a broad orientation for the direction of the research design. In the next section, I explain the steps I took to confirm the specific strategy of the data collection.

4.3 Research methods and process

In the following sections, I describe step-by-step, the methodological choices I made during the research process and the methods I employed in my data collection. First, I explain the rationale for the use of case studies. Then, in section 4.3.2, I outline the ‘replication logic’ (see Yin 1994: 46) I employed to arrive at a multiple-case study design. In section 4.3.3, I detail how I selected my case studies, including the practical issues I encountered. In section 4.3.4, I

explain the first step in the data collection process – gathering information from the annual reports and financial statements of each case study institution. While in section 4.3.5, I detail the process of interviewing, my main data collection method. Throughout this section I describe the methodological challenges I confronted and how I resolved them.

4.3.1 Case study approach

As demonstrated in chapter 3, key cultural policy documents of the New Labour administration appear to offer little clarification on what social value meant in the context of the contemporary art museum and how it could be evidenced. As I explain throughout the thesis, the meaning of social value was influenced by multiple inputs and discourses. Cultural actors had to navigate a complex field of competing, and sometimes contradictory, discourses and value sets, which collided at the interface of practice and policy. I have already established that the normative conceptualisation of governance under New Labour's social value agenda does not appear to capture the full extent of this complexity, nor the ramifications of it, in terms of governance. As detailed in chapters 2 and 3, in the dominant critical position, the interpretation of governmentality that is applied to the analysis of cultural policy is largely structural, and there is an assumed rationality and structural simplicity to NPM as a governing framework which appears to overlook some of the tensions that emerged from the ambiguity of social value as a governing principle.

The purpose of my data collection is to develop an empirical and immanent critique of the normative position, through the collection of evidence that will show the adequacy or inadequacy of this dominant critical position as a framework for understanding the particular experience of the contemporary visual art institution. Accordingly, the aim of the research is to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda. Based on the theoretical

critique developed in the last two chapters, the guiding principles of the research design of this thesis are that the methods employed should be discipline-focused, capable of gathering micro-level data and focused on actors, as well as structures and processes. The case study approach meets these criteria because it is capable of providing an in-depth and discipline specific exploration of the institution. In doing so, the case study approach provides an opportunity to learn more about how the meaning of social value was constructed in the institution and how tensions were resolved within an evidence-based evaluative framework, as well as shedding light on the informal processes that were a part of the governance of the institution.

There will always be limitations to a case study approach, in terms of the extent to which the results are generalisable. However, as this thesis is concerned with nuancing the theorisation that is developed in the extant literature, the transferability of specific institutional experiences is of less concern than the revelation of a differentiated experience, which serves to reinforce the critique that a more nuanced and discipline-specific reading is needed. While I have explained the rationale for the overall case studies approach in this section, in the next section I expand upon the criteria I used to select the case studies.

4.3.2 Case study selection – replication logic

In this section, I explain how I selected the three case studies that are the focus of my empirical work. Using a multiple-case study design, I sought to apply a ‘replication logic.’ According to Yin, in the multiple-case studies approach, “each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) produces contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)” (1994: 46). I sought to achieve ‘theoretical replication’ by selecting case studies that were broadly similar but, differentiated by the size and scale of the institution, which I expected to play a part in

contrasting results. As explained in the introduction to the thesis (section 1.3), I decided to focus my selection on London. I determined that comparing institutions in London with institutions in the regions would introduce too many variables into the analysis and would defy a replication logic. I did not want to unpick the impact of regionality (which would make an interesting investigation for another day), preferring instead to hone in on the specific discussion of governance and social value. Therefore, I selected institutions that were broadly similar, except for some differentiation by size. In addition, the density of art galleries in London is higher than anywhere else in England, and therefore the jostling for money and audiences is at its most complex. This creates an interesting context for the exploration of cultural policy and social value. Time and resources necessitate setting some parameters for the enquiry, and it made sense for me to limit the investigation to the highly charged context of London.

All of the institutions are what I call 'quasi-public,' defined in the introduction (see section 1.3) as sitting somewhere between the state and the market. The case studies are drawn from ACE's 2014/15 list of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), a portfolio of regularly funded organisations, which replaced the now defunct Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) in 2012. 2014/15 is the year I reached the stage of case study selection in my research journey. Although some years have passed between now and then, and 2014/15 now appears somewhat arbitrary, outside of my circumstances, the important selection criteria I used was that these institutions had all been Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) during the New Labour administration and had effectively sustained that support up until the year 2014 – a criteria that remains relevant today. I dropped those organisations (there were two) that appeared in the 2014/15 list that were new NPOs and had either not been around, or had not received funding, under the New Labour government. However, I do recognise that working from the 2014/15 list of NPOs could skew the results in that I have not captured those organisations that were dropped from

the portfolio *during* the New Labour administration, which might have provided an interesting angle to the analysis. However, one of the case study institutions has since lost its portfolio status, and another has gone through a number of difficult years of reduced funding, so the opportunity to look within both 'struggling' and 'thriving' institutions was not lost.

In 2014/15 the national portfolio programme provided funding to 696 organisations in England. This includes funding for all arts organisations across a broad range of sectors, including theatre, dance, visual arts, etc. As argued throughout the thesis, there is scant research available on the contemporary visual arts institution's specific experience of the New Labour administration. As explained in chapter 2, the contemporary arts sector operates in a unique way, and therefore, part of the aim of the thesis is to explore the 'fit' of current conceptualisations of governance and cultural policy with the practical experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions. For this reason, I determined to look only at contemporary visual arts institutions, in London. Applying these filters, the 696 potential objects of analysis were quickly whittled down to 49 objects of analysis. However, these 49 organisations included a variety of visual arts organisations in London, from magazines to artist studios. Given the nature of my enquiry, it was important that the organisations being compared interacted with their audiences in broadly the same way. In order to analyse comparable objects of analysis, I applied a final filter – I eliminated all organisations which were not, primarily, concerned with the presentation and exhibition of contemporary art. After the application of this filter, there were 18 institutions on the list of potential case studies.

Reviewing the list of 18 contemporary visual arts institutions, I could see that it now represented a group of broadly similar quasi-public institutions in London, a logical 'peer-group' of institutions. To make a selection, I categorised the remaining institutions on a specific point of

difference so that I could ensure a logical range of experiences that might broadly indicate wider phenomena. Again, considering the thesis' focus on social value and cultural policy, and the hunch that the scale of the institution might be a relevant vector to consider as a nuancing factor in the institution's engagement with policy, I grouped the institutions into four categories: small, small-medium, medium-large, and large.

As my thesis is concerned with the policy context, and ACE is a large contributor to that context, I based my categorisation of size on the level of support that institutions received from ACE. I used information that was publicly available and based upon the year 2014/15, which again might appear arbitrary, outside of my research journey. However, as funding levels go up and down, it would be difficult to rationalise any one particular year over another, and I considered that the scale of the institution in 2014/15 would provide a good snapshot of how the institution had evolved over the New Labour years, effectively to land where it did in the years closely following the New Labour government. As a check, I drew upon my professional knowledge of the sector, and my insight into how my professional peer group and I would perceive the 18 institutions on the list in terms of size and considered how this matched with the institution's categorisation according to funding levels. On this basis, the categorisation came across as accurate. I might have used other 'categorisation' techniques, such as annual operating budgets, but as the ACE funding levels appeared to offer a logical divide, I stuck with it. The table on the next page details how I divided the remaining 18 institutions, and how many landed in each category.

Table 4.1 Contemporary Visual Arts Institutions in London and ACE NPO committed support in 2014/15

£1- £250K (small)	£250K - £500K (small- medium)	£500K - £1 Million (medium to large)	Over £1 Million (large)
11 institutions		5 institutions	2 institutions

4.3.3 Case study selection – conceptual and practical considerations

Once I had configured a list of possible case studies using the methods described above, I had to identify three institutions that would be willing to grant me access to complete the first phase of data collection – gathering information from annual reports, described in more detail in section 4.3.4, below. At this point, the selection process involved combining conceptual criteria with the practical consideration of which institutions might agree to grant me access to the institution’s annual reports from several years ago. Since all institutions on the shortlist now stood as possible case studies, I moved to practical considerations, and decided to approach those institutions that I had already had some connection to.

Since there were no institutions in the small-medium category, I determined to select one small, medium to large and large institution. I took anonymity very seriously. In order to protect my interviewees, who might be identifiable by association to a particular institution, I anonymised my three case study institutions. I hereon refer to them simply as the Alpha Institution, the Beta Institution and the Gamma Institution.

Table 4.2 Anonymisation of case study institutions

Pseudonym Name	Size of the Institution
Alpha Institution	Large
Beta Institution	Medium-Large
Gamma Institution	Small

I selected an institution from the 'small' category where I had previously had some professional dealings with the Director. I got a quick reply, which was friendly and attentive, but the Director informed me that as a small institution with such limited resources, they did not have time to support me in my research. I wrote back clarifying that I wouldn't need much 'support' (at this point I was only seeking access to annual reports, which I will explain in further detail in section 4.3.4 below), but the answer was an apologetic but emphatic 'no.'

Similarly, my first inclination in the 'medium-large' category was to select the institution where I had most recently worked as Curator of Visual Arts. Again, I thought that my professional networks might help in gaining access. As it turns out, there was a new 'keeper' of the archive whom I did not know particularly well. He was suspicious of my request, possibly because of my status as an ex-employee. Contrary to my initial thoughts, knowing the institution very well in this case seemed to be a barrier to access, rather than an enabler. It took weeks to get replies, and eventually, I was told they could not access the information I needed. With the same reasoning in mind, I approached the 'large' institution through a professional contact. This time I received quick, helpful and agreeable replies, enabling me to confirm the institution as one of my case studies.

Having confronted unexpected difficulties in gaining access with the 'small' and 'medium-large' institutions, I went back to the selection

process thinking objectively about which institutions would make the most interesting case studies, based upon their characteristics, and not my previous experience with them. I reverted back to conceptual considerations. Since the thesis is about the institution's engagement with cultural policy, I considered the ways that each institution connected with the development of cultural policy in the UK. I had confirmed the Alpha Institution as a case study, and because the institution was founded with the aim of having a positive impact on its impoverished local community, I understood the institution as very much connected to the founding spirit of the Labour party, in terms of welfare provision.

With the Alpha Institution in place as a case study, I looked for institutions that represented other relationships to the policy context. The Beta Institution stood out as potentially illuminating in the context of this study because it was founded with significant support from ACE, and in response to a report commissioned by ACE which essentially set out an agenda for an institution that would have a building-based programme about cultural diversity. The institution was deeply connected to the policy context of the time, and in general to the new, post-80's character of ACE. With this in mind, in the 'small' category I looked for an institution that might represent the spirit of the New Labour administration. Although it was founded in 1994, before New Labour, the narrative of the Gamma Institution's founding very much matched the entrepreneurial drive championed by the New Labour government. The Gamma Institution received funding after its founding Directors set up and ran a series of successful arts events. The story of the institution reflected the newer, independent role that institutions were playing in the 21st century, after the introduction of New Labour's rhetoric about the entrepreneurial spirit of the arts.

I concluded that collectively, these three case studies charted different 'phases' of cultural policy in the UK and represented different connections to the policy context. I decided that if I could secure them

as case studies, taken together, the three institutions would, within the practical constraints, constitute a logical range of experiences that might be indicative of wider phenomena. Both the Beta Institution and the Gamma Institution responded positively to my email request for access and I was able to move forwards with three case studies in place.

4.3.4 Annual reports and financial statements

In chapters 2 and 3, I identified a gap in the literature taking account of the perspective and role of the skilled cultural actor in governance and capturing the nuance and variety of experiences across sectors and institutions. I established that the methods employed in this thesis should be discipline-focused, capable of gathering micro-level data and focused on actors as well as structures and processes. One of my key concerns was to move beyond methodological choices in the existing literature that have kept the critical enquiry at the macro-level and focused on processes, rather than actors.

In order to achieve the above, I decided to take a mixed-method approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods (see section 4.3.5, below). First, I planned to gather information about how resources were allocated across departments in each case study institution during the period of the New Labour administration. The data was intended to capture micro-level processes of governance within each institution and to determine whether and to what extent, the discourse of evidence-based evaluation had begun to impact the way in which resources were distributed within the institution, or by extrapolation, whether the discourse of KPIs had begun to shape the activities of the institution. The data set was intended to respond to the thesis' second research question about processes of governance in the institution, and the third research question about the impact of methods on activities and decision-making. This method of data collection offered a means of exploring in granular detail, micro-level

processes of governance within each institution – an approach that has not been undertaken in previous investigations.

I planned to look at the budgeting sections of the annual reports in order to discern whether and to what extent, resources in the institution were re-directed, under New Labour, towards departments whose functions were in line with the administration's instrumental objectives, or more specifically, with the social value agenda. I identified those departments involved in attaining goals in non-cultural areas (marketing to develop audiences, education to provide gallery learning, development to attract more funding and press and publicity to attract more people) versus departments involved directly in creating artistic content, such as exhibitions and programming departments. While the initial intention was to look at how money was apportioned across specific budgeting silos (such as marketing, development, exhibitions, education and press and publicity), it quickly became apparent that these were nuanced and shifting categories, variously defined and implemented by different institutions at different times, and it was impossible to capture meaningful or comparable data.

Therefore, I established that a more viable data set to collect across institutions, which was consistently available in the annual reports, was 'project expenditure' versus 'administrative expenditure,' or more usefully, 'project expenditure as a per cent of total expenditure' versus 'administrative expenditure as a per cent of total expenditure.' This way of looking at the data would account for increases and decreases in the total budgets, and hone in on whether the respective categories commanded more or less of the total budget, over time, and as representative of each category's relative importance within the institution. Resources allocated towards project expenditure would serve as a proxy measure of the institution's prioritisation of core functions (usually aligned to the objective of 'excellence'), whereas resources allocated towards administrative areas would serve as a

proxy measure of the institution's prioritisation of evidencing success in non-cultural areas, or the pursuit of social value. As identified in the policy review (section 3.5), there was little guidance offered to arts institutions about how they could evidence social value in addition to fulfilling their core institutional functions, without any increase in resources, and this was a concern. Therefore, I felt confident that collecting this data set would offer new insights into how the institution managed tensions around resourcing within the institution and that this was representative of the resolution of competing value sets.

While the charity commission requires that all annual reports are made publicly available for the last five years, I wanted to acquire data from as far back as 1996, so this availability didn't help. Therefore, as described above, I had to reach out to each case study institution, in order to get their agreement to facilitate my request to gain access to historical annual reports. As detailed above, my selection of case studies was partly determined by which institutions agreed to participate, though I only approached those that met my conceptual criteria. Thus, conceptual criteria and access issues worked hand-in-hand to determine the selection.

As explained above, the Alpha Institution responded quickly and positively to my request for information. The annual reports were held in the archive, which was publicly accessible at certain times, so I was able to book an appointment, and with the help of the archivist, access the information I needed. I collected information for the years 1996-2010. My research window starts a year before the New Labour administration and I had wanted to end a couple of years after the administration, but the data after 2010 was incomplete and could not be used. I took the pragmatic decision to settle with the available data. I exchanged a number of emails with the Beta Institution who informed me that annual reports from 1998-2010 were available in PDF format online. Prior to that, the reports were in hard copy in an off-site archive which they could not access. Again, I took a pragmatic stance and

decided that 1998-2010 was still a sufficient data set so I downloaded the reports and gathered the information I needed for my research. It took some time to get replies from the Gamma Institution but they were willing to help. At first it looked as though the annual reports were in a loft that could not be accessed, and then it seemed that only reports from 2005 were available. In the end, however, the Director determined that the institution's 'Financial Statements' might hold all of the information I needed, and suggested I liaise with their off-site accountant. The accountant quickly sent me a complete set of Financial Statements as PDFs which provided all of the information I needed for the research.

Alongside the quantitative data collection, I determined that my main method of data collection would be interviews with key cultural actors who had been employed at the institution during the period in question. Interviews offered a means of substantiating the role and perspective of skilled cultural actors tasked with implementing policy – which I had identified as lacking, or lacking in detail, in the dominant critical positions. Considered together, the quantitative and qualitative data sets would act as a check on one another and would ensure the thesis' methods were differentiated from the methodological choices of the extant literature by being discipline-focused, capable of gathering micro-level data and focused on actors as well as structures and processes.

4.3.5 Research participants and interviews

As described above, I planned the research to include both quantitative and qualitative data. I explain in section 4.4.1, below, that the quantitative data analysis confirmed the need to look further into the institutions, and to engage directly with skilled cultural actors, in order to learn more about the experience of governance under New Labour. I had already established this intention in the literature review (chapters 2 and 3), having identified a gap in the literature taking

account of the perspective and role of the skilled cultural actor in governance and capturing the nuance and variety of experiences across sectors and institutions. I hoped the quantitative data set would shed new light on micro-level processes of governance, and perhaps offer new insights into how resources, as representative of priorities, were deployed within the institution. However, I also knew that interviews would be an important part of the process and offered a means of moving beyond the process-driven approach. Engaging the discipline community would also present a new perspective on the experience of policy and the practices of governance in the institution. I wanted to see the application of policy, rather than the conceptualisations of policy that I had engaged with in the secondary literature review, or the 'official' policy rhetoric, which I reviewed in my survey of the policy landscape (see chapter 3).

Section 4.3.4 described the process by which I approached current employees of the case studies in order to gain access to information about resource allocation. However, since the interviews needed to capture the voice of skilled cultural actors working within the case study institutions during the New Labour administration, the process of qualitative data collection was distinct, and involved reaching out to a different set of potential participants, all of whom were now former employees of the case study institutions. To identify potential participants, I used the annual reports, which all had a section on roles and staffing in the institution. For the Gamma Institution, I had only financial statements to work with, but since the two Directors had been the only full-time employed permanent staff members of the organisation throughout its history, the absence of annual reports did not impact the data collection process.

As the thesis is concerned with micro-level processes of governance and how tensions were resolved within the institution, I decided it would be best to gather a range of different perspectives from across different departments in the institution engaging with the purpose of

the institution and confronting questions of value and audiences (but not, for example technical/estates, administration, accounts etc.). From my own experience of working in institutions, I understood this group to include: marketing, press and publicity, development, education and exhibitions, as well as the Director in the oversight role. The first issue I confronted was that two of my case studies had much smaller infrastructures than I was expecting. As mentioned, the Gamma Institution really had no other sustained or significant support, outside of the two Directors. The Beta Institution had a skeletal structure that did not include a Development department, nor an Education department, except for a couple of very short-term appointments.

However, I did find that in the smaller institutions, employees took on multiple roles and thus were able to share and discuss a broader range of experiences than employees working in the larger, more differentiated structure. In addition to the case studies generally having fewer departments (and employees) than I had initially expected, I also found that some employees had occupied their roles for much longer than I had anticipated. For example, the marketing managers of the Alpha and Beta Institutions both stayed in their posts for nearly the entire duration of the New Labour administration. The length of the employees' tenure at the institution had some impact on how much they had to share. However, while I had expected to interview two, three or possibly even more marketing managers for each institution, the limited staffing turnover in some areas reduced the number of potential participants for the study. In the end I found that employees in smaller institutions who fulfilled several roles, and employees who had remained at the institution for a long time had a tremendous depth of knowledge to share. I tended to speak to these employees for a considerable amount of time, usually around 60-90 minutes and thus, the depth of the interviewees made up for the lack of the breadth of the participants, in some areas.

I recognised that I was asking participants to recall their experiences of a period of time that was, in some instances, over 15 years ago. To ensure that I could have a meaningful conversation with participants, I decided at the start of the research not to include anyone who had stayed at the institution for less than two years. This decision filtered out potential participants who had only had a fleeting engagement with the institution. This meant I did not always 'cover' each year in every department, but I did have meaningful discussions with former employees who had deep and memorable engagements with the case study institutions. I definitely wanted to move beyond the perspective of the Director, since that was the voice most prominently captured in existing theorisations. I decided to target mid-senior management level employees, as well as the Director, so that I could capture those workers that were engaging with questions of value and empowered to make decisions in the institutions. Most departments had only one member in them, but where there was more, I targeted the 'Head' or overall lead in the department.

I had anticipated at the start of the process that it would be difficult to track down former employees, after years had passed. However, this did not prove to be an issue at all. I used internet searches to find participants, and nearly all participants had a 'linked-in' page confirming their current place of employment which made it very easy to find contact details. Most participants were still working in the 'industry' but had moved on to other organisations. However, I had not anticipated that access to interviewees would be as difficult as it was. Except for the Director of the Alpha Institution, who had a PA, there were no gatekeepers to my potential participants; I had direct email access to all of them. However, the busy, highly pressured and usually under-resourced working environment of the contemporary arts institution meant that it took quite a bit of effort to get responses from participants. Often, I had to chase participants up to four or five times in order to get an email response to fix the interview.

In the end, I identified twenty possible participants, which was less of an overall ‘pool’ than I had been expecting. I managed to conduct interviews with sixteen of these possible participants. Again, I took anonymity very seriously, and all interviewees were given pseudonyms. Other than Directors (where it is unavoidable), I do not refer to specific job titles, only to the interviewees’ associated departments. Refer to the table below for details on my interviewees, including the pseudonym given, the institution they worked within and the interview mode.

Table 4.3 Summary of interview participants

Role	Institution Alpha, Beta or Gamma	Pseudonym	Interview mode
Director	Alpha	Claire	in-person
Exhibitions	Alpha	Thomas	phone/Skype
Education	Alpha	Beth	in-person
Education	Alpha	Michelle	phone/Skype
Education	Alpha	Rebecca	in-person
Education	Alpha	Daphne	phone/Skype
Marketing/Press and Publicity	Alpha	Edith	phone/Skype
Development	Alpha	Annabel	phone/Skype
Development	Alpha	Gemma	phone/Skype
Development	Alpha	Ethan	phone/Skype
Director	Beta	Yasmin	in-person
Director	Beta	Matilda	in-person
Marketing	Beta	Esme	phone/Skype
Press and Publicity	Beta	Bella	phone/Skype
Director	Gamma	Bruce	in-person
Director	Gamma	Grace	in-person

In the Alpha Institution, I managed to secure interviews from the six perspectives I had been hoping for: marketing, press and publicity, development, education and curating, as well as the Director. I could not pin down the most recent Director, due to the availability of her time. However, I was more interested, in this case, in moving beyond the Director's perspective as there was a fairly large and differentiated structure in place within the institution, and the department perspective was most useful in terms of the aims of the thesis. In the Beta Institution, as mentioned, there was no Education and Development department. In addition, I could not secure an interview from the Exhibitions department as the one possible participant proved too busy to engage, even after many attempts. However, the institution did run on a skeletal staffing structure and it appeared that the Directors got involved in most aspects of the running of the gallery. Whilst I was less interested in the Director's perspective for the larger institution, here I felt it was more useful, as the role did involve engaging in micro-level processes and offered insights into the practices and behaviours of the institution. Similarly, I had only the Directors' (there are two) perspective to work with in the Gamma Institution, but in such a small operation, this offered a thorough perspective on granular decisions and processes. I had an unequal spread of interviews across the case studies, but because of different organisational structures, I felt that both depth and breadth of experience was covered by the participants I secured.

I emailed all participants to confirm the interview, and at that time sent a 'Participant Information Sheet' (see appendix 1) and 'Participant Consent Form' (see appendix 2). For phone and Skype interviews, I also sent participants the consent form to sign via Adobe Echo Sign, as well as inviting them to send it back to me over email, if that was easier for them. If we met in person, I brought copies of the 'Consent Form' for the participants to sign, leaving one copy with them, and retaining one for myself. The forms explained the project and the participants' rights. I made it clear that interviews were carried out

confidentially and although I might quote them, the quotes would not be attributed. I aimed to meet each participant in person, but I had to be flexible with this aim, as some people preferred a Skype or phone call, and several participants had since moved out of London, or out of the UK. I also had to be as flexible as possible with my own time, and work around the participants' schedules as much as possible, which wasn't always easy. I found there was no difference in the length or depth of the interviews if they were conducted in-person, on the phone or on Skype. If we did meet in person, it was usually at the participant's place of work, or in a public café.

I was able to strike up a good rapport with all participants. I conducted the semi-structured interviews with a list of guiding questions, which I had set out in my 'Interview Schedule' (see appendix 3). I allowed the interview conversations to flow as naturally as possible, only occasionally steering the participants back to the questions, when the conversation had really gone off track. Often, I found that a free-flowing conversation started just as I was wrapping up the interview, and in some cases, this 'natural' conversation was as long, and as insightful, as the semi-structured interview. I included the entire conversation in the data set. As mentioned above, the potential pool of participants was smaller than I had initially expected, but by the time I was beginning to get to the end of it, I felt I was not discovering anything new. I had covered a range of perspectives within each institution, and, coupled with the quantitative data I had collected, I now had an in-depth understanding of the micro-level practices and experiences of governance in contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010.

4.4 Data analysis

In this section, I describe how I analysed the data, or turned the data into findings. In section 4.4.1, I detail my approach to quantitative data

analysis. In 4.4.2, I detail how I used coding to surface the significant findings in my qualitative data set.

4.4.1 Analysis of resource allocation

When it came time to analysing my quantitative data, I found that there was some work to be done in terms of ‘smoothing’ out the data. In the Alpha Institution’s budget sheets, project expenditure was termed ‘charitable expenditure’ and was further detailed as: library project costs, property costs, staff and related costs, telecommunications and postage, photocopying and stationery, organising, transport, insurance, installation, security, catalogues and postcard and education. Administrative expenditure therefore included the other main budget headlines: cost of generating funds and management and administration (and from 2006 onwards, ‘governance costs’ and ‘trading subsidiary cost’). Costs of generating funds was further detailed as: property costs, staff and related costs, telecommunications and postage, photocopying and stationery, membership schemes, management fees and development costs. Management and administration was further detailed as: property costs, staff and related costs, telecommunications and postage, photocopying and stationery, legal and professional, audit fees, bank charges and exchanges losses, sundry expenses, irrecoverable value added tax, bad debts, travel courier and miscellaneous, depreciation and intern expenses. Relevant staff and related costs were included within both project and administration expenditure.

From 2003 to 2006, I adjusted the ‘charitable expenditure’ budgetary headline, subtracting ‘publicity and previews, editions, research and development, hire of gallery, catering expenditure and gifts in kind.’ In the previous years, ‘publicity and previews’ had been included under ‘costs of generating funds’ and the other expenditures do not comfortably sit within project expenditure. So, these expenses were instead included within ‘administrative expenditure.’

From 2006 onwards, editions, hire of gallery and catering expenditure fell under a new budgetary headline termed 'trading subsidiary,' which I included as part of administrative expenditure. Development (or research and development) appeared within both charitable (project) expenditure and cost of generating funds (administrative expenditure), so from 2006 onwards, I no longer subtracted it from project expenditure, as there appeared to have been further distinctions made within the accounting practice as to which development activities were part of the charitable mission, and which were part of generating funds. And, 'gifts in kind' disappeared as budget category from 2006. So, from 2006, charitable expenses were adjusted by subtracting 'publicity and previews' only. In addition, in 2006, the total expenditure was adjusted by subtracting '[the Alpha Institution] Project Costs,' as this expenditure related to a specific capital project, which was financed entirely through restricted funding.

For the Beta Institution, project expenditure was defined within the accounting policies as including exhibitions, publications, research, education and internet/multi-media. Administrative costs (termed 'support, administration and other costs' within the annual reports) included research and development, supports costs, management and administration and fundraising and publicity. I should also point out that 'wages and salaries' were included within both 'project expenditure' and 'administrative expenditure,' and as they were apportioned on the budget sheets. In 2009 and 2010, the budget sheets no longer contained a 'project expenditure' line, which was instead replaced with 'charitable expenditure,' a more inclusive term seemingly including all expenditure except, 'fundraising,' 'governance' and a small 'other resources expended' column. Therefore, data from 2009 and 2010 are not included in the final quantitative data analysis, as it was impossible to tease out spending on publicity, marketing and other support costs not directly related to project expenditure. However, I found that the changes that I observed to budgeting

practices in the financial statements did have significance, which I explain later in this section, and in chapter 6.

I conducted a similar exercise of smoothing out the data for the Gamma Institution. I looked at the two categories of 'charitable expenditure' and 'administrative expenditure.' I moved the expenditure from 'advertising and mailing and flyers' from charitable expenditure to administrative expenditure, from 1997-2000, and continued to do so from 2000 onwards, when the category was renamed 'fundraising and publicity' (and included 'marketing and publications,' which was not included before.).

Once I had the data in order, I set up three excel sheets to input 'charitable expenditure,' 'administrative expenditure' and 'total expenditure,' for each year in question. I set up an excel formula to calculate 'administrative' expenditure as a percent of 'total expenditure' and I used this figure as a key basis of comparison, mainly to look for change within the institution itself.

The data collection method had some limitations. As it was not possible to differentiate budgeting to different departments in a meaningful way, I used the more general category of 'project expenditure' versus 'administrative expenditure.' This was useful in terms of looking at those KPIs associated with growing audiences, because nearly all activities in this area fell within the administrative category. However, I was not able to differentiate resources spent on the education and learning departments in particular, and it is likely that most of this activity fell within the 'charitable expenditure' category, therefore obfuscating the opportunity to note balance shifts towards the education department, as one might have expected in pursuit of a social value agenda under the New Labour administration.

