

Re-imagining public space: Urban renewal,
identity and discourses of consumption
in Montpellier, France

Roza Tchoukaleyska

PhD Thesis

September 2013

Department of Geography
The University of Sheffield

Abstract:

This thesis examines the meaning of public space in Montpellier, France, with a focus on a city-centre plaza that has been redeveloped through a municipally-led regeneration program. Originally home to an outdoor produce and household goods market used by a wide diversity of urban actors, the redeveloped Plan Cabanes plaza has been re-imagined as a *brocante* and French book market.

The process of changing the type of market situated in this plaza has resulted in a noticeable change in how public space is used in the surrounding neighbourhood. Through the relocation of the produce market it has witnessed the displacement of users who self-identity as North African, and become a point of heated contestation between Montpellier's municipal government and local actors over who should have access to public space, and have the right to define its function.

Based on 10 months of qualitative research in Montpellier, the thesis draws on ethnographic field notes, semi-structured interviews, and archival research to consider questions of civic belonging, cultural identities and their linked consumption practices, and the meaning of urban redevelopment in contested urban arenas. With the new Plan Cabanes plaza described as 'empty space' rather than 'public space', and the establishment of a *brocante* market instead of an ethnically diverse produce market viewed as an attempt to erase ethnic diversity from the city-centre, the municipally-led redevelopment program has been challenged for seemingly excluding certain users from public space. The thesis draws on the work of Lefebvre (1991), Ross (1996) and Klein (1997) to situate these topics in a broader discussion of French cultural identity, civic engagement, and the tacit exclusion of certain social groups and cultural practices from the city-centre.

Acknowledgements:

The warmest of thanks to all the participants who took the time to talk to me about their work, their life, and led me on walking tours of their favourite Montpellier places. Many thanks to the archivists who helped find materials, Dominique Crozat and Sabrina Marchandise at the Université Montpellier III for the warm welcome, and to the friends and *famille d'accueil* in Montpellier who made the year of fieldwork and all of my visits such wonderful fun.

A very big thank you to my primary supervisor, Professor Peter Jackson, for shepherding this research, always having the time for a meeting and providing invaluable advice, and to my secondary supervisor, Professor Paul White, for encouraging me to push my ideas further.

This work has been enabled by a University of Sheffield Overseas Research Scholarship, and in the writing up year(s) by a grant from the Canadian Centennial Scholarship Fund. I gratefully acknowledge their support.

Many thanks to my fellow D5 office inhabitants for the cups of tea and distractions, and especially to Anna Krzywoszynska, Saskia Warren, and Sarah Wrathmell for their support and friendship. With special thanks to my parents, sister and family for their support over many years of being a PhD student.

Table of Contents:

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 The Montpellier case study	4
1.2 Re-imagining urban space	9
1.3 Thesis outline	13
Chapter 2: Setting the Scene	17
2.1 Introducing Montpellier	19
2.2 The Plan Cabanes and the city	38
2.3 Research approaches	49
2.4 Transcribing, coding, organizing, writing	66
Chapter 3: Performing the market	79
3.1 Defining the market	81
3.2 Rules and regulations	89
3.3 Articulating the game	104
3.4 The rule breakers	116
3.5 Conclusion	126
Chapter 4: Public places and empty spaces	129
4.1 Municipal intervention and public space	131
4.2 The market relocated	137
4.3 Conceptualizing public space	147
4.4 Contested space as empty space	158
4.5 Conclusion	167
Chapter 5: Memory erased, history re-imagined	171
5.1 Public space and public memory	174
5.2 Neighbourhood memories	181
5.3 Materiality and market memory	194
5.4 Memory erased / empty space part II	201
5.5 Conclusion	207
Chapter 6: Re-ordering public space	209
6.1 Dirt meets heritage	211
6.2 Chaos, dirt, disorder and the market	221

6.3	The insalubrious neighbourhood	232
6.4	The Plan Cabanes re-ordered	240
6.5	Conclusion	261
Chapter 7: Conclusion		263
7.1	Thesis summary.....	264
7.2	Conclusions and implications	270
7.3	Directions for future research	281
References.....		285
Appendices.....		305

List of Figures:

Figure 2.1: Montpellier, south-central France map.....	19
Figure 2.2: Montpellier and surrounding urban communities.....	20
Figure 2.3: The city-centre of Montpellier map	21
Figure 2.4: A street in the historic city-centre.....	23
Figure 2.5: Building facade in the historic city-centre.....	23
Figure 2.6: The Cathédrale St-Pierre.....	24
Figure 2.7: The Place de la Comédie.....	24
Figure 2.8: Tramway line 1	27
Figure 2.9: Walking through La Paillade / Mosson	27
Figure 2.10: ‘M’ for Montpellier.....	28
Figure 2.11: The Antigone neighbourhood	28
Figure 2.12: Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles street map.....	39
Figure 2.13: GoogleMaps/satellite image of Plan Cabanes/Figuerolles	39
Figure 2.14: The Plan Cabanes plaza	40
Figure 2.15: The Place Salengro plaza and market.....	40
Figure 2.16: The Broc’Art (<i>brocante</i>) market in session.....	43
Figure 2.17: A produce stand in the Place Salengro market	43
Figure 2.18: The Cours Gambetta, tramway construction	44
Figure 2.19: A rainy street view in Figuerolles	44
Figure 2.20: The Rue du Faubourg Figuerolles	59
Figure 2.21: Shops across from the Place Salengro.....	59
Figure 2.22: The Place Salengro (with vendors packing their stands)	60
Figure 2.23: The Cours Gambetta, across from the Plan Cabanes	60
Figure 3.1: Brocante stand in the Plan Cabanes	91
Figure 3.2: The Broc’Art market stands	91
Figure 3.3: Books displayed in wine crates	92
Figure 3.4: A <i>brocante</i> stand jewellery display	92
Figure 3.5: Food stands in the Place Salengro	95
Figure 3.6: Behind the stand, Place Salengro	95
Figure 3.7: Peaches for sale.....	96

Figure 3.8: The fish stand in the Place Salengro	96
Figure 4.1: Hierarchy of urban spaces in Montpellier	149
Figure 4.2: Flagstones of the Place de la Comédie.....	151
Figure 4.3: Flagstones laid out in the Plan Cabanes.....	151
Figure 4.4: The tarmac in the Place Salengro	152
Figure 4.5: Selection of building facade colours	152
Figure 5.1: Faded store sign in the ‘streets of saints’	191
Figure 5.2: Faded store sign with the words ‘ <i>fabrique / bonneterie</i> ’	191
Figure 5.3: Graffiti reading ‘ <i>la rue est à nous</i> ’	192
Figure 5.4: Graffiti reading ‘ <i>on veut vivre ici!</i> ’	192
Figure 6.1: Building facade colour choices	243
Figure 6.2: Renovation in progress, Cours Gambetta	243
Figure 6.3: Broc’Art market and building façade	244
Figure 6.4: The same buildings, now fully renovated	244
Figure 6.5: SERM renovation, 22 rue de Metz	249
Figure 6.6: SERM renovation, 10 rue de Metz.....	249
Figure 6.7: SERM door, 4 Rue du Père Fabre.....	250
Figure 6.8: SERM door, 15 Rue du Père Fabre	250
Figure 6.9: The 11 pre-empted properties in Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles	252
Figure 6.10: ‘ <i>La gentrification c’est pas très cool</i> ’	259
Figure 6.11: Poster against the construction of a new building	259
Figure 6.12: Renovated facades in the Rue du Père Fabre	260
Figure 6.13: The Cours Gambetta during tramway line #3 renovations	260

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Any ‘social existence’ aspiring or claiming to be ‘real’, but failing to produce its own space, would be a strange entity, a very peculiar kind of abstraction unable to escape from ideology or even the ‘cultural’ realm. It would fall to the level of folklore and sooner or later disappear altogether, thereby immediately losing its identity, its denomination and its feeble degree of reality.” (Lefebvre 1991, 53)

“And the Plan Cabanes, it can play the role of intermediary, of the missing link between the, the Faubourg [Figuerolles] and the historic city-centre, you see, it’s a bit like this, it’s like this that I see things. Eliminating of course pockets of lawlessness that unfortunately exist there.” (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier, 2005-2011).

“It’s because they wanted to make the Arabs leave in my opinion. Give another atmosphere to the neighbourhood.” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes plaza).

The ability to appropriate space, to write oneself into the urban fabric and carve out a visible presence in the city, is a key step in establishing a viable, recognized, and enduring sense of civic belonging and identity (Lefebvre 1991; Mitchell 2003). Alternatively, an inability to establish such a presence can result in a sense of exclusion from the city (Sibley 1995; Ross 1996) or removal from public space (Duneier 1999; Mitchell and Staeheli 2006) leading to the erasure of certain identities, histories, and social existence from the urban realm (Davis 1990; Klein 1997). The research presented in this thesis takes these topics – of urban exclusion, civic belonging, and the importance of maintaining a visible presence in the city – as the starting point for considering how cultural identities and linked consumption practices are inscribed in public spaces, and the ways in which alterations to the urban fabric can imperil those existences. My examination of these topics has been focused on the southern French city of Montpellier where an ambitious €250-million urban redevelopment program has actively sought to aesthetically alter the networks of urban streets, plazas, and parks

that make up the city-centre, all the while also intervening in the social and cultural function of these public spaces by setting new limits on the types of events and uses permitted. I have chosen to approach these topics through the perspective of outdoor food and antiques markets: the collections of stalls, vendors, food, goods, and clients which are a common feature of many French plazas (de la Pradelle 2006), and that have recently become a hotly contested aspect of Montpellier's urban landscape. My particular focus has been on two plazas in Montpellier – the Plan Cabanes plaza and the Place Salengro plaza – and the succession of three markets¹ which have been created, dismantled, and rotated through these plazas as a result of the municipality's urban redevelopment project. In an instance where an ethnically diverse food market has been displaced from the Plan Cabanes plaza to the much smaller Place Salengro, and a French antiques market installed in the Plan Cabanes in its place, questions have been raised about how decisions on spatial management are made, what cultural diversity means in an urban setting, and most of all who has access to public space and an ability to influence its shape, form, and meaning (cf Mitchell 2003).

Understanding public space – and processes of civic belonging or cultural exclusion – through the lens of outdoor food markets is, perhaps, a novel approach. Yet in France, as has been argued by de la Pradelle (2006) and de Certeau et al (1998), food markets are key community nodes and urban planning tools: they allow for economic, social and cultural exchange; and render urban plazas 'public' by making these spaces accessible to a series of actors who may not normally use, enter, or loiter in these areas (Black 2005a). The idea of 'public space' is, in this instance, taken to mean a site that is accessible to all citizens and users and one that is, following Habermas (1962), a sphere in which a range of discussions and debates are held and which can in turn wield an influence over political and social action². Public space is therefore a site of interaction, engagement,

¹ The three markets are: the Marché du Plan Cabanes, a produce, household goods, and used goods markets held in the Plan Cabanes plaza until 2005; the Marché Salengro, a small produce market held in the Place Salengro from 2005; and the Broc'Art, an antiques (known as *brocante*) and book market, held in the Plan Cabanes plaza from 2010.

² I have resisted positing public space as the opposite of private space. As Weintraub (1997), Pratt (2004) and Bondi and Domosh (1998) argue, the binary of public/private

discussion. It presents opportunities for strangers to meet and converse, and encourages interaction between different community groups (Hayden 1997; Harvey 2006; Low and Smith 2006). As de la Pradelle argues, the outdoor market has the capacity to transform an urban thoroughfare into a site where “it is appropriate for people to recognize each other as alike and to treat each other as fellow citizens, in a way that is independent of private friendships or status ties” (2006, 157). Markets become places where one goes as a citizen of a public community, and it follows that participation in market life – and in public space – allows users to become civic participants, appropriate urban spaces and become visible community members.

Closely regulated by municipalities and regional governments, outdoor markets³ are also a representation of local policy and politics: the types of markets deemed appropriate for certain plazas says much about the kind of atmosphere, character and urban environment a municipality may seek for that space (Guano 2006). Outdoor markets thus allow plazas and streets to be inhabited by a wide range of users, yet they do so under the confines set by municipal governments on market times, size and the range of items permitted for sale in that specific space. While the notion of ‘public space’ speaks to accessibility and civic engagement, as Mitchell (2003) and Sibley (1995) outline, certain publics – the homeless (Blomley 2004), teenagers (Valentine 1996), groups with diverse gendered identities (Hubbard 2001), ethnic minorities (Dines 2002) – are sometimes less able to appropriate public space and claim a right to the city (Lefebvre 1996). Through this, the idealized vision of public spaces as inclusive agoras produced through the actions of citizens and users are challenged and the urban environment

space overlooks the numerous ways in which the public sphere intrudes into the private, and vice-versa, especially in terms of how notions of ‘home’ are articulated and enacted.

³ Indoor markets – known as Halles in France – are also municipal institutions. However, since indoor markets are usually housed in buildings owned by either the local municipality or a private landlord, and are governed by a series of rules that include a rental agreement for stall holders and a variety of policing measures, they are arguably a different type of ‘public space’ (one more closely associated with shopping malls, cf. Black 2005a) than outdoor markets. While the sites used by outdoor markets revert to being streets, plazas and parks once the market is finished for the day, the Halles buildings are locked to visitors at the end of the market day and these spaces cease to be ‘public’ (cf Gonzalez and Waley 2012 for detail on the public access issues faced by indoor markets / Halles).

appears more like a patchwork of selective access, social exclusions, and limited engagements (Low and Smith 2005). In this respect, outdoor markets are interesting entities: in some instances, they have been found to lead to greater engagement across groups normally excluded from urban spaces and to allow a wider variety of users to occupy plazas and streets (Faure 1998; Bava 2000), while in others they are themselves sites of profound exclusion through selective gendered, racial, and social politics (Slocum 2007). The institutional nature of outdoor markets – that they are “the product of local policy” (de la Pradelle 2006, 39) – creates tensions between municipal interests and community interests, making these spaces microcosms of wider political and urban trends and issues. As Mazzella and Roudil (1998) argue with respect to Marseille, the large Belsunce outdoor market in the city centre integrated a diversity of users and uses, particularly in terms of Marseille’s North African and Sub-Saharan African communities. The closure of the Belsunce market as part of an urban regeneration project targeting Marseille’s historic city centre, and its eventual relocation to a private parking lot on the city’s outskirts, was viewed as necessary by the municipality yet opposed by market goers and vendors – creating a scenario where the meaning and function of public space is contested, closed to some users, and opened to others, through municipal intervention (Koné 1995, Peraldi 1999). The outdoor market is thus a complex unit, at once a community node providing services and sociability, and at the same time a municipal entity that speaks to political goals and ambitions.

1.1 The Montpellier case study

Focusing my research on Montpellier’s Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro plazas has allowed me to explore these topics further, with particular attention to competing ideas on how public space is produced, used, and invested with meaning. The tension between the different definitions of the outdoor market – as a municipal institution, and as a civic and social entity – are played out in the conflict over the urban redevelopment project that has seen one market replaced by another in the Plan Cabanes plaza, and the function of this public space fundamentally altered. Used as an informal

market for a long time, the Plan Cabanes plaza was formally recognized as a vending space in the 1940s (Faure 1998). The initial market was made up of small holders and vintners, selling local stock to residents of the Faubourg Figuerolles, then a working class neighbourhood of agricultural labourers and recent Spanish immigrants. The market of farmers, buggies, candy, cheese, and meat vendors functioned well into the 1960s, when the neighbourhood began a decline – residents moved from the older houses in the surroundings to newer developments around the city (Prat 1994). In the 1970s and more noticeably in the 1980s, the area attracted a new, immigrant clientele arriving from the Maghreb (Descombes-Vailhe 1995). Low real estate prices in Figuerolles and Plan Cabanes – and store vacancies and abandonment – alongside the availability of market stall spaces, allowed for a commercial and cultural regeneration of the neighbourhood (Faure 1998). In the surrounding commercial streets appeared first halal butcher shops, cafes, and barber shops, then bilingual French-Arabic store signs with coloured tiles and photographs of Morocco and Algeria in many restaurants. The market itself saw a change of vendors, with new and much larger produce stalls appearing, meats and live chickens, and also household goods stands, cloth and fabrics, kitchen items, baked goods. The Plan Cabanes neighbourhood developed into a unique social, cultural and commercial network, and the market gained a reputation for unparalleled bargains and selection. Some of the vendors became market regulars – meaning that they paid an annual subscription fee for their place in the plaza, and retained rights to that spot. Others were ‘dailies’, who appear irregularly and brought a greater variety of merchandise, including wholesale items, seasonal goods, and clothing. On busy market days – the weekends and Fridays – the Plan Cabanes counted upwards of 50 vendors, amongst them perhaps 12 or 15 with annual place rights and the rest dailies, some of them unregistered. The market and plaza functioned as the social and commercial hub of the district, linking together the halal butcheries and cafes of the surrounding streets, providing opportunities for informal sociability alongside shopping. The Marché du Plan Cabanes also had the highest turnover of Montpellier’s outdoor markets into the late 1990s (Descombes-Vailhe 1995, 36). The

Plaza also saw a later, illegal market in the evenings, particularly around Ramadan, as people sold goods from car trunks and boxes spread on the ground.

In 2005 neighbourhood life changed significantly. The Marché du Plan Cabanes was relocated to the nearby Place Salengro so that the Plan Cabanes plaza tarmac could be updated and electrical works carried out. Initially the move was temporary, and only the dozen annual subscribers were permitted stall space in the parking-lot-turned plaza at Salengro. While the market was expected to return to the Plan Cabanes once refurbishments of the plaza were complete, within a few weeks the municipality contended that the relocation might be made permanent, and in 2007 city council voted for the formal transfer of the market. This final decision followed months of speculation, which saw the municipal council first vote to have the market relocated, then returned, then relocated once more. Those unable to secure a place in the new Marché Salengro moved to the large flea market and indoor Halles on the city's exterior, while the vendors who did remain saw a reduction in profits and clients. The market is no longer served by a direct bus route, and the large refrigerator trucks that service the produce stalls are parked several blocks away. The decision to retain the produce market at the Place Salengro was coupled with a proposal to create three new markets at the now completed Plan Cabanes plaza: a flower market, an art and pottery market, and a *brocante* and used books market. Of these only the *brocante* market has been established and is held every Wednesday.

In some ways the relocation of this produce market can be seen as a minute action in a greater sea of urban redevelopment and public space management. Yet the turmoil surrounding the Marché du Plan Cabanes and the renovations of its namesake plaza suggest that this case stands apart. Forming an association to fight for the right of the market to return to the Plan Cabanes, vendors and local shop owners circulated petitions and requested meetings with municipal officials in 2006 (Midi Libre 2006a, 2006f). Other local actors have mobilized in defence of the neighbourhood – in other words, against the return of the food market to the Plan Cabanes

– and have likewise circulated petitions and successfully met with city officials (Midi Libre 2005b). The Mayor of Montpellier and individual councillors have made multiple pronouncements on the state of the market, the topic has circulated noisily through the local papers and continues, several years after the fact, to be a significant point of discussion in the Plan Cabanes community. The replacement of a food market described as ‘North African’ with a market selling French *brocante* and books speaks to a material change in plaza usage – one that has been tied to national debates on immigration, ethnicity and cultural difference – and has led to accusations of discrimination, racism, and a deliberate attempt to erase Arab and Maghrebin identities from Montpellier’s city-centre (Midi Libre 2006e). And so the individual event of market relocation has become emblematic for wider issues surrounding the municipally-led redevelopment of the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood, and in particular the ability of different social and cultural groups to access public space and claim a right to a visible presence in the city.

The conflict over Montpellier’s Plan Cabanes plaza and its displacement links with broader French discourses on embodied difference and depictions of immigration as a spatial and social problem (Dikeç 2007; Wacquant 2008). The social imaginary surrounding French-North African communities, Freedman (2004) argues, posits North African immigrants and their descendants as a cultural and political ‘Other’ within French society. The meshing of traditions – unease with the colonial on the continent, as Silverman (1992) remarks – has produced anxieties over seemingly insurmountable religious, linguistic, and socio-economic differences. This discourse of cultural difference is augmented by a further factor: French citizenship speaks to *égalité* (equality) and in this context to formally recognize the existence of different ethnic groups in France would be akin to challenging this fundamental republican value. As a result notions of multiculturalism are absent in French political or social vocabulary and collecting statistical data on ethnic identifiers is not

possible⁴, and as Hargreaves (1995) has noted, speaking about ethnicity or race is difficult, with these terms rarely appearing in formal political documents. This duality – discomfort with ethnic difference, yet inability to speak about it directly – has two outcomes which are particularly relevant for my study of public space and identity in Montpellier. First, the term ‘immigrant’ has taken on much wider meaning than would be assumed in the English speaking world: it denotes someone who is not ethnically French (regardless of their actual immigration or citizenship status), and has become a byword for cultural or ethnic difference (Weil 2005). Secondary, as Dikeç (2007) has argued, the absence of a vocabulary to speak about ethnic diversity has resulted in a spatialization of the issue: rather than speak about ethnic groups or communities, French urban policy refers to spaces of difference, ones requiring further social, economic, or policing intervention. For instance the French *banlieue*, particularly following the 2005 suburban uprising, is increasingly depicted as a dangerous space of foreignness, a site with security problems and social problems, and one where there are no ‘ethnicities’ but many ‘immigrants’ (cf Wacquant 2008)⁵. As Dikeç has argued, “French urban policy has constituted its spaces of intervention, and associated problems with them” (2007, 4) so as to produce discrete spaces of ‘insecurity’ – rather than identify cultural or social communities (with no geographic boundaries) in need of further support. As a result, ethnic difference – or, what might be termed ethnic diversity in my Canadian vocabulary (Bramadat and Seljak 2005) – has been both erased from urban planning vocabulary while at the same time being problematized, producing what are effectively racialized

⁴ The French state does not officially collect statistics on ethnic identity, religious adherence, or political beliefs. While the French statistical agency (INSEE) produces publicly available data on employment, health, education, and many other indicators, it is not possible to formally know the proportion of the population that self-identifies as belonging to a certain religious or ethnic group. Data on citizenship is, however, collected, and for larger districts or urban areas it is possible to know the proportion of foreign citizens and their countries of origin. Tribalat et al (1991) have produced one of the more authoritative studies on ethnic identity in France, tracing the trajectory of what are termed 2nd-generation and 3rd-generation immigrants.

⁵ Before its reincarnation as a zone of foreignness and insecurity, the *banlieue* surroundings Paris and other large cities was known as the ‘red belt’, after its political leaning and association with the large manufacturing centres (and their unions) on the city’s outskirts. Even earlier, in the inter-war period, these spaces had been known as ‘mal-lotis’, or zones of makeshift housing built by those unable to access formal housing in the cities (Fourcaut 1988)

urban spaces in what Silverstein and Tetreault (2006) refer to in very stark terms as a form of postcolonial urban apartheid.

1.2 Re-imagining urban space

While particular attention has been given to the *banlieue*, this is not the only space of socio-cultural negotiation and contestation. Particularly in the post-WWII context, Ross (1996) indicates, state intervention has taken the form of urban regeneration and city-centre ‘cleaning-up’: the dismantling of Paris-central immigrant neighbourhoods in mid-century, Ross suggests, is led by a desire to not only reorder the physical space, but also the social milieu, of the city. Applying the terminology of ‘cleaning-up’ to neighbourhoods anecdotally known as ‘immigrant’ (Mitchell 2011) leads to yet another form of spatial coding that draws on a specific vision of how the French urban landscape should be ordered to distinguish spaces that are outside the remit. The urban landscape, argues Hayden (1997), is a representation of a city’s collective memory and the process of urban renewal can obliterate the very history giving meaning to a certain space, all the while denying long-time residents and users access to the public and private spaces that define daily social and economic activity. In this process, public space becomes increasingly important: since French urban policies target spaces (urban, suburban) rather than people (ethnic communities), any urban redevelopment program or public space intervention carries with it the potential for social and cultural intervention as well.

If social and cultural identities are produced through the struggle to define ‘place’ (Massey 2005), then the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes can be seen as an attempt to negotiate local identities and civic rights (cf Mitchell 2003). The displacement of diverse commerce in favour of French antique stalls speaks to more entrenched, and perhaps less visible, conflicts over the function and purpose of community space. This change in the materiality of the Plan Cabanes market(s) also hints at a desire to re-imagine the atmosphere of the plaza and the neighbourhood more broadly (as noted in the quote from Madeleine at the start of this chapter). Changes to the aesthetics of the Plan Cabanes plaza, along with alternations to

nearby building facades, the re-classification of this area as a protected urban heritage zone, and municipal intervention to tidy what are coded as 'insalubrious' urban structures, alongside shifts in the location of markets and the types of goods permitted for sale, all suggest that the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area is undergoing a notable (and noticeable) transformation. I have found the concept of 're-imagination' particularly useful for describing these shifts, understanding their significance for local identities and cultural practices, and situating the processes witnessed in Montpellier's Plan Cabanes neighbourhood into wider social and urban trends. In Lefebvre's (1991) triad on the production of space, the way that space is conceived by urban planners and engineers (what Lefebvre terms representations of space) meets the perceptions and experiences of users (or, spatial practice in Lefebvre's dictum), and together produce representational spaces: the experience of the build environment as conceived by planners and perceived by users, and one imbued with symbols and meanings that make this into a lived, daily space. Images are integral to the formation of representational spaces – or, the sites where inhabitants encounter and appropriate the urban environment by overlaying the physical landscape with their own ideas, experiences, and symbols – and through the re-imagination of such sites, the meaning of these everyday spaces (de Certeau 1984) is challenged, as is the ability of certain groups and communities to use them (Mitchell 2003). The way public spaces are imagined – whether by neighbourhood actors; or the municipal urban redevelopment teams – impacts on the ability of certain users to claim rights to that space (Lefebvre 1996), and in turn has implications for the ability of diverse groups and communities to stake out a visible and viable urban presence.

Taking inspiration from the work of Klein (1997) on the interplay of memory and urban appropriation, Gregory (1994) and the notion of geographic imaginations, and Jackson (1989) on the signs and symbols that constitute cultural landscapes, I have deployed the idea of re-imagined urban spaces as a way of considering how the aesthetic, social, and cultural meaning of the Plan Cabanes plaza has evolved, and further, how this

municipally-led re-imagination process intersects with the aforementioned social imagery of immigration as a (spatial) problem. In particular, I have drawn on Jackson's (1989) discussion of landscapes as social constructions to consider how urban landscapes in Montpellier are inscribed with a specific set of political, cultural, and social ideals – and in turn, how a municipally-led re-imagining of the Plan Cabanes reflects an evolving sense of the kinds of cultural landscapes deemed appropriate (by certain urban actors) for the city-centre. Gregory's (1994) commentary on the multiplicity of meanings imbued in urban landscapes – and his detailed consideration of Lefebvre's (1991) influence on how geographers perceive urban space more broadly – have helped me resituate the idea of 're-imagining' in a French urban context, and led me to the work of Ross (1996) and her studies of the sometimes racialized imagery associated with Parisian redevelopment programs. The idea of imagery, imagination, and re-imagining rings most loudly in the words of Klein (1997) who, through his consideration of film noir, urban identities, and dystopias in Los Angeles, outlines the importance of images – personal, corporate, state, community – to the way urban spaces are conceived, perceived, and experienced.

My research seeks to intervene on these points, and make a contribution to the literature on geographies of exclusion, public space planning, and the cultural dimension of identity politics. Although considerable literature exists on processes of exclusion, displacement, and racialization of suburban spaces in France (cf Dikeç 2007; Wacquant 2008), city-centre neighbourhoods have been studied less frequently (cf Ross 1996; Mitchell 2011), and through this PhD research I hope to expand this body of literature through the addition of a new case study. The ongoing struggles over the meaning and usage of Montpellier's Plan Cabanes plaza, and the relocation of the produce market in favour of French *brocante*, intertwines themes of urban renewal, discourses of embodied difference, cultural identity and heritage, and access to public space. By selecting the Plan Cabanes as my field site, I intend to bring more attention to the social and cultural function of outdoor markets, and their particular importance for the definition of public space. My fieldwork approach in 2009-2010

involved ethnographic research, the use of semi-structured and life-history interviews, archival research, and media analysis. Relying on qualitative methods that have positioned me in the markets, behind the stands, speaking to vendors and residents, and visiting municipal offices and the Mission Grand Coeur program, I have sought to interrogate a series of research questions:

- How is public space invested with social and cultural meaning, and what role is played by outdoor food and antiques markets in constituting ‘the public’?
- What is the language of ‘difference’, and how is this appropriated by political and cultural actors in Montpellier – and manifested in urban redevelopment discourses and public space management? How are these discourses embodied / rejected / adapted by diverse actors?
- How is public space re-imagined through urban renewal programs, and how does that re-imagination interact with diverse urban identities?
- To what extent does the racialization of suburban spaces (Dikeç 2007; Wacquant 2008) transfer to ethnically diverse city-centre spaces, and how are these urban spaces coded and reordered?

Taking Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of the rights to the city and Mitchell’s (2003) evaluation of how these rights function in the contestations over a specific public space as the starting point, the work that follows will seek to articulate how outdoor markets produce specific forms of public space – and further how alterations to the urban fabric, and the forms of cultural consumption there contained, fundamentally alter who is included in ‘the public’. I am keen to trace whose interests are represented in public space – state, commercial, resident, shopper – and how tensions between the role of the municipality as representing community interests while at the same time intervening and changing social and physical neighbourhood structures has affected the function of the Plan Cabanes plaza in Montpellier.

1.3 Thesis outline

The chapters that follow examine the central themes noted above. Rather than include a conventional stand-alone literature review, I have chosen to incorporate relevant literature at the start of each empirical chapter. The intent is to ensure that the theoretical grounding and background details for each chapter are situated alongside my findings, and thereby build more in-depth discussions of each topic.

Chapter 2 considers the research approach, and outlines how ethnographic work and interviews in the two markets were conducted, alongside archival research and interviews with a wider range of neighbourhood and municipal actors. The chapter has a particular focus on a key challenge to emerge from long-term engagement with a single field site: the idea of over-familiarity, issues around engaging participants over several years around similar topics, and ensuring on-going participant consent to being included in the project. The chapter also includes an overview of Montpellier's urban development with a view to contextualizing PhD research, and pays particular attention to local urban planning policies, leading political figures, the history and current socio-political context surrounding the Plan Cabanes plaza, and a commentary on how these issues intersect with the methodological approach.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the two outdoor markets currently in existence in the Plan Cabanes area: the Broc'Art (or *brocante*) market in the Plan Cabanes plaza and the produce market held in the Place Salengro. The chapter draws on ethnographic material to examine the practice of market life, the intersection of social, economic and municipal interests in each plaza, and considers how outdoor markets are used to encourage the formation of viable, lively public spaces. The chapter outlines the municipal codes governing outdoor markets in Montpellier, the administrative process of forming such ventures, and the internal rituals and codes of the *brocante* and produce vendors which shape the lived experience of each space. I then move on to consider situations in which these codes are broken and challenged, including illegal vending and other subversive

activities, and points at which the formal municipal codes are bent and twisted to more closely match the reality of the daily market. Influenced by the work of Michele de la Pradelle (2006), there is a consideration of the performance of market life, and the ways in which the market-turned-public space is staged, defined, and enacted through the process of selling, buying and socializing.

Chapter 4 looks at the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes from its original position in the Plan Cabanes plaza to the new Place Salengro. Here I seek to expand on the conclusions of the preceding chapter: if outdoor food markets are key community building blocks and important nodes for neighbourhood life, then what effect does the relocation of a market have? I first draw on Lefebvre's (1991) notion of the formation of space and Mitchell's (2003) notation of 'appropriate' uses and users, before drawing on a Marseille market relocation case study as a way of situating my Montpellier Plan Cabanes research. The chapter then details the timeline of market relocation, and considers how public space is dismantled and then recreated through shifts in plaza usage. The idea that a plaza must be 'animated' or used in order to truly function as a public space is interrogated, and the creation of the Broc'Art (*brocante*) market is considered as one attempt to re-imagine the Plan Cabanes plaza as a key cultural node for Montpellier. The chapter concludes with a consideration of 'empty space' – a notion commented on by both municipal and neighbourhood actors – as one way of describing the current (2009-2010) state of the Plan Cabanes, and its inability to fulfil the function of usable, enlivened, and animated public space.

Chapter 5 considers the urban regeneration process, and in particular the underlying current of French heritage protection and restoration that has pushed developments in the Plan Cabanes. Drawing on the work of Klein (1997) and Byrne and Houston (2005) the chapter examines the intersection between public space and public memory, and the ways in which this redevelopment programs has re-imagined local cultural and social identities. Drawing on ethnographic notes, life-history interviews and recorded neighbourhood walking tours, the memories and community

histories associated with the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood are detailed. The impact of the Marché du Plan Cabanes relocation and plaza renewal project is examined as an instance of memories erased – the removal of a diverse food market in favour of French antiques described by research participants as the removal of a certain (colonial) form of public memory from public space. The shift in the materiality of the markets – from food to *brocante* – and its impact on the broader function and meaning of this public space are then discussed.

The final Chapter looks at the reasoning behind the relocation of the food market and adjoining Plan Cabanes renovations. The rhetoric of dirt and lack of hygiene – that the Marché du Plan Cabanes was not to standard – is detailed, and linked to a particular re-imagination of the urban landscape that requires public spaces to be (materially and socially) ordered in specific ways. The idea that the Marché du Plan Cabanes had to be relocated because it was dirty is then linked to broader depictions of the entire Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood as insalubrious and in need of direct state intervention. The notion that this area is insalubrious because it is perceived as an immigrant neighbourhood with declining real estate prices is examined as yet another way of racializing urban spaces. The subsequent municipal intervention through the use of a variety of protected urban heritage designations, amongst others, is seen as a re-ordering of urban and public spaces that leads to the erasure of particular histories and spatial uses from the Plan Cabanes.

