Intangible heritage in multicultural Brussels: 
A case study of identity and performance.

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Declaration

I, Catherine Burkinshaw, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Intangible heritage in multicultural Brussels: A case study of identity and performance”, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

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Introduction

Made up of residents and artists it highlights the rich culture of Brussels, which is by definition cosmopolitan and pluralistic, and is the expression of a desire to build bridges between the 18 municipalities and the city centre, between the people of Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia, by mobilising the (socio) cultural associations.¹

Heritage, performance, identity, difference and belonging: these are the concepts on which my dissertation is based. I set out to explore the ways in which a cultural project in Brussels is trying to bridge the gap between both the majority cultures and the minority cultures in the city. The case study is the Zinneke Parade, which has taken place in Brussels biennially for only fifteen years. It is an unusual example of contemporary heritage production in that it does not hark back to an imagined past or people, but instead

is consciously present-focused. Its name originates from the Brussels dialect word for a person of the part-Flemish, part-Wallonian Brussels community. I was curious to see how this part-social cohesion project and part-created ritual functioned from the point of view of those involved.

Brussels is a thriving multicultural city, with two majority cultures – Wallonian and Flemish – and a significant minority culture population, most prominently from the Maghreb. On top of that is layered the European Union (EU) community, comprised of people who work for the EU institutions or in related organisations. This heady mix of different peoples in a single space has had visible effects on the identity of Brussels as a place of diversity, but the potential for intermixing is limited by the structural organisation of cultures.

Belgium’s consociational governance, that is, a “structural compromise between communities separated along broadly geographical lines”, was intended to ensure that resources are divided fairly between the two majority cultures.² Both Flemish and Wallonian authorities hold a portion of power in the capital region in a doubled structure of bureaucracy, leaving minorities the choice to pursue assistance from either or both. Funding for socio-cultural activities is intended to serve either the French or Flemish-speaking community, with partial efforts to include English-speakers. On paper, the system minimises the possibilities for intercultural projects, whilst the two governments pursue a muddle of multiculturalist and assimilationist policies. In my field research, respondents felt very clearly that the bureaucratic structure provides scant opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges and effectively perpetuates separation among communities.

In this divided and rapidly diversifying city, the millennial celebrations for the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) brought new possibilities for joint projects. The Zinneke Parade was born partly from a desire to bring together the different communities of Brussels and show how they could work together to create something new. Initially funded only for the first iteration, this parade has become one of the few events from Brussels ECoC 2000 to be continued through the efforts of its small leadership team. Part

of this paper explores the intercultural aspect of this project, how participants perceive its aims, and their impressions of the effects.

On the other hand there is the intangible heritage perspective of the case study: the parade is a ritual which, like other public forms of memorialisation, carries and transmits meaning. Objects, places or practices can be recognised as heritage by individuals or groups. This means that they imbue the thing with meaning pertaining to an identity, often rooted in the past, for example a parade to commemorate the casualties of a war. The practice acts as a connection between the group in the present (contemporary society) and the imagined group in the past (ancestral soldiers). Participating in the commemoration signifies identification with the group and provides people with a way to express or perform their identity – both to other group members and those outside the group. The other purpose of this paper is to investigate to what extent this new ritual is a part of the participants’ identity constructions, and what meaning they are ascribing to the parade.

This paper sets out to answer these interrelated questions: How is this new heritage ritual being created and given meaning? How is it being formulated as an intercultural integration project? And linking these two perspectives, how is the Zinneke Parade being shaped by, and giving shape to, Brussels communities’ identity constructions?

Through heritages, having them recognised and supported, groups are able to bolster their sense of identity and legitimacy. Heritages connect to at least one narrative, usually a collective public narrative, and even support conflicting narratives. In the recent boom of heritage industry expansion, whereby a widening array of objects, places and intangible elements have successfully gained heritage status, more diverse groups of society than ever before have laid claim to “self-narratives” and public recognition.3 This multiplying of memory in the public sphere disrupts existing narratives and exposes silences, as I shall demonstrate in my analysis. Minority groups have gained a greater public voice as a result of these and other developments in identity politics.

Understanding how minorities and, in this case, two majorities negotiate their shared space in the medium of this heritage project can give insight into how the groups’ various identity constructs are being re-constructed and re-negotiated. From this we can see who

is being included or excluded from specific groups and how. Citizenship is one of the few concrete ways that the state can formally include an individual in the national community, and validate the collective identity. In response to the changing diversity of modern societies, political theorists from various multicultural societies have been calling for an expanded and more flexible concept of citizenship for over two decades. I hope this paper may highlight a model heritage project which can negotiate wider and more inclusive identities for the many communities who might have a stake in them. In turn we can observe the effects of various government policies and gain an impression of their reception by those most affected. Studying how projects can create open communication spaces between many cultures allows us to observe the ways a positive dialogue can arise from that. Lastly, the way such an event can arise from a community level and be self-sustaining can serve as an exemplar of a successful community cohesion project.

The approach

I began from the normative position that positive intercultural exchanges should be encouraged, and studied the ways in which the Brussels federal system works in regard to this, and where the Zinneke Parade sits in this system. From there I determined to find more in-depth data from those most closely involved. By targeting local cultural animators I hoped to find the most relevant information about how the parade functioned and the wider interactions of the various ethnocultural communities in Brussels. Whilst this could have been gained by going to various different cultural organisations from each community, focusing on a single pan-Brussels event offered the most direct route to information regarding a wide variety of communities. The absence of particular groups was as visible using this method as by approaching them individually.

The background research was approached via the two disciplines of heritage and multicultural studies. Consulting sources from the leading scholars in my specific topics, I found there was much overlap. In heritage studies, plural cultures are beginning to be a more widely considered aspect of heritage management, whilst issues of heritage and cultural policies are an established strand of multicultural studies. By overtly linking the two, I was able to draw out parallels and make conclusions from the data gathered.

Despite the parade taking place in Brussels, seat of the European Union, it was with a sense of irony I found that this was the one part of Brussels society that was glaringly
absent from the event – the community, the policies, or the funding. Further research would benefit from greater consideration of the EU’s role in such events, especially the ECoC initiative, which inaugurated the Zinneke Parade. Although I had intended to include such material, I found my respondents had so little concern for the ECoC aspect of Zinneke or indeed anything relating to the EU that it seemed expedient to minimise this analysis. Further studies would no doubt be able to reveal interesting insights into why those situated nearest to the EU and its workings felt apparently so little connected with it.

**Chapter order**

In the first chapter, I discuss the key concepts and literature in the field of heritage studies. Covering the developments from the ‘heritage fever’ of the last several decades, I outline theories about the qualitative change in the way Europe chooses its heritage and the function this fulfils. This pertains to the collective narratives ascribed to heritage objects, and here I expand on the concept of collective memory. In particular, the embodiment of memory in ritual and the importance of performance in the public sphere. I discuss the significance of place as a site of memory, and the effect of globalisation and internationally mobile societies. Lastly, the increasing plurality of heritages and the EU cultural policies are considered.

Leading into multicultural studies, chapter two delves into the increasing diversity, or super-diversity of modern European societies and the various national responses. Key among these was multiculturalism theory, and I outline the essential points from leading political scientists in the field. This approach has faced a crisis of public confidence, which I discuss along with the political and academic responses. The crisis has led to the rise of a new and questionably differentiated theory, interculturalism. Here I discuss some key differences and the posited improvements that interculturalism offers. Finally, I examine the Belgian integration approach and the balance of power between the two linguistic majorities.

Chapter three takes the key concepts of the above literature review as the framework for the discourse analysis. Considering the responses gained from the field research interviews, I analyse the Zinneke Parade from the different disciplinary perspectives. In particular, the themes of identity construction and expanded group identities were very
evident from the respondents’ accounts. I highlight indications that Zinneke is beginning to carry a cultural narrative as a new ritual. The conflicting narratives of the purpose of the project – artistic or integrationist – are also considered, and the perceived effects of the parade over its lifetime. Finally, I discuss the conspicuous absence of the EU community from respondents’ account of Zinneke, and my hypotheses for this.

To conclude, I discuss the importance of localism to the Zinneke Parade, and its place in contemporary heritage developments. Its highly targeted group of participants and lack of commercialisation makes the project more one of urban and social development than a touristic display, although tourists are an inevitable part of the audience. I cover its limitations and drawbacks, and summarise the different narratives which construct the project. Lastly I outline the challenge for multicultural societies to create an open, plural public space.
Terminology

There are various terms and commonly used words throughout this paper that I have used in specific ways, particular to the disciplines I am associating them with.

Collective Memory. I shall discuss this concept more fully below, but when using the terms collective memory and collective narrative I am using them according to Aleida Assmann’s model: a representation or account of the past which is claimed to be shared by a larger group of people, but not automatically by all members of the group.4

Culture. A term which is barely reducible to a simple definition, I have not examined the nature of culture here. Where I have used the term cultural representations or cultural signifiers, I am referring to the representation of culture in physical or intangible forms – for example, artworks or rituals. When discussing the European Capital of Culture programme, I have used ‘culture’ in the sense that the programme’s discourse most often uses (there is no formal definition available). Nicole Immler and Hans Sakkers have described this definition as referring to artistic, creative and heritage life of the city in question, but also considering “its potential to create new forms of solidarity, via strengthening ‘local bonding’ and linking it to global references at the same time.”5 Finally, where I have used the term cultures I mean a society or group embodied by diverse communities.6 These could be geographically situated or diasporic.

Cultural Animator. A term which has sprung up from the Euro-English spoken in Brussels which denotes, loosely, any person working on the cultural sector, frequently with youth and the public, but could equally be a project manager who has only limited connection with the general public. Most of the staff of a cultural centre could be described by this term.

5 Nicole Immler and Hans Sakkers, “(Re)programming Europe: European Capitals of Culture: Rethinking the role of culture,” Journal of European Studies 44: 1 (2014), 23.
6 “Roland Posner has articulated a triple characterization of culture as a society, i.e. a set of individuals whose mutual relations are organized in specific social institutions; as a civilization, i.e. a set of artefacts that are produced and used by the members of this society; and as a mentality (a system of values and ideas, morals and customs), i.e. a set of conventions that control the social institutions and determine the functions and meanings of the artefacts (Posner, 1991:121-123),” Joris Vlasselaers, “The Modern City: A Symbolic Space of Memory and a Crucible for Multiculturalism?” Literator 23 (2002), 99.
Cultural Centre. In Belgium (as in many European countries) there are two networks of cultural centres which each serve the community in which they are based: one Francophone, one Flemish. These also function in each municipality of the Brussels-capital region. They often function as social hubs for the community, and are a key resource in the process of integration and cultural activities. They have the resources and professional staff to promote both.

Heritage and Intangible Heritage. In European discourses, heritage has most usually been associated with material forms, such as museums, relics, or physical spaces. This tendency to frame heritage in material forms has led to the development of the term intangible heritage when considering practices or rituals “that might previously have been called ‘tradition’. In this way, a museum, its contents, and the practice of having museums for the public are each, in their own way, heritages. I have used ‘intangible heritage’ in this way, but have used ‘heritage’ to indicate both material and intangible forms.

Participant. Any person, whether organiser, group member or member of the general public, who is involved with any part of the Zinneke project. Generally this involves being part of the Zinnodes and performing in the parade, but may be someone who joins only for the preparations, only for the parade, or any other combination.

Respondent. One of the people who I contacted as part of this research project, and who granted me an interview. Their comments shaped the course of this research and which topics are examined. I prefer to reflect this active contribution by referring to them as respondents rather than interviewees.

Zinnode. The parade is made up of different subdivisions called Zinnodes whose members prepare and perform their own showcase during the parade, whether this be musical, costumed performances, dance, or something else entirely. These subdivisions are themselves an assemblage of existing social, cultural or other groups, schoolchildren, and individuals. Participants from the public are not chosen at random, but deliberately targeted by the coordinators based on their varying ideology and pre-existing connections, with a small number of volunteers who join independently of this recruiting process.

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7 Macdonald, Memorylands, 17.
Methodology

My methodology was influenced by the oral history discipline in that I conducted semi-structured interviews, and the field of critical discourse analysis in how the resulting transcripts (plus additional Zinneke promotional materials) were analysed for content. Using pertinent theories in cultural anthropology and multiculturalism studies, I have highlighted facets of the case study for discussion. This is only partial treatment of the complexity that is the Zinneke Parade, but provides a window onto contemporary issues being mediated by new heritage projects.

In analysing the various narratives gathered during the field research, one must bear in mind that there is no single meaning of any discourse – meaning is contextual and located in the text’s meaning, intention, and interpretation all at once. Conducting discourse analysis means developing multiple explanations or interpretations, which makes it fundamentally suited to interdisciplinary approaches. In this instance I have drawn on discourse analysis to supplement my other disciplinary perspectives.

Initial quantitative research, including examining the population statistics and bureaucratic structures of Belgium and Brussels in particular, established the framework for the field research approach. For this I chose a qualitative interview methodology with a sample of eleven respondents. The resulting recordings were transcribed, at some points translated, and the transcripts thematically analysed for content using a grounded theory approach. This involved coding the transcripts according to emergent themes and inductively arriving at theories which connect to the literature discussed below. I used the same system to analyse the website articles and promotional booklet provided to me by the Zinneke team. This method was the most suitable for my research question as I wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of the workings of one organisational group, and I needed to be able to adapt my method according to my initial findings. For instance,

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9 Some respondents made comments in French which were translated for me by the transcriber, a native French speaker.
I was able to revise my questions when it became apparent that there was conspicuous silence vis-à-vis the EU community of Brussels.

The discourse of the interviews was of course influenced by both my participation and the format of the discourse itself. It is undoubtedly true that I would have received different answers to my questions if they were posed in a different medium – moreover, I would have formulated different questions.\textsuperscript{11} My respondents would have presented a slightly different narrative of their experiences with Zinneke, used different words and language structures. Also, their expectations of the interview may have led some to critically reflect on what they would say in advance, while others will have responded more spontaneously. Due to the fact that I am interpreting the oral interaction as well as the transcribed text, there is more contextual information available to me than to the reader, which affects my interpretation.

I chose to limit the sample to people who had been involved in various leadership positions within the project. This meant a small sample of people who I hypothesised would have more detailed knowledge and recollections of the project’s aims, execution and effects. I chose not to gather data from a large sample of the general public participants for logistical reasons. My analysis of the resulting interviews suggests that this would be an extremely interesting further step to take, in order to gain a better impression of the effects of the parade on the participants.

The sample included only Zinneke organisers who had been active in at least the most recent iteration of the parade (2014), so that the data would be as up-to-date as possible. Having solicited the organisers whose contact details were publicly available via the Zinneke website, the final sample comprised all those who agreed to be interviewed in person (in English). The qualitative interviews comprised a plan of general topics to cover, but without questions to be asked in a specific way or order.\textsuperscript{12} From my initial research and examination of the Zinneke website I formulated a list of questions (see Appendix I). I also took an excerpt from a concurrently running local exhibition at the BIP, the House of the Capital Region, which mentioned the origins of the word zinneke.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} For a fuller discussion of how discourse is shaped by format, see Johnstone, \textit{Discourse Analysis}.
\textsuperscript{12} Earl Babbie, \textit{The Practice of Social Research} 12\textsuperscript{th} edited by (Belmont: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, 2013), 318.
\textsuperscript{13} The BIP hosts educational exhibitions relevant to the Brussels capital region. For more information, see \url{http://bip.brussels/en}.
This functioned as a further prompt and discussion-starter for respondents to consider (see Appendix II). At each interview, consent to quote the interview was gained.

I am categorising my respondents as ‘organisers’ of Zinneke, but should acknowledge that they were a widely divergent group of people who played different roles in the process, and possessed differing amounts of power and influence over the outcomes. The common feature among them is that they were part of the organisational structure, and partially separate from the members of the public (who I suggest have the least influence over the aims of the project, if not the outcome). However, they sometimes participated at the same level of the members of the public during the creative process, so the boundaries are not fixed.

There are many factors to consider with the interview methodology. The prepared questions were not used exhaustively or in strict order. David Lance, an oral historian, suggests that rigid adherence to questionnaires cannot adequately accommodate “the unexpected and valuable twists and turns of an informant’s memory”, and in fact hinders “the natural and spontaneous dialogue” that I was seeking.¹⁴ A methodological drawback to interviewing is that there is no guarantee of equal levels of understanding between interviewer and the different respondents. Each interview was a one-off, and a first meeting. Unlike many oral history projects, where an individual is interviewed over many hours, there was very little time to reach a shared understanding of the terminology used, especially given the added complication that all respondents were speaking in a second language. Accommodation theory claims that interlocutors will exhibit adaptive behaviour, modifying their speaking styles to gradually converge when they identify with each other.¹⁵ I was intentionally practising this during the interviews to create a sympathetic discussion and to potentially elicit more personal responses. This was particularly apparent in the interview with the Zinneke director, Myriam Stoffen, who has previously been an academic researcher. I found that we already shared a ‘common language’ to discuss the more abstract concepts involved.