However, the collected data was useful in terms of shedding light on the budgeting decisions institutions had to make, and the ways in

which these decisions reflect tensions and competing agendas in the institution. It was also useful to see that the percent of administrative expenditure, as a proxy indicator of the pursuit of audiences, did not increase. I took notes on the quantitative data analysis as I went along, with several columns in the excel document explaining different changes to the budgeting methodology. Initially, I did this to keep a record of my approach and to ensure consistent treatment of the data. However, in doing so, I noticed that the changes to budgeting practices appeared to reflect a changing ideology in the institution. This observation came across as a more significant finding than the resource allocation data set. In this way, I moved from the secondary analysis of extant quantitative data, towards an approach inspired by grounded theory methods. I began to address the “form as well as the content” (Charmaz 2014: 45) of the data. Taking this approach, I was able to see changes in the budgeting processes and consider the significance of these changes in the analysis. Coffey, Prior and Charmaz remind us that “documents do not stand as objective facts, although they often represent what their authors assumed were objective facts” (Coffey 2014; Prior 2003, cited in Charmaz 2014: 46). This statement rang true with my experience.

As I explained in section 4.2, my epistemological position developed over the course of the research, and I found that the qualitative data collection became a more important part of the empirical process than I had expected. I found in my quantitative data set that the numbers did not relay the full complexity of a situation. However, it is significant that this observation also reflects my critique of evidence-based evaluation. Though a useful insight into micro-level processes of governance, the quantitative data analysis also confirmed that I needed to go beyond the ‘numbers’ and ‘processes’ and know more about the actions of actors and informal processes in decision-making and governance.

4.4.2 Interviews – coding for themes

My approach to data analysis uses some features of grounded theory, but as many scholars have pointed out, that alone does not make it a grounded theory (Walsh et al. 2015; Bryman 2016). Instead, my approach is best described as one that simply takes inspiration from certain grounded theory principles and tools, including coding.

To begin with, I drew upon Charmaz’s notion that as researchers, we can “place priority on the theoretical usefulness of our interview data rather than a quest for meticulous accuracy” (Charmaz 2014: 19). As mentioned above, the interview process required participants to reflect upon events that occurred many years ago. Of course, there were challenges here in terms of how much the participants would remember, how recollection might be influenced by current conditions and how reliable the data would be. As detailed above, I took some measures against the possibility of lack of recall by only interviewing employees who had had a sustained experience with the institution. As stated in the introduction to the thesis (chapter 1), it is not the aim of the thesis to recount specific KPIs or funding agreements. Instead, the thesis aims to enhance understanding of experience and practice. According to Rubin and Rubin, “qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds” and can help the researcher “understand experiences” (1995: 1). In many ways, I was less concerned with the policy context than the skilled cultural actors’ *perceptions* of this context. So, whilst I needed to ensure the reliability of my findings, and employed quantitative and qualitative means to do so, I was not seeking meticulous accuracy in the participants’ recollection, but rather more subjective insights into the perception of policy, the experience of governance and the informality of processes. I approached the data analysis with this general awareness.

In terms of the analytic process, all interviews were recorded and then transcribed as I went along. The transcriptions included notes on the

time and place of the meeting, as well as comments that I had noted during and after the interviews. I used initial coding and focused coding as a means of organising and analysing the data. I did not code interviews in the order in which the interviews had taken place, but tended to do them 'by institution,' which I found helped me to think about their meaning. According to Charmaz, "during initial coding we study fragments of data – words, lines, segments, and incidents – closely for their analytic import" (Charmaz 2014: 109) this means "categorising segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarises and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz 2014: 111).

I used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to organise the coding process. I uploaded all of the transcriptions into the software, and then I conducted the initial coding phase. In the initial coding I took an 'inductive' thematic approach, meaning I went through the transcriptions line-by-line and coded every piece of text, rather than disregarding material that appeared not be relevant to my research questions (Maguire and Delahunt 2017: 3355). I used 'open coding' so that the codes emerged from the data, rather than working with a pre-determined set of codes (Maguire and Delahunt 2017: 3355). I used as many codes as I needed to describe the data. After my initial coding, I ended up with 76 initial codes. The codes were associated with anywhere from 46 references to just 1 reference. I occasionally coded one extract to a few codes, but this did not occur frequently.

When I first looked at the 76 codes, I found it difficult to see the emergence of significant themes. So, I began a systematic process of 'focused coding,' "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through and analyse large amounts of data" (Charmaz 2014: 138). I used the Nvivo software to look for 'markers' of significance. I looked at those codes that had the most number of extracts of text coded to them. I also looked at codes that encompassed a high number of 'sources,' because this indicated

codes that cut across the different interviews. By these measures, a number of codes emerged as 'significant.' As examples, some of these codes were: 'History of the organisation,' 'ACE picks up on existing activity,' 'Importance of audience numbers,' 'Diversity not social value,' 'Importance of community,' 'ACE not too instrumental,' 'Education's relationship with Curatorial,' 'Input of Director/people into the mission,' 'Value of small arts organisations,' 'Relationship management' and 'Influence of socially engaged practices.'

Initially, I conducted the focused coding in NVivo, and I sought to bring smaller codes into larger ones, or to fold one code into another. I found it difficult to correlate some of the codes back to the research questions and some codes appeared to be relevant only to specific institutions. I ended up with four broad themes: 'Resilience and Resistance,' 'Importance of Diversity,' 'Importance of Community Engagement,' 'Influence of Artistic Discourses' and 'Changes to the Policy Landscape under New Labour.' However, I found that these themes, which emerged through an inductive approach, did not entirely relate to my research questions. I decided to go through the process of focused coding again, this time with pen and paper, so I could reorganise and visualise the codes more readily.

This time, I conducted the focused coding with greater 'theoretical sensitivity,' "enabling me to see the research situation and its associated data in new ways, and to explore the data's potential for developing a theory" (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 44), or in the case of my research, refining an existing theory. I constructed larger themes by taking informal notes and thinking through relationships between categories. Focused coding "requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorise your data incisively and completely" (Charmaz 2014: 138). Most often, I devised a new code that subsumed other codes.

In this process, I was able to resolve the issue that some codes appeared to relate to only one case study. As example, 'Importance of diversity' and 'Importance of local community' were both drawn into a new code, which was 'Importance of institutional values and history,' which cut across the case studies to draw out the larger, thematic point that each case study understood social value in relation to its history and values. I also found that some themes had been 'hiding' in my first attempt at focused coding. For example, 'Resistance and Resilience' was too broad, and I needed to draw out of it some of the important themes it encompassed, such as the 'the importance of informal processes' and 'relationship management'. It was an iterative process. In the end, I had several themes which encompassed most of my initial codes, and which appeared to give meaning to my data. My focused coding took place on paper, but I used the initial codes that I had developed in NVivo, so I could use the paper structure as a 'key' to navigate back to the data extracts under each code in the software programme. I then used this emergent structure as the basic organisational logic for the foundation of my findings chapter.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed, step-by-step, the research processes of data collection and analysis. The overarching aim of data collection in the thesis is to provide empirical evidence to enhance understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of the application of cultural policy under New Labour's social value agenda. I have explained that, in order to achieve this, and to differentiate my work from others, I had to employ methods that were discipline-focused, capable of gathering micro-level data and focused on actors as well as structures and processes. I decided to take a case study approach, and to use both quantitative and qualitative methods.

I found the quantitative data analysis useful for three reasons. First, it confirmed that there was not a radical shift towards 'administrative

expenditure' during the New Labour administration, something that would have suggested that institutions were redirecting resources, and thus restructuring priorities, towards the pursuit of audiences. This finding was very much verified in the subsequent qualitative work. Second, when I looked at the data set with a different analytic focus, some significant findings emerged, in terms of how budgeting categories reflected the shifting ideology of the institution, and how it understood its core functions. Third, I felt that the quantitative data set was only revealing part of the 'story' that I wanted to uncover. For example, the role of the Education department had been obscured, and this needed to be explored further. This realisation was useful in verifying the necessity of interviewing actors in the institution. It was also interesting in that it offered insight into the research process, and use of methods, and how my use of methods could better square with the critique of process-driven approaches developed in the thesis.

As shown above, there were some methodological challenges in gathering qualitative data, in terms of accessing the right participants and ensuring the breadth, depth and validity of the data. However, working across three institutions of different sizes and organisational structures meant that each participant contributed to the study in different ways, and in end, I had a very rounded and in-depth understanding of the practices and experiences of governance of these institutions during the New Labour investigation, which was the aim of empirical investigation. A number of significant findings emerged, which are discussed in the next two chapters (chapters 5 and 6).

PART II –

THE EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Chapter 5: The Meaning of Social Value

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two findings chapters. To briefly recap, the aim of this thesis is to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda. My review of the extant literature demonstrated that there is a gap in the literature taking account of the perspective and role of the skilled cultural actor in governance and capturing the nuance and variety of experiences across sectors and institutions. As explained in chapter 4, to address this gap in the literature, I devised a research methodology to gather local-level, discipline-focused data, which would focus on actors, as well as structures and processes.

In this chapter, I present the key themes that emerged from my coding of interview transcriptions. These themes respond to my first research question: how was the meaning of social value constructed at the interface of practice and policy? Having established, in chapters 2 and 3, that 'social value' is a conflicted and contested concept situated within multiple discursive communities, the aim of this chapter is to present a number of insights which collectively contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the meaning of social value in practice. I look within the contemporary arts institution, as the site where the discourses of cultural policy and contemporary art theory collide.

In the chapter, I include the granular insights gained from speaking directly with skilled cultural actors tasked with implementing policy. In contrast to the existing literature, I do not make a judgement on the aggregate *outcomes* of New Labour's cultural policies, but instead I aim to offer a deeper understanding of the *experience* of policy in practice, and to shed light on what lay beyond the 'official' policy rhetoric and the actions and legislative programmes of government. This chapter focuses on the construction of the meaning of social value as a governing principle, while the next chapter focuses on the diffusion of social value into everyday practice, through formal and informal governance and management processes.

The chapter is split into two parts, each of which explores how the meaning of social value under New Labour was constructed within the institutional context. The main themes to emerge are that social value was a highly situated concept, and it was influenced by the history and values of the institution, as well as the discursive community of contemporary art. I also found that even within the institution there were debates about what 'social value' meant and how it could be achieved. The next section (5.2) explores these themes in more detail, and shows how each case study institution understood, interpreted and configured 'social value' in different ways, and in relation to different institutional values and histories. The section also reveals how the professional identities of skilled cultural workers implementing and interpreting policy played a role in the construction of meaning. I show that different departments sometimes held onto different notions of value, which caused some internal fracturing within the institution. I begin the discussion of each case study with a brief description of the institution, followed by an analysis of social value as a situated concept within the institution.

The second part of the chapter (section 5.3) looks at how artistic practice and discourse influenced meaning-making, and decision-

making, in the institution. The chapter show how artists, and specifically socially engaged and participatory arts practices, played a role in how skilled cultural actors tasked with implementing policy understood and prioritised social value. The last section of the chapter (5.4) synthesises the main themes of the chapter to show that by taking a specific disciplinary approach, and engaging directly with skilled cultural actors, the meaning of social value as a governing principle emerges as a highly situated concept, informed by both the policy context and institutional context, as well as the discursive community of contemporary art. In the next chapter, I explore how such a varied and situated notion of value channelled into an evidence-based evaluative framework, and how the tensions around the meaning of social value were resolved at the interface of policy and practice.

5.2 The meaning of ‘social value’ in relation to the institutional context

This section focuses on how each case study institution interpreted the meaning of ‘social value’ as a governing principle of New Labour’s cultural policy. The findings reveal how and why different institutions developed different notions of social value. Overall, the section shows that the meaning of ‘social value’ was nuanced, situated in time and specific to different institutional contexts. This finding is important because it is not possible to analyse the experience of governance under New Labour without first understanding what principles and values underpinned the new governance mechanisms. The approach taken here is novel because it moves beyond the study of the rhetoric of policy, which forms the basis of most policy analysis from the governance/NPM perspective. Instead, the empirical evidence presented here shows how the meaning of ‘social value’ as a governing principle was constructed in practice. In doing so, I reveal the variety of priorities that evolved from New Labour’s social value agenda, as well the institution’s ability to appropriate and refashion

different interpretations of social value in order to align with, or further, their institutional agendas. This section is organised around each case study institution, to demonstrate the nuance and situatedness of the meaning of social value.

5.2.1 The Alpha Institution: social value – engaging the local community

The Alpha Institution was founded with the aim of bringing excellent art to its impoverished local community. In my fieldwork, employees at the Alpha Institution repeatedly pointed out the institution's long-established roots in the local community, which were cited again and again in the discussion of social impact. The institution was born out of a social reformation movement, with the aim of improving the lives of the poor. It started in the building of a well-known charity with a reformist social agenda and was intended to offer an alternative to the 'uncivilised' habit of attending pubs. The Alpha Institution was one of the first arts institutions to have electricity so that working-class people could attend after work. In this way, the gallery eroded some of the implicit barriers to participation in the arts that existed at the time; other galleries had limited opening hours, dress codes or high fees that prohibited certain social groups from attending, despite the fact that galleries were open to all in principle (Bennett 2004; Duncan 1995).

According to Ethan, a former employee in the Development department of the Alpha Institution, the institution's history was the 'thing' that made the institution distinctive in relation to other galleries. He said:

“And so, what was unique about the [the Alpha Institution] as opposed to say, [another large gallery in London] or any of its peers at that time, was that it had a history which went back [a long time], so it was the oldest of its type really in London, the oldest community arts organisation if you like, so it had a history

and also it was unique in its setting in that it had a social history as well as an art history” (interview 2016).

Former employees at the Alpha Institution felt strongly that the institution had a social purpose as well as an art historical one. This self-identification appeared to resonate profoundly with New Labour’s values, at least in principle, and in relation to the gallery’s historical commitments. However, importantly, this identity was developed long before the New Labour administration.

Employees at the Alpha Institution expressed a real sense of ‘owning’ the social value agenda. According to Gemma, another former employee in the Development department of the Alpha Institution:

“The arts organisation, [the Alpha Institution] itself, believes in those values and wanted to do that sort of work. It wasn’t something they were forced to do because of the Labour government” (interview 2016).

Gemma’s response clearly positions the social value agenda as part of the institution’s core remit.

However, at the same time, because there was funding attached to social value priorities, the New Labour policy context did encourage the institution to draw upon, and draw out, the institution’s historical commitment to social impact. When asked to recall the institution’s mission, Ethan acknowledged commitments to both art and social value, but accepted that it was in the institution’s interest to pursue the social value agenda:

“... so it was the history of the contemporary but also that there was a distinctive, social and economic setting to it, which of course was changing at the time and has changed a lot since. But that definitely informed our thinking and of course, the policy context then... very much encouraged us to pursue that, or put it like this, it was definitely in our interest to pursue that

agenda because obviously there was funding related to that. But to be fair to [the Alpha Institution], I think that it wasn't just trying to retrofit its mission to the funding, I mean I think genuinely because of its history and its situation and location, it wanted to do that or certainly there was a number of people there in the various positions who felt that at the time" (interview 2016).

In principle, at least, the institution's core founding mission was well-matched to New Labour's overarching principle of museums as 'centres for social change' (DCMS 2000). While the policy context encouraged the foregrounding of that mission, employees expressed a genuine commitment to the institution's founding principles. Therefore, employees primarily discussed New Labour's social value agenda in relation to the institution's history, and in the specific terms of engaging the local community.

The institution's founding principles clearly resonated with the priorities of the policy context, but the pursuit of social value within the institution was still a contested and sometimes confused ambition. Despite apparent similarities between the rhetoric of New Labour's social value agenda and the institution's mission, there were difficulties in translating that mission into an institutional practice that was appropriate for the modern era. The institution's understanding and pursuit of its mission was complicated by an updated awareness of cultural sensitivities, the changing demographics of the local community and the recognition of ideological tensions that manifested from the institution's two-fold agenda of engaging the local community and showing 'great art.'

Employees at the Alpha Institution spoke of the need to bring the institution's historical commitment to social value up to date. There was apparent agreement amongst interviewees that the institution's original founding ideals did not neatly fit with cultural sensitivities and

awareness of the late 20th and early 21st century. Rebecca, a former employee in the Education department of the Alpha Institution voiced this concern:

“... the mission back [in the early days of the gallery], it was to bring art to the poor . . . so it was kind of patronising. And it was slightly... slightly religious as well. Well, it was, it was a religious, a Christian, agenda” (interview 2016).

While the former employees of the Alpha Institution frequently raised the institution’s long-standing commitment to social value, at the same time, they were critical of the original conception of the ambition. Thomas, a former employee in the Exhibitions department, raised a similar concern:

“... there was a lot of research into the gallery’s past and the original, [early] philanthropic aims were very present and important to us. But, there was also a period when everyone was saying, ‘Oh, how patronising people were in the [past]’” (interview 2016).

The employees’ critique of the institution’s original ambition left them in a predicament. On the one hand, the New Labour context was a moment to celebrate the institution’s roots, but at the same time, they had to find a way to square those original ambitions with the demands of the present.

For the employees of the Alpha Institution, it was in the delivery of ‘social value’ in practice, or in actually doing the work of ‘engaging the local community,’ that things got most complicated. To begin with, the local community of the institution had changed dramatically (a few times) since the inception of the institution, and therefore, the very meaning of, motivation for and implications of engaging that local community had also changed. Thomas remarked on these changes:

“... of course the different immigrant populations in the surrounding [area] were very key to the organisation’s identity

and all of those shifts from [different immigrant groups], all that had a very, very big impact on the ethos of the gallery” (interview 2016).

Thomas’ comments raise questions about what it means to situate the institution’s identity, and its interpretation of ‘social value,’ in relation to a ‘local community’ that is diverse and necessarily situated in time.

At the time of the institution’s founding, most of the local working-class population of the Alpha Institution were living in some form of poverty or destitution. The area has always been ethnically diverse and has sustained large immigrant populations, which have shifted over time. In more recent times, it has become a popular place for artists to live and work.

All of this meant that whilst there was apparent agreement amongst employees that the social value of the institution should be defined in relation to the institution’s engagement with the ‘local community,’ and this harkened back to the founding principles of the institution, negotiating that ambition in practice was complex. It meant that cultural actors in the institution had to confront a set of challenges that resulted from the specific character of the local community, and which were specific to the institution and its local context. Annabel, a former employee in the Development department, described these challenges:

“I was there during [a particular moment when the institution sought to celebrate its history] and there was a real effort to reach out to the community and it was very hard because as you know the community comes in very different cultural perspectives, [some groups] weren’t into representational art, and some of the work, like Nan Goldin’s was very shocking with photographs of people having sex. I think that is a strong recollection of the disparity of the programme with its contemporary art and immediate neighbours... however much

we tried ... it was a bit like hitting our head against a brick wall”
(interview 2016).

These specific challenges were similarly described by Ethan:

“It always had this community focus, and also we were very conscious of the fact that because of the community that we were situated within, the cultural and religious context for an awful lot of our local visitors, meant that actually engagement with us as an institution sometimes meant not coming – having the ability to actually have open enough communication that we were able to indicate when particular exhibitions or shows might be problematic, might be offensive, so our work was always very developed beyond the gallery walls as well as within the gallery. So, we saw engagement as something which was more fluid and not necessarily situated within the walls” (interview 2016).

Despite a clear, and long-standing, commitment to social value, there were tensions within the institution about how social value could actually be achieved in the specific context of the institution at that time. As the institution understood social value in connection to the local community, interviewees grappled with the ‘disparity’ of showing contemporary, potentially provocative, work and engaging the local community, whilst bearing in mind the cultural sensitivities of that community. This tension seemed to derive from the desire to realise the original ambition of the institution – to bring great art to the local community – in the context of the institution at that time.

Even within the institution, and despite all interviewees imparting the importance of the institution’s historical links to the local community, there was certainly some variation by department in the rhetoric used to discuss the institution’s priorities and the concept of local engagement in more detail. For Edith, a former employee in the Marketing department, the institution was always “*very, very invested*

in audience development”, a term which for her may encompass the local community, but is generally broader in its remit, with some implication of diversity at scale, and common parlance in the vernacular of marketing. For Ethan, the institution was “*community focused*”, and similarly, for Rebecca, the Alpha Institution was “*embedded in the local community*”. These variations, though subtle, do suggest further differentiation in the construction of the meaning of ‘social value’ according to department, and the associated expertise, specialisation and professional identity of individual cultural actors.

This internal differentiation also manifested in the extent to which different departments saw their role in connection to the social value agenda. In response to a question about the social value of the institution, Thomas, from the Exhibitions department, remarked:

“Remember, I was an exhibitions curator, and so my role was to work with artists and develop the best exhibitions I could - and publications - and then find international partners” (interview 2016).

Thomas’ response suggests a surprisingly siloed approach to work within the institution, and particularly in relation to institutional commitment to social value. The total emphasis he places on putting on the ‘best exhibitions’ and finding ‘international partners’ suggests that the response is an outlier amongst the other responses gathered from former employees of the Alpha Institution, which tended to stress the centrality of social value and local engagement, both to the individual role of the employee and to the mission of the institution.

However, Thomas’ response also reinforces some of the tensions described above, in terms of squaring the institution’s two-fold mission of showing ‘great art,’ and engaging the local community. His statement hints at an unexpected division of responsibilities within the institution, particularly around ‘delivering’ social value. However, this sense of a division of responsibilities, and specifically between the

Education and Exhibitions departments, was articulated by a Michelle, a former employee in the Education department:

“But in terms of delivery of base numbers and more people, that was, I think, very much seen as something more the education... the education’s responsible for diversity and for making sure that they’re delivering a wide range of people through the gallery, and more obviously complementing the numbers that would come to the exhibition” (interview 2015).

Michelle’s comments suggest an awareness of the way in which the Education Department was perceived by other departments, and by extension, what the Exhibitions department did and did not consider to be part of its remit. However, such a fractured sense of ownership of both the core founding principles of the institution, and the institution’s commitment to New Labour’s social value agenda appeared to create some internal tensions about what social value meant to the institution, and how it could be achieved.

These tensions were magnified during the New Labour period, as the institution sought to reinforce the institution’s role in the local community, and at the same time, to define the institution as a major contributor to artistic discourse on an international stage. While the institution was keen to celebrate its historical commitment to the local community, there were also rising expectations about the scale and reach of the institution’s activities. Michelle describes how the Alpha Institution changed in the period of New Labour:

“So there was this sort of professionalisation and I think again that sent a very clear message I think as well, the [Alpha Institution] was no longer just a community gallery. It was striving for something more” (interview 2015).

Michelle’s choice of language – ‘just a community gallery’ – is significant. Although the institution was keen to embrace its community roots and to celebrate these roots in the context of New Labour, there

were still internal struggles about how to define the social value of the institution, and how to prioritise it amongst other institutional priorities, as well as the pressures of the policy landscape.

This section has considered how the meaning of social value was constructed within the Alpha institution. I have shown that for the Alpha Institution, social value was defined in relation to the institution's history, and core founding principles. However, I have also demonstrated that despite apparent similarities between the rhetoric of New Labour's social value agenda and the Alpha's Institution's core mission, there were tensions within the institution about the extent to which social value was an institutional priority, what social value meant within the institution and how it could be achieved.

For the Alpha Institution, social value was mainly understood as being focused on engaging the local community of the institution. However, this section has illustrated that for cultural actors tasked with interpreting and responding to the social value agenda, the construction of the meaning of social value was complex, and was impacted by a number of different factors, including an updated awareness of cultural sensitivities, the changing demographics of the local community, ideological tensions that manifested from the two-fold agenda of engaging the local community and showing 'great art' and the different values that different professional identities within the institution contributed to the construction of meaning. Taken together, these insights show that although social value was foregrounded by New Labour's cultural policy priorities, the form and specific contestations that surrounded the meaning of social value as a governing principle in practice were highly situated within the context of the institution and even further, in relation to specific departmental discourses.

5.2.2 The Beta Institution: social value and diversity

The last section explored how the meaning of social value was constructed in the Alpha Institution. This section details the history of the Beta Institution before investigating how the meaning of social value was configured within the institution. The Beta Institution came into being as a result of lobbying by artists, intellectuals and practitioners who felt that art institutions in the UK did not reflect the diversity of artistic practice or ideas in the country. It was founded with significant support from the Arts Council of Great Britain. The establishment of the Beta Institution was very closely linked to the specific policy context of the time, and to the priorities of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

However, shortly after Yasmin, the first Director of the institution, took up her role, the Arts Council of Great Britain ceased to exist, and the institution moved to become a part of the remit of the newly created Arts Council of England. Yasmin describes the situation:

“The new Chairman ... he had a speech written for him by his mandarins, he rips it up and he said, ‘All bets are off, this is the child of the Arts Council of Great Britain, the adopted daughter of the Arts Council of England, it’s up to you, and your team, how many goals you can score.’ The reason I’m telling you all this is because it was then made very clear that the institution was born under one set of conditions and regime of support which was very different, in reality, a few months later as a result of the changes” (interview 2016).

Yasmin’s comments show that although the institution was created through close links to the Arts Council of Great Britain, due to the restructuring of the Council and the emergence of ACE, the fledging institution quickly found itself with tenuous connections to the new policy bodies. The original mission of the institution centred on diversity and engaging with a wider global agenda in the world.

However, there was some uncertainty about what this meant in practice (interview 2016).

The initial uncertainty about the remit of the institution was magnified by the changing policy landscape. When the new funding structure took hold, and the institution lost the presumptive support it had had with the Arts Council of Great Britain, the institution had to rethink its agenda for a new context. Yasmin describes how the institution was forced to adapt to the new landscape:

“It [the Beta Institution] started off with quite a particular agenda but the circumstances of funding and support, and also how we chose to interpret [the Beta Institution’s] agenda, was one which was different to what had been set out bureaucratically if you like, or through its gestation” (interview 2016).

When the institution was formed, its mission was essentially prescribed to it. However, due to the changes in the funding landscape, and the Director’s willingness to ‘interpret’ the mission in a particular way, the institution’s agenda was still in formation when New Labour took office in 1997 and began to formalise its social value agenda for museums.

Much like the Alpha Institution, on the surface, the Beta Institution’s core commitment to ‘diversity’ was well-matched to New Labour’s social value priorities. However, my analysis of interviews with cultural actors working in the Beta Institution revealed a number of tensions within the institution about what the commitment to diversity actually meant in practice, how it could be achieved, and finally, to what extent the institution could link its ambitions to New Labour’s policy priorities.

My findings suggest that there was apparent agreement amongst former employees of the Beta Institution that the institution defined social value in terms of cultural diversity, and that this was about providing artists whose work had not had recognition by mainstream

visual arts venues, a space for the exhibition and critical discussion of their work. The former employees I interviewed discussed cultural diversity mainly in relation to artists, rather than audiences. Even the former Marketing Manager spoke about diversity in these terms. Significantly, this interpretation contrasted with the priorities of the New Labour administration, which had shifted emphasis in cultural policy away from artists and towards audiences, from a cross-section of society (Bunting 2006; Jancovich 2017). Under New Labour, diversity was considered almost exclusively in relation to audiences. However, the former employees of the Beta Institution did not discuss the diversity of audiences, suggesting either an assumption that audiences would follow content or, a critical distance between New Labour's conception of diversity, and the institution's realisation of it.

Unlike the Alpha Institution, the department with which the interviewee was associated did not appear to be a relevant vector in differentiating how the meaning of social value was defined in the institution. However, as a smaller institution, 'departments' were rarely more than one person. One former employee discussed how everyone 'pitched in' to help with everything, so it is likely that there was less opportunity for specialisation and differentiation by expertise than in the larger Alpha Institution.

There was also apparent agreement amongst employees that diversity in the context of the institution meant 'cultural diversity.' Esme, a former employee in the Marketing department, noted that this assumption only became visible when it was questioned:

"And I think in terms of diversity it changed in 2007 because Boris Johnson came in - obviously Conservative - and Munira Mirza started questioning why diversity was such a big thing. That is cultural diversity and she said surely it should be socioeconomic diversity rather than social diversity, rather than ethnic diversity" (interview 2016).

Esme's comments reveal that not only was 'social value' a broad and ambiguous term, which could take the institution in a number of different directions, but even the institution's focus on 'diversity' was open to interpretation.

Furthermore, Esme's acknowledgement of the London politics at the time illustrates the complexity of the policy landscape, and the multiple pressures influencing both the institution's priorities and its interpretation of social value. Within the institution, while there was agreement about a commitment to 'cultural diversity,' interviewees tended to discuss this commitment rather ambiguously, and again most often in terms of content and ideas rather than audiences. For Esme, the institution was concerned with "*rethinking what it means to live in a post-colonial state*" (interview 2016). For one former Director of the institution aimed to create a space for "*discussing identity and non-Western art history*" (interview 2016), while for the other former Director the purpose of the institution was to present "*different ideas, different ways of thinking which were culturally diverse, but not culturally essentialist*" (interview 2016). While all of these characterisations coalesce around ideas of 'diversity' there is also some nuance to them. The interviewees' comments demonstrate how the meaning of a broad value set, such as social value, is differentiated by the pull of political, institutional and disciplinary discourses.