The thesis concludes by summarizing the key findings, and returning to the broader themes of urban exclusion, the meaning of public space in the city, and the relevance of outdoor markets in establishing and supporting the public sphere. The conclusion argues that public space in Montpellier is a highly politicized (and political) entity, and that the Marché du Plan Cabanes relocation and associated redevelopment programs reveals a coding of urban spaces that mimics the processes witnessed in the French *banlieue*, and speaks to the tacit racialization of city-centre spaces.

Chapter 2: Setting the scene

Recently I was asked to describe Montpellier to a group of students. We were preparing for a two-week urban planning field course in the city and they wanted a sense of the place. It took me the best part of a day to organize a series of power point slides and decide which photos to include, all this despite the informal nature of the talk. I stumbled and fidgeted, and in the end was frustrated with my description of Montpellier: a socially progressive city (with widespread support for social housing and public transport, for instance), a wonderfully preserved historic city centre, and a sunny climate that makes the local beaches endlessly tempting. Yet at the same time, as I will detail in the chapters that follow, it is a city that has a not-so-nuanced program of exclusionary state-led gentrification, a sense of history and heritage that erases certain events and people from the urban landscape, and a mayor (Georges Frêche) who has been accused of racism while being hailed as a political visionary (Maoudj 2007; Rollat 2008). Montpellier appeared like a strange urban version of Jekyll and Hyde, at once a shining example of innovative urban planning, and a site marred by disenfranchisement and racialized politics. This duality of identities and images is certainly not unique to Montpellier: Baudelaire (1869) might convince us of the beauty of Paris while Orwell (1933) counters with details of the more seedy side of the city of lights, and yet there is a particular joy in reading both and knowing that (considerable temporal differences aside) they each capture threads of the wider whole that is the urban phantasmagoria (Benjamin, 2002). I have no delusions of building equally grand narratives of this small(ish) city in southern France, but have taken heed from these works, and in the pages that follow will seek to contextualize my PhD research by listing some facts (population, employment figures) and fictions (the myth of Georges Frêche and his Montpellier vision) as a way of situating my findings and my research approach.

Montpellier is a city that runs on images and narratives, and at times it seems more like an ideology or an idea than a concrete place. A commentator in the UK's Guardian newspaper captured this sense much better than I have managed when he noted that "Montpellier feels like another world: like Blade Runner re-imagined by the man who inflicted 'A year in Provence' on us" (Bull 2007). A recently published, and much lauded, academic volume on Montpellier's urban planning program carries the title "*Montpellier: la ville inventée*" (Volle et al. 2010) – 'Montpellier: the invented city' – which suggests that this sense of urban make-believe has caught the attention of not only PhD students and newspaper commentators, but also several local academics. In the sections that follow I will first provide an introduction to Montpellier's urban history, and will show how this influences the shape of its modern city centre and surroundings. This will include some attention to the persona that is Georges Frêche, a man described as "a benevolent dictator" (McRae, 2007), and a politician who figures prominently in decisions on urban and cultural planning⁶. Next, attention will turn to my field site, the Plan Cabanes plaza and surrounding neighbourhoods of Figuerolles and Gambetta, with a view to outlining how the area fits into the broader narrative of urban development in Montpellier. The subsequent section will detail the fieldwork approach and methodology, with attention to some of the challenges and successes resulting from a long-term engagement with a single site and topic. And finally, I will outline how fieldwork data were transcribed, coded, and organized into a series of thematic thesis chapters.

⁶ The term cultural planning refers to the city of Montpellier's emphasis on funding cultural events and maintaining the venues which support these programs. This includes: funding for the operas and museums, and maintaining these buildings; funding for sports teams and the maintenance of these facilities; an expansive network of municipal and Agglomération libraries; a series of free concerts and theatre performances; subsidized museum, theatre and film passes; and a series of community venues to support local associations, performances, events, etc. Detail on the city of Montpellier's cultural rota here: <http://www.montpellier.fr/3759-culture.htm> on sports: <http://www.montpellier.fr/3782-sport.htm> and youth programs: <http://www.montpellier.fr/3769-jeunesse.htm> .

2.1 Introducing Montpellier

Situated in south-central France, Montpellier is both regional capital (of Languedoc-Roussillon) and department capital (of Hérault), and is one of the fastest growing cities in France (Audric and Tasqué 2010) [see Figure 2.1].

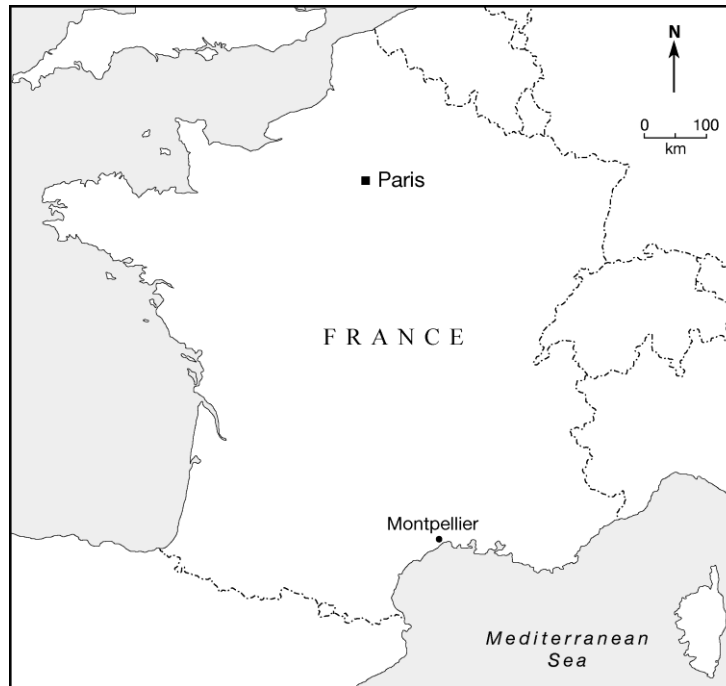


Figure 2.1: Montpellier, south-central France. Map prepared by Paul Coles, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield.

The city is situated 10km from the Mediterranean coast, and is surrounded by salt-water marshlands to the south, the foothills of the Cévennes mountains and their dry brush lands of thyme and rosemary to the north-east, and vineyards in all other directions. Today, Montpellier has an economy based on high-tech research, some of the leading medical and agricultural research facilities in Europe, several large universities, tourism, the wine and agricultural trade, and the construction sector – one of the healthier in France (cf Morvan 2013).

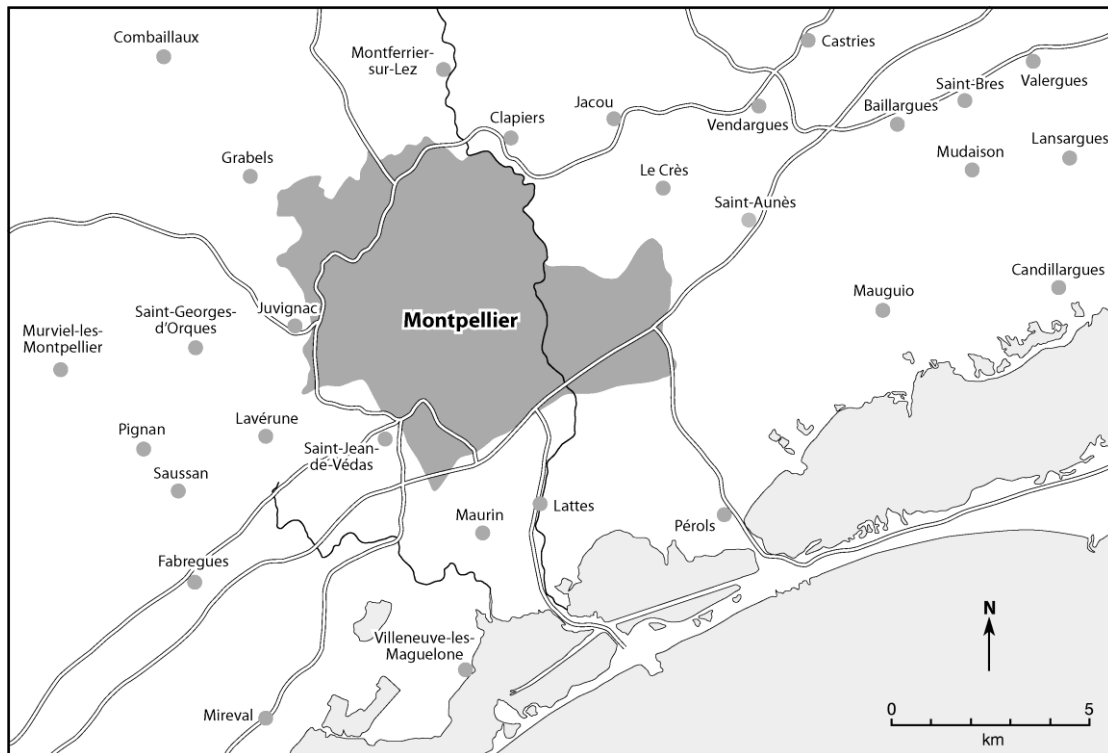


Figure 2.2: Montpellier and surrounding urban communities, with the salt-water marshes and Mediterranean coast. Map prepared by Paul Coles, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield.

Like many other cities in France, Montpellier is part of a wider urban administrative area – known as Montpellier Agglomération⁷ – which includes the city of Montpellier, and since 2001 a further 30 towns and urban communities in the surroundings (for instance, Juvignac to the west, Lattes to the south, and Jacou to the east) [see Figure 2.2]. With Montpellier a key player in the region, this administrative network has created two complementary political powers: the City of Montpellier (or, the municipality) which contains the historic city centre, more than half of the Agglomération’s population, and the largest public purse in the department; and Montpellier Agglomération, which has a separate state

⁷ An administrative entity known as the District of Montpellier was first created in 1965. It comprised the City of Montpellier and 12 surrounding villages (or communes) including Lattes, Jacou, Grabels, and Castelnau. The administrative entity known as Montpellier Agglomération was created in 2000/01 and initially included a larger number of communes (including Palavas and Carnon) but was reduced to 31 communes in 2001 after several of the seaside villages objected to Agglomération policy (and President Georges Frêche’s politics) and left the organization. The Montpellier Agglomération website: <http://www.montpellier-agglo.com/>

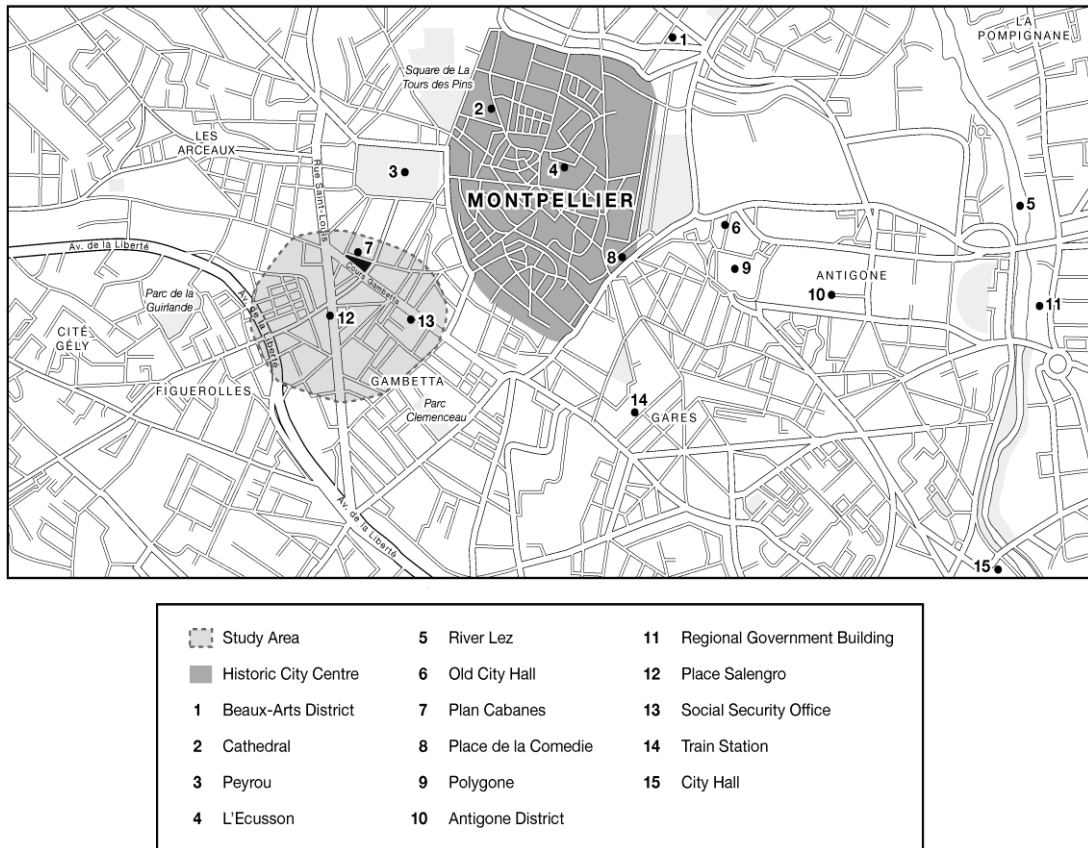


Figure 2.3: The city-centre of Montpellier, with the historic-city centre (dark grey) and the outline of my study area (light grey), the Plan Cabanes (point 7) and the Place Salengro (point 12). Map prepared by Paul Coles, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield.

funding program and political mandate, yet often collaborates with the City of Montpellier on urban planning, transport, economic and cultural planning decisions. Until 2004 and before an internal shuffle amongst municipal political parties the Mayor of Montpellier (Georges Frêche, Socialist Party) was also the Président of Montpellier Agglomération, creating an overlap of administrative and political power: decisions on what best suited the City of Montpellier did not always match the interests of the Agglomération, and it was only in the late 2000s (with Hélène Mandroux as Mayor of Montpellier) that significant cultural funds began to be parcelled out to surrounding communes and the tramline network extended beyond the boundary of the City of Montpellier. The urban renewal projects initiated in the Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes area are within the mandate of the City of Montpellier (from here on ‘the city’ or ‘the municipality’), with

additional funding from the region and from the French state – a process that has bypassed the Agglomération and its governance structures entirely. In many respects, Montpellier Agglomération has only a limited role to play in designing and managing the urban landscape of the historic city centre and surroundings⁸ [see Figure 2.3] – although in many instances the City of Montpellier will claim that its renewal and redevelopment projects are done for the benefit of all Agglomération residents (who presumably benefit, even if indirectly, from the spaces and amenities of the city-centre (Barone 2010)). The fact that two positions – Mayor of Montpellier and President of Montpellier Agglomération – were held by the same person made it more difficult to trace decision making routes, and it is only with the division of these roles between two people – as of the late-2000s, and especially after 2010 – that the City of Montpellier and Montpellier Agglomération have begun to function as two separate, sometimes competing, entities.

The City of Montpellier was founded sometime in the 10th century: the first mention of Montpellier is in the year 985 (Le Roi Ladurie 1962, 22). It was a seemingly late (urban) arrival in an area which already had well established cities – Nîmes, a Roman centre; Narbonne, also an important Roman settlement – and a flourishing trade in wine and sea salt. Yet by the 12th century Montpellier had carved out an important position in the

⁸ The administrative and political entity of the Agglomération is used throughout France (for instance, Agglomération Val-de-France unites several communities north of Paris; Agglomération du Grand Villeneuvois which unites several communities south-east of Bordeaux). The administrative entity of ‘agglomération’ was created in 1999 with the intent of allowing smaller communities to integrate some aspects of local service provision and planning. The city of Montpellier is slowly transferring some municipal powers and as of 2012 cultural planning, transport, sports, and some aspects of urban planning have ceased to be the responsibility of the municipality and are in the sphere of the Agglomération instead. In 20005, when the Marché du Plan Cabanes was relocated, this process of scaling-up political and administrative power had yet to begin. In 2009-2010 when I was completing my PhD research, transport (the tramline) was in the process of being transferred to the Agglomération, but urban planning was still very much a municipal concern. With Georges Frêche acting as Montpellier Mayor and Agglomération president until 2004, the division between the two administrative and political entities was difficult to tease out. Although Georges Frêche effectively installed Hélène Mandroux as his replacement as Mayor of Montpellier in 2004, the two had an acrimonious and very public falling out in 2009 over the appointment of municipal staff, and in the year that followed (until Frêche’s death in 2010) this personal spat took the form of a municipality-vs-Agglomération debate in the local media. Both Frêche and Mandroux represented the French socialist party, though Frêche was barred from the party in 2007 – as I note further in this chapter.



Figure 2.4: A street in the historic city-centre, January 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.5: Building facade in the historic city-centre of Montpellier, January 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.6: The Cathédrale St-Pierre, in Montpellier's historic city-centre, May 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.7: The Place de la Comédie, in the centre of Montpellier, May 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

region. It was the site of the first medical school in France, and of a notable law college, and had a reputation for trade (Le Roy Ladurie 1962), which propelled the city to considerable wealth. Caught in the crosshairs of the wars of religion, where allegiances changed from Catholic to Protestant and back to Catholic, and ultimately surpassed by Marseille as the leading Mediterranean trading point, by the 19th century Montpellier was a small(ish) provincial town squeezed between much larger and economically successful urban neighbours (Marseille, Toulouse, Perpignan). Today, Montpellier bears the marks of its history: the medieval city centre and its dense network of narrow streets is known as l'Ecusson (the shield, for the shape of its original city walls [see Figures 2.4 and 2.5]), a city-centre ring road traces the space where the 12th century city walls once stood (only the Tour Babote and Tour des Pins remain). The 14th century Cathedral St-Pierre borders [see Figure 2.6] the medical school, and only a small collection of churches (many of them attacked or destroyed during the wars of religion) dot the area. At the western edge of the medieval city-centre is the 17th century Arc de Triomphe, and behind it the Royal Parc de Peyrou, with the water tower leading to the 18th century Aqueduc des Arceaux. To the east is the large central plaza of the Place de la Comédie [see Figure 2.7], with the old opera at one end and the new Corum opera/performing arts/conference centre at the other, and the 1960s Polygone shopping district nearby. The train station lets off passengers a few minutes walk from the Place de la Comédie, and the historic city centre is surrounded by 18th and 19th century neighbourhoods of Haussmann-style buildings (to the south) and less decorative two- to three-story apartment buildings and smaller houses with gardens in other directions. The Ecusson is meticulously maintained, the streets cleaned every morning, the shops and restaurants in the city-centre supported by a municipally paid commercial manager, the stone work has been sandblasted to a golden yellow colour, and the plazas lined with benches and the shade afforded by palm trees and plane trees. The restaurants, cafes, and commerce make for a lively Ecusson atmosphere, and the tramline networks permit relatively easy travel to the more distant neighbourhoods and suburbs – four tramlines

currently criss-cross the City of Montpellier and expand into the Agglomération, with a fifth line planned for 2017 [see Figure 2.8].

To the north-west of the historic city-centre are La Paillade and La Mosson, two high-rise social housing neighbourhoods [see Figure 2.9]; to the north are hospital complexes and research facilities, which stretch into Grabels and Montferrier where 20th century tract-housing dominates; to the west is Castelnau and more tract-housing. The south-east of Montpellier has the more interesting urban landscape: originally flood plain, but also military terrain, this district has been rapidly urbanized with a mix of private and social housing, the large Odysseum shopping district, and the soon to be constructed secondary high-speed rail line. The City of Montpellier has had a long standing ambition of becoming a city on the sea – and urban plans from the late 20th century onwards have focused on an expansion of the built environment past the Odysseum, and along the series of rivers feeding into the salt water marshes⁹. This includes plans for a man-made inland port at Port Marianne, and expansion of residential high-rises and commercial facilities towards the coast at Pérols and Lattes. The south-west of the city has the old rail networks and transport facilities along with several specialized enterprise zones, and neighbourhoods anecdotally labelled as ‘dangerous’ or ‘cheap’ (a question of perspective), and former light-industry zones that have most recently been slated for redevelopment into a new mixed-housing neighbourhood¹⁰. The city is overwhelmed by searing heat in the summer – and waves of mosquitoes, which are kept at bay by extensive anti-bug spray campaigns – and enjoys relatively mild and sunny winters. The Ecusson cafe terraces and outdoor parks and plazas are used throughout the year, and are overrun in July and August when French tourists descend on the expansive seaside resorts of Palavas and Carnon for their holidays (these resort areas have refused to join Montpellier Agglomération, and as a result have been excluded from the urban tramline, making for difficult car-free travel between the two).

⁹ A list of all upcoming Montpellier Agglomération projects, including urban expansion and new tramlines, is available here: <http://www.montpellier-agglo.com/conna%C3%A9tre/grands-projets>

¹⁰ A list of urban redevelopment projects for the city of Montpellier is available at: <http://www.montpellier.fr/373-grands-projets-urbains.htm>



Figure 2.8: Tramway line 1, June 2006. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska



Figure 2.9: Walking through the La Paillade / Mosson neighbourhood, June 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

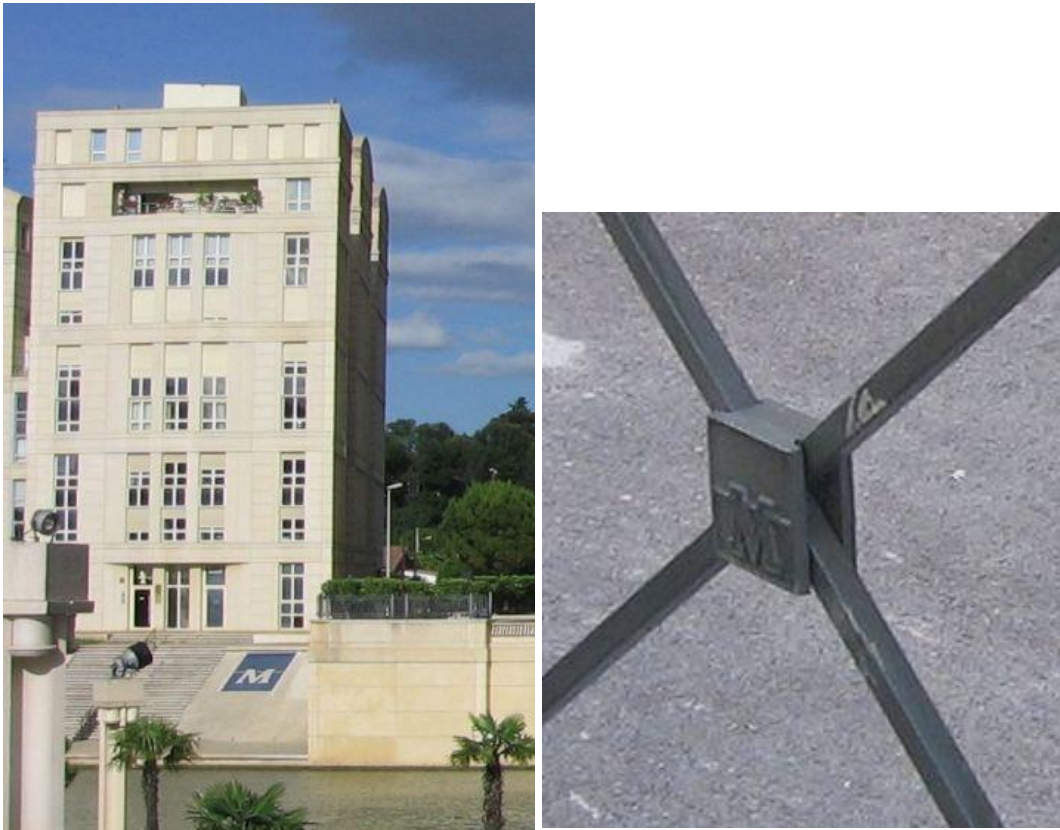


Figure 2.10: 'M' for Montpellier. Left: A blue 'M' – symbol for the city of Montpellier – integrated into the concrete embankment on the River Lez, in the Antigone, May 2007. Right: A metal 'M' embedded in a sidewalk railing, Place Salengro, June 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.11: The Antigone neighbourhood, May 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

Montpellier's astronomical rise from the 25th largest city in France in the 1960s to the 8th largest city by the late 1990s (Montpellier 2012) is a noteworthy feat, and is reflective of broader social and political trends in France. As the Algerian wars of independence concluded in 1962, Montpellier became the destination for many of those leaving Algeria to resettle in France. One outcome of this rapid population change was the creation of the La Paillade and Mosson districts mentioned above: a cluster of high-rise apartment buildings, smaller houses, along with some community facilities, all built around the need to quickly provide affordable housing. At the same time, many Spanish and Portuguese immigrants escaping difficult political regimes in their home countries arrived in Montpellier and augmented the need for further urban expansion, as did an influx of rural-to-urban migrants from the surrounding region (Le Roy Ladurie 1962, 119). During what is known as *les trente glorieuses* (1950s to late 1970s) period – decades of rapid economic growth in France – Montpellier also boomed. The arrival of IBM's large research and customer support centres in the 1960s, soon followed by Dell and a series of other high-tech companies, have marked this city as a 'technopolis' (Brunet et al 1998) – a technology focused research centre, where companies such as Dell and IBM benefit from considerable state assistance in terms of tax breaks, access to suitable commercial land, and support in establishing their enterprises. The medical and law schools have continued to be important, and into the late 1990s the large military college and several army installations, along with an expanding civil service, provided considerable employment.

The second half of the 20th century was in many respects a period of profound change for Montpellier: a rapidly expanding population, a growing urban boundary, new technological industries, the resurgence of old research institutions, and an expanding tourist trade. As of the last official counts in 2012, the City of Montpellier had a population of just over 258.000 residents and Montpellier Agglomération was home to almost 420.000 residents (Montpellier 2012). Municipal calculations suggest that in 2011 Montpellier and the surrounding villages welcomed nearly

2.000.000 overnight visitors, of whom almost 980.000 stayed in the city of Montpellier (Montpellier Office de Tourisme 2011), making for nearly 4 tourists for every resident. Montpellier continues to have one of the largest annual rates of population growth of any city in France (2.5 times higher than most other cities in France (Tailhades and Tasqué 2010), and it also has one of the higher unemployment rates in France: in 2010, as I was completing fieldwork, the region of Languedoc-Roussillon had an unemployment rate of 12.5% (compared to a national average of 9.3% (these figures in 2012 stood at 14.3% and 10.2% respectively (INSEE 2012)), while Montpellier itself had an unemployment rate of 18.5% in 2009 (INSEE No date). With an average household income of 19.894€ in 2009, compared to an average of 23.230€ for France (Ibid.), and only 32.8% of residences being owner-occupied (compared to 57.6% for France (Ibid.)), Montpellier appears as a contradiction: a centre of tertiary employment and innovative research, yet an urban zone with high unemployment, low household income, and seemingly low home ownership.

That I continue to be surprised by these figures speaks, perhaps, to the considerable abilities of Montpellier's marketing machine to carefully gloss over the economic details. In the late 2000s the tourist board launched a well received marketing campaign that identified Montpellier as 'the city where the sun never sets'¹¹, while in the 1990s Montpellier's municipal slogan was: "*Montpellier la surdouée, berceau du future*" – 'Montpellier the overachiever, cradle of the future'¹². These slogans are aimed not only at tourists and visitors: they are positioned at all municipal buildings, cover bus stops, and are reprinted in the local papers. A visit to the city's network of libraries will include the acquisition of new brochures promoting the city's work on behalf of its citizens, the swimming pools are all graced by designs shaping the letter 'M' in blue – M for Montpellier, blue for the city's colour – and even the railing and sidewalks are embossed as 'M' in what

¹¹ The promotional video for the '*Montpellier: la ville où le soleil ne se couche jamais...*' campaign is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVs2au6dmJQ>

¹² The images for the 1990s *Montpellier: la surdouée* campaign are available here, along with the current (2012) Montpellier: unlimited campaign: <http://entreprenreenlanguedoc.com/2012/10/30/montpellier-unlimited-dans-le-sillage-de-montpellier-la-surdouee/>

can best be described as an urban branding strategy [see Figure 2.10]. With an incredible 20% of municipal budgets spent on cultural planning (unprecedented expenditures in France, where cities spend an average of 2% of their municipal budget on cultural planning (Négrier and Préau 2010, 177)), the city's promotional material and blue 'M' logo is spread through sports arenas and placed on the back of opera and theatre tickets. The city, and since 2001 the Agglomération, co-own the main cultural events venues (the Musée Fabre, the opera houses, the Corum conference venue, the rugby stadium, the football stadium, etc) and subsidize event tickets and access. This is wonderful news for students and residents. Yet also means that the municipality and Agglomération exercise considerable control over the types of cultural events planned for the city, the kinds of performances and performers encouraged to take part, and the variety of materials and works made available through the libraries and museums – a situation which has drawn considerable criticism from those who view the city as overreaching its mandate (cf Maoudj 2007). When the blue 'M' comes into view at every turn and behind every corner, there is a niggling sense of living in a surreal urban version of Disneyland (cf. Zukin 1995; Guiral 2012) where everything is ever so perfectly staged, performed, and presented.

Many of the researchers working at the city's universities are close collaborators of the municipal urban planning and cultural departments, providing expertise on the very projects and program I was hoping to dissect – which, as I note in the research approaches section below, had some notable impacts on my own ability to establish contacts and set up interviews with municipal officials. As a result, there is limited critical academic research on Montpellier's urban planning program – and the critical material that does exist is most often written by journalists, and focuses not on the actions of the municipality as a political and administrative entity, but on one person, former Mayor Georges Frêche (1938-2010). An enigmatic figure, he has been labelled an urban visionary, a political despot, the maker of modern Montpellier, and the city's greatest foe. Frêche acted as Mayor of Montpellier from 1977-2004, and President of Montpellier Agglomération until 2010. Through a series of books Frêche

positioned himself as the singular force to shape modern Montpellier, taking credit for the rapid urban growth of the city, and for the ‘*Montpellier la surdouée*’ campaign, and consistently promoted his city as a French, and then a European, *métropole* worthy of international recognition (Frêche 2003, 2010). Whether hated or beloved, his influence on the urban and social fabric of Montpellier is difficult to deny – nor is his ability to depict himself as a modern day Machiavelli, in the vein of Robert Moses whose forceful intervention and larger than life personality shaped the urban fabric of New York City and garnered as much criticism as adoration (Caro 1974). From a distance, Frêche appeared like a fantastic caricature: often grumbling and mumbling in interviews, capable of tossing out insults and compliments in turn, and unshakingly possessive of Montpellier.

Frêche arrived at the helm of Montpellier’s municipal government at a particularly volatile period. *Les trente glorieuses* were visibly slowing down, and the city’s lack of industrialized production and reliance on technology, agriculture, and government administration were starting to be felt. Frêche’s predecessor François Delmas – who served as Montpellier Mayor from 1959-1977 – had recently completed a series of urban projects, including the La Paillade high-rise neighbourhood, the Polygone city-centre shopping district, and the construction of a new city hall adjoined to the Polygone. The city had grown, yet as many Frêche supporters have argued (Volle et al 2010), it had done so with little imagination and too much reliance on large, cumbersome, and ugly structures. What might qualify as ‘ugly’ urban planning could be a matter of considerable debate – but for Frêche and his team of urban planners and political supporters, the Montpellier of Delmas was one clear example. The Polygone shopping mall was labelled a disaster, criticized for the way it drew attention from the shops of the historic city-centre and for blocking the city’s (imagined) connection with the river, and then towards the sea (Viala and Volle 2010). The Polygone was a tasteless lumbering building hampering Montpellier’s flourishing, and was mediated by Frêche with the construction of the Antigone – or, the anti-Polygone. In keeping with its classical Greek name, the Antigone is an expanse of Doric columns, paved plazas (or, agoras), a

mix of private and social housing, golden coloured stones (and concrete) and sweeping walkways and structures [see Figure 2.11]. It is in the shape of a key, and at the time of its construction it was physically closed to the Polygone – though the Polygone mall and the Antigone neighbourhood border each other, they originally did so with solid walls, until the municipality expropriated several residential units in the Antigone in the 1990s and created a walkway between the two. I inquired about this seemingly outlandish posturing with several municipal contacts: Frêche, it seems, felt very strongly about the ugliness of the Polygone and despaired at his Antigone being mixed in. The Antigone was the start of Frêche's urban campaign: built on disused military land, it was also the test case for a new urban planning mechanism devised by the municipal planning department in the 1980s. With a state decision in 1982/83 to devolve power from the French government to local planning authorities, the City of Montpellier developed a system that relied on long-term land tenure planning and pre-emption to shape the landscape. The Antigone was one of Montpellier's first ZAC: *zone d'aménagement concerté* (ZAC), a French urban planning tool that allowed the municipality to designate a certain district as 'under development', and thereby have the legal authority to build and coordinate infrastructure (water, electricity, etc), to plan the built environment (residential, commercial) and public amenities (schools, parks, the shape of streets) in that space. A ZAC, in other words, allowed the City of Montpellier to produce a fully-designed neighbourhood with the urban aesthetics, types of amenities and public spaces deemed appropriate for the city's growing ambitions and real needs. Within the ZAC Antigone, Frêche also instituted his political ideology: 20% of the residential units are social housing, an exceptionally high rate of provision for any urban area in France, and an approach to organizing neighbourhoods that has continued to the present day (all of the city's rota of ZACs are based on 20% social or affordable housing¹³).