My influence on the process is evident in the transcripts. The dialogues were co-created between myself and the respondent, which means respondents’ utterances were

¹⁵ Johnstone, Discourse Analysis, 147.
contingent on my presence, my questions and word choices, and my reactions – and their response to these factors. I found during the interviews that certain phrases and themes were repeated. I suggest that this is partly because Zinneke’s organisers have, over time, developed a ‘common language’. This narrative discourse which describes what they do and why they do it, finding ways of representing Zinneke to the world via media and participants. I contend that it was too consistent to be purely a response to my questions and word choices. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that language profoundly influences the way we categorise and understand the world. According to this theory, the Zinneke organisers are being influenced to understand the project in a certain way by the development of this common language. This is a fascinating possibility that I sadly did not have time to explore more fully.

Considering the critical discourse analysis aspect of the method, there are several points to acknowledge. The data I analysed, the transcripts, are entextualised records of an oral discourse. The analysis is thematic, focusing on specific pre-selected topics and therefore the analysis is selective. I explicitly made choices about what to include and exclude which will affect the interpretation of any quotes. This is both artificial and necessary. The transcripts themselves are also not always literal copies of the discourse. A literal transcription of how respondents spoke – expressing the French or Flemish accents and mispronunciations – might create the effect of stupidity and be overly distracting. To textually create too strong an impression of “foreigner-talk” risks stereotyping or objectifying the respondent in the mind of the reader. However, I have retained the many grammatical mistakes, made-up words and non-English utterances, because these cannot and should not be altered or omitted based on my assumptions (for example, ‘museumification’). Made-up words especially convey something of the three languages at play, with layered or particular meaning, for which I can offer interpretations, but which are not definitive.

In discourse, i.e. in social interaction, people perform their identities, whether they be gendered, ethnocultural, or much more localised and specific. To perform this to other people is to signify membership of that group and collective identity. Linguist Barbara Johnstone describes this identity performance in the globally connected world as a choice.

17 Ibid., 62.
– whilst bearing in mind that identity choices are not unlimited.\textsuperscript{18} Thus my respondents are, in this instance, performing their identity as Zinneke representatives, or organisers, or another personal representation. Some demonstrated more awareness of this more clearly than others; some were more reluctant to frame themselves in this way, which points to the varied nature of the Zinneke identity. I shall now discuss the concept of identity performance through heritage in greater detail.

\textsuperscript{18} Johnstone, \textit{Discourse Analysis}, 151-154.
Heritage and Collective Identity Narratives

The Zinneke Parade is a newly created heritage for a particular group of people, and embodies the meanings and symbols these people chose to ascribe to it. This event arose in 2000 from a specific atmosphere, era and group of citizens. It is necessarily a product of its environment in terms of what has been happening in the field of heritage, identity politics, ideas about who belongs in the community, and how to both influence and represent these concepts.

Although Zinneke has a comparatively short history, it is already showing signs of becoming an established ritual in the city. With repetition the event’s narrative is reinforced and becomes easier to transmit in the future. By performing on the city streets, the participants use the parade to claim legitimacy for their pluralist group identity through public recognition. To fully illustrate the workings of Zinneke, I turn now to some of the key ideas in heritage, place and identity.

Heritage Fever

People use a variety of tools and materials to construct their identities. Identities are complex constructs which are actively created by negotiation with external factors. People hold multiple identities, overlapping in different spheres, fluid and changing over time. Identities change in response to the outside world and one’s present understanding of it. The past is one of the key tools to make meaning of the present and plan for the future. The way people interpret and use their past, and its relics, is entirely dependent on their construction of the present.

Identity is a construct which operates on several levels. It is at once a construct for individuals and groups of all sizes. Cultural geographers Brian Graham and Peter Howard suggest a list of the most commonly accepted identity markers: “heritage; language; religion; ethnicity; nationalism; and shared interpretations of the past”. Communities define themselves by a common narrative, with reference to all these factors, to include

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some people and exclude Others.\textsuperscript{20} This shared interpretation of the past is what prompts humans to jointly ascribe meaning to objects which they consider heritage artefacts. Since there is no single interpretation of the past, there is no single meaning and value accorded to heritage. Heritages are, like identities, plural, changeable, and contestable.\textsuperscript{21}

Heritage is not a passive factor of identity, but is a tool actively used for identity construction, manifestation, and defence. A great deal of academic research has been directed at the wave of nation-building activity which formed nineteenth century nationalism and its use of heritage. The historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger sparked much of this attention with their ground-breaking work on the relative shallowness of many nationalistic traditions. Heritage studies had congealed in technical discussions of conservation methods without much attention to the uses of heritage until a paradigmatic shift in the 1980s when Hobsbawm and Ranger’s work was ‘rediscovered’. The second crucial element of their analysis was that the promotion of certain politicised traditions represented the interests of only a small section of the society. Publications such as David Lowenthal’s \textit{The Past is a Foreign Country} (1985) furthered critiques of the biases inherent in heritage selection and preservation. A geographer and specialist in heritage studies, his seminal work demonstrated the program of nineteenth century nationalism, with its newly created rituals and monumental heritage presentations, attempting to anchor an identity, contiguous with the nation-state, in an imagined glorious past.

This program found expression at every level, within elite arts, newly created pedagogical museums, commemorative rituals, through to commercial products sporting exotic images of Otherness.\textsuperscript{22} Some were aimed at signifying inclusion (e.g. the commemorative rituals honouring war dead) and some at creating exclusion (e.g. the Othering of foreign peoples or customs). Identities were and are being constructed at every level, from the individual, communal, to regional, national and beyond. The state was one of many actors creating signifiers of inclusion or exclusion, although Hobsbawm labelled these political

\textsuperscript{22} Bella Dicks, \textit{Culture on display: The production of contemporary visitability} (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 5.
and social traditions in separate categories. It is now accepted that there is considerably more overlap than he suggested.

According to Hobsbawm, Lowenthal and subsequent authors, the overarching model is that heritage is used according to the needs of the present, and that it can be made, used and re-interpreted as those needs change. Heritage is present-facing; an interpretation of the past in reaction to the present. Each heritage is an embodiment of collective memory, “a social construct shaped by the political, economic and social concerns of the present.”23

Zygmunt Bauman, an influential sociologist, has offered a three phase model of the development of culture. Firstly, the Enlightenment phase, “transformative in intent”, the concept that the upper echelons could “cultivate and communicate a set of universal values to the masses.”24 This task, conceived in terms “akin to land cultivation”, intended to mould the populace into a preconceived ideal.25 The transformative element was much evident in the civilising discourse of colonialism.

The second phase saw an escalation of this project, to form the people not into an ideal, but into an “imagined community”.26 The use of cultural representations (and the heritage objects which were given emblematic status) changed from a tool to galvanise the masses into a conservative force for a nation-building. European political elites controlled the use of heritage to stabilise their power base and promote a narrow, exclusionary national identity. Many prominent scholars have discussed the musealisation of heritage during this period, creating new venues for the public to visit it.27

Finally, in the modern phase, Bauman sees cultural representation as losing its normative function, reduced to a force “to seduce and drive consumption.”28 This comment is an observation on the circular developments of the last four decades. It is arguable, however, whether heritages have been used to deliberately drive consumption, or whether global circumstances, including increased spending power, have driven the demand for commoditised culture.

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23 Graham and Howard, *Ashgate Research Companion*.
26 Ibid., 83.
27 See Graham Ashworth, John Tunbridge, David Lowenthal, among others.
For over forty years, there has been what is variously described as heritage fever, memory boom, museum mania or memory phenomenon. This is an international development but is especially noticeable in Europe. Since the 1970s the number of museums has dramatically increased, and they have been filled with a new object of import: the mundane.

The democratisation of heritage is the shift towards preserving objects and sites of ordinary life, as opposed to the exclusive privileging of high profile heritages, the canonical and emblematic approach. The rise of popular individual heritage pursuits such as genealogy coincided with formation of oral history as a widely accepted research method, which encouraged a social agenda to document the unheard voices of history. New interest in women’s and black history were reflected in what people wanted to see represented in the heritage they consumed. In the UK, this was frequently linked with industrial heritage in a rapidly deindustrialising society, but it has been a pan-European and, to a certain extent, global phenomenon. The result is “the development of a ‘relative’ approach to the question of heritage values, in which it is acknowledged that different cultural groups are entitled to value different forms of heritage and to attribute to them different forms of values.”

This is the equivalent of pluralist versus homogeneous nationalist politics; multiple heritages and varying values versus universal significance and canonical norms.

Heritage, and cultural representations more generally, have been increasingly on show for mass consumption since the 1980s. The exhibited content represented more of the lives of ordinary citizens, reflecting more than a narrow, emblematic type of culture. It had begun to display plural heritages from different groups within the nation, or which crossed national identity boundaries. At the same time the exhibition medium was expanding outside the bounds of the museum or gallery, projected in the shopping malls, streets and countryside. Cultural narratives are being more legibly inscribed onto all aspects of physical environments. Cities are being transformed by commercial interests and urban planners into eminently marketable spaces, and cultural signifiers are a major tool. As sociologist Bella Dicks describes, each mall can be designed to showcase

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29 Harrison, Heritage. Critical Approaches, 145.
30 Dicks, Culture on display, 6.
31 Ibid., passim, and Macdonald, Memorylands, 4.
“continental-style, café-bar piazzas and whimsical art-works”. Outside cities, rural scenes can be overlaid with meaning from different points in history.

The heritage fever has gone hand in glove with the heritage industry. Mass consumption of heritage is the result of market forces, which ensure that popular demand is met. The industry has tried to be beneficial economically, socially and in some cases environmentally. De-industrialisation created a need for regeneration, and culture was frequently the chosen vehicle to achieve it. Place marketing has more and more frequently included heritage as a crucial aspect. The heritage industry appears to be a perfect marriage of local forces eagerly seeking validation of their communities, and the possibility of a source of additional or increased income. The overall result is the creation, manipulation and negotiation of heritages on an unprecedented scale.

The ‘heritage industry’ theory is not the only explanation of the recent memory boom, however. More diverse heritages are being claimed and recognised in the march of identity politics, but modernity has also created conditions which generate history at an accelerating pace. The rapidly transforming socio-economic conditions meant that people’s modes of living are changing drastically, further differentiating the past from the present. There is more and more history to preserve, creating a snowball effect.

Rodney Harrison, archaeologist and anthropologist, and Hermann Lübbe, a philosopher, have both diagnosed the increasing desperation to preserve every memory as a symptom of this increased sense of the passage of time, arising from the accelerating change in modernity. They see the act of preservation as a bulwark, with which people can psychologically protect themselves from this perceived loss of tradition and the increased unpredictability of the future. This sense of rapid change also gives rise to the modern search for authenticity, rooted in antiquity, finding it an ever more elusive quality.

While European societies are using heritage to root the present in the past and orient the future, it gives a sense of security in a rapidly changing world. This reasoning has led many scholars to criticise heritage fever as self-indulgent nostalgia which produces nothing. Instead it diverts attention from the real needs of the present, the crises and

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32 Dicks, Culture on display, 9.
33 For instance, the biodiversity projects accompanying rural regeneration schemes.
34 Macdonald, Memorylands, 138.
injustices which ought to be addressed (for example, literary critic Fredric Jameson, who claims that this nostalgia is a retreat from the condition of postmodernity).\textsuperscript{36} This argument has much material to support it, notably the overly rosy and simplified presentation of the past that often attends the valorisation of specific communities or locales.

However, this interpretation implies an overly-homogeneous view of the memory boom. The phenomenon has taken place in such diverse circumstances, over several decades, spanning great societal change. Indeed, critics should perhaps be surprised with all these changes that it took so long to arrive.\textsuperscript{37} Some heritage projects are certainly more nostalgic than others, but some are more provocative and challenging. According to Andreas Huyssen, Professor of comparative literature, museums have the potential to fulfil multiple functions. The most important one is offering the chance to explore and negotiate one’s understanding of the past, and how it is connected with the present, and the fleeting nature of the world.\textsuperscript{38} This is partly Huyssen’s analysis and partly a suggested programme for the future. Museums, and heritage management in general, can provide a “site and testing ground for reflections on temporality and subjectivity, identity and alterity.”\textsuperscript{39}

**Collective Memory**

The concept of collective memory has been widely accepted in many fields, growing to be applied so widely as to lack a common definition. In 1950 Maurice Halbwachs, a philosopher and sociologist, proposed that individual memories are smoothed and harmonised by social groups. His theory was deeply influenced by the work of sociologist Émile Durkheim, and was revived in the 1980s when the memory boom was expanding. Halbwachs stressed the importance of social groups in creating both frameworks for remembrance and a resulting sense of belonging. His very influential work has, however been criticised for disregarding individual autonomy. The process he describes renders individuals passive creators of memory, dependent on the social dynamic of the group. It

\textsuperscript{36} Dicks, *Culture on display*, 130.
\textsuperscript{37} François Hartog, “Time and Heritage”, *Museum International* 57 (2005), 16.
\textsuperscript{38} See also Göle (2009) for a discussion of new public monuments, in Macdonald, *Memorylands*, 173.
negates their ability to hold contradictory memories or create new ways of understanding the world.

Fuller explanations of collective memory were needed. Cultural anthropologist Aleida Assmann’s model deconstructs the process to three levels: the individual, social and cultural. She distinguishes between two forms of collective memory, social and cultural. Her model suggests that individual memories are remembered or forgotten by “strategies of remembrance though repetition or recording”, and that these are then passed to the social level by exchange with other individuals.\textsuperscript{40} At this stage they are externalised by whichever media is used to transmit them. It is this reification which enables a memory to be transmitted for a time period greater than the life span of the original individuals. In the final stage these memories move to the cultural memory level. The difference between the transmission to social and to cultural is the embodiment of these memories: the first is by a “social group kept together by a common store of memories”, and the second by “transferable cultural symbols, artefacts, media and practices”.\textsuperscript{41} Whilst social memory may also have its media and practices, at the broadest level the memories are no longer dependent on individuals, but are reliant on externalised formats.

Besides the material, which has long been the dominant concern of heritage studies and management, is the intangible. Rituals, performance and practices are equally potent embodiments of memory. Anthropologists Paul Connerton and Sharon Macdonald have highlighted how the physical effort required to witness, engage with and perform heritage makes it “part of our lived experience”.\textsuperscript{42} Communities inherit rituals from their shared identities, and these function as bridges to the collective narrative. This collective narrative tells the story of a group’s identity. Public memory rituals such as Easter day parades or political rallies are more than a retelling of the collective narrative, they are an embodiment of it.\textsuperscript{43} According to cultural anthropologist Beate Binder, groups need a stage to represent their identity as they perceive it.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{40} Aline Sierp, \textit{History, Memory and Trans-European Identity. Unifying Divisions} (New York: Routledge, 2014), 14.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Macdonald, \textit{Memorylands}, 234.
\textsuperscript{43} Paul Connerton, \textit{How Societies Remember} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
\textsuperscript{44} Sierp, \textit{History, Memory and Trans-European Identity}, 20. I question how this can translate to larger-scale identities i.e. regional or national. However, I note that in virtually all modern societies people likely have sufficient encounters with their Others to have the opportunity to ‘perform’ and thus reinforce their national identities on a regular basis.
\end{flushleft}
Memorialisation and ritual have usually been studied as part of national identity building or political power struggles, notably in the form of public commemoration. In these public manifestations of memory, significant events or ideas, glorious or traumatic, are reiterated. Repetition reinforces the connection between individuals and the cultural memory. These rituals “firmly fasten the cultural memory of the past to the future by committing future generations to it.”

Aline Sierp, specialist in collective memory and European integration, claims that these formalised repetitions create a stable (but not permanently changeless) collective memory and rooting the cultural identity. These memories from the cultural level are carried forward by “individuals and institutions who pick up those [cultural symbols] and engage with them”. Importantly, this does not include all individuals in the group. Collective heritages are contestable and inevitably involve conflict. Their meaning and significance are not fixed but are constantly subject to negotiation from within and without. As per Halbwachs’ theory, cultural identity and its associated memories can be homogenised at the collective level, but there will be multiple possible interpretations which exist below.

These cultural memories of a group and its identity can be communicated by public rituals, whether they be national or more local. Especially in times of crisis, they reinforce boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Parades function as a very physical statement of who represents the group. This may be accepted by the whole, or not. Riki van Boeschoten, a social anthropologist, links education, national identity and public commemoration in her study of the Greek Ochi Day controversy. Suddenly aware to the fact that Albanian-born children were partaking in this celebration of national pride, the Greek public became embroiled in an acrimonious discussion of how or whether outsiders could be included in the national identity. Despite a full-scale media discussion, the question remained unresolved. Her study illustrates Huyssen’s point that the public arena is a controversial stage on which to negotiate complex issues of identity and heritage, able to engage people from local to high political spheres.