Beyond the articulation of the value of the institution, there was also a lack of clarity within the institution about how it could or should achieve its ambitions. For the Beta Institution, notions of value were wrapped up in the form of the institution. A primary concern for the institution was whether it should have a building. The question was deeply connected to the institution's mission, sense of purpose and articulation of value. In the original conception of the institution, under the auspices of the Arts Council of Great Britain, there was to be a building-based programme. However, after the restructuring of the

Arts Council, this was an area that opened up for discussion. According to Yasmin, the founding Director of the institution:

“And in a sense the building was not the issue. It was not a question that there were spaces for diverse artistic practice to be shown, it was that people just didn’t show it. So, it was more about content than about space. And, in a sense, that then shaped how we began to construct the institution’s agenda” (interview 2016).

The question of whether the institution could be most effective working with other intuitions, or having its own, dedicated space persisted. For some, the move to a permanent space would represent a vote of confidence in the institution’s mandate. For others, a permanent home would put an end to the ‘antagonistic catalyst’ mode of working that the institution had developed, and contain the cultural diversity conversation to a physical space. For most of the New Labour period, the institution operated as an “*antagonistic catalyst*” challenging bigger institutions on their commitment to cultural diversity (Esme, interview 2016).

The Beta Institution, its commitment to cultural diversity and its articulation of social value continued to be challenged by changes to the broader institutional and policy landscape. Reflecting back on the period under New Labour, Matilda, a former Director of the Beta Institution in the latter years of New Labour, observed a number of changes in the landscape of contemporary art that influenced the role of the institution:

“Obviously, a number of things were changing in terms of... Tate Modern was opened 2001, I think, and began in the 2000s to start to collect international work that considered artists from different backgrounds and then of course there was the burgeoning of the biennale in so many different parts of the world, and then other museums and galleries in London took a greater interest” (interview 2016).

Matilda's depiction of the changes in the landscape of contemporary art institutions illustrates how trends within the sector, and the institutional landscape, began to challenge the 'uniqueness' of the Beta's Institution's commitment to issues of cultural diversity. While other institutions began to foreground issues that had previously been largely ignored by the mainstream contemporary art establishment, the Beta Institution was forced to reconsider its articulation of value.

Esme also described changes to the institutional landscape but cited not only shifting interests and values within the sector, but also, the impact of priorities set out in New Labour's cultural policies. She remarked:

"I think over a period of time it [the Beta Institution] changed quite fundamentally but the whole landscape changed fundamentally, so in my personal opinion what happened was as soon as Arts Council started making it part of their core funding agreement that they [other institutions] had to develop work that was reflective of the society that we lived in, [the Beta Institution's] cultural currency was reduced significantly" (interview 2016).

In Esme's view, the New Labour policy context, and the administration's commitment to social value, created a situation in which all institutions were supposedly addressing cultural diversity, which threatened the *raison d'être* of the Beta Institution.

In this section, I have shown how the unique history of the Beta Institution is intimately linked to the history of ACE and its priorities. Like the Alpha Institution, the Beta Institution was founded with a clear purpose – to create a prominent space for the exhibition of diverse artists. I have demonstrated through my analysis of the Beta Institution that the institution's interpretation of social value was situated in the time and place of the institution, but that the construction of meaning

was also influenced by a number of factors including the political landscape, the institutional landscape of contemporary arts and the views of cultural actors working in the institution and shaping its identity. As a result, I have shown that although the institution shared common ground with, and was clearly influenced by, New Labour's social value agenda, beneath the surface of this common ground, there were also key differences between how the institution understood social value and how it was conceived as part of New Labour's cultural policy. Importantly, the institution tended to focus on cultural diversity in relation to both the representation of ideas and artists, but not audiences, which was the emphasis of New Labour's social value agenda. In addition, the institution initially saw its role as being that of an 'antagonistic catalyst', challenging its larger institutional peers to think about cultural diversity. Taken together, these insights develop the theme that the meaning of social value was highly situated and contested, and informed by the history and values of the institution, as well the wider, discursive community of contemporary art.

5.2.3 The Gamma Institution: social value - outreach vs. artists

The Gamma Institution is the smallest of the three case studies. It was founded by its current Directors. For most of its history, the Directors have been the only full-time employed staff members. Prior to securing a building, and running the gallery, the Directors ran a series of successful art events. Since its early days, the institution has occupied part of a Victorian building, which was once a part of a well-known charitable organisation. However, the Directors made no reference to the history of the building in our interview.

According to the Bruce, one of the Directors of the Gamma Institution, the mission of the institution has always been to "*fill the niche between the institution, the commercial and the alternative*" and to act as a "*streamlined resource for the development and presentation of*

contemporary art" (interview 2016). Distinct from the cultural actors who had worked within the Alpha and Beta Institutions, who interpreted social value in relation to their respective institution's history and values, the Directors of the Gamma Institution did not make an attempt to marry their institution's self-conceptualisation with the priorities of the New Labour administration. Bruce understood New Labour's priorities as "*increasing audiences, increasing outreach in terms of work going out of the space*" (interview 2016). His interpretation of social value was different from both the Alpha and Beta Institutions, because it did not foreground either the local community, or commitment to diversity. Bruce's comments are significant because he appears to define the meaning of New Labour's social value agenda in opposition to the role of the institution, rather than in connection to it. In this way, the meaning of social value is still defined in relation to the institutional context, but there appeared to be a particular conflict between the institution's values and the leadership's perception of the priorities of the policy context.

The Gamma Institution's skeletal staffing structure meant that the Directors' input was unrivalled in the space of the institution. While the Alpha Institution and to some extent, the Beta Institution, had internal conflicts about what the policy context meant to the institution, this conflict led to negotiation within the institution about its values, particularly with regards to social value. In the Gamma Institution, there was little opportunity to confront different ideas within the institution, and the Directors expressed difficulty squaring their idea of the institution's purpose with New Labour's priorities. Significantly, in the Gamma Institution there appeared to be no distance between the leadership values and the institution's values.

Bruce's articulation of the social value of the institution revolved around the role that the institution played in developing new work:

"We're a development space, we develop work in the space and we spent a lot of time arguing that the actual importance of a

space like this is operating on very subtle levels, like obviously in the development of the artists' work itself, but also that the repercussions of that work might not be just that that product goes out and gets pinged around the country and the calculator's out saying more and more audiences; what would happen is that it would lead to new work and different work in different contexts. So, it would be developmental concepts" (interview 2016).

Bruce understood the institution as a space for the experimentation and development of artistic work and believed that the social contribution of the institution was to support this work. However, Bruce's interpretation of New Labour's social value agenda in terms of 'more audiences,' positioned the institution in opposition to the priorities of the policy context. Although both Bruce and Grace, the co-Director of the Gamma Institution, believed in the social value of the institution, they could not intersect their notion of social value with that which they believed was intended by the New Labour policy context.

Both Bruce and Grace are artists themselves, and they described how their practice evolved into the running of an art space. The funding for the institution was initially to support them as individuals, rather than for the organisation as an independent entity. Grace described the development of the institution:

"What was really important about [the Gamma Institution] was that [Bruce] and I worked as [a collaborative arts practice] and we'd come from a fine art background and we set up these peripatetic events that ended up happening absolutely regularly once a month, every first or last Saturday of every month for four years, and it was a project that expanded and had a certain amount of critical success and actually we had the public funders coming to us to find out who we were and pretty much offering us to get involved with them" (interview 2016).

Grace's comments illustrate how the conception of the institution was inextricably linked to its current leadership. With the Directors' admission that the running of the institution is, or began at least, as an extension of their artistic practice, it is perhaps unsurprising that they saw the role of the gallery as supporting fellow artists in the development of new work.

In this section, I have explored how the particular values and structure of leadership in the Gamma Institution led to a situation in which the institution's conception of social value was positioned as at odds with New Labour's social value agenda. These findings reinforce the theme of the situatedness of social value, and also demonstrate how the meaning of social value was constructed by institutional values and histories. However, distinct from the Alpha and Beta Institutions, which essentially appropriated and reconfigured New Labour's policy priorities in accordance with their respective institutional identities, the Gamma Institution held onto a pared down conception of New Labour's social value agenda, as an external set of priorities with little relationship to the institution. This disjuncture would cause some friction for the institution, as New Labour's policy priorities were diffused into everyday practice through the introduction of new evaluative measures. These frictions are explored in the next chapter.

5.2.4 Summary of the meaning of social value in relation to institutional contexts

In this section, I have illustrated how each case study institution understood and interpreted social value. I have shown that for the former employees of the Alpha Institution, social value was mainly understood in relation to the core founding principles of the institution, which focused on engaging the local community of the institution. However, the insights gathered show that, in practice, the pursuit of this mission was complex and that there were still tensions within the institution about what social value meant, and how it could be

achieved. In the Beta Institution, the New Labour social value agenda was understood in terms that connected it to the institution's commitment to advancing cultural diversity. However, despite surface level similarities with the New Labour rhetoric, in practice, there were key differences between the institution's values and the policy priorities. Finally, I have shown that the Gamma Institution was distinct in positioning its interpretation of social value in opposition to the policy context. The institution's perception of New Labour's policy priorities as being focused on reaching new audiences was difficult to reconcile with the Gamma Institution's commitment to supporting the development of new artwork.

The overarching themes to emerge from my coding and analysis of the interview transcriptions detailing these different institutional experiences are that the meaning of social value was highly situated within the institution and that the construction of meaning was informed by the history, values and disciplinary community of the institution, as well as the professional identities of cultural workers who articulated value through institutional practices. As a result, contestations about the meaning of social value sometimes caused internal fracturing, particularly in the Alpha Institution, which was larger and more differentiated by department. These insights suggest that critical debates within the sector and within each institution add further insight to what social value meant and how it operated as principle of cultural governance.

5.3 The meaning of 'social value' in relation to the discursive community of contemporary art

The section above explored how each case study institution understood, interpreted and configured 'social value.' I have shown that the construction of the meaning of social value was largely situated within the context of the institution and shaped by its history and values. This section focuses on the particular influence that the

discursive community of contemporary art had on meaning-making in the institution. While the last section explored social value in each case study institution, this section cuts across the three case study institutions to demonstrate how cultural actors drew upon, and in some cases prioritised, the discourses of contemporary art to interpret New Labour's social value agenda.

The section draws upon local level data to illustrate how cultural actors made connections between developments in artistic practices at the time and New Labour's social value agenda – despite some key underlying differences between art and policy discourses. Primarily, the section illustrates the extent to which cultural actors identified developments in arts practice as influencing both their understanding of social value as a governing principle, and their actions as implementors of cultural policy.

5.3.1 Social value and the discourse of contemporary art

A significant theme to emerge from my coding and analysis of interview transcriptions was that of the influence of developments in arts practices and the discourses of contemporary art on decision-making and the articulation of value in the institution. As described above (see 5.2.2), the Beta institution was founded in response to calls by artists for a space that would give visibility to particular artists and artistic practices. Although the institution was focused on addressing issues of diversity, and this did resonate with New Labour's cultural policy rhetoric, the critical positioning of the space came from artists and intellectuals. According to Yasmin, a former Director of the Beta Institution:

“Well, it was really the people ... it was people. It was artists, their practice, intellectuals [...]. It was informed by that extraordinary period of intellectual and creative practice and thinking. Curators like [a well-known curator who made substantial contributions to the field]. People who informed a

context, created a context of thinking differently and making differently and that was really the driver. So, it was very much shaped through, out of that, those ideas and practice, and was very dynamic in that sense. Not a static, fixed thing in itself. It kept changing and evolving” (interview 2016).

Yasmin’s recollection is significant because it illustrates the role of artists and intellectuals in articulating the value and purpose of the institution. This insight is significant because it adds another analytic dimension to the process-driven accounts of the dominant critical positions on cultural policy under New Labour. Yasmin points to a particular network, or discursive community, which influenced the institution’s critical position on diversity. While New Labour was concerned with diversifying participation in art, the Beta Institution was heavily informed by the thoughts and ideas of academics and artists. The institution’s critical positioning was based upon questioning existing power structures and configured the institution’s understanding of cultural diversity in a way that was distinctly different from New Labour’s more benign conception of disenfranchised individuals.

While the former employees of the Alpha Institution also emphasised the importance of artistic developments on the institution’s articulation of value, they tended to focus on the influence of the rising prevalence of socially engaged and participatory arts practices in the 1990s. Although all institutions connected broadly to the discursive community of contemporary art, within this, there were specific networks that connected to different institutions in different ways. While the Beta Institution was largely concerned with changing the status quo in the presentation of art, the Alpha Institution was determined to present internationally recognised art. The influence that socially engaged practices had on the institution increased as these practices entered the mainstream arts establishment. According to Thomas in the Exhibitions department of the Alpha Institution:

“The other thing I think is really important is the context of socially engaged practices. Socially engaged practice began to become recognised as an artist’s practice. I do think there was a difference between socially engaged practice and community-based work. Socially engaged practice started to become recognised specifically as an artist’s practice” (interview 2016).

Thomas’s comments point out both the influence that socially engaged practices had on the institution, but also, how this influence grew as these practices became recognised as ‘an artist’s practice,’ or in other words, as they were accepted into the critical discourse of the arts establishment.

A number of former employees of the Alpha Institution made a point of emphasising that the rise of socially engaged and participatory practices had helped shape the meaning of social value prior to New Labour’s social value agenda. Beth, a former employee in the Education department of the Alpha Institution was keen to point out that for her, developments in artistic practice had been more influential than the policy regime:

“It was less about the governments who’d been in power during the time that I worked and more about the kind of practice I’d seen developing, and particularly artists working with participants, so I was very influenced by community arts practice, by art in the public realm” (interview 2015).

Most employees, however, made the point that there were multiple discourses at play, and that it was a combination of the policy context and developments in artistic practice that influenced their understanding of value, and helped shape their actions in the institution. According to Daphne, another former employee in the Education department of the Alpha Institution:

“... if you are in receipt of public funding, those service level agreements with the local authority and also Arts Council funding, then you are completely ... part and parcel of that context, but also you are, a lot of what you’re doing is being shaped by the practice of the artist, not just that you show but just artists more generally” (interview 2015).

Daphne went on to affirm this point:

“... this idea that museums and galleries, their work was profoundly changed by the arrival of New Labour '97 ... it was a factor but it ignores the changes... if you’re thinking about learning programmes in museum and gallery learning pedagogy is really key, the changes and developments there, and also institutional critique and the rise of participatory practices and artists’ own practice themselves... and then the shifting government agenda, but I don’t think that... it was a coming together of all of these forces, than it simply being as simple as going, ‘Oh, it was that!’”(interview 2015).

Daphne’s comments articulate the multitude of discourses influencing the direction of the institution, and its movement towards an articulation of social value. Her comments are important because they illustrate how different factors combined in different ways to create a notion of social value that was situated within the context of the institution and influenced by both the political climate and developments in arts practice at the time.

The insights gathered in this section show how, in the contemporary visual arts sector, the construction of the meaning of social value was not only hinged to the history and values of the institution, but also to developments in artistic practice at the time. I have illustrated the complexity of meaning-making in the institution and demonstrated the benefit of taking a multidisciplinary approach to the study of cultural governance.

5.4 Conclusions and next steps

In this chapter, I have explored my findings in relation to the research question about how the meaning of social value was constructed at the interface of policy and practice. Through my findings, I show that social value was variously defined, and situated in the time, place and specific knowledge domain of each case study institution. My approach of gathering local level data from skilled cultural actors working at the interface of policy and practice makes a novel contribution to the literature because it shows the process by which the meaning of social value was constructed, as it moved from policy rhetoric into practice. By engaging with the specific discourses of contemporary art, I reveal tensions and contestations around the meaning of social value that are not visible in the extant literature. As a result, I show with empirical evidence, nuance and disciplinarity that is flattened by the more general and process-driven approaches of the dominant critical positions. My approach demonstrates the benefit of taking a multidisciplinary approach to the research.

In the first part of this chapter, I have shown how the construction of the meaning of social value was influenced by each institution's history and values, as well as the expertise of the cultural actors tasked with interpreting and implementing New Labour's social value agenda. I show that social value was highly situated and contested, even within the institution, and this created micro-politics within the institution. In the second part of this chapter, I have illustrated how sector specific developments in art practice and the discursive community of contemporary art contributed to an understanding of social value that was specific to the contemporary art sector – and at times, at odds with the values underpinning New Labour's intentions.

The chapter has illustrated the situated and contested nature of social value. The next chapter begins to explore how such a fractured

concept operates as a principle of cultural governance. While this chapter has focused on the meaning of social value as a governing principle, the next chapter explores the diffusion of New Labour's cultural policies into the everyday life of the institution, through the introduction of new evaluation methods. The next chapter addresses the research questions about processes of governance in the institution and how tensions around the ambiguity of social value were resolved within the rigid structures of an evidence-based framework.

Chapter 6: The Diffusion of New Labour's Cultural Policies into Everyday Practice

"We were more interested in changing the status quo than ticking those boxes" (Yasmin, a former Director of the Beta Institution, interview 2016).

6.1 Introduction

In the last chapter I explored how the meaning of social value was constructed in each case study institution during the New Labour period. Through the coding and analysis of interview transcriptions, I showed that social value was defined in different ways by different institutions, and was situated in the time, place and specific knowledge domain of each case study institution. While the last chapter focused specifically on the meaning of New Labour's social value agenda at the interface of policy and practice, this chapter focuses on the diffusion of policy into institutional practice. The chapter responds to the research questions by exploring processes of governance and specific modes of engagement with NPM structures, within the contemporary arts institution.

The insights presented in this chapter emerged from both the interview coding I conducted on transcriptions of interviews with skilled cultural actors, and the quantitative data analysis I carried out on resource allocation. From these analytic processes, three themes emerged, all of which are considered in relation to the dominant critical position on cultural policy under New Labour. Section 6.2 explores the themes of informality and dialogue, in the evaluation process. The insights gained challenge the assumption in the dominant critical position that NPM techniques were both entirely rational and dominated by a 'rule by numbers' ethos. Instead, the section shows that informality in governance meant that skilled cultural actors played an important role

in interpreting, translating and even influencing the discourses of evaluation that the institution was held accountable to.

Section 6.3 looks at how cultural actors managed tensions that arose from the ambiguities of social value as a governing principle. The section addresses institutional modes of engagement with NPM evaluation structures, highlighting the variance in modes of engagement amongst different institutions as the most prominent theme to emerge. The section explores different institutional approaches to navigating the administrative climate of New Labour, from embracing the new evaluative measures to resisting them. The section highlights the important role that skilled cultural actors played in defining how the institution engaged with the evaluative context, and how the size and scale of the institution was a determining factor in the institution's capacity to embrace the new discourse of evaluation.

Section 6.4 draws upon the quantitative data analysis I conducted on resource allocation to further explore institutional modes of engagement with NPM evaluative structures, specifically looking at the extent to which the methods shaped activities within the institution. Despite the totality of O'Brien's (2014) theory of the 'social life of methods,' my quantitative data analysis suggests that New Labour's "regime of performance management and accountability" (Tlili 2014: 158) did not appear to drive decision-making in the contemporary visual arts institution. However, this section explores how the data analysis did surface new insights about the ways in which the NPM discourse did impact organisational thinking, particularly around the institution's relationship with its audiences and its perception of how different activities related to its core function.

The final section, 6.5, synthesises the findings in order to shape the argument that the collection of detailed, local level information capturing the role of skilled cultural actors in negotiating governance principles and structures provides new insights into cultural

governance. Collectively, the findings challenge the assumption of simplicity and rationality in the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, whilst also suggesting that a more nuanced understanding of how institutions engaged with the discourse of evaluation is needed.

6.2 Practices of evaluation

As discussed throughout this thesis, very few analyses of the New Labour period move beyond the critique of the instruments and processes of evaluation, to consider the practices of evaluation. Although the analytic focus in the dominant critical position on the introduction of new processes and techniques of evaluation sheds an important light on step-changes in cultural governance under New Labour, these approaches have also shifted focus away from the crucial interpretation of value that is the ‘art’ of institutions and their skilled cultural actors. This section expands the themes of informality and dialogue in evaluation to show that despite the introduction of quantitative performance criteria in policy, in practice, skilled cultural actors played an important role in translating, interpreting and influencing policy discourse, and informal qualitative measurements remained an integral part of evaluation and cultural governance. The findings suggest that it was not always the case that from the introduction of NPM techniques ensued the top-down model of governance suggested by Belfiore (2012). Rather, the insights gathered in this section show that processes of evaluation usually involved a rapport between funders and cultural actors, allowing for the negotiation and translation of aims.

6.2.1 Informality in evaluation

Despite the DCMS’s (and subsequently ACE’s) introduction of PSAs, KPIs and targets into the cultural sector, many interviewees working in arts institutions during the New Labour administration reported that targets did not remove subjectivity from decision-making. Claire, a

former Director of the Alpha Institution, describes her impression of the evaluation process:

“No, I don’t think it [the evaluation process] was clear and I also don’t think it was any more objective than it would have been before [New Labour], because I can remember very clearly that an exhibition that one of the officers visited, whether they liked it or didn’t like it, somehow that would be... you felt it was very arbitrary... it still was based on general perception of whether the gallery was doing well or not well” (interview 2016).

Claire’s comments show how the use of evidence-based performance criteria represented the introduction of another discourse (albeit one that was given much credence at the time), to an already complex constellation of inputs influencing the evaluation process. Whilst the official policy discourse was one which put forth the notion of objectivity in cultural value, in practice, processes of evaluation were still swayed by the subjectivity of interpretation by both funders and cultural actors. In fact, the ‘general perception’ of the success of the institution that is articulated in the quote above was influenced by a broad range of discourses that encompassed different conceptions of social value, as well as other aims valued by the specific, disciplinary community of contemporary art. ‘General perception’ was a reputation gained from a variety of channels, from the judgements of peer institutions to the critical opinions of various art world channels. Consequentially, the social value set forth in the KPIs of policy documents emerged as a kind of necessary fiction that institutions had to tolerate, amongst other value systems at play, and it was the role of the skilled cultural actor to navigate a path through these various demands.

The sense that in practice, evaluation was informed by multiple discourses and the notion of value was a process of translation by different actors was echoed by Yasmin, a former Director of the Beta Institution:

“Well actually the thing I most recall being exercised about was being told to be more like [another well-known gallery] actually, rather than ticking the social agenda boxes. So, there was ... and again things don’t flow from government in a trickle down, nice, neat way. It’s so dependent on the people who you’re interfacing with as the representatives of power and funding. And those change and they’re different people and depending who they are they have a different attitude and influence the conversation a different way” (interview 2016).

Yasmin’s recollection of being compared to another well-known contemporary visual arts institution in London is evidence of the important role that the peer and disciplinary community had in shaping notions of success and value. Her observation that *“things don’t flow from government in a trickle down, nice neat way”* (interview 2016) is critical to understanding the complexity of the New Labour policy context. The insights gained from the local level enquiries of this thesis suggest that there was a range of discourses and influences that went into the funder’s decision-making process, which were not all based on quantitative judgements, but which were informed by the specific relationship with the institution, which was managed by skilled cultural actors working at the interface of policy and practice.

Indeed, it appears that the importance of the institution’s relationship with its funder was not only an observation, but also a strategy. Despite all that has been written about the introduction of NPM techniques into the cultural sector, cultural actors in the sector found many ways to engage funders through informal, qualitative means as well. Gemma, an employee in the Development department of the Alpha Institution explains the importance of relationship management in her job:

“The willingness to engage in relationship management with the funders is absolutely critical, and the reporting documents and measurements and stats is one element, but it should be a

dialogue, and you should have regular contact with your key funders. And, I've found that with some of the foundations and public sector and individuals, the more and deeper your relationship is with them, the more you carry them along, because at the start, particularly if it's anything to do with the community, what's the outcome of that going to be? You don't necessarily know that at the beginning. You have some projections but carrying the funders along that journey of discovery is absolutely vital for their continued support. I think that's essential" (interview 2016).

As an employee in the Development department, Gemma had to engage directly with funding agreements and reports. She acknowledges that 'measurements and stats' were part of the evaluation process, but that there was a simultaneous process of interpreting and translating those stats for the funder and carrying them along in the 'journey' of the project, so that the quantitative elements take on new meaning, or become altogether less meaningful. However, Gemma's approach of cultivating a relationship with funders and engaging them beyond the 'measurements and stats' is both time-consuming and resource-heavy, which also gives some indication of the pressure institutions felt to provide evidence of their success to funders.

Gemma's comments about the importance of relationship management also suggest that ACE was more willing to be interventionist in its approach than might have been expected from the climate and rhetoric of NPM. As explained in chapters 2 and 3, the general arc of cultural policy after the 'instrumental turn' (Belfiore 2004) was to avoid evaluation discussions based upon vague notions of 'excellence.' NPM techniques were intended to replace 'expert' judgements with quantitative evidence and numbers, supposedly exonerating funders from getting involved in the stickiness of value debates (see Hewison 2014; Belfiore 2004) However, the evidence

gathered here suggests that even for ACE, the numbers weren't enough, and the council did intervene at the level of culture too.

Annabel, another former employee in the Development department of the Alpha Institution described how representatives from ACE used to sit in on Board meetings (interview 2016). In many ways, this kind of behaviour indicates a process-based, interventionist approach, which is at odds with the results-based approaches typical of NPM. This insight into the practices of evaluation within the institution presents a challenge to the assumption set forth in the dominant critical position that NPM measures created an evaluation process that was both total, rational and structurally simple. Instead, it highlights the role that qualitative measures, including informal feedback from the disciplinary community and skilled cultural actors, played in shaping a 'general perception' of the success of the institution.

6.2.2 Dialogue and agency in the evaluation process

Contrary to the dominant narratives of the period, I found through the fieldwork that the practice of evaluation as part of cultural governance under New Labour was not only informed by informal inputs to an extent that has not been captured in detail before, but was also far more discursive than is revealed by the structural application of governmentality that is the primary analytic lens for interpreting cultural governance under New Labour. Edith, a former employee in the Marketing/Press and Publicity department of the Alpha Institution describes a discursive evaluation practice that is markedly different from the narratives we are familiar with from the primary accounts of the period:

“So, I felt that they [ACE] were exemplary in that regard actually and I always felt as if I was absolutely at liberty in terms of the way that we reported and conversations I had, to be honest, and actually we reflected what our priorities within the organisation were. And I think the other thing I always enjoyed

was a sense, with those colleagues that I worked with at the Arts Council, was they respected the team's knowledge of visual arts and our knowledge particularly of gallery education and community education, and so were interested to hear what we had to say. So, it felt like an exchange of peers really" (interview 2016).

Edith's recollection of the evaluation process is surprising both in the sense of 'liberty' she experienced in the reporting structure and in the emphasis she places on the 'exchange' with ACE. Edith's feeling that ACE 'respected the team's knowledge' is an insight into the important role that disciplinary knowledge played in evaluation, and the potential agency of the skilled cultural actor in assessing value. Her recollection of a constructive dialogue with ACE does not reflect the results-driven approach typical of the administrative climate of NPM, and the top-down structure that has been the focus of many analyses of the period (see Belfiore 2012). On the contrary, these insights suggest that the skilled cultural actors played an important part in constructive, qualitative discussions that formed decision-making, as they have always done in ACE, although now they operated under a carapace of auditing techniques and numbers.

This sense that the practice evaluation involved a two-way, constructive dialogue with funders was echoed by Gemma in the Education department of the Alpha Institution:

"I did find both the DCMS and the Arts Council and other funders at that time very willing to have a dialogue and very willing to adapt and change and listen" (interview 2016).

Gemma's comments suggest that in practice, cultural actors actually had significant agency in the evaluation process. She describes this agency in further detail:

"... rather than just see it [the evaluation] as some sort of clunky burden, it actually ... we tried to do something intellectual which

was interesting. And so therefore engaging with the policy-makers about why they were trying to do that and about looking at cultures for it, was actually a really interesting process, and then thinking how measurements could develop from the goals accordingly” (interview 2016).

Gemma’s comments show that despite the introduction of auditing processes, institutions did have real and meaningful engagement with policy-makers. Most notably, Gemma describes a process in which ‘measurements could develop from goals.’ These comments are important in that they challenge O’Brien’s ‘theory of the social life of methods’ (2014: 49), in which targets that are meant to measure existing activity come to shape the activities themselves. Gemma’s statement suggests a possible alternative reading of the evaluative process, where in fact activities, or the cultural actors driving those activities, begin to shape the targets.

The findings reveal that skilled cultural actors played an agentic role in shaping the evaluative discourse – something that is obscured in the normative conceptualisation of targets flowing rather seamlessly into practice. However, Daphne, a former employee in the Learning department of the Alpha institution points out that there was learning and adaptation on both sides of the evaluation process:

“I think we became more sophisticated about how we, quote unquote, ‘proved’ this but at the same time I like to think it was a two-way process of also enabling the people we were reporting to have a better sense of what some of the markers could be” (interview 2015).

Daphne’s comments show that while the institutions, and the cultural actors engaged with funding reports, seemingly had some agency in the development of evaluation indicators, they also had to learn the language of the new evaluative discourse, and they became more sophisticated in how they ‘proved’ their success. Daphne’s quote

acknowledges that institutions had to find a way to evidence success in the terms required of them, but at the same time, to find a means to nuance, or add narrative to those measures.