¹³ Details of Montpellier agencies offering social housing, and a brief commentary on the city of Montpellier's policy on social housing is available at: <http://www.montpellier.fr/394-logement-social-office-public-hlm.htm>

The ZAC Antigone was, then, a symbol of the urban planning politics espoused by Frêche – who took a personal interest in the project, publicly sparring with architect Bofill and with Montpellier residents to achieve his vision (J.-F.B. 1980; J.M.R. 1980). The ZAC Antigone demonstrated an ethos which saw the municipality as the central actor in any urban development – with the ability to determine everything from decorative aesthetics, to the location of the swimming pool, the price of real estate in the area, and the quality of supporting public amenities and technical infrastructure. The Antigone also spoke to grander ambitions: the neighbourhood is the centre of an imagined axis that connects the 17th century Arc de Triomphe, the medieval historic centre, the 20th century Antigone district, and the Hôtel de Région (the seat of regional governance) on the banks of the river Lez. This is a nod to Parisian planning where the Louvre, the Champs Elysée, the Arc de Triomphe, and the Grande Arche in the financial district of la Défense all sit on a straight axis as well, connecting history, governance, and finance. During his time as Mayor, Frêche and the urban planning team headed by geographer and academic Raymond Dugrand (political head of urban planning for Montpellier from 1977-2001) deployed the ZAC approach to urban planning extensively¹⁴.

By designating most of the lower-density, suburban and peri-urban areas that fell within the municipal boundaries as ZACs, land speculation ground to a halt (after all, the city now controlled the sale of property, the rate of building and the appearance of the built environment, plus the timeline for listing these on the public market). Many existing owners in those zones were placed under pre-emption orders: if owners of residential or commercial buildings, or agricultural land, situated in a ZAC wanted to sell their property, they had to seek the permission of the municipality to do so, and the municipality in turn held the right of first purchase (at a price negotiated between the municipality and owners, or between the judicial

¹⁴ Montpellier is not the only city in France to deploy such urban planning measures, nor the only one to have a Mayor with a strong personality. Grenoble, Lille, and Toulouse have all seen comparable urban planning approaches – though Montpellier distinguishes itself for the extensive use of pre-emption (or at least this is what my urban planning contacts have noted) and the ability of the municipality to govern land and property sales within the city's boundary.

system and owners if the latter did not cooperate). The process of buying and developing ZACs was handed to a joint public-private holdings company known as SERM – *Société d'Équipement de la Région Montpellieraine*¹⁵ – an institution used by many French cities, and one which requires that public actors (be it the state, the region, the department or the city) hold majority stakes and provide the majority of the development funds for large urban projects, with private collaborators working alongside¹⁶. The ZAC Antigone was the first large project for Montpellier's SERM, and since the 1980s SERM have been involved in dozens of similar projects including the redevelopment of the city's covered market halls, the Montpellier zoo, several parks, along with the conversion of former military land, light-industry zones, and peri-urban areas into high-density residential neighbourhoods¹⁷.

Frêche's arrival at Montpellier City Hall has been described by some as the "socialist conquest of the municipality in 1977" (Négrier and Préau 2010, 163; my translation of the French text). As Mayor, Frêche fundamentally changed the urban infrastructure and appearance of the City of Montpellier, instituted the urban planning and administrative tools which have seen large portions of the city designated as ZAC, and permitted SERM to redevelop existing urban neighbourhoods (such as the Plan Cabanes). In the space of a few decades Montpellier had become a large urban redevelopment project – on a Haussmannian scale – with the municipality and Frêche taking the lead role of designer, builder and real estate agent. Arguably the City of Montpellier has the ability to not only shape the built environment, but also the lived environment and the city's image beyond its administrative boundaries. Whether this makes Frêche a visionary or a political tyrant is difficult to say; the degree to which the phoenix-like rise

¹⁵ The SERM website: <http://www.serm-montpellier.fr/fr/courante.php?chapitre=presentation>

¹⁶ SERM is Montpellier's name for this type of association; the generic name is a SEM, or *société d'économie mixte*. As an institution, SEM was created in 1983 as part of the devolution of urban planning power from the French state to individual local planning authorities. It allows for the collation of funding between the French state, the region and the city – and indirectly opens municipal planning and state construction to private investors.

¹⁷ A full list of SERM's current ZACs is available here: http://www.serm-montpellier.fr/fr/courante.php?chapitre=realisation_nouv

of Montpellier from the 25th to the 8th largest city in France is due to his diligent work and capable manoeuvring is, I believe, impossible to really know. Frêche's critics, however, are much less kind in their assessment. In his 2008 book *L'assassinat raté de Georges Frêche* ('The failed assassination of Georges Frêche'), Rollat claimed to have uncovered the lies and manipulations at the heart of Frêche's political career, while Maoudj's (2007) book entitled *Georges Frêche, grandes heures et décadence* ('Georges Frêche, heydays and decline') challenged Frêche's legacy in Montpellier and levied accusations of political favouritism, racism, and profiteering. Frêche's statements on immigration and ethnicity nearly derailed his career. When Frêche presided over the inauguration of Montpellier's brand new tramline in 2000 – a line connecting the Antigone, the historic city centre, and La Paillade – he commented: "Here we have the longest tunnel in the world: you enter in France and you get out in Ouarzazate [a city in Morocco]" (LeMonde.fr 2010), with reference to the ethnic diversity of La Paillade and its difference from the historic centre. His 2006 complaint that the French national football team had too many black players led to his expulsion from the Socialist Party, and a further series of racially fuelled comments led to Frêche being labelled the 'black sheep' of French politics towards the end of his career¹⁸. Perhaps the greatest sting came from the words of Hélène Mandroux, Frêche's chosen successor as Mayor of Montpellier, who in 2010 wrote that "You [Frêche] have awoken this city, that's true, but through contempt for its women and men, its inhabitants. Today I will admit my error: I once believed you. I

¹⁸ As with any polemical persona, there are endless stories to tell about Georges Frêche. Frêche's decision in 2010 to create a new park in Montpellier with statues of all the great political figures of the 20th century – Stalin and Mao alongside Mandela, Roosevelt and Churchill – led to outcries of glorifying dictatorships and a disregard for democracy (Rap 2010). His presence has left a deep mark on the municipal teams, with contacts at the urban planning department describing themselves as Frêchists – as did many politicians, not least Philippe Saurel, the head of urban planning during my 2009-2010 fieldwork season. He has been imprinted in the city's space in yet another way: the new City Hall, opened in 2012, has a postal address of 1 Place Georges Frêche. Contacts at the Agglomération enjoyed telling me stories about their time under Frêche, and in particular his insistence that certain statues be moved between Antigone plazas so that he could see them better from his offices. An October 2012 issue of *Jeudi Tout Montpellier* carried the title page slogan '*Il est vivant!*' (he's alive!) with a photograph of Frêche, and included a list of all of his collaborators, policies, and supporters still working in the municipality and Agglomération – making Frêche still alive in spirit, if not in body, for this magazine.

now understand that you built not for others, but for yourself, for your own personal glory” (Mandroux 2010, in Jarrassé 2010).

Frêche is not Montpellier, yet his name is synonymous with the city. My first few weeks of field notes comment on the consistency with which ‘city hall’ (*la ville*) and Frêche are used interchangeably, and the extent to which current Mayor Hélène Mandroux is depicted as simply extending the Frêchist approach. For many research participants, it was not the municipality which decided to move the Marché du Plan Cabanes, but Frêche or Mandroux – a point taken up in more detail in Chapter 6. Many vendors, residents, and business owners in the Plan Cabanes area also noted that Frêche had been Mayor for as long as they could remember – he was not just a local politician, but a city institution. That Frêche is sometimes depicted as the embodiment of the municipality is not simply a quirk of Montpellier’s political climate: it has had a profound impact on the way the Marché du Plan Cabanes’ relocation has been understood, challenged (or not), and contextualized. In France, as noted in the preceding chapter, public space planning, immigration politics and cultural policy intersect to create a form of spatial planning that avoids the mention of ethnicity yet still segments the city into sectors that denote difference – and call for extensive state intervention – through the use of terms such as ‘security’ and ‘precarity’ (Dikeç 2007; Wacquant 2008). Within this approach, there is a sense of institutional discrimination – or, a deep seated political and social vision which discerns those who are ‘appropriate’ users from those who are not (cf. Mitchell 2003). While this institutional vision may have individual actors – for instance, Sarkozy became the face of the state during the 2005 suburban uprising, and Dikeç (2007) details interviews with individual planners and politicians – in most instances ‘the state’ remains disembodied. Such is not the case in Montpellier: the centrality of Frêche meant that for many of my research participants ‘the state’ or ‘the municipality’ were very much a real person, one who spoke to local media, was physically present in their city and their communities, and was assumed to have a disproportionate ability to influence their neighbourhood. Whether this is true – whether Frêche as Mayor or

Agglomération President really did hold this much political and economic power over Montpellier – is not a point I have sought to prove or disprove. Rather, I have been interested in how this perspective that the political is personal (and the municipality is a coherent entity, in the shape of Frêche or Mandroux) has sometimes shaped the response to the Plan Cabanes redevelopment project. As is true of all qualitative research, context really does matter, and in this instance the particularities of Montpellier’s imaginative urban development machine has been a backdrop to the nuanced, volatile and polemic relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes.

2.2 The Plan Cabanes and the city

Seen from the busy Cours Gambetta, the Plan Cabanes plaza appears as a smallish sandy-coloured plaza, lined with trees on the south side and bordering the imposing Catholic college François-Régis to the north. The plaza has a triangular shape, its widest part touching on the Rue Daru (which becomes the Rue du Faubourg du Courreau) and its narrower point nudging the Rue Emile Zola [see Figure 2.12 and 2.13]. Today, the Plan Cabanes is also bordered by Line 4 of the city’s tram system. In 2009-2010 when I was completing research, the tramline was under construction and the plaza was instead bordered by machinery, trucks and caches of building materials. In 2005 when the Marché du Plan Cabanes still stood in its namesake plaza, the site had a low wall bordering the Cours Gambetta and was made of asphalt – the current sandy-coloured stone tarmac of the Plan Cabanes is a post-2005 innovation [see Figure 2.14]. In 2009 the municipality also introduced a series of concrete road barriers to the eastern edge of the Plan Cabanes plaza: to halt illegal parking while keeping the plaza free for the nearby driving school to use when the market is not in session. The Place Salengro, where the produce market was relocated, has a different appearance. In 2009 Salengro was also resurfaced, but with asphalt, and the space is decidedly a parking lot and not a plaza: there are yellow parking lines, a rising car barrier, and a parking token machine.

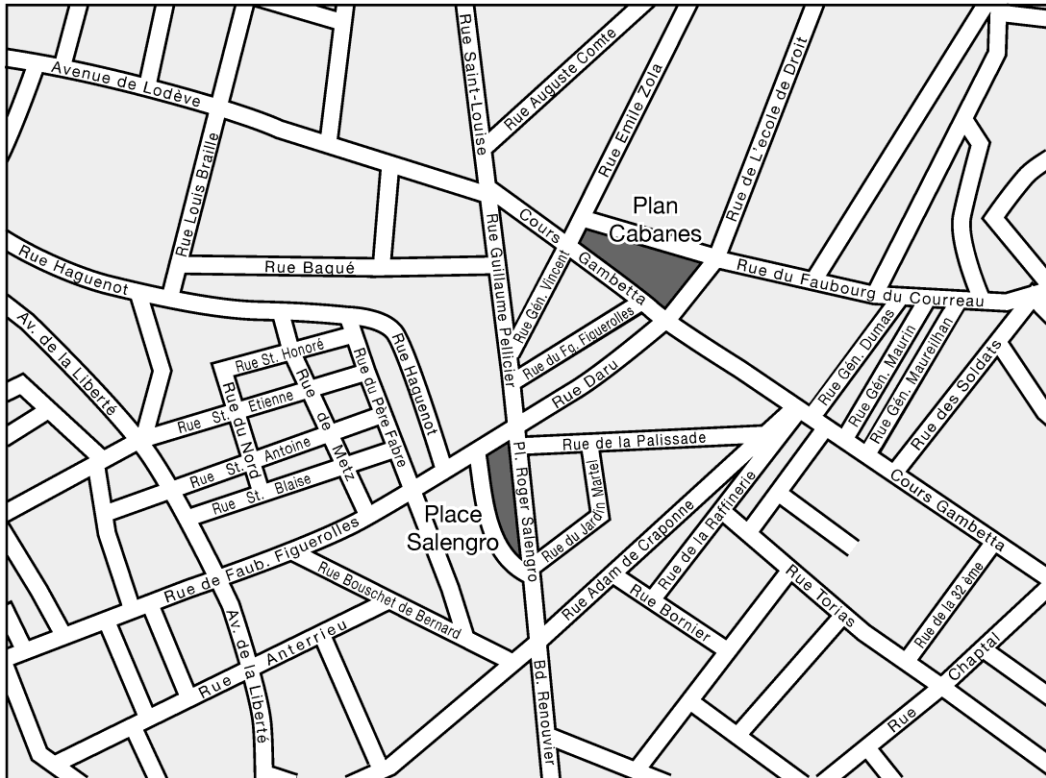


Figure 2.12: The Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles street network. Map prepared by Paul Coles, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield.



Figure 2.13: using the satellite function on GoogleMaps, a look at the rooftops of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood, with some hint of the enclosed interior gardens. GoogleMaps©, accessed 14 August 2013.



Figure 2.14: The Plan Cabanes plaza, November 2008. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.15: The Place Salengro plaza and market, June 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

While the Plan Cabanes appears like a permanent pedestrian plaza – no parking grids, no token booths – the Place Salengro retains the look of a space that is a public plaza only while the market is in session, and quickly reverts to a parking lot soon after [see Figure 2.15]. These two plazas – and the interaction between them – form the focus of my research, and are what I might identify as my ‘field sites’ (in quotation marks, because so much of the research took me away from the physical space of the plazas, all the while discussing their importance). The neighbourhood which surrounds them I have termed Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles, after the main landmarks in this area and as a way of indicating the considerable difficulty in defining the limits of this neighbourhood following the relocation of the market. Residents living immediately next to the Plan Cabanes plaza would suggest that their neighbourhood is called the Plan Cabanes, or Courreau (after one of the streets) or Gambetta. Those living near the Place Salengro would suggest that they are in the Figuerolles neighbourhood. Yet, several research participants argued that the Plan Cabanes plaza was in reality part of the Figuerolles neighbourhood – while some Plan Cabanes residents still claimed the produce market as their own (despite its location in the Place Salengro). As a result the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles is a label I have attached to this porous neighbourhood that is bordered: by the Plan Cabanes plaza and the Rue du Faubourg du Courreau to the north, the Rue Adam de Craponne to the south-east, the Avenue de la Liberté to the west, and the intersection of Rue Louis Braille and Avenue de Lodève to the north-west.

Aside from the two markets – the Broc’Art *brocante* market in the Plan Cabanes, and the produce market in the Place Salengro [see Figures 2.16 2.17] – the neighbourhood is dotted with many bakers, food shops, cafes, restaurants, fast food shops, internet cafes, hair salons, and several smaller household goods and clothing stores. The Plan Cabanes plaza is a quick 5 minutes walk from the Rue Saint-Guilhem and the start of the historic city centre, and the network of trams and buses means that it is also on direct transport routes from La Paillade and Mosson, and the train station. The Plan Cabanes plaza is surrounded by several older (18th and 19th century)

buildings, some in a Haussmannian style. The nearby streets of residential houses and apartment buildings are often two or three stories tall, with interior gardens and courtyards [see Figure 2.13].

The Place Salengro and the Plan Cabanes are both immediately bordered by cafes and their terraces, with the Place Salengro further surrounded by a well known Montpellier fishmonger, a key music venue and café in Montpellier (La Plein Lune), a pharmacy and bank. The streets leading away from the Place Salengro contain a mixture of buildings: to the north a network of smaller houses, with large garages and gardens once used as stock houses for the wine trade; to the south and west several taller (four or five storey) apartment buildings. Reaching the Place Salengro from the Plan Cabanes means crossing the busy Cours Gambetta, and with the wait for traffic to clear it takes more than 5 minutes to walk the 200 meters between them [see Figure 2.18 and 2.19].

While Montpellier has deployed ZACs as their main mode of urban development, this approach has not been applied to the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles. Intervention has instead taken the form of several other overlapping urban planning and administrative zonings. The *secteur sauvegardé* – the protected heritage zone, a designation governed by the French state – covers the Ecusson, and drops to the Catholic College François-Régis and the northern portion of the Rue du Faubourg du Courreau just on the edge of the Plan Cabanes. However, the *secteur sauvegardé* does not cover the Plan Cabanes. Instead the Plan Cabanes is zoned as ZPPAUP: *zone de protection du patrimoine architectural, urbain et paysager* or a zone of protected architectural, urban and landscape heritage. The ZPPAUP designation is agreed upon by the municipality and the national heritage protection agency, and in this instance covers: the Plan Cabanes plaza, the Place Salengro, the “streets of the saints” near to the Place Salengro (Rue Saint-Honoré, Rue Saint Blaise, etc) and the so called “streets of the generals” to the south-east of the Plan Cabanes (Rue du Général Maurain, Rue des Soldats, etc). The ZPPAUP designation allows the municipality to apply a series of architectural protection measures to



Figure 2.16: The Broc'Art (*brocante*) market in session in the Plan Cabanes, with the Catholic College François-Régis in the background, February 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.17: A produce stand in the Place Salengro market, March 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska



Figure 2.18: The Cours Gambetta, tramway construction, and the continuation of the Rue Daru into Figuerolles, as seen from the Plan Cabanes plaza, March 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.19: A rainy street view in Figuerolles, November 2008. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

the neighbourhood, amongst them enforced facade renovation programs, a pre-selected palette of building colours and materials, a limited building height, and enforceable specifications on how air conditioners, lighting, and railings can be placed in the facade. The Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles is also under an ANRU designation: *agence nationale de la rénovation urbaine*, or the national agency for urban renovation. ANRU is a national program founded in 2003 that provides funds to local authorities for the renovation of zones with a ZUS designation (*zones urbaines sensibles*, or high risk urban zones) or areas of the city deemed at higher risk of urban degradation. The case of Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles is interesting in this respect. The ZUS designation covers streets starting from the Avenue de la Liberté onwards, and overlaps with the ZPPAUP designation and the ANRU designation. The ZUS designation is a contentious zoning measure (cf Wacquant 2008), one that is often applied to high-rise social housing districts on the urban periphery – and ones with an ethnically diverse population. This generalization is also true of Montpellier and the city has a total of five ZUS which, aside from Figuerolles-Gély¹⁹, are all large 1960s built suburban social housing districts, including La Paillade, La Mosson, and several other neighbourhoods to the north and north-west of the city centre²⁰. The rest of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood (the Place Salengro, Plan Cabanes, streets of the saints, Gambetta, etc) are covered by what is known as a non-ZUS CUCS²¹: a *contract urbain de cohésion social*, or an urban program for social cohesion, a gentler and less intrusive form of ZUS that targets low-income areas with perceived social

¹⁹ Some of the 2009 indicators used to define Figuerolles-Gély as a ZUS: 42.6% of the population is classed as low income, compared to 12.5% for Montpellier as a whole; the area has 49.4% of households in social housing (HLM), compared to 12% for Montpellier; and 9.1% of residents are single parent households, compared to 4.3% for Montpellier as a whole. However in 2009 15.7% had unemployment payouts, compared to 17.4% for Montpellier, which is a smaller difference than would usually be noted for ZUS, and in 1999 7.4% of the Figuerolles population were foreign citizens, compared to 10.1% for Montpellier as a whole, unlike most French ZUS which are home to a significant percentage of non-French citizens. (all data: SIG SIV 2009a).

²⁰ A list of Montpellier's ZUS is available at: <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ppp/bases-de-donnees/donnees-detaillees/duicq/zus.asp?reg=91&uu=34701&zus=9105030>

²¹ Some of the 2009 indicators for CUCS Gambetta: 28.9% are classed as low income (12.5% for Montpellier); 2.1% live in social housing (9.1% for Montpellier); 5.4% are single parent households (compared to 4.3% for Montpellier) (all data SIG SIV 2009b).

difficulties ²² , and allows for more extensive municipal and state intervention. As though this overlap of designation is not enough, the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles is also an OPAH: *opération programmée d'amélioration de l'habitat*, or a national housing renewal program. In Montpellier the OPAH designation is active around the historic city centre, covering Gambetta, Figuerolles, several neighbourhoods close to the Parc de Peyrou, and others around the train station²³.

From this jumble of acronyms, designations, zonings and policies can be extracted several conclusions. First, the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area is in a unique administrative position: it is the only neighbourhood in Montpellier to be under heritage protection, housing renewal, and CUCS / ZUS designations at the same time. While this is perhaps not exceptional for France – Marseille has several similarly zoned neighbourhoods near the city centre²⁴ – it does suggest that the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles is receiving particular attention. The overlapping designations are significant in another way: each is tied to a national program, and each requires an agreement between the municipality and the state to create the zoning designation. In addition, each designation is coupled with the provision of state funds for housing renovation, programs deemed to improve social cohesion (which also often take the form of alterations to the built environment, cf Dikeç 2007), and gives more leeway for the municipality to impose a series of building, structural, and economic programs on the area. To coordinate the application of these designations the municipality created the Mission Grand Coeur in 2002²⁵ – an agency made up of urban planners, SERM staff, municipal staff, and technical staff, charged with overseeing the work of the many municipal, departmental, and state units involved in the redevelopment of Montpellier's city centre. The Mission

²² Details on the administration of CUCS, and the number of CUCS by region at: <http://sig.ville.gouv.fr/page/45>

²³ Details of Montpellier's OPAH, with interactive maps indicating the zones concerned: <http://www.montpellier.fr/572-portail-montpellier-les-opah.htm>

²⁴ Further details on the ZPPAUP designation, and how it has been applied to the Marseille region: http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/sites-sdaps/sdap13/pages/information/protections/liste_zppaup.html

²⁵ The CUCS designation was created in 2007, making the Mission Grand Coeur not only a coordinator of existing zoning designations, but an agency which provides support for the creation of new designations.

Grand Coeur's mandate extends to covering the historic city centre (the *secteur sauvegardé* designation), all of Montpellier's OPAH designations which span out from the city centre, the ZUS of Figuerolles-Gély, the CUCS of Plan Cabanes / Gambetta (and that of the north of the city centre), the ZPPAUP and the ANRU zones. The Mission Grand Coeur's motto, as noted on the municipality's website, is '*se sentir bien en centre ville*'²⁶ – 'feel good in the city centre' – while the motto that appears on Mission Grand Coeur internal documents is '*reconquête urbaine*'²⁷, which translated word-for-word means 'urban reconquest' though the meaning is closer to 'urban redevelopment'. Montpellier Agglomération and the City of Montpellier use the phrase '*reconquête urbaine*' with respect to the redevelopment of commercial zones²⁸ and the conversion of flood plain into residential areas²⁹, and in some ways this phrase is rather banal and widely applied. Yet, the use of the word *reconquête* speaks to a particular sense of how urban and rural land is envisioned (as something problematic to be recaptured and won back) and to the role envisioned for the municipality in this (as the actor taking charge of the recapture), and delineates the city into seemingly unruly zones needing particular intervention (cf. Newman 2011 on its Islamophobic connotations and usage in Parisian redevelopments). The close collaboration between the Mission Grand Coeur and SERM, and the extensive use of pre-emption in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area (detailed in Chapter 6), suggests that this sense of recapturing urban land is, perhaps, not so far from the reality³⁰.

²⁶ Mission Grand Coeur motto available at: <http://www.montpellier.fr/375-grandcoeur.htm>

²⁷ For instance, page 10 of this 30-page PDF containing municipal directive from February 2013 includes the Mission Grand Coeur *reconquête urbaine* motto: <http://montpellier.eelv.fr/files/2013/01/affaires1a20.pdf>

²⁸ For instance, a job posting for urban planners seeking to contribute to a *reconquête urbaine* project in Montpellier: <http://www.directgestion.com/sinformer/dgmag/13921-montpellier-la-reconquete-urbaine-de-la-route-de-la-mer-passe-par-lavenue-georges-freche>

²⁹ Montpellier Agglomération website also makes use of the term, in relation to commercial and natural zones: <http://www.montpellier-agglo.com/connaître-grands-projets/ode-montpellier-nature-urbaine>

³⁰ A documentary about the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles made in 2010 captures many of the polemics, and many of the images and experiences, tied to these neighbourhoods: <http://vimeo.com/39185685#> (last accessed 14 August 2013).

The programs in place around the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood are, thus, not common throughout the city of Montpellier. In this context, the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes in 2005 is, arguably, a unique event. While the Marché du Plan Cabanes has its origins in the early 20th century (as will be noted in Chapter 5), it rose to prominence only in the 1980s and 1990s when the surrounding area experienced extensive demographic change: the arrival of vendors from diverse cultural and national background led to the neighbourhood being labelled as ‘Maghrebin’ or ‘North African’. While the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles continues to retain this label, it is difficult to comment definitively on the actual composition of residents, visitors and users. As noted in the preceding chapter, French law prohibits the collection of ethnically-delineated data, and instead designations such as ‘Maghrebin neighbourhood’ are based on anecdotal evidence. Faure’s (1998) ethnographic work in the neighbourhood in the 1990s concluded that the market and surrounding shopping streets are particularly important for residents from a Moroccan and Algerian background, and also for a greater diversity of cultural groups who descended from La Paillade and La Mosson to do their shopping in the Plan Cabanes. A similar conclusion is reached by Descombes-Vailhe (1995) who labels the Plan Cabanes as a secondary city centre: a commercial and social node so dense and well-used that it competes with the Polygone and Place de la Comédie for prominence. Descombes-Vailhe (1995) also identifies the areas as a ‘Maghrebin community’ based on the use of Arabic in store names, the types of good sold in stores, the languages spoken in the market, and through conversations with vendors, shoppers and residents. The label of the Plan Cabanes as a ‘Maghrebin neighbourhood’ is difficult to establish beyond the evidence gathered by the authors noted above. Certainly no data exist on the ethnic background of those who live and who shop here, beyond INSEE statistics which indicate that the neighbourhood has a lower rate of owner-occupiers and lower overall household income than other parts of the city³¹

³¹ In the non-ZUS CUCS zone the rate of renters in 2009 was 68% (compared to 52.6% for Montpellier), and the median income in 2009 was 13.139€ compared to the city of Montpellier median of 18.372€. All data INSEE: <http://sig.ville.gouv.fr/Synthese/9134008> (last accessed 14 August 2013).

and the data included in footnotes 14 and 16. Interestingly, few research participants were willing to link a Maghrebin identity to a religious identity – and comments on Muslim identities (or, Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant identities) were few and far between, and rarely voluntarily brought up. Instead, language – Berber, Arabic, Turkish, Gitan, etc – and national heritage (Moroccan, Algerian, Senegalese, French) or self-identification with a wider ethnic or cultural community (Maghrebin, European, for instance), were given by participants as the elements which constituted this as an ethnically diverse neighbourhood. While the lack of willingness to discuss religious identities is in itself interesting, the discomfort with this topic – and the ability of questions on religion to close conversations and interviews – led me to put this aside as a line of enquiry.

The selection of the Plan Cabanes plaza and its relocated market as the starting point for PhD research was informed by the political, social and urban planning dynamics produced through the intersection of the city of Montpellier's urban ambitions and the resistance and reticence amongst Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles residents towards these programs. That the Plan Cabanes is classed as a public space makes the debates around its usage – and who should determine the types of activities most appropriate for the plaza – a contentious point, and one that speaks to wider themes of cultural identity, community development, immigration and cultural planning.

2.3 Research approaches

On the first official day of PhD fieldwork – the day in mid-September 2009 when I put (a brand new!) pen to paper, scribbled notes in a small notebook, and convinced myself that simply having a coffee in a rotation of delightfully sunny plazas could no longer count as 'research' – the ten-month program of ethnographic work, interviews, and archival consultations seemed both deceptively straightforward and clear, and terribly mushy and opaque. The 'nervous condition' of research (Cerwonka 2007) had set in: that phase of organizing and starting when initial decisions are made on who to contact and which leads to follow, and all the best laid plans seem to crumble (temporarily) as alternating waves of dread

and excitement set in. This sense is, of course, not unique to my experience of fieldwork, no matter how self-indulgently I may have waxed on about the challenges I expected to face in those first few pages of notes. But looking back through the initial comments on the Plan Cabanes – a few scribbles on changes to the plaza’s tarmac, and on the new *brocante* market which seemed closed to the world with vendors grouped around a game of Scrabble and ignoring all who passed – has been a useful way of starting to think about the fieldwork processes, the research decisions made, and the context in which I was working.

Condensed, the fieldwork season looked as such: 10 months of ethnographic research (September 2009 – June 2010) in the Plan Cabanes (the Broc’Art market) and the Place Salengro (the produce market), which involved spending two or three mornings per week in the Place Salengro, and much of each Wednesday in the Plan Cabanes. Ethnographic work produced extensive field notes – details of conversations, impressions, commentary on daily events, and information on market function and municipal management – and was coupled with a further 21 semi-structured interviews with market vendors, municipal actors, local associations, and businesses (details included as Appendix 1). All interviews were completed in French, as were all informal conversations. I spent several hours each week in the municipal archives, or in the local library collating newspaper articles on the Marché du Plan Cabanes’ relocation and associated neighbourhood debates. In addition, several research participants took me on walking tours of the Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes area, and during the 2009-2010 research period I walked through the neighbourhoods to photograph buildings, streets, and the markets every few months. During the 2009-2010 field work period I lived on Gambetta, a few streets away from the Plan Cabanes, and spent some of my (non-research) social time in the area as well. Between September – November 2012 I was in Montpellier once more, and used the opportunity to collect some additional documents from the Mission Grand Coeur, and take additional photographs of the Figuerolles, Plan Cabanes, and Gambetta areas.

Before delving into the details of field work, I would like to focus on one further point that was central to how and when I carried out this research. This was not my first foray into Montpellier, nor into the polemics surrounding the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes. In 2005 I arrived in Montpellier for a year-long French language course – quite by accident, and on the recommendation of the education attaché at the French consulate in Toronto. I lived with a home stay family on Gambetta, and though I had arrived several months after the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, this event featured prominently in my initial experiences of the city: everyone in the neighbourhood was talking about it, and my weekly assignments of translating articles from the local papers inevitably touched on this topic. In the summer of 2007 I returned to Montpellier for several months of Masters-level research. My focus was on three outdoor food markets in the city: the Marché des Arceaux (organic, local food, and high-price point), the Marché Paysan d’Antigone (farmers’ market), and the Place Salengro food market. MA research looked at the materiality of food and the ways in which local produce (farmers’ market, specifically) was tied to certain visions of what it meant to be from Montpellier, and how one could negotiate access to this local identity by shopping in the right places (cf Tchoukaleyska 2010, 2013). MA-level fieldwork saw me conduct ethnographic research in each of the three markets, with several hours each week spent with Place Salengro produce vendors, along with weekends spent helping behind the stands of the other markets.

The day that I have above labelled ‘the first official day of PhD fieldwork’ was such because a vendor I had spoken to extensively during MA research in 2007 spotted me sitting in a Plan Cabanes café in September 2009 and joined me for a coffee. My (re)entry into the Place Salengro as a researcher, and the ways in which I built new networks in the Broc’Art market and the neighbourhood more widely, are very much affected by my earlier engagements with the neighbourhood. To call these introductions ‘easy’ would be a misnomer, yet in many ways I was fortunate to be able to build on earlier connections as I started to examine new topics (public space, urban planning, social and cultural displacement, Chapters 2, 3, and 6 of

this thesis) alongside some more familiar ones (the materiality of food, augmented to include the materiality of *brocante* and books, Chapter 5). My longer engagement with the Plan Cabanes has implications for two other spheres of the fieldwork experience: how I was perceived by research participants; and the issue of participants' informed consent to be interviewed and included in the research project.

The start of MA fieldwork in 2007 had been bumpy at best: questions about whether I worked for the police, on whether I was a journalist (both frequently asked of me in the Place Salengro market), and why I wanted to know about the inner worlds of the markets, indecision amongst participants about how to categorize my nationality (Canadian, Bulgarian, neither, both, what are you *really?*), and some level of harassment and unwanted flirtation in the markets. Returning to the Place Salengro in September 2009 was a different experience: I knew most of the vendors and many of the stall assistants, and no one suspected me of having ties to the police, or cared where I was from, because I was now identified as 'that girl who used to talk to us about the market'. Evidently to the Place Salengro market vendors and users I was not as much of an outsider in 2009 as I had been in 2007. This is not to say that I was fully an 'insider' – rather, I occupied a difficult-to-chart chasm between being familiar, yet decidedly not from there. As Rose (1997) reminds (along with Katz 1994, and Hyndman 2001), it is profoundly difficult for any researcher to grasp the nuances of their positionality vis-a-vis a field site or a group of research participants. There I was, a young(ish) woman from a European ethnic background completing ethnographic fieldwork in a market where most of the vendors were male, much older, and from non-European backgrounds – a description that lends itself too easily to binaries and to unhelpful categorizations. Below the surface, there were some important similarities: several market participants were dealing with immigration issues, as was I at the time (all of us finding our way to the long lines outside the Préfecture at some point in the year, not to mention the day long waits for health cards), which made for lively conversations and a resounding sense that we

were soldiering through this together, age, gender, and national difference made less relevant by the weight of French bureaucracy.

My long(ish) presence in the market also meant that many of the vendors and stall holders, along with some neighbouring business owners, had become friends. Our discussions easily switched between topics on market governance and municipal intervention, and conversations on family issues, relationships, interpersonal problems, gossip, hearsay, and opinionated comments on recent events. At the start of PhD research I blanketed the Place Salengro with information leaflets outlining the purpose of the project, noting my contact details, and indicating that participation was voluntary and anyone (and everyone) could step away and ask not to be included or written about. All of the vendors took a leaflet, and happily tucked it away with their papers. Although I made a point of often reminding participants and friends that I was doing research and writing notes based on their comments, I had an uneasy feeling of acting as a ‘mercenary researcher’ (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, 95), mining for information all the while trying hard to separate the personal from the professional. As Katz (1994) notes, the boundary between ‘research’ and ‘everyday life’ is ever shifting, and in Hyndman’s (2001) view, perhaps non-existent. The reality of the situation – as least for me – was that at times I felt profoundly uncomfortable quietly morphing from friend to researcher to friend and back again in the space of a 10 minute conversation. This ultimately led me to conduct formal interviews in the Place Salengro with two key informants – an opportunity to revisit ethics and informed consent, to record a conversation, and ensure that the interviewees were comfortable with the information they provided. I would have liked to conduct more interviews, but many of the other market participants argued that they had already been interviewed in 2007 and found the process bizarre and uncomfortable – and so I spent a few days reviewing my field notes, summarizing the key points, and checking that they consented to having these stories included in my thesis.