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46 Ibid., 14.
Place and Identity

Places, like heritages, are imbued with meaning. People ascribe significance to the different landscapes which surround them, be they rural, urban, mundane or emblematic. Since historian Pierre Nora’s seminal work on *lieux de mémoire* there has been a profusion of research on this topic linking peoples’ identities with physical spaces.48 *Lieux* function the same way as relics, artefacts or rituals, by grounding or materialising the remembered past. As with the heritages discussed above, these spaces can be linked to identities on a small or mass scale. Specific sites or types of landscape have been made symbols of whole nations, for example, the Acropolis for Greece, the white cliffs of Dover for Great Britain, or vineyards for Italy.49

Studying the meanings ascribed to places or other heritages has become a well-established means of studying identities in the wake of Nora’s work. From the 1990s it became popular to claim that national identities were losing their power and relevance. The fragmentation of heritage from the nationalist agenda to recognise subaltern groups and diasporic communities gave the impression that place was no longer a significant factor for identity. The nation-state had lost the power to tightly control borders and there was subsequently a massive flux of people, capital and ideas.50 UNESCO has led the way in this agenda of ‘heritagising’ the environment since its sweeping 1972 Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.51 Immediately following this, the question of EU-level involvement in cultural heritage was raised, resulting in the 1974 European Parliament resolution on European Heritage. The adoption of an EU cultural policy grew from this watershed moment.52

There was new recognition of the changes brought about in national societies from global movement. It gave rise to the theory that “global networks [had] diminished the importance of place and traditions, ruptured boundaries and created hybrid, in-between spaces”.53 Fifteen years ago, it seemed that the modern period, so popularly described as

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49 For an introduction to cultural landscapes, see Denis Cosgrove, 1993, 1998 (2nd ed.) or 2008.
51 Hartog, “Time and Heritage”.
‘fluid’ and ‘fragmented’, no longer supported the nationalist use of cultural representation.

Since then, there has been a reaction against this conclusion, with new research demonstrating the enduring framework of the nation-state, especially as regards heritage.\textsuperscript{54} Today it seems that identities, and thus heritages, are more fragmented and multi-faceted. Cultures themselves have been made increasingly porous by the global network of people. Exposure to other cultures, whether from tourism or migration, has increased the range of possible cultural options from which people construct their identities.\textsuperscript{55} Transnational identities (from migration, for example) undermine strictly bounded national identities, but these have not disappeared overnight. A more nuanced model of plural cultures, identities and heritages is needed.

Joris Vlasselaers, former Professor of comparative literature, contends that multicultural societies contain many more levels, interactions and elements than is commonly comprehended.\textsuperscript{56} Instead of a model of plural bounded cultures living in parallel in one society, people position themselves in “several social subsystems” (and associated identities).\textsuperscript{57} He finds people simultaneously participating in cultural or ethnic groups, and groups which cut across or overrule the former. Vlasselaers labels this phenomenon multisociality. Karen Phalet and Marc Swyngedouw (a social psychologist and political sociologist respectively) find that multiple perspectives are an important aspect of identity construction among the Belgian, Turkish and Moroccan communities within the Brussels population. They found strong national ties in all groups. Immigrant groups also identified with their ‘new’ nationality, supporting the transnational theories. As with Vlasselaers, Phalet and Swyngedouw found that cultural or ethnic differences were used as markers which established a “social borderline”.\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Macdonald, \textit{Memorylands}, 167.
\item \textsuperscript{56} In his definition, society is a social system wherein people negotiate their differences, resulting in a “puzzlingly pluralized field of various perspectives, utterances, attitudes and interaction.” Vlasselaers, “The Modern City,” 100.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 103. Phalet and Swyngedouw report that among the ethnic minorities, the strongest associations with the Belgian nationality construct were with political rights and participation in national institutions. By contrast, their original national identity construct was more strongly associated with social and cultural signifiers. Karen Phalet and Marc Swyngedouw, “National identities and representations of citizenship: A comparison of Turks, Moroccans and working-class Belgians in Brussels,” \textit{Ethnicities} 2 (2002).
\end{itemize}
This deliberate indication of difference reinforces the model of identity being sustained by patterns of inclusion and exclusion. There is little evidence of multicultural societies developing the theorised hybridisation of cultures and identities. However, I note that despite persistent national identities, no national culture is distinct and separate to any other. All cultures are fluid and porous; previous attempts to treat them as bounded and static have been widely criticised in cultural anthropology. Despite the prevalence of multicultural policies of equal access and recognition in many European states, Macdonald’s research suggests that the use of heritage is generally still dominated by national approaches. With this in mind, she questions whether “heritage is capable of accommodating other kinds of identities, especially those that might be considered, variously, ‘hybrid’, ‘open’ or ‘transcultural’.”

Globalisation has developed whilst identity politics have become more widely employed. These opposable forces push towards increasing universality and public differentiation, leading to the phenomenon of glocalism. Globalisation usually denotes the homogenisation of patterns, whether of culture, consumption or regulations. Particularism reacts to this force, for example with a local or regional characteristic emphasised and (re)produced on a global scale. To some extent this resists or undermines the homogenising effects of globalism. The uncertainty which has resulted from rapid social change is manifested in the search for meaning and authenticity. Cultural scientist Karin Salomonsson links the growing emphasis consumers place on an item’s providence and traceability to this longing for authenticity. The consumers are associating authenticity with that which identifies as “regional, local, ethnic, or original”.

I concur with Dicks’ finding that the fragmentation and increased representativeness of heritage gives testimony to this growing localism, whether substantially or superficially. The increasingly local-focused nature of many ‘new’ heritages can be a representation of

69 Macdonald, Memorylands, 168.
60 Ibid., 162.
61 For example, local specialities such as Bordeaux wines are marketed globally in a way which benefits the regional economy and constructs regional identity.
local and/or subaltern groups; “the mobilisation of identity for the tourist”; a mere veneer of local particularism to lure the consumer; or some combination of the above.64

These issues are inextricably bound up in the space where they were taking place, in this case, Western Europe. There has been activity at the EU level, as well as national and local. Whilst transcultural identity constructs may have been forming as a result of increased global mobility, scholars have noted that the EU, as a transnational (or maybe a supranational) entity, has been purposely encouraging this trend. Cris Shore, cultural anthropologist, and Tobias Theiler, political theorist, have both analysed the activities of EU institutions and found they are pursuing deliberate efforts to foster identification with the EU project – Ever Closer Union – via a range of initiatives and manufactured symbols.65 They conclude that a somewhat centralised EU cultural policy has gradually emerged over recent decades.

In addition, historian Oriane Calligaro and sociologist Monica Sassatelli have found that action in the cultural field is often a key part of initiatives undertaken with assistance from EU Regional Development Funds.66 The two approaches complement each other in the aim of promoting transcultural identity: one goes over the top of national structures, the other undercuts them.67 Ever since first hypothesised and espoused in the 1973 Declaration on European Identity, the EU has been making Europeanness a more tangible concept. By pursuing a cultural policy, politicians sought to simultaneously please the public and shape their perspectives – of the Community, themselves and the meaning of Europe.

The growing importance of the cultural policy may be simply analysed by its steady escalation. The pioneering Culture 2000 program (budget €236.5 million) was succeeded by the Culture Action Program 2007-2013 (budget €408 million). Most recently, the Creative Europe program launched in 2014 (budget €1.46 billion) marks a six-fold

64 Dicks, Culture on display, 142, 30, 82.
67 Ibid., 96. In some cases, sites and objects which were previously thought of as national heritage are relabelled as European heritage, such as the case with European Heritage Days, and, it appears, the European Heritage Label.
increase in the funding given over to “enhance the cultural area shared by Europeans, based on a common cultural heritage”. There has been a shift of emphasis from preserving the past to creating culture in the present, cemented by the Culture 2000 program. This shift goes alongside the support shown for cultural development in its regional projects. The ‘high’ and ‘low’ counterpoints are both pursued for different purposes, the emblematic for its symbolism, and “grassroots culture as a way of ‘humanising’ the EU”.

EU programs, in areas as diverse as “foodstuffs, landscapes, product designs or culture – and the thereby invented cultural heritage”, are promoting glocalism. Anthropologist Reinhard Johler claims that the EU has calculated that such an approach combines both economic benefits and the key to European identity (as noted by Dicks, above). Discussing marketing strategies, he claims that ‘the local’ is being Europeanised, that is, redefined and mobilised at the EU level. Simultaneously, as the anthropologists noted above found, Europe (or rather, the EU) is being localised, for example by increased presencing through high-profile projects or mundane signifiers such as currency. I shall later discuss this interpretation that it is local and European identities which are being voiced and reinforced, and how transcultural and inclusive those identities are.

The European Capitals of Culture initiative (ECoC) has merged these top-down and regional development approaches. Conceived as a tool to promote cohesion among both the member states and European people, it has become one of the most successful means of urban renaissance. As Immler and Sakkers describe it, “[the] label has promised not only to generate large-scale media interest that could serve to attract increased tourism, stimulate greater interest in culture and boost economic activity, but also to foster social cohesion and cultural participation, strengthen local infrastructure and encourage the regeneration of deprived districts.”

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69 Calligaro, Negotiating Europe, 103.
70 Salomonsson interprets the EU’s actions as deliberately strengthening the regions partly to undermine the power of the nation-state and as a tool to symbolise the nation-state’s failures. Salomonsson, “E-economy and the Culinary Heritage”, 140.
72 Ibid., 9. For a discussion of presencing, see Macdonald, Memorylands, chapter 1.
73 Immler and Sakkers, “(Re)programming Europe,” 4.
The ECoC program is especially relevant in the context of my study, as it was under the auspices of Brussels 2000 ECoC that the Zinneke Parade was formulated. At that time, Immler and Sakkers have concluded that the ‘Europe’ the event was designed to promote was barely associated with interculturality or diversity. In the programmes “concepts such as migrants and diversity figured rarely, and ideas of ethnicity, multiculturalism and multilingualism were almost never mentioned.”74 The ECoC events did not target “migrant and ethnic minorities”; although some cities made specific programmes, there was scant information about their effectiveness.75

In his ECoC Report, Robert Palmer (Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage at the Council of Europe since 2004) evaluated the aims of the ECoC events, and argued that since 2000, “social objectives’ have become increasingly important, particularly in northern European cities in Scandinavia, Netherlands or Belgium”.76 There have been distinct positive results in strengthening community connections and voluntary organisations, and “changes to the pattern of cultural inclusion by relatively marginalized or excluded groups.”77 The Zinneke organisation is a good example of such voluntary cultural organisations, and its activities reflect this new focus on social outcomes and community participation. The overt targeting of ethnocultural minorities and active mediation with the two dominant societal groups mirrors the increasing EU preoccupation with interculturality.

**Fluid and Fragmentary Societies**

Societies approach heritage with presentism, with an increasingly fragmented and plural perspective.78 The pressure to embrace identity politics from all quarters has caused new and contending claims on existing heritages as well as recognising new ones. As the present is constructed anew, the past is constantly re-evaluated. Modernity has created conditions of accelerating change and schism, the circumstances under which the use of heritage thrives. As the historian François Hartog argues, “[heritage] is one way of

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74 Immler and Sakkers, “(Re)programming Europe,” 10.
75 Ibid., 11.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 By presentism I mean primarily concerned with the needs of the present moment. Heritage is interpreted and used according to the concerns and needs of the users at that time.
experiencing ruptures, of recognizing them and reducing them, by locating, selecting, and producing semaphores.”

Memory fever has ignited keen interest in collective identity, remembrance, its performance and display, and the underlying causes of this insatiable appetite. Ethnic and religious conflicts of the last few decades have coloured the theories suggested, yet even stable states experience struggles over identity, expressed through claims on heritage and the interpretation of history. Globalisation has lent new frameworks to the analysis, emphasising fluidity, impermanence and multivocality. Arjun Appadurai, a prominent social-cultural anthropologist, has stressed the difficulties of identity construction in a world which individuals perceive to be lacking in “steady points of reference [and] the search for certainties is regularly frustrated by the fluidities of transnational communication.” Heritage can be used as an anchor. Through it one can firmly root identities in an imagined, stable, authentic past.

While using heritage to formulate and express identities, many European societies simultaneously enjoy a lucrative industry built around it. Scholars have offered well-evidenced examples of heritage activation which serve economic interests and satisfies the consumer demands and tourist gaze. Besides the regenerative and economic reasons which Dicks favours, anthropologist Llorenç Prats offers a more reflective explanation of why people engage in local heritage. He suggests it may be a “retreat into local identity as a reaction to rapid growth and change”, for example, recently increased demographic diversity. Whilst Zinneke is overtly concerned with the Brussels local identity, it is a tradition which does not link with any historic practice or supposed historic Brussels community. As I shall discuss below, it is less a retreat into an imagined past, and more a conscious re-engagement with what a Brussels identity means today.

Society can use heritage in more thought-provoking, experimental ways than simple nostalgia. In the face of social upheaval and change in ethnic and cultural diversity, new heritage manifestations can provide a necessary outlet of expression and common ground for intercultural exchange. The outcomes of cultural debates around heritage have

81 Llorenç Prats, ‘Heritage according to scale’, in Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World, ed. Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 83. See also Lübbe, in Macdonald, Memorylands, 138-139.
82 Huyssen, Twilight Memories.
profound influence on a person’s identity, as they see themselves and as others wish to interpret their identity. Despite progress in ensuring political and civil equalities for all in European multicultural societies – from varying approaches – political processes often neglect these questions.

The EU is engaged in many different types of cultural initiatives, from the centralised to the local. But in dealing with multicultural societies it could so far be accused of promoting only an “identikit of ‘safe’ cultural markers” rather than taking the opportunity to address difficult or divisive heritages. If allowed to repeat nationalistic models of inclusion/exclusion, heritage can represent a very damaging force in diverse societies. Without a purposively transcultural or pluralist approach to heritage activation, ethnic minorities or migrants may be tolerated, but never accepted. Anthropologist Verena Stolcke warns that although any group may learn the dominant culture in which it finds itself, “heritage is much more emphatically something that stretches back, that speaks of where you have come from.”

The rise in ethnic tensions, right-wing politics and backlash against multicultural policies has compelled the search for better solutions. As cultural scientists Nicole Immler and Hans Sakkers note, “[this] has made the question of how different groups can be integrated at a local level and participate actively in cultural activities a key issue for municipalities and local administrations.” New heritage projects such as the Zinneke Parade may provide part of the answer. By creating a space which encourages citizens to cross cultural boundaries and forge strong links among previously unconnected communities, the parade can demonstrate ways in which new heritage projects can help with mediation in their multicultural society.

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83 Macdonald, Memorylands, 169 and Immler and Sakkers, “(Re)programming Europe,” 15-16.
84 Macdonald, Memorylands, 168.
85 Immler and Sakkers, “(Re)programming Europe,” 18.
Multiculturalism or Interculturalism in Modern Societies

The debate over how to govern and live in a diverse society is one which has flourished under different labels – multicultural studies, integration studies, or political philosophy. Roughly defined, multicultural studies focus on “the multiplication [or] hybridization of minority cultures and identities” within the sphere of majority cultures, whereas integration studies prefer “minority acculturation”. Despite historical examples of types of multicultural policies, such as the laws applied to dhimmis (non-Muslim minority groups) of the Ottoman Empire, it is only in the twentieth century that the concept as we now recognise it has been more thoroughly explored and variously implemented. It is also significant that in Western Europe in particular, multiculturalist policies developed from periods of notorious ethnic conflicts (i.e. immediately post-World War II, and during the 1990s’ bloody clashes in the Balkans). Accelerating population diversity within Western societies, linked with fear of ethnic conflict, lead the international community to view multiculturalism as a potent preventative measure.

The number of scholars working in the field of multiculturalism theory means that only an overview of the most influential theories is possible here. The selection is motivated by its connection with actual policy discussions happening among the European political classes, media and general public, and because it affords a great wealth of material. The attributes of interculturalist approaches inform my analysis, as the Zinneke Parade tries to effect in practice what the theories below discuss in abstract.

Citizenship in Ethnoculturally Diverse Societies

Virtually all societies have been comprised of more than a single ethnicity or race, and although there are examples of monocultural societies, cultures are never static and bounded. The view of any European society as ethnically homogenous (or ‘pure’) and having a single, unifying and fixed culture is both illusory and, as history shows, dangerous. The consequence of defining one’s society by inclusive and exclusive

\[86\text{ Phalet and Swyngedouw, “National identities”, 6.} \]
discourses is inevitably divisive and begets conflict. While one can point to the nation-state model as a major cause of this Othering, this process can be considered a feature of all group identity formations.\textsuperscript{88}

Although migration has been a common feature of human history, modernity has been marked by such an increase, still accelerating, as to earn a new set of labels: multiculturalism, globalisation and super-diversity.\textsuperscript{89} With the boom of post-WWII migration, and the terrible legacy of the pursuit for a racially and culturally pure state still fresh, European states’ public policies began to reflect issues of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity.\textsuperscript{90} Only a few adopted outright multiculturalist policies (such as Britain and Sweden), some adopted assimilationist policies (including France and Greece), and the rest a more ad hoc approach, “evading an explicit choice”.\textsuperscript{91}

The multiculturalism-assimilationism debate has developed across the world since this period, although confused by the varying use of the terminology and translation issues. The misapplied but commonplace use of the word ‘multicultural’ as a description of society, of philosophies and of policies further muddies the waters.\textsuperscript{92} Where assimilationist practices have been employed, questions have been raised about the effectiveness and even ethics of such an approach. Movements for recognition of difference, loosely termed ‘identity politics’, grew and spread from the 1960s. More complex and refined models of society have been developed which acknowledge multiple ethnocultural groups with layered and interconnected identities.\textsuperscript{93} In the resulting debates, old models of “unchanging ethnic identities versus unproblematic identity assimilation” have been refuted.\textsuperscript{94} Identities have been re-described as more fluid and contingent than previously thought (i.e. time-and-place specific and subjective).


\textsuperscript{89} By modernity I mean post-1900.