This balancing act, between ‘playing the game’ to a certain extent, and inputting into a meaningful process is explained in more detail by Daphne:

“I remember very clearly thinking about developing evaluation indicators that were appropriate to the groups that you were working with, and then finding ways to enable your various paymasters to see how those indicators were in fact very powerful. So I don’t know, so if you were working with people who had profound mental health issues, where simply the process of negotiating public transport by themselves and arriving was a very significant indicator of how much they were engaged with the project, how much they were prepared to personally invest, and it was a process of us having those conversations with the people we were having to report back to, that sometimes your reporting targets would look slightly idiosyncratic but in fact were very pertinent. So sometimes it was as blunt a tool as how many BAME people under the age of 16 have attended workshops and that kind of thing, but I think it was also about us being more sophisticated and alert ourselves to indicators of success” (interview 2015).

Daphne’s comments demonstrate that while the policy rhetoric around the introduction of NPM tools into the cultural sector suggested a movement towards a more precise measurement of value and an objective system of accountability, in practice, funders and cultural actors recognised that numbers alone were not enough to make evaluative judgments. Informal processes of evaluation informed by multiple discourses constituted a significant part of value judgements, and skilled cultural actors played an important role in shaping evaluation tools. While the quantifiable metrics such as audience

numbers or numbers of specific BAME attendees mentioned by Daphne remained a part of the evaluation process, the findings suggest that these measures played a dual function – on the one hand they propagated a policy discourse that culture could be evaluated through objective measures without redress to notions of ‘excellence,’ and on the other hand they provided a reassuring guise for enabling a slew of qualitative measures, including the perceptions of the peer community, and the input of skilled cultural actors, to feed informally into the evaluation process.

Contrary to the dominant accounts of cultural governance under New Labour, the findings reveal that institutions, and the cultural actors working within them, had some agency in nuancing evaluation measures through informal dialogue, so that targets were apparently not always, or entirely, impositions from the top down. The interviewees’ recollections of the evaluative process as both informal and dialogic offers new insights into the space between policy processes and practice, and the messiness of cultural governance processes. These insights begin to shape a challenge to the dominant governmentality reading of NPM techniques, and their assumed totality and rationality. The findings here suggest that skilled cultural actors played a demonstrable role in governance, and that the situation was not entirely led by a ‘rule by numbers’ ethos – though it does take some digging around at the interface of policy and practice for these informal processes to surface.

6.3 Institutional modes of engagement with NPM evaluation structures

In the sections above, I have shown how informality and discussion played a part in cultural evaluation practices under New Labour. Having established that there were multiple inputs, discourses and processes at play in the practice of evaluation, this section now hones in how institutions and skilled cultural actors engaged with the new

evaluative discourse of NPM, which I have established in the thesis as one discourse amongst others that informed questions about the value of the institution. In particular, this section tackles the specific question of how tensions and ambiguities around the meaning of social value were managed by specific institutions within an evidence-based framework. This focus is contextualised by the arguments developed in chapters 2 and 3, which explain how the meanings of social value were varyingly constructed by the disciplinary community, which presented particular contentions for arts institutions tasked with demonstrating social value as part of New Labour's cultural policy agenda, and within an evidence-based framework.

The most prominent theme to emerge from my coding and analysis of interview transcriptions and quantitative data was around the overall variance in institutional modes of engagement with the new evaluative methods and discourses of value. The findings indicate that the policy context created a range of institutional experiences that are not visible in the macro-level approaches of the normative critical position. The theme of variance is explored in more detail below. For clarity, I have organised this section around each case study institution, detailing its particular mode of engaging with the evidence-based evaluative framework. Section 6.3.1. shows how the Alpha Institution embraced the development of evidence-based accountability, while section 6.3.2 illustrates how the Beta Institution rejected and resisted the new evaluative discourse, which it saw as largely irreconcilable with the progressive aims of the institution. Section 6.3.3 details how the Gamma Institution struggled to engage with the framework at all, due to the administrative burden it placed on its skeletal staffing structure.

In section 6.3.4, I consider the insights gained from the three case study institutions collectively. Taken together, the insights make the case for adding nuance and variety to critical accounts of institutional engagement with NPM structures. They also further develop the role of the skilled cultural actor in governance, this time by showing the role

that these actors played in determining how the institution engaged with the evaluative discourse, which included embracing, resisting and ignoring this discourse alongside the pursuit of other institutional priorities. The insights gathered here are not revealed in the macro-level approaches of the dominant critical positions, which do account for the particularities of different institutions, or even sectors, and do not fully engage with the complications that skilled cultural actors had to contend with as policy became practice. Collectively, the insights gained suggest a subsidiary finding, which is that modes of engagement, which were highly situated, appeared to be differentiated by the size and scale of the institution.

6.3.1 The Alpha Institution: embracing accountability

As detailed above, interviews with former employees of the Alpha Institution (in particular) revealed a degree of dialogue and informality in the funding decision process. However, former employees of the Alpha Institution were also the most likely of the three case study institutions to voice their support for more accountability in the funding decision process. According to Rebecca, a former employee in the Education department of the Alpha Institution:

“... we had this money and we weren’t as accountable as those that are civil servants are accountable, and yet we were trying to make our own ways of being accountable. We were setting up our own frameworks of evaluation, which is fine ... it’s just that you also need ... I mean I understand that you need to be accountable if you’ve got public money; otherwise it’s like why are you getting it and not another group?” (interview 2016).

Rebecca’s comments detail both the form of self-evaluation that had largely existed before New Labour, and the movement towards accountability – or at least the aspiration for it – that was ushered in with New Labour. For Rebecca, the aim of increasing emphasis on evidence-based results was a positive development for the sector. The

institution's collection of evidence signalled increased 'accountability' and bolstered the institution's justification for receiving state support over other organisations competing for a share the same pot of money.

However, it is also important to remember that there was a prevailing degree of informality to the whole process of evaluation (as detailed in the previous section). While Rebecca's comments signal that she agreed with the development in principle, it is difficult to discern the extent to which she supported auditing techniques in addition to, or in place of, discursive measures that fed into the evaluation process. Also, as the largest of the three case studies institutions, the Alpha Institution had more resources to commit to evaluation and reporting than other, smaller institutions, which made the additional demands generally more feasible and palatable.

This general sense of support for the new evaluative structures was echoed by Gemma, a former employee in the Development department of the Alpha Institution:

"... the Arts Council had a certain number of boxes that you needed to tick on how relevant and impactful your work was across a diverse group of communities. I actually think that was responsible, and a good thing to get organisations to be thinking about" (interview 2016).

Whilst Gemma was seemingly enthusiastic about the introduction of targets, her assessment that certain metrics were 'a good thing to get organisations to be thinking about' does also suggest a lack of consequence in the process. Were the targets something to think about, or something to achieve? What were the consequences of achieving or not achieving them? The statements reaffirm a sense of informality about the process, or at least, indicate a process that was multi-faceted, and which took account of different discourses, and both qualitative and quantitative measures.

There was apparent agreement amongst the former employees of the Alpha Institution that the ambition behind New Labour's introduction of quantitative measurements was a positive development for the sector. However, at the same time, the implementation and deployment of that ambition generated a more mixed set of reactions. The reality of the practice of data collection and evaluation was cited as frustrating for some employees. Ethan, another former employee in the Development department at the Alpha Institution who was intimately involved in reporting to ACE, expanded upon the challenges he confronted:

"It remains difficult, I think, because without some sort of heavily resourced longitudinal study, it's very difficult to... Unless you're getting a university to do a 10-year study on the impact of cultural practice on people's lives in deprived areas, I don't see how you can evidence it in the way that everyone would like. The money just isn't there to... if you were to turn around to all the funders and say, 'We want £200,000 to do the projects and we want another £100,000 to evaluate it over a 5-year period,' there was no way you'd get the money! So, the frustration for me is that... I would have known... there were ways you could have done it, but there were never the resources or the real commitment for understanding it" (interview 2016).

Ethan's frustration lay not in the principle of accountability, but in the measures themselves, which were often dubious proxy measures of social value, such as audience numbers, which said little about the composition of audiences or the degree of their engagement. Ethan points out that it would take a great deal of time and resources to gather meaningful data. However, the previous interviewees' comments (in section 6.2) have demonstrated that in practice, there were ways around this. The last section illustrated that skilled cultural actors played an important role in shepherding relations with funders, opening up discursive evaluation processes and even shaping the methods of evaluation. The Alpha Institution had not only a dedicated

development department, but also specialised roles within the team, which enabled the institution to engage fully with the complexity of the policy context. Most likely, the scale of the institution explains why the Alpha Institution was also the most positive of the three case study institutions about the introduction of NPM techniques into the cultural sector.

6.3.2 The Beta Institution: changing the status quo

As explained in the last chapter, for many years the Beta Institution lacked a proper exhibition space. The institution's peripatetic manner of working meant that it was difficult for it to provide quantitative evidence for some measures of impact, particularly around audiences. Esme, a former employee in the Marketing department of the Beta Institution, explains the challenges:

"I think [the institution] was a very different kettle of fish for... it wasn't like The Tate where they were under lots of pressure and they have a ton of tourists coming in. At some point [the institution] didn't even have its own building so it was on the floor of [a] building that had a bit of space and that space would also be used for mini meetings and Board meetings as well. We always used to say that [the institution] was like... you could never find it in the first place, never mind get into the building, never mind get onto the actual floor..." (interview 2016).

The Beta Institution had to contend with a particular set of challenges that made it difficult to evidence success in some of the terms required by New Labour's metrics. It was a challenge, for example, for the institution to quantify success in terms of audience numbers, when the institution lacked a landmark exhibition space.

For Yasmin, a former Director of the Beta Institution, the evaluative metrics of New Labour were a source of frustration because she felt that they did not capture the real impact of the institution, or its

intentions. She explains how the Institution refused to be guided by the values propagated by the 'tick-box' culture of New Labour:

“So, we approached those whole questions from a very different perspective. So, we tried to ... Ours again wasn't a numbers game, because we were experimental and risk taking, but we did projects which were long term programme projects like [a particular intervention in schools], which was about changing the curriculum of primary school teaching and what that included and the kind of ideas and perspectives that that included. Do you see what I'm trying to say? So, we pretty much ignored ... I mean we didn't set out to ... We were more interested in changing the status quo than ticking those boxes” (interview 2016).

Yasmin's comments are significant because they polarise New Labour's targets with 'experimental' and 'risk taking' activity. They illustrate a clash between different conceptions of social value (a contestation that is developed in further detail in chapter 2). Yasmin saw the work of the Beta Institution as concerned with 'changing the status quo' which was a very different interpretation from the explication of the social value of cultural institutions that was developed in New Labour's policy rhetoric. Chapter 2 showed how social value under New Labour grew out of the notion of social inclusion, which effectively aimed to bring individuals *back into* the status quo. Yasmin's comments pinpoint how these different conceptions of value sometimes erupted at the interface of policy and practice, and the role of the skilled cultural actor in determining how the institution would engage with competing agendas.

It appears that the Beta Institution confronted a clash of aims that was exacerbated by frustration with how such a contention could be resolved within a 'tick-box' evaluative framework. In citing the schools project, Yasmin gives an example of a project that set out to have long-term social impact, but which, she says, could not demonstrate

success in the short-term analysis required by New Labour's funding paradigm. Yasmin implies that the institution's agenda and New Labour's agenda could not be pursued simultaneously. The confrontation is an illustration of the role of the skilled cultural actor in managing multiple discourses as part of the cultural governance process. In this case, Yasmin remarks that the targets were "*pretty much ignored*" (interview 2016). Yasmin's response is an illustration of resistance that sheds a new light on NPM as a governance framework, the variety of ways in which institutions engaged with auditing processes, and on the importance of skilled cultural actors in the interpretation and negotiation of governance processes and principles.

Despite the challenges, the Beta Institution continued to pursue activities that were difficult to quantify in the terms required by New Labour, and difficult to justify in the context of the funding regime. Yasmin expands upon the challenges of pursuing the institution's priorities within a culture of evidence-based evaluation:

"And why were we doing research? Why were we accumulating a library? Why was a research strand of our programming as important to us as curatorial or publishing? That was the struggle. And why didn't we get loads of sponsors? Why was our ... And that was an issue for us because, again, our work was risk taking and experimental. The artists we worked with, nobody had heard of. And that's where the audience numbers and the social inclusion comes in, because sponsors want to be able to tick ... They want press coverage, they want audience numbers, or they're putting it under their philanthropic programme so there has to be some element that you're doing public good" (interview 2016).

Again, Yasmin positions the institution's 'risk-taking' and 'experimental' activity as impossible to reconcile with the perceived need to demonstrate success in terms defined by NPM methods, including audience numbers and press coverage.

In fact, the specific metrics quoted by Yasmin – audience numbers and press coverage – were usually only part of the ACE evaluative process, but they featured heavily as priorities amongst other funders, including Trusts and Foundations and corporate sponsorship. As explained in chapter 3, reducing institutions' reliance on ACE funding was a key concern of New Labour's cultural policy strategy. Alongside the push towards social impact, institutions were expected to be enterprising and to raise additional funds to match or supplement ACE funding. This presented particular problems for the Beta Institution, as explained by Bella, a former employee in the Press and Publicity department of the Beta Institution:

“... the greatest challenges, the challenge is in every... and still continues to be the same with the Arts Council, that is if they give you money and you're doing a building, you've got to find 50% of that cost through private sponsorship, that is the challenge. It's all very well ACE giving you 50% when you've still got to find 50% and you're a small organisation, you don't have the infrastructure and the staff” (interview 2016).

Often smaller institutions, such as the Beta Institution, didn't have the personnel or infrastructure to raise funds from multiple sources, or weren't producing the sort of high-profile activities that attract private sponsorship. As a result, it became even harder for these institutions to attract ACE funds, which might otherwise have filled the support gap for the kind of experimental activity the institution wanted to pursue.

Despite a surface-level shared commitment to many of the 'buzz words' of New Labour, including diversity, the Beta Institution struggled to reconcile their ambitions with ACE priorities, and to evidence success in the terms required of it. With the benefit of hindsight, Yasmin summarises the institution's inability to see eye-to-eye with ACE during the New Labour period:

“I don’t know if we pleased them [the Arts Council]. I mean subsequently they were pleased, but then, that was some years later when that was seen as being very influential and vanguard and influencing. 20 years later [a very well-known arts professional] stands up having been on the board of the [Beta Institution] and says, ‘Everything I learnt, I learnt at the [Beta Institution].’ And he’s reflecting the programme. It’s sort of totally embedded now in [a very well-known arts institution’s] agenda” (interview 2016).

For the Beta Institution social value was about risk-taking, experimental activity that could challenge and change the status quo. Despite sharing with New Labour some of the rhetoric of diversity and inclusion, the Beta Institution’s conception of social value jarred uncomfortably with New Labour’s version of social compliance. This clash of values was exacerbated by the need to evidence success within an evaluative framework that relied upon proxy measures of success, which the Beta Institution felt were ill-suited to the institution’s long-term strategy of change. The institution responded by ignoring, as much as possible, the direction in which the targets would lead them. In this way, the Beta Institution illustrates the role of skilled cultural actors in interpreting – and in this case, resisting – governance principles and evaluative structures. For Yasmin, evaluation under New Labour was a ‘struggle,’ and it was only years later that the institution’s achievements began to gain recognition.

The insights gathered in this section show the variety of ways that institutions engaged, and in this case, disengaged, with the evaluative measures of the New Labour policy regime. The Beta Institution’s mode of engagement suggests that the normative conceptualisation of the period should take further account of the variety of ways that institutions engaged with targets, which did not flow from policy to practice in an orderly, uncontested fashion.

6.3.3 The Gamma Institution: the burden of bureaucracy

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Directors of the Gamma Institution struggled to connect with New Labour's social value agenda in the same way that other institutions did. Equally, in my interviews, the Directors of the Gamma Institution reported difficulties in gathering and presenting evidence of their success in the terms required by the new evaluative measures brought in under New Labour. According to Bruce, one of the Directors of the Gamma Institution:

"...gradually we were basically committing ourselves to more and more bureaucratic reporting and that's true. It got harder and harder and harder to justify what we were receiving" (interview 2016).

Bruce went on to explain that the institution struggled with the additional work and resources required to evidence social value in the terms required of them:

"The thing is if you've got that infrastructure and you've got the resource in place, then also you can deliver the analysis that they [ACE] want. It's like you've got the people there who speak the language and can basically manipulate the mechanism to deliver what they want. It doesn't mean that the art is any better but they can basically ... put it out there in the way that it ... fits the analysis that is needed, so you can then make sure that you hit all the right targets in terms of educational activity, you can employ somebody who deals with that specifically and goes out and does that work. You can do the PR and marketing and press that button. You can do all the things in that professional way that they want you to" (interview 2016).

As Bruce points out, due to the small size of the institution, it was not possible to hire more staff to take on the additional responsibility of producing and collating evidence for funding reports. While interviewees from the Alpha Institution admitted to becoming more 'sophisticated' (Daphne, interview 2015) in how they evidenced

impact, this type of institutional learning took time and resources, which the Gamma Institution did not have. While the Director of the Beta Institution explained her process of defiantly ignoring the 'tick-box' culture of New Labour in pursuit of the institution's own ambitions, the small size and scale of the Gamma Institution meant that it was very difficult for the institution to engage in any real depth with the new evaluative measures, and the collection of evidence.

The inability to provide evidence, or construct a narrative, of the full impact of the institution was a point of frustration for the Directors. Grace, the co-Director of the Gamma Institution, expressed her feelings of failure around the Gamma Institution's level of engagement with the evidence-based funding paradigm:

"... of course the pressure was on to demonstrate massively and we never were able to demonstrate enough even though that philosophy [of social value] was always in place and things did happen, but I suspect we never quite did enough on that front" (interview 2016).

With such a small infrastructure, and a commitment to supporting the development of new, experimental work, the institution struggled with the additional time and resources it took to evidence the work they did in the community, in the way that was required by the new reporting mechanisms. The institution was simply too small to be delivering on so many fronts.

As a consequence, Bruce described how he always felt under pressure to 'do enough' to secure funding, which was never really enough anyway to provide for the needs of the institution and its development:

"Because we were doing so much work, so the perception was that we were probably much better supported by the Arts Council [than we were], but the [support was such] little amounts ... so it's almost [that] the drip feed kept us wanting

more, but we were denied proper support in terms of any development money that would really secure our future..." (interview 2016).

As explained in chapters 4 and 5, the Gamma Institution engages with very experimental work, with the aim of supporting the research and development of the artist. This consideration was a significant part of the institution's conception of social value, even though it did not entirely revolve around audiences and participation, as the policy rhetoric and agenda did. The sort of work that was shown at the Gamma Institution was often difficult to engage with and it was not always intended to attract large audiences. However, the institution has an impressive history of supporting emerging artists who continue on to established careers, where the work is eventually received by large audiences. This initial investment, therefore, has a 'deferred value,' (see Thelwall 2011) which is difficult to capture over a short period of time, and without the extensive resourcing required to conduct a longitudinal study.

Like the Beta Institution, the Gamma Institution responded to the need to engage with an evidence-based evaluation framework in a number of ways. The Directors acknowledged that the Gamma Institution's approach did not entirely gel with the policy rhetoric and reporting structures of ACE. However, they tried to carry on in accordance with the core values of the institution, whilst engaging as much as possible with the reporting requirements. As described above, the Directors themselves took on more and more of the administrative burden of reporting. They also attempted some organised resistance. The Gamma Institution joined a consortium of small galleries that banded together to generate research on the value of small arts organisations.

However, presumably as a consequence of the institution's overall inability to define its contribution in the terms required by ACE, the institution received less and less money from ACE as a Regularly

Funded Organisation (RFO), until it was finally removed from the portfolio after the New Labour administration. However, like the Beta Institution, the Gamma Institution found ways to minimise its exposure to the policy agenda by seeking out alternative sources of funding and revenue. Since leaving the RFO portfolio, the institution has developed revenue from its café, as well as individual funders and donors, and some venture capital. It continues to receive project-based grants from ACE. One reading of these developments is that the new evaluative structures encouraged the institution to think creatively about new funding sources and business models.

6.3.4 Variance and differentiation by size and scale of the institution

Considered together, the three case study institutions illustrate the theme of variance in institutional modes of engagement with NPM structures. The findings show the variety of ways that institutions responded to the new evaluative framework, which included embracing the development of a culture of accountability, resisting and rejecting the values implicitly propagated by the 'tick-box' imperative and acknowledging the institution's lack of capacity to engage with evidence-based criteria. All of these responses, or modes of engagement and disengagement, complicate the assumption of simplicity that pervades the normative conception of the period. The micro-level approach of this thesis reveals that the response to the introduction of NPM techniques was not one-dimensional, and it was neither uniformly rejected nor begrudgingly accepted. Instead, the three case study institutions show that the manner in which an institution engaged with the new demands was a highly situated response driven by different factors, including the skill, professional identity and value sets of the cultural actors implementing policy alongside other institutional priorities and managing the process of engaging with funders and funding requirements.

A subsidiary theme to emerge from understanding the degree of variance in the ways that institutions responded to the introduction of NPM techniques into the cultural sector is that the size and scale of the institution was a key determining factor in the institution's capacity to engage with the new demands. The Alpha Institution, the largest of the three case studies, was most willing and able to engage with the evaluative process because it had a large infrastructure and could afford to dedicate specific roles, or even teams, to the task of framing the institution's successes in the ways required of them by funders. As illustrated by the findings, although most employees of the Alpha Institution questioned the suitability of numerical metrics (i.e., audience numbers) as proxy measurements of social value, and appeared to draw heavily on informal processes of engagement, alongside the quantitative framework, they welcomed the reassurance that 'hard-evidence' offered funders and embraced the fallacy that culture could be measured objectively because it strengthened their hand in funding discussions with the Treasury. On the other hand, the two smaller institutions were more explicit about the contention between New Labour's social value agenda and the institution's ideas about social value, and the difficulty of squaring the two within an evidence-based evaluative framework. The Gamma Institution in particular cited its smaller infrastructure, and lack of time and resources for restricting its ability to engage with the new reporting demands.

Although overall budgets for the three institutions increased during the New Labour period, so too did their ambitions. My quantitative analysis of average administrative expenditure as a per cent of total expenditure revealed that the Gamma Institution spent by far the least proportion of its overall budget on administrative functions – just an average of 15% over New Labour's term, in comparison to the Alpha Institution's 36% and the Beta Institutions 64%. However, it is difficult to compare the Beta Institution's proportional contributions, because the institution often worked in partnership with other institutions who

would contribute to the project costs, thereby raising the overall percentage of funding given to administrative functions in the Beta institution's budgets. In fact, the Beta Institution too was probably 'punching above its weight' in terms of output versus infrastructure. This situation was confirmed by my interviewees with former employees, including Bella, who laughed:

"I didn't have a department, I had me! I had this fantastic title which helped on the phone but I didn't have... it was very... We sat in a room and had various desks and shouted across and tried to put together a plan for the season" (interview 2016).

Bella's comments illustrate the reality of the skeletal staffing structure that the Beta Institution ran on, and also how the institution sometimes created a perception of being bigger or more professionalised than it actually was.

The pressure to achieve on a grand scale, despite minimal levels of resourcing was echoed by Bruce, one of the Directors of the Gamma Institution:

"... the amount of stuff that came from the money that we were given was unbelievable. So much so that actually we had one dressing down which was 'You have to reduce your output!'" (interview 2016).

For both of these institutions, and the Gamma Institution in particular, it was difficult to gather evidence and spin the narrative that New Labour wanted to hear without the time, resources and capacity to do so. The three case studies illustrate that institutions engaged with NPM techniques in a variety of ways. Their modes of engagement were determined by a range of ideological factors, driven by the discourse of the institution and the disciplinary community, as well as the professional skillsets of cultural actors making decisions within the institution. At the same time, findings from the qualitative data analysis and the analysis of interview transcriptions show that the size and

scale of the institution was a key factor in determining the institution's capacity to engage with the NPM discourse. The illustration of variance and differentiation in modes of engagement suggests that analyses of the period should take account of institutional and sectoral particularities, as well as the practices of policy implementation and engagement executed by skilled cultural actors.

6.4 More than bureaucracy – institutional understanding of core priorities

This section continues to tackle the question of how institutions managed the tensions and ambiguities around social value within an evidence-based evaluative framework. As detailed in chapter 4, I began my empirical investigation with a micro-level investigation of resource allocation within the three case study institutions. I intended to ascertain at the local level whether resources were diverted from departments supposedly tasked with achieving cultural excellence (i.e. programming or 'projects' in budgeting terms) and redirected to departments whose core function it was to secure new audiences and income streams (i.e., marketing, publicity and developments or 'administration,' in budgeting terms). As explained in chapter 4, I saw resource allocation as a representation of institutional values and priorities and therefore, a shift in resourcing to 'administration' functions would indicate that the evaluative methods of the administration had come to construct the reality of the institution and its activities. As explained in chapters 2 and 3, the investigation began as a way of elaborating, evidencing, or perhaps challenging the totality of O'Brien's theory of the 'social life of methods,' or the idea that "methods help to constitute social reality" (O'Brien 2014: 12), in his analysis of cultural policy under New Labour. In relation to culture, O'Brien says "the tools and techniques of government, so often seen as a counterpoint, an opponent or a contradiction to culture, are in fact, deeply embedded in the creation of what culture is" (O'Brien 2014: 34). In my quantitative analysis, I sought to know more about how

institutions actually engaged with the targets in daily practice and decision-making – did the methods of evaluation shape the resourcing of activities in the institution? Was there evidence of the ‘gaming of targets’ as O’Brien suggests? (2014: 116).

Through my quantitative data analysis (explained in more detail in chapter 4), I found that generally, the proportional ratio of expenditure on ‘project’ costs and ‘administration’ costs moved up and down unremarkably across the three institutions over the period of the New Labour administration. In isolation, this finding did not reveal a great deal about how institutions engaged with the NPM framework, but it did suggest that institutional priorities, as represented by spending allocations, had not shifted significantly during the New Labour period. This quantitative finding served to substantiate the qualitative findings detailed in section 3, which show that institutions did not alter their institutional priorities and simply fall in line with the values implicated in the new evaluative discourse. Instead, skilled cultural actors played a role in interpreting, translating and managing the evaluative discourse amongst other priorities. Taken together, the qualitative and quantitative findings move beyond the analyses of the dominant critical positions by showing modes of engagement within the institution at a local level and revealing the variety and nuance of institutional experience.

As explained in chapter 4, one of the outcomes of the quantitative data analysis was the realisation that the ‘numbers’ might not tell the whole story – a realisation that reverberates with the critical debates of the thesis. While the initial quantitative data analysis did not reveal a great deal about *how* institutions engaged with the new evaluative structure of NPM, it did lead me to dig deeper into the data, and to look not only at the *content* of the data, but also its *form*. In doing so, I found that in the three case study institutions examined, the budgeting practices of each institution revealed more about institutional values than the figures themselves. I found that in the Alpha Institution, activities that

had once been deemed as 'administrative' expenditure were increasingly included within 'project' expenditure. For example, from 2003 onwards, press and publicity expenses at the institution were included as 'project' expenditure, whereas prior to 2003, they sat within the 'administration' category. The shift suggests that although levels of resourcing did not change, the way in which the institution reported activities, and the sorts of activities that the institution understood as constituting its core mission, did change.

Similarly, from 2009-2010, the Beta Institution's budget sheets no longer contained a 'project' expenditure line, which was instead replaced with 'charitable expenditure,' a more inclusive term which now included all expenditure except 'fundraising,' 'governance' and 'other resources expended.' As detailed in chapter 4, in my analysis, I controlled comparisons between administrative and project expenditure by subtracting items (such as press and publicity) that changed classification over time – and still the data did not reveal a significant shift in resource allocation.

However, the institutions' increasingly broad understandings of which activities constituted their core, charitable missions suggest that the new evaluative climate did encourage some institutional rethinking. In particular, the movement of activities once considered 'administrative' into the 'charitable' category suggests an opening up of the institution's functions, and a diminishing of strict divides between aesthetic and social objectives. It is difficult to determine from the quantitative analysis alone whether this was representative of a value shift within the institution, but it does indicate a deeper level of engagement with the policy context than is portrayed in the extant literature, which tends to assume that institutions dismissed the new auditing methods as simply an additional, nuisance layer of bureaucracy. Considered together, the findings show that institutional modes of engagement with the NPM evaluative structures were complex and highly situated. However, whether the institution embraced, rejected or ignored the

auditing methods, their introduction into the cultural sector did impact organisational thinking, particularly around the institution's relationship with its audiences and its perception of how different activities related to its core function.

This finding seems to be backed up by the number of arts institutions that underwent capital development projects during the New Labour period (see section 3.2.3). These developments reaffirm the 'opening up' of institutions in the sector, and the rethinking of the institution's relationship to its audiences that is represented by the change in budgeting practices.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has responded to the research question about processes of cultural governance by looking at policy implementation in the contemporary visual arts institution and exploring on a micro-level the processes, behaviours and interactions of skilled cultural actors engaged in decision-making and reporting. The chapter has addressed the research question about how institutions managed the tensions around the social value of art within an evidence-based evaluative framework by analysing interviews with skilled cultural actors tasked with implementing policy in the institution. It has also approached the research question about the extent to which methods shaped activities in the institution by conducting a quantitative data analysis of resource allocation, and from this, surfaced new insights about how the institution understood and categorised social functions of the institution in relation to its core mission, as represented by institutional budgeting practices and nomenclature.