After the initial euphoria of starting PhD research and being back in the Place Salengro market, things slowed down. I made an attempt to be in the

Place Salengro for a few hours every day, yet after two weeks of such visits my notes from a Friday morning simply read: “already have this written down from the MA”. Some of the vendors told me that ‘nothing has changed’. Added to that was the challenge of what Parkin (2000) describes as the uncertainty of fieldwork memory, or the sense of being caught between a desire to build on previous ideas while at the same time constantly questioning the validity of these earlier conclusions – hoping that the MA findings I had used to build my PhD research could hold their ground, yet wondering if some of them were still relevant or true of this site. Vendors who a few years earlier had decried the relocation of the market now seemed rather blasé about the experience. New neighbourhood actors and associations that were not active in 2007 had taken up the cause of the Plan Cabanes plaza, while other local personalities had honed their viewpoints on the relocation into a refined dialogue that I flippantly labelled ‘media speak’ in my notes – brief, pointed sound bites that consistently accused the municipality of racism, with little explanation as to why – and which made it very difficult to crack through with more nuanced questions. With Place Salengro vendors insisting that I already knew everything, I decided on a different approach: I visited the market two or three times a week, one visit lasting several hours, and the others a more brief 30-40 minutes. On longer visits, usually on a Tuesday or Thursday when the market was a little less busy, I took a coffee or mint tea in one of the local cafes or brought my cup to one of the stands for a catch-up. On these days some of the vendors were happy to let me hang about behind the stand, occasionally helping with customers, or simply sitting on the wooden palettes around the stand. Other vendors were insistent that after a quick ‘hello’ I make way for their clients and delivery vans.

On the shorter days, later in the week or on the congested weekend shopping day, I stopped in to see the vendors and stall assistants who were my key informants and who seemed to collect market stories – there had been a fight, how many cars were impounded by the police, unreasonable price of produce, a football bet lost to a neighbouring vendor – and were ready to answer my sometimes muddled questions on market policy, city

bylaws, or internal vendor relations. Over the 10 months of work, I spoke regularly with five vendors and stall assistants, less frequently with another three, and had only limited contact with the remaining dozen or so vendors and assistants – amongst the assistants many left their jobs, some shifted stands, new ones arrived, creating a rapidly shifting workforce in the Place Salengro. Of the five key informants, four had been present when the Marché du Plan Cabanes had been relocated, and one had joined two years later. Following each market visit I took detailed notes, and in April and May 2010 conducted the two recorded interviews.

Entry into the Broc'Art market in the Plan Cabanes also involved introductory information sheets on the research project and discussions on informed consent and permission to be recorded. The Broc'Art market is held in the Plan Cabanes once a week and has a specific rhythm: unlike the Place Salengro market which runs daily from 8am-12.30pm, with each stand seeing hundreds of clients every day, the Broc'Art takes place from 10am-5pm every Wednesday, and each vendor may see a dozen clients on a slower day, or perhaps 50 or so clients on an exceptional day. As with the Place Salengro market, at the Broc'Art vendors were generally unable to engage with anyone early in the morning when they were setting up their stands and later in the afternoon when they were cleaning up for the day. After several Wednesdays of sitting in a nearby café observing the market – at the time feeling like some sort of market hawk, waiting for the right moment to swoop in – I introduced myself to the book vendors, then the *brocante* vendors. Research in the Broc'Art market fell into a pattern as well. I usually joined the vendors either in the morning, and stayed through lunch; or arrived as lunch was completing and joined them for an afternoon of Scrabble and chats. During the market day I sometimes rotated between different stands, speaking with either book or *brocante* vendors, sometimes was asked to mind a stand while someone sought out a coffee or a sandwich, and often either joined in their group lunches – nearly the entire market buying a pizza together and sharing wine – or taking part in the after-lunch coffee.

As with ethnographic work in the Place Salengro, my time in the Broc'Art market led to a embodied, corporal experience (Longhurst, et al 2008) that marked eating and drinking as a form of participation. While in the Place Salengro market many of the vendors knew me from earlier MA work, at the Broc'Art market everyone was new – to me, and in some cases to each other, the market had started to operate only a few months before my arrival. My position here was, arguably, different than in the Place Salengro: my university studies and the resulting (assumed) knowledge of French and British literature meant that my first few weeks were filled with discussions of the greats of modern literature, and what a few of the vendors later admitted was an attempt to suss out my actual knowledge and expertise (I am, they concluded, not terribly cultured). I spent much of the first few months learning about how a book market functioned, how items were acquired, where and from whom, and listening to the vendors' stories of selling at professional fairs, the large northern and Parisian markets, and the golden days of *brocante* in the 1980s and 1990s. As with the Place Salengro market, towards the end of my tenure in the Broc'Art I asked some of the vendors to take part in a more formal interview. My questions in these interviews revolved around each vendor's trade and work practice, their understanding of how markets functioned in Montpellier, and their thoughts on the evolutions seen in the Plan Cabanes. At busy market days the Broc'Art had more than a dozen vendors. Of those, I formally interviewed seven vendors, and spoke informally (and frequently) with another three.

In both the Broc'Art market and the Place Salengro market I also spoke with clients, usually informally while I was stationed near a stand, and asked them what they thought of the market and how they used the space. In late February 2010 I attempted some formal (voice recorder) interviews with clients, and was both surprised and admittedly disappointed that these three interviews yielded only brief responses to questions and much less detail than the informal conversations (a challenge also noted by Watson 2009). Most shoppers pass through the market at a rapid pace – especially the Place Salengro, where they often had other commitments in the day –

and while many recognized me, and had received an information leaflet, this recognition did not extend to a willingness for interviews. Requests for longer interviews away from the market were turned down about a dozen times (over a two months period in early 2010), and so I reverted to informal conversation and quickly scribbling down notes right after. On the recommendation of friends and colleagues living in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood, I also joined book clubs, language groups, and other local events with the hope of meeting residents who might take part in research. This yielded many unrecorded informal conversations on neighbourhood development, with one particularly notable (and recorded) life-history interview with a resident who had known the area from his youth in the inter-war period, and provided a wealth of information on the changing function of the outdoor markets. One particular difficulty of recruiting local residents – and, perhaps, a challenge with recruiting market shoppers as well – is that the neighbourhood has a somewhat mobile population. Apart from the life-history interview noted above, most other participants had moved to Montpellier as adults, and had little knowledge of the Figuerolles or Plan Cabanes area, local history, or municipal involvement. Many also indicated that they planned to move to other locations in Montpellier in the near future – to buy a house, to live in the countryside, for a larger apartment – and so had limited interest in the neighbourhood, though many were happy to give me their general impression of the markets ('great', 'cheap', 'fun', 'glad it's here').

In one instance a vendor in the Broc'Art market suggested – mid-way through a stall-side discussion – that we stop talking about the neighbourhood, and go see it instead. He took me on a two-hour walking tour of Figuerolles, Plan Cabanes, and Gambetta, telling me about his experience of living there for many years and detailing the history (as he knew it) of many of the buildings. This approach opened up new vistas for my understanding of the redevelopment program in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area, and resulted in a notable research shift: the PhD, as I envisaged it at the start of the research period, was going to be about the markets, the materiality of food and *brocante*, and the idea of 'public space'.

Following our neighbourhood walk in late March 2010, the words ‘expropriation’, ‘pre-emption’ and gentrification entered the PhD sphere more forcefully. This is not to say that I was unaware of these processes over the many years of Montpellier research. Rather, I had unwittingly separated the sphere of the markets from the sphere of state urban planning – preferring to think about how Montpellier’s many outdoor markets related to each other in a city-wide network of outdoor shopping, rather than how the specifics of the Place Salengro and Broc’Art markets related to their immediate neighbourhoods, and to political strategies at the municipality. I took up this approach of ‘talking whilst walking’ (Anderson, 2004), and asked several other research participants to take me on their tours of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area. In some instances I recorded our discussions, in others the tours were more impromptu and I did not have a recorder with me. I often took my camera and photographed the streets and buildings we spoke about. In all cases, the tours focused on changes in who lived in the neighbourhood, comments on how physical infrastructure had shifted, pointing out SERM-owned buildings and noting who had owned them before, and hearing many stories of each participant’s own experience of being in those spaces. This latter point was especially important, and I often took a life-history interview (cf. Jackson and Russell 2010) approach to these sessions.

Using the physicality of the neighbourhood to prompt discussions led to lengthy deliberations on certain trees, facades, stone walls, or water wells in the area, as well as the faded signage of old stores, and the absences in the landscape: the missing home-movie theatre, the absent bakery, the electrical transformer which was not installed following local protest. In several instances these walking tours intersected with another neighbourhood community: the long-established Roma population in the Figuerolles area. While happy to speak to me while I was with a recognized Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes resident – and when the voice recorder was turned off – community members that I met indicated that their life stories were not for me to tell, and asked that I note only their comments in relation to specific urban planning topics (which stores had been where, for



Figure 2.20: The Rue du Faubourg Figuerolles at the intersection with Rue Haguenot, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.21: Shops across from the Place Salengro, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.22: The Place Salengro (with vendors packing their stands) after another round of renovations to the area, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 2.23: The Cours Gambetta, across from the Plan Cabanes, on a Sunday afternoon when stores are closed, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

instance). Attuned to these requests to be un-written (neither written-out from, nor noticeably written-into) the PhD, and unwilling to usurp tales or overstep my ethical obligations to participants, I decided not to write down our conversations (except when I had permission to do so) and leave some research avenues unexplored.

My renewed interest in municipally-led gentrification and the fate of the built landscape surrounding the markets [see Figures 2.20-2.23] led me to re-interview some of the Broc'Art vendors – many of whom lived in the area, unlike Place Salengro produce vendors who often lived in other parts of the city – and to seek out more research participants from the surrounding neighbourhood. Following the advice of vendors in both markets, I contacted several neighbourhood associations – of these, two responded positively and I visited key association members on several occasions before requesting recorded, semi-structured interviews. Several others indicated that they did not wish to speak to another researcher, and as it turned out a French PhD student was already actively courting their participation and had taken up volunteer positions in some of the associations. One uncomfortable PhD-to-PhD student meeting later, it became clear that cooperating or sharing local contacts would not be possible. With only a few months of research time left, I chose to focus on the two associations who were happy to participate – conscious that not pursuing the remaining associations would likely leave a gap in my understanding of local networks and processes. One of the associations requested that our interview (where one member was present) not be recorded, and in this instance the conversation lasted around 40 minutes while I took handwritten notes – with questions focused on the work of the association, and interviewee's personal response to the market relocation process, and the association's response to the redevelopment project. This association also kindly gave me access to old copies of their newsletters, and were happy to meet with me informally on several occasions (where I met other members of the association). The second association invited me to meet with members at their local meeting space, and I had the opportunity to speak with several members over the February-June 2010

period. I conducted a semi-structured interview with the two key members guiding the association, with questions focused on: the purpose of the association, who they engaged with in the neighbourhood, how they interacted with the municipality; and then how they personally saw the redevelopment project, the importance of the market, and the future of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area.

After a discussion on the notion of ‘cleanliness’ and ‘hygiene’ in the Plan Cabanes, one member of the second association took particular delight in telling me several times: “Your work is clean” (Juju, neighbourhood association, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles). I was both amused, admittedly taken aback, and suddenly conscious that my position as a PhD researcher with a voice recorder, camera, and reams of notebooks, marked me out in this space in very particular ways. Juju insisted that he was joking, but also that I could not possibly understand what it was like to make a living by working in the market (as opposed to making my living by researching and observing the market) and to live in the quagmire of rapid neighbourhood change. This conversation has left a lasting imprint, and led to two concrete actions at the time: first, I re-oriented more of my work to exploring the issues of hygiene and cleanliness, and their intersections with race and racism (Chapter 6 of this thesis); and also, it led me to follow up conversation with many research participants about my role in the neighbourhood, and crucially, about what I could (and should) do with my research findings. The resounding sentiment, it seemed, was that any involvement in political or neighbourhood action on my part was most unwelcome: local associations had been created to petition for the market’s return, and to lobby the municipality for a greater resident voice in the regeneration project, and while participants were happy to tell me their stories, they viewed a more active role on my part as an intrusion. Several vendors and local business owners also noted that *Midi Libre* and *La Gazette* journalists were already reporting on the situation, and suggested that I keep my seat in the audience: listening and recording stories, relaying my findings to participants, but doing so in the full awareness that I was an

outsider looking in, and should not imagine myself as some sort of academic-turned-neighbourhood saviour.

During the March – June 2010 period I also interviewed several neighbourhood businesses, along with municipal actors. Approaching cafes, restaurants, stores, local artisans, and other commercial ventures bordering the Plan Cabanes plaza and in the Figuerolles neighbourhood I completed five semi-structured interviews. In each instance, interviews lasted between one- and two-hours, and consisted of open ended questions: asking each interviewee to explain their work, their knowledge of the local neighbourhood, the importance (or not) of the markets, and how the Mission Grand Coeur programs impacted on their businesses. While I approached local business owners personally to ask for an interview, setting up meetings with municipal actors was a more difficult process. I was fortunate to have the assistance of the Université Montpellier III Geography department in this respect, with several faculty members providing me with their own contacts at the municipality and the Mission Grand Coeur. Municipal interviews took place in the April – June 2010 period, and in each instance lasted about an hour, with a semi-structured interview guide focused on how different departments in the municipality envisioned the urban landscape, and the Plan Cabanes in particular, the types of interventions planned for this area, and the role taken by each agency in achieving this change.

Smith (2006) has argued that the notion of ‘elite’ interviews is a poor categorization of certain types of research interactions, and further, that dividing participants into ‘those with power’ and ‘those without’ is not so easily done. My experience of municipal interviews in Montpellier seems to both contradict and affirm this. From the sometimes elaborate interview booking procedures, to the process of accessing secured offices and buildings, the simple act of arriving at my interview gave me a clear sense of being in an environment designed to mark-out outsiders, and one where hierarchy mattered. While in some instances I was seated at a round table with interviewee(s) next to me, and in others in the visitor’s chair across from a substantial desk, it was the first few comments of the interview

which most forcefully demarcated this as a more unique interview situation: all municipal interviewees were happy to speak to me, yet they had all agreed to this only because they had a call from a close colleague and collaborator in the university's geography department. I was there as a favour and this, at least in my mind, set up a rather strange interview dynamic where I felt compelled to (over)state my academic qualification and re-position myself as the foreign expert on their urban planning system. Municipal interviews did not evolve into further research affiliations, and while I would have liked to conduct several more interviews and perhaps have more informal discussions, the contact at the university geography department nixed the idea. While I find the idea of 'elite' interviews useful in explaining some of the research dynamic, I am uncertain if the municipal interviewees were the 'elites', or if in fact it was the academic gatekeeper who held the position of most power.

Archival research also produced some interesting methodological challenges, and a difficult gatekeeper of a different kind: the computer repository at the municipal archives, which spun out a communiqué saying that it contained no files on the Plan Cabanes plaza (except a few documents from the 1980s). In part this was linked to municipal policy: documents had to be more than 7 years old to be made publicly accessible, which in the 2009-2010 research period would have limited me to files produced before 2002-2003. Added to this was the challenge of how these files were transported from the municipal offices to the archives. If a box contained documents from 1999-2005, it fell within the 7 year limit. The relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes and the series of urban planning decisions made around this time would not be accessible. At the same time, many of the documents that could have been useful were either redacted or marked 'confidential' and not released. Items which I knew should be there – for instance, documents referenced in several other files – were never found in the system, and very little relating to SERM (apart from glossy media packets) could be located, this entity holding a tenuous position as a joint public/private institution and so not archived in the same way. The Mission Grand Coeur had not released any policy files for archiving, and

the documents relating to outdoor market policy and municipal decisions were likely still being used and therefore ‘live’ and not ‘archive’ (the archivist suggested).

As a result, I set about what was at first a haphazard search: only the archivist had access to their computer records, and so we would sit together at her desk and call up anything that mentioned the word *marché* (market), then eliminated boxes that had to do with economic markets (rather than outdoor markets), and I would suddenly acquire several heavy cases of documents to sift through. While each box might contain only a single file on the markets, finding that sometimes requires a day or two of reviewing papers on all sorts of semi-related topics: the problem of pigeons in city parks (and what is terrifyingly called the *dé-pigeonisation* program), vendors on the beaches, health and safety checks on restaurants. The small number of relevant documents I did find during this initial phase, I photographed (the cost of photocopies being prohibitive) and then stored the digital copy on my laptop, organized according to the archival call number. In early spring 2010 I reviewed the documents already collected, and decided to take a different approach.

Since many of the relevant files had come from the archives of the *Direction de la réglementation et de la tranquillité publique (DRTP)* (municipal department of public regulation and tranquillity) – and almost nothing useful from the municipal department dealing with outdoor markets and commerce – I decided to request all of the recently archived DRTP boxes. Amongst documents on noisy bars, illegal restaurant terraces, and upturned garbage containers, I found the meeting minutes for the Mission Grand Coeur’s first few years of existence, and several older documents on the Plan Cabanes that outlined the technical specifications of the plaza and included a schematic of how the market should be laid out. Requests for Mission Grand Coeur documents also produced several glossy brochures destined for media interviews, while a call for the document of the OPAH files resulted in many more maps and files on the early phases of planning the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles / Gambetta redevelopment.

In the final month of fieldwork I also consulted the large books of municipal votes and decisions: page-long documents that outline the directives, bylaws, and binding agreements voted on by the elected council. Contained within these books were directives on pre-emption that included the address of the property being purchased. In my remaining time I worked through the several dozen books containing 2005 municipal council decisions, and photographed all pages relating to municipal pre-emption or expropriation in Montpellier Agglomération. A desire to focus on ethnographic research so as to develop a better understanding of how the redevelopment program was experienced by residents and neighbourhood users – and the exceedingly long process for collecting pre-emption information – meant that I limited my search to only the year 2005 with the hope that this would give me a sense of municipal action at the time of the Marché du Plan Cabanes' relocation. If the opportunity to conduct several more months of archival research in Montpellier presents itself, these municipal directives could form the starting point for a more systematic review of the fees paid for pre-empted properties, their geographic spread over several decades, and the rate of re-selling to private developers. The constraints of completing fieldwork on a PhD schedule meant that the incendiary issue of pre-emption and physical displacement are discussed more in terms of how Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles residents experience and envision the process – rather than how it is recorded in municipal documents.

2.4 Transcribing, coding, organizing, writing

Returning to Sheffield in the autumn of 2010, I began the long process of reviewing fieldwork data and organizing my findings. I first focused on the interviews: each was transcribed verbatim, and in French. At first I was hesitant about this approach, yet after listening through several of the interviews decided that a detailed transcript, one that noted pauses in dialogue, hesitation, word repetitions, and kept the original vocabulary used to describe events and explain opinions was crucial to my analysis. At times this meant spending several minutes clicking the transcription pedal

back and forth to produce a sentence that looks like a jumble of sounds and sound bites, with a repetition of words, and multiple pauses, for instance:

“Julie: Voilà. Vers rue de Soldats, là c’est une école (laughs, recorder falls) c’est une école, non, non, non, je m’inquiète pas tu sais c’est pas grave.”

This approach had several benefits. It forced me to listen very closely to what was being said, and how it was being said: I made some early notes on themes that created a more hesitant dialogue, and ones that had direct, quick answers. Transcribing in French – rather than summarizing these interviews in English, or transcribing directly into English – also maintained the specific vocabulary being used, and in the coding that followed, allowed me to identify similarities and differences in the way that places and events were described.

Once the lengthy verbatim transcripts were produced, I began the equally lengthy coding processes. My coding approach still requires paper print-out, pens, and hand-written charts to process the data. And so the transcripts were printed out and clipped together into two books, each of which I could take to the library, the nearby cafe, or the comfort of the couch. The transcripts were grouped together according to location or to interest group: those from the Broc’Art market were bunched one after the other, the municipal interviews were grouped together, etc. After an initial read through to get a sense of how the discussions had flowed, and to make some initial notes, I developed the first coding chart. This saw me highlight passages that mentioned ‘Plan Cabanes’, ‘Salengro’, ‘relocation’ or ‘displacement’, ‘urban renewal’, amongst a dozen other broad themes. While the transcripts were in French, the coding was done in both English and French – I used the term ‘urban renewal’ rather than the French ‘*renouvellement urbain*’ because the English version was shorter. However, I coded portions of the transcripts with the term ‘*saleté*’ (rather than the English version, dirt) when comments on cleanliness, hygiene, garbage or refuse were spotted because I struggled to translate this word – its meaning so nuanced, referring to both tangible refuse, and the more difficult to categorize sense of cultural cleanliness. This early coding approach has, as I

note further down, led me to keep some of these terms in French in the final draft of the thesis – rather than translating everything to English.

With the first round of coding done I spent some time picking through the results: in new Word documents I grouped together all the transcript sections (across all the interviews) that dealt with the Plan Cabanes, then cut-and-pasted all sections that mentioned the Place Salengro into another document, and continued this process until I had several dozen files on themes I felt cut across all the interviews. It became quickly apparent that some of these – ‘public transport’, also ‘market scavenging’, ‘market cheating’ and ‘facade renewal’ – had only a page (or two or three quotes) of data. Others, such as ‘Plan Cabanes’, ‘*saleté*’ and ‘relocation’ were enormous. Through this initial organization of quotes and ideas, some of the topics I was very keen to write about – scavenging for leftovers in the produce market, for instance – gave way to themes that were more widely discussed by interviewees, and which fit into the broader framework of examining public space, identity, and urban redevelopment.

Before the second round of transcript coding I spent a few days reading through my field notes, applying the same processes of labelling sections according to themes and roughly grouping them together. I also read through what I termed my ‘analysis notes’ – those comments imbedded in the field notes that suggested an early conclusion or insight on a topic, such as the notes on my work being ‘clean’ for instance, and how this led to a wider consideration of the racialization of space and the multiple meanings of *saleté*. My field notes are a linguistic jumble, mostly written in English, though at times in French. While processing, I left them in their original state, and continued to use both French and English words for the coding. Field notes captured a wealth of detail on the inner workings of each market, and considerable information on how the actual selling and buying was structured – points which were not discussed as closely in the interviews.

Combining the results from the initial transcript coding and those from the initial field notes coding resulted in a more nuanced understanding of

which topics formed the mainstay of research discussions. The use of the term ‘empty space’ – and its variants of ‘dead space’, ‘meaningless space’, and ‘empty plaza’ – appeared several times in relation to the Plan Cabanes, and so this became a key theme I followed in my subsequent reading of both transcripts and field notes. Very few interviewees spoke about the idea of ‘community’, yet my ethnographic field notes were filled with examples of how this was performed, enacted, and discussed in more informal stall-side discussions. As a result, on the second round of coding I decided to look for specific forms of ‘community’, noting mentions of: ‘Arab’, ‘French’, and other ethnic groups, along with ‘neighbours’ or ‘neighbourhood’, ‘belonging’, and ‘memory’. This coding process reveals as much about my own positionality and research goals as it does about the realities of life in the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood. My evaluation of ‘community’ as something based around a shared identity (cultural memory, ethnic groups, etc), and one which required some sense of a shared space or action (neighbourhood, cultural practice) and participation (belonging, taking part) is reflected in the code words used – and is based in part on my reading of Jacobs (1961), Whyte (1943), de la Pradelle (2006) and Duneier (1999). The idea of memory, cultural heritage, and the particular role of *brocante* in enacting these visions in public space shone through after the first round of coding as well, and suggested a way of understanding the importance of the Broc’Art market that I had only vaguely entertained before closely looking through fieldwork results. And so, on the second round of processing both transcripts and ethnographic field notes I narrowed the coding terms significantly and focused on: examples of community engagement, as noted above; the notion of ‘empty space’ that surprisingly ran through many of the interviews (but none of the ethnographic notes); notions of memory and heritage, and the materiality of *brocante*; and finally, the term *saleté* and the idea of urban space developing in an incorrect manner (what eventually became the idea of re-ordering public space). Once transcripts and field notes were re-coded and annotated with more notes analyzing the words and phrases used by interviewees, I produced four new Word files around the themes noted

above – each forming one of the four findings /discussion chapters of this thesis.

My approach to transcript coding straddles the competing notions of grounded theory as outlined by Glaser (1978) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). The system of in-vivo (or emergent) coding requires that researchers work through transcripts line by line, building their coding system on the specific vocabulary used by participants, and only then creating a theoretic framework based on these codes (Glaser 1978). The use of axial coding, meanwhile, sees researchers using both emergent themes and pre-existing theories in order to analyze the data while coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990). In theory, in-vivo coding is data driven and refuses to pre-fit the findings into existing theories or models, while axial coding draws on these theories and models to build a more nuanced and complex understanding of the phenomenon under study. While I have found the competing systems of in-vivo and axial coding very useful for interrogating the origins of my own coding system and the assumptions that I might bring to the analysis, like others (Kendall 1999; Walker and Myrick 2006) I have also found this insistence on a distinction between in-vivo and axial frustrating and unhelpful. The use of the code ‘*saleté*’ and the meaning of ‘clean’ illustrate this challenge: emerging directly from the vocabulary used by research participants, the term ‘*saleté*’ can be construed as in-vivo coding. That a discussion on neighbourhood *saleté* resulted in one research participant (Juju, pg 59 above) describing my work as ‘clean’ – the opposite of *saleté* – resulted in my subsequent use of the term ‘*saleté*’ as an analytic and axial code. To suggest that my coding system fits into either in-vivo or axial would erase the extent to which I have integrated elements of both approaches into my data analysis, with *saleté* being both an emergent code (Glaser 1978) and a theoretical model (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The process of coding has been much aided by a reading of Cerwonka and Malkki’s (2007) book *Improvising Theory*, which outlines in considerable detail how both coding systems can be deployed at different stages of the research process in order to make sense of ethnographic and interview findings. My longer engagement with this field site has, admittedly, made it

much more difficult to approach interview transcripts without a pre-existing sense of how individual conversations feed into broader narratives, and the complexity of themes which intersect in terms such as *saleté*. The benefit is, I hope, a richness of analysis that allows the layers of opinions, ambiguity, and viewpoints to peak through.

The translation of interview quotes from French into English was done much later on, when each chapter was written and ready to be submitted for comments. In part, this was a conscious strategy to ensure that the French meaning of key terms, and the specific context in which they were used, remained central to my analysis throughout – translating everything into English early on would, I worried, make it too easy to accidentally write-out some of these nuances. At the same time, the act of translation I found fickle, difficult, imprecise, and problematic, and did my best to put this off until the last possible moment. As I approached this long-avoided task, I drew on the edited volume *Exploring French text analysis: interpretations of national identity* (Crawshaw and Tusting 2000) for some practical advice – and analytic tools – for working in French-English translation. In moments of particular difficulty I also called on the expertise of a friend who is a professional French-English translator, and who provided some useful suggestions on how to translate the particularities of French sentence structure to English. Working in translation is, I would argue, different from working across languages and translating the text yourself. As Esposito (2001) notes, analyzing a transcript that has gone through third-party translation – that is, an instance where the researcher relies on an interpreter – can create difficulties in understanding the original context of a conversation, the multiple meaning of certain words, and the ability to pick up on sarcasm or other verbal cues (Temple and Young 2004). Being fluent in French and English has allowed me to avoid this particular challenge, though I am very conscious that my grasp of French is not to the same standard as my knowledge of English – literary French sometimes eludes me, as do some forms of jargon and dialect used in Montpellier, and the technocratic language of some academic publications sends me scrambling for a dictionary.

To complicate matters further, my first language is Bulgarian, followed by English at a young age. Rather than viewing my French-to-English research as something exceptional, the multi-lingual trajectory of the PhD is in reality not too different from the world of code-switching and language hopping that forms my usual daily experience (cf Krzywoszynska in review). I am both all too aware of the slippages that can occur when trying to translate the meaning of a word or phrase, and conscious that correct translation is simply impossible. If a phrase is translated word-by-word it can lose its cultural and social context; translating for socio-cultural meaning can erase idiolect or any personal linguistic ticks. My approach to translating interview quotes has followed a general pattern: when a word has proved difficult to translate, and I have been unable to settle on a single meaning or interpretation, I have left that word in its original French and provided one English variant. And so, *saleté* has appeared as ‘dirt’ but also as ‘filth’, in each instance the original French word and the English translations presented side-by-side – with the English word chosen to most closely match the meaning as used (or, as I perceived it to be used) by the interviewee. In most other instances, phrases were translated with attention to the socio-cultural meaning of the words (and very rarely in a word-for-word translation that, when I tested this out, resulted in incomprehensible sentences worthy of GoogleTranslate). Occasionally I have left the quirks of French syntax and sentence structure in place, though most often I have tried to ensure that words flow in a manner that would be comprehensible to a non-French speaker.

Participant anonymity was central to completing research in the Plan Cabanes, yet when working with quotes and inserting translations into chapters I wanted to retain some sense of the individuality of the speaker. As a way of mediating this, interviewees have been given pseudonyms, with attention to giving some hint of the speaker’s gender and when possible selecting a name from a similar cultural background: participants with nominally French or North African names were anonymized with a comparable name. When I visited Montpellier for a longer period in the autumn of 2012, I met with some of the research participants in the

Broc'Art market, and told them about my attempts at re-naming and anonymization. The interviewees who appear as Lucien and Madeleine in the chapters that follow felt their 'research names' were infinitely dull, though they also set about jokingly inventing new personas for their PhD alter-egos. It was a good reminder of both the importance of ensuring that research participants are comfortable with the information I convey in my work (including their anonymity and pseudonyms), and equally of the sometimes surreal nature of academic writing – was I writing fiction or fact, Lucien asked?

In several instances I have, however, not included a pseudonym for an interviewee. Philippe Saurel, who is an elected municipal councillor and acted as the political head of the urban planning department in the 2009-2010 research period, agreed to be named and forgo anonymity. In part, I could not think of how to anonymize a high-ranking politician – at the same time, he preferred to be listed as himself, and once he included my name on his political website as one of his publicly listed meetings for 2010, any need for anonymity vanished ³². I have also avoided inserting pseudonyms for my interviews at the Mission Grand Coeur: this is a small department, with a handful of urban planners and municipal staff, and any hint of the gender of the speaker or suggestion of their cultural background would quickly quash anonymity. While I am at times highly critical of the work of the Mission Grand Coeur, I do not wish to jeopardize the individuals who hold various professional positions in this department, and so the two interviewees appear as 'Interviewee 1' and 'Interviewee 2'. Using pseudonyms throughout the PhD will also, I hope, make it possible to trace various speakers throughout the chapters, giving a sense of the diversity of individual opinions, and perhaps giving a hint of the personas and characters who shape so much of the Plan Cabanes (and my own research) experience.

Alongside interview transcripts and ethnographic field notes, I also coded portions of the archival materials and newspaper articles collected. After

³² Philippe Saurel's website, with my name included as one of his publicly listed meetings for 2010: <http://www.philippe-saurel.com/actualite/interventions/entretien-avec-roza-tchoukaleyska.html>

several months of work in Montpellier's municipal archives I had managed to photograph several thousand pages of documents, and organize these into several dozen digital files. Sorting through the files on the first round, I separated them into those which linked directly to PhD topics – Mission Grand Coeur documents, newspaper articles on the Plan Cabanes, municipal decisions on pre-emption – and those which were interesting but less relevant to the four themes that I had settled on following the coding of transcripts (files on the covered markets, on redevelopments of other neighbourhoods, municipal documents from the 1980s and 1990s). The remaining files were reviewed, and coded according to one of the four themes: markets as community pillars; empty space; memory and heritage; and *saleté* and re-ordering of space. It quickly became apparent that only two of these themes were addressed in municipal documents in a substantial way – the idea of public space, its physical and social meaning; and the process of re-ordering space through physical redevelopment and cultural planning. As with the transcripts and field notes, much of my analysis of archival documents involved pens, paper, highlighters and many pages of written notes. While the potential to mine this cache of municipal documents for more details is certainly there – and will undoubtedly, at some future point, be used to expand the discussion on public space and municipal planning – I deliberately limited the extent to which I drew on these findings in the chapters that follow. My initial interest in the Plan Cabanes area and its markets centred on the social, cultural, and community dynamics produced through municipal intervention and a redevelopment of the built landscape. As such, my focus has remained on making extensive use of ethnographic field notes and interview transcripts – leaving the archival materials to a secondary, supporting role. This decision is also a reflection of the inability to access any documents relating to the actual relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes in 2005, and to the decisions made around the redevelopment process of this neighbourhood since then, due to the ways in which these documents are archived and the time limits on releasing current files. Certainly this has narrowed the types of conclusions I can reach on municipal action (hesitation over the

racialization of space being the most notable example), and this is a point I would hope to return to through future work in the area.