\textsuperscript{90} Hill, \textit{The National Interest in Question}.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 10. According to Riva Kastoryano, in Germany and Britain, the switch to using the term multicultural by governing powers in the 1980s marks a new acceptance of ethnocultural diversity as a permanent feature of society. Riva Kastoryano, “Multiculturalism: An Identity for Europe?,” in \textit{An Identity for Europe}, ed. Riva Kastoryano (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

\textsuperscript{92} Hill, \textit{The National Interest in Question}, 8-9.

\textsuperscript{93} Tariq Modood et al., \textit{Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Change} (London: PSI, 1997), and Stuart Hall et al., \textit{Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies} (London: Routledge, 1996).

\textsuperscript{94} Phalet and Swyngedouw, “National identities”, 7.
At the same time, rapidly progressing globalisation has led many scholars, particularly in the 1990s, to reconsider the highly porous nature of cultures, in contradiction to previous models which assumed a more bounded and insular condition. While it was for a period ‘fashionable’ to proclaim the death of the nation-state in light of global connectivity and transnationality, this has proven false so far. Old nationalist citizenship models were based on a sense of generic national obligation and single nationality. This seems to go against the tide of increased mobility, growing numbers of individuals holding multiple nationalities and increasing penetration of transnational connections with the spread of the World Wide Web. Domestically too, the increasing diversity (or ‘super-diversity’) of European societies is beginning to confound the practice of treating ethnocultural groups as discrete and distinct entities. As noted interculturalist and former public servant Ted Cantle notes, individuals with mixed ethnocultural backgrounds are “now the fastest-growing minority in Britain.” This presents weighty and as yet unmet challenges for governance in Europe.

**Multiculturalism Theory**

Leading multicultural theorists Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood illustrate the difficulties of having any clearly defined discussion on multiculturalism when the word is applied so differently in various countries and circles. It is used as an adjective, a normative statement, and public policy approach.

“[Multiculturalism] is simultaneously used as a label to describe the fact of pluralism or diversity in any given society, and a moral stance that cultural diversity is a desirable feature of a given society (as well as the different types of ways in which the state could recognise and support it).”

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Multicultural theorists attempt, via their arguments, to propose models by which one can manage the claims of the different groups – and in some cases, individuals – within modern multicultural societies. The attempt to outline such models whilst avoiding bias and unsupportable universal normative statements has proven divisive. One of the most influential theorists was Charles Taylor, who rooted his ideas in the black rights and women’s rights movements.

Taylor’s work on the now widely recognised concept of the politics of identity expounds the theory that a person or group of people can suffer real harm by non-recognition or misrecognition of their identity. His proposal is in direct opposition to assimilationist policies pursued by various nations, and he argues that “assimilation is the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity.” Taylor developed this from Herder’s ideas of an ‘authentic self’ and the self-determination of any nation, or a discrete cultural group. His argument is founded on a dialogical understanding of self in relation to the world, society at large and the Other.

He develops two logical extensions from this starting point which are simultaneously conflicting: the ‘politics of equal recognition’ and the ‘politics of difference’. These appear irreconcilable.

“The reproach the first makes to the second is just that it violates the principle of non-discrimination. The reproach the second makes to the first is that it negates identity by forcing people into a homogenous mold that is untrue to them.”

Worse, the mold is modelled on the dominant hegemonic culture which fits no-one.

Taylor is writing from a liberal perspective, but acknowledges that this cannot be universal. He condemns insistence on unthinking approval of all cultures as equally valuable as an “inauthentic and homogenizing demand for recognition”. On the other hand, he wishes to avoid a blinkered judgement of all cultures by one’s own standards as this inevitably leads to unfavourable conclusions. He somewhat optimistically exhorts his readers to “be open to comparative cultural study of the kind that must displace our horizons in the resulting fusions.”

101 Ibid., passim.
102 Ibid., 43.
103 Ibid., 73.
Will Kymlicka, a leading Canadian political philosopher, has developed a thorough treatment of the issues surrounding multiculturalism and its policies. He draws a distinction between immigrant, racial and ethnic groups – which result in polyethnicity – and discrete national minorities – which create multinational states, such as the Quebecois within Canada.\textsuperscript{104} He also takes an anti-assimilationist stance, agreeing on the integral role that culture plays for human development, and thus the right of minority groups to their own culture. Kymlicka’s main argument in favour of cultural diversity is that it offers increased variety of choice for individuals.\textsuperscript{105}

However Kymlicka, as a liberal nationalist, is firmly entrenched in the national unit of culture, and does not allow for the rights of minority cultures of migrant minorities to exist independently, only the rights of national minorities. In Belgium, under his model, the Flemish and Wallonians would be entitled to their different cultures, but not minority groups such as the Moroccans. I surmise that Kymlicka’s recommendation of other cultures as increasing personal choice risks trivialising the importance of cultures to a buffet of aesthetic lifestyle choices. While his account of autonomy allows for great diversity within society, overall the liberalist nationalist bias makes it too unpalatable for nonliberals and therefore unsuitable for modern multicultural societies.\textsuperscript{106}

Following Taylor, Bhikhu Parekh (another prominent and politically active theorist) has developed a fully formed theory of multiculturalism with some unique aspects. His work is a thorough examination of the European monist traditions, and he tries to distance his ideas from the pitfall of universalising tendencies. Parekh carefully discusses the issues, noting the contradiction of a monoculturalist (i.e. liberalist) theory of how to manage a multicultural society. Any framework would originate from, and thus be structurally biased towards, one of the member cultures.\textsuperscript{107} As a result, a balanced theory of multiculturalism, which would seek to mediate between liberal and nonliberal cultures, must itself be dialogical.

Parekh criticises existing philosophies for too-weak arguments in favour of plural cultures. His own theory moves away from the liberal-based judgements made by other

\textsuperscript{104} Kymlicka, \textit{Multicultural Odysseys}. \\
\textsuperscript{105} Bhikhu Parekh, \textit{Rethinking multiculturalism: cultural diversity and political theory}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). \\
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 107. \\
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., chapter 4.
multiculturalists, focusing instead on the goal of a space for open dialogue and contact between largely closed cultures. He addresses the difficulties of the tendency for all cultures to universalise their norms and values: the only solution or amelioration possible is a shared discussion to find consensus.

It is crucial, as Parekh demands, to promote the value of cultural and moral diversity as it develops from different cultures. He laments that multiculturalism can be and is used to illegitimately justify authoritarian regimes (such as in China), but his theory is not fully formed in offering guidance on how to deal with the most intransigent of cultural differences. Parekh leaves it at the level of opening a path to negotiations to find the answer in the future. This is a safe option, avoiding some potential criticisms, but providing only vague instructions to his readers. Of the prominent scholars in the field, his multiculturalism appears to be most closely approaching interculturalism.

Facing the crisis
After peaking in prominence during the 1990s, the multiculturalism debate plunged into crisis in the wake of the international attacks on New York (9/11, in 2001), Madrid (Train Bombings, 2004) and London (July Bombings, 2005). It exacerbated the already-charged question of integration and acceptance of groups historically constructed as Europe’s Other. Multiculturalism, as a philosophy, questions and challenges the concept of national unity and national identity. What began as a “simple anthropological analysis of cultural diversity” has been politically charged into “an ideological vision of pluralism” with serious ethical dilemmas.

In this new atmosphere of heightened security awareness and suspicion of apparently closed communities within Western society, popular support for multiculturalist policies evaporated. The steady rise of far-right parties across Europe ever since has made multiculturalist policies a convenient target. Blaming a flawed philosophy is politically convenient, and allows those in government who are invested in the European project of

109 His definition of culture is, unlike Kymlicka, not limited to the national level, but encompasses both larger and smaller scales.
110 Parekh, *Rethinking multiculturalism*, 140-141.
integration to continue to pursue it under a different name. The assumption appears to be that this is the lesser of two evils, rather than allowing the entire process to be derailed by public and media hysteria.\textsuperscript{113}

One explanation of multiculturalism’s disfavour could be the high hopes that governments invested in it. If multiculturalist policies were indeed viewed as a vaccine against the type of violent ethnic conflict seen in, for example, the Balkans, then any significant indication of ethnocultural clashes could be interpreted as a failure. Patterns of conflict emerging from the 1990s indicate a structural dilemma present in more than one European nation.

Whilst academics such as Meer and Modood sought to refine and re-orient the multicultural theories in light of these developments, some deemed the idea of multiculturalism fatally flawed and sought new solutions. Given that there had been as yet relatively little time to implement multiculturalist policies within European nations, analysing the effects of existing policies offered inconclusive and contradictory results.\textsuperscript{114}

When considering Keith Banting, a political scientist, and Kymlicka’s survey of policies enacted in EU states since 2000, Meer and Modood’s plea – that multiculturalist policies have been so patchily implemented that they are being unfairly blamed for a situation not of their making – appears well-founded.

Scholarly debate quickly provided a new label for the European integration project: interculturalism. Arguably led by Cantle, this philosophy is variously branded a modification of multiculturalism, or a new and improved philosophy that grew out of multiculturalist debate. Cantle formulated his theory of interculturalism in reaction to, as he saw it, the failed multiculturalist policies which had compounded the ethnocultural conflicts in Northern England.\textsuperscript{115} His analysis pronounced the present multiculturalist policies to be antagonistic and divisive in practice, despite the best intentions.

\textsuperscript{113} Cantle makes the good point that politicians were caught in a dilemma of needing fulfil their promises of ever greater economic growth, knowing that the fastest and easiest way of delivering it is cheap migrant labour but needing to appease their electorates, of whom Cantle estimates around 75% are opposed to wholesale migrant labour. Cantle, “Interculturalism as a new narrative,” 71.


\textsuperscript{115} Cantle’s first publications on the subject were in his role as head of the Investigation Review Team regarding the 2001 UK race riots.
Interculturalism was deliberately formulated in such a way as to resolve these deficiencies and promote community cohesion.¹¹⁶

Whilst interculturalism, like multiculturalism, is impossible to absolutely define, Cantle summarises the three key elements as “a sense of openness, dialogue and interaction.”¹¹⁷ In his formulation, interculturalism combines “the framework of rights to equal treatment and non-discrimination” (which has been developed by multiculturalism theory) with “the interaction and belonging programmes initiated by community cohesion” (originating in his own work after the race riots).¹¹⁸ Although interculturalism is as yet theoretically and practically underdeveloped compared to multiculturalism, sociologist Jude Bloomfield and cultural policy theorist Franco Bianchini argue that interculturalism can surpass it for true effectiveness, seeking nothing less than “the pluralist transformation of public space, institutions and civic culture.”¹¹⁹

It is difficult to truly compare interculturalism with multiculturalism on an equal footing, as they are two nebulous groupings of theories and policies, practiced differently around the world. The former is as yet barely present in European policy formation, except under the guise of progressive multiculturalism. However, Cantle lists several concrete policy ideas that arise from his version of interculturalism, including some notable changes from present multiculturalist practices. The most striking are his call for the end of state funds and structural privileging of single-identity and faith groups. His analysis of accelerating super-diversity in (European) nations is such that this strict delineation of ethnocultural identity is rapidly becoming outmoded, and should be replaced with a more fluid and mixed understanding of ethnocultural identity. Whilst multiculturalism continues to treat societies as differentiated identity groupings, “our mongrel selves […] have no particular identity, nor recognition.”¹²⁰ Cantle’s policies would aim to foster community cohesion in the form of social capital to combat this disempowerment and segregation.

¹¹⁷ Cantle, “Interculturalism as a new narrative,” 78. Cantle is careful to note that creating the circumstances conducive to this open dialogue are not guarantees that it will occur.
¹¹⁸ Ibid., 79.
¹¹⁹ Ibid.
¹²⁰ Ibid., 74.
Multiculturalism versus Interculturalism

Meer and Modood (and other established pro-multiculturalism theory academics) insist that interculturalism is unoriginal and insufficiently differentiated from multiculturalism.\(^{121}\) The debate revolves around the commonly identified features of interculturalism and the most frequent accusations levelled at multiculturalism: whether dialogue is fundamental to either interculturalism or multiculturalism, the balancing of minority and majority claims, the propensity of multiculturalism to slip into illiberalism, and interculturalism’s greater nurturing of integration and cohesion.

Meer and Modood appeal to Taylor’s 1992 essay, *The Politics of Recognition*, as a “founding statement of multiculturalism in political theory” to establish that all the apparent advantages of interculturalism are already present in multiculturalism theory.\(^{122}\) Meer and Modood admit that Taylor’s conception of recognition can be interpreted as abstract but claim it is a development from liberal democratic ideas towards “full or unimpaired civic status upon all its citizens.”\(^{123}\) I consider that their reading of his text makes a coherent but not totally substantiated leap from the necessity of mindful recognition to the centrality of discourse, and therefore dialogue, to multiculturalist theory. It is more plausible for Parekh to claim the importance of dialogue for multiculturalism as his key text, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, makes a strong case for the virtue of plural cultures in and of themselves.

Whilst Parekh, Meer and Modood repeatedly refute the accusation that multiculturalism is illiberal, or more accurately gives protection to groups that perpetuate illiberal practices, they do so by making a related but not totally satisfactory point. They try to change the nature of the discussion by situating the accusation in a secularist point of view, one that is openly hostile to religious practices. Meer and Modood’s answer to such examples as female genital mutilation or forced marriage is that these practices are ethnocultural, not discreetly linked to or bounded by religion. These replies are valid and serve to problematise the question, but it remains unanswered.\(^{124}\)

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\(^{121}\) Meer and Modood, “How does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?,” 192.
\(^{122}\) Ibid., 183.
\(^{123}\) Ibid., 184.
Multiculturalist policies are most strenuously criticised for giving undue preference and weight to the demands of minority groups at the expense of the majority. Meer and Modood counter this claim of asymmetry by reference to their own work, claiming multiculturalism seeks to accommodate “collective identities and incorporate differences into the mainstream.” They also suggest that a new and expanded collective identity would have more attraction for all citizens if there was a “renegotiated and inclusive national identity”. Indeed, most scholars in this debate agree on this point, but the question is whether multiculturalism, interculturalism or another theory can develop a method to achieve this.

Geoffrey Levey, a political scientist, distinguishes between ‘hard’ claims of factual difference between multiculturalism and interculturalism – which pro-multicultural theorists have refuted – and ‘soft’ claims of emphasis, which Levey acknowledges. Levey agrees that interculturalism has more explicitly stated the case for dialogue and exchanges, which, while present or implied in multiculturalism, have hardly received the same attention or prominence. I concur with his analysis; and if the ‘brand’ of multiculturalism can be successfully revived and refined with these aspects given more prominence, the benefits might yet be felt at a societal level.

The theoretical differences of these two terms are such that even the legitimacy of categorising them as separate theories is called into question. Bound up as it is with the need for some expediency in government policies, the discussion will not be satisfactorily resolved by logical argument alone. Kymlicka has characterised it as a rhetorical rather than an analytical dispute. In fact, the Council of Europe’s report on the matter makes careful note that multiculturalism is perceived as having led to problems such as “communal segregation and mutual incomprehension”, but carefully avoid the claim that these policies actually caused these ills. I interpret this as a deliberate glossing over of the specific and complex circumstances in the many countries within the EU which may have led to this situation of apparent failed integration. Instead the political actors are

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125 Meer and Modood, “How does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?,” 190.
126 Ibid.
choosing to openly acknowledge the feelings and fears of people – both within and outside government – that the policies have led in an unintended and disagreeable direction, whether this is so or not and deciding to act accordingly.

The overlap between interculturalism and multiculturalism is further muddled by political rhetoric. Without coherent or comprehensive policy changes, the political class has largely switched from using the term ‘multiculturalism’ to using ‘interculturalism’. This is present not only in domestic politics, but at international levels.130 The Council of Europe and the European Commission are supporting research and programs on intercultural policies for future governance models.131 To top off this shift, 2008 was designated as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, championed by the Commission as an opportunity for “all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of our rich cultural heritage and opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions”.132 To continue the academic dispute under such circumstances, while indeed a matter of principle, appears “politically inert”, as Kymlicka avers.133

Despite the changed rhetoric, analysis of actual policies being pursued in Europe shows that there has been little withdrawal from multiculturalist policies. In fact, there has been a continuing drive towards greater implementation, alongside integrationist measures, leading to “a blended approach to diversity”.134 It is difficult and unusual for governments to sweep away what has gone before, instead choosing to add new policy directives to old structures, resulting in a sometimes confused implementation. Banting and Kymlicka number Belgium among the European states which have increased multiculturalist policies since 2000. In their analysis, they find that many states are successfully layering integrationist practices over the existing multiculturalist framework.135 This suggests that

132 Meer and Modood, “How does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?,” 177.
133 Kymlicka, “Comment on Meer and Modood,” 212.
134 Banting and Kymlicka, “Is there really a retreat from multiculturalism policies?,” 577.
135 Ibid., 591. I consider that since Kymlicka is a notable multiculturalist theorist, even if some experts might consider the ‘integrationist’ measures he describes are in fact more interculturalist, he would avoid using this term.
a modification of multiculturalism, rather than a wholesale policy change, will characterise European politics for the near future.