In relation to the research question about processes of cultural governance, the chapter illustrates two key themes: informality and dialogue in evaluation. The experiences of skilled cultural actors engaged in evaluation processes that surfaced through my analysis of

interview transcriptions show that during the New Labour administration, informal measures, such as the institution's relationship with its funder and the reputation of the institution with peers, prevailed as part of the evaluation process. By moving beyond the process-driven macro-level accounts of the extant literature, the findings show the complexity of cultural governance and challenge the assumption in the normative conceptualisation that the governing principles characteristic of NPM could operate in a total, rational and structurally simple way in the cultural sector. The illumination of informality in evaluation demonstrates that in practice, numerical evaluation methods often provided a reassurance to funders and policy makers that arts institutions were being put through their paces, which encouraged the continuance of other, more discursive measures of evaluation.

In addition, the informal role of skilled cultural actors in processes of evaluation also challenges the assumption of the linear flow of discourse that is presented in Belfiore's arguments about policy implementation (2012). While other theorists, such as O'Brien, do acknowledge and explore the tensions between "citizens' expertise" and "bureaucracy" (O'Brien 2014: 140) at a theoretical level, they do not *show* how the skilled cultural worker exercised agency either in the evaluation of culture itself, or in the formulation of the methods of evaluating of culture. The theme of dialogic evaluation that emerged in my analysis of interview transcripts recasts the skilled cultural actor in an agentic role in the process of cultural governance and evaluation. This role comes to light because of the thesis' approach of engaging directly with cultural workers and investigating policy implementation on a granular level.

The agentic role of the skilled cultural actor, and the overall complexity of policy implementation is further substantiated by the theme of variance in terms of institutional modes of engagements both with the evaluative culture of the NPM and its instruments of measurement. As

shown in my quantitative and qualitative analysis, institutions did not fall into line with targets; they responded in a variety of ways determined by the values of the institution, the professional judgments of skilled cultural actors and the size and scale of the institution. Whilst the dominant critical positions on cultural policy under New Labour all acknowledge resistance from the cultural sector, they do not illustrate this resistance, nor contextualise it in relation to the discourses of institutional histories or disciplinary communities. In this chapter, I have moved beyond a picture of unrest to an investigation of how tensions surfaced within specific institutions and how they were managed and resolved by specific actors. In this chapter, I reveal the 'how' of practice and the granular detail of experience in a manner that has not been done before. In doing so, the insights gathered in this chapter add nuance, variety and complexity to the normative conceptualisation of policy implementation.

While the insights presented in this chapter show that in practice, the implementation of policy was complex and 'messy,' they also show that the introduction of NPM evaluative measures into the cultural sector was more than an additional layer of bureaucracy. Whatever the institutional response, the evaluative discourse caused the institutions and their skilled cultural actors to rethink the practices of the institution and its place in the policy landscape. Considered together, the themes that emerge from my analyses of interview transcriptions and budgeting practices show that skilled cultural actors played an important, agentic role in cultural governance, and that the institutional experience of cultural governance under New Labour was complex, varied and highly situated. In the next chapter, I bring together the findings from this chapter and the last (chapter 5) and I explore the significance of these findings in relation to the wider literature, the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy during New Labour and the specific application of governmentality as an analytic framework for understanding the practice and experience of

contemporary visual arts institutions under New Labour's social value agenda.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings – the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions under New Labour

“Being political, however, involves more than the simple presence of matters of contention – it also involves the mechanisms by which these may be resolved, who is rightfully involved in producing such resolutions, and the basis upon which they can then be justified to local, national and international communities.”

(Gray 2010b: 1)

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters presented the empirical findings of this thesis. Chapter 5 looked in detail at how the meaning of social value was constructed within the case study institutions. Chapter 6 explored the diffusion of social value as a governing principle into everyday practice, within an evidence-based evaluative framework. The aim of this chapter now is to reflect upon the significance of the insights gathered in the last two chapters in relation to existing literature, and in particular, to consider how these insights confirm, or construct a challenge to, normative conceptualisations of the experience of cultural policy under New Labour at an institutional and individual level.

The chapter is organised around the four research sub-questions presented in the introduction to the thesis: How was the meaning of social value as a governing principle constructed at the interface of policy and practice? What were the processes of governance in contemporary visual arts institutions? How did specific institutions manage the tensions around social value within an evidence-based

evaluative framework? And, did the methods shape activities and decision-making in the institution? The chapter will explore how the findings respond to each research question and to the overall research objective, which is to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda.

Ultimately, the chapter aims to draw out a number of conclusions to address the main research question of the thesis: does the normative conceptualisation of cultural governance under New Labour's social value agenda provide an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010? Each section below demonstrates how the findings build to respond to a research sub-question and explains how that response is significant to the objective of this study and to the wider literature.

7.2 The meaning of social value

To briefly recap, and to stress the line of argument that I have developed: Chapters 2 and 3 establish the complexities surrounding social value as a governing principle. Chapter 2 shows that the conceptualisation of social value is different in different contexts, and the theorisation of social value from the public policy perspective is markedly different from the theorisation of social value from the contemporary art perspective. According to Ruth Levitas (2005), New Labour's social inclusion policy agenda was derived from an understanding of participation as co-option into an existing social order. This conception contrasts squarely with the meaning of participation developed in the art world, where participation, and by extension, social value, is aligned with activism, or "self-realisation and collective action" (Bishop 2012: 13). In juxtaposing theorisations of social value from public policy studies with conceptualisations of social value from contemporary art, chapter 2 illustrates that in the context of

contemporary art galleries (rather than more generally, as Levitas addresses), social value was the subject of a lively critical debate which largely contradicted interpretations of social value as a governing principle of New Labour and NPM.

I establish these different values in chapter 2, while chapter 3 traces developments in art history and post-war cultural policy in the UK. Both chapters point to a gap in the literature exploring how different value systems were resolved at the interface of practice and policy. Whilst the chapters make it clear that in the art world, there were multiple discourses potentially constructing the meaning of social value, my analysis shows that how cultural actors interpreted these discourses and understood social value as a governing principle remained unclear. Therefore, the first research question that this project deals with is: How was the meaning of social value constructed at the interface of policy and practice?

7.2.1 Recognising multiple discourses

The findings demonstrate that the ways in which social value was interpreted as a governing principle were varied, and the construction of meaning was influenced by a number of different inputs, including the discursive community of contemporary art. It is worth underlining that despite some superficial similarities, the approach taken here is quite distinct from the literature that sits within the 'value of culture' debates, because this project is primarily concerned with the meaning of social value as a construct in practice. The majority of the 'value of culture' texts either advocate for the value of culture from within the sector (see, for example, Tusa 2007; Henley 2016) or critically engage with conceptualisations of value (cultural value, public value, intrinsic value, etc.) on a theoretical level, rather than at the level of operationalisation (see, for example, Throsby 2001; Belfiore 2002; 2012; Holden 2004; 2006; Belfiore and Bennett 2007; O'Brien 2014). Often, the aim of engaging on a theoretical level is to re-theorise

cultural value. O'Brien, for example, proclaims near the end of his book, "a new theory of the value of arts and culture must start here, with public policy as it is conducted in modernity..." (2014: 130). However, it was not my intention to offer a new theory of the value of culture, but rather to demonstrate how social value was understood, interpreted and developed in practice, by skilled cultural actors within the specific context of a contemporary visual arts institution. I argue that by bringing in the contemporary art discourse the thesis does not replace one theorisation of social value with another. Instead, it illustrates the complexity of inputs influencing the construction of the meaning of social value, and shows how these 'influences' interacted, what new tensions they created, and ultimately, explored in the next section, how these tensions were resolved.

To begin with, by illustrating the importance of the contemporary art discourse in constructing the meaning of social value, my findings show that social value was not a one-dimensional policy discourse, as it is assumed to be in the dominant critical positions, which do not take a specific sectoral approach. The unique contribution of this thesis is to offer a contemporary art perspective to the analysis of the policy context. I show how this approach brings to light the existence of a lively, critical debate about the meaning of social value which is absent from the normative conceptualisation of the period, which rarely explores what social value meant in arts practice. My findings are a challenge to Belfiore's (2012: 104) conceptualisation of a 'top-down' version of instrumentalism, in which priorities flow from policy to practice, without sectoral input or agency. The surfacing of the contemporary art discourses and influences in this thesis also challenges Gray's notion of 'policy attachment,' in which, he argues, the arts 'attached' themselves to better known and better resourced agendas, including social policies (Gray 2002; 2015; Belfiore 2012). On the contrary, the existence of a lively social value discourse within contemporary art shows an interaction and interplay between practice and policy that is distinct from Gray's conceptualisation of a

subservient 'attachment' (2002; 2015). The significance of my findings is that they contextualise New Labour's cultural policy alongside debates in contemporary art, and recast social value as an interdisciplinary, co-constructed discourse. In doing so, we begin to see the role of the skilled cultural actor, in negotiating and translating discourses, emerge.

In acknowledging the contemporary art discourse alongside the policy rhetoric, my thesis repositions the cultural actor as a 'skilled cultural actor' who carries with them a body of sector specific knowledge. While it is well recognised in cultural policy that there is a tension "between citizens' expertise, in this case focused on aesthetics, markets and bureaucracy" (O'Brien, 2014, p.140), the importance of the 'expertise' of skilled cultural actors in the construction of the meaning of social value is largely absent from O'Brien's conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour (2014), and the normative reading of the period, which does not substantiate this expertise. Where the concept of expertise is developed in Hewison's work (2014), the expert is pitted in simple and direct opposition to the policy regime. In this thesis, I show that contemporary arts discourses interacted with policy rhetoric and I develop a more nuanced reading of the interplay between policy and practice.

My illustration of how the meaning of social value was informed by the discursive community of contemporary art demonstrates the extent to which social value was defined at the interface of practice and policy, by the institution and its skilled cultural actors. In hearing the voices of these skilled cultural actors and dissecting the discourses that informed their knowledge base, the analysis here reveals new tensions and contestations that are not visible in the normative reading of the period. Importantly, my findings show that there was apparent disagreement between the policy rhetoric and the contemporary art discourse about who were the intended 'beneficiaries' of the social value agenda. Whilst the policy rhetoric foregrounds an external

audience, my findings show that for all three case studies, having a positive impact on the artists involved in the production of the work was understood as part of the social contribution of the work. This was the case for the Gamma Institution, as it supported emergent artists, for the Beta Institution, as it sought to give a platform to underrepresented artists, and for the Alpha Institution, as it encouraged experimental and socially engaged practices. Fundamentally, these misalignments about who is included in social inclusion destabilise the foundations of the normative conceptualisation of New Labour's social value agenda, which positions social value as inextricably linked to audiences.

This section has shown that my illumination of how the meaning of social value was informed by contemporary art discourses is important to the interpretation and conceptualisation of the institutional experience of cultural policy under New Labour. The significance of recognising that there were multiple discourses defining social value at the interface of practice and policy is that we see that there was a lively, critical debate about the meaning of social value, and this led to further contestations about what it meant to implement a social value agenda, and who is 'included' in social inclusion. The conclusion I draw is that the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour would benefit from contextualising social value within the contemporary art discourse, as well as the policy landscape, and acknowledging the multiple inputs that skilled cultural actors, as interpreters of policy, had to contend with.

7.2.2 Social value – a situated concept

This section is a further response to the question, how was the meaning of social value constructed at the interface of policy and practice? Chapters 2 and 3, and the findings detailed above, make the case for considering how contemporary art discourses informed, and interacted with, cultural policy discourses in the construction of the

meaning of social value as a governing principle. However, the findings in chapter 5 demonstrate that there was even greater complexity in the process of meaning making, as institutional histories, values and professional identities played a further role in the interpretation, translation and appropriation of the concept of social value. This finding is significant because it shows that meaning was situated in the context of the institution. It also demonstrates the extent to which the normative conceptualisation of the experience of cultural policy under New Labour tends to flatten differences across sectors, institutions and even departments.

As discussed throughout the thesis, governmentality has grown to become the normative approach to the conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour from a governance perspective. However, current applications of governmentality (see O'Brien 2014, in particular) rely heavily on a notion of power that is presumed to promulgate neatly through the NPM governance structures. My findings in chapter 6 open up another parallel line of interpretation, suggesting that New Labour's social value agenda was influenced by discourses of contemporary art and filtered through the history and values of the institution. Accordingly, I argue that social value was a contested and situated concept, and the institutional experience of New Labour's social value agenda was varied (and not, as is often implied, uniform). The particularities of these 'deviations' are equally important. As described above, for the Alpha Institution, social value was closely aligned to the institution's commitment to the local community as well as its interest in supporting experimental arts practices, including the socially engaged practices that were developing at the time. The Beta Institution, on the other hand, saw its remit, in terms of social value, as giving a platform to diverse artists, and provoking discussion about cultural diversity. And, the Gamma Institution understood its social purpose as supporting artists in the development of experimental work. The institution's agency in appropriating different 'versions' of social value challenges Belfiore's

conceptualisation of 'top-down' instrumentalism (2012) and Gray's theory of 'policy attachment' (2002; 2015) by demonstrating both the co-construction and the variance of governing principles.

This variance, nuanced by institutional history and values, confronts more general accounts, including O'Brien's (2014) examination of the cultural sector at large and Hesmondalgh et al.'s (2015) over-arching analysis of the extent to which New Labour's approach was 'successful' in the terms they define (as an illustration of democratic cultural policy). Instead, my findings portray a far more nuanced landscape, and expose differences between institutions that are flattened by the assumed simplicity of the governmentality approach. In chapter 2, I explain Gray's argument (2010) that the choice of analytic framework determines how we conceive of actors in the museum. In Foucault's governmentality framework, actors are constrained within structures and administrative apparatus or within "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics" that allow the exercise of power (Foucault 2002: 219). Conversely, in Bevir and Rhode's interpretation of governance, the institution is devalued, whilst the analysis of change is positioned as "rooted in the beliefs and preferences of individual actors" (Bevir and Rhodes 2004: 10). The nuanced interpretations of social value that emerge through my empirical work lean towards Bevir and Rhodes' application of governmentality, which is more useful in the conceptualisation of the governance of contemporary visual arts institutions. Additionally, the findings illustrate Gray's claim (explained in further detail in chapter 2) that the museum sector is 'fragmented' and that "the particular specificities of individual organisational forms and sectoral peculiarities are required to make sense of the patterns of behaviour that are being explored" (2010: 54).

This section has explained how the findings illustrate the conclusion that the meaning of social value as a governing principle was situated

in the specific context of the sector and the institution. This conclusion is important in relation to the wider literature because it illustrates how the key conceptualisations of the period, including O'Brien's (2014) structural application of governmentality, would benefit from taking more account of the particular agencies of cultural workers, as well as sectoral specificity and variance in cultural governance.

7.2.3 Institutional micro-politics

In addition to recognising the importance of the influence of contemporary art discourses and institutional histories and values on the construction of the meaning of social value, my findings show that skilled cultural actors, differentiated by professional expertise and roles, engaged with New Labour's social value agenda in different ways, and that this could cause internal fracturing between departments in the institution. The Alpha Institution had the most departmentalised infrastructure and was most prone to internal conflicts. My findings demonstrate particular fractioning and frictions between the Education and Exhibitions departments. These frictions can be understood as a microcosm and a reflection of tensions that built up around the transition, which I explain in chapter 3, from a cultural policy in the UK based upon aesthetics and notions of excellence towards a cultural policy based upon the social and economic value of culture. Inside the Alpha Institution, the social value agenda, alongside the development of discourses around socially engaged practices and new institutionalism, encouraged the growth and visibility of the Education department. At the same time, due to the departmentalised structure, the Exhibitions department felt at liberty to disconnect from the instrumental agenda, viewing it as the domain of the Education department. This dynamic reflects the different value sets that informed each department, as well as the professional identity that each role within the institution constructed. Weber saw the division of labour as essential to the formation of professional identity and devotion to a cause (Weber 2010). With

aesthetics (and the quality of the art) defining the value set of curators, and social value underpinning the work of education departments, individuals in the institution aligned their concept of meaningful work to the distinct agenda of their role, which caused internal conflicts around mission alignment in the institution.

This kind of internal fracturing has shaped the development of larger institutions in the UK. However, the micro-politics of the institutional experience is not addressed in the dominant critical positions' macro-level approaches to the conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour because these approaches are not sector-specific, do not drill down into the institution and do not explore how professional identities and discourses interacted with New Labour's priorities. Despite Foucault's broad alignment with post-structuralism, and the diffused notion of 'the art of government' (2002) encapsulated in the governmentality perspective, in taking a macro-level approach, the application of governmentality in the dominant positions (and most explicitly in O'Brien 2014) is more structural than diffused and situated. For O'Brien, "governance' is used to understand the importance of the blend of public, private and voluntary sector organisations administering cultural policy, along with the fragmentation of policymaking in modernity" (O'Brien 2014: 27). My thesis is an extension of O'Brien's fragmentation, but I argue and show with evidence, that the institution, the department and the individual self are also sites of governance and policy-making.

My findings demonstrate that the social value agenda caused further internal fracturing between departments in the institution. This finding is important in the broader context of the extant literature because it shows detail that is missed in the macro-level approaches of the dominant critical positions and makes the case that conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour need to pay more attention to the micro-politics of the institution. In the wider context, this conclusion builds the case for a less structural, and perhaps more Weberian

(2010) (in the sense of self-realisation) interpretation of governmentality.

7.2.4 Conclusions

This section has addressed the significance of three key findings that respond to the research question, how was the meaning of social value constructed at the interface of practice and policy? I show that the construction of the meaning of social value was informed by the discourses of contemporary art. However, my findings also demonstrate that the history and values of the institution were key to the process of meaning-making. An unexpected finding is that there was still further complexity in the construction of meaning, as different departments and skilled cultural actors with distinct professional identities appropriated, and co-constructed different 'versions' of social value, causing internal fracturing between departments in the institution. The findings are significant because from them, I conclude that there is a benefit to drawing in the contemporary art perspective, which illuminates the existence of lively critical debates about what social value meant, and who was included. My illustration of social value as an interdisciplinary and co-constructed concept disrupts the more linear interpretations of 'top-down' governance (see Belfiore 2012). I also conclude, in response to the research question, that the meaning of social value was situated in the context of the institution and was subject to further contestation by different departments and skilled cultural actors with varying professional identities. This detail, and the internal fracturing of the institution that occurred, is not evident in the dominant critical positions' macro-level analyses. Considered together, my conclusions call for a less structural application of governmentality as an analytical lens for interpreting the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of New Labour's cultural policy.

7.3 Governance processes

In this section, I explore the significance of the findings presented in chapter 6, which respond to the research question about processes of governance in contemporary visual arts institutions. The question is positioned to draw out granular detail about how social value as a governing principle was diffused into everyday practice during the political and administrative climate of New Labour. The question is guided by the speculation that despite focusing on the fragmentation of modernity, O'Brien's (2014) application of governmentality as an analytic lens still assumes a rationality and a totality to the NPM auditing techniques that needs to be investigated and challenged. Although O'Brien is most explicit about his application of governmentality, this rationality and totality typifies the normative conceptualisation of the period. The key finding to emerge from my empirical research is that despite the assumed rationality of the NPM, governance was 'messy.' Through informal and discursive processes, skilled cultural actors played a significant role in cultural governance as interpreters and translators of policy, as well as shaping the discourse of evaluation.

My findings are significant because they illustrate a gap in the literature addressing cultural policy under New Labour from the perspective of skilled cultural actors. My inclusion of these voices, and the processes of interpretation, translation and resistance they make visible, demonstrates that cultural governance under New Labour was not simple or rational – it was more than pragmatism; it was a complex process of negotiation and exchange in which the disciplinary knowledge of skilled cultural actors and their peer community was drawn upon to contribute to both the evaluation of cultural activities, and the formation of methods and tools of evaluation in the sector. In the next sub-section, I explain in further detail, how these insights contribute to the extant literature and specifically, to analyses of cultural governance processes in the sector.

7.3.1 Auditing processes and discursive evaluation methods

In the normative reading of cultural policy in the UK, the ‘instrumental turn’ marked the end of an era of cultural policy and administration dedicated to cultural excellence, and based upon aesthetic judgements, and the beginning of an era of cultural policy dominated by arguments about the instrumental value of culture, or the possibility of culture attaining results in non-cultural areas (Belfiore 2002; 2004; Hewison 1995; 2014; O’Brien 2014). At the same time, this transition was hinged to the rising prevalence of NPM auditing techniques, which intended to shift emphasis away from processes and towards a results-based output, which was capable of being quantified (Hood 1995; 1998). In the cultural sector, the use of the audit supposedly shielded government agents from getting involved in the sticky territory of cultural value, reifying the removal of aesthetic judgments, based upon notions of ‘excellence,’ from the evaluation process. However, the use of the audit has been widely critiqued for limiting the role of ‘discretion’ in decision-making and downgrading the status of expertise, resulting in the “loss of professional power” (O’Brien 2014: 12). The role of the ‘expert’ and the function of ‘expertise’ is an often-debated subject in governmentality studies (see Bourdieu 2010; O’Brien 2014; Rose and Miller 2010)

However, there is an alternative reading of the audit, which is less developed in the normative conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour, but which I develop and expand here, in relation to my findings. In Michael Power’s examination of the ‘audit explosion,’ he questions whether the audit:

“provides deluded visions of control and transparency which satisfy the self-image of managers, regulators and politicians but which are neither as effective nor as neutral as commonly imagined” (Power 1997: 143).

In Power's view, "auditing has the character of a certain kind of organisational script whose dramaturgical essence is the production of comfort", and the danger of the audit society is that "shallow rituals of verification" mask other forms of intelligence and hide real risk (Power 1997: 123). Contrary to the sense of anxiety about the loss of professional power in bureaucracy that runs through the normative positions, and Power's view of the totality of the audit, and its ability to silence other forms of intelligence, my findings show that despite the introduction of NPM auditing techniques, other forms of intelligence, including discussions with skilled cultural actors and informal peer assessments were an important part of the evaluation of cultural institutions under New Labour. However, while Power's reading of audit processes as "shallow rituals of verification" (1997: 123) might be overstated (the ideological impact of the audit is explained in greater detail below, in section 7.4.3), his articulation of the 'comfort' it provided to managers, regulators and politicians is reflected in my findings. This 'comfort' manifested particularly in relation to my largest case study institution, the Alpha Institution, where former employees tended to embrace the use of the audit as a means of developing and strengthening arguments about why the institution was deserving of state support.

However, where my findings differ from, and provide valuable nuance to, the wider literature is the extent to which they suggest that the audit silenced "other forms of organisational intelligence" (Power 1997: 123). Instead, my findings show that rather than silencing other forms of intelligence, the 'comfort' of the audit, which appeased policy makers and the Treasury, actually enabled discursive evaluation processes to flourish, without the scrutiny attached to formal reporting measures. Whilst the sector had long been plagued with questions of value and judgement processes, the introduction of the audit finally gave organisations an apparatus with which they could demonstrate 'hard' evidence in the same manner as other sectors. For those institutions with the resources needed to gather data and spin a

sophisticated narrative using the language and metrics of policy makers, the audit strengthened the position of the institution, which had previously had to rely upon woolly notions of aesthetic excellence and expert judgements to compete for their share of state support.

At the same time, my findings demonstrate that most skilled cultural actors in the sector recognised the imperfection of auditing metrics used as proxy measures of social and cultural value. In response, even those interviewees that embraced the development of a professional, accountable culture (see chapter 6) remarked that they engaged extensively in informal, discursive methods in the evaluation process. In this way, the ‘comfort’ of the audit encouraged, rather than silenced, other forms of intelligence. And it is important to note that skilled cultural actors generally managed the relationship with funders and were the primary providers of other intelligence through discussion with funders. This intelligence ran alongside the general reputation of the institution developed through the opinions of the professional peer community. In this sense, counter to O’Brien’s reading of the “loss of professional power” (O’Brien 2014: 12) and the oft critiqued relationship between management and expertise (see Bauman 2004; Bourdieu 2010), critically, my findings illustrate that (in contemporary art at least) the professional, or skilled cultural actor, continued to hold considerable power and agency in the evaluative decision-making process, even within the NPM administrative framework.

Moreover, in the normative reading of cultural policy under New Labour, the application of governmentality as an analytic lens tends to assume both a totality and a simplicity to the NPM framework which obscures the salience of other, informal and discursive governance processes. As a consequence of this assumption, the normative reading generally overstates the impact of auditing processes on the cultural sector. For O’Brien (2014), NPM methods constructed the reality of the institution, for Hewison (2014), they stifled creativity, and

for Hesmondhalgh et al. they were “both ineffective and damaging to arts and cultural practice in the UK” (2015: 101). I contend that these judgments are based, in part, upon the assumption, which I challenge through my findings, that the role of the skilled professional was diminished by the NPM auditing framework.

Whilst this thesis does not aim to assess the success or failure of New Labour’s cultural policy (instead it intends to shed light upon the experience of these policies in the contemporary visual arts sector), the insights gathered here offer some caveats to the structural interpretation of governmentality that is applied in the normative reading of cultural policy under New Labour. My findings demonstrate that in bringing more agency to governmentality as an analytic lens, it emerges that skilled cultural actors had an important role to play in decision-making and that the introduction of NPM techniques into the cultural sector did not necessarily, or entirely, usurp power from these actors. I suggest that an alternative reading to dominant critical positions, substantiated by the empirical evidence of this thesis, is that the ‘comfort’ of the audit may have encouraged, rather than diminished, other, informal discursive evaluation processes.

The conclusion that I draw here is that we need to recalibrate the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour with more agency and less structuralism. In Foucault’s approach to governance, governmentality is an analytic framework that makes visible both the *how* and the *who* of power (Foucault 2002). O’Brien’s (2014) approach is sympathetic to this position, citing Miller and Rose’s (2008) work on governmentality and networks to draw attention to “how networks of governance, with their range of differing institutional actors, contain the technologies and practices that allow policy to take place” (O’Brien 2014: p.31). At the same time, however, O’Brien is critical of what he calls “the insistence on the preponderance of networks” (2014: 27) in the work of Rhodes, who emphasises both the autonomy of networks (from the state) and their capacity to self-

organise (Rhodes 1996). Although O'Brien recognises the importance of networks in governance, by not paying attention to the discourses of contemporary art, or any specific disciplinary community, and by not engaging directly with skilled cultural actors in the institution in the research design, O'Brien's conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour lacks evidence to substantiate or demonstrate the role of networks in cultural governance.

However, my contribution is unique because my analysis of the empirical evidence, presented in chapter 6, shows that cultural actors were specialists with professional power, and the notion of the 'network,' encompassing what I call the 'peer community,' is a useful construct for understanding the governing powers that skilled cultural actors amalgamated from a range of discourses and affirmations from peers, in order to appropriate, interpret and translate policy, and shape decision-making in the institution. My findings do not suggest that these 'networks' were as autonomous or as self-governing as Rhodes (1996) argues, but rather that governance was a hybrid of policy directives, evaluative measures and informal judgments. My findings illustrate that skilled cultural actors were a part of a discursive community influenced by multiple inputs, and they made judgements about how to interpret policy, how to shape narratives and how to influence the instruments of evaluation. Critically, my findings demonstrate the extent to which O'Brien's (2014) analysis focuses too much on the mechanics of instruction, and not enough on the agency of skilled cultural actors and informal evaluative measures in the governance process.

This section has explored the significance, in relation to the extant literature, of surfacing informality and dialogue in the evaluation process. The next section shows how the thesis' focus on the granular detail of institutional modes of engagement with the NPM context reveals the situatedness of practice and the variety of institutional

experiences of cultural governance during the New Labour administration.

7.4 Managing tensions

This section responds to the research question about how institutions managed the tensions around social value within an evidence-based evaluation framework. In the previous section, I demonstrated the significance in relation to wider literature of the finding that social value was a contested and situated term that caused internal fracturing of the institution, and that skilled cultural actors and informal, discursive evaluation methods played a significant role in the governance of contemporary visual arts organisations. The previous section argued that the findings demonstrate the need to nuance the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, which tends toward a structural interpretation of governmentality. The previous section also suggested that the significance of including and understanding the voices of skilled cultural actors as powerful professionals is that we gain a better understanding of cultural governance as a hybrid of structure, agency and networks.

Whilst the section above focused on the benefits of acknowledging and exploring through the analytic framework the agentic role of skilled cultural actors and networks, this section explores the pervading influence of NPM techniques, and how these skilled cultural actors managed tensions arising from the contestation around social value, within an evidence-based framework, and as one of numerous discourses informing governance. Here, I detail the significance of the theme of variance in institutional modes of engagement with the policy context (detailed in chapter 6), which does not surface in the macro-level accounts of the dominant critical positions. I also show in chapter 6 that the introduction of NPM evaluation methods into the cultural sector was not only an additional nuisance layer of bureaucracy. I demonstrate in my analysis that the new evaluative culture did have

some real, ideological impact on the institution. Here, I discuss how this finding challenges the assumption in the normative conceptualisation of cultural governance under New Labour that institutions widely dismissed the additional measurement structures as meaningless. The following sections explore the significance of each finding in the context of the wider literature, and the research objective.

7.4.1 Modes of engagement and disengagement

To briefly recap, in section 7.2.2, I demonstrate that the meaning of social value was situated within the context of the institution and was informed by a plurality of discourses and individual values. In this section, I elaborate the theme of variance, but this time in relation to institutional modes of engagement with the NPM evaluative framework, which varied widely amongst institutions. I reveal modes of disengagement that are not captured in the dominant critical positions, showing how some institutions developed new business models to reduce their reliance on ACE funding and subjection to method-based accountability. I also explore the significance of the subsidiary finding that the size and scale of the institution was a determining factor in the institution's ability and willingness to engage with the new evidence-based evaluative measures brought in under the New Labour administration.