Throughout each chapter I have also made use of the many photographs I took during walking tours, visits to each market, and strolls through the Plan Cabanes and Figuerolles area. The use of visual imagery and of visual analysis (Rose 2012) I have found at once problematic and deeply rewarding. All of the photographs included in this thesis are my own and date from 2006 to 2012 – a period which stretches far beyond the PhD fieldwork season of 2009-2010, and reflects my longer interest and engagement with the Plan Cabanes area. In part I have used photographs to record neighbourhood change, sometimes returning to the same street in different years and taking photographs of (roughly) the same buildings and store fronts with the hopes of capturing changes to the physical landscape – some results from this are included in Chapter 6. I am not working with ‘found images’ – in the vocabulary of Rose (2012), photographs taken by others which can be appropriated for another form of visual analysis – but have instead used my own photographs as one way of documenting urban change and answering my research questions. And so the photographs included in each chapter are deployed: as illustrations, providing a visual image to match comments on facade colour schemes, for instance; as evidence of how the urban landscape has changed over several years, and which parts of the buildings, streets, public spaces, and plazas are affected (Chapter 6 especially). When I have been prompted to photograph a building or site by a research participation during a walking tour, the images are in part representations of neighbourhood facets that the participant deems important – with the caveat, of course, that I have included only a small selection of such images in Chapter 5, and so these images do not represent any single participant’s visual narrative of the area (Harrison 2002). This latter point is something of a bugbear, and while writing and compiling my research I realized that this was a glaring oversight, and will certainly revisit the concept of participant-led visual narratives before any future research projects. My use of photographs does have limitations, some of them self-imposed. People are intentionally

absent from the photographs included in this thesis: concern for anonymity and for informed consent have meant that I am very hesitant to include recognizable faces. My approach of photographing physical neighbourhood change fails to capture the shifts in usage, cultural meaning, and function of these spaces for residents (not least because these residents are visually absent) and in some instances I have used photographs more as my own memory prompts than as proof of what urban change has meant for Plan Cabanes users. All of this has underlined both the complexity of using visual research methods and their particular importance to studying public space and urban change, and has left me to consider the conflict between ensuring participant anonymity and erasing participants from photos.

Converting the quotes, ethnographic notes, and other materials into chapters necessitated the creation of four separate (if inter-related) narratives. Chapter 4 on 'empty space' and Chapter 6 on 're-ordering space' were especially difficult to pull apart and write. The material re-ordering of space – that the Plan Cabanes was inserted into a formal municipal hierarchy of urban spaces, and assigned a certain colour and texture of tarmac and type of street furniture as a result – could just as easily fit into both chapters. Ideas on installing an 'oriental spice market' in the Plan Cabanes is equally important to advancing the arguments of Chapter 4 and 6. Ultimately, I decided to include this information in Chapter 4, leaving more space in Chapter 6 to develop a narrative around dirt, cleanliness, and the racialization of public space. Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 also function as a pair: each uses ethnographic material extensively, and draws on the narrative techniques of Klein (1997) and Till (2005) to combine different voices and versions of history and community. In both of these chapters I wrote with a sense of building a narrative – in part because so much of the material in these sections was told to me as personal stories, anecdotes, and experiences. As I note in Chapter 5, the difference between fact, fiction and fable is sometimes difficult to pinpoint, and in relating these stories I have tried to both communicate the sentiment and importance of these events to the speaker, and attempted to situate them into broader narratives of spatial change, social exclusion, and the importance of outdoor markets to

the cultural life of these neighbourhoods. The separation of these paired chapters – so that the Chapter on empty space is not immediately followed by the Chapter on re-ordered space – is more a writing technique than a theoretical or research statement. The thought that these ideas would follow immediately one on the other resulted in a litany of sentences that said ‘see previous/next chapter’, and a central argument that seemed to circle around with no end in sight. This slowed down my writing considerably, and so the chapters have been separated out – which in practical terms has forced me to write more self-contained sections, and think about the ideas in terms of the broader narrative.

In the pages that follow I will draw on the idea of Montpellier, the urban phenomenon, to understand how and why the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood has been identified as needing particular municipal attention, and the importance of the Plan Cabanes plaza to the social, cultural and community life of the area. While the chapters combine findings from interviews, ethnographic field notes and archives, they do so by different measures: Chapter 3 draws most extensively on ethnographic notes, while Chapter 6 makes particular use of archival materials and Chapter 4 newspaper sources. While the *brocante* market in the Plan Cabanes plaza is formally called the Broc’Art, I have most often referred to it simply as ‘the *brocante*’; the Place Salengro market is ‘the produce market’; and mentions of the Marché du Plan Cabanes refers to the large outdoor market that existed in the Plan Cabanes plaza before 2005.

Chapter 3: Performing the market

“To create a public space without putting some form of animation in it is a heresy, it’s impossible.” (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier 2005-2011)

This quote, drawn from a fieldwork interview with Philippe Saurel, emerged during a discussion on how the city of Montpellier perceives outdoor markets. I had asked why the municipality insisted on establishing a food market in every neighbourhood. Philippe Saurel explained that, simply put, without the market there would be no neighbourhood – no local spirit, no place where all neighbours can come together, and little in the way of sustained public space usage. As the above quote indicates, a plaza without animation – one lacking in activity, usage, engagement, interaction – cannot rightly be considered a public space. In this vein outdoor markets are seen more as a cultural event rather than a commercial venture, intended to function as a pillar of neighbourhood life (Morales 2009).

Sitting behind a stand in the produce market, the Place Salengro seems like a cacophony of sounds, scents, and conversations. The impression is one of boisterous chaos, effortless fun and heightened sociability, a scene that seems capable of drawing in the most dour of shopper. In the Plan Cabanes plaza, the *brocante* market has a slower pace of vending, with a continuous game of Scrabble amongst vendors giving the impression of leisurely indifference to the odd book browser who strolls past the stands. While in the Place Salengro it seems that no one can escape without being drawn into conversation, in the Plan Cabanes shoppers are sometimes under the impression of being left to their own devices, unobserved and unpressured to buy: an alluring facade built on a coherent series of daily processes geared towards creating a seamless integration of commercial and cultural interests. The market is in many ways a well-tuned machine: setting up and repacking, managing goods and clients, vending and buying all happen

within the limits of established socio-spatial rules. The approach of this chapter will be to flush out these hidden variables and move beyond the facile, if delightful, vision of outdoor markets as simply colourful zones of festive fun. The markets of the Place Salengro and the Plan Cabanes serve as excellent case studies precisely because they present such seemingly different experiences. Spurred by de la Pradelle's (2006) work on a Provençal market, and influenced by de Certeau's work on everyday life (1984) and the practice of shopping (de Certeau et al 1998), in the sections that follow I will examine the manner through which markets are produced, and in turn, how the *marché* produces a community-based notion of public space. First, I will review de la Pradelle's (2006) ethnographic study of a French outdoor market. Through this I aim to establish some parameters for understanding the Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro markets, all the while drawing on additional literature to situate de la Pradelle's (2006) work and note some of the challenges of applying her findings to my own research. The subsequent section will examine the outdoor market bylaws of the city of Montpellier's, and consider how the *Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés* (Halles and Markets regulations) guide the shape and form of the *brocante* market and the Place Salengro produce market. The chapter will then consider the internal rules of the market: those rules of conduct and entrenched notions of accepted behaviours that are not included in the formal guidelines, but which all vendors acknowledge and deploy in their professional capacity. The final section will look at the rule breakers and the ways in which the market experience is shaped as much by disobedience as by regulations. Through these sections the chapter aims to detail how the *brocante* and the Place Salengro produce market function, and to describe how and why these ventures are seen to produce a more engaging, animated (in the words of Philippe Saurel), and inclusive form of public space. The secondary function of this chapter is to provide the ground work needed for the more detailed analysis of public space politics, state-led gentrification, and the racialization of city spaces that follow in the subsequent chapters.

3.1 Defining the market

Hired by the French Ministry of Culture to do an ethnographic study of outdoor food markets, Michele de la Pradelle's (2006) work in Carpentras near Avignon is a detailed examination of the cultural, social and economic practices that form the matrix of market life. De la Pradelle's book *Market Day in Provence* (2006) and earlier articles on the topic (1995) present the market as a social relationship, one that envelops the town of Carpentras every Friday morning and compels citizens of all walks of life to converge in the plazas and streets for the experience. She details the patterns of client-vendor exchanges, arguing that in the ethereal space of the market the normally divergent bourgeois, farming and working class identities are forced into a coherent, localized whole: the quick wit of vendors and the casual speech of buyers makes little allowance for posturing. The goal is to demonstrate that you belong and through your actions and manners to present yourself as being *Comtadine*, a resident of the local region. You establish yourself by buying local goods, knowing the regional customs, and through small pleasantries that continually circle back to a comment on the town's situation or history. As de la Pradelle strolls the cobbled stone pavement, her astute observations capture this world within a world and the fluidity of her ethnographic narrative communicates the intricacies of market life. From de la Pradelle's (2006) work I have drawn several analytic approaches that have functioned as the basis for my own examination of outdoor market life and public space in the Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro.

First, the relationship between the outdoor market and public space is temporally limited: the market runs at certain times of the day, and only on certain days of the week, and it is only during these periods that outdoor markets can be said to produce or contribute to the formation of public space. This is not to say that public spaces do not exist without outdoor markets. As Whyte (1943), Jacobs (1961) and Hayden (1997) note, plazas and streets are very much in use as public spaces even when devoid of formal or informal vending activity. Outdoor markets, however, bring something different to the game, and for de la Pradelle (2006) market time

is the only period of the week when otherwise disparate groups – farmers, neo-rurals (her term for second home owners), youth, the elderly, immigrant groups from the social housing districts, middle-class groups who live in the city centre, the unemployed and those who have high paying jobs – all congregate in the city. As de la Pradelle notes

“Because the market runs all through the city, oblivious to marks of social status or identity, and because, for a few hours, the use made of the urban space is less functional and therefore more erratic, more conducive to ambling and whim, the city space becomes somehow porous; neighbourhoods flow into each other and internal boundaries, invisible yet known to all, are temporarily abolished” (2006, 176-177).

It is this porousness and collapse of recognized social and physical boundaries which leads de la Pradelle (2006) to conclude – in way that perhaps overly romanticizes such ventures – that outdoor markets have a key role in establishing a more inclusive, open, and communicative form of public space. It is a conclusion also reached by Watson (2009) who argues that markets encourage a sort of ‘rubbing along’ that compels users to acknowledge and tacitly engage with each other in a way that is not common of supermarkets, shopping malls, city streets or plazas. Likewise, Duneier (1999) finds that street vending opens up Greenwich Village in New York City to a wider variety of users, while Zukin (2008) argues that a series of markets and bazaars in Harlem, New York, provide a public venue for a diversity of actors and residents to shop, meet, and interact.

In a study of a plaza in a Costa Rican town Richardson (1982) details the specific ways in which an outdoor market renders that space into a site of engagement and interaction: during market hours personal space is at a premium, forcing people to step on each other’s shadow in a way that sees, for instance, young men and women interact (while in non market times social mores require that they keep some distance in the plaza). The outdoor market witnesses verbal debates between clients, and between clients and vendors, occasional fights, tiffs, a brief nod of acknowledgement, or a word or two to request someone to move aside, and the constant speech of vendors shouting to attract attention. The same plaza, when emptied of its market, become what Richardson (1982) describes as a

promenade, with couples or families keeping a respectable distance from each other in the manner of the flaneur that sees limited physical or verbal interaction (a point also made by Cattell et al 2008). As Richardson remarks, “contrary to the focused participation of the market, plaza interactions necessitate that people self-consciously become observers even as they respond to the actions of others” (1982, 430). Whereas the market encourages interaction, a bodily recognition of each other and a sometimes forced engagement with a wide variety of actors, the market-less plaza is about seeing and being seen, an experience of public space centred on maintaining a respectful distance, and one which more quickly singles out those who do not belong (the poor, homeless, unmarried young couples holding hands).

De la Pradelle (2006) also argues that the outdoor market is a site of performance, a stage where different actors posture before their civic peers and engage in debates and dialogues that are by their very nature public. De la Pradelle (2006) details some of these interactions: a client asking a vendor for advice will be overheard by the surrounding clients, any discussion between two pedestrians navigating a market street will clash with others’ conversations, and most debates, insults, and compliments will be overheard. The physical proximity created by the confined spaces of markets and their stalls makes such small verbal interactions audible to everyone within earshot, and for de la Pradelle (2006) results in a particular form of performativity. At the stalls of Carpentras social and economic standing temporarily falls away, with vendors treating everyone as ‘the young man’ or ‘the mademoiselle’ (no matter their actual age), and gleefully teasing with double-entendres regardless of who is standing before them. There are no flashy platinum credit cards at the market, only cash, and if you want the attention of a vendor you have to jostle with others at the stand, see your bags equally crumpled no matter its make, and engage in commentary over food quality or the deals to be had on household goods as a matter of decorum. The market, thus, has a set of implicit rules about how to engage with vendors and shoppers that are predicated on celebrating the variety, selection, quality, quantity, or deals

available in the market – and equally, on deliberately overlooking social or economic differences between participants. For de la Pradelle this has an equalizing effect, and is crucial to the formation of a public sphere:

“Because market exchange holds social statuses and their hierarchical arrangements at bay, a micro-society develops at the market, particularly around a given stall, where actors not only coexist as in a crowd but also relate to each other. What makes the market a public space is the combination of anonymity and interaction among subjects who recognize each other as equals.” (2006, 185).

Participation in the outdoor market thus requires that everyone – vendor, shopper, gawker – recognizes each other through a series of well-established patterns, yet retain a sense of equality through the guise of anonymity. Vendors, de la Pradelle (2006) notes, pretend to not know the social or political standing of their clients; clients, in turn, put on a performance that sees them amicably chat with their queue neighbours. Interestingly, de la Pradelle (2006) finds that there is no requirement to buy something – it is perfectly acceptable for people to examine the stall, and then simply walk away. Entry into the market is seemingly easy, with vendors taking it upon themselves to draw new faces into conversation and rustle up dialogue by commenting on the similarities between one person’s purchases and those of their neighbour. Market performances are, for de la Pradelle (2006), almost theatrical. Each participant is aware of their heightened friendliness, their greater interest in their surroundings and fellow market goers, and in performing the role of the curious shopper or knowledgeable vendor. Certainly all identities are a performance of a kind (Butler 1999) yet the particularity of outdoor market life is the emphasis on a performance that opens dialogues and plays along with a set of social rules that, for de la Pradelle (2006), seek to remove social, economic and cultural barriers.

De la Pradelle’s (2006) insistence on both the performativity of market life and its capacity to equalize social relations I find fascinating – and have used it as a starting point for considering how such relations are established in the *brocante* market and the Place Salengro food market. However, I am also conscious of absences and disparities in her analysis. While different

ethnic identities feature in de la Pradelle's overview of Carpentras – deploying French nomenclature, she recognizes Senegalese immigrants and Congolese shoppers in the market, but rarely speaks about 'ethnic' groups or communities – these form a very limited portion of her analysis, and there is no commentary on how racial or ethnic differences are dealt with (or not) through the equalizing performance of the outdoor market. As Slocum (2007) has so carefully demonstrated with respect to a Minneapolis farmers' market, racial identities and the performance of 'whiteness' with respect to the buying of organic and local food has created what she terms 'unintended exclusion' in that market. Guthman (2004) and others (DuPuis and Goodman 2005; Alkon and McCullen 2011) have noted that the production and selling of organic and local food is imbued with beliefs of what constitutes good food that often intersect with specific visions of class, race, and ethnicity. De la Pradelle's (2006) work does not examine a farmers' market and there is no focus on short-circuit food networks in her research – very little of the produce sold in Carpentras is grown in the region – which makes for some thematic leaps in comparing her work to that of others researching outdoor food markets. Yet in Slocum's analysis (2007), and that of others' examining local food networks and rural products (Bessière 1998; Leitch 2003; Tregear 2003) or questions of food 'authenticity' and notions of 'traditional' products (Bérard and Marchenay 1995; Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Heller 2002; Sims 2009; Smithers and Joseph 2010) I have found a relevant counterpoint to de la Pradelle's (2006) approach.

Thus, the outdoor market might be a performance, but it is not necessarily an equal one (Hily and Rinaudo 2004). While the marketplace offers an opportunity to overcome some of the social and economic differences which impact public life (Watson 2009), it can also play the opposite role. For instance, in a study of a Cairns, Australia market Law (2011) documents the tacit erasure of a complex colonial history through the use of a colourful food multiculturalism campaign that gives an artificial harmony to local relations (a critique made more broadly of multicultural eating by Probyn 2000; Henderson 2004; Vallianatos and Raine 2008; Slocum 2011).

Equally, Luckman (2011) notes the absence of Aboriginal foods in a Darwin, Australia, market geared towards, once more, showcasing the city's cosmopolitan culture. In both instances the outdoor market has become a site of exclusion (Sibley 1995), one where the performance of market identities is built on the absence of certain users – resulting in a less than inclusive public space. As Duruz et al (2011) note in a study on multiculturalism and the performance of market life:

“these [market] exchanges do not occur on a political, cultural, or theoretical *tabular rasa*, giving rise to a linked set of questions requiring critical examination of how cities' shared histories of colonialism-post colonialism shape everyday interactions in public space” (2011, 600; italics in original).

Market life, in other words, is not removed from the social, political or economic realities of everyday life – not least the colonial histories which shape part of the Plan Cabanes' importance, as will be noted in Chapter 5. While de la Pradelle (2006) is arguably correct in her assertion that the performance of market exchange sees some of these differences temporarily suspended and a tacit equality established, that equality does not necessarily outlast the market day. In some instances this very performance perpetuates well established exclusions (Slocum 2007; Luckman 2011), giving a superficiality to the market exchange.

Alongside this analysis of the complex inter-personal interactions that render outdoor markets as public spaces, de la Pradelle (2006) also considers the administrative structure supporting such ventures. The Carpentras market is effectively a municipal institution: places in the market are assigned by a municipal employee (known as a *placier*), the municipality determines which streets and plazas will be used by the market, fines errant vendors and ensures that market opening hours are respected, sets rules on stall height and displays, and organizes the post-market clean up. As de la Pradelle notes:

“In our fascination with the market stage or setting, we tend to forget the machinery essential to its functioning. What appears at first glance a reign of joyous disorder is nonetheless a regulated public space. The impression of an

uncontrolled invasion of city streets and squares is thus illusionary. What we observe in fact results from continual arbitration of multiple questions and issues, a series of compromises among partners with divergent interests” (2006, 39).

De la Pradelle’s (2006) suggestion that the outdoor market is a municipal entity makes this a particularly interesting site for studying the juxtaposition and competition between municipal, private, community, and commercial interests. Describing indoor and outdoor markets as “a particularly beguiling research landscape” (Duruz et al 2011, 599), Duruz et al support de la Pradelle’s (2006) conclusions and suggest that these complex sites can function as a microcosm of broader social, cultural, and political dynamics. Precisely because outdoor markets take place in spaces that are formally labelled as ‘public domain’ – streets, parks, plazas, municipally owned parking lots – the way in which access to such markets is governed (who is allowed to sell, and who is blocked, for instance) says much about each city’s understanding of how public space should be used and by whom. Through this, Mitchell’s (2003) notion of appropriate users and uses can be introduced, alongside Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of rights to the city: if the outdoor market is run by a municipality and is held in public space, and is effectively a public event, then decisions on participation and usage reveal much about who forms the urban public (a point to be considered in more detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6).

Conscious of some of the constraints of de la Pradelle’s (2006) work, I have nonetheless found her analysis of the Carpentras market a useful starting point for considering how the Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro markets function – and more importantly, why the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes was such a significant event for the neighbourhood. From the ideas outlined above I have taken away several more concrete points. First, the notion that the outdoor market is a performance says much about how the collection of stalls and stands can be perceived and studied. In the pages that follow I am keen to trace how this ‘performance’ is achieved, with particular attention to how vendors stage their markets. I have focused on vendors for two reasons: 1) they are required to follow the outdoor market bylaws, and are therefore in direct contact with municipal actors by

paying fees, applying for market space, meeting with *placiers*, and in the case of the Plan Cabanes, contesting their removal from a certain public space; and 2) vendors translate the outdoor market codes into a daily practice of being in the market, or, they perform municipal market guidelines for the clients, plaza users, and neighbourhood actors. Vendors effectively occupy the role of negotiators between the municipality which wishes to create an outdoor market, and market goers who wish to experience or use a market. If there are differences between how the *brocante* market and the produce market at Place Salengro are performed, I am interested in tracing these differences – with an eye to a subsequent discussion of why one market is deemed appropriate for the newly renovated Plan Cabanes, while another is not.

Further, de la Pradelle's (2006) approach owes much to the work of de Certeau (1984), and uses the language and symbol of market life as one way of explaining why this event brings about a particular form of public space usage. Though de la Pradelle (2006) recognizes the economic function of the outdoor market, she argues that Carpentras shoppers visit the produce and household stalls not out of economic necessity but rather from a desire to participate in an urban phenomenon: the process of walking along the market streets, speaking with vendors and fellow market goers, and the embodied experience of touching, tasting, and seeing the items on sale transform the street from a thoroughfare into a place of lingering and interaction. Or, following de Certeau (1984), through participation in market life Carpentras residents become active urban agents capable of appropriating and transforming their environment. The outdoor market encourages the kind of chance encounters valued by Mayol (1998) as the starting point for building a sense of neighbourhood – a bodily engagement with your urban surroundings that for de Certeau (1984; also 1998), effectively produces the public sphere. Following de la Pradelle (2006) my interest in the outdoor market is, thus, not one based on economic analysis or a desire to trace food production chains or short-circuit local networks – points which would warrant a PhD thesis all on their own. Rather, my focus is on the cultural and social function of outdoor markets, and the ways in

which they can create open and inclusive public spaces – or in some instances reproduce forms of social exclusion (Slocum 2007). In the pages that follow I have focused more on the inclusive aspect of outdoor markets, leaving the more difficult question of exclusion processes in the Plan Cabanes to the three subsequent chapters.

And finally, de la Pradelle's (2006) work has prompted an interest in the institutional nature of outdoor markets. While the markets studied by Luckman (2011) and Duruz et al (2011) are held on privately owned land, and the farmers' market examined by Slocum (2007) and Smithers and Joseph (2010) are run by a producers' association, the Carpentras market – like those in Montpellier's Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro – is organized, operated, and monitored by the municipality. Whether the outdoor market is romanticized or demonized (both are true of the original Marché du Plan Cabanes, as will be detailed in Chapter 5), the rhetoric surrounding the creation, relocation and running of outdoor markets says much about a municipality's political and urban planning goals. Debates over the appearance or location of a market reveal much about local negotiations over the use of public space, and in turn about the function assigned to public space in the city. As one of the few academic studies of outdoor market vending in France, de la Pradelle's (2006) work signposts these themes. While I touch on these points only tangentially in the following paragraphs – by examining Montpellier's outdoor market guidelines, for instance – it is an idea which has shaped much of my research, and is interrogated in more detail in Chapters 4 and 6. The pages that follow draw on ethnographic field notes and interview material to enter into dialogue with de la Pradelle's (2006) work, and seek to consider how the Plan Cabanes *brocante* market and the Place Salengro produce market constitute public space in this neighbourhood.

3.2 Rules and regulations

A windy, mid-winter Wednesday in the Plan Cabanes plaza, and we are huddled around a Scrabble board, balanced on two overturned crates. The 'we' in question are three book vendors and myself, the ever present

researcher whom they have finally convinced to try a round of the game. Scrabble is a *brocante* market ritual, and though I have watched multiple games from the sidelines, I have been wary of joining. The book vendors play competitive Scrabble, drawing on the vocabulary of Voltaire, Hugo and the literary greats while betting a coin or two for a winner-takes-all game. My contributions draw on a different sort of French, popular fiction and television, everyday lingo and slang. I am poor competition and forfeit my euro coin from the get-go. A book vendor to my right lays out the word *sotte*. The electronic dictionary is nudged my way and I check to find that it is an olden variant of silly or dumb. A wink, a smirk, my turn passes uneventfully and the Scrabble rounds continue with jokes and challenges. While the book vendors average 200 points each, I have barely scrambled to 50. As the second rounds starts I pull back my chair, released from the game, and turn to watch the plaza and the market.

The stalls of the Broc'Art market are laid out in two rows, the vendors facing each other over a central passage [see Figures 3.1 and 3.2]. Though the book and *brocante* stands intermingle, the book vendors generally stay closer together at the south end of the plaza. More out of habit, they say, because they sell together at other book markets and are part of the same association. Heaps of books are neatly ordered on tables, some of them in wooden wine crates and others lined in long rows or set with their covers on display [see Figure 3.3]. There are umbrellas overhead – not to shade the tables from the feeble winter sun, but as protection against falling leaves and the occasional splatter of rain drops. If darker clouds obscure the sky, the stalls are wrapped in giant plastic sheets and the vendors wait it out in their cars. The *brocante* stands further up the market spill out onto the plaza, objects set on tables but also on carpets and in plain boxes lined on the tarmac. Behind all the stands are the vendors' cars, with doors propped open and items shuffled in and out. While there is a distinct division of goods – the book vendors sell only books, the *brocante* vendors rarely do so – the series of stands have a similar set-up. The vendors often sit in the passenger seat of their car or on stools behind the stand, the most precious goods at the back, the largest laid out on the ground or set up on



Figure 3.1: *Brocante* stand in the Plan Cabanes, November 2009. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 3.2: The Broc'Art market stands, and a group of vendors having lunch in the middle of the marketplace, February 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 3.3: Books displayed in wine crates, May 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 3.4: A *brocante* stand jewellery display, May 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

smaller tables out front [see Figure 3.4]. For pedestrians passing by, the objects on sale are a menagerie of colours and textures. They beckon and guile, glisten and elicit a response: cups are inspected, books leafed through for a good ten minutes, linens checked and bracelets spun around. The *brocanteur* dealing in old posters and comic books has a small crowd gathered around his latest additions to the stall. Between the stands the price points vary from a few Euros to several hundreds, with one statue valued at roughly 2,000€. Amongst the more gilded items are practical goods too: kitchen tables and chairs, used DVDs, piles of toy cars and soldiers that parents struggle to separate from their children. Although the market takes up no more than half of the Plan Cabanes plaza passersby rarely avoid the stall. The attraction is evident and the wide expanse of the central walkway means that no one feels pressured to engage. You can look at your leisure, with the comfortable knowledge that the vendors are just far enough to not hear your conversation or casually push for a purchase.

On this blustery Wednesday, still seated in my chair, I can see the clients and vendors circulating through the market. Some are high-school students just finishing their day. Others are wearing suits, perhaps emerging from the courts just a few blocks to the east. There are mothers and children, and older men circulating in groups, chatting in Berber and Arabic. Perhaps because of the expanse of the plaza, the market rarely looks truly busy. There is always ample space for bikes to zip through, or the occasional car to pass by, belonging to the driving school at the eastern edge of the Plan Cabanes. While ruminating over the Scrabble game the vendors are still fully in sync with the plaza. Through minute gestures they know when a client is ready to purchase or wants their attention. For regulars they don't bother getting up, knowing that these shoppers will approach them at their game. They are subtly reading the market, looking for nuances that guide their responses. I am doing much the same, though my surveillance of the plaza is more overt and with a pronounced purpose. Stretched out in my chair, pencil and note pad in hand, I am looking for a particular type of shopper: one carrying plastic bags and baskets full of produce. This follows a long and ongoing discussion with the book and *brocante* vendors on the

provenance of their clients, and the links between this market and the food market in the Place Salengro. The clients carrying food packets are assumed to have stopped at the food market before moving onto the *brocante* stands. Such shoppers are few and far between, leading the book vendors to conclude that there is no correspondence, no link between the two markets – except for history, their shared link to the Plan Cabanes plaza itself. Tranquilly observing the market, I am hoping to spot someone, anyone, carrying bags of groceries. Not from any delusions of working these sporadic notes into a systematic understanding of people-movement; but rather with the hope of being able to speak to a shared client. No luck today, and certainly no luck on the other side – in the food market I have yet to spot a client with books or anything resembling a *brocante* purchase. The produce vendors are amused by my interest in the circulation of people between the two spaces. The clients I have inquired with affirm that they have seen the *brocante* market, but rarely buy anything. Wrapped up against the high winds, I cross the Cours Gambetta, the threshold between these two spots, with some regularity.

The food market is dense, noisy, the senses overwhelmed by the smell of fresh fruit, of mint, of fish; there is the vendor shouting and the client posturing. This market runs daily – unlike the Wednesday-only *brocante* – and has eleven regular vendors. Apart from Mondays, when some of the regulars take a day off, there is no space for more occasional sellers. There are five produce stalls, each heaving with boxes and bags of goods [see Figure 3.5]. Their tables, easily ten meters long, expand outwards and nearly touch the stands opposite. Clients wishing to purchase make their way through narrow walkways between the produce stands to the cash registers and scales [see Figure 3.6]. The five produce stands have two scales each, during busy times both are active, in the calmer mid-week days only one person sells. There is always a stocker, a person managing the produce crates [see Figure 3.7], bringing out extras when items sell out and clearing away boxes, peels and trash. Each stand requires at least two, usually three people to run efficiently. The produce stalls line the outside of the market. On the inside is the bread stand, a clothing stall, and three days



Figure 3.5: Food stands in the Place Salengro, March 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 3.6: Behind the stand, Place Salengro, July 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 3.7: Peaches for sale, Place Salengro, July 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 3.8: The fish stand in the Place Salengro, July 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

a week an olive stand as well. At the south end is the rotisserie and a personal accessories stand with belts, watches, and smaller items. At the north end is the fishmonger [see Figure 3.8], who also controls the plaza's water supply and helps other vendors fill buckets when a wash-down is needed. Their places are fixed, and if an outsider – a daily vendor – decides to join, they seek the permission first of the *représentant*, the individual who is officially the market's representative to city hall but informally makes day-to-day decisions on how the plaza is run. As with the *brocante* market in the Plan Cabanes, a municipal *placier* very rarely passed through the Place Salengro. At least on this point both markets are very alike: they are by default self-managed, with a call for a *placier* only when a daily sets up in the Place Salengro, or in case of an irresolvable dispute between vendors in either market.

While in the *brocante* market I can comfortably lounge in a borrowed chair, in the food market there is no place to sit, and no time either. I chat with vendors, standing on the client side of the stalls, rarely venturing behind the scale and to the sellers' side. Our chats are brief, if frequent. I stop in several time a week. When I linger a bit too long I am handed a box to move, or find myself stuffing bay leaves into tiny sachets. The jokes are constant, sometimes crude, often comically poking fun at current events and the political rumblings of the local authority and government. Sometimes I am simply ignored, acknowledged with no more than a nod or a wave. Everyone is too busy to bother, or simply not keen to reveal the more intricate processes of decision making and behind-the-scenes negotiating that mark the running of this market. The impression is of chaos, a charming, enticing sort of chaos that plays on your senses and envelops your being. You bump into people, constantly. Personal space is at a premium and so is thinking space. I retreat to a nearby cafe often to jot down notes and recalibrate before re-entering. Clients follow a similar path, many of them I meet because we sit in the same cafes looking across the busy roads to the Place Salengro. The din of the market is audible from a few blocks away, the stream of people and cars converging to guide you through dense streets. Children run between the stalls, amused by the

surroundings as their parents shop and catch up with neighbours. A full-time city cleaner is present, shoving boxes and unsellable produce into a compactor truck and passing between the stalls with a wooden broom, visible to all in a neon-yellow uniform.

In the *brocante* market vendors take great care to ensure their wares attract visitors. Through groupings of bright colours, the staging of unique items on elevated shelves and organizing books alphabetically before propping them up with old wooden wine crates the stalls are given a lively, yet coherent appearance. The book vendors sell everything – except romance novels and pop fiction. The heavy books on French culture and local customs, worn paperbacks of great French writers and catalogues of paintings entice a particular, cultivated shopper. The regulars are easy to spot. They not only browse and buy, but also have long conversations with the dealers, sometimes retreating to a nearby cafe, other times leaning over the stands or shifting behind them to provide their reviews and exchange opinions. The book vendors adore these clients, enjoying the chance to discuss a favourite novel or hear about one yet to be considered. Book dealers cannot read all they sell, I am reminded often.

In the Place Salengro another series of exchanges, this time over boxes of clementines. A client would like to know the difference between the three varieties. What shall I buy? The produce seller leans over the till, then thinks better of it and simply walks out and joins the shopper. The three varieties each have their qualities: one is a classic clementine, another is more fragrant, and a third is something between an orange and a clementine. Some of them are easier to peel, another has fewer seeds. All are 3,20€ for a kilogram. My palate might understand 'classic' and 'fragrant' differently from the shopper, or from the vendor for that matter, but the advice is still taken to heart and carefully considered. Walking out to greet the client is not motivated by a push to sell the most expensive item. Rather it is an engagement with a loyal shopper struggling to make a decision. Eventually the vendor walks back to the till, there are others lined up now, waiting to have baskets weighed and paid for. The clementines client makes her selection, and tells the seller 'you have advised so...' she

selects a variety that would match her tastes. A halved squash sits further up the stand. One of the assistants is queried on the variety and its uses. He says that it is less floury, and the client requests a portion of the remainder. It is best baked with some crème fraîche, is the advice. The biggest crush of clients is just before noon, and then the flows slowly temper and vendors begin to close shop. But here a disagreement arises: a table has to be moved so that a produce vendor can reach the side of his stall. But the table's owner refuses to have anyone else touch the top, shouting from the back of a refrigeration truck 'you leave it as it is, don't touch!'. Tempers flare, large arm gestures and shouting. A bucket of water is spilled elsewhere and another vendor is told that his driving skills are so bad he must have gotten his license on a camel. The recipient does not see the joke in this, and replies rudely, dismissively. The offending table is eventually moved, the bucket up righted, insults ignored and the market packed up in an hour. A few days later the same group is jovially joking, teasing, tossing products across the stalls and sneaking a taste of the competition's grape box. Love, hate and respect in a microcosm.

Despite the apparently convivial chaos, both markets are tightly regulated (at least in theory) by the city of Montpellier. The management of Montpellier's outdoor markets falls within several overlapping municipal departments: the *Services des Affaires Commerciales* (commercial affairs section) has the most immediate influence over the running of both outdoor and indoor markets. This division is in turn under the auspices of the *Direction de la Réglementation Publique* (public regulation and bylaws division) whose goals include the enforcement of the *règlement d'occupation et d'utilisation de l'espace urbain* (bylaws for the usage and occupation of urban spaces), which are decided on by vote of the municipal council. While *Affaires Commerciales* has the role of selecting vendors and daily operations, *Réglementation Publique* determines the rules for using public spaces within the city for markets and any other commercial, private or state actors. The combined outdoor market rules and bylaws of the two agencies are presented as a single document, the *Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés* (Market and Halles Regulations).