Ethnocultural Diversity and Integration Policies in Brussels

In the decades following the end of World War 2, like many Western European states, the Belgian state and large companies recruited immigrant workers and their families to supplement the decimated population, the most numerous being from Morocco. These new arrivals were heavily concentrated in the northern cities of Antwerp and Brussels.\textsuperscript{136} The significant presence of Moroccan nationals in Brussels is such that in 2005 they numbered roughly half of the non-EC citizens resident there.\textsuperscript{137}

EC migrants arrived in increasing numbers in response to the opening up of European mobility. Minority populations continued to grow in urban clusters but Belgium put no formal policies in place to manage the increasingly diverse society.\textsuperscript{138} As these migrants had largely arrived as a result of recruitment drives, they and their families were long “perceived as workers and not so much as civic and political actors.”\textsuperscript{139} This state of affairs was brought to a head by the new waves of refugees and asylum seekers who arrived in waves throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Christopher Hill, a political scientist, has surveyed post-war policy developments among European states, and categorises national approaches according to three types. The first group has pursued a proactively multiculturalist method, the second an assimilationist method, and the third has yet to move decisively towards one or the other. Belgium falls into the latter category, adopting what Hill describes as an ad hoc approach, incorporating measures from both perspectives.\textsuperscript{140} All are struggling to manage the growing diversity in their respective societies. Hill and political scientist Hassan Bousetta et al. consider that the result of measures for the regularisation of foreigners was such that around the

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\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{138} Phalet and Swyngedouw, “National identities”, 11.
\textsuperscript{139} Bousetta, Gsir and Jacobs, “Belgium,” 42.
\textsuperscript{140} Hill, \textit{The National Interest in Question}. I note that according to some interpretations, Belgium has institutionalised a multiculturalist (or at least pluralist), form of governance by creating the regional parliaments to represent the two nations.
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year 2000, Belgium’s requirements for becoming a citizen were one of the easiest to meet and thus most open in the world.\textsuperscript{141} Brussels is a particular point of interest, with around 30\% of its residents being foreign nationals.\textsuperscript{142}

In common with other Western European states, Belgium became suddenly aware that it was a de facto multicultural society, and there was a predictable public discourse which retaliated against this development. Like the governments in Britain and Canada, the Belgian government initiated a public body to develop and monitor integration policy. In 1989 the Royal Commissariat for Migrant Policies published a set of guidelines for implementation by the respective regional powers in Wallonia and Flanders. These were a mixture of assimilationist and multiculturalist measures which were adopted piecemeal by the two governments.\textsuperscript{143}

The Flemish government followed their usual trend of adopting influences from policies in the Netherlands, and the Wallonian did the same from their French influence. The Francophones adopted more of the assimilationist approaches, in line with France’s wholesale rejection of multiculturalist policies. The Flemish favoured a mixture of multiculturalist and assimilationist approaches, as is more characteristic of Dutch politics.\textsuperscript{144} This situation still pertains today, and depending on the issue at hand, “[ethnic] difference can both be neglected and denied or accommodated”.\textsuperscript{145}

The way forward

The search for an answer to social cohesion in the face of such diversity has caused much ink to be spilled over recent years. The debate has proceeded along several lines of enquiry. Even theorists who disagree on numerous other points have called unanimously for a reformulation of national citizenship towards a version that allows space for the currently excluded sections of society.\textsuperscript{146} Others (for example, political scientists Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson) argue that a whole new type of citizenship should be

\textsuperscript{141} Bousetta, Gsir and Jacobs, “Belgium,” 42.
\textsuperscript{143} Bousetta, Gsir and Jacobs, “Belgium,” 38.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 42.
\textsuperscript{146} Long-established opponents such as multiculturalists Meer, Modood and their interculturalist counterpart, Cantle, agree vocally on this point.
imagined in the wake of globalisation and the increasing number of people living transnational and multinational lives.

Besides the heated question of who should or should not be granted citizenship rights, it is apparent that not all new citizens or long-existing minority groups integrate into society. Castles and Davidson pursue the argument that formal citizenship, difficult as it can be to achieve, does not constitute full participation in society but is merely a first step. \(^{147}\) It seems that a more holistic and far-reaching approach is necessary for effective integration.

According to Cantle’s theory of interculturalism, it is social cohesion which is missing from mixed communities. Despite many adult migrants being granted citizenship status in Brussels, this seems to have had little practical effect on the pattern of segregated lives. Varying governmental policies have been effected to address the issue. Since both Flemish and Wallonian governments have jurisdiction in Brussels territory, these contradictory approaches operate simultaneously in the capital. Bousetta et al. point out that this difference is partly a deliberate tactic, enabling them both to “protect and reinforce their respective positions in the multinational political arena.” \(^{148}\) So many new immigrant organisations are francophone that they threaten to tip the balance in favour of the already more numerous francophone Brussels community. Accordingly, the Flemish side is especially open and welcoming to new immigrants and their organisations (especially via schools and multilingual cultural events) in an attempt to boost the Flemish influence in the capital. \(^{149}\) Thus the policies in Brussels manifest a delicate balance of power, where minority interests are played off for the advantage of the two national communities.

Operating under but in some ways contrary to this power structure is the Zinneke Parade. If cohesion projects are called for, as Cantle believes, local cultural animators are potentially key actors in this field. As a seemingly unique example of a cross-cultural and multilingual project, Zinneke deserves our attention as a case study. For an appraisal of how it might meet this need and the perceived effects it has been having on the Brussels communities, I turn to the respondents’ interviews.

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\(^{147}\) Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration.*  
\(^{149}\) Ibid.
Interviews with Zinneke Organisers

In this section I compare the contrasting narratives gathered on specific topics relating to the meaning of this new heritage, the intercultural exchanges between participants, and the wider effects in the Brussels communities. I analyse the responses and spontaneous comments made by organisers of the Zinneke Parade and the Zinneke leadership team, alongside the aims proclaimed in Zinneke’s promotional materials. During the course of the interviews, the respondents commented on a wide range of ideas concerning the origins, practices and achievements of the Zinneke Parade. I specifically tried to elicit their impressions of the long-term effects and the ways in which it had changed over the years. As all the respondents were involved in other socio-cultural work with the Brussels community, I asked what they thought the wider implications of participation were. They responded with a combination of apparently spontaneous remarks, occasional confusion, and some evidence of more critical reflection.

Here I draw out the most prominent themes of their comments in connection with the above theoretical discussions. The strongest emergent themes were of identity construction and negotiation among participants, and of creating an open space for intercultural dialogue. The ensuing conversations offered a wealth of insight into the workings of the project and respondents’ perspectives on the situation in Brussels with regards to existing multiculturalist policies. Many had concerns about the habitual segregation of the communities, and saw Zinneke as a potential tool to tackle this.

Hierarchy of Zinneke respondents

The graphic below illustrates the relative hierarchy of the respondents in the sample (although this is only part of the greater hierarchy which includes many more organisations, participants from the public, and Zinneke founders, among others). This roughly represents the lines of influence over which people or organisations become involved in the Zinneke Parade and the flow of information. For example, Coordinators are appointed by the Zinneke team, and they in turn find or are approached by potential Zinnode participant organisations/individuals. However, the relationships are, in practice, considerably more flexible than the diagram suggests. Artists may be found for the
Zinnode by Coordinators or allocated to the Zinnode by the Zinneke team. Some meetings to disperse information may be attended only by Zinnode Coordinators, some by Coordinators and all participant organisation representatives, or a mixture of both. Practices regarding the artistic theme and creative output are even more flexible and barely regulated by the Zinneke team at all.

Despite this somewhat fluid and frequently flat hierarchy, the respondents voiced similar ideas in their narratives according to their grouping, partly reflecting their similar interests. Whilst all were keen to portray Zinneke in a positive light, each had varying priorities. There were conflicting narratives regarding the primary goal of Zinneke, whether artistic or integrationist, which were in line with the respondents’ position in the hierarchy. The tendency to see Zinneke more from a creative perspective was, unsurprisingly, greatest amongst the Zinnode artists. The importance of the intercultural exchanges was greatest in the Zinneke promotional materials, only slightly less in the Zinneke team and less pressing again among the coordinators accordingly. Interestingly, the participant organisation representative also had a strongly integrationist attitude.
towards the project, perhaps as a result of his involvement since the outset.\footnote{150} Here I will discuss the different narratives between the Zinneke team and the other organisers.

**Zinneke origin stories**

Respondents who had been involved the longest recounted stories of how Zinneke began, portraying it as beginning in a period of growing awareness of change and crisis. They experienced mounting media discussion of the increased ethnocultural diversity and a series of lurid murders that took place in Brussels in the late 1990s. The general public had an increasingly negative view of the minority communities in their midst, whether legal migrants or not.\footnote{151} Some communes (districts) of Brussels, Molenbeek and Anderlecht in particular, were highlighted as trouble spots with noticeable poverty and a strong presence of ethnic minorities. As happens in times of public fearfulness, this period also saw a rise of right-wing politics whilst the immigrant population was still being denied local electoral rights.

In this anxious climate, the so-called ‘Dutroux affair’ caused a national sensation. Marc Dutroux, born and living in Brussels, was arrested in 1996 after having kidnapped, sexually abused and tortured six girls, four of whom he killed. The ethnic diversity of the victims – Wallonian, Flemish, Moroccan and Italian – made for a poignantly accurate representation of the diversity of the city. Myriam Stoffen, Zinneke’s director, described the shock in the community after the discovery:

> It was a little girl from a Moroccan family, Loubna Benaïssa, she was called; and of course, the immigrants in her neighbourhood were absolutely enraged, so there was a little riot, because they were manifesting against the fact that during the two years the police never stopped controlling them because they were immigrants, but during the meantime they didn't manage to find the little sister that disappeared. That was a really strong moment in the neighbourhood with the confrontation, wondering ‘What is going on? How come we missed this?’ and on the other end, it was also a confrontation, towards the institutions, the police force and so on. There was also a confrontation among the neighbours, we said ‘How comes that we didn’t see? That we don’t take enough time to care for each other?’

\footnote{150}{Although not formally a Zinneke organiser, Bart Nagels has been involved since the initial event and has been a de facto coordinator for his Zinnode.}

So we need to take time to do that, and to talk more, take more time with each other and see how it goes with everybody, and to take care of everybody.\textsuperscript{152} Stoffen was already a social activist, working on anti-racism projects which expressed “solidarity towards undocumented illegal people”.\textsuperscript{153} In the aftermath of the Dutroux affair, there was a strong feeling of solidarity towards the immigrant population because of the victims, and mass demonstrations over the scandalous mishandling of the case by the police.\textsuperscript{154} The respondents from the Zinneke team believed that when, a few short years later, the founders of Zinneke Parade were planning their event for Brussels’ European Capital of Culture celebrations, they did so partly in reaction to this awareness of increased ethnocultural diversity. Dis Huyghe, Communications Officer for Zinneke, explained the motivation behind Zinneke’s collaborative structure:

We have to find some possibilities to bring all those different kind of people together, and let's try to find in the method a kind of carnival. Let's organise a carnival where people are obliged to meet each other and work together. And people work together but also neighbourhoods that have to work together.\textsuperscript{155}

The respondents who had not been involved from the beginning were aware in more general terms of this unease in the public awareness over the growing immigrant population and urban poverty, but did not overtly connect Zinneke’s origins to these circumstances. Nor did they mention the Dutroux affair and the reaction among the communities. Some were too young to have experienced it as adults. Zinneke’s own website affirms the integrationist intentions but only briefly mentions its origins as rooted in the Brussels ECoC 2000 event, and this was the origin narrative that these respondents were familiar with. Zinneke’s own website describes its origins thus:

The first Parade was emotionally charged and full of joy, creating many great memories. The idea was to showcase the multicultural richness of Brussels neighbourhoods and restore connection between its fragmented districts.\textsuperscript{156} Both accounts blend together, but it is interesting that the first, civic-participation aspect of the origins is not more widely circulated. The Zinneke team is not intentionally

\textsuperscript{152} Interview with Myriam Stoffen, Brussels, 19 December 2014.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{155} Interview with Dis Huyghe, Brussels, 25 November 2014.
\textsuperscript{156} Zinneke, “History,” Article on the Zinneke website (accessed 8 June 2015) \url{http://www.zinneke.org/Historique-Zinneke?lang=en}
circulating this history among the partners, and the website language even appears to distance the present incarnation from the ECoC event. This may be because there have been significant practical and leadership changes since that time. The initial ECoC funding available made the first parade possible; the subsequent iterations had to be funded entirely differently. According to Michel Kazungu, a Zinnode artist, the initial scramble to find funding overshadowed the purpose of the event: “it was like that until the change of direction, the arrival of Myriam [Stoffen] and then it changed completely; it became something really artistic and social while it was really political at first.”

Both he and the Zinneke team recounted this transformation in the project with the change of leadership, but this was either prior to the other respondents’ involvement or less evident to them.

I suggest that the Zinneke team, who are still actively involved with the founders, have some insight on the founders’ motivations, but it remains debatable which priority was uppermost: the will to begin an intercultural artistic project, or to participate in the ECoC event and receive some of its apparently generous funding. According to most respondents, then, Zinneke was conceived after a period of upheaval in Brussels, where the city’s inhabitants were facing a crisis of identity in the wake of accelerating ethnocultural diversity. The second crisis arose from the series of murders, especially as the crimes were committed in densely populated neighbourhoods. The media expressed the communities’ shock that nobody had noticed these crimes committed in their midst over the weeks and years. If those involved longest are correct, Zinneke was intended to function as a collaborative space in which formerly segregated neighbours could intermingle and begin to face this crisis of identity. For the residents of the so-called trouble areas, respondents believed it also offered an opportunity to mediate their relationship with the rest of Brussels, which tallies with the Zinneke website narrative:

I think this first project created this kind of hope, like, Oh yeah it could be possible to do something with more people and to have some – that we can show ourselves in the streets and show to Brussels that there is more to us than just difficult young people.

It was born from a desire to organise a big party in the city that would build bridges between the city centre and Brussels’ 18 districts.

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157 Interview with Michel Kazungu, Brussels, 27 November 2014.
158 Interview with Françoise De Smet, Brussels, 27 November 2014.
159 Zinneke, “History.”
Group identities

The idea of Zinneke’s function as a tool in the construction and negotiation of identity was universally present in the interviews. This new ritual, the parade and its preparation, had partly been formulated with this aim in mind, and as it grew this purpose has come to the fore. Considering Connerton’s analysis of public rituals, performing the Zinneke Parade is a bridge to a collective narrative of Brussels as the respondents conceive it today. It does not hark back to an imagined past but rather negotiates a new narrative from the community of the present.

The organisers are deliberately trying to structure the preparations so that groups, i.e. sections of society, must meet each other and work together. (Although the Zinneke team respondents claimed this had been the goal from the outset, they felt that the initial implementation was flawed). Zinnode coordinators spoke of their efforts to make partnerships across different boundaries: gender, class, ethnoculture, language, age, disability, citizenship.\(^{160}\) During the interviews respondents reflected on the effects of the intermixing, and the way participants began to form new groups. Sometimes it is the inclusion of individuals who were previously excluded: “Sometimes it’s very small. They didn’t know each other; people that were outsiders and now have a role to play”.\(^ {161}\) And at other times the effect was felt across a whole neighbourhood:

So in some neighbourhoods, for example, you can have people, organisations that now organise a party in the neighbourhood, to gather, and in the past it was not so [...] but with Zinneke they learnt to know each other, now they say, ‘Okay I met someone in Zinneke; was able to do it and I can ask to him to organise a party’.\(^ {162}\)

Interaction can change negative stereotyping of particular groups, or neighbourhoods. It changes the people’s perceptions of themselves, and their area, for the better. Zinneke is well publicised, and respondents recounted ways its positive representations can change the image of these groups in the eyes of the audience, and sets a good example for young people.

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\(^{160}\) Several groups involve Brussels residents who are marginalised, socially or legally, including children or adults who are undocumented migrants.

\(^{161}\) Interview, Dis Huyghe.

\(^{162}\) Ibid.
For kids from this neighbourhood, if they coming to media, it's always very negative [...] There are always problems in Molenbeek. And Molenbeek is the problem; media is there, television is there, etc. [...] So for them it's very important. Also the good things that they can show to their talents, in the media, thanks to Zinneke, also in other performances [...] For kids who don't have this particular talent, at least they have some good example.\textsuperscript{163}

As the different people are mixed together in the Zinnodes, respondents reported that the information given to participants (about these social aims) was kept to a minimum in order to encourage the group to form more naturally. Some felt that this was by accident, others deliberate. Most respondents commented that initially the participants did not understand the overall aim, but that by the end of the preparations, they had fused into a new group that could discuss the issues. All respondents were convinced of the value of this process, and all noted the positive, friendly atmosphere among successfully formed groups.

We sometimes wanted to be organic; if you speak about it too much, it feels very unnatural; kind of like forced, and I think that to people who stay and understand the project and want to participate in such a project, they understand and then we get to talk about it [...] what I also see is that once they have done the parade then the group is really there. Only when you really have done something together and it’s fun then the group forms and people feel really good together, and those are really the nice moments.\textsuperscript{164}

Although Zinneke is held every two years, this leaves a considerable period in between iterations when the groups are not interacting. In addition, because many participants are children, they often grow out of the organisations that mediated their participation. The overall effect is that there is a lack of continuity among the public participants, although the organisers are involved more long-term. This becomes both a difficulty and an opportunity. On one hand, there is the potential to reach many new people each time, the groups do not become fixed in their presentations or ideas, and there is the chance to continually re-negotiate their identity and group expression. This is countered by the constant drive to recruit more participants, the need to begin almost from scratch each iteration, and the fading of the bonds within the existing groups. Several respondents expressed their frustration at having to stop their activities just when their group becomes fully united.