The significance of my findings in relation to the wider literature is that they illustrate, through the illumination of micro-level behaviours within the sector, the need for more nuance in the governmentality reading of the period. In chapter 2, I draw upon Becker (2008) to illustrate that the contemporary visual arts sector operates in a unique way and it is difficult to migrate analyses of the creative industries onto the sector. My findings, which show the specific practices and behaviours of contemporary visual arts institutions, affirm the need to nuance interpretation across cultural sectors. However, my analysis also reveals variance and contestation *within* the sector that does not

surface in the normative conceptualisation of the period. As a result, I argue, the dominant critical positions do not fully account for variance across cultural sectors or between institutions.

As illustrated in my findings, the size and scale of the institution appeared to be the key determining factor of how and to what extent the institution could engage with NPM modes of evaluation. The point to make here, in relation to the wider literature, is that because the museum sector is highly fragmented (Gray 2010b), we can't really understand the institutional experience of cultural policy under New Labour without contextualising that experience with information about the institution, and in particular, the size and scale of the institution. The tendency in the dominant critical accounts is to speak generally about institutional experience, or to privilege the analysis of larger cultural and creative organisations that have capacities vastly greater than contemporary visual arts organisations. For example, O'Brien's concluding thoughts on his 'social life of methods' theory is illustrated through an analysis of recent developments at the BBC (O'Brien 2014: 131-140), which sheds very little light on how a small contemporary visual arts organisation might experience similar conditions. Much as we need to see the variance in how the meaning of social value was constructed as a governing principle for arts institutions, we also need to see variance in how institutions, particularly of different sizes, engaged with the administrative and managerial modes of the NPM. Only with attention to this variance is it possible to come to meaningful conclusions about the experience of the policy regime.

Equally, and related to the need to see more variance in the institutions' modes of engagement, is the particular importance of illustrating how institutions not only accepted, but also negotiated, ignored and resisted the NPM evaluation methods. I have shown how the findings demonstrate the agentic role of skilled cultural actors in decision-making and policy implementation, and how the governmentality reading in the dominant critical positions (see O'Brien

2014, in particular) would benefit from accounting for that role in greater detail. A key assumption of the governmentality reading that is challenged by my empirical findings is that institutions mostly fell into line with New Labour's policy targets.

My findings show that, in fact, there was a wide range of modes of engagement with the policy context, and some institutions resisted and disengaged from the funding and governance structure. The process of 'opting out' challenges the assumed totality of the policy framework. The Gamma Institution altered its business model to become less reliant on charitable income by developing income generating enterprises, which eventually enabled the institution to exist without regular funding from ACE and therefore, with less susceptibility to the evaluative framework. In this sense, the policy regime and the methods it encompassed, were impactful, because they influenced the future path of the institution. However, the process of 'opting out' or perhaps even being 'forced out' by lack of administrative capacity contrasts with O'Brien's theory that methods construct reality (O'Brien 2014). In this case, the imposition of measurement engendered another way of existing, but one that was at one remove from the instruments of evaluation.

O'Brien's (2014) view is shaped by debates about the relationship between aesthetics and management, or aesthetics and bureaucracy. He draws upon Bourdieu (2010) and Bauman (2004) to substantiate the debate. In Bauman's view:

"Culture cannot live in peace with management, particularly with an obtrusive and insidious management, and most particularly with a management aimed at twisting culture's exploring/experimenting urge so that it fits into the frame of rationality that manages have drawn" (Bauman 2004: 65).

At the centre of O'Brien's account is the desire to define the complexity of the relationship between "aesthetics, markets and bureaucracy"

(O'Brien 2014: 140). He says, "Thinking through a defence of the bureaucratic, alongside the limits of the market, whilst recognising the role of aesthetic judgement, is a complex task" (O'Brien 2014: 140). While the argument I develop in the thesis supports O'Brien's general assessment of complexity, my findings illustrate this complexity in greater detail, and in more specific, sectoral terms. However, critically, my argument also departs from Bourdieu, Bauman and O'Brien both in its approach and its conclusions. Whilst Bourdieu, Bauman and O'Brien all define the terms of the tensions around cultural policy, they do not show how these tensions are resolved. It is not difficult to prove that culture *can* "live in peace with management" (Bauman 2004: 65), because if it could not, then by now, we would have witnessed the implosion of the cultural sector in the UK. To some extent, Bauman does recognise this, acknowledging that cultural creators eventually "seek a *modus co-vivendi* with administration or sink into irrelevance" (2004: 65). However, the terms of this negotiated co-existence, the agency of skilled cultural workers and intermediaries in resolving them, and perhaps most importantly, the nuance and variety of modes across the sector and sectors are not addressed in Bauman's account. Similarly, although O'Brien makes a brief attempt to illustrate the 'operationalisation' of policy in three case studies, he does so primarily in theoretical terms, with no engagement with the actors actually 'operationalising' the policy, so there is little revelation of how the tensions and complexities he identifies play out in practice.

My findings show a variety of institutional responses that demonstrate, in summary, that contemporary visual arts institutions did cope, in different ways. What this illustrates more broadly is that Bauman's view of culture and management, and O'Brien's view of aesthetics and management is too dichotomous. Management and culture do co-exist, and my findings show that the missing piece of the analytic picture is the skilled cultural actors who intelligently engaged, disengaged, embraced, resisted, and in some cases, outwitted the policy context and management structures.

7.4.2 Ideological impact

The final research question addressed here is, did the methods shape activities and decision-making within contemporary visual arts institutions? This question is a further investigation into how institutions engaged with the NPM evaluative framework. As explained previously, in this question, I seek evidence to substantiate O'Brien's 'social life of methods theory,' in which he posits that "the way culture is debated and discussed... is fundamentally shaped by the social life of the methods used to construct an understanding of culture" (O'Brien 2014: 33). The critique I leverage in this section, through my findings, is that O'Brien's theory is overstated, and needs to take more account of the intelligence of actors in responding to the methods of evaluation. O'Brien (2014) admits that, in his view, Bauman (2004) and Bourdieu's (2010) conception of the state in relation to culture is overdeveloped, but, in his words, it also offers "the insight that the governmental techniques of the state are bound up with arts, culture and the aesthetic itself, in contrast to the idea of aesthetic autonomy found in a range of narratives that suggest cultural policy is different, unique or special" (2014: 9-10).

The argument I develop through my findings is that again, O'Brien's (and to some extent, Bauman and Bourdieu's) contention is too dichotomous, and at the same time, too general. In O'Brien's conceptualisation of the cultural sector's engagement with NPM techniques, culture is apparently either in a state of "aesthetic autonomy" (O'Brien 2014: 10) or "fundamentally shaped by the social life of methods" (O'Brien 2014: 10). Bauman recognises that cultural creators could not 'realistically' choose "between acceptance and rejection of administration" (2004: 65), but the middle ground for Bauman is a kind of reluctant acquiescence of, or regretful subjugation to, the powers of bureaucracy. The argument I develop in this thesis is that the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions show a variety of institutional responses, some of which

demonstrate a negotiated space in-between compliance and rejection. Through my findings, I illustrate that cultural institutions engaged with the evaluative discourse in different ways and that this engagement was a complex process of negotiating different inputs and values. The evaluative discourse of NPM was not completely constructive – institutions as cultural intermediaries and cultural actors as arbitrators tempered the discourse and made value judgements that prevented that – but at the same time, neither was it completely meaningless. The cultural sector did not seek to exist in a bubble of ‘aesthetic autonomy’.

My findings illustrate that NPM evaluation methods did have a real, ideological impact on contemporary visual arts institutions, which is made visible through developments in the institutions’ accounting practices, which reflect fundamental shifts in the way institutions categorised and conceptualised their core activities. In a broader sense, these changes represent the institution’s rethinking about its purpose, and in particular, how audience engagement activities contribute to the core function of the institution. As explained above, in the normative conceptualisation, typified by O’Brien (2014), the introduction of evaluation techniques is understood as antithetical to ‘aesthetic autonomy’ and therefore the assumption is that they were dismissed within the sector as a nuisance layer of bureaucracy. At the same time, and somewhat contradictorily, in O’Brien’s ‘theory of the social life of methods’ (2014), methods have a total, yet insidious, influence on the construction of meaning in culture and cultural institutions.

However, my findings portray a relationship that is more complex, situated and negotiated than O’Brien’s (2014) dichotomous portrayal, which underpins the dominant critical positions. On the one hand, some institutions did dismiss, resist and ignore the targets set for them, but as discussed above, this eventually led to a radical rethink about the institution’s viability in the funding structure, and precipitated

major changes to the institution's business model. On the other hand, though the findings show in great detail that all institutions grappled with the task of channelling complex value judgements into simple, evidence-based criteria, the process of engaging with this conundrum encouraged them to think about their activities in different ways. Whether for pragmatic or ideological reasons, activities – such as audience development activities – that had once been considered peripheral or outside of the core charitable function of the museum, moved to the forefront of the institution's mission, as evidenced in the institution's internal budgeting categories, and in some cases, through the reorganisation of space following expansion and capital development. Whilst the dominant critical positions primarily focus on the impact of policy, they tend to overlook this ideological impact, which worked in tandem with developments in contemporary art and museology to inspire a rethink of the museum's core functions. However, the key point I make here is that this rethink was influenced by skilled cultural actors, who were influenced by the disciplinary community of contemporary art and played an important part in negotiating the complex relationship between the state and aesthetics that O'Brien sets out to explore (2014).

7.5 Conclusions and next steps

This chapter has discussed the significance of my findings in relation to the research questions and the wider literature. My findings are grounded in the contemporary visual arts sector and are drawn from evidence gathered about institutional and individual practices and experiences. By taking a micro-level approach and engaging skilled cultural actors and their disciplinary community in the analysis of cultural policy under New Labour, the thesis demonstrates where the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions challenge some of the assumptions of the normative conceptualisations of cultural governance under New Labour. In this section, I recap these points of difference, and detail how each one

constructs a caveat to the dominant readings of cultural policy under New Labour in relation to the interpretation of the specific experience of contemporary visual arts institutions. The implication of the findings more broadly is that these caveats suggest the need for a more nuanced reading of cultural policy, and one that accounts for the diversity and variety of institutional and individual experience and considers the agency of skilled cultural workers in cultural governance.

In this chapter I have shown that by contextualising social value within the discourse of contemporary visual art, I elucidate the existence of lively, critical debates about the meaning of social value, and the beneficiaries of 'social impact.' In demonstrating the extent to which the meaning of social value was both contested and highly situated within the institution, department and even the individual professional self, I challenge the assumption of 'top-down' policy implementation (Belfiore 2012) in the New Labour period. Beyond that, my illustration of critical debates around the meaning of social value also challenges the theory of 'policy attachment' (Gray 2002; 2015) that explicitly and implicitly pervades so much of the analysis of the impact of cultural policy on the cultural sector. I show that, contrary to Gray's reading (2002; 2015) that the arts 'attached' themselves to other, better known agendas, social value had a long history and discourse within contemporary art and was at the forefront of institutional thinking before New Labour took office.

My approach of investigating micro-level behaviours and interactions reveals the role of informality and dialogue in evaluation. This finding is significant because it highlights the agency of the skilled cultural worker in cultural governance – something that is largely overlooked in the structural application of governmentality that has shaped the normative conceptualisations of the period. In foregrounding the role of the skilled cultural worker, I counter arguments (see Bauman 2004; Bourdieu 2010; O'Brien 2014) that bureaucracy diminished expertise and silenced other forms of intelligence (Power 1997). On the contrary,

I show that auditing processes provided a 'comfort' that enabled other, more discursive evaluation methods, to continue. As the same time, I show that institutions engaged with auditing structures in a variety of ways, and through the mediation of institutional and professional identities. I show that this engagement was varied by the size and scale of the institution, and that it was a negotiated, intelligent engagement. In doing so, I challenge the dichotomous view of institutional engagement with the NPM evaluative framework, which is often portrayed, as it is in O'Brien's account (2014), as both a meaningless layer of bureaucracy, and an insidious, totalising structure, inseparable from the construction of the meaning of culture. My findings reposition the new evaluative measures as a discourse, which skilled cultural workers learnt and considered in relation to institutional value sets, disciplinary conversations and professional judgements.

Considered collectively, the findings construct a number of caveats to the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, and the structural application of governmentality as a framework for understanding the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions. In the next chapter, I recap my findings and explain how they answer the research questions of the thesis. I explain how the findings, established here as significant to the extant literature, add new knowledge to the academic study of cultural policy and contemporary arts institutions.

Chapter 8: Concluding Reflections

“...things don’t flow from government in a trickle down, nice, neat way. It’s so dependent on the people who you’re interfacing with as the representatives of power and funding...” (Yasmin, a former Director of the Beta Institution, interview 2016).

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has investigated the contemporary visual arts institution’s experience of governance under New Labour’s social value agenda. In the thesis, I have explored the rhetoric of social value as it was developed and employed as part of the political project of New Labour and as a key governing principle of cultural policy, which was brought to the fore by NPM auditing techniques. I have shown that there is a gap in the literature exploring cultural policy under New Labour that acknowledges the ambiguity of social value by taking a broader, interdisciplinary context for the analysis. Equally, in the extant literature the interpretation of governmentality that is applied to the analysis of cultural policy is largely structural, and there is a gap in the literature taking account of the perspective and role of the skilled cultural actor in governance.

In order to address this gap, the approach taken in this thesis is differentiated from the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour in two ways: the research framework and methodology. This thesis has drawn upon the literature of both contemporary art theory and cultural policy in order to explore what new insights might be gleaned from taking a multidisciplinary approach to analysis. In demonstrating how social value means different things in different disciplinary communities, including cultural policy and

contemporary art, the thesis has made the case for a more specific and in-depth investigation of the interface of practice and policy. In order to do so, the methodological design of this thesis is based around engaging directly with skilled cultural actors working and making decisions at the site of policy implementation. This approach is distinct from the normative approach, which primarily relies upon intelligence from actors at least one step removed from implementation, such as policy-makers, funding bodies and high-level Directors.

The purpose of this chapter is to define the research contribution of the thesis by demonstrating how the findings provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour, the research aim of this study. Together, the key findings develop a critique of the normative conceptualisation of New Labour's cultural policy. The chapter begins with a summary of the thesis' main findings, in section 8.2, before outlining its contributions to academic literature, in section 8.3. In section 8.4, I discuss the limitations of the research. In section 8.5, I outline the future directions of research, before concluding the chapter in section 8.6.

8.2 Key findings

This section summarises the key findings of the thesis. In this section, I digest the main themes of the thesis, and in doing so, provide direct answers to the four subsidiary research questions that have shaped the enquiry. In the following pages, I illustrate how the findings enhance understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda. In concluding this section, I show that, taken together, the key findings deliver an answer to the thesis' main research question:

Does the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour provide an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010?

The first section, 8.2.1, explores the benefit of bringing the contemporary art theory perspective into the analysis of cultural policy under New Labour and addresses the question of how the meaning of social value was constructed at the interface of policy and practice. Section 8.2.2 explores the agentic role of skilled cultural actors in governance, in response to the research question about processes of governance. Section 8.2.3 illustrates how institutional engagement with, and experience of, NPM auditing techniques was diverse, nuanced and situated in the context of the institution, but that methods were impactful – just not in the way previous scholars have assumed them to be. These findings respond to the fourth research question about how institutions managed the ambiguities of social value within an evidence-based evaluative framework, and the extent to which methods shaped activities and decision-making in the institution. The last section, 8.2.4, pulls together the findings to conclude that, in answer to the thesis' main research question, the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour does not provide an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions.

8.2.1 How was the meaning of social value as a governing principle constructed at the interface of policy and practice?

The thesis has shown that social value means different things in different contexts and discipline communities. In chapter 2, I concluded that from the public policy perspective, the social value of participation is aligned to compliance and acceptance into an existing social order (see Byrne 2005; Levitas 2005), whilst in contemporary

art theory, the social value of taking part is primarily conceptualised as disrupting the social order (see Bishop 2012) or changing the status quo (see Harvie 2013; Jackson 2011). This contradiction in meaning creates a particular ambiguity for contemporary arts institutions tasked with achieving and demonstrating social value. Having illustrated, in chapters 2 and 3, the plurality of influences and historical lineages confronting decision-makers in contemporary arts institutions, and the tensions that arose from the introduction of social value as a governing principle under New Labour, the thesis set out to explore what social value meant at the site of policy implementation, and how the meaning of social value as a governing principle was constructed at the interface of policy and practice.

As stated earlier, the research design of the thesis is unique in that it approaches the study of the institutional experience of cultural policy from the dual perspectives of cultural policy and contemporary art theory. This approach elucidates the contested meaning of social value, and illustrates that there was a lively, critical debate about the meaning of social value in contemporary art, which intersected and interacted with the policy rhetoric to shape the meaning of social value as a governing principle. Importantly, the bringing together of the two literatures sheds light upon the professional knowledge of cultural actors in the institution, establishing them not simply as agents 'administering' policy, but as skilled cultural actors with a strong connection to the disciplinary community, and an in-depth and specific discipline knowledge. My findings show that these skilled cultural actors had to negotiate the inputs of the discursive community of contemporary art, alongside the policy context, which created a complex governance landscape. In the thesis, I have demonstrated that there was more to decision-making, evaluation and cultural governance than is visible in the dominant critical accounts, which tend towards the assumption of 'top-down' governance.

In terms of policy, 'social value' debates have become increasingly prevalent over the life of this research. However, despite this, there has been little effort to locate 'social values' within institutions, professions and practices. One of the most distinctive findings to emerge from my research, in relation to the process of constructing meaning at the interface of policy and practice, is that because the 'official' cultural policy rhetoric on 'social value' was ambiguous and contested, skilled cultural actors involved in turning policy into practice adapted the policy discourse in various ways, to bring it in line with different institutional histories, values and leadership priorities. What this meant in practice is that social value as a governing principle was a highly situated concept, nuanced by the particular context of the institution. I demonstrated in chapter 5 that for the Alpha Institution, social value was defined in terms of the local community, which suited the institution's long-standing commitment to community engagement, and more recent efforts to speak to the local artist community. The Beta Institution, on the other hand, appropriated a meaning of social value that was most closely aligned to enhancing diversity, which matched its core mission.

However, often the pliability of social value as a governing principle created surface level alliances from which cracks did not take long to surface. Whilst workers at the Beta Institution felt that it was the institution's remit to diversify the kinds of artists that a public would encounter, in policy terms, diversity was nearly always defined in relation to the audience coming to engage with the art. Although the two ambitions might be intrinsically linked, the question of 'who' is included in social inclusion was a point of tension between the policy intention and its manifestation in practice. This same tension afflicted the Gamma Institution, which defined its core mission as supporting artists to make challenging and experimental work. Whilst the Directors of the institution saw this mission as having a great social purpose, it did not neatly fit with the policy interpretation of social value, which, though variously defined, rested squarely on some form

of engaging audiences and widening access. These contestations demonstrate that the meaning of social value was constructed such that it meant different things in different contexts, and this created particular tensions in the contemporary arts context – something that is not made visible in the normative reading of cultural policy under New Labour.

I did expect that the critical debates about the meaning of social value in contemporary art discourse would create scope for institutions to appropriate different meanings of social value as a governing principle. However, I had underestimated the extent to which these interpretations were nuanced by the history, values and leadership priorities of the institution, as well as the professional identities of skilled cultural workers. I had not anticipated that in addition to the discipline-specific body of knowledge that skilled cultural actors brought to the cultural field, there was further differentiation amongst workers within the institution by their particular role and department. As a consequence, debates about the meaning of social value as a governing principle, and the extent to which social value constituted the institution's core mission, caused internal fracturing and contentious micro-politics within the institution and between departments, particularly in relation to the exhibitions and education departments. The illumination of these micro-politics within the institution are only made visible by my approach of speaking directly with skilled cultural actors; and not simply by looking at governance and techniques from the 'outside.' These internal fractures illustrate further variance in the experience of cultural policy under New Labour, moving beyond the normative approach of attempting to shepherd diverse and varied experiences into an overarching theory of impact.

It is not possible to define social value as a governing principle in practice because the findings clearly demonstrate that social value had different meanings in different contexts. The construction of the meaning of social value as a governing principle at the interface of

practice and policy was a complex process, informed by multiple inputs including the policy discourse and the critical debates and historical lineage of social value in contemporary art theory. Through these findings, I have demonstrated that the benefit of bringing in the contemporary art perspective is that we see that there was a lively, critical debate about the meaning of social and this led to further contestation about what it meant to implement a social value agenda, and who is included in social inclusion. As a consequence, the role of the cultural actor is repositioned as a highly skilled actor, who arbitrated between different value sets. Therefore, in the thesis, social value is reframed as a situated and co-constructed concept, interpreted in different ways by different institutions, and often adapted to align with the institution's history, values and leadership priorities. I show that even within the institution, there was further debate and differentiation by department and professional identity about the meaning and significance of social value as a governing principle. These internal fractures suggest that current conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour would benefit from paying more attention to the micro-politics of the institution, in order to provide a framework for interpreting the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions.

8.2.2 What were the processes of governance in contemporary visual arts institutions?

My findings challenge the assumption of rationality and simplicity in governance that underlines the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour. As explained in the last section, my findings show that social value as a governing principle was a highly situated concept, informed by the discursive community of contemporary art, as well as the policy discourse, and the institution's history, values, leadership priorities and the professional identities of skilled cultural actors. The last section explained that by demonstrating the importance of the contemporary art discourse in meaning-making, the

thesis substantiates the specific, professional, disciplinary knowledge of cultural actors and illustrates the complexity of the cultural governance landscape.

This section addresses the question about the processes of governance in the contemporary visual arts sector. Here, I briefly recap that, contrary to the dominant position, which applies more structural interpretations of governmentality to the reading of New Labour's cultural policy, my findings highlight the particularity of different agencies in governance. Whilst the dominant readings tend to assume that NPM techniques were both total and rational, I argue, through my findings, that cultural governance was messy. Critically, my findings show that despite the introduction of evidence-based criteria, informal processes and dialogue played an important role in the evaluation process. Contrary to the notion that auditing processes 'silenced' other forms of intelligence (see Power 1997), my findings show that the audit provided a level of 'comfort' to funders that actually enabled other, informal and discursive means of evaluation, such as the institution's relationship with the funder and its reputation amongst peers, to contribute to evaluation without the scrutiny that comes with being part of a formal evaluative framework. Although there was apparent agreement amongst interviewees that proxy measures of social value, such as audience numbers, were imprecise measurement tools at best, it was also recognised that they were a useful means of providing 'comfort' to funders who wanted hard evidence of success in the same terms used by other sectors competing for the Treasury's resources.

Unexpectedly, my findings also illustrate that skilled cultural actors played some part not only in the evaluation of culture, but also in shaping the evaluative discourse, including the techniques of measurement. The role of the skilled cultural actor in governance was enabled by both the complexity of the policy landscape and the ambiguity of social value, which created the need for a 'professional

power' to arbitrate between competing agendas and discourses. My illumination of the role of the skilled cultural actor is significant because it challenges the view that the audit necessarily diminishes the role of the expert (see Bauman 2004; Bourdieu 2010; O'Brien 2014). By taking account of the 'voices' of skilled cultural actors and enabling a lens onto the micro-behaviours of institutional actors, the thesis has revealed the informal processes that informed governance. I have shown that in order to interpret cultural policy under New Labour, we need to move beyond the structural interpretations of governmentality that dominate the normative conceptualisations of the period.

8.2.3 How did specific institutions manage the tensions around social value within an evidence-based evaluative framework? Did the methods shape activities and decision-making in the institution?

The first part of this section discussed the finding that the meaning of social value as a governing principle was a highly situated concept, constructed at the interface of policy and practice, and influenced by multiple discourses. However, as explained earlier in the thesis (see chapters 2 and 3), the step change in cultural policy under New Labour was really an innovation in two parts: social value became an explicit part of the instrumentalisation of culture, and NPM auditing techniques introduced into the cultural sector required arts institutions to produce evidence of value in new terms (Belfiore 2002; 2004; 2012). This section summarises the findings in relation to the question of how institutions managed the tensions that arose from social value as a situated and contested term within the rigidity of an evidence-based evaluation framework. The section explores institutional modes of engagement with the NPM evaluative discourse and also details my findings in relation to the related question: did the methods shape activities and decision-making in the institution?

My findings show the wide variety of institutional modes of engagement with the new evaluative discourse. In the dominant critical accounts of the period, institutional engagement with the policy context is portrayed as having two options: rejection or (reluctant) acquiescence. Since the first is not a realistic option, the latter is determined to prevail. Somewhat contradictorily, in the normative conceptualisation, the cultural sector is entirely dismissive of the evaluative discourse, and at the same time, damaged by it. My findings show that in fact, modes of institutional engagement varied widely amongst institutions, and that skilled cultural actors played an important role in determining the extent of engagement and negotiating its terms in relation to other value discourses. Critically, one of the case study institutions largely disengaged from the evaluative measures and eventually adopted a business model that reduced the institution's reliance on ACE funding. In this case, the policy context was impactful, but, arguably, it was not destructive; it encouraged the institution to develop a new way of existing in the cultural landscape.

An important subsidiary finding to emerge from the research was that an institution's willingness and ability to engage with auditing processes was largely differentiated by the size and scale of the institution. As example, interviewees from the largest case study institution, the Alpha Institution, tended to embrace the new auditing measures as part of the development of a professional, accountable culture because they had the resources required to gather evidence and spin a narrative in the terms required of them from funders. The smaller case study institutions, with less differentiated infrastructures, struggled to keep pace. The macro-level approaches of the dominant critical positions do not account for the variance, across sectors and institutions, in modes of engagement with the policy context. My findings show that institutions not only accepted, but also negotiated, ignored and resisted the NPM evaluation methods. My findings demonstrate the agentic role of skilled cultural actors in decision-

making and policy implementation, and how the governmentality reading in the dominant critical positions (see O'Brien 2014, in particular) would benefit from accounting for that role in greater detail.

Finally, my findings show that cultural institutions did engage with NPM auditing techniques, and evidence-based criteria were impactful – just not in the ways that they are assumed to be in the dominant analyses of cultural policy under New Labour. The short summary of the normative conceptualisation is that auditing processes were “both ineffective and damaging to arts and cultural practice in the UK” (Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015: 101), or in Hewison’s succinct rendition “managerialism turned a golden age to lead” (Hewison 2014: back cover). In these readings, NPM techniques are dismissed as an additional, nuisance layer of bureaucracy. While the thesis generated findings that evidence the institutional challenges and frustrations born from the new auditing processes, the findings also illustrate that institutional engagement with the NPM framework was complex and meaningful. To begin with, I found that although there was apparent agreement amongst interviewees about the inadequacy of the measurement tools, the introduction of evidence-based criteria aimed at assessing social value caused the institution to rethink its relationship to audiences, and to reconsider its mission in relation to social value. Whilst the dominant critical positions primarily focus on the impact of policy, they tend to overlook this ideological impact, which was influenced by skilled cultural actors who played an important part in negotiating different value sets and agendas.

In sum, and in direct answer to the research question about how institutions managed tensions that arose from social value as a governing principle within an evidence-based framework, the thesis generated findings that show that institutions engaged with auditing structures in a variety of ways, and through the mediation of institutional and professional identities. I show that this engagement was varied by the size and scale of the institution, and that it was a

negotiated, intelligent engagement. At the same time, I show that the introduction of NPM techniques into the cultural sector was a meaningful intervention that encouraged the institution to think about its core functions and relationship to audiences in different ways.

8.2.4 Conclusion – conceptualising the experience of governance under New Labour’s social value agenda

Taken together, the findings provide an answer to the main research question: does the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour provide an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010? Collectively, the findings illustrate that the normative conceptualisation is not adequate, without some caveats. Through my findings, I have developed the argument that we need to revise the normative position to acknowledge the role of multiple, intersecting discourses in decision-making and governance; give voice to skilled cultural actors in the institution; recognise the nuance and variety of different sectors and institutions, and ultimately, to allow for more institutional and individual agency, in a less determinist interpretation of governmentality as an analytic lens for reading the contemporary arts institution’s experience of cultural policy under New Labour. In the next section, I explore the significance of this conclusion through a discussion of my contributions to academic research.

8.3 Contributions of my thesis

In the thesis, I have proposed a multidisciplinary approach to the study of cultural policy under New Labour. In my review of the extant literature (see chapter 2), I concluded that current policy and NPM debates do not include the perspective of contemporary art theory. In my approach, I have imported and modified insights from multiple fields to provide an in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution’s experience of governance under New Labour’s social

value agenda. This specific sectoral approach has enabled me to engage directly with skilled cultural actors engaged in the practice of policy implementation – a method that is not explored in the dominant critical analyses of cultural policy under New Labour. Consequentially, the thesis is unique in two ways: it brings together multiple discourses, including, uniquely, contemporary art theory, and it conducts a micro-level investigation of situated practices and experiences.