Formalized in 1978, following the election of Georges Frêche as mayor, the *Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés* reads as both a code of behaviour and a manual for first entry into the world of vending. The current version takes as its base a 1992 update of the document, incorporating additional bylaws introduced in the late 1990s and 2000s by the Municipal Council. The city of Montpellier, the document clearly outlines, is the keeper of public spaces, the arbitrator of conflict, and a landlord of sorts who has the power to admit new vendors and evict those deemed in violation of urban codes. Only certain plazas are listed as vending sites, and the opening and closing times of their markets included alongside the *Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés*. Generally vendors pay per square meter of space, with those occupying indoors markets paying about twice the fees of those based outside. The indoor *halles* are allocated on a quarterly basis, with vendors effectively renting commercial space from the City, and also covering the cost of localized repairs, utilities and other user fees. Outdoor markets have a combination of annual stallholders and those termed ‘dailies’: annual stallholders pay a quarterly fee for an allocated space within a designated market, daily vendors are attached to neither a market nor a stall size and seek gaps left empty in established markets where they set up for the day. Formally 20% of all outdoor market space is designed for the use of dailies (*Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés* 2001, 17), although bylaws have been introduced to limit this number for certain markets³³. In the Place Salengro food market, for instance, daily vendors can set up only when an annual stallholder is absent – and with most stallholders occupying their spaces throughout the week, it is only on Mondays and sometimes Tuesdays that daily vendors can take up a position in Salengro. While *halles* and outdoor markets function under different tariff and management codes, in both cases the municipality is responsible for ensuring a water supply, electricity, garbage disposal and site maintenance

³³Along with the normal *Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés* a separate charter may be introduced for each market, again limiting activity in that space. For instance, the city's farmer's market functions under a special charter that gives the farmers' association the power to allocate space and admit new members. *Placiers* in the farmers' market are present only to collect the daily stall fee, and have no role in allocating market spots.

– in the case of *halles* this means the buildings themselves, for outdoor markets this relates to the upkeep of the plaza. The municipality therefore determines the physical and temporal span of Montpellier's markets, and the *Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés* clearly note that the municipality cannot be reproached for its market-related decisions, nor indemnified for any damages resulting from the use of its *halles* and markets.

To become a market or *halles* vendor, one needs to be approved by *Affaires Commerciales*. The lengthy list of documents needed for the application indicates that while markets are in theory open to a variety of actors – and travelling daily vendors – those allowed to legally sell at markets are actually a rather homogeneous group. Anyone wishing to gain an annual place or hoping to become a daily must be French, an EU citizen or citizen of a country having reciprocal labour relations with France (see Black, 2005b, for some speculation on the background of this constraint). They require a permanent address with preference given to Montpellier residents, need to present receipts of contributions to state social security and health schemes, and must also be members in good standing of the local Chamber of Commerce or other professional associations. Market vendors are seen as professionals, and as such they are subject to institutional constraints: VAT must be paid, they must make regular contributors to state pensions, their work is overseen by local and national regulatory bodies, and a permanent address and stable citizenship is required. Most Montpellier markets are not open to travelling hawkers or transient vendors – the one exception being the *Marché aux Puces* (flea market) where anyone can take up a space with the purchase of a ticket and without any formal registration, though the list of goods that can be sold is limited and excludes any food products. The majority of outdoor markets are closed commercial spaces that have a limited number of spots available, and so require considerable time to reach the top of the waiting list.

Once inside, a further series of rules regulates your situation within the market: placement in a plaza or an indoor vending space is determined by seniority, the vendor with the oldest tenure is given preference on the exact

spot and size of their stall. The most visible and heavily trafficked sections of markets are perceived as best-sellers and quickly acquired, leaving new arrivals in more distant and shaded positions. Within *halles* a familial hierarchy also operates, with stall-inheritance formally permitted. Excluded from a permanent presence in vending spaces are associations – neighbourhood groups, NGOs, cultural associations – and commercial marketing agencies. While *Affaires Commerciales* may permit farmers to hold free tasting sessions and educational workshops to attract new clients, they have in the past blocked Nestea and other food conglomerates from advertising or giving samples in markets (Archives de la Ville de Montpellier 591W71).

Vendors in outdoor food markets are strictly prohibited from shouting or loudly advertising prices and wares. All perishable goods must be carefully packaged and can never be stacked on the ground, not even during set-up and clean-up. Newspapers may be used to wrap items that “the buyer would normally wash and peel before using” (*Réglementation Générale des Halles et Marchés* 2001,7). In all other cases plastic wrap, waxed paper and lined sachets are required. Those claiming to be farmers and local producers must present a plaque stating their status along with the address of their agricultural terrain. All food vendors are required to note the country of origin of the produce, the quality category, and the sale price. Harassing customers by stepping in front of the stand to invite them to purchase is also expressly forbidden, as is keeping produce tables too near the ground and permitting live animals in the market – neither for sale, nor in the form of dogs and other pets. The consumption of alcohol in outdoor markets is barred, and this has created a symbiotic relationship between vendors, clients and local bistros. The municipality retains the right to limit the types of products sold in each market, and the proportion of vendors who sell the same product. They can also issue warning notices for anyone working outside the prescribed operational hours. For annual vendors regular attendance is required by the main stall holder, although spouses are permitted to substitute, and if you trespass on neighbouring stall spaces you will be charged accordingly. Garbage must be placed in labelled bins, no goods are to be left on the ground, and the plazas stripped of any signs

of a market even before the city cleaners arrive. The sale of used goods is strictly prohibited in Montpellier's outdoor markets and *halles* – and if such items are to appear in the flea market, they must be signposted by an 8-by-2.5cm plaque. The rules are detailed, and demonstrate a clear separation between indoor *halles*, outdoor markets, book and flower markets, and flea markets.

If markets can be taken as embodiments of local policy, then Montpellier appears a strictly managed and carefully contrived space. The weight of that authority is felt on several levels. Each market session is visited by a municipal official known as a *placier* (literally 'placer', or market superintendent) who allocates space for daily vendors, collects stall fees and deals with any concerns raised by annually subscribed sellers. Outside this daily oversight is the markets committee, the *Commission Municipale des Halles et Marchés*, which deals with disciplinary issues and petitions submitted by vendors. The *Commission* is made up of elected municipal officials, a representative from the chamber of commerce, the president of the union for market vendors³⁴, along with representatives from each of the four *halles* and a single representative for outdoor markets. The balance is certainly skewed – the city has thirteen outdoor food markets and a further five flower and goods markets, yet their presence on the *Commission* is reduced to a single vote. Daily vendors and those selling prepared foods from trucks are not given individual representation, but are rather covered under the auspices of the vendors' union. When a seller is seen to operate outside standard market hours or to leave trash at their space following a session the *Commission* intervenes with a warning letter and may function as an appeals panel to consider cases brought to their attention by either the *placiers*, other vendors, or *Affaires Commerciales* and the municipality. The separation of functions between *placiers*, the municipality and the *Commission* theoretically allows for decision making to percolate amongst different actors. In reality *Affaires Commerciales* wields the greatest power as it has the ability to admit new vendors, decline applications, assign

³⁴The president of the *Syndicat des Halles et Marchés* is not officially allocated a seat on the commission, at least not according to the Market and Halles Regulations (2001). However the current (as of research in 2010) and long-serving president has been part of the commission as one of the elected market representatives.

sellers to markets, allocated spaces, dismiss and evict, fine and prosecute, and is the overseer of the city's *placiers*.

3.3 Articulating the game

The power of the municipality to govern outdoor and indoor markets functions invisibly. Clients are rarely aware that the height of stalls is mandated or that the type of products sold in their local market results from the selection process instituted by *Affaires Commerciales*. The regulations are effective because they so subtly direct the flow of these commercial spaces. On this foundation is layered another system of nuanced rules: the vendors' own internal codes and guidelines, which are often more fluid and variable. The three types of vending present in the Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro – *brocante*, books, food – each follow a different internal code, resulting in distinct communities of practice (Amin and Roberts 2008). As the paragraphs below will outline, these divergences in market practices are in large part responsible for the different shopping experiences in the two plazas.

The game of Scrabble outlined in the preceding section is a daily ritual for the book vendors, and is one that clients recognize and have come to expect. For vendors it is fun, passes the time, may win you a few extra Euros, and allows for collegiality and community spirit to build amongst the book vendors. Yet there is another, much more subtle function: the game allows vendors to feign disinterest in the actions of passers-by, play at being occupied and pretend that they are not keenly watching the market. Enveloped in the task, with their letters laid out and hawkish glances at fellow competitors the book sellers are absorbed in a world that is conceptually distant from the business of selling. The Scrabble game at once creates an appearance of jovial fun that postures the market more as a site of leisure than commerce, and allows for a comfortable distance between vendors and clients that allows the latter to browse at their own pace. The book stands are normally organized so that there is a single line of books or crates, and if the book sellers were standing behind their stalls they would be within arms reach of any shopper. That physical proximity can create a sense of being surveilled, adds a pressure to buy, and

according to the vendors can deter those who are undecided about buying, but might be convinced to purchase a book if given the time and space to do so at their leisure. With the book vendors pleasantly occupied with their game of Scrabble, those perusing the stall are not disturbed in their activity. They are exempt from the pressure to buy and can leaf through a dozen books without the keen glance of the vendor to query their interest. This is not to say that the book vendors are unaware of their stalls: sitting around the Scrabble table they constantly comment on the number of customers at each others' stands, and are fully aware of who is looking at a book (especially an expensive book), and quickly respond when a potential buyer looks in need of more information.

The *brocante* vendors at the top of the market very consciously play at listlessness and disinterest too, listening to the radio, reading, chatting with their neighbour. They do not, however, step away from their stands. Some of the items on sale at the *brocante* stalls are small, easy to slip away in a pocket, and constant – if seemingly jovial – oversight is needed. Clients are given the time to consider each item, weigh it in their hands, look it over, and carefully decide if they wish to purchase. As one *brocante* vendor explains:

“Well my attitude is basically live and let live, so, yes, I just leave people be. If I feel though that, you see, voila, she's turning or, or, he's looking at, he's looking at the object a bit longer, see, it's possible that he's waiting for a some additional gestures on my part” (Julie, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

The market is not a high-street chain, there are no greeters and no one (overtly) watching. Though if you pick up a delicate vase and flip it around the vendor will suddenly appear alongside and offer to provide some more details. And if a client initiates a discussion or makes eye contact, assistance is at the ready. It is a seamless performance, a staged appearance of leisure that quietly masks the economic function of buying and selling – and each vendor's desire to sell something so the journey to market is worthwhile – and gives the *brocante* market a subdued, calm, and dignified (as one book vendor put it) atmosphere.

In the produce market the client-vendor relationship functions in the opposite manner. Vendors are alert, obviously watching you approach, at the ready with baskets to make your experience as expedient and effortless as possible. Ready to carry your goods to the till, and also prepared to explain the provenance of every item and offer cooking instructions if necessary. Produce vendors do greet their clients, shake hands, ask after their children and their work, comment on the weather and ensure that even new arrivals are prompted to linger with small talk. The relationship between sellers and buyers in Place Salengro differs from the *brocante* on several levels: the market runs daily and so clients meet vendors on a more frequent basis; the shopping experience is centred on the regular acquisition of provisions which allows for a more stable relationship to form between the two parties; and finally there is the element of gustatory delight, of clients wanting to be assured that what they buy will be tasty and good for them. When vendors intervene directly in their clients' experience, this takes the form of friendly, informal and often comical discussions. The nuances of market discourse are well documented by both de la Pradelle (2006) and Lindenfeld (1990), and include a pattern of greeting, establishing common ground through reference to the produce on sale, and a masking of the business sale with a clever remark or racy joke (see also Duneier, 1999 for a detailed breakdown of book vendors' language in New York City). Stalls in the Place Salengro are long and wide, and to attract loyal clients vendors need to bridge this physical distance by establishing a personal relationship. As the *brocante* vendors are consciously playing at indifference, here the produce sellers intentionally seek conversations and personal exchanges with their clients. The performance is one of familiarity: clients are in a market where they are known, recognized, remembered, and encouraged to converse. Vendors in turn play the role of a 'good friend', telling little tidbits about their own families, smiling, giving advice on the best café in the area, all the while ensuring that the queue for the cashier moves quickly and the stalls are replenished with produce.

In both the Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro markets, vendors sometimes find themselves unwittingly taking up the role of personal advisor – with

their friendliness misread as true friendship. The book vendors jokingly call this function 'being a psychologist', meaning that they find themselves being drawn into the most intimate and personal spheres of some of their clients' lives. They hear stories of marriage and divorce, bankruptcy, more details on medical conditions than most would care to know. The book and *brocante* vendors generally nod and smile when these conversations develop, but do not encourage long discussion or attempt to truly intervene in their clients' lives. The produce sellers, however, take a different approach and use these details to elicit further conversation and ingrain themselves in the daily routine of clients. Sometimes these conversations take an unpleasant turn, and vendors in both markets suddenly find themselves faced with a difficult client: someone who complains, does not move out of the cash queue, takes up more than 10 minutes of time (in the Place Salengro where trade is quick and clients plentiful, the threshold for an overly long conversation hovers around the 5 minute mark), constantly requests a lower price, argues about the quality of the items, accuses the vendors of cheating. The compartmentalization of nuisance clients produces a series of codes that are unique to each location.

In the Marché Salengro vendors do not permit themselves to confront difficult clients, choosing instead to smile and manoeuvre the offending individual away from the till, once they have paid. All the produce vendors and their assistants stick to this rule in the absolute: clients may shout, throw produce to the ground, hide an item in their bag and not pay, complain about the quality of the goods, or challenge the expertise of the vendor and they will be greeted with a small joke to diminish the accusation or take attention away from the maddening spectacle. Describing his response to a client who habitually eats several unpaid for bananas while doing his shopping, one food seller exclaimed:

“Yeah it [difficult clients] happens, I know. But you must absolutely, absolutely do the maximum, the absolute maximum. Sometimes there are always those, those clients that really piss you off. Honestly I want to take their shopping basket and smack them over the head with it. But you can't. You can't because it would give a bad impression of you.” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro).

For produce vendors who work in teams and are in constant competition with their neighbours, maintaining good relations with clients and a respectable image in the market is central to their success. They cannot react, and if they do, they will not only lose clients but also risk being discharged or disciplined for their actions.

Brocante vendors, however, are in a different position. Competition through selling is minimal: each merchant has unique stock and clients cannot hop to the next stand with the hopes of finding similar goods. Because they are dealing with unique items and with more flexible prices *brocante* and book vendors feel that they are in a more egalitarian position with their clients. Book vendors have explained that they are particularly intolerant of clients who speak down to them, claim that Amazon sells things more cheaply, or bark out commands as though the vendors are bistro waiters (as one *brocante* vendor put it). In this context, niceties swiftly turn to fighting words when a vendor feels that a client is out of line. One afternoon in late spring I was seated in the *brocante* market chatting with a vendor when a fellow *brocante* vendor came bounding across the plaza, huffing and cursing. At the pronouncement of '*cette dame!*' (that woman!) the vendor sitting next to me sprang up, and mimicked pulling out his hair in response. They had a troublesome client in common and in rushing to the opposite side of the market the arriving vendor wanted to share the latest in a series of incidents. *La dame* has inquired after a pair of lamps and demanded a considerable reduction. The *brocante* vendor had refused, and continued to refuse lowering the price when *la dame* had appeared at his stand for three consecutive sessions. Her teasing yet authoritative manner had angered him and on the fourth visit he had snarled back, asking her why she guarded her money so stringently, and telling her that her vast fortunes would do her no good when she died because they would just be spend by her thankless inheritors. Using information *la dame* had volunteered – on her wealth, and her distant children – the *brocante* vendor claimed to have brought her down to level. When *la dame* walked away deriding the vendor, this latter managed to offload the lamp to another customer for just above the lowest price the

troublesome woman had demanded. *La dame* had returned to the stand once more an hour later, and the *brocante* vendor had proudly told her that the lamp was gone, sharply noting that he had easily sold it for more than she was willing to offer. The client is not always right, and in the *brocante* market behavioural codes permit vendors considerable discretion in managing the client-vendor relationship.

The question of internal competition between vendors also seeped into discussion in both plazas. The main function of the markets is to sell products, with the best profit margins and in the largest quantities possible. The internal codes of market life make allowances for competition while also imposing some strict, if unwritten, rules on how and when it may manifest. Vendors in the Place Salengro market operate a cheerful gift economy as a way of extracting loyalty from paying clients. There is the occasional slice of watermelon given for a tasting, a banana for the little girl hiding behind her father, or a wink along with an extra helping of grains for an elderly woman, all part of a universally observed loyalty-inducing system. At the produce stands sellers will habitually drop free handfuls of parsley into the shopping bag of anyone who spends at least 10€. The gift is presented at the till, after the last items have been packaged and while the client is reaching for their wallet, with a wide smile to make the action obvious. Vendors sometimes gift other goods, and as this seller makes clear, the intent is to stifle competition by ensuring that a client has a reason to feel particularly well treated at your stand:

“The parsley we normally buy. We pay for it. The lemons too. What would I do to gain a client’s confidence? The hot peppers. Someone buys from my stand, I don’t know, 10€, and he hands me a basket of lemons. I won’t weigh it. I’ll give it away. Especially if I don’t know the person I’ll make it very obvious that they are free, I’ll say ‘Mademoiselle I haven’t counted the lemons, they are for you’. And you, that’ll make you feel good. ‘Oh thank you, that’s so kind’. It’s the way it goes. For me the lemons, I don’t know, they cost 0,30€. Let’s say for two of them. But with what, with how much you have paid, 10€, I’ve made more than 0,30€. And on top of that by giving you the lemons I’m sure, certain, that you’ll be pleased, you’ll feel that ‘ah, the monsieur, he’s very nice, he gave me the lemons for free’. Sometimes there are clients who come to buy a banana. I know that the banana, the cost. But just by

giving it away, that small gesture, it allows you to keep that client and gain their business. You're sure that he won't go buy from someone else. (Michel, produce vendor, Place Salengro).

Each produce stall gifts the same type of items – lemons, spices, parsley – in roughly equal quantities and in the same manner. For individual customers the presentation of free items is appealing and pleasing, they smile and nudge me (as I loiter nearby) to say that the vendor is really exceptional. Those who shop in other markets are aware that parsley is given away with some regularity – the practice is not limited to the Place Salengro food market – but still, despite the generalizability of the action, it induces the desired response. The olive vendors top off purchases as well: once a client has made their selection and a sachet filled, it is weighed, and once the purchase price is announced an extra small scoop is sometimes added. Or a tasting of candied fruit and nuts presented. The paella stand provides extra portions of rice, also added after scaling and pricing, as do those selling eggs. If sachets of herbs are sold at 50grams per bag, the vendors will top up the packet with an extra 5grams before displaying for sale. The fish vendors deal in lemons and herbs, the personal goods vendor may offer full re-servicing of watches or a discount for large purchases. Only the bread vendor, who sells in very small quantities – a baguette is 0,65€ - does not make regular offers of gifts.

Reducing prices and staging sales are other tactics. Each stands sells a variety of one product: three kinds of apples, each from a different country or French region, and with different quality labels (for instance, Grade 1, Grade 2, etc). With multiple varieties and quality categories of each item available at every produce stand it is often impossible to compare prices or determine the better deal – finding an apple that is from the same region, the same variety, and the same quality category at two stands in the Place Salengro I found difficult, despite spending days upon days in the market. This is in fact intentional, and it is an established vending technique for ensuring that clients cannot compare two stands and therefore cannot change loyalty based on price or quality alone. Alongside, many sellers use what they describe as *produit d'appelle* – meaning, items that draw you in

– to catch shoppers’ attention. As one produce seller explains:

“You know that, ok, in commerce we have something we call *produit d’appelle*. Articles that draw you in. Meaning, like the banana, everyone eats bananas. So you get bananas and you try to sell them, you make 0,05€ on the kilo but with that product you pull people in. You sell the bananas very cheaply because you know that everyone, everyone eats them. You pull in people like that. It’s what we call *produit d’appelle*. So you see that the bananas are really cheap, you buy a few bananas, and hop, in the time that you have walked to the till and circled through the stand, ah look, you take a salad, and then you take some tomatoes [...]. Because like I was telling you in the market there are things you see, and the things you don’t, because behind is another reality. Meaning that you should imagine that, you should think, voila, so you come up to the till with a bunch of courgettes, and stuff. It’s not, it’s not by accident. There are, there are calculations, where things are placed, how they are placed, sometimes you really have to calculate things out. How you set up the table, the layout of the produce, so, it’s all....[*trails off*].” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

With the intensity of selling and the push for clients the Place Salengro vending community have developed rules of conduct, intangible limits on manifestations of competition that are recast as a show of respect:

“Mahmet: What would I do to steal your clients? What? The client base is always the same. So I don’t know. I might set really low prices, eh, try to be really nice to a client and have small chats and things. So between everyone there is steep competition but that doesn’t prevent, there is always, always a lot of respect. So for example, so, you can’t for instance, you can’t exceed the limits...[*pause*]. You can’t for example set up in someone else’s space [...].

Roza: Ah, ok so what are the limit, or more like how do you exceed them?

Mahmet: Ok so alright let’s say, I don’t know what, for example you buy sometime from me. Or I’m buying, alright. I buy something for a euro. No one is going to, no one is going to come over and say to me, voila, why did you buy it there for 1€ when this other one is selling it for 0,50€? No one is ever going to come up to me with that line.” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro).

Despite the intense rush for profits, produce vendors still refrain from obviously poaching each other’s clients, infringing on each other’s

designated market spaces, or verbally insulting each other. To ensure loyalty and beat the competition some produce vendors also offer running credit for regular clients, especially restaurant and shop owners in the area. In the larger markets – the Marché des Arceaux, or the farmers’ market – these codes are not pronounced, if recognized at all. The importance of respect and the dance around competition have developed because the Place Salengro market is so small and vendors see each other every day. The clients, as one of the interviewees above notes, are always the same and guarding that boisterous, carefree and fun ambiance requires that grievances are buried and collegiality staged (cf Hochschild 1983).

In the *brocante* market competition is linked with the acquisition process rather than selling itself. As noted in the case of *la dame*, vendors argue that the diversity of items means that comparison shopping is nearly impossible, and instead they happily share clients and refer requests for particular books or decorative items to colleagues. Sometimes small items are gifted – a toy for a child, or a decorative pen – but these are exceptions to the rule. Clients revel in opportunities to bargain on prices, perhaps not realizing that this is a facade carefully erected to give the impression of bargain hunting or faux-competition. A book seller explains candidly:

“It is exceptional that a client doesn’t try to bargain. So we do a type of, you do, we take that into account. The fact that if for instance you put out a book for 10€, or let’s say 12€, we know very well that the shopper, she’s going to, she’s going to propose 10€, you see. So we, we include that in the price. We’ve already calculated the bargain. Right, so yes sometimes there are times when people don’t bargain but, eh, it’s possible sometimes. It’s all a game, in reality.” (Pauline, book dealer, Plan Cabanes).

Most vendors work a 'bargaining-margin' of 10% to 20% into the price, the more expensive the item the greater the mark-up in anticipation of negotiating. Most book and *brocante* vendors argued that this was not a competitive tactic – since all sellers do this, and they are each aware of the others’ use of the mark up, this is more a tactic for ensuring profits than a way of creating a loyal clientele. The real competition between vendors comes through in the acquisition of books and *brocante* items. On the

question of where the items they are selling come from, vendors are mum. They would not reveal the provenance of their goods, even to a familiar researcher offering confidential interviews and full anonymity. As one vendor noted:

“Aha, where each *brocante* seller buys is the greatest of secrets. Because if you know where to go, well you’d take it yourself...” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

While the names of specific suppliers or preferred acquisition locations were strictly off limits, the process itself was explained through individual interviews. Vendors get their goods in one of two ways: by circulating through *brocante* and flea markets themselves and purchasing items they could resell for a higher fee; or by 'doing addresses', that is collecting the names of people who are interested in selling or who want to clear out entire rooms of their houses, and visiting them to negotiate a price for the unit. One *brocante* vendor explains the particular form of competition in their market:

“Yeah of course there’s competition, there’s competition when we are buying. When we’re buying or when someone comes to offer something up. There, all the competition to, to, everyone wants to be the first to buy and for the best price, eh, eh, because competition doesn’t really exist when we sell because we never have the same goods. Nor in the same state, and so there is no competition. Sometimes clients think that they are going to find it cheaper elsewhere, the same item, but it just doesn’t happen. If there is a bargain price it’s because there is always something that’s a little broke, or it’s based on the overall state. At the point of sale there is no competition, it’s not like with produce and stuff, yep.” (David, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

The rule in the *brocante* market is to simply ignore the purchasing process: in the ten month research period not once did I hear acquisition discussed at the regular coffee or lunch breaks, between vendors, or voluntarily raised in an interview or informal discussion. Except for instances when items were found in dumps or gifted by passers-by – in other words, free – I could not convince either a book or a *brocante* vendor to reveal the provenance of their goods. Competition was kept behind the scenes, unacknowledged, and hidden through the tacit approval of the collective for

the sake of collegiality and market conviviality. *Brocante* vendors do, however, have to keep formal registers of their purchases with addresses of sellers and the price paid for each item in case these are requested by the police or questions of theft arise. These *carnet de police* are kept in glove compartments or buried in the depth of boxes and not often shared amongst colleagues.

The practice of 'doing addresses' and the necessity of dealing with unique, often antique, items has spurred the development of dense information networks among *brocante* vendors around the pricing of goods. With *brocante* vendors purchasing from each other, antiques dealers buying from *brocante* sellers, flea markets and book expositions and 'doing addresses,' the exchange of information on current selling prices and trends is invaluable – even if the exact provenance of an item is hidden. A *brocante* vendor notes the importance of information networks:

“We are learning all the time. There is no pre-set information that exists. Everything is based on who you know and what you know. We learn, the more we know the more money we can make, and the more we know, the better bargains we can get.” (David, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

Fellow vendors are both your competition and your best resource for information (cf Crewe and Gregson 1998). Those who purchase from flea markets or professional sales query their colleagues extensively before acquiring a unique or expensive item, checking to see who has bought what, and the general purchasing price. The client, as the vendor below makes clear, is only the final point in a very long chain of purchases. That in the Plan Cabanes *brocante* market vendors deal directly with clients is somewhat of an exception:

“At the end of the line it probably ends up with a regular customer somewhere, but, it's, goods pass around so much, there is the search which is done by the first buyer who finds things at people's houses, the ones that get it from the original owners. Then that buyer will sell the good to a general *brocante* vendor, like myself. And then I know someone who will buy goods by the crate, so I'm going to sell it to a guy who deals in bulk. Then the guy who deals in bulk will go and sell then to someone in Paris, he'll sell the crates of goods in Paris because the best prices are there. And then

from Paris they'll go to dealers in New York and I don't know where, they'll be bought and a few small things will end up in New York. The goods pass through the hands of so many people before they get to the end, well not always, but usually they do. And so we live basically between merchants. To such a point that there are dealers' markets. There are huge fairs where selling and buying happens only between professionals." (Guillaume, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

Those best equipped – in terms of transport trucks, but also in terms of information and trade knowledge – are most successful in building a viable stock, and thus attracting clients and profits. In the relatively small sphere of antique and bric-a-brac vending, networks of exchange and the purchasing process are guided by an internal code of ethics. A *brocante* vendor explains the rules linked to acquisition:

“Madeleine: But on the other hand there are rules, rules that the young ones have a less developed knowledge of. There are things that are done, and things which are not. If they are followed there are no problems. For instance, I get an address [that wants to sell] and I tell you about it. You're not going to sneak off there behind my back. The youth do that sometimes, they would double cross you. They'll go there.

Roza: Really?

Madeleine: There is a code of ethics in *brocante*, things that are done and others that are not permitted. If I am in a [dealer's] market for instance, and I'm considering the purchase of an object. The seller tells me the price, I look, I hesitate, I have the thing in my hand, and the guy behind me has heard. If I put it down, he'll jump in with an offer. But he doesn't have the right to do that, quote-unquote, it's very badly looked up, if while I have an item in hand he says, 'I'll take it'. You see, that's just not done. There are loads of rules like that which are tacit, and if you don't follow them you're not really going to get far in the *brocante* world. If you don't manage to follow them, if you don't have ethics, people are going to just start boycotting you at a certain point. So you won't be able to buy anymore, and you won't be able to sell. Because after all three-quarters of our deals are between merchants." (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

The penalty for not playing by trade rules is perhaps more severe than breaking municipal codes: with *brocante* networks stretching throughout France the label of 'cheater' is hard to shake off, and would stifle career ambitions very quickly. Rules are learned by tapping into existing

information networks and through a process of unofficial apprenticeship. Most of the *brocante* vendors in the Plan Cabanes have spent the first years of their career working alongside an established antiques or bric-a-brac dealer. Others have inherited the trade from their parents or taken up from a spouse or family member. In contrast, most of the book dealers have based their business on a personal interest in literature, arguing that with the growth of the internet and having authors, editions and publishers noted on the covers of all their tomes, it is sometimes easier to parachute into the trade and pry open information networks.

Markets may be manifestations of municipal policy and politics, but they are also institutions in their own right. The appearance and function of the *brocante* market and of the food market are defined by internal codes, expectations on behaviour, and limits on visible forms of competition. They function because regulations have been internalized and morphed into rituals: vendors instinctively set their stock on stalls far off the ground and carry only enough tables to fill a standard market space, rarely questioning if this is simply standard practice or a function of municipal bylaws. While some internal codes – those relating to competition in particular – are quickly explained, others have to be teased out. The informal distance *brocante* vendors keep from their clients became apparent only when it was unintentionally transgressed.

3.4 The rules breakers

Rules are meant to be broken: a cliché perhaps, but one that holds weight in the markets of Montpellier. The guidelines set out by the municipality and trade networks delineate fair play and effective participation. They set a norm, an accepted mode of behaviour, and thus also define what is inappropriate and undesirable. The rule breakers are equipped with the same rules, although they choose to challenge or ignore them. People bring their dogs into the market – a flagrant infraction on the ‘no animals allowed’ clause – and vendors sometimes shout out prices and entice clients with promises of the sweetest watermelon they have ever tasted. Garbage is left behind, *brocante* vendors sell without bargaining, and book vendors sometimes swap ‘done addresses’. The *placier* does not always appear when

expected, and can sometimes be convinced to mind the stand while a vendor hops away for a coffee. Internal corruption has apparently been so rampant that in recent years the municipal council has decided to restructure the *placier* system and place their employees on a permanent, sporadic, and unpredictable rotation through all of the city's markets so that no one can sprout roots and get intertwined in the murky depths of illegality (Midi Libre 2008). The city fails to comply by its own rules to maintain the *halles*³⁵, and sometimes shows favouritism for some vendors and markets, and not others³⁶. Michèle de la Pradelle's (2006) otherwise excellent study does not stretch far enough in this respect, and fails to account for the incredible importance of those who challenge, subvert, rile and deconstruct market norms and relations.

Some of those subversions are on the part of clients who excel at acquiring items outside the accepted practice of purchasing. The issue of theft rumbles through both markets at regular intervals. *Brocante* vendors have sarcastically renamed the Plan Cabanes as the 'Plan Voleur', *voleur* meaning thief. As one vendor noted:

“This morning they stole from me, but it’s not serious, I’m not angry. Yes, yes, yes, a ring. It’s my fault. I put out a ring, it’s too easy to take. It’s just too tempting, a ring” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

While the vendor lamented this loss, it was seen as an expected facet of market life. Keeping a distance from clients and playing at being distracted had evidently faltered for this *brocante* vendor, as it had for a book vendor during a different session. Soon after setting up her book stands and arranging the tables, the seller had retreated to her car for a break and a snack. Watching the stand from a few meters distance she had seen a man walk up to the stand, pick up a philosophy book and walk away with it,

³⁵The Halles Laissac, for instance, has had ongoing structure problems for the best part of a decade. Part of the Halles has collapsed, some of the concrete has crumbled, and the electrical works were deemed unsafe. At the Halles des Quatre Saisons, as will be briefly noted in Chapter 6, vendors have had ongoing meetings with city officials on a series of problems with the building, not least the lack of a toilet and poor security.

³⁶The farmer’s market (Marché Paysan d’Antigone) and the Marché des Arceaux are extensively promoted in municipal publications, for instance, and the Plan Cabanes Broc’Art market vendors have complained that they have not received the same level of support with publicity as the two above mentioned established markets.

brazen and blatant, with little attempt to cover the act. No one was sure why that book had been targeted, but the event spurred the remaining book vendors to converge in the middle of the plaza and exchange stories of other thefts. An old trick, apparently, is to use a newspaper to cover the theft: the paper is dropped on the table on top of the desired book, another book is consulted as distraction, and then the original target is lifted along with the paper, which is immediately folded to hide the item. Most vendors try to be vigilant and keen an eye on each others' stand, raising suspicions if someone stands too close to the stalls or appears to turn away and brush their coat and bag against small items. *Brocante* vendors normally keep expensive goods closer to them and avoid displaying small trinkets. Most are convinced that this type of activity is more common in Figuerolles and the Plan Cabanes than elsewhere in the city. Others suggest that by its very status as a large vibrant town, Montpellier is more of a trap than the surrounding villages.

Stealing is also evidence in the Place Salengro market, although here it makes a lesser impression. The huge turnover and large stocks of goods make the absence of a few tomatoes or the slippage of apples less important or obvious. Still, most produce sellers keep the most expensive items – nuts, honey, exotic fruit – close to the till. In part this is linked to a push to draw in clients through the '*produit d'appelle*' tactic noted in an earlier section. At the same time it prevents expensive items from dropping into open bags or disappearing into pockets. The biggest irk for vendors are clients who eat their way through the stand: picking up a cherry at one spot, taking grapes at another, a banana eaten before reaching the till, clementine peeled or tomato munched. Theft through consumption. Watching from behind the stand, vendors choose not to discipline their shoppers, but do tap on the table and call out offers of assistance as a way of tacitly indicating that they are watching their stand.