\textsuperscript{163} Interview with Bart Nagels, Brussels, 10 November 2014.
\textsuperscript{164} Interview with Respondent Y, Brussels, 5 November 2014.
Respondents were philosophical about these difficulties, and generally embraced the positives. Françoise De Smet, a Zinnode artist, commented that it can be a benefit: this short, intensive method allows more people to participate than if it was a perpetual activity. They need only devote a few hours over the five months, rather than a more long-term commitment. The interviews revealed a variety of motivations and priorities among the respondents – some placed more importance on the creative side, others on the social integration aspect, and among these, some were more interested in the children/adult divide, or the ethnocultural and linguistic divide. Despite these differences, all were acutely aware of the challenge to form “a real group” from the disparate individuals attending each Zinnode.\textsuperscript{165}

The long term effects of Zinneke are difficult to ascertain, and the longevity of the group identity even more difficult. Some organisers were hesitant to identify long term effects, claiming that they did not have a close enough connection with the participants after the event to judge for themselves. However, other respondents were able to give some indication of lasting effects. One particular example was a pre-existing after-school club for children that has participated in the Zinneke Parade since the first event. The organisation has been totally transformed by the experience, becoming a dedicated performance group with some international success. Their group identity has been strengthened by the experience, and has attracted more and more children.

Most respondents noted that the process of group formation was sometimes very hard, and that it took many months of effort on all sides. They all noted that there are always some people who join but do not continue with the project, suggesting that this process is not without flaws and difficulties. Some were more selective about who they chose to involve in their Zinnode. De Smet was the most restrictive in this way. When describing the recent inclusion of a class of schoolchildren, she stated her preferences: “we tried to work only with people who are interested in doing this, we didn’t want the whole class.”\textsuperscript{166} This selective process will of course have had an effect on the potential group cohesion in their Zinnode. Other organisers felt that the people who left their groups quickly were ones who didn’t understand what they were trying to do, or felt uncomfortable with the mix in some way.

\textsuperscript{165} Interview with Florent Grouazel, Brussels, 11 November 2014.
\textsuperscript{166} Interview, Françoise De Smet.
Respondents were of course keen to describe their successes in the best light. Some clearly saw the goal as forging a new group from the disparate elements, some less consciously perceived the end result as a united group, but this perception was implied or stated in every interview. In their eyes, the process of participating in Zinneke, or working together in a Zinnode, created new group identities for people to add to their existing identities. This became a space for them to reflect on the process and incorporated parts of society that they did not previously or often mix with. For example, school children from various ethnocultural backgrounds mixed with elderly people in wheelchairs, young adults with homeless people and refugees, all working together through this creative medium.

**Boundaries and Borders**

Respondents felt the significance of certain places and their communities within Brussels, and referred to their boundered nature. Several of them portrayed some communities as separated not only by class or ethnoculture, but also by the physical space that they inhabited. Various *communes* had an invisible frontier within them, or even a physical boundary. The canal which separates Molenbeek (poor, diverse and troublesome) from Dansaert (gentrified and overtly Flemish) is a prime example. Zinneke team member Alessandra Esposito’s description recalls Nora’s theory of *lieux de mémoire*. The canal is the embodiment of the stark boundary between two neighbourhoods with very different identities: “it is really a border, really a physical border, psychological and physical border in the centre of Brussels.”

Huyghe recalled his surprise at the realisation of how potent this boundary was for some residents:

> The moment we cross the canal; that family told me, people told me, ‘That’s the first time we cross this canal.’ [...] And they've been here for 25 years in Molenbeek. So they never saw the other side of the canal; and I was a bit, so I was surprised and very touched by the parade at this moment, not only because it was beautiful to see and very creative and very artistic, with everybody from Brussels but also the things around and behind the curtains which was for instance an explanation of a complete family who never has been and lives [...] 20 minutes’ walk away and had never been to the city centre.

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167 Interview with Alessandra Esposito, Brussels, 25 November 2014.
168 Interview, Dis Huyghe.
Those who recounted these stories were keenly aware that although participating in Zinneke was not dissolving those boundaries, it was encouraging people to cross them, sometimes for the first time ever, as described above. The respondents who referred to these borders were not any particular group within the hierarchy, but were the ones working in or with these areas. The Zinneke team were equally aware, but the promotional booklet made references only to more general levels of fragmentation and division (perhaps because it is intended for authorities in every commune in Brussels, and cannot risk singling any out). This specific cultural geography is most relevant to those physically present there.

**Audience**

The identities formed in Zinneke preparations are local, i.e. commune- or city-wide, and they are performed in this ritual at a city level and in some ways, an international level, due to the number of international visitors in the audience. Binder’s assertion that groups need to perform their identity is in this case both literally and figuratively true: without the parade and the publicity it brings, the group would cease to have practical purpose.¹⁶⁹ Zinneke as a group is entirely dependent on having audiences witness its performance. Without that recognition, the group would lose its bonds from repetition and external recognition, as well as struggle to find the necessary funding.

Without interviewing the participants as well, it is impossible to guess what they believe they are symbolising when performing the Zinneke Parade, or when making the preparations. The lack of audience voices among the gathered narratives is unfortunate, but remedying it is logistically challenging. This would be a valuable starting point for further research, and would permit a clearer view of the effects of Zinneke during its short history.

Most respondents felt that the participants rarely reflect on the issue of audience perceptions. Bart Nagels, a participant organisation representative, felt that “they don’t really think about what they are representing” to their audience.¹⁷⁰ But some of the parade activities suggest an attempt to involve the audience with the Zinneke group symbolically.

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¹⁷⁰ Interview, Bart Nagels.
One year the performers “made snowballs from paper to throw to the public and then to throw back”, as their way of interacting with the audience.\(^{171}\) The idea of audience involvement has begun to affect the logistics of the parade as well. Previously it has been performed on a simple route through the city, with a passive, static audience. Now it will be appearing in separate spots all over the city, so that the audience will have to seek out the performances. This seems to symbolically invite the audience to join with the Zinneke group, and what they signify.

None of the respondents had clear ideas about what the audience thought of the parade or how it was received, except for Zinnode artists like Florent Grouazel who discussed the event as a visual spectacle of the city. Although the Zinneke team had more fully developed wishes for the effect of the parade on the spectators, there was a general lack of insight. This is at stark odds with the aims and priorities highlighted in the Zinneke promotional booklet. Described to me as being aimed at potential funding providers, this document clearly states the intended effect of the audience and the city at large. Firstly, “to encounter in an original way the strengths of Brussels as the capital and multicultural city.”\(^{172}\) Secondly, “to forge a positive image of other cultural communities; […] to discourage stigmatizing opinions.”\(^{173}\) The parade is described as transforming the public space, temporarily “returning the streets to the people, creating a space for the public festival and [creating] proximity to the [Brussels people].”\(^{174}\)

Although the promotional booklet did not mention the cumulative effect Zinneke might have, I suggest that it will be reinforced by repetition. In my interpretation, the performance of the ritual embodies the collective narrative of the group. Whilst the Zinneke Parade perforce only involves a portion of the city’s people, the participation of the audience in the ritual connects the wider community with that narrative. According to Connerton’s theory, Zinneke will gradually become a carrier of this collective memory, strengthened each iteration as it grows, and as it becomes embedded in the minds of its audience. It was notable that one of the youngest and most recently involved respondents has already begun to perceive it as an iconic and established part of the Brussels cultural heritage:

\(^{171}\) Interview, Bart Nagels.
\(^{173}\) Ibid.
\(^{174}\) Ibid.
It’s a famous event, it’s like an image of Brussels, it’s very famous, I don’t say all around the world because before coming, living to Brussels I didn’t know anything to Zinneke but I was informed since the first year.\textsuperscript{175}

This prevalent idea of Zinneke as a way for people to form new group narratives that actively engage with civic matters is no coincidence. It was most present in the interviews with the Zinneke team, and appeared to have filtered down to all organisers. Since taking up the directorship in 2005 Stoffen has deliberately pursued this agenda. Her ideas are in accord with the promotional booklet provided: “The project aims through long processes of preparation to strengthen cultural democracy.”\textsuperscript{176} Stoffen is pushing Zinneke’s potential to create or reinforce local community bonds, to enable people to be more active citizens:

In certain neighbourhoods there are urban development projects you’ve seen, new big lodging projects that are going to start in a few years to come, meaning that there is an incredible social transformation that is going to take place in these neighbourhoods, and thus it might be interesting to reinforce the connections between local actors and the inhabitants in order to be able to, sometimes, organise themselves, to question what is going to happen in the neighbourhood, to be connected.\textsuperscript{177}

Cultural memory

According to respondents’ narratives, the participants are understandably focused on the performance aspect of Zinneke – the parade day is when “we can show our work to Brussels, to the public”.\textsuperscript{178} Although respondents had fairly vague ideas about who the intended audience was, they were aware of the significance of the performance on several levels. Not only was it the focal point and celebration for the participants after months of work, it was also important for the parade to be seen by the public as a way of connecting to the wider community. They talked about the way the parade brings all the people of Brussels together on the streets, the friends and family of participants, and international visitors. The participants are potentially acting as conduits for the groups to see themselves represented in this new, amalgamated community.

\textsuperscript{175} Interview with Tamara Maes, Brussels, 12 November 2014.
\textsuperscript{176} Zinneke, “En bref.”
\textsuperscript{177} Interview, Myriam Stoffen.
\textsuperscript{178} Interview with Florent Grouazel, Brussels, 11 November 2014.
The perception of the parade and its importance as a visual, artistic production or as a unifying performance of diverse groups was partially divided among the respondents by the nature of their involvement and, perhaps, closeness to the Zinneke team. The independent Zinnod artists and one coordinator tended to describe the event in artistic terms, focusing less on the integrationist aspects. Grouazel was able to see it from the tourist gaze perspective, following Dicks’ interpretation of culture on display:

It’s quite a good way to see Brussels; and for tourists, for example if you come here during the time of Zinneke, you really see the face of Brussels now, not in the ancient past, museum stuff. New, it’s really the spirit of Brussels in the streets.179

When asked about the meaning that is conveyed by the parade, respondents had varied answers – some had given the matter little thought, while those higher up the hierarchy of the organisation had nuanced reflections. Matteo Serger, a former Zinneke artistic coordinator, thought that the parade was a manifestation of a new type of Brussels identity. The fact that Zinneke relies on a multiplicity of organisations and agencies for support and funding means it reflects a much more pluralist set of messages:

[Brussels] is coming up with its own identity made out of para-diversity and not based on its institutions or its history. But even before the European Union, Brussels had always been very cosmopolitan; it had always been a very mixed city and paradoxically what is being communicated is an identity based on diversity, and on the fact that there’s no majority, or ghettos, or crushing institutions, but instead there is a diversity of institutions.180

His comments almost echo Cantle’s assertion that super-diversity is fundamentally different to what society has witnessed before, that this is creating a new type of identity. By implication, this is one which is plural, diverse and not connected to old symbols of homogenous nationalist identity i.e. the grand institutions of the state. Interestingly, Serger posits that it is not a binary amalgamation of majority and minority, but a more equal mix. Similarly, Grouazel believes that the parade is the opposite of the force of “museumification” that is happening in old (Western European) cities.181 It reminds people that Brussels is a living, changing city.

179 Interview, Florent Grouazel.
180 Interview with Matteo Serger, Brussels, 14 October 2014.
181 Interview, Florent Grouazel.
Zinneke is perceived by a variety of the respondents as having effect at an individual, organisation (group) and city level. Its trajectory follows Assmann’s three-stage model of collective memory. The process of negotiating a new group identity is shared between the individual participants and the Zinnodes (individual and social levels). The parade is the ritual whose repetition encourages remembrance. This is the externalisation of the group identity, which can be carried on after the individuals cease to participate. Some could already see Zinneke passing from generation to generation, in the form of child participants becoming volunteers and teachers to new participants.\(^{182}\)

The Zinneke ritual, and the narrative it connects the public to, is still young and the meaning flexible. Its scope has expanded so that it attempts to bridge even more boundaries. From a perhaps more linguistic and ethnocultural diversity focus it has come to encompass age, disability, gender and mental illness diversity too. The parade is a highly visible public demonstration of inclusion. In my interpretation, by including these many different representatives of the Brussels community, Zinneke implicitly asserts their right to participate in the creation of cultural memory. As per Huyssen’s theory, such public rituals have significant power as a stage to influence a society-wide debate on cultural heritage and identity.\(^{183}\)

The resulting space for intercultural dialogue is being used in a thought-provoking way which helps the community negotiate social upheaval resulting – in part – from ethnocultural diversity.\(^{184}\) Zinneke may use an old name for its parade, but everything that it creates comes from the present participants and their ideas. The Zinneke promotional booklet portrays the project’s goals at their most abstract, compared to the more everyday focus of the respondents. It takes a much more social and ideological attitude towards even the creative aspect: one participant goal is to “encourage people to participate in a project that arouses their imagination, creative identity and creative senses, via interactions [which are based on] exchange and production rather than [being] consumerist and commercial.”\(^{185}\) Whilst the artistic creation is an important tool to spark discussions, the eventual aim of each Zinnode (at least for the Zinneke team and some

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\(^{182}\) Interview, Dis Huyghe. Interview, Bart Nagels.

\(^{183}\) Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*.

\(^{184}\) Ibid.

\(^{185}\) Zinneke, “En bref.”
organisers) is to allow participants to interact, and gradually to talk about social and local issues, not just to create an impressive spectacle.\textsuperscript{186}

The respondents are aware of the temptation to rely on familiar, nostalgic forms of artistic expression, and some told me how they go out of their way to encourage groups to create something entirely new from their individual influences. What results is more than a simple mixture of all the elements, but a unique expression of the integrating group.\textsuperscript{187} Zinneke is a suitable answer to Huysen’s call for an intentionally hybridised approach to heritage, and its mediation in contemporary multicultural societies, while not lapsing into artificially nostalgic models.

\textbf{Fluidity and hybridity}

Parekh categorises Belgium as multiculturalist in that it is a multicultural society which seeks to embrace its two (or more) cultures and make them central to its identity and functioning, but monoculturalist in that it seems to assimilate the other cultures within it (the much smaller immigrant populations) via education.\textsuperscript{188} All respondents made reference to the persistence of institutionalised dualism between the two languages, despite the flowering of many non-francophone and non-Flemish organisations in Brussels. The aim of crossing those boundaries was acknowledged by many, but those higher in the hierarchy emphasised it particularly. Zinneke is structured in a way which deliberately transgresses across the linguistic, ethnocultural boundaries. By contract, this idea of transgression was markedly downplayed in the promotional booklet. As government funds are earmarked for the two language groups, there is theoretically no funding for a cross-cultural event. Two Zinneke team members told me of the project’s aims:

\begin{quote}
It is to work completely in a different way as those cultural centres. French cultural centres get money from the French government, for French theatre, for French people. Same for Flemish.\textsuperscript{189}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{186} Interview, Alessandra Esposito.
\textsuperscript{187} Interview, Françoise De Smet.
\textsuperscript{188} Parekh, \textit{Rethinking multiculturalism}, 7.
\textsuperscript{189} Interview, Dis Huyghe.
That's not our way to work. It’s about exchange; it’s so important, and it’s the society of today. So we created a way to work is founded on exchange, but we can give know-how and knowledge to let the people from organisations, the Zinnodes, [obtain grant] money to pay artists.\textsuperscript{190}

The Zinneke team deliberately encourages organisers to source funding from both Wallonian and Flemish powers, and pool the resources. In this way Zinneke counters the state form of multiculturalism, exemplified by Modood’s model which treats people as discrete, potentially static groups. Whilst Zinneke must recruit participants from groups, an apparently multicultural structure, this seems to be for expedient rather than ideological reasons. The attempts to forge long-lasting relationships between the disparate groups and individuals suggests a more interculturalist agenda. Zinneke’s methods align with Cantle’s theory of interculturalism: to promote social cohesion and overcome divisions entrenched by multiculturalist policies. In Grouazel’s words, the aim of the project is “to put some [bridges] between communities”.\textsuperscript{191}

Several coordinators expressed their difficulties in integrating minority cultural groups for a variety of ethnocultural and gendered reasons that were less present in the narratives of the Zinneke team. Tamara Maes, a Zinnode coordinator, spoke of the frustrations of creating interest among some of the minority groups, who generally have a very poor attendance level except when the event is specifically targeting them i.e. Moroccan-themed. Respondent Y, another Zinnode coordinator who preferred to remain anonymous, found it difficult to persuade groups of Moroccan women to participate in workshops, as they “don’t like to go out” of their small community area.\textsuperscript{192} This seems to be a sign of the women’s gendered roles (particularly regarding childcare responsibilities) within their communities. Organisers found themselves modifying the schedules and workshops to accommodate these differences, which had some success.

In the interviews, the respondents expressed a desire, some more fervently than others, to widen the participation in Zinneke with more individuals unconnected to their existing partners. This was mentioned with more hesitation by the coordinators (who would be tasked with achieving this in each Zinnode). Overall, I conclude that the Zinneke organisers aim to move beyond treating participants as distinct and separate groups, but

\textsuperscript{190} Interview, Alessandra Esposito.
\textsuperscript{191} Interview, Florent Grouazel.
\textsuperscript{192} Interview, Respondent Y.
it remains the most effective way of sourcing participants and funding.\textsuperscript{193} Despite these aims, they are constricted by language limitations to conduct workshops only in French, Flemish or English.