The contributions of the thesis to academic knowledge cannot be articulated in relation to siloed academic disciplines. Instead, the thesis has established a unique, multidisciplinary mode of enquiry, and demonstrated the benefits of doing so. The thesis' most significant contribution to academic knowledge is the engendering of a sympathetic critique of the normative conceptualisations of cultural policy under New Labour, which tend to take undifferentiated, process-driven and macro-level approaches to analysis. In section 8.3.1, I show how bringing contemporary art theory into the analytic framework for interpreting the policy context reveals new insights that further academic debates about the conceptualisation of cultural governance under New Labour. In section 8.3.2, I demonstrate how my approach of engaging directly with skilled cultural actors and investigating micro-level processes and behaviours engenders a new reading of the experience of cultural governance under New Labour, which not only enhances understanding of the operationalisation of policy, but also furthers academic knowledge more generally by demonstrating the importance of considering practice in the theorisation of policy.

8.3.1 Bringing contemporary art theory into the analytic framework

Cultural policy is a broad and complex field (see chapter 2 for further discussion on this). As an interdisciplinary enquiry, it is possible to approach the study of cultural policy from many different disciplinary

leanings and perspectives – cultural studies, political science, cultural economy, public policy and sociology, to name a few (Gray 2010a; Bell and Oakley 2015). The unique approach taken in this thesis has been to include in the analysis of cultural policy, the disciplinary perspective of contemporary art theory. This is distinct because the specific discursive community of contemporary art does not feature predominantly in the analysis of cultural policy and the dominant critical accounts of cultural policy under New Labour tend to cover the cultural and creative industries as a broad and undifferentiated sector. As a result, analyses in the extant literature do not effectively draw upon the subject knowledge and discursive community of the cultural ‘objects’ being governed. The thesis shows that the omission of the contemporary art theory perspective (and specifically, those critical debates around socially engaged practices that I outline in section 2.6.1) and the lack of attention given to fragmentation in the cultural sector in the extant literature has the effect of silencing salient debates about value that interacted with policy rhetoric to shape cultural governance.

This omission is especially significant in the context of New Labour. Despite the apparent rhetorical similarities between socially engaged practices and New Labour’s social value cultural policies, there are very few accounts that investigate contemporaneous developments in contemporary art and cultural policy. Whilst Harvie (2013), and to some extent Bishop (2012) do, their accounts encompass different disciplinary emphases than the ones included here. The thesis is further differentiated from these works by its focus on the practices and experiences of institutions, rather than on the theorisation of art practices. As I established in chapters 2 and 3, there is a clear gap in the literature exploring the contemporary art institution’s experience of governance under New Labour’s social value agenda from the dual perspectives of cultural policy and contemporary art theory. The thesis addresses the gap in the literature by bringing the two perspectives

into dialogue, in order to engender a multidisciplinary approach and demonstrate the benefits of doing so.

A major contribution of the thesis is that it shows that bringing together the discourses of contemporary art and cultural policy makes visible critical, interdisciplinary debates about the meaning of social value. These debates raise important questions about who is included in social inclusion, what participatory projects hope to achieve and how institutions can demonstrate social value. The thesis demonstrates how debates in contemporary art theory (see Bishop 2012; Finkelpearl 2013; Harvie 2013; Helguera 2011; Jackson 2011; Kester 2004) about the extent to which social impact necessarily involves disruption, or what Bishop calls 'dissensus' (2012) challenged New Labour's use of the term, which generally revolved around compliance and co-option into an existing social order (see Bryne 2005; Levitas 2005). By uncovering these conflicting notions of value, I illustrate the complexity of the policy landscape in a way that is not evident in either the literature of contemporary art theory or in the literature of cultural policy. I demonstrate that the academic interpretation of cultural policy and art would benefit from a deeper engagement with debates about the meaning of social value in art, as well as in policy, or in this case, as part of New Labour's broader social inclusion project. By exploring the theoretical foundations and historical trajectories of social value, in both art theory and public policy studies, the thesis makes an important contribution to academic knowledge by making visible in a level of detail that has not been achieved before, the connections and tensions that informed the construction of the meaning of social value and the contested space that artistic practitioners operated within.

By drawing upon the contemporary art theory perspective, the thesis also shows that there is a long history of engagement with the concept of social value within the contemporary arts. This perspective is significant in the broader context of academic knowledge because it shifts the power dynamics that are implicit in the theory of policy

attachment and other normative depictions of the instrumentalisation of culture, in which the arts are assumed to be subjugated to other, bigger agendas (Gray 2002; 2015). The long history of socially engaged practices that is surfaced in my approach to research offers a distinct challenge to studies of cultural policy that are based upon the assumption of 'top-down' structures and processes (Belfiore 2012). By drawing in the perspective of contemporary art theory, I develop and demonstrate the disciplinary knowledge of skilled cultural actors and begin to evidence their capacity to play an active part in cultural governance.

Finally, by bringing in the perspective of contemporary art theory, and focusing specifically on the contemporary visual arts sector, I am able to illustrate further differentiation within the sector, which is not visible in the macro-level accounts of the dominant critical positions. In Hesmondhalgh's nomenclature, the contemporary art world is part of the 'peripheral cultural industries,' or those industries whose primary aim is the production and reproduction of texts through "semi-industrial or non-industrial methods" (Hesmondhalgh 2013: 18). In the study of cultural policy, the 'peripheral cultural industries' receive substantially less critical attention than the 'core cultural industries,' those industries such as broadcasting, film, advertising and music, which are "centrally concerned with the industrial production and circulation of texts" (Hesmondhalgh 2013:17). Certainly, rigorous scholarship on the specific dynamics of the contemporary art world in relation to cultural policy is lacking. Not only does the thesis focus on the specific sector of contemporary visual arts, it also hones in on the particular dynamics of the quasi-public contemporary arts institution. Another contribution of the thesis is that it focuses on an area of the cultural sector that has not previously been investigated in relation to cultural policy in this level of detail. The thesis adds to academic knowledge by offering a specific and demonstrable response to Gray's call for more scholarship that deals explicitly with 'sectoral peculiarities' and the 'fragmented' nature of the museum sector (Gray 2010b: 54).

8.3.2 Engaging directly with skilled cultural actors

In addition to focusing specifically on the contemporary visual arts sector, the thesis makes a unique contribution to academic knowledge by concentrating analysis on the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions and including the 'voices' of skilled cultural actors involved in the implementation of policy. The thesis redresses the gap in the literature established in Lindqvist's (2012) review of public sector reform and cultural organisations in the period 1990-2009. Lindqvist found that most literature on the subject of public sector reform and cultural organisations "focuses on change in processes and policies, rather than impacts on the cultural organisations themselves" (Bonham-Carter 2017b). Lindqvist's findings support the theoretical critique of the normative reading of cultural policy developed at the start of the thesis, which pointed out how process-driven accounts obscure detail and variance in the practices and experiences of cultural policy. The thesis' case study approach and research into micro-level processes and behaviours adds new insights to the structural interpretations that dominate study of the period.

The thesis' findings also make a meaningful contribution to the value of culture debates which have been in high-profile circulation in cultural policy studies (see Crossick and Kaszynska 2016) and contemporary art theory, in recent years. In the cultural policy debates, the value of culture is theorised in different ways and is often framed, initially, within the 'intrinsic vs instrumental' divide. Similarly, in the literature of contemporary art theory, the social value of art is usually contested within the 'ethics vs. aesthetics' debate, a theoretical division based on the use of artistic and ethical criteria in the judgment of art (Bishop 2012). However, uniquely, the focus of this thesis is not on what the value of culture is, but rather, how the policy rhetoric was actually interpreted by practitioners and skilled cultural actors tasked with

implementing it. Through evidence gathered from engaging directly with skilled cultural actors, the thesis shows that in practice, the construction of the meaning of social value was highly situated within an institutional context, and subject to many different inputs. By demonstrating that institutions appropriated different meanings of social value, the thesis adds another perspective to both the 'value of culture' debates and the 'ethics vs. aesthetics' debates. Fundamentally, the thesis takes both of these debates out of theory, and repositions the questions of value, evaluation and judgment around which they revolve, within situated practices. This approach, and the thesis' findings about informality and discussion in evaluation, add insight into how institutions and actors actually 'cope' with different value agendas. The thesis shows the importance of including in the conceptualisation of policy, the outcomes of the implementation of policy as it is put into practice.

8.3.3 Conclusions and reflections on the thesis' contributions

By reviewing the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, through the specific lens of the analysis of the experiences and practices of contemporary visual arts institutions, the thesis generated findings that collectively construct a sympathetic critique of governmentality as it is applied to the study of cultural policy under New Labour in the dominant critical positions. In this section, I explain how the findings build this critique and contribute to academic knowledge.

As established throughout the thesis, governmentality has arguably become the normative interpretive framework for the analysis of cultural policy under New Labour. However, there are many definitions and interpretations of governmentality (see chapter 2) and the thesis generated findings that show how the application of governmentality expounded by O'Brien (2014), and more implicitly by others, tends to overstate the totality and rationality of technical, institutional rules and

processes, whilst understating the agency of skilled cultural actors in governance. In short, taken together, the thesis's findings point to the need for an interpretation of governmentality that allows for more variance and in which there is more agency, and less structure – in many ways, a version that is arguably closer to Foucault's original post-structural interpretation (see Foucault 2002).

One of the most significant findings to emerge from my research was that skilled cultural actors played an agentic role in governance as interpreters, translators and sometimes resisters of the policy discourse. Whilst the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour emphasises the technical instruments of NPM, the thesis found that auditing processes were but one discourse amongst many that skilled cultural actors had to contend with. As a consequence, these skilled cultural actors played a major role in the governance of contemporary arts institutions – a role that is obscured in the more structural interpretation of governmentality that is applied in the normative reading of cultural policy under New Labour. This finding is one of the most salient contributions that the thesis makes to the study of cultural policy under New Labour because it suggests the need for a theoretical framework, or an interpretation of governmentality, that captures the agency of actors, as well as the importance of structure and process, in governance.

Furthermore, the thesis generated a number of findings that illustrate how the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour implies a rationality and simplicity that does not capture the complexity of the contemporary arts institution's experience of governance. One finding in support of this conclusion is that despite the introduction of NPM auditing techniques, informal processes of evaluation and discussion continued to play an important role in funding decisions, which were not always methodical. Alongside this, the findings show that disagreements about the meaning and importance of social value encouraged further fracturing of the

institution by department and professional identity, fuelling the development of micro-politics within the institution. And finally, an important subsidiary finding to emerge from the research is that institutional engagement with auditing structures was varied and differentiated by the size and scale of the institution. Taken together, these findings show that NPM as a governing framework was neither simple nor entirely rational. This conclusion is significant to the study of cultural policy under New Labour because it breaks down critical assumptions that are a part of the governmentality reading of the normative position and also demonstrates the benefit of engaging directly with cultural practitioners to capture variance in the institutional experience of the policy landscape.

Over the last six years of researching this thesis (on a part-time basis), a number of books and articles investigating cultural policy under New Labour have been published (see Hesmondhalgh et al. 2015; Hewison 2014; O'Brien 2014). As explained in chapter 1, I call these the accounts (as well as a number of articles by Belfiore 2002; 2004; 2012) the 'normative' position or the 'dominant critical position,' because they constitute the group of books and articles that delve into the recent history of cultural policy in the UK in great detail, make a number of common assumptions and broadly apply a governmentality reading to cultural policy. The general thrust of this literature is to ask, what went wrong? Or, how did we get here? On the latter point in particular, my thesis offers a different perspective, because the 'here' has changed. This thesis began at the end of the New Labour period. It is inevitable with a thesis of this nature that one will be overtaken by events. New Labour has come and gone. Austerity and Brexit have arrived. All institutions and policies are naturally embedded in a time and place, and it is not possible to simply transpose findings from one place and time to another. However, the thesis has shown that there are lessons to learn from New Labour, and the insights presented in this thesis may have value not only to academic discourse, but also to the future formation and administration of cultural policy.

On the whole, the thesis generated findings that nuance assessment of the period. As I have stated before, it was not the goal of this thesis to make a judgement about the success or failure of New Labour's cultural policies, but rather to bring practice, experience and disciplinarity into the analytic framework. The thesis found that, contrary to the dominant reading, the introduction of NPM techniques into the cultural sector was not only another level of bureaucratic tedium, but that engagement with auditing structures, though varied, did have some ideological impact on contemporary visual arts institutions. Taken together the findings provide a greater understanding of the complexity of cultural governance under New Labour, and the variety of experiences of it.

8.4 Limitations of the research

A strength of the thesis is its specificity. However, this focus is also a limitation. At the start of the thesis (see section 1.3) I explained and rationalised all of the boundaries that I put in place to contain the research. In the end, these boundaries enabled an in-depth and in-focus study of the contemporary art institution in a level of detail that has not been achieved before. However, these boundaries also create a focused study, which will always raise questions about the wider applicability of the findings, to other regions, sectors and time periods. In this section, I briefly describe the potential limitations of my thesis, and how some of these limitations suggest directions for future research.

The focus of the research is on cultural policy in the UK (or more accurately, England, since I engage primarily with ACE). Clearly, each national context has its own version of a cultural policy, that is related to that context, as well as to global cultural and political dialogues. However, the 'instrumental turn' in the UK is indicative of wider phenomena, as nations around the world have increasingly

constructed cultural policies predicated on ‘instrumental’ values of culture. In fact, the UK’s particular development of the ‘creative industries’ rhetoric under New Labour has been the subject of much interest and debate in both policy circles and academic analyses. Therefore, although the thesis is particularly focused on ‘social values’ within cultural policies in the UK, and this is a potential limitation of the thesis, the findings are likely to be valuable to future studies on the articulation and deployment of instrumental values of culture outside of the UK. This is especially likely for the analysis of policy contexts that share broadly similar characteristics with the UK, including the existence of some level of state support for the arts, as is common across Europe. However, future studies would need to determine the extent to which the findings generated by this research are applicable to national contexts where cultural governance is underpinned by fundamentally different funding structures, such as the US, where national support for the arts is dwarfed by indirect subsidies from the private sector (see Cohen 2006). In this case, a rhetoric of ‘social values’ may develop, but with different ‘inputs’ – which broadly affirms the point made here; that social value is a highly situated concept that is made visible in the practices and experiences of individuals and institutions.

As explained in chapter 4, the overall methodological approach of the thesis focuses on three case study institutions in London. As a research method, the case study can uniquely contribute to the “understanding of individual, organisational, social and political phenomena” (Yin 1994: 2). However, at the same time, the specificity of the case study will always raise questions about the extent to which it can provide a basis for generalisation (Yin 1994). I have aimed to conduct a ‘generalising analysis’ (Yin 1994: 10); although I have revealed the particularities of the contemporary arts sector and specific institutions within it, my findings focus on generalisable themes. For example, while I noticed different modes of institutional engagement with NPM structures, my findings did not focus on the

detail of these modes but rather, on the more generalisable theme of 'variance' – which is likely to be a relevant finding to institutions outside of my sample, outside of the contemporary visual arts sector, outside of the UK, etc.

In addition, I chose to limit my selection of case studies to institutions based in London, in order to mitigate against the location of the institution having too much impact on the findings. In recent years, there has been an important debate (see Stark et al. 2013) about regionality and cultural policy in the UK, and that topic needs further exploration. However, regionality was not the research enquiry of this thesis and I determined that the data would have greater 'reliability' and 'external validity' if I chose similar institutions, deliberately differentiated by a few relevant factors, including 'size.' This approach ensured that the multiple-case study approach had a 'replication logic' (see Yin 1994: 46), which meant that the data generated findings that were significant to my research objective: to know more about the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions under New Labour. Future studies could isolate different variables, for example, regionality rather than size. However, shifting the analytic focus of the study of cultural policy to take account of the nuance of different contexts essentially underlines the argument of this thesis, which is that the experience of policy is nuanced by a range of different vectors and we can know more about policy from engaging with practice.

A further potential limitation of the research is the influence of time. The research required me to ask participants to reflect upon things that had sometimes occurred 20 years ago. The danger in such a scenario is that the participant remembers things incorrectly. However, a benefit of the passage of time is that none of my interviewees were still employed by the institution in question, so perhaps felt more confident to speak freely and without obligation to the institutional 'party line.' In addition, because the thesis is primarily concerned with how

participants experienced policy, or the life of policy in practice, rather than the actual details of specific KPIs or funding agreements, the participant's perception or memory of policy is more relevant for the research enquiry than a description of developments that can be gleaned from secondary sources. In addition, with the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see that cultural governance under New Labour marked a turning point in the breakdown of the consensus on state for the art (see Hewison 2014). For this reason, although my findings are situated in a moment of time, a potential limitation, they surely have value to both the study and administration of cultural policy now, and in the future.

My enquiry is pitched specifically around the experience of contemporary visual arts institutions. I have shown that the findings of the thesis have important implications for how we conceptualise that specific experience. However, in pointing out the need for more variance in the normative reading of cultural policy under New Labour, I have also pointed out the inadequacy of the current framework as a means of interpreting developments in a broad and undifferentiated conception of the cultural industries. The call for more discipline-specific theories of cultural policy, and more analysis based upon the observation of micro-level behaviours and engagement with skilled cultural actors (as opposed to processes) is not specific to contemporary art. I have shown that this approach 'works,' and that it could be adopted as an analytic approach to the study of cultural policies in different cultural sectors.

Finally, the focus of the thesis is on institutional experience, though through my multidisciplinary approach, I make links between cultural policy, institutional practice and artistic practice. I focus my research on skilled cultural actors, many of whom define their roles by their engagement with, and commitment to, artists. However, I do not, in this enquiry, capture the voice of artists, which would add another 'voice' to the construction and articulation of value in practice. I focus

on the experience of institutions because they are more often than not the frontline of engagement with policy. However, what I have shown is that there is value in reconceptualising the 'chain' of policy implementation to construct an analytic framework that includes the perspectives of practitioners, artists, participants etc.

8.5 Directions for future research

I have demonstrated in the section above that although there are a number of potential limitations to the thesis, the findings are also valuable to the study and administration of cultural policy in a wide range of contexts. As I argue throughout the thesis, my enquiry is broadly differentiated from the extant literature on cultural policy under New Labour by both its methodological approach and research framework. In this section, I explain how the insights gained from these points of differentiation also indicate directions for future research.

Throughout the thesis, I have demonstrated how analysis in the dominant critical accounts of cultural policy under New Labour is primarily based upon the structures, processes and instruments of governance. In the thesis, I employed data collection methods that enabled direct engagement with skilled cultural actors, in a specific disciplinary context. The insights gained from this methodological approach, which illuminated micro-level processes and behaviours, construct a varied and nuanced interpretation of the experience governance under New Labour. Significantly, this methodological approach has illustrated the benefit of interrogating the interface of practice and policy and shown what the professional perspective can bring to the academic policy dialogue. This revelation suggests the need for more studies that can bring the professional perspective into the academic enquiry. Although this study is situated in the particular time, place and art form that it is, the findings show that the field of cultural policy would benefit from more studies adopting the methodological approach of this thesis and taking account of

professional practices and experiences in the theorisation of policy. The next step in research would be to apply this methodological approach to different forms of institutions, in different contexts and time periods, in order to see what new insights might be gained, and how these insights might build to refine current conceptualisations of 'moments' in cultural policy.

The thesis is further differentiated from the dominant critical accounts of cultural policy under New Labour by the particular emphasis I place on the discursive community of contemporary art, and the literature I draw in from contemporary art theory. Throughout the thesis, I have shown how this perspective both casts the notion of 'social value' into a broader set of debates and situates meaning-making within an institutional and individual context. While the governmentality and governance debates go on, I have shown that underlining these debates is a concern with values, and how to articulate and resolve them. I have argued throughout the thesis that it was not my intention to enter the well-trodden 'value of culture' debates, nor to offer another theory of the value of culture. However, what I have shown here is that these debates would benefit from a strong professional, or 'internalist' critique, which would add something to the somewhat 'externalist' or rational approaches of the existing debates. I believe future research studies could enter the 'value of culture' debates from an 'internalist' perspective, again not with the intention of 're-theorising' but rather, as I did here, nuancing academic theorisations of value with the insights of practice, experience and professional expertise. Although the New Labour period has come and gone, and this thesis is situated in a moment, more generally, I have shown that the thesis is valuable as a critique of methods and analytic emphasis and has much to contribute to the study of cultural policies, and the cultural values debates. I hope further studies will employ my methods and points of emphasis in different contexts, to illuminate insights that can further our understanding and theorisation of cultural policy.

Furthermore and finally, the thesis has implications for arts evaluation both in theory and in practice. My research shows that policy-making in modernity is highly fragmented, and despite the idea of an 'official' policy discourse, in reality, discourse is always live and influenced by multiple inputs. I illustrate that the notion of 'social value' was already deeply embedded in the community of contemporary art long before it was identified as a core principle of arts evaluation under New Labour. My thesis shows that without getting close to the cultural activity that cultural policies seek to govern, and without evaluation agendas giving due consideration to discipline-specific practices, values and traditions, there is enormous potential for sham marriages between different, possibly even contradictory, value sets and agendas. These shotgun weddings can quickly unravel. Recent debates around cultural regeneration vs. gentrification; flexibility and entrepreneurialism vs. precarity and exploitation and participation vs. social engineering are but a few examples of how the devil really is in the detail, when it comes to aligning core values in the cultural sectors.

My work has implications on future research in the area of arts evaluation because while I suspect my conclusions about the impact of the disciplinary context are generalisable across different sectors, this remains to be tested. In terms of arts evaluation as a practice, I have highlighted the potential for the rhetoric of evaluation to land in different ways in different artistic contexts, and I have shown the importance of including a disciplinary 'voice' in the evaluation process. I hope that by showing the impact of disciplinary discourse on the articulation of value, I may encourage an approach to arts evaluation and policy-making that takes into account the values of distinct artistic communities.

8.6 Conclusion

At the start of the thesis I described my experience as a curator in a prominent contemporary visual arts institution in London. In that role, I witnessed the institution's struggle to reconcile its institutional values with the priorities of the New Labour administration. I saw, first hand, how the institution tried to come up with the 'hard evidence' it felt it needed to present to ACE in order to secure funding, even when that 'evidence' had become largely divorced from meaningful activity. At the same time, I saw colleagues working around me put in long hours for relatively little remuneration, seemingly driven by a deep sense of institutional purpose, a commitment to the institution's historical values and a desire to engage with, and push forwards, discourse on contemporary art. Observing the situation, I wanted to know more about how so many competing agendas, including the impassioned motivations of those professionals working around me, could channel into a simple, results-based evaluation system now defined by supposedly objective measures of 'success.'

My initial academic reading of the situation was disappointing – the extant literature gave little attention to disciplinary discourse, institutional histories, or the role of professionals in decision-making. Far from understanding more about the dynamics of negotiation, I could not even see the problem in most academic analyses. More than that, the response from the cultural sector was largely depicted to be as cold and undifferentiated as the evaluative measures themselves. However, this reading did not match up with own experiences and observations inside the sector. The focus of my research became the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda. I hope that my research has helped both to illustrate the absence of academic enquiry in this mode, and to move analysis beyond the distant pragmatics of policy administration, and into the messy, conflicted space of institutional practice.

Collectively, my findings support governmentality as an analytic framework for reading cultural policy under New Labour, but with some caveats. Through research, the thesis developed a theoretical critique of the interpretation of governmentality that is applied in the normative conceptualisation, and as an analytic framework for understanding the experience of contemporary visual arts institutions. The thesis set out to explore what new insights might be gained from approaching the study of cultural policy under New Labour from the dual perspective of contemporary art theory and cultural policy. By bringing in the contemporary art theory literature, the research found that in the dominant critical position, the interpretation of governmentality that is applied to the analysis of cultural policy is largely structural and does not take account of the perspective and role of skilled cultural actors in governance. As a consequence, I found that the normative position tends to flatten differences across cultural sectors, obscuring the nuance, variety and messiness of the experience of policy as it becomes practice.

The thesis set out to investigate this theoretical critique through the collection of empirical evidence, and to approach the main research question: Does the normative conceptualisation of cultural governance under New Labour's social value agenda provide an adequate framework to understand the practices and experiences of contemporary visual arts institutions in London, in the period 1997-2010? Accordingly, the aim of the thesis was to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under New Labour's social value agenda, in order to evaluate the adequacy of the normative position. Through a mixed method approach to data collection that involved a review of policy documents to survey the policy landscape, quantitative analysis of resource allocation within the institution and semi-structured qualitative interviews with cultural actors in the institution, the thesis

gathered information about informal, micro-level processes, behaviours and attitudes within the institution.

The thesis generated findings that collectively illustrate that the normative conceptualisation of cultural policy under the New Labour does not provide an adequate framework to understand the contemporary visual arts institution's experience of governance under the administration's social value agenda. Throughout the thesis, I have argued that we need to revise the normative conceptualisation to acknowledge the role of multiple discourses in decision-making and governance; give voice to skilled cultural actors in the institution; recognise the nuance and variety of different sectors and institutions; and ultimately, to allow more agency, and less structuralism in the interpretation of governmentality as an analytic lens for reading how contemporary arts institutions experienced cultural policy under New Labour.

The research is novel in both its research approach and its methodology. First, it is the first account that I am aware of to approach the study of cultural policy under New Labour from the dual perspective of contemporary art theory and cultural policy, in this level of detail. This approach elucidated the numerous inputs and discourses that influence governance and substantiated the role of the cultural actor as a knowledgeable player with the capacity to arbitrate between multiple discourses and to navigate a muddled policy landscape. Second, the methodological design of the thesis prioritised interaction with skilled cultural actors and enabled analysis to move beyond the process-orientated investigations of the dominant critical position, and explore the capacity for agency, alongside structure, in governance. These innovations led to new insights which have collectively shaped a challenge to the extant literature.

Although the thesis supports the dominant governmentality approach to the conceptualisation of cultural policy under New Labour, it has

also offered a sympathetic revision of that approach. This critique has implications both for our understanding of contemporary art, in terms of the benefits of contextualising practice within a broader social and political context, and for the field of cultural policy, in terms of articulating the need for cultural policy studies to understand more about the critical debates informing practice, and to pay more attention to the life of policy as it moves beyond rhetoric. I hope future research will employ greater discipline specificity and acknowledge and indulge the messiness of policy in practice.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet



**School of Arts
and Social Sciences**

CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON

Information Sheet

Charlotte Bonham-Carter

PhD Candidate

Culture and Creative Industries

City University

Northampton Square

London EC1V 0HB

Charlotte.bonham-carter.1@city.ac.uk

Tel: [REDACTED]

Title of Study: Instrumental Cultural Policy and the Governance of Contemporary Visual Arts Galleries in London: An Analysis of Social Objectives in Cultural Policy Under New Labour

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is conducted as part of a PhD, within the Culture and Creative Industries Department at City University, London. Research is on-going, with an anticipated end date of 2017.

Museums have to make convincing arguments to central government about the value of the museum, in order to secure public money. Under the New Labour administration (1997-2010), cultural policies increasingly emphasised the importance of museums having social

impact.

This thesis aims to explore how galleries evidenced social impact, and to what extent social objectives did or did not inform institutional practice.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to take part in the study because you worked at a case study institution, in a department of interest, within the time frame of this study (1997-2010).

Case studies were drawn from a list of visual arts organisations in London that were regularly funded by the Arts Council in the period 1997-2010, or which became a regularly funded organisation shortly thereafter.

Interviewees are the most senior former employees in Learning, Marketing/PR and Curatorial posts from 1997-2010, as long as they held the post for at least 2 years. The study involves approximately 30 interviewees.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate in part or all of the project. You can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen if I take part?

The interview should take approximately 30-45 minutes.

The research study is being conducted over a period of 6 months.

We will only need to meet once.

In our meeting, I will ask you a series of questions. I will also ask you to comment on my numerical findings on resource allocation. Our interview will be audio recorded.

The research method involves simple data collection and interviews.

The interview will take place in a public place that is convenient for you.

Expenses and Payments

Unfortunately, we cannot offer to cover or reimburse travel expenses, and there are no payments offered for participating. However, as suggested above, I am happy to meet you at a location that is convenient for you.

What do I have to do?

All you need to do in our meeting is provide comment on my numerical findings regarding resource allocation within the gallery, and answer a set of questions about your current/former place of work.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any risks or disadvantages to taking part.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While participation in the study has no obvious direct benefits to you, the research is beneficial to the wider arts community, particularly, potentially, those institutions wanting to make a case for contributed value that cannot be readily 'evidenced' through metrics such as audience numbers.

What will happen when the research study stops?

Your data will be stored in a locked file on the computer. Your data will be destroyed three years after the completion of the project.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Only the researcher will have access to the data

Audio recordings may be securely sent to a confidentiality guaranteed transcription service, where they will be destroyed after use

Audio recordings will be kept in a locked file on the computer

You will be anonymous in any publication that arises from this research, now or in the future

What will happen to results of the research study?

This interview is a very important part of the thesis. There is a possibility that some aspects of this research may be published in academic journals in the field. Again, you will be anonymous in any publication that arises from this research, now or in the future.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to withdraw from the study without an explanation or penalty at any time.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is:

Instrumental Cultural Policy and the Governance of Contemporary Visual Arts Organisations in London

You could also write to the Secretary at: Anna Ramberg Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee Research Office, E214

City University London Northampton Square London EC1V 0HB

Email: Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk

City University London holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City University London, Research Ethics Committee

Further information and contact details

Charlotte.bonham-carter.1@city.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix 2: Consent Form



**School of Arts
and Social Sciences**
CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON

Charlotte Bonham-Carter
PhD Candidate
Culture and Creative Industries
City University London
Northampton Square
London EC1V 0HB

Email: charlotte.bonham-carter.1@city.ac.uk

Tel: +

Title of Study: *Instrumental Cultural Policy and the Governance of Contemporary Visual Arts Organisations in London*

Please initial box

1.	<p>I agree to take part in the above City University London research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the participant information sheet, which I may keep for my records.</p> <p>I understand this will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * being interviewed by the researcher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allowing the interview to be audio taped 	
2.	<p>I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized or disadvantaged in</p>	
3.	<p>I agree to take part in the above study.</p>	

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

Process:

Prior to Interview - send 'Participant Information Sheet'.