A more obvious and much less reviled practice is the recuperation of damaged or discarded produce. Fruit that is bruised or becoming wrinkly is usually stacked in small plastic baskets and sold at 1€. Food items that are deemed even less desirable are simply tossed in the trash bins or

abandoned as the stalls are cleared away at the end of the day. Portions of these castoffs are then collected by individuals scavenging through the plaza for edibles. In the large, organic food-oriented Marché des Arceaux this scavenging is most often done by groups of youth who ascribe to alternative living practices and vocalize their disagreement with food waste (cf Black 2007 for an example of this practice in Lyon). In the Place Salengro food market another group glean the remains, as one stall holder explains:

“The stuff we toss out is generally beyond damaged. It’s really very, very rotten. But now there are the Romanians [Romanian Roma, as differentiated from the Gitans who have lived in the Figuerolles neighbourhood for decades] the Romanians who are there, who come at the end of the market. They take everything, everything that has been dumped on the ground. But taking that stuff off the ground and to sell it.. [trails off] what’s left behind is not sellable. If we’re throwing it out it’s because we haven’t been able to sell it, it’s too spoilt. Yep, so, because we know if we could sell it..[trails off] I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but we also deal in baskets of things that go for 1€ the lot.” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

Other vendors have argued the reverse, that those who gather food from the ground are in fact French pensioners at the end of their means. During my visits to the Place Salengro I have noted both groups, yet hesitated to approach them – always conscious that eye contact is avoided and distance maintained with other market users. Those collecting discarded produce – what amounts to garbage in the view of most vendors – are not disturbed in their activity, never chided, but not helped either. Although merchants are legally obligated to safely dispose of all inedible produce, both the vendors and the municipal cleaners who work in the market turn a blind eye to the practice. Through its regularity, recuperation has in a sense become part of the market cycle, a predictable and expected facet of daily life.

Scavenging is also present in the *brocante* market, although in a much more limited fashion. Occasionally certain vendors will sort their merchandise in the plaza, tossing broken or low value items in bins that are discarded nearby. The descent of people on the heaps of glass, wooden trinkets and torn books is incredible and not discerning: high-school

students, their teachers, men in suits, parents with baby strollers, a friend's landlady who chided me for not telling her this was going on ('look at all the free stuff!'), and occasionally other *brocante* dealers. The practice does not seem to carry the same stigma noted by Reno (2009) in relation to used-goods scavenging. Yet sorting on the market grounds, and especially discarding goods, is strictly discouraged and in the past sellers at the flea market have been fined by the municipality and their tenure revoked by the *Commission* for similar actions³⁷. In the Plan Cabanes fellow vendors chuckle, others condemn, but no formal complains are lodged against those who discard goods in the market surroundings and encourage recuperation by others. The practice is simply described as a de-valorization of a market whose status is already questionable, and for the book vendors in particular, it is taken as a sign that the space functions more as a flea market than a professional fair.

In both the *brocante* and the food market, vendors warp the regulations on space allocation and formal participation. The eleven regular vendors of the Place Salengro are assigned formal spaces in the plaza. Everyone keeps to their own site, and as one interviewee argued doing favours and sharing space is out of the question – at least in France, for this speaker who has previous experience with North African markets:

“No one, no one would let you edge even 50cm into their stall plot. Oh yes. It’s how it is. I could do it, I’ll explain it, I have, I have, I have.. the pack of Marlboro [cigarette carton], that’s my spot. I pay for that spot. I pay it. It’s city hall who, who gave it to me. I pay a rent for that spot. You can’t come and tell me, voila, unless I want to do you a favour. And I can’t do you a favour. I just can’t. Because we are in France and you, it’s a capitalist world. At the end of the month there are workers to pay, and there are fees to cover, and blah-blah, tada-da, all that. Voila.” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

Yet on a weekly basis stands shift, quietly making room for some additional vendors. If one of the regular produce vendors is absent, no one would dare

³⁷A particularly aggressive moment of recuperation occurred at the flea market in 1997, resulting in a *placier* injured, the police arresting several individuals who had fought over the abandoned shoes and clothes, and fines handed out to the vendors who had dumped the items (Archives de la Ville de Montpellier Boîte 297W23).

occupy their space: the produce stalls are the drivers of this market, their sites are unchallenged and never compromised. With respect to everyone else's patch of the plaza another logic sometimes manifests. In mid January I entered the Place Salengro after a leisurely stroll through the neighbourhood. The plaza was packed, a rare sight on a windy day. There were groups of shoppers milling about, and many more vendors than usual. A gentleman was selling mattresses at the top end of the market. Another dealing in lamp shades from a low table, and behind him another selling clothes out of cardboard boxes. Including the violin vendor squeezed in by the bread stall the number of sellers in the market counted ten regulars and four dailies. No one can set up in the Place Salengro unannounced, which suggests that the four additions had the tacit approval of their temporary colleagues. The involvement of the *placier*, a more sporadic visitor to this site, seemed uncertain and I was later told that he had not been called out to the Place Salengro that day. Favours are sometimes handed out, and as long as no one asks too many questions, daily vendors are permitted to take up a temporary spot in the annuals-only Place Salengro.

Amongst the *brocante* vendors another tactic is occasionally used: established vendors share stall space with a novice, allowing the latter to gain experience in the trade and to work at fairs and expositions that are only open to professionals. For those starting up in the business or unwilling to complete the extensive Chamber of Commerce and municipal registrations, stall-sharing is a comfortable, if less lucrative, approach. Of the dozen vendors in the *brocante* market several note that they started out in this manner and only 'legalized' themselves a few years later. Some continue to share stalls at certain professional trade fairs – especially when a minimum stall size is imposed – and split the profits according to seniority and vending contributions. Municipal regulations are fixed when it comes to spatial management and legal vending: appropriating space is not permitted, and markets are neither flexible commercial grounds nor malleable public sites. They are welcoming to vendors who are registered with the city and the Chamber of Commerce, and shoppers who are there to buy and pay for their goods.

Amongst *brocante* and book vendors the transgression of formal vending laws is sometimes a group effort. As there are codes to guide the purchasing and selling process, there are rules for when and how they can be broken. As one vendor notes, deceit is very much part of the game:

“Ah with our colleagues, we get along very, very well it’s generally an excellent atmosphere. Apart from the few that are a bit slithery. Swindles are part of the game in reality. All at the same time. But it’s not real tough swindlers. It’s more like if you’re buying something from a seller, and they tell you it’s 10€, and you buy it, and you say nothing. And then you resell it for 100€ because you know that that is its real value. It’s pretty normal, it’s part of this game.” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

In other instances vendors work together and cover for each other when their stalls are inspected by professional trade authorities. Large *brocante* and book fairs are overseen by experts: established antique dealers trusted by the fair organizers to ensure that all items presented meet the quality standards expected of a professional sale, and more importantly, that the object is advertised for its true historic and monetary value. The small Plan Cabanes market has an on-call antiques expert if questions ever arise, but the site is not the object of regular visits, nor is the municipality equipped to perform such quality controls. Describing the internal ticks of large professional fairs, one seller explains:

“Let’s pretend that you are in a market, a dealers’ fair for instance, there is the *révise* [review]. So that means, actually it’s not done in Montpellier, it’s so small scale here. Normally *brocante* has a greater spirit. There are places where it’s tiny, and here they don’t do it, well, it’s just a small *brocante* family here really. But if you go to the dealers’ fair, ok, there is someone who is lying. No one says anything. No one points out the object. And after [the *révise*] we revisit the sale, and the person who has made money splits it with all the others who haven’t spoken up during the exposition [...]. And so that’s how it’s done in Paris, and in Marseille, in the big dealers’ fairs. And in the smaller fairs it works the same way, there are uses and customs, that you don’t point things out when you could point things out, otherwise there will be sanctions. People will just avoid you if you don’t sell the expected way. I mean I’ve always gotten on fine.” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

Sometimes the antiques expert catches up with a swift vendor and a series

of other reactions surface. One *brocante* dealer outlined an exchange he witnessed in a professional fair. The antiques expert had passed with his team and requested that one dealer remove a lamp from his stand: the object was a copy, a well made one, that could fool unwitting shoppers and was clearly in breach of that fair's quality standards. The vendor quickly removed the lamp, hiding it under the stall. A few minutes later a shopper appeared, demanding to know the fate of the lamp, wanting to know if it had been sold, asking if there could be a second one, with waves and gestures the story teller deemed out of sync with the desirability of the item. A few minutes later the noted vendor was observed extracting the lamp from below the table, loudly professing that even though it was copy the antiques expert had found it so well made that he had advised it be held back for a better sale. It was just too good to give away, the vendor was heard saying. The client offered to pay double, the lamp was sold in an instant. That these instances are also part of the *brocante* and antiques vending codes suggests that the commercial activities enveloping city spaces are shaped as much by nuanced deceptions as through municipal codes and muted competition (cf Mars 1982).

The rules are broken through another facet of market life: staffing practices and recorded work hours. Illegal work and illegal workers are present in all of Montpellier's markets, sometimes in a more obvious stall-side capacity, and in other cases as agricultural help or undeclared assistants. Work in outdoor markets is often informal and seasonal. Vendors hire staff when demand is high and provide oral contracts for pay and working hours. Salaries are paid under the counter, and in some cases take the form of goods and other items. One seller explains, with some identifying traits removed for anonymity:

“Otherwise we just find someone for 10€, 5€. They help with the set up. The young guys in [name of town] they help us out. When I got to [name of town], yes, for sure. And then others come and help with the packing up. They don't want to work [permanently]. Yes, ok. They come at 10am. Packing up is quick as can be. At Carpentras as well. Or we give them something, like a bike if they help with the packing up.”
(David, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

In other instances informal work ends badly with intense and heated discussions behind stalls and out of earshot of shoppers. Working illegally means that neither the employer nor the employee have to pay taxes and social security. It also leaves employees without state healthcare, and gives them no recourse to challenge dismissals or infractions by their employers. These elements create considerable instability, and make it more difficult to challenge the stall owners when problems arise. Undeclared workers sometimes accompany several different vendors, switching functions and working at different markets depending on the season. Some of those working under the radar declared themselves as exceedingly happy with the arrangement, particularly the flexible work and the quick cash. Others participated for the conviviality of markets, with no intention of regularizing themselves or moving towards a more formal arrangement – as is the case with some assistants in the *brocante* market, but also several retired individuals informally joining in the produce market. However, a noticeable portion of these informal stall assistants also complained about the resulting income instability, with one recently fired undeclared stall assistant seeking me out during a market session to finally tell me how much he had hated his work and his boss. The issue of illegal workers reared up when I attempted to take photos in a series of the city's markets. Stall owners insisted that only they could be pictured behind the stand. When I later asked a trusted source why this pattern repeated itself in every corner of Montpellier and beyond, it was quietly explained that the same tactic – taking photographs of stands – was used by municipal employees and officials working with the labour tribunal. Their tactic was to walk through the market and quietly photograph without seeking to draw attention to themselves. If a vendor was photographed with additional people behind the till, questions of illegal employment were raised and vendors accused of dishonesty in their *Affaires Commerciales* declarations.

Illegality is present in yet another form: makeshift stalls set up outside the official marketplaces, with people informally selling food and clothing. In the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood this activity can be witnessed on the Cours Gambetta, in view of the *brocante* market and a short walk away

from the produce market. Operating outside formal vending spaces, these sellers are technically outside the remit of the *placier* or *Affaires Commerciales* – and are dealt with by the municipal police instead. Outside the TATI department store on Gambetta one can usually find one or two makeshift mint stands: a series of crates propped up on wooden boxes, with bunches of mint sold for 0.50€ each, and wrapped in newspaper by the elderly gentlemen behind the stand. The illegal mint vendors have a long standing association with the Plan Cabanes area. In her ethnographic account of the Marché du Plan Cabanes in the 1990s Faure (1998) notes the presence of the mint sellers and their incorporation in the area's informal commercial sector. Everyone is seen to buy from them, an act noted by Prat (1994) as well. Many shoppers in the Place Salengro I spoke with admitted to buying mint from the illegal vendors, while others also noted that in summer all manner of other illegal sales take place: cantaloupes and watermelon sold from car boots on Gambetta, clothing and belts sold from boxes in front of TATI, vegetables and other foods hawked further south on Gambetta. Yet these vendors rarely venture close to the Place Salengro. One Place Salengro vendor explained why the illegal mint vendors would never dare encroach on the formal market:

“They won't come, oh mama. It's, it's been a while that they've been over here [Place Salengro]. You see the vendor there who sells [...], there the [...]. That guy, if they show up he'll smash them to bits. Already with him, pff, we can say, alright, it's not really an agreement. But it works like this. The others never, never would sell coriander or mint. Amongst the other vendors no one, no one would ever bring coriander. It's just him that brings it to market. I could bring some in. But I can't. Why? Because it would destroy his work.”
(Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

The inability of the illegal mint vendors to venture near the market proper is the result of internal codes of practice: as long as they stay on Gambetta, the vendors of the Place Salengro will neither report them nor target their activity. If those vendors do occasionally try to join the Place Salengro market, it would be to share a stall with an established produce vendor. While I have been told that this has occurred in the past, in the 10 months of ethnographic fieldwork I did not once see an illegal mint stand within the

bounds of the Place Salengro. The municipal police do, however, regularly pass by the illegal mint vendors on Gambetta – and at least from a distance seemed to ignore the stands, neither stopping to chat nor asking them to move on. Within the Place Salengro itself another ethic operates: only one of the annual vendors sells mint and coriander. Everyone else, as the seller above notes, deals in parsley, and even then only as a free bonus for loyal clients. Ground spices, oils and olives are sold, but only by certain vendors.

3.5 Conclusion

The everyday, de Certeau (1984) notes, is made up of different temporalities, incoherence, clashes and complements. The routines of market life set the pace for activity in the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood, and the impact of the market stretches the Place Salengro and the *brocante* stands to envelope surrounding cafes, businesses, and residents in their rituals. Municipal rules may create a vision of public space, how it should look and function, but it is the actions of vendors and the responses of clients that determine the lived experience of market life. As Lefebvre (1991) aptly demonstrates, space is defined through relationships and interactions, representations and visions of community performance: it must be conceived, it requires users to perceive the physicality of the site, and it must be lived and experienced. Integrating these ideas with de la Pradelle's (2006) points on the particularly lively urban experiences engendered through the Carpentras market, it would seem that outdoor markets are important modes for producing public space in French cities.

The *brocante* market and the Place Salengro food market certainly speak to these ideas. Through the combination of municipal bylaws and internal codes of behaviour, the physical and social space of the market is produced by vendors enacting these codes and bylaws – and by shoppers and users responding to these elements. The encouragement to engage with other users is central to the market experience: a quick conversation with a food vendor, the brief eye contact with a book seller seated in her car, the nods, smiles and nudges necessitated by participation in the busy Place Salengro, or the longer discussions between vendors, and with loyal shoppers. The organization of the outdoor market –stalls facing each other, with a main

walkway between them – directs pedestrian traffic and creates a scenario in which one is seen, acknowledged (perhaps less frequently in the *brocante* market), and pushed to recognize strangers as fellow shoppers and public space users. The performance of market life so carefully outlined by de la Pradelle (2006) certainly seems to hold true in the Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro, and in both cases it contributes to the creation of a public sphere. A diversity of users are welcomed – even nuisance customers are not spurned – and the market experience is built around the provision of both a profitable shopping experience and a convivial atmosphere geared towards eliciting amusement from users. The outdoor market brings more people to the plaza and the street than at other times of the day, it tacitly integrates activities and individuals – those recuperating, unsanctioned workers, petty thieves, amongst other – who might stand out as inappropriate users (cf Mitchell 2003) in other instances, and creates the ‘eyes on the street’ scenario valued as a key component of a functioning public sphere by Whyte (1943), Jacobs (1961), and Duneier (1999). It is these points which lead me to label the outdoor market as a ‘public space’ – or at the very least, a form of spatial usage that opens these sites to a wider public (a point to be considered more fully in Chapter 5).

In section 3.1 above I drew out several key points from de la Pradelle (2006). Of these, I have yet to address one central idea: that outdoor markets are temporary, and though they do render public spaces more open and inclusive, they do so for a constrained period of time. The *brocante* market functions once a week, on Wednesdays, and for the remaining days the Plan Cabanes is used as a thoroughfare and parking lot for the driving school cars. The feel of the plaza is noticeably different on non-market days: there are fewer people strolling around, no one lingers, and most of all, there is little conversation or engagement with fellow plaza users. Richardson’s (1982) comments on the difference between a market-plaza and a market-less-plaza certainly hold true: without the *brocante* market, the Plan Cabanes plaza does little to encourage greater social engagement or exchange. The Place Salengro market is open until noon every weekday, and the conviviality described in the pages above can be

experience with some regularity. Once the market day is done, however, the Place Salengro ceases to be a public space: after 2pm the Place Salengro becomes a paid parking lot, and cars quickly settle in the space once the stalls fold up. You can walk amongst the car, but this is arguably no longer a site suited to strolling, engagement or interaction in the vein of a useable public plaza.

The temporality of market life is relevant in yet another manner. The 2005 relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes from the Plan Cabanes plaza to the Place Salengro not only saw the number of vendors and size of the market reduced, it also witnessed a fundamental change in the way public space is used in this neighbourhood. Until 2005 the Marché du Plan Cabanes enveloped the Plan Cabanes plaza with shoppers and vendors every morning, on certain occasions (weekend) in the afternoons as well. The newly established *brocante* market performs this function only once a week, for a few hours. Based on the comments of vendors and shoppers, and on the business of the current Place Salengro market, the pre-2005 Marché du Plan Cabanes would have attracted a dense crowd – one that is simply absent from the renovated plaza. The relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes has thus noticeably altered the frequency with which public space is used in the neighbourhood, and as the next chapter argues, this has in turn questioned the degree to which the Plan Cabanes plaza can still be considered a ‘public space’.

Chapter 4: Public places and empty spaces

“The market [name] depends. Some call it the Figuerolles market. There are others who call it the Plan Cabanes market. It depends, yes it depends. It’s a market that, amongst the Arabs it’s the Plan Cabanes and amongst the others they call it Figuerolles. Because they say that there, there, there, there where it is, is Figuerolles streets, so, so they say that it’s at Figuerolles, the Figuerolles market” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro).

Since the relocation of the *Marché du Plan Cabanes* the notation of ‘Plan Cabanes’ has become a disjointed system of place- and space- names, a politically charged reference that reveals much about the identity of the speaker and the everyday struggle to claim public space in the neighbourhood, to draw on Lefebvre’s (1991) vocabulary. The ‘Plan Cabanes’ has a variety of meanings – and a fluidity of locations. The newly renovated plaza with its sandy-coloured tarmac and border of low trees is formally known as the *Place du Plan Cabanes*. The old market, the one which stretched out in this plaza until 2005 is still known as the ‘*Marché du Plan Cabanes*’. Yet this is also the name given to the relocated market by certain users, despite its situation several streets away from its namesake plaza: to say that you are going to the Plan Cabanes means that you are actually going to the collection of stands in the *Place Salengro*. For others the *Marché du Plan Cabanes* no longer exists, and has been replaced by the *Marché du Figuerolles*, a new venture that is envisaged as breaking with the long standing history and function of the ‘old Plan Cabanes’. The divide between those who refer to the current market as Plan Cabanes or Figuerolles reflects vested interests: as the above quote suggests the name Plan Cabanes is current within Montpellier’s Arab and North African communities, a reference to a site that has been a key socio-cultural milieu for decades. A wider group of local actors also call the market Plan Cabanes, an indication of their opposition to the relocation process – in contrast to

those who prefer to call it Figuerolles, a reflection of the market's current location and in some cases a sign of tacit agreement with the urban regeneration process that has altered the hierarchy of public spaces in the area. To this must be added a third, rarely invoked name: for the municipality neither of the above options exist, rather a daily Marché Salengro occupies a parking-lot-turned-plaza in the Figuerolles neighbourhood. Meanwhile the antiques and books market which sits in the actual Place du Plan Cabanes is known as the Broc'Arte (with no place name), or more simply as 'le brocante'.

At times the use of 'Plan Cabanes' can seem a game of names, a not-so-subtle process of determining allegiances and articulating a stance on the fate of the relocated market, not unlike the shifting use of place-names observed by Pred (1990) in his study of Stockholm. Some vendors in the *brocante* market wholly rejected being called Plan Cabanes, despite their location in the plaza, while others embraced the history with a tinge of nostalgia. Some interview participants insisted that we call the food market Figuerolles, while others argued that the Plan Cabanes is, and always will be, their neighbourhood market. While shifts in place-names may be common to many urban regeneration programs in France (cf Newman 2011), the vivacity surrounding the usage – and in particular, the rejection – of 'Plan Cabanes' speak to a complex intersection between cultures of consumption, identity politics, and neighbourhood planning. If the plaza is considered a public space and the market itself a public entity the multiple naming practices can be viewed as instances of contesting the function of public space in this neighbourhood.

Taking up this topic, this chapter will first consider how urban renewal programs in France and beyond have dealt with outdoor food markets, and will contextualize these into broader discourses surrounding public space. Visions of how public space is used and understood in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood will then be examined by focusing on three key moments of neighbourhood change: (1) the 2005 market relocation process itself, and the ways in which vendors and residents describe the intersection between public space and market space; (2) municipal

perspectives of the broader role of public space in Montpellier, and that of the Plan Cabanes in particular (3) and finally, the label of empty (*vide*) space currently used to describe the Plan Cabanes, deployed by both municipal and neighbourhood actors adamant that ‘public space’ no longer exists in the plaza. The chapter concludes by reconsidering the meaning of public space in Montpellier, and the implications of the Plan Cabanes relocation process for civic participation in the city.

4.1 Municipal intervention and public space

In France, as was argued in the previous chapter, food markets have a particular function: they render urban spaces public, make them accessible to a series of actors who may not normally use those areas and allow for economic, social and cultural exchanges. It follows that participation in market life – in public space – is linked to civic engagement. The market as a municipally governed entity is a representation of local policy and politics. It is also a place where neighbourhood engagement is formed – and through which a sense of neighbourhood, of belonging, grows. If the creation of a market can be linked to the creation of a usable public space, and if participating in markets is akin to community involvement, then what does the relocation of a market mean?

Taking up this point as part of a wider study on identity, culture and politics in France, Chevalier (1994) details the redevelopment of Les Halles in central Paris from a wholesale food market into a shopping mall. While in some instances the intertwining of municipal politics and cultures of consumption can arguably produced well frequented public spaces centred on outdoor or indoor markets (de la Pradelle 2006; Black 2005a), in Chevalier’s (1994) view the relocation of Les Halles had the opposite effect: a cultural practice formed around bartering, informal exchange, and discount commerce which permitted the assimilation of a diversity of local and regional actors was replaced with one centred on higher price-point goods, tourism, and the semi-public spaces associated with malls (Sibley 1995; Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo 2009; Gehl 2011). Friction between municipal policy and the lived experience of the city unseated a defined

form of cultural appropriation and produced what Ross (1996), following Chevalier (1994), describes as a more exclusive form of public usage (a point to be taken up in Chapter 6). A similar trajectory is outlined by Zukin (1995) in her examination of a redeveloped New York City market. Describing the contest as one of street-peddlers versus the municipality, Zukin (1995) details the conversion of an informal Harlem flea market into a more strictly controlled and monitored indoor vending site made up of defined stalls, controlled entry points, and closer oversight of vendors. Affirming the importance of the original market as a key public space in Harlem – all the while questioning the need for municipal intervention into a functional socio-cultural space – Zukin (1995) forms two key conclusions: that a certain social order is implicitly being developed through the renovation process; and that the seeming attack on street and market vendors puts to question who actually belongs in the public sphere of New York City. Focusing on the daily struggle of books vendors on the sidewalks of Greenwich Village in New York, Duneier (1999) reaches a conclusion compatible with Zukin (1995) by suggesting that the introduction of private security and attempts to discipline the ‘chaos’ of sidewalk life by moving on those selling low-price point goods speak to a narrow vision of how public life should be structured (cf Jackson 1998).

From these very brief accounts of vending, markets and public life I would like to draw some lessons. Zukin (1995) and Duneier’s (1999) notes on New York market and street vending, along with Chevalier’s (1994) comments on the Parisian Halles, suggest that in each case the municipal bodies who initiated the relocation or renovation of these vending spaces implicitly sought to create a new form of public space which carried a single usage, function, and arguably meaning. The complex relations resulting from tourists meeting both legal and illegal vendors in Harlem and Greenwich Village, and the layers of socio-economic interaction between wholesalers, working-class, and middle-class residents in Les Halles, speak to the sort of multi-level, nuanced function of public space promoted by Jane Jacobs (1961). This vision of a messy and not easily regulated public sphere stands in stark contrast to the types of interactions expected of the shopping-mall-

like atmosphere recreated in each location following municipal intervention: higher price-point goods, the oversight of city police and private security, and strict control over the types of vendors who could set up kiosks in each location, all resulting in the production of a public space that effectively excludes certain users from taking part.

If public space is a site to which all citizens should have access, then the nuanced exclusions of certain users raise questions about who makes up the public and whose interests municipalities represent. For Smith and Low (2005) the state has a central role in promoting a broad definition of 'public', and as Mitchell and Staeheli (2005) indicate, this also charges the state with determining who comprises the public sphere. Mitchell (2003) takes up this point in his study of competing claims to a city park by students, a university, homeless groups, and private interests in Berkeley, California. For Mitchell (2003) the unequal access to public space – with the presence of homeless groups in the park contested by more financially and politically empowered actors – and the complicity of the local government in limiting access to those labelled as 'inappropriate' users forcefully demonstrates the exclusive nature of public space. Taking up Lefebvre's (1996) notion of the right to the city, Mitchell (2003) suggests that unequal access to public space prevents those deemed as 'inappropriate' users from staking a claim to the city, and by extension to the political, social and legal rights entailed in civic citizenship. The right to the city – or the right to occupy, use, and appropriate public space – means not only being able to shape the aesthetic appearance of urban space (Mattila, 2002), but also being able to influence political decision making (Harvey, 2003) and claiming a right to an identity that may differ from the mainstream (Dikeç, 2002). Certainly the 'the right to the city' is a contested concept, and one that Attoh (2011) argues is so flexibly and widely deployed as to render it impossible to settle on one definition or understanding. Yet in considering the Plan Cabanes plaza and market relocation, I have found Lefebvre's (1991) viewpoint on the production of space and rights to the city (1996) particularly useful. If public space can be taken as the node where municipal plans and urban designs meet the expectations and ideas of

citizens, together building the spatial practice of a society, then contested changed to the public sphere – where municipal plaza designs are challenged by residents, as in the case of the Plan Cabanes – question citizens’ ability to transform that space and take it as their own. With my approach I am relying more on the works of Harvey (2003), Dikeç (2007) and Mitchell (2003) which view the notion of ‘rights to the city’ as being closely tied to urban policy and politics: ‘the right’ is the ability of citizens to transform, impact upon, and influence the appearance and meaning of their urban surroundings. It is a ‘right’ that, in Mitchell’s (2003) work is challenged through the action of private actors over public space, and in Harvey’s (2003) analysis involves the ability of residents to challenge capitalist interests (and the political entities viewed as supporting them). In this context social or physical exclusion from public space (Sibley 1995) – or an inability to form a visible presence in public space, and through this claim a right to the city – is linked to political (dis)empowerment. The removal of certain users from key public sites – be it book vendors in New York, or homeless groups from a park in Berkeley – narrows the definition of citizenship through spatial disenfranchisement, and makes the public sphere more the purview of municipal interests than a site which reflects the ideas, experiences, and desires of citizens.

Arguably, a single public space cannot cater to the wide spectrum of publics in the city. Tracing the activities of street vendors in Los Angeles, Crawford (1995) argues that it is rather a network of interconnected spaces which form the public sphere: while some forms of vending and street-side activities might be moved on from one part of the city, their establishment in another indicates a flexibility of usage that allows a diversity of actors to establish themselves. Suggesting that public spaces have competing and often contradictory meanings, Lees (1998) details the process of renovating a Vancouver public library: while changes in the layout and access to washrooms prevents homeless men from using the facilities, it simultaneously makes those sites more useable for women and children. For Lees (1998) the particular challenge of producing public space lays in the sometimes contradictory desire to extract multiple meanings from a

single site, all the while trying to assure the safety of multiple publics. Both Crawford (1995) and Lees (1998) raise key points about the challenges of creating usable public space, and the importance of a multiplicity of spaces with a variety of uses (a point also made by Mitchell (2003)). Yet the notion of networks of public spaces, and the adjoining sense that different users can carve out a section of the city to their liking, puts to question how those sites were appropriated in the first place. At issue is not the invisibility of certain users from *all* public spaces, but rather their exclusion from the central, high-frequency sites which link key political, economic, and social venues in the city. The sense of 'out of place' (Cresswell 1996) publics, of a form of public space usage which is not suited for city-centre location, is carefully detailed by Dines (2002) with respect to a main plaza in Naples and municipal attempts to move-on immigrant groups who simply do not fit the image of a southern, Italian historic city centre. At issue is the attachment of a singular identity to key nodes in the public space networks of cities, and the lingering 'absent presences' (Mansvelt 2010) of those who may have imprinted the formation of the site, but are no longer part of that public.

The relocation of the Belsunce market away from Marseille's historic city centre in 1984 can provide a useful glimpse into the interaction of urban policy and the right to appropriate key city spaces. An important Mediterranean port and France's second largest city, Marseille underwent extensive redevelopment in the 1980s and 1990s in an attempt to improve housing, economic, and social conditions, and preserve heritage-designated buildings in central areas (Beaudoin 2003; Savitch 2011). State intervention focused on brown fields and old maritime buildings (Grzegorzcyk 2012), along with the network of public spaces and commercial clusters which defined the Belsunce district. The relocation of the market to a series of more peripheral buildings figured prominently in the renovation process: while the market generated considerable turnover and profit (Tarrius 2002) the neighbourhood was still linked with economic blight, with the function of Belsunce as a key reception site for migrants from Sub-Saharan African and the Maghreb (Koné 1995) furthering

associations with insalubrious housing and living conditions. Describing the old Belsunce market, Tarrius (1995) suggests that it functioned more as an expansive vending network that attracted shoppers from France, Italy, Spain, but also Algeria and other points along the Mediterranean. Peraldi's estimate suggests upwards of 400 stores and stalls, and 40.000 weekend visitors (Peraldi 1999, 3) converging for the sale of household items, manufactured goods, cars, gold, jewellery, clothing and food. For Mazzella and Roudil (1998) the old market had a further connotation: functioning as a key point for integration, neighbourhood socialization, and a first entry into the work force, Belsunce allowed individuals who would normally be unemployed to find a paid activity, to become regularized in one way, that is to enter, occupy and legitimately use public space. With people moving about the stalls, vendors chatting to clients and each other, the noise and activity, you could hang about without being accused of loitering and were permitted – in the sense of social norms – to engage strangers in conversation. While the relocated Belsunce still attracts a high frequency of shoppers and encourages informal sociability (Spinousa et al 1995), the market now draws a more local clientele (Peraldi 1999) and has seen some market vendors becoming sedentary (Bava 2000). With the streets and plaza of the old Belsunce subsumed into the urban fabric of the redeveloped centre of Marseille, and the new market enclosed by fences and housed in privately-owned disused industrial buildings, some of the original function that saw interaction between the market, residents, and a wider streetscape has been lost (Mazzella and Roudil 1998). While Mitchell (2011) notes the continual importance of the Belsunce neighbourhood as a key socio-commercial node for the city, the relocation of the market and its enclosure in what are effectively private buildings and terrains means that some of the connections that identified Belsunce as a key commercial and public space in Marseille have been altered.

The Marseille/Belsunce case study indicates that the processes afoot in Montpellier are not unique to this city, but rather encapsulate a particular viewpoint on how urban space should be formed and used. Leaving conflicts between French heritage-based planning and urban diversity to

Chapter 5, the sections that follow will focus on the meaning of public space – and the re-ordering of public spaces through the relocation of the Plan Cabanes market – for a variety of neighbourhood and municipal actors in Montpellier. Taking up Mitchell’s (2003) vocabulary of ‘appropriate’ users alongside Mazzella and Roudil’s (1998) conclusions on Belsunce and the Lefebvrian notion of right to the city (Lefebvre 1996; Dikeç 2002; Matilla 2002), the analysis that follows draws on ethnographic field notes, interviews, and media analysis to consider the relocation of the market, subsequent plans for the renovated plaza, and the resulting discourse of ‘empty space’ to describe the decline of the Plan Cabanes as public space.

4.2 The market relocated

The relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes was enacted in March 2005 with a municipal decree, following several months of municipal council discussions. The expected arrival of a new tramway line, and the seemingly dilapidated appearance of the plaza necessitated a full reconstruction of the space and the temporary relocation of the market to the nearby Place Salengro. While articles in the local media decried the destruction of what they described as an important social milieu (Midi Libre 2005a, 2005b)– and in particular the planned removal of a low wall and other street furniture used by a diversity of residents for seating, socializing, and cross-cultural exchange (Le Ny 2005) – the municipality remained quiet on the subject. The start of construction in July 2005 was followed, in December of that year, by rumours that the Marché would in fact be permanently retained in the Place Salengro (Nithard 2005). Affirmed by municipal vote in early March 2006 (Midi Libre 2006a), the non-return of the market was met by opposition from neighbourhood groups (Fo 2006). Yet just a few days later Montpellier Mayor Hélène Mandroux announced a surprise reversal of the municipal council decision, indicating that the market would eventually return to the Plan Cabanes (Midi Libre 2006b). In the months that followed market vendors initiated a petition in support of the market’s return (Le Ny 2006a), and along with other key actors associated with the Plan Cabanes decision – Mayor Mandroux, the municipal councillor in charge of market affairs, neighbourhood groups, and local commerce –

engaged in a media scuffle that saw the debate quickly shift from a discussion of renovating the plaza to accommodate the new tramway, to one on the appropriate composition of a neighbourhood market, questions of delinquency, illegal vending, cleanliness, the quality of merchandise, and accusations of racism on the part of city hall (G.T. 2006; Le Ny 2006b).

While in an April 2005 *Midi Libre* article, Mayor Mandroux's visit to the Place Salengro is described as "relaxed and good natured" (Midi Libre 2005b) and a celebration of the vendors' success, in December 2005 vendors in the Place Salengro are noted as being increasingly agitated with the municipality's approach (Nithard 2006). By June 2006 Mayor Mandroux is cited as saying that "we [municipality] will be attentive and ensure that this site [Plan Cabanes] stays clean"³⁸ (G.T. 2006), a comment that a *Midi Libre* journalist notes as indicative of the municipality's inability to understand the complexity of issues surrounding the market's relocation (G.T. 2006). By this point one Place Salengro vendor is quoted as saying "I just want to give up, we don't exist for them [city hall]" (D.P. and O.L.N. 2006), while in other articles opposing sides in the debate describe the neighbourhood as "the most degraded in the city centre" (Le Ny 2006a) and the market relocation as a "condemnation" (Ibid.) of the vendors' ability to survive, and the municipality as "being bothered by this neighbourhood's liveliness" (Midi Libre 2006c). Those supporting a return to the Plan Cabanes claim that the decision to retain the market in the Place Salengro was "an unjust decision based on a pseudo-consultation" (Midi Libre 2006f, 12). Meanwhile supporters of the market staying in the Place Salengro argue that the Plan Cabanes will now have "fewer problems with cleanliness" (Midi Libre 2006c) and that "here [Place Salengro], we have a smaller market and a true neighbourhood market" (D.P. and O.L.N. 2006, 9) which is viewed as more desirable than the semi-wholesale market that existed in the Plan Cabanes. The question of racism and discrimination is raised from March 2006 onwards (Fo 2006; Midi Libre 2006b; Le Ny 2006a), and is linked to an ongoing petition on the part of certain Place Salengro vendors to return to the Plan Cabanes – and their belief that the

³⁸ The idea of cleanliness and hygiene will be central to the discussion of Chapter 6.

municipality is avoiding their requests for meetings. The definitive decision to retain the market at Place Salengro in November 2006 (Midi Libre 2006c) seems almost anti-climactic, the debate on the meaning of the market having eclipsed the actual act of its relocation.

In outlining this sometimes difficult to follow zig-zag of municipal intervention, community opposition, and market politics that saw the Marché du Plan Cabanes relocated temporarily, then permanently, then temporarily, and permanently again I would like to draw out some more nuanced details. The first relates to the timeline of relocation itself: although the physical removal of the market took a single day (or rather night, vendors left the Plan Cabanes plaza on a Sunday and set-up in the Place Salengro the following day), the actual relocation process continued from March 2005 to November 2006, a span of twenty months. In this sense 'relocation' is less a reference to the physical shift of stands and crates, and more to the debates that followed. The notion of 'relocation' as a socio-political process of rhetoric, opposition and discussion is relevant to understanding how public space is constituted in the neighbourhood, and will be particularly important to contextualizing the eventual labelling of the Plan Cabanes as 'empty space'. The elements which underpin the relocation also shifted over the twenty-month process. What commenced as a discussion of the technical requirements for accommodating a new tramline (electrical upgrade, street width, re-enforcing the underground parking, etc) quickly shifted into a debate on the social and cultural reasons for relocating the market: the Marché du Plan Cabanes was too noisy, too busy, dirty, with too much illegality (people and goods) and simply too large to be a true neighbourhood market. The relocation debate swiftly descended into a coding of 'appropriate' uses and users (Mitchell, 2003) that attempted to (re)define how public space should be occupied. Added to these elements is the vocabulary of a 'return' of the market (*un retour du marché*) to its original location in the Plan Cabanes. Expressed in multiple newspaper articles and in fieldwork interviews, the use of the word '*retour*' carries certain connotations: it means going back, suggests a reversal, or a temporary action. It also identifies a fixed, preferable and desirable location

for the market – the Plan Cabanes plaza – and hints at defiance at the current placement in the Place Salengro. The vocabulary of ‘*retour*’ also contextualizes, at least partially, the disjointed system of names surrounding the market itself.

Leaving an examination of the twenty-month relocation process to Chapter 6, I would like to focus instead on the descriptions of the pre-2005 Marché du Plan Cabanes and the importance assigned to the relocation. Interviews with vendors, shopkeepers and residents often shifted between speaking about the past and present, with hand gestures indicating which market was under discussion – pointing towards the Plan Cabanes plaza, or towards the Salengro plaza as a way of distinguishing them – or referring to the names of the two plaza (Salengro and Plan Cabanes) as a way of demarcating the many markets. In an attempt at consistency, and at the expense of simplifying a complex naming system, I took up this practice of referring to plazas rather than markets in interviews. In the excerpts that follow I have continued to apply the notation of Plan Cabanes (for the pre-2005 market) and Place Salengro (for the current food market) when clarity is necessary. Since most research participants referred to the *brocante* and book market which occupies the renovated plaza on Wednesdays as ‘the *brocante*’, with no place name, I have done the same. In some instances my vocabulary was politely corrected, with one Salengro market vendor indicating that there was no history to talk of because the Salengro market was only a few years old - the Salengro market, in this case, envisaged as having no continuity with the *marché* that existed in Plan Cabanes until 2005. Yet in most other instances reference to Salengro and Plan Cabanes produced fruitful discussions and revealed an interdependence between the two sites: the current Salengro market existed because the former, Plan Cabanes, market no longer did.

Some interviews were infused with nostalgia that suggested a sense of loss through the relocation process, particularly in terms of the social and community function of the market. One local shopkeeper explains their first experience with the Plan Cabanes in the 1990s:

“It [Plan Cabanes] was huge, just huge. There were the fruit sellers who are still there [Salengro], it was huge, huge.... So at the start it [Plan Cabanes] was, it was a neighbourhood, it was the heart of the neighbourhood, we could say, it was the, the centre of the village. In the morning there was the market and then in the afternoon when the vendors from the market left, the plaza was used by lots of people, the *Chibanis*³⁹, the workers who came out to do a bit of, the market, to do a bit of commerce as well. They built things too. There was an incredible surge of people. Lots of people.” (Damya, business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

According to this view, the Marché du Plan Cabanes was not simply part of the neighbourhood fabric, but rather the heart of the neighbourhood – one indivisible from the other. The attraction of the market lay in its ability to draw in people, create a “surge” as the speaker describes, that included a multiplicity of users: elder Maghrebin migrants, workers, the formal vendors, and those coming in the afternoon to do a bit of informal selling. These impressions are also articulated by a local artisan:

“It’s just that me, I find that this link, the Plan Cabanes was a link that brought together several neighbourhoods. It was the Quartier Courreau, the Quartier Figuerolles, the Quartier toward les Arceaux, and towards Peyrou. It took all that, it took all of them, it was the link that pushed people to meet. Also, they took that away. The people from Courreau don’t go to the market in Salengro. Of course not, it’s too far.” (Rita, resident, Figuerolles)

In sentiments of the Marché du Plan Cabanes as a crossroads, as a neighbourhood link, and a key community hub there are echoes of a space that facilitated the type of interactions identified by Jane Jacobs (1961) as central to urban life. The ability of the Marché du Plan Cabanes to draw in a diversity of users is viewed by some interview participants as one of the reasons for the market’s eventual relocation and downsizing:

“Damya: Everything was, everything was centred on the market.

Roza: Ok.

³⁹ Chibanis: a term used to refer to elder Maghrébin men and women who migrated to France in the 1960s.

Damya: Everything, and so it, it was done because, moving the market was I think, it shows a desire to decapitate a little bit, a little bit, this neighbourhood.

Roza: Really? In what way?

Damya: There was a huge, a huge congregation of people here, it was a *marché populaire*⁴⁰. People came from, from everywhere, even, even from 30 or 40 kilometres away to buy at the market. It's because it was here that people found the lowest prices.”(Damya, business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles).

Drawing in not just neighbourhood shoppers, but also clients from La Paillade and La Mosson (Faure 1998), and according to Damya, even from outside of Montpellier, the Marché du Plan Cabanes brought people together in a way that transformed this neighbourhood into a secondary city-centre (Prat 1994). If, as noted above, the Marché du Plan Cabanes was criticized for no longer being a neighbourhood market – and the Place Salengro valued for being just that – Damya's comment certainly supports this assertion that the Plan Cabanes once functioned at a scale that few other markets in the city could match. Aside from the more social aspects of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, some speakers highlighted the commercial benefits of the larger market. The selection of products on sale has, in the eyes of one resident, diminished noticeably:

“There were clearly more [vendors]. There were [in Plan Cabanes] people who sold cheese, who aren't there [Salengro] anymore. The charcuterie isn't there any more, not a lot, from time to time there is a truck with meats I think. I very rarely see the meat vendor's truck. There was a fishmonger. The fishmonger is still there, but not every day. There was also, yes, things like dried fruits and olives. They still come sometimes, on Saturdays, but not everyday” (Rita, resident, Figuerolles)

Current Salengro vendors who followed the stalls from Plan Cabanes provide similar impressions. The Plan Cabanes market was large, and importantly, allowed for much longer and wider stands. They could bring in an even greater variety of merchandise, and had considerable turn-over, especially on weekends, when additional cashiers were brought in to help out. There were lots of people – not just shoppers, but many others who

⁴⁰ Populaire translates as 'of the people'. See footnote 19, Chapter 6.

used to hang about and chat – and for those who used to sell in the Plan Cabanes, this was viewed as a benefit, as this vendor describes while recalling the dynamics of the pre-2005 market:

“Because the market is a public space, you see. Even, even, even the vendors, even the produce vendors, what I mean is, it gives them a very good image. Because if you, you are passing by [Plan Cabanes], you pass by and you see all these people in the middle of the market. You are going to say to yourself, hey, there’s people everywhere. Maybe there is something to see.” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

The ‘surge’ of people attracts more people and the totality of foot-fall leads to increased profits for each stall, but also a heightened sociability. This viewpoint is affirmed by Faure (1998) in her detailed study of the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood in the 1990s, and by Prat’s (1994) overview of plaza life during the same period, both describing a well-attended market capable of absorbing those with money to spend and those seeking simply a conversation. A neighbourhood association member further details the changes to the scale and mode of sales:

“When I got here at Plan Cabanes there was regular stuff and then semi-wholesale. Now at [Salengro] there is no longer the semi-wholesale. I would buy 5 kilos of almonds, things like this [at Plan Cabanes]. But it's not possible there [Salengro] anymore. It's all small scale. But it's still the cheapest market in the city.” (Ralph, neighbourhood association member, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

The attraction of the old Plan Cabanes market centred on two, connected, factors: the wide selection of products and goods on sale, both in terms of the variety of items sold but also in terms of the quantities and prices; and on the informal modes of sociability provided by the market. Commodity exchange in effect functioned as a vehicle for social exchange, and the flexibility of the space – the expanse of the plaza and its ability to accommodate both formal and informal trading – further contributed to cementing this as a key neighbourhood space. While the interviewees above juxtapose the Salengro with the Plan Cabanes market in a more negative light, highlighting the presence of certain forms of exchange in the old market and their absence in the new site, others take a different viewpoint.

As a member of another neighbourhood association notes, the price to pay for the relocation of the Plan Cabanes market is tranquillity:

“They protested for the Plan Cabanes. Those who are protesting don't live there. The trucks got there at 4am, it never ended. The guys, they paid us, we would go to push the carts. We set up, and at noon we would go back and pack up. And the guy would give us money. And I can tell you that it was lively. But from 4am, do you live there?” (Juju, neighbourhood association member, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

This speaker does not live at Plan Cabanes either – rather, they are at home several blocks away in a residential zone. Yet their viewpoint is noteworthy of its ability to disrupt the narrative of community loss and displacement noted in the first set of quotes. The noise of the market, the clanging of upwards of 40 stands setting up in the early morning, adds a further dimension to the more nostalgic visions of the old Plan Cabanes and its plethora of shopping options. Although illegal mint stands and informal vending existed alongside the *Marché du Plan Cabanes* (Faure 1998), few interview participants commented on this. When prompted on this topic, the result was most often a dismissal of the issue, and a few words to say that all markets have illegality, including the *Place Salengro* (as detailed in the preceding chapter). The old *Marché du Plan Cabanes* is certainly romanticized by some users – yet it is this very act of rose-tinted memory which I found especially interesting for the way it describes the market-turned-public-space of the Plan Cabanes as being exceptionally inclusive, open, welcoming, and lively. These notions very much support de la Pradelle's (2006) conclusion on the efficacy with which outdoor markets open up urban spaces. By outlining the attractiveness of the *Marché du Plan Cabanes*, and detailing the loss felt through the market's relocation, many of these speakers are indirectly commenting on the value of the Plan Cabanes plaza as a social space, and the changes to the social flows of the neighbourhood engendered by the shift to the *Place Salengro*.

For other interview participants, the market in *Salengro* is viewed as an experience very similar to the Plan Cabanes. The key elements of sociability

and vivacity are still there, though with some caveats, as the vendor below describes:

“A market enlivens a neighbourhood, eh. Not only, ok in part, the fruit and vegetables guy [shopkeeper next to the Place Salengro] it makes him worry about competition. There are always shopkeepers who are, who said that they would lose their parking spots but that’s not true because $\frac{3}{4}$ of the time the people who used this parking lot [Place Salengro] were regular, long term parking. And we enliven the neighbourhood it’s true that by moving us from there [Plan Cabanes] to here [Place Salengro] the vendors have, they had to pay for it. They felt a drop in activity, they did lose it’s true, we dealt with a lot more business back there [Plan Cabanes], there was a neighbourhood dynamics that is, that, that, that, that is dead, back there the neighbourhood... and on top of that, the city is building up the residential [ie, expanding housing in the area], but the shops they, little by little they close. Here [Place Salengro] it’s a lot more diverse. There is a [sedentary] baker, a butcher, the fishmongers, it complements the market and makes people come out. And so people come to the market and then they go and buy products all around, and then it brings them to the market.” (Michel, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

Despite the 200 meters distance between Plan Cabanes and Salengro (see Figure 2.12) for this speaker the two sites are part of different neighbourhoods. There is recognition that the Plan Cabanes was a lively neighbourhood hub – in other portions of this interview Michel describes the Plan Cabanes in terms very similar to the series of quotes earlier – and that the relocation of the market effectively killed (“dead”) the neighbourhood itself, and cut vendors’ profits. Yet in this before/after discussion there is a further argument. That the transfer of the market effectively saw the transfer of the public space from Plan Cabanes to Salengro: the arrival of stands and stalls in the parking-lot-turned-plaza is seen as bringing people out, engaging them with their neighbourhood, and (perhaps tenuously) increasing profitability for the surrounding shops as well.

If the relocation of the market stalls resulted in a relocation of the public space itself, then what can be said about the newly renovated Plan Cabanes

plaza and its newly established used books market? One vendor in the *brocante* market describes the function of their market:

“Yeah, yeah, voilà, it’s nice. But apart from that, voilà, it’s [*brocante*] not an extraordinary market. It’s a little market for the week, voila, it’s. I’ll tell you something, the point of a market like this, for us, is to find new addresses [ie, clients willing to sell antiques] most of all. Ok, so if you make a few extra bucks on the side you’ll take them but, it’s not extravagant or anything, a few euros, it’s not your bread and butter. If I lived off this I might even get thin.” (Guillaume, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

The difference between the *brocante* market and the old Plan Cabanes produce market is stark. While the Marché du Plan Cabanes drew in large groups of people, created a socio-cultural milieu centred on buying, selling, chatting, and casually hanging about, the *brocante* market is quiet enough that this vendor can expect to make at most “a few extra bucks”. For several other *brocante* sellers, this activity complements a much more profitable online book selling business or participation in the larger, professional antiques and goods markets in the region. That the *brocante* is useful for meeting potential suppliers of family antiques indicates some foot-fall, and over the course of my year long milling about the stands and the vendors’ Scrabble games, several did succeed in collecting local addresses that yielded profitable merchandise. The vendor quoted above does not seem to take the *brocante* market seriously, or view it as a market in the more traditional sense of outdoor vending (de la Pradelle, 2006) where the goal is turnover and profits. Rather, the goal is to gather information on other vending sites and opportunities, and as outlined in the previous chapter, to meet fellow *brocante* and book vendors and socialize.

Emerging from this discussion of three markets (*brocante*, the pre-2005 food market, and the current food market) and two plazas (Plan Cabanes and Salengro), some comments on the interplay between commerce and public space are useful. While Sibley (1995) and Slocum (2007) suggest that commercial activity can enclose public spaces, converting them into semi-public, exclusively used sites, the overlay of shopping and social interaction outlined by the first series of quotes in this section suggest that this is not

always the case, a conclusion also put forth by Jackson (1998). The presence of market stalls and vendors instead opens up the Plan Cabanes, encouraging levels of participation in the pre-2005 food market that are simply not reproduced in the *brocante* market – even though both of these occupy the same plaza, the Plan Cabanes. The reduction of the number of vendors, stalls, and the physical expanse of the vending area through the transfer to Salengro has arguably altered levels of participation, and the form of public space itself. Although it is easy to fall into a for/against market relocation scenario – helped by the polarized opinions presented in local media – the nuance of opinion which emerges through interviews suggests that a single, desirable function for the Plan Cabanes is difficult to arrive at. In the section that follows I will first consider municipal perspectives on the relocation of the market and formation of public space in Montpellier historic city-centre, before moving on to considering the impact of the relocation on the Plan Cabanes plaza and its status as a key public space in the city.

4.3 Conceptualizing public space

While residents, vendors, and local shopkeepers have divergent opinions on the relocation, they still draw on similar vocabulary to describe the markets: ‘enlivened’ space, heart of the neighbourhood, with emphasis on shoppers, gawkers and people passing through, and a heightened sense of sociability. These drive towards a depiction of public space that has less to do with the physical structure of each plaza, and much more with the socio-cultural milieu produced through the intertwining of market commerce and informal interaction. The vocabulary deployed by urban planners and municipal actors relies on a different set of factors: it emphasizes the legal codes associated with the renovation of plazas, streets, and parks, and issues of aesthetics, transport links, and landscape continuity through the network of public spaces in Montpellier. As a result public space is conceived, to draw on Lefebvre’s (1991) vocabulary, in terms of technical and physical requirements – an approach that seems to have limited intersections with the interaction-filled descriptions of many market users. This split of ‘urban planners/technical vision’ and ‘market goers/social

vision' is a brute simplification – not least because the same planning experts who deployed technocratic vocabulary to describe their understanding of public space also commented on their more personal experience of the sociability of outdoor markets, while market users engrossed in discussions of cultural exchange flippantly critiqued the technical failings of the plazas. But in the context of the Plan Cabanes renovations, considering this split proves useful: the mismatch between the intentions and expectations of municipal actors and the expectations of many other users in relation to the function and meaning of the plaza has, ultimately, led to the space being declared empty (*vide*) and dead (*mort*) by both groups.

The term public space crops up frequently in municipal documents. The *Plan Local d'Urbanisme* (the local urban planning guide, hereby PLU) notes that “quality public space planning contributes to the social and economic vitality, and animation, of the city-centre” (PLU 2011, 37; my translation) and that nodal public spaces “constitute important urban symbols from which the surrounding neighbourhood can draw a further sense of identity” (PLU 2011, 52; my translation) by facilitating “residents’ appropriation of their daily space (*espace de vie*)” (PLU 2011, 53; my translation). While the terms ‘neighbourhood’, ‘vitality’ and ‘appropriation’ hint at a social element to public space planning, the details that follow provide some curious direction on how this may be achieved: the focus is on ensuring uniformity throughout the city-centre, renovating facades, improving the sites that will welcome new tram stops, and establishing water fountains and public artwork. The implicit suggestion being that careful design is central to developing successful public spaces (Lehrer, 1998), and further, that good design would lead to the sort of neighbourhood vitality outlined in the PLU.

Montpellier’s yet to be finalized *Charte de l'Espace Public* (public space charter, available for consultation in draft format as of 2012) assumes a similar approach. Drafted by the Mission Grand Coeur, the *Charte de l'Espace Public* outlines the city’s ambitions for the historic city-centre and surroundings with an emphasis on creating a comprehensible visual impression of Montpellier through the use of specific materials, colours,

and types of vegetation. What the *Charte* denotes as ‘public space vocabulary’ (*Le vocabulaire de l’espace public*) includes subsections on marble, trees, security barriers and signage along with notes on gradations of stone colour, sidewalk height, spacing between trees and benches, and discussion of appropriate street-side potted plants. The *Charte*, together with the PLU, denotes a hierarchy of urban spaces in Montpellier. As noted in Mission Grand Coeur documents (Archive de la Ville de Montpellier 625W4, July 2003), the city-centre landscape is divided into two categories, each with three levels of importance. So, streets and plazas of the city centre either fall into the category of: 1) historic centre; or 2) faubourg, meaning the neighbourhoods immediately surrounding the historic centre. Each of these categories is then subdivided into a hierarchy of importance. For the category of ‘historic centre’, space is either: 1) a key plaza or main street; or 2) streets with locals-only access and smaller shopping streets. For the faubourgs, there are three levels of importance: 1) main plazas; 2) main shopping streets or transport axis; 3) and locally used streets and smaller shopping streets [see Figure 4.1]

Level	Historic centre	Faubourgs
1.	Key plazas and main shopping streets	Key plaza
2.	Secondary shopping streets and locally accessed roads	Main shopping streets and thoroughfares
3.		Secondary shopping streets and locally used streets

Figure 4.1: Hierarchy of urban space in Montpellier.

In practice, this division of space functions as follows: the Place de la Comédie, Montpellier’s main plaza, is classed as ‘historic centre’ level 1. The Plan Cabanes is classed as ‘faubourg’ level 1. In the historic centre all ‘level 1’

and 'level 2' spaces must use the same colour of tarmac, if not the same texture or type of stone (AVM 625W4, July 2003). This means that the tarmac of the Place de la Comédie [see Figure 4.2] is visually similar to the tarmac used in other principal plazas, and that the colour scheme of the Comédie (a light beige) is used throughout the historic centre as well. Given Montpellier's urban branding strategy, this homogenization of urban materials in the historic centre is perhaps not surprising. More interesting is the way in which the hierarchy of spaces translates beyond the Ecusson – and to the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood in particular. The tarmac used on the newly renovated Plan Cabanes matches that of the Place de la Comédie [see Figure 4.3]. The tarmac of the Place Salengro differs noticeably from the Plan Cabanes: while the Plan Cabanes has large, sandy coloured flagstones, the Place Salengro is asphalt [see Figure 4.4]. The Plan Cabanes is visually and materially higher up the hierarchy of Montpellier urban spaces than the Place Salengro. In its pre-2005 appearance the Plan Cabanes was, I have been told by several vendors, made of the same material as the surrounding parking lots: asphalt. Through the redevelopment process the Plan Cabanes has thus seen its ranking in the city's hierarchy of urban spaces increased, and the plaza effectively usurped by the historic city-centre through this material change. If the PLU defines public spaces as having symbolic value for Montpellier, the changes witnessed in the Plan Cabanes plaza speak to the municipality's desire to alter the way this space relates to the historic centre – and to the urban landscape more broadly.

The pages of the Charte de l'Espace Public are engrossing. The limestone used to line city sidewalks, for instance, comes from the French departments of Ain or Isère, sometimes Valencia in Spain, has a golden-yellow-with-grey tone with golden or rose-coloured veins, and bulk density of 2670kg/m², amongst other requirements (Charte de l'Espace Public, draft, Fiche Vocabulaire CI1a). Equally, while plane trees are used

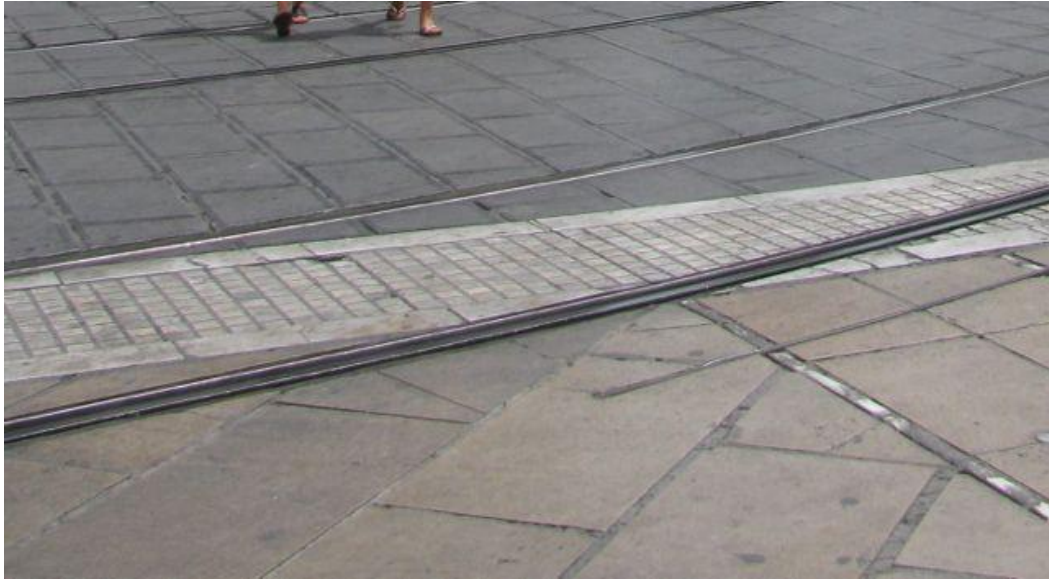


Figure 4.2: Flagstones of the Place de la Comédie meet the white-grey stones used to identify plaza borders, and the grey stones that identify the start of the surrounding faubourg, July 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 4.3: Flagstones being laid out in the Plan Cabanes, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 4.4: The tarmac in the Place Salengro, after renovations to accommodate the market, July 2007. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 4.5: The selection of building facade finishes and colours as displayed in the Mission Grand Coeur, November 2012. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

throughout the city centre, towering over plazas and newly planted in the Plan Cabanes, in surrounding neighbourhoods different varieties are introduced – evergreens on east-west streets in Port Marianne, alongside plane trees on north-south streets, to create nuanced distinctions between neighbourhoods. The *Charte*, according to the Mission Grand Coeur, is intended to give all sub-contractors and architects working on city-centre renovations an identical base-line for their projects. In its capacity as the lead urban renewal agency the Mission Grand Coeur has samples of sanctioned materials in their reception area that can be handled, compared, inspected in shade and in light, and then put back on their display shelved [see Figure 4.5]. An afternoon spent playing with the urban building blocks on display at the Grand Coeur office is a fantastic experience. The office staff are passionate about their work and support the agency's emphasis on using local materials whenever possible, including the sourcing of all lumber products exclusively in France. They articulate a determination to include regional quarries (including nearby northern Spain) and construction firms in the acquisition process, and have countless pamphlets and posters on display which insist on the importance of enrobing this city where “the sun never sets” (that favourite tourism slogan of the 2000s) in shades of golden, sandy, rose-coloured materials that radiate warmth and Mediterranean ambiance.

The enthusiasm for renovating this city, and for promoting Montpellier, is infectious. Walking out of the Grand Coeur offices after one visit in 2012, with photocopies of the draft *Charte de l'Espace Public* tucked in my bag, I was buoyed. Stretched before me was the under-renovation Boulevard du Jeu de Paume, sandy coloured sidewalks and newly installed tramway. But then there were people, and cars, and graffiti, and children playing football below a ‘no ball games allowed’ sign, and the beautifully selected materials of the *Charte de l'Espace Public* were quickly subsumed by the lived experience of city life. It is this somewhat melodramatic shift in perspective which highlighted several key points about the municipal approach to public space planning. The ‘public space vocabulary’ of the *Charte* seems to have a notable gap: there is scant mention of the ‘public’ or of people

alongside the pages and pages of notes on design requirements, and little sense of how residents might perceive or interact with the materials selected. In an instance where a key goal of the PLU is to encourage residents to appropriate their neighbourhood space (PLU 2011, 53), the strict rules governing the materiality of public space seem to leave more limited opportunities to do so. Graffiti is certainly banned, but so is the usage of bright store-front signs, visible air conditioning units, and colour schemes that contrast with the golden-rose of the city. While an approach that stringently governs the physical appearance of the public sphere is certainly not unique to Montpellier (cf. Charbonneau 1997 on Lyon) the PLU and *Charte* provides a specific definition of public space: it is tangible, it is imagined as homogeneous and it is suspiciously devoid of people. If public space is intended to aid with the creation of a neighbourhood identity, then this is an identity derived from the physical components of the surrounding streets and plazas rather than the more difficult to direct social and cultural interactions.

Surprisingly absent in both the PLU and the *Charte de l'Espace Public* is a definition of public space, and in an interview with a senior urban planner I asked for a clarification of what 'public space' means for the city of Montpellier. The answer was detailed, and outlined how public space and the public domain are created through the republican principles governing French politics and property:

"Inaliénable (inalienable), that's the word, comes from the French word *aliénation*. An '*aliénation*' means that you take something from somebody. Therefore *inaliénable* means that you can't take it. No one can decide to take a chunk of the public domain. It is '*inaliénable*'. So no one can say I'm going to take this chunk, it's mine, that's impossible. It's '*incessible*' (non-transferable). That means that we can't sell it. It's '*imprescriptible*' (enduring), that means that it's one that we can't, except with the authority of the [judicial] controllers, we can't create a series of rules that alter the public domain. Voilà, it means apart from the authority vested in the controllers. '*Imprescriptible*' means that it's like this, and there is nothing that can change it, so it's something that's totally, it's an idea that very, how can I say it, very Jacobian, very republican in terms of everything that is of, of, of, of the republican sphere in France. It's been 200 years since the

revolution and stuff, but, but, but it's, all that is the public sphere has a considerable power attached to it. It's like that. So, and they [Mission Grand Coeur] govern public space. So what does governing public space mean? So for instance if they, for example when a new neighbourhood is created and we make the street. So the streets at the start are not part of the public sphere. It's a line that we make on a city plan. Then we build it. Our building society create the street, makes the sewers, makes the sidewalks. And once everything is built we turn it over to the public domain. Meaning that the street takes on the status of public space with all the requisite judicial protections. That's it." (Antoine, urban planner, City of Montpellier)

The creation of new public space is a legal and technical process. It starts with a line drawn on a map, followed by the arrival of construction equipment to convert that line into a concrete (and limestone) covered street, and ends with the transfer of this new material space to the public sphere via a judicial process. To condense the description above, public space is both materially defined and legally protected, and above all, it is a creation of the urban planning department and state laws. At least in the case of Montpellier the creation of *new* public space is very much linked to urban development and the establishment of new housing and commercial districts, with social events (or: animation) introduced by the municipality's cultural department only once the new locations are constructed. Plan Cabanes and Salengro are not new spaces – at least in the sense that they have existed as named lines on a map and tarmac on the ground for many years. Yet the same legal protections apply: once declared as 'public space' these plazas cannot be folded over to the private sphere and taken out of circulation. However, as the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes indicates, the materiality of public space can be redefined – or re-qualified (*requalifier*) in the vocabulary of French urban planning. While maintaining public space as a legal and physical entity, the requalification process in Montpellier's city-centre seeks to alter the ways in which public space is used by introducing the elements outlined in the *Charte de l'Espace Public* and PLU.

In an interview with Philippe Saurel, Montpellier's political head of urban planning in the late 2000s, I asked him to outline the municipality's

intentions with respect to the renovation of the Plan Cabanes, and the need for this form of intervention:

“Philippe Saurel: By the Plan Cabanes we’ll have a tramway stop for the 3rd line of the tramway. And we’re estimating 80, between 80,000 and 100,000 passengers per day. So this flux of potential passengers could benefit from commercial and pedestrian installations in the Faubourg [Figueroles]. If, with the arrival of the tramway we are able to re-qualify the public space and give it another role from that which it has today.

Roza: What do you mean by re-qualify?

Philippe Saurel: Everywhere the tramway passes there is a considerable improvement in public space. Whether it’s in the, in the materials being used, in having it enlarged, in expanding the public space, we call that, tied to that, to the passage of the tramway. We are removing the cars, the automobiles, we remove. Then we put in the tramway, we also remove the, the roads and boulevards. And so we are step by step turning towards a pedestrianization. But at the same time there has to be a choice in terms of the urban materials being used, in terms of the urban furniture, and then there is the requalification of the buildings that have to correspond to the usage of the city, the new usage of the city is tied to the passage of the tramway.” (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier 2005-2011).

This quote reveals a wealth of information, and it is one I will come back to as I consider the cultural implications of ‘new usage’ and the methods deployed to achieve this. For the moment I would like to focus on the idea of requalification as it relates to the definition of public space – in other words, what ‘requalification’ can say about the municipal vision of the purpose and function of public space in Montpellier. As Saurel indicates, the purpose of requalification is to alter the role of a specific public space. This means changing the materiality of the Plan Cabanes – the stones, trees, and street furniture – to match the ‘level 1’ slot on the hierarchy of urban space, and assigning the plaza a new function as a support space for public transport. It is a choice that would take the space away from its previous role as a low-cost market, and elevate the Plan Cabanes to the sphere of ‘key plaza’ (on the faubourg scale, debatably on the ‘historic-centre’ scale too).

This highlights several points: the municipality has a central role in determining how plazas look, function, and how they are used. It further

suggests that the Plan Cabanes is not a singular space. Rather, it is envisaged as one amongst many other plazas whose role is being recast as part of a wider matrix of motions and efforts to create a coherent (and homogenous) city fabric centred on public transport. There is friction between this desire to create an integrated network of public spaces in the city, and the goal of using plazas as