**Plurality**

The symbolism of the word *zinneke* was more apparent to some respondents than others. This question more than any other showed the variety of narratives among the respondents. Most had not reflected at all on any greater significance of the name, although all were aware of its historical meaning. Zinneke’s director alone had considered the matter in depth. According to her narrative, the word *zinneke* had been in use up to the early twentieth century, to refer to the hybrid origins of the residents of Brussels (there was also a connection with the Brussels dialect, a mixture of Flemish and French). In the years leading up to 2000 the citizens were becoming more aware of the new type of ethnocultural diversity in Brussels “in a positive and negative way.”\textsuperscript{194} The choice of name reflects the decision of the founders to revive a nearly forgotten term and apply it in a new way. It effectively encompasses an updated form of plurality, suitable for the now super-diverse Brussels society.

And today it means a new kind of Zinneke, it is a Zinneke with its roots coming from everywhere, but today this everywhere it’s a different kind of everywhere, but let’s claim it! Let’s claim it like a very proud position we want to strive for […] So it was a way to get it on the surface again, revisiting the word […] and thus the reference of what it’s all about, by reclaiming the new kind of identity.\textsuperscript{195} Her perspective is very evident in the promotional booklet, which makes much of the number of different cultures represented and the “aesthetic plurality that constitutes the unity and quality of the Zinneke Parade.”\textsuperscript{196} There is little evidence of truly hybrid identities, so plural and multi-layered identities are more characteristic of this diverse group. Stoffen, coming from an academic background, sees the project in a much wider setting of identity negotiation and hopefully a shift away from inclusive/exclusive models of identity. She would like to see a whole new way of envisioning our identities which is

\textsuperscript{193} Interview, Alessandra Esposito.
\textsuperscript{194} Interview, Myriam Stoffen.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Zinneke, “En bref.”
much more open and fluid. When discussing the hybridity meaning of the word *zinneke*, Stoffen felt that even hybrid identities were too limiting:

Nevertheless that’s still kind of a new bounded definition of some kind of identity which is very typical here, and in the meantime I think it’s absolutely not interesting to see it that way. And I think the same goes for most of identities, for social groups; culture groups, nations, whatever [...] use. I think there is an interesting work to revisit the way people define themselves by reflecting in how they can complexify and continue to complexify instead of seeing it like a closed identity.\(^{197}\)

Rather than trying to create a new hybrid Brussels identity – a Zinneke identity – Stoffen would like to see Zinneke as a space for developing plural and multifaceted identities that are more inclusive. For her, the Zinneke is not a singular identity; that is impossible. Change requires an end to this easy, self-reinforcing way of boundary thinking.

If there is something that we really have to re-reflect on in the 20th century, it is, in general, about the interconnection, the interdependence on all levels, should oblige us to stop with conceptualising through boundary thinking; it’s the exact opposite.\(^{198}\)

Whether or not Zinneke actually succeeds in this aim in the minds of those involved will show in time. These ideas were absent from the other respondents’ interviews. I suggest this signifies not a conflict of narratives but that this underlying concept is not being discussed openly or directly enough. The fact that each Zinnode’s presentation is the result of the unique creative process between those group members, and that there are so many different people involved each time, does mean that what is present each iteration is varied, unique, and not under the control of even the central organising team. Each group has an independently negotiated identity, non-replicable and interconnected via the Zinneke Parade.

**Intercultural dialogue**

Zinneke team respondents felt strongly that the Zinneke Parade has changed since coming under Stoffen’s directorship to become more conducive to intercultural dialogue. Although the first two iterations of Zinneke were intended to be projects that were of and for the people, they believed there was little reflection of this in the actual creative

\(^{197}\) Interview, Myriam Stoffen.

\(^{198}\) Ibid.
process. By decentralising control from the hands of a few key people to a much flatter hierarchy, the team has tried to make the project much more diverse and representative, and allowed it to expand beyond its original limited scope. The leadership team has also encouraged participant organisations to reflect more on their reasons for engaging with the project.

[In] general we observed that a lot of organisations don’t really take their time to think really over why they want to participate in a project like Zinneke; over the three sentences like, nice, and culture, and multicultural, and so on [...] So that means that we try to invest much more these questionings, on a practical level as well on our side.199

Levey and Cantle assert the centrality of cross-cultural dialogue and exchange to interculturalist policies, and thus the creation of space for open communicative spaces. I would argue that each Zinnode is an example of this space for dialogue, although approached indirectly via the creative medium. The many people involved in targeting specific groups and organisations for participation have different profiles and priorities, resulting in a concomitantly diverse array of organisations that are gathered into each Zinnode. There is one section of Brussels society which is conspicuously absent, which I shall discuss below. However, a brief survey of the different types of individuals who are invited to contribute to the group and exchange ideas indicates that Zinneke is trying to create opportunities for intercultural dialogues between diverse groups.

De Smet describes the role of the professional artists in each Zinnode as to make the different participant groups listen to each other, exchange ideas, and be willing to create something new rather than cling to their individual forms of expression or ideas. She described this as very challenging, but that this process of exchange is more successful every iteration. Other respondents had similar reflections on the benefits of the process, enabling children to be exposed to and interact with “other cultures”.200 At its most successful, respondents describe Zinneke as giving groups of people that would never normally interact the chance to cooperate and create something together. In some instances, it can offer the chance of inclusion to severely marginalised people, “people that don’t really get the access to institutions”.201

199 Interview, Myriam Stoffen.
200 Interview with Amélie Castan, Brussels, 28 November 2014.
201 Interview, Florent Grouazel.
As a result of the institutionalised linguistic divide between the two majority cultures in Belgium, people are filtered from the earliest age into either a French or Flemish-speaking life. Despite Meer and Modood’s protestations, the opinion of the respondents was firmly that the multiculturalist policy of separate governance and funding created cultural segregation for the majority of Brussels people. One respondent explained: “once you follow that trajectory you never – there are no bridges anymore to the other cultures and the other language.”

Zinneke’s most remarkable feature is the organisers’ determination to work across those lines of segregation. Cantle’s unconventional policy demand to cease government funding to organisations based on their ethnocultural character, as is so typical of British multiculturalism, would be equally applicable here. Specialist organisations serving the many different communities of Brussels are de rigeur, and Zinneke subverts the funding system by getting these partners to pool their resources across Zinnodes.

The interviews also revealed negative narratives present in the communities which reinforce ethnocultural divides in Brussels. Before Belgium followed France’s lead in banning the headscarf, it was in use among some of Zinneke’s participants. But performing so visibly in the parade was not always considered suitable by their communities. Nagels described one incident in his community: “there are girls, they even wear headscarves and they perform. But in Molenbeek, they can get also negative reactions from imams, etc. It happens; or from the parents also”. Some groups easily accommodated these markers of difference in the parade, despite community disapproval. Other failed to discuss or accommodate differences, instead putting the onus on the individuals to conform or bow out. One of the coordinators recounted this issue:

Some of the Moroccan women, they didn’t want to walk with naked legs and naked arms, because we were painting, and we needed to be in shorts […] But we couldn’t talk about that with them, we didn’t say it explicitly.

Due to their inability to have an open discussion, the process of exchange broke down.

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202 Interview, Dis Huyghe.
203 Interview, Bart Nagels.
204 Interview, Amélie Castan.
Integration and anti-discrimination

Whilst allowing for the sometimes flawed implementation, I argue that Zinneke is following the interculturalist model for social cohesion. This intention is most evident at the top of the hierarchy, and is spread among the various organisers. Zinneke appears to try to integrate the diverse communities of Brussels, with implicit anti-discrimination tendencies. Respondents had different ideas about the best way to do this, but many focused on the importance of starting early. Nagels was adamant: “if you want to make Brussels a city with many people that work together, you have to start very, very young.”

Zinneke helps young people in the city, the most disproportionately poor and unemployed demographic, so that the areas where they are concentrated will not become even more ghettoised. According to Amélie Castan, a Zinnode coordinator, this has a very positive effect when working across generations, helping counter fear and misunderstanding in the older generations.

Zinneke mixes lots of different types of people and, when successful, creates a “really social link” in the process. Further, it also creates strong organisational links between the participant groups, so that it becomes easier and faster for them to collaborate on other projects. The result is a beneficial spill-over effect with other socio-cultural projects. De Smet observed that Zinneke meets a social and cultural need – to mix the groups – which is not met by any other activity in Brussels, because of the institutional linguistic divide.

Whilst there are some one-off bilingual events, respondents agreed that this was the largest and furthest-reaching intercultural project of the region.

The project works towards not only local community cohesion but also on anti-discrimination stances. The Zinneke team has tried to give it the flexibility to react to specific events, such as partnering with gay rights campaigns after incidents of homophobia in the city. Stoffen told me: “for us it’s really important and interesting to let those groups of youngsters collaborate with support organizations, gay organizations in Brussels.”

Regrettably, I was unable to ascertain whether any other participant organisations had qualms about this partnering.

205 Interview, Bart Nagels.
206 Interview, Matteo Serger.
207 Interview, Tamara Maes.
208 Interview, Myriam Stoffen.
Where the Flemish government has tried to balance minority populated neighbourhoods with infusions of Flemish residents via subsidised housing, the organisers have tried to cope with the resulting difficulties.

These [Flemish] people, they live there, but they are not really living there, just […] And that creates some kind of tension because it’s as if they really don’t want to be there and don’t really want to participate, yeah like, be in the Molenbeek life and that’s what we wanted to bring these groups together.\textsuperscript{209}

In this instance the project is supplying the means of integration and social cohesion to correct or supplement a governmental project to manage diversity.

The respondents were not alone in noticing the habitual (linguistic) segregation of communities in Brussels. On a recent public consultation in her commune, Maes heard the same concerns echoed back: “they talk about what we saw […] people said we are not mixing, there’s a lot of people who don’t speak French here so it’s hard”.\textsuperscript{210} It seems that despite being active in Brussels for 15 years, Zinneke has yet to have a widespread effect on the mixing of ethnocultural communities. Any lasting effects seem concentrated among a few people. In Maes’ commune, she reported difficulties in engaging participants from the minority communities, calling into question the project’s effectiveness there.

Clearly Zinneke is fighting an uphill battle in attempting any widespread cross-cultural integration or even dialogue. In addition this intention is only partially pursued by some of its organisers and artists, depending on their personal ideologies. The core Zinneke team may have strong agendas in this matter, but may need to communicate them more compellingly to their partners. The director has very clear ideas for the purpose she wishes Zinneke to fulfil in Brussels. Rather than a mechanism to enforce social mixing, she sees it as a more dialogical method which invites people to reflect on their experiences together:

It was for me an opportunity to re-reflect on how in a completely different context, urban development, participation processes, but also the question of how to live together through diversity and all kinds of difficult questions that arose; it could be explored, experimented in practice and that was really a thing that interested me very much.\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{209} Interview, Respondent Y.
\textsuperscript{210} Interview, Tamara Maes.
\textsuperscript{211} Interview, Myriam Stoffen.
Exclusion or absence

Despite the overt efforts to involve as wide a selection of society as possible, Zinneke organisers were strangely silent as regards one significant part of the population. The people who come to work for and with the European Union institutions, and who make up at least one tenth of the city’s residents, seem completely overlooked by Zinneke. Most respondents did not mention this group at all unless specifically prompted. They could also not easily express why this group was being ignored, but it seemed to be a tendency in all their socio-cultural work, not just the Zinneke Parade.

Again this community was seen as having physical boundaries, yet these were ones that the respondents seemed to have no desire to cross: “I don’t know anybody of European community so maybe they don’t mix, I don’t know because they are, if I want to meet them I have to go to Place de Luxembourg […]”. Even when they perform the parade, Zinneke traverses through the historical centre of the city, but nowhere near the new institutions’ buildings. The signs of exclusion were quite profound – conspicuous silence, physical separation, and a seemingly conscious indifference.

Surprised by this finding, I hypothesise two simple explanations. Firstly, there is such a wealth disparity between the residents who need their work the most and the EU community that the latter is generally ‘over their radar’ (one quarter of Brussels population is living below the poverty line). Secondly, that members of the EU community often live in Brussels only temporarily. This could engender a lack of identification with the wider Brussels community, by either or both the EU or Brussels communities. Maes admitted that the EU had increased the diversity in the city, but in a transient way: “I think before it was, maybe before it wasn’t so mixed before the European community, now there’s a lot of people who are just passing through.”

Although Zinneke aims to create a space for diverse people to mix together, the EU community is not part of the Zinneke process, and cannot benefit from this experience. The EU community itself – or at least that part of it present in the city during the parade – can

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213 Interview, Tamara Maes.
215 Ibid.
hardly fail to notice the parade’s existence. Sadly, as none of the respondents had any connections to this community, nowhere in the interviews were their views mentioned or guessed at.

The only person to directly address the issue of involving the EU community, Stoffen claims that Zinneke encourages partner organisations to consider the question: “In the European neighbourhood, the local actors, we started to ask, like, ‘How do you work with expats, do you know them? Do you get networks? Do you reach them?’ and so on.”

Whilst this is one of the Zinneke team’s targets for the future, there will have to be a great change of attitude towards this community to begin their participation.

**Zinneke: Interculturalist Project and Invented Tradition**

As a new celebration of the present multicultural heritage of Brussels, Zinneke is a typical Hobsbawmian “invented tradition”, a point some respondents are well aware of. As per Hobsbawm’s critique, this tradition represents only a section of society’s interests, excluding the EU community in favour of other, more settled and frequently lower class groups. Rapidly becoming established, it is still fluid and changing in form and to some extent meaning. Under the present leadership, I predict that it will continue to change and grow, and avoid becoming fixed. The director’s determination to keep it as a dialogical space to explore the ideas of intercultural cooperation, community cohesion and active citizenship should help it remain open and responsive to the individual participants’ contributions.

With its origins in the reaction to a sense of crisis, Zinneke is being shaped by the needs of the present by all its participants in a way which is particularly evident given this fluidity and newness. From the respondents’ comments, I surmise that it will follow Connerton’s theory of ritual and habit. The repetition of the ritual (the parade) makes it ever more a part of the “lived experience” of the Brussels community. If it continues to grow and become more securely established, it will become a carrier of a cultural

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216 Interview, Myriam Stoffen.
217 Interview, Michel Kazungu.
memory. Zinneke can connect the participants and the audience to a collective narrative which is being constructed in a circular process, as Lowenthal theorised.

At its most effective, Zinneke serves a more immediate and concrete purpose of bringing together the diverse elements of society, including the marginalised and underrepresented. Where the organisers have embraced the vision put forward by the Zinneke team, the project offers participants a chance to mix and form a new group around a common purpose i.e. the performance. The varying levels of commitment to the intercultural dialogue aspect of the project depending on respondents’ position in the hierarchy seems typical of the Zinneke team’s approach. Rather than take an evangelistic line, they tend to allow the project’s content to develop in response to the needs and ideas of the participants. Instead they retain the structural format whereby they exert some control over the mixed leadership of the Zinnodes, and the pooling of funding from both Flemish and Wallonian authorities. Thus the structure of Zinneke continues to cross cultural boundaries, and the interactions in the workshops are left to the auspices of the Zinnode organisers, artists and participants.

Whereas those involved in the day-to-day running of the participants’ workshops and rehearsals may be more focused on the creative processes, all were aware of the underlying intercultural exchange goals. While this was most present in the core Zinneke team, it was even more marked in the promotional booklet. It marks out aims at the city level which many respondents had little consideration for. The document’s wording carefully balances the artistic and intercultural aims of the project, but ultimately leans towards the social aspect:

Zinneke wants to create an open space for new collaborations and new encounters between amateurs and professionals, between generations, between cultural and social groups, neighborhoods and towns, between [Brussels people], Flemish, Walloons, etc. The exchange of views and expertise is the central concern.  

The variety of narratives, from the website, promotional booklet and respondents at different levels, illustrates the complexity of mounting such an enormous public project with an intentionally diverse list of partners. Recent iterations involved around 2000 performers and over 200 separate organisations.

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219 Zinneke, “En bref.”
220 Interview, Myriam Stoffen.
The seemingly unique opportunity to interact and collaborate across divides of culture, age, ability etc. can lead to greater levels of cooperation in the future (in other socio-cultural projects) and community cohesion at a wider level (for example, the street parties in Dansaert). Despite the exclusion of the more transient EU community, the Zinneke team continues to position the parade as a project for all people of Brussels.

I think Zinneke is really one special project in Brussels; it's open to people from everywhere in the world who consider themselves also part of Brussels.\textsuperscript{221}

\textsuperscript{221} Interview, Alessandra Esposito.
Conclusion

Juxtaposing the two disciplines of heritage and multicultural studies offers insights into collective identities, narratives and manifestations not always discussed in either field. The preceding chapters have looked at the general developments from both and discussed the most relevant concepts such as collective memory, performance of identity, and the beginning of interculturalism. Viewed in the context of the highlighted theories, we can see in the deconstructed narratives how the concepts are perceived and used in practice. Zinneke manifests and negotiates the issues which are being debated across the wider European setting. This manifestation is not homogeneous but multi-layered, as the project is an amalgamation of many different people working together. The narratives collected for this research have shown that even among a relatively small group there are different priorities and conceptualisations of the parade.

To conclude, I will outline the interculturalist and identity construction aspects of the Zinneke preparations and parade, and draw general conclusions as to how the project and its circumstances are, in a way, emblematic of socio-cultural programmes in many European cosmopolitan cities.

Engaging diversity

By seeking out members of the communities that are not the typical majority and mainstream cultures (i.e. not limited to the Walloon or Flemish, adult, employed, able-bodied, neuro-typical, legal citizens) Zinneke provides opportunities for them to interact with each other and the mainstream majority cultures. Not only can they interact, but they are – when sufficiently motivated – united in the goal of preparing their performance for the parade, or learning new creative skills, or expressing their joint aesthetics, or perhaps just of socialising with a new group. Over the course of five months, these individuals can choose to engage in collaborative work as a group, exchanging ideas and forming social bonds. When respondents witnessed Zinnodes finally fusing into new united groups, they unfailingly commented on the warm and enthusiastic atmosphere which resulted. The new group had a newly constructed identity, negotiated through their exchanges and shared will to work together.
This sometimes faltering and challenging process culminates in the exhibition of the new group cohesion and identities in the public sphere. The parade is positioned, via its press and website materials, as an embodiment of Brussels as a “living city”. The implication to participants, organisers and audience, is that all the people present in the Zinneke Parade represent contemporary Brussels, and are Bruxellois-Brusseleir (people of Brussels). Historically zinneke was a term for the mixed (Flemish and Wallonian) people of Brussels, situated as it is roughly between the two territories and populated by both cultural groups. Today it has been co-opted to indicate the contemporary ethnoculturally diverse population. I suggest that the word zinneke has become in effect a localised Brussels term for Cantle’s super-diversity.

With this symbolic broadening of the definition of Brussels people to include ethnocultural minorities and the socially marginalised, the Zinneke Parade performance lays claim to the legitimacy of this interpretation. With every repetition and gesture of public recognition and support, the expanded Brussels identity is afforded credibility and perpetuated for another iteration. This virtuous cycle echoes Lowenthal’s theory of the use of heritage, even in this newly created intangible heritage.

However, forming a newly expanded identity of Brussels people has highlighted new categories of social exclusion. These may be self-imposed (using cultural markers e.g. gendered behavioural codes to avoid performance) or by widespread omission (for example, the EU community). Whilst the parade organisers have sought out arguably under-represented and under-engaged minorities such as Moroccan communities or undocumented migrants, the more affluent EU community is routinely disregarded, if not excluded. Unless individuals from that community join spontaneously from their own interest, they are unlikely to be represented in the Zinneke vision of Brussels people. It seems that this community does not fit the demographics of the participants sought out by the organisers, although none could give a satisfactory answer as to why this was. As long as the EU community is overlooked by the project, this creates a definite symbolic message of rejection.

Zinneke is crossing borders and boundaries at a personal, geographic and structural level. By deliberately transgressing the federal linguistic divide the Zinneke team seeks to re-

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222 Zinneke, “What?,”
establish connections between the two majority cultures which have been parted by the governmental cultural policies. By purposefully arranging workshops to be run by leaders who are fluent in both regional languages, and sometime English as well, they are straddling the two cultural spheres. Their funding strategy – to pool resources from as many governmental agencies as possible – deliberately undermines the federal system of funding allocation by language group. This symbolic and practical move levels the playing field for all organisations that wish to be involved. It also recalls Cantle’s demand that governments cease to fund associations by ethnocultural categories. Instead of privileging discrete cultural groups and perpetuating differences, Zinneke’s structure treats all participants as having hybrid and plural identities, not distinguishing between the different groups. It literally provides recognition for “our mongrel selves”. I interpret respondents’ comments about bridging divides between communities and creating new connections as referring to social cohesion or social capital, which Cantle claims is central to interculturalism.

The Zinnodes, and the way they bring together the different participants, are also beginning to affect the cultural geography of the city. Residents in areas which have notable boundaries around or between them have already been affected by the signs of social cohesion which Zinneke has initiated. When respondents spoke of the borders in their districts they spoke of the efforts to bridge them. Where the canal separates the poorer districts from the city centre, former participants have brought their communities together to hold neighbourhood parties.

Some boundaries have been left unchallenged: the EU community-related borders have been left in place, and the Zinneke Parade does not perform anywhere near the new EU institutional buildings, preferring the city centre with its concentration of spectators. Despite the welcoming approach most organisers take towards the city’s minority groups, they rely on the participants to speak sufficient Flemish, French, or possibly English, to take part. While it is already an achievement to have leadership in two or three languages, the most vulnerable and least-integrated city residents are effectively excluded.

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223 Cantle, “Interculturalism as a new narrative,” 74.
224 Ted Cantle, Community Cohesion.
225 Interview, Dis Huyghe.
Adding the interculturalist agenda

The Brussels bureaucratic structure means that both French-style assimilationist and Dutch-style multiculturalist policies hold sway among the two communities, and are imposed upon the minority groups who choose which linguistic path to follow. Despite the still-nebulous character of interculturalism as a theory, I posit that Zinneke is more intercultural than multicultural or assimilationist. On paper and at the highest levels, its aims align with the outcomes posited by intercultural theorists: “the pluralist transformation of public space, institutions and civic culture.” Zinneke has encouraged changes in the practices of the institutions it works with. This is particularly evident among cultural centres, several of whom now more regularly collaborate with their district counterparts across linguistic divides. The performance transforms the public space – temporarily – making the city the stage and the passers-by the audience.

Cantle’s theory of interculturalism draws on existing research on the benefits of social capital in communities, comprising the support of social networks, trust and cooperation. As the number of participants grows each year, Zinneke should be penetrating further into the different communities, but I acknowledge that several respondents reported resistance among groups. Although run from public funds, Zinneke operates outside governmental cultural policy. This means it adds its interculturalist agenda to the existing multiculturalist and assimilationist policies already in operation. It cannot oppose the other policies but mitigates them, offering alternative ways of engaging to both cultural animators and public. Its limited duration – several months biennially – and sometimes flawed implementation restrict its impact on potential social cohesion.

While interviewing the Zinneke organisers revealed the widespread intention to compose groups that were as diverse as possible, the difficulties of engaging their preferred participants was a recurring theme. The experience of recruiting from some communities differed from one narrative to another. Some were more aware of logistical and scheduling difficulties, others of actual disapproval by some members (particularly regarding gender-related concerns over the propriety of performing publicly, and the costuming). The auto-exoticism noted by Vlasselaers, whereby ethnocultural markers

226 Cantle, “Interculturalism as a new narrative,” 79.
227 Interview, Amélie Castan.
were deliberately treated as signifiers of difference by the individuals themselves, coincides with the behaviour mentioned by both Castan and Nagels.²²⁸

In some instances, Zinneke organisers failed to persuade people either to participate or to negotiate a harmonious balance of these signifiers of difference. The respondents generally agreed that it was vital to begin such intercultural exchanges with as young participants as possible, and I hypothesise that they had found younger participants to be less resistant to the interculturalist ideology than adults. Most respondents had many positive recollections of successful instances of intercultural dialogue and groups that had established new, congenial relations.

Active citizenship

The opinion held by some cultural animators that specific groups had generally low levels of engagement in majority cultural activities could be tied to several factors. The lack of plural cultures represented in Brussels, which is instead dominated by the two majority cultures, creates few paths for the groups’ self-expression. Interculturalists would argue that the various policies encourage cultural segregation and dis-incentivise pluralist initiatives. Whilst the organisers themselves were attempting to welcome such groups, there was a universal tendency to discuss and treat communities such as the Moroccan population as discrete groups. Whilst Maes recognised the children among her participants as Belgians, she then qualified her explanation by saying they were from Moroccan parents.

The spate of citizenship amnesties offered to clandestine immigrants from the 1990s and relatively high level of naturalisation among minorities in Belgium means that there are a significant number of foreign-born citizens and their children in the cities of Antwerp and Brussels. Whilst the process of becoming a citizen in Belgium was lately the most open in the world, the matter of participation and being an integrated citizen is entirely different.²²⁹ Castles and Davidson argue that this is much more difficult and that few states offer sufficient assistance with this transition. Although Zinneke’s director overtly

²²⁸ Vlasselaers, “The Modern City,” 103.
²²⁹ Bousetta, Gsir and Jacobs, “Belgium,” 42.
wishes to make the project an opportunity for Brussels people to reflect and be active citizens together, logistically such assistance may be beyond Zinneke’s means.

This is parallel to the observation made by Hill regarding the difficulties of creating a mass and inclusive public discourse. The participants in Zinneke all have multi-layered identities, a mixture of Belgian, Flemish, Italian, Moroccan, class, language group etc. A much-debated question is the possibility of a European identity (tied to EU citizenship) in some way replacing or being layered on top of local, regional, and/or national identities. While cross-cultural dialogue is much vaunted by the EU institutions, Christopher Hill warns that a European public discourse is much harder to achieve than the simple legal fact of citizenship. Even if we can create such a large forum, “it is not clear whether a European public opinion could only develop out of the existence of a shared ‘communicative space’, or whether common discourses are created by that opinion.”

The parade is the embodiment of a newly constructed identity, albeit somewhat loose, of the moment and with multiple meanings. Hobsbawm’s studies show how heritage is interpreted, used, discarded or revived according to the needs of the present. As a newly created heritage ritual, Zinneke is used as its participants and organisers interpret the needs of their communities. That the meaning ascribed to it is at its strongest, an intercultural statement of pluralist identity, and at its weakest, an artistic cross-cultural collaborative festival, offers insights about the respondents’ views on those needs.

The different narratives examined here – from cultural animators, the leadership team, and Zinneke’s promotional materials – tell of the many different meanings that are ascribed to this event before even considering the ideas held by the participants or public. Those narratives centre on the themes of the intermingling of different people, creative collaboration, and the exhibition of a hybrid or plural aesthetic. The visual result from each group, their unique aesthetic creation, represents the work of the entire group in the public space. The successful performance of each parade and its positive reception by the public audience validates their efforts. This intangible heritage creates the collective narrative of collaboration and manifests it in the public space during the parade. By becoming established and repeated each performance the parade provides an increasingly secure point of reference for those who choose to maintain their identification with it.

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The developments in heritage usage since the nineteenth century correspond to Bauman’s second and third phases, whereby emblematised heritages are used to transform a selected people into an imagined community, and later are commoditised to drive consumerism.\textsuperscript{231} I suggest this an overly homogeneous view of the third phase. Harrison has discussed the multiplying of heritages in the third phase as partly corresponding to genuine rising interest by many more segments of society as well as growing identity politics laying claim to an increasing range of heritages. This cannot be reduced to commercialisation, although that is also a significant factor. Zinneke itself falls into both the second and third phase. It has the normative aspect, whereby its leadership team encourages the participants to re-imagine their communities as a single, combined group. It also fits well with the third phase, which is characterised by increasingly localised, plural and sometimes hybridised heritages.

My speculations on how Zinneke functions as intangible heritage have comparatively little to draw on. While some types of heritages are well studied, for instance museums, this type of intangible heritage has much less material so far. The UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage sparked heightened interest in the many forms of intangible heritage, yet there are still few studies on projects like Zinneke. It does not fit the usual pattern of public rituals such as political or religious parades, nor commemorative celebrations. Zinneke is unusually not linked to any historical practice (supposed or otherwise) but is an overtly new creation. The question of authenticating it as an intangible heritage is both simple and complex: UNESCO’s own criteria is that only the community in question can decide, by affording or denying the heritage recognition.\textsuperscript{232} Brussels citizens could thus decide to recognise it as part of their cultural heritage (and the interviews suggest that this may already be happening in some cases). However, UNESCO’s text retains the bias towards antiquity and the longevity of cultural practices. A barely fifteen-year-old tradition is likely to be overlooked by most cultural anthropologists.

Both interculturalist political scientists and cultural anthropologists have called for the transformation of the public space to represent plural and hybrid cultures (Bloomfield, Macdonald, Huyssen, to name but a few). The fragmenting of heritages reflects the new

\textsuperscript{231} Harrison, \textit{Heritage. Critical Approaches}, 146.
ways in which they are conceived and claimed by various groups, but this has found little expression at a national level. Macdonald notes that fragmentation goes hand in hand with localism in heritage projects, of which Zinneke is a good example, but that national approaches have not significantly changed to reflect this.233

Dicks suggests that growing identification with local identities may be a result of uncertainty in the face of rapid social change.234 The identity which Zinneke celebrates is overtly local, based on residence in the city with no other qualifying criteria. Whilst in practice it prefers some residents over others (notably, ethnocultural minorities over the EU community), for the various groups it does manage to involve, it provides a space to co-construct this collective identity.

Closing remarks
In concluding, I return to the original questions which concern the creation of this new intangible heritage, its function as an intercultural integration project and its relation to Brussels’ identity constructions. Considering the uses to which heritage has been put since the heritage fever began, such as claiming the authenticity of specific group identities, positioning local identities on the larger stage, driving consumption and urban development, I argue that Zinneke is being utilised in all these ways, despite its relative newness. The trend of localism is notable in the project, being devised and populated by local people, financed by district urban renewal funds, and performed in the iconic historic centre of the city.

Although everything exhibited during the parade – the performers, their costumes, music, dances and interactions – is collaboratively produced by the very diverse participants, those participants’ understanding of Zinneke is partially mediated by the organisers. The respondents who run the different aspects of Zinneke deeply influence who participates and what information they receive regarding the aims and purposes of the parade. Through their attitudes and ideologies, in their different narratives, Zinneke is given meaning and significance in peoples’ minds. The core themes of exchange and artistic

233 Macdonald, Memorylands.
234 Dicks, Culture on display, 142, 30, 82.
collaboration are gradually transmitted throughout the groups and now across generations of participants.\textsuperscript{235}

The goal to create an intercultural dialogue is present in varying degrees, depending on the different narratives. Zinneke’s written documents, website and promotional materials state this aim much more openly than any of the organisers, save the director. I surmise that the emphasis put on this dialogue and on “collective acts of solidarity” is ultimately aimed towards the integration of the communities, although this word is conspicuously absent from the material.\textsuperscript{236} Even with the best of intentions among the organisers, each group forms differently, so while some do bond and begin to discuss deeper matters, a few never overcome their respective boundaries to work together effectively.

This public celebration, so recently created, is still trying to establish its collective narrative. The assertion by nearly every single respondent that the process is more important than the performance hints at a group discourse stressing the primacy of exchange and interaction, and without this period of intermixing during the preparations the groups would not have time to form their united identities. The wider, plural identity of \textit{Bruxellois-Brusseleir} is not yet present in the city’s residents. It must be recreated and renegotiated each iteration by virtue of participation and open dialogue. As new generations pass through the process, this new identity may take hold among them. For now, “it should be nice that they all say, ‘We are Zinnekes’ but it’s not there yet. They don’t feel themselves Zinnekes yet.”\textsuperscript{237}

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In the modern world, cosmopolitan cities bring together multicultural societies with different peoples, cultures, and their heritages. These do not exist in a vacuum, but are layered over (usually strong) national histories, which are prominently on display via heritage sites such as palaces, museums, and memorials. There is a need for new spaces for these people to manifest their intangible heritages. As communities come together to live side by side, naturally porous cultures will create new cultural expressions and form new heritages.

\textsuperscript{235} Specifically, the child performers who have gone on to become volunteers and teachers in subsequent Zinneke workshops, as discussed in Bart Nagels’ interview.
\textsuperscript{236} Zinneke, “What?”
\textsuperscript{237} Interview, Bart Nagels.
This transformation of public space to reflect the pluralism of contemporary societies will be a slow, arduous and likely painful process. Adding new voices and interpretations to public discourse reveals conflicts and silences. As groups have claimed heritages as their own to pursue public recognition of authenticity it can challenge the status quo, to the distress of the established majority. Zinneke is an example of how the public inclusion of challenging societal elements (such as the homeless and ethnocultural minorities) confronts the discourse of Belgium as a nation composed of two harmonious groups. Societies which are now aware of being multicultural must now find ways to publicly accommodate and incorporate this pluralism.
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Primary Sources:

Interviews with organisers of the Zinneke project conducted by the author, Brussels, October-December 2014.


Secondary sources:


Appendix I

Sample Interview Questions

What is your nationality?
What is your mother tongue?
How did you become involved in the Zinneke Parade?
What sort of people [from the general public] do you get involved and why?
How do you choose who becomes involved?
How is the theme of each parade communicated, and how important is it?
What is the aim of Zinneke?
What are the effects in the neighbourhood, and in the city?
What do you think about the quote from the BIP exhibition? [See Appendix II]
Appendix II

Quote from the “experience Brussels!” Exhibition, at the BIP - House of the Capital Region, Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels, Brussels Capital, Belgium.

Photograph by Catherine Burkinshaw 2014.

A zinneke?
What is someone from Brussels?

Because of his multiple roots, he is often defined as a Zinneke, "a mutt only good to be thrown in the Senne" (Zinne). His identity was at first, tailored by 800 years of invasions, which saw the Romans, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Spanish, the Austrians, the French, the Dutch and Germans pass through. Then by the different social disputes between the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the working population. These two factors have made the man from Brussels into a rebellious character "for whom grousing is a civic virtue". His spirit, marked by the zwanze, typically cheeky humour and Brussels way of living, is taken to the absurd becoming surrealist.