If participants are still employed by the institution in question, I will first seek consent from the appropriate authority (i.e., gallery director), and then seek consent from the employee.

If participants agree in principle to participate, then they will be sent a consent form, which will be signed and returned to me upon first meeting, in person, and before the interview.

Participants will be given a pseudonym, so that they may be anonymous in the publication.

Institutions will also be anonymised, or talked about in generic terms (i.e., a small, regularly funded organisation in London, receiving less than £250K in ACE support)

Interview Schedule:

Part 1: Opening

1. Establish rapport (including one sentence summary of research)
2. Purpose of the interview, discussion of anonymity (anonymity, via pseudonyms for participants, will be offered) ethics and signing of consent forms

3. Time Line (what will happen in the next hour)

Part 2: Outline of interview

- A. Gather basic information about the interviewee's role, and years and dates in service at the case study institution

- B. Establish the interviewee's recollection of the organisation's mission during (or over) the time period. What, or who, informed this?

- C. Did the institution have a social value? What was the social value of the institution? What or who informed this?

- D. In the period 1997-2010, the New Labour government adopted a style of management that, to some extent, predicted success on the ability of an organisation to meet certain targets. To what extent, in your understanding, was the institution's agenda impacted by these new approaches?

- E. Did you notice that objectives changed within the organisation, in this period? How did you meet them? Did you ever feel these objectives were 'symbolic'? Or, were there real consequences for meeting or not meeting them?

- F. What, in your understanding, was the main objective of your department? Did you feel that your department's position within the organisation changed during this period?

G. Did you ever perceive a tension between the organisation's mission, and drawing in larger visitor numbers, or having a social impact? If so, can you describe this tension?

H. Were you involved in funding reports? And, did you feel that some kinds of objectives and activities had to be made more visible in these reports? If so, what objectives and activities were thought to be valued in these reports?

Part 3 : Closing (Thank you for your participation, reminder of anonymity, will give you a summary of the PhD when it is finished)

Appendix 4: Ethics Approval



Senate Research Ethics Committee Application for Approval of Research Involving Human Participants

Please tick the box for which Committee you are submitting your application to

<input type="checkbox"/>	Senate Research Ethics Committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cass Business School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Computer Science
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	School of Arts & School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	School of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Department for Learning Enhancement and Development

For **Senate** applications: return one original and eight additional hardcopies of the completed form and any accompanying documents to Anna Ramberg, Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee, University Research Office, Northampton Square, London, EC1V 0HB. Please also email an electronic copy to Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk (indicating the names of those signing the hard copy).

For **Computer Science** applications: a single copy of the application form and all supporting documents should be emailed to Stephanie Wilson S.M.Wilson@city.ac.uk

For **School of Arts & School of Social Sciences** Research Ethics Committee submit a single copy of the application form and all supporting documentation to your Department's Research and Ethics Committee by email.

For **School of Health Sciences** applications: submit all forms (including the Research Registration form) electronically (in Word format in a single document) to A.Welton@city.ac.uk.

For Department for Learning Enhancement and Development a single copy of the application form and all the supporting documentations should be emailed to Pam Parker (P.M.Parker@city.ac.uk).

Refer to the separate guidelines while completing this form.

PLEASE NOTE

- Please determine whether an application is required by going through the checklist before filling out this form.
- Ethical approval **MUST** be obtained before any research involving human participants is undertaken. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary procedures being instigated, and you will not be covered by the University's indemnity if you do not have approval in place.
- You should have completed every section of the form
- The Signature Sections must be completed by the Principal Investigator (the supervisor and the student if it is a student project)

Project Title:
Instrumental Cultural Policy and the Governance of Contemporary Visual Arts Galleries in London: An Analysis of Social Objectives in Cultural Policy Under New Labour
Short Project Title (no more than 80 characters):
Instrumental Cultural Policy and the Governance of Contemporary Visual Arts Organisations in London
Name of Principal Investigator(s) (all students are require to apply jointly with their supervisor and all correspondence will be with the supervisor):
Charlotte Bonham-Carter Professor Andy Pratt
Post Held (including staff/student number):
MPhil/PhD candidate and Professor of Cultural Economy
Department(s)/School(s) involved at City University London:
Department of Culture and Creative Industries/School of Arts and Social Sciences
If this is part of a degree please specify type of degree and year

PhD (commenced in October 2012)

Date of Submission of Application:

December 2014

1. Information for Non-Experts

Lay Title (no more than 80 characters)

Instrumental Cultural Policy and the Governance of Contemporary Visual Arts Galleries in London: An Analysis of Social Objectives in Cultural Policy Under New Labour

Lay Summary / Plain Language Statement (no more than 400 words)

The thesis will explore to what extent instrumental cultural policies have affected contemporary visual arts galleries in London that were regularly funded by the Arts Council England, in the period 1997-2010. An analysis of the policy environment indicates that under New Labour, there was an increased emphasis on the need for art galleries to have social impact. In addition, the political and administrative climate of the time cultivated evidence-based decision-making processes, mounting pressure on galleries to come up with demonstrable measures of success. Yet, the concept of social impact remained ambiguous in policy documents, which discussed a broad range of social objectives including broadening access, combatting social exclusion, strengthening communities and increasing learning and education in the gallery. As a consequence, this thesis hypothesises, art galleries prioritised proxy indicators of social impact, such as counting foot fall, in order to evidence their success. As galleries struggled to secure future funding, these proxy indicators moved from being measures of existent activity, to targets that shaped activity (O'Brien, 2014), and eventually, the organisational structure of contemporary visual art galleries.

This thesis hypothesises that as art galleries struggled to evidence social impact, more resources were give to Learning and Education departments, and equally, as they sought to grow audiences, more resources were allocated to marketing, PR and development departments – effectively altering the governance and organisational structure of the contemporary art gallery. This thesis will analyse human and monetary resources allocated to marketing/PR, education and

fundraising departments, as well as programming, in order to determine whether these initiatives came to preside over other activities, such as programming and production. The thesis will also involve interviews with former employees and analysis of mission and vision statements, in order to determine whether, or to what extent, social impact agendas were embedded within the institutions' core values.

Finally, the thesis considers the effect of instrumental cultural policies on small arts galleries in particular, testing the hypothesis that it was harder for small galleries to build and evidence large audiences (when they may not have seen it as their mission to speak to non-specialist audiences, nor have had large resources to devote to audience development), than it might have been for larger galleries.

Information will be gathered from a small, medium and large ACE regularly funded contemporary visual arts gallery, as well as a contemporary art space that was not an RFO in this period, in order to assess the extent to which the form and function of the gallery changed in the years 1997-2010.

2. Applicant Details

This project involves:

(tick as many as apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Doctoral Student
<input type="checkbox"/>	Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	M-level Project
<input type="checkbox"/>	Externally funded	<input type="checkbox"/>	External investigators
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
Provide details of collaboration and/or other			

Address for correspondence (including email address and telephone number)

(Principal Investigator)

Charlotte Bonham-Carter
 150 Balfour Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 6NE, UK
 Mobile: 07525152711
 Email: charlotte.bonham-carter.1@city.ac.uk

Other staff members involved

<i>Title, Name & Staff Number</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Dept & School</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>

All students involved in carrying out the investigation

<i>Name & Student Number</i>	<i>Course / Year</i>	<i>Dept & School</i>	<i>Email</i>

External co-investigators

<i>Title & Name</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>

Please describe the role(s) of all the investigators including all student(s)/external co-investigator(s) in the project, especially with regards to interaction with study participants.

Charlotte Bonham-Carter will undertake archive research (accessing publicly available annual reports), and will conduct interviews with current and/or former employees at each case study institution.

If external investigators are involved, please provide details of their indemnity cover.

N/A

Application Details

2.1 Is this application being submitted to another ethics committee, or has it been previously submitted to an ethics committee? This includes an NHS local

Research Ethics Committee or a City University London School Research Ethics Committee or any other institutional committee or collaborating partners or research site. (See the guidelines for more information on research involving NHS staff/patients/ premises.)

YES NO

If yes, please provide details for the Secretary for the relevant authority/committee, as well as copies of any correspondence setting out conditions of approval.

2.2 If any part of the investigation will be carried out under the auspices of an outside organisation, e.g. a teaching hospital, please give details and address of organisation.

N/A

2.3 Other approvals required – has permission to conduct research in, at or through another institution or organisation been obtained?

YES NO

If yes, please provide details and include correspondence

No – all annual reports are publicly available. Permission to interview current employees will be obtained from the relevant institutions.

2.4 Is any part of this research project being considered by another research ethics committee?

YES NO

If yes, please give details and justification for going to separate committees, and attach correspondence and outcome

2.5 Duration of Project

Start date: September 2014

Estimated end date: September 2018

Funding Details

2.6 Please provide details of the source of financial support (if any) for the proposed investigation.

N/A

2.6a Total amount of funding being sought:

N/A

2.6b Has funding been approved?

YES

NO

If no, please provide details of when the outcome can be expected

No funding is required.

2.6c Does the funding body have any requirements regarding retention, access and storage of the data?

YES NO

If yes, please provide details

N/A

International Research

2.7 Is any part of the research taking place outside of England/Wales? (if not go to section 3)

YES NO

If yes, please provide details of where

2.7a Have you identified and complied with all local requirements concerning ethical approval & research governance*?

YES NO

2.7b Please provide details of the local requirements, including contact information.

2.7c Please give contact details of a local person identified to field initial complaints local so the participants can complain without having to write to or telephone the UK

*Please note many countries require local ethical approval or registration of research projects, further some require specific research visas. If you do not abide by the local rules of the host country you will invalidate your ethical approval from City University London, and may run the risk of legal action within the host country.

3. Project Details

3.1 Provide the background, aim and explanation for the proposed research.

In the current climate of austerity, museums have had to make convincing arguments to central government about the value of the museum, in order to secure public money. Since the New Labour administration came to power in 1997, cultural policy documents have repeatedly emphasised the importance of museums having social impact. Yet, the concept of social impact remained ambiguous in policy documents, which discussed a broad range of social objectives including broadening access, combatting social exclusion, strengthening communities and increasing learning and education in the gallery. Due to the ambiguous nature of the social impact agenda, coupled with the need for demonstrable measures of success – a process that has been normalised in the auditing culture of British public institutions – art galleries relied upon proxy indicators of social impact, such as counting footfall to evidence their success. The thesis uses the theoretical framework of the New Public Management, to analyse how a culture of auditing in the UK has affected the contemporary art gallery in particular.

In order to assess the extent to which the form and function of the gallery changed over the years 1997-2010. Studio Voltaire, Beaconsfield, INIVA and the Whitechapel are all employed as case studies.



3.2 Provide a summary and brief explanation of the design, methodology and plan for analysis that you propose to use.

First, I will establish the policy environment in the period 1997-2010, by looking at key policy documents, which are all publicly available online.

Second, I will examine the publicly available annual reports of each case study institution, which include information on budget allocation across departments, human resourcing across departments and footfall statistics. Case studies are drawn from a list of visual arts organisations in London, in the ACE National portfolio, that are primarily concerned with the presentation of contemporary art through exhibitions (i.e. galleries). From this list of 18 galleries, I have selected galleries that receive low (£1-£250K), medium (£500-£1million)¹¹ and high (over £1million) levels of support from ACE. As such, I have selected the following galleries as case studies: Beaconsfield (low), INIVA (middle) and Whitechapel (high), as well as Studio Voltaire, which did not become an NPO until 2011.

In order to approach the research question, I will establish **Q1: Was there a change in how resources were allocated across departments in contemporary visual arts gallery in the period 1997-2010? And, Q2: Does this change imply the prioritisation of audience development over other activities?** These questions can be answered by observing the swelling and/or deflating of different departments over the period, as evidenced by analysing the amount of human and monetary resources being allocated to specific departments each year, and as a percentage of overall budgets. More resources (as a percentage of overall resources) being directed to marketing/PR and education, and as opposed to programming, would back up the hypothesis that these activities came to preside over other activities, and further, that indicators (i.e. footfall statistics) that were intended to measure existing activity, had come to shape the institution.

While this data collection will offer a useful numerical picture of the extent to which

¹¹ There are no galleries in receipt of £250K-£500K.

each case study institution developed in line with social impact agendas, the statistical picture tells us little about how embedded these developments were within the ethos of the institution and how they affected the character, programme and mission of the organisation. To approach these questions, the research will also involve interviews. I will conduct interviews with current and former employees of the institutions being discussed, in the period 1997-2010. As I am interested in the role of learning, marketing/PR and programming departments, it will be necessary to interview employees from the learning, marketing/PR and curatorial departments of each institution, as well as the Director. I will interview the most senior former employee in each of these posts from 1997-2010, as long as they held the post for at least 3 years - in order to ensure their involvement in, and understanding of, the institution was substantial.

Alongside the quantitative analysis, interviews will offer a fuller picture of developments within these institutions.

3.3 Please explain your plans for dissemination, including whether participants will be provided with any information on the findings or outcomes of the project.

I plan to present the numerical findings to each interview subject, for comment. Segments of the thesis may be published in academic journals.

3.4 What do you consider are the ethical issues associated with conducting this research and how do you propose to address them?

I propose to offer all participants full anonymity.

All participants will be given a 'Participant Information Sheet,' clearly detailing the project, and their role within it, as well as the interview process. They will be asked to sign a consent form to ensure that they are participating from an informed position.

Some interview subjects may have concerns about revealing their thoughts on their former workplace. In order to address this, participants will be referred to by a pseudonym, ensuring full anonymity.

3.5 How is the research intended to benefit the participants, third parties and/or local community?

There is some debate at the moment about the percentage of funding that arts institutions spend on auxiliary activity (i.e. marketing), particularly when viewed in comparison to that which is spent on supporting artists or artistic production. Therefore, it will be interesting to see how institutions' departmental budget allocations have changed over the years, in case this study reveals findings that could be used to advocate higher production/programming budgets. In addition, there are a number of networks (i.e., Common Practice) of small arts organisations advocating the value of small institutions, often in response to a perceived lack of value when they are compared to larger institutions that reach much broader audiences. This study may be useful for small arts organisations wanting to make the case that increasing audience numbers is a difficult, even irrelevant, goal for them to pursue.

3.6a Will invasive procedures (for example medical or surgical) be used?

YES

NO X

3.6b If yes, what precautions will you take to minimise any potential harm?

N/A

3.7a Will intrusive procedures (for example psychological or social) be used?

YES

NO X

3.7b If yes, what precautions will you take to minimise any potential harm?

N/A

3.8a In the course of the investigation might pain, discomfort (including psychological discomfort), inconvenience or danger be caused?

YES NO X

3.8b If yes, what precautions will you take to minimise any potential harm?

N/A

3.9 Please describe the nature, duration and frequency of the procedures?

I will interview each participant once, for approximately 30-40 min.

4. Information on participants

4.1a How many participants will be involved?

Approximately 40 (four posts for each institution, each post held for three years) .

4.1b What is the age group and gender of the participants?

25+, male and female

4.1c Explain how you will determine your sample size and the selection criteria you will be using. Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria. If exclusion of participants is made on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, race, disability, sexuality, religion or any other factor, please explain and justify why.

Case studies are drawn from a list of visual arts organisations in London, in the ACE National portfolio, that are primarily concerned with the presentation of contemporary art through exhibitions (i.e. galleries). From this list of 18 galleries, I have selected galleries that receive low (£1-£250K), medium (£500-£1million) and high (over £1million) levels of support from ACE. As such, I have selected the following galleries as case studies: Beaconsfield (low), INIVA (middle) and Whitechapel (high), as well as Studio Voltaire, which did not become an NPO until 2011.

I will interview the most senior former employees in each of these posts from 1997-2010, as long as they held the post for at least 3 years - in order to ensure their involvement in, and understanding of, the institution was substantial.

4.2 How are the participants to be identified, approached and recruited, and by whom?

Participants are identified through a variety of means. In some cases, names of personnel occupying particular posts are available from annual reports over the

specified period. Where this information is not available, I will rely on current post holders to recall previous post holders. I will approach participants via email, and will explain the context of the research and ask to meet them in person for a further introduction into the research, and short interview.

4.3 Describe the procedure that will be used when seeking and obtaining consent, including when consent will be obtained. Include details of who will obtain the consent, how are you intending to arrange for a copy of the signed consent form for the participants, when will they receive it and how long the participants have between receiving information about the study and giving consent.

Participants will receive a 'Participant Information Sheet,' providing details on the project, and their role within it, when they are initially contacted via email, requesting an interview. Please see the attached 'Participant Information Sheet' for further information on this. If subjects agree in principle to participate, then they will be sent a consent form, which will be signed and returned to me upon first meeting in person, and before the interview. If employees are still employed by the institution in question, I will first seek consent from the appropriate authority (ie gallery director), and then seek consent from the employee.

4.4 How will the participant's physical and mental suitability for participation be assessed? Are there any issues related to the ability of participants to give informed consent themselves or are you relying on gatekeepers on their behalf?

There are no issues relating to the ability of participants to give informed consent themselves. Having been working professionals in the industry, they should be well adjusted to making informed decisions. If there was any indication otherwise, participation in the study will be terminated.

4.5 Are there any special pressures that might make it difficult to refuse to take part in the study? Are any of the potential participants in a dependent relationship with any of the investigators (for instance student, colleague or employee) particularly those involved in recruiting for or conducting the project?

There are no special pressures to participate, and there are no dependent relationships within the study design.

4.6 Will the participant's doctor be notified?

YES NO

(If so, provide a sample letter to the subject's GP.)

4.7 What procedures are in place for the appropriate referral of a study participant who discloses an emotional, psychological, health, education or other issue during the course of the research or is identified by the researcher to have such a need?

N/A

4.8 What steps will be taken to safeguard the participants from over-research? (i.e. to ensure that the participants are not being used in multiple research project.)

There would be no cause to believe any participants are in danger of over-research.

4.9 Where will the research take place?

Interviews will take place at a public location agreed between the researcher and the participant. In addition, data will be collected from annual reports. Annual reports are available online, within the institution's archives or by request from the institution's archivist.

4.10 What health and safety issues, if any, are there to consider?

N/A

4.11 How have you addressed the health and safety concerns of the participants, researchers and any other people impacted by this study? (This includes research involving going into participants' homes.)

Interviews will not take place at participants' homes, but in public places, such as cafés.

4.12 It is a University requirement that an at least an initial assessment of risk is undertaken for all research and if necessary a more detailed risk assessment be carried out. Has a risk assessment been undertaken?*

YES xNO

4.13 Are you offering any incentives or rewards for participating? YES

NO x

If yes please give details

*Note that it is the Committee's prerogative to ask to view risk assessments.

5. Vulnerable groups

5.1 Will persons from any of the following groups be participating in the study?

(if not go to section 6)

Adults without capacity to consent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>
Those with learning disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prisoners	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerable adults	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young offenders (16-21 years)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Those who would be considered to have a particular dependent relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, employees, colleagues)	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.2 Will you be recruiting or have direct contact with any children under the age of 18?

YES

NO X

5.2a If yes, please give details of the child protection procedures you propose to adopt should there be any evidence of or suspicion of harm (physical, emotional or sexual) to a young person. Include a referral protocol identifying what to do and who should be contacted.

5.2b Please give details of how you propose to ensure the well-being of the young person, particularly with respect to ensuring that they do not feel pressured to take part in the research and that they are free to withdraw from the study without any prejudice to themselves at anytime.

5.3 Will you be recruiting or have direct contact with vulnerable adults? YES
 NO X

5.3a If yes, please give details of the protection procedures you propose to adopt should there be any evidence of or suspicion of harm (physical, emotional or sexual) to a vulnerable adult. Include a referral protocol identifying what to do and who should be contacted.

5.3b Please give details of how you propose to ensure the well-being of the vulnerable adult, particularly with respect to ensuring that they do not feel pressured to take part in the research and that they are free to withdraw from the study without any prejudice to themselves at anytime. You should indicate how you intend to ascertain that person's views and wishes.

5.3c Please give details of any City staff or students who will have contact with vulnerable adults and/or will have contact with young people (under the age of 18) and details of current (within the last 3 years) City University London Disclosure and Barring check.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Dept & School</i>	<i>Student/Staff Number</i>	<i>Date of DBS</i>	<i>Type of disclosure</i>

5.3d Please give details of any non-City staff or students who will have contact with vulnerable adults and/or will have contact with young people (under the age of 18) and details of current (within the last 3 years) Disclosure and Barring check.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Address of organisation that requested the disclosure</i>	<i>Date of DBS</i>	<i>Type of disclosure</i>

5.4 Will you be recruiting any participants who fall under the Mental Capacity Act 2005?

YES NO

If so you MUST get approval from an NHS NRES approved committee (see separate guidelines for more information).

6. Data Collection

6.1a Please indicate which of the following you will be using to collect your data

Please tick all that apply

Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interviews	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Participant observation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio/digital-recording interviewees or events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Video recording	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physiological measurements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quantitative research (please provide details)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please give details	Data will be collected from publicly available annual reports. Data includes: budget allocation across

	departments and human resource allocation across departments. In addition, vision and mission statements will be coded, to analyse key themes within them, such as education, outreach, experimental programming, etc.
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6.1b What steps, if any, will be taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the participants (including companies)?

Interviewees will be given a pseudonym, and ensured full anonymity in any publication arising from the research.
--

6.1c If you are using interviews or focus groups, please provide a topic guide

Topics include: 1) Research pitch and informed consent 2) Gather basic information about the interviewee's role within the organisation 3) Discussion of the organisation's mission 4) Discussion of organisation's priorities and values 5) Discussion of programme 6) Discussion of the importance of the organisation having social impact 7) Comment of numerical findings of resource allocation

7. Confidentiality and Data Handling

7.1a Will the research involve:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete anonymity of participants (i.e. researchers will not meet, or know the identity of participants, as participants are a part of a random sample and are required to return responses with no form of personal identification)? 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anonymised sample or data (i.e. an <i>irreversible</i> process whereby identifiers are removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers. It is then impossible to identify the individual to whom the sample of information relates)? 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • de-identified samples or data (i.e. a <i>reversible</i> process whereby identifiers are replaced by a code, to which the researcher retains the key, in a secure location)? 	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subjects being referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from the research 	X (individual interviewees, but not institutions)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any other method of protecting the privacy of participants? (e.g. use of direct quotes with specific permission only; use of real name with specific, written permission only) 	
Please give details of 'any other method of protecting the privacy of participants' is used	

7.1b Which of the following methods of assuring confidentiality of data will be implemented?

Please tick all that apply

• data to be kept in a locked filing cabinet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• data and identifiers to be kept in separate, locked filing cabinets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• access to computer files to be available by password only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• storage at City University London	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• stored at other site	<input type="checkbox"/>
If stored at another site, please give details	

7.1c Who will have access to the data?

Access by named researcher(s) only YES

NO

Access by people other than named researcher(s) YES

NO

If people other than the named researcher(s), please explain by whom and for what purpose

7.2a Is the data intended for reuse or to be shared as part of longitudinal research?

YES NO

7.2b Is the data intended for reuse or to be shared as part of a different/wider research project now, or in the future?

YES NO

7.2c Does the funding body (e.g. ESRC) require that the data be stored and made available for reuse/sharing?

YES NO

7.2d If you have responded yes to any of the questions above, explain how you are intending to obtain explicit consent for the reuse and/or sharing of the data.

Participants will be informed in writing, in the 'Participant Information Sheet,' and in person, that findings may be used in any publication that arises from this now, or in the future. Again, all participants (interviewees) will be anonymised.

7.3 Retention and Destruction of Data

7.3a Does the funding body or your professional organisation/affiliation place obligations or recommendations on the retention and destruction of research data?

YES

NO

If yes, what are your affiliations/funding and what are the requirements? (If no, please refer to University guidelines on retention.)

7.3b How long are you intending to keep the data?

Interview data will be kept for three years after the end of the project. If there is any cause to extend that period, I will reapply to the ethics committee to consider the extension.

7.3c How are you intending to destroy the data after this period?

Interview data will be permanently deleted from the computer on which it is stored (and the hard drive on which it is backed up).

8. Curriculum Vitae

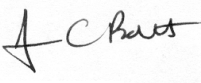
CV OF APPLICANTS (Please duplicate this page for each applicant, including external persons and students involved.)

NAME:	Charlotte Bonham-Carter
CURRENT POST (from)	MPhil/PhD student
Title of Post:	Researcher
Department:	Culture and Creative Industries
Is your post funded for the duration of this proposal?	No
Funding source (if not City University London)	
Please give a summary of your training/experience that is relevant to this research project	
I currently work as an Associate Professor of Visual Arts Management and Curating, at Richmond University, London. I have eight years of experience working in the art world, often dealing with sensitive and confidential information.	

8.1 Supervisor's statement on the student's skills and ability to carry out the proposed research, as well as the merits of the research topic (up to 500 words)

As Ms Bonham-Carter's supervisor I am very pleased to support this ethics application. I have read through, and discussed, the research and the potential ethical issues that might be encountered in it. I am content that any potential risks have been mitigated through appropriate research design. The proposal has my full support

--

Supervisor's Signature	
Print Name	Professor Andy C Pratt

9. [Participant Information Sheet](#) and 10. [Consent Form](#)

Please use the templates provided below for the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. They should be used for all research projects and by both staff and students. Note that there are occasions when you will need to include additional information, or make slight changes to the standard text – more information can be found under the [application guidelines](#).


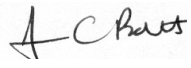
11. Additional Information

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12. Declarations by Investigator(s)

- I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above, together with any accompanying information, is complete and correct.

- I have read the University's guidelines on human research ethics, and accept the responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application.
- I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting the project.
- I understand that **no** research work involving human participants or data can commence until **full** ethical approval has been given

	Print Name	Signature
Principal Investigator(s) (student and supervisor if student project)	Charlotte Bonham-Carter Professor Andy Pratt	 
Associate Dean for Research (or equivalent) or authorised signatory		
Date	2 December 2014	

9. Template for Participant Information Sheet

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED 'PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET'

10. Template for Consent Form

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED 'CONSENT FORM'

Researcher's checklist for compliance with the Data Protection Act, 1998

This checklist is for use alongside the *Guidance notes on Research and the Data Protection Act 1998*. Please refer to the notes for a full explanation of the requirements.

You may choose to keep this form with your research project documentation so that you can prove that you have taken into account the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

	REQUIREMENT	✓	
A	<i>Meeting the conditions for the research exemptions:</i>		
1	The information is being used <i>exclusively</i> for research purposes.	x	Mandatory
2	You are not using the information to support measures or decisions relating to <i>any</i> identifiable living individual.	x	Mandatory
3	You are not using the data in a way that will cause, or is likely to cause, substantial damage or substantial distress to any data subject.	x	Mandatory
4	You will not make the result of your research, or any resulting statistics, available in a form that identifies the data subject.	x	Mandatory
B	<i>Meeting the conditions of the First Data Protection Principle:</i>		
1	You have fulfilled one of the conditions for using personal data, e.g. you have obtained consent from the data subject. Indicate which condition you have fulfilled here: _____ ConsentForm _____ _____ _____	X	Mandatory

2	<p>If you will be using sensitive personal data you have fulfilled one of the conditions for using sensitive personal data, e.g. you have obtained explicit consent from the data subject. Indicate which condition you have fulfilled here:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		Mandatory if using sensitive data
3	<p>You have informed data subjects of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. What you are doing with the data; ii. Who will hold the data, usually City University London; iii. Who will have access to or receive copies of the data. 	X	Mandatory unless B4 applies
4	<p>You are excused from fulfilling B3 only if all of the following conditions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The data has been obtained from a third party; ii. Provision of the information would involve disproportionate effort; iii. You record the reasons for believing that disproportionate effort applies, please also give brief details here: <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>N.B. Please see the guidelines above when assessing disproportionate effort.</p>		Required only when claiming disproportionate effort
C	<i>Meeting the conditions of the Third Data Protection Principle:</i>		
1	You have designed the project to collect as much information as you need for your research but not more information than you need.	X	Mandatory
D	<i>Meeting the conditions of the Fourth Data Protection Principle:</i>		
1	You will take reasonable measures to ensure that the information you collect is accurate.	X	Mandatory
2	Where necessary you have put processes in place to keep the information up to date.	X	Mandatory

E	Meeting the conditions of the Sixth Data Protection Principle:		
1	<p>You have made arrangements to comply with the rights of the data subject. In particular you have made arrangements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Inform the data subject that you are going to use their personal data. ii. Stop using an individual's data if it is likely to cause unwarranted substantial damage or substantial distress to the data subject or another. iii. Ensure that no decision, which significantly affects a data subject, is based solely on the automatic processing of their data. iv. Stop, rectify, erase or destroy the personal data of an individual, if necessary. <p>Please give brief details of the measures you intend to take here:</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">ii</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	X	Mandatory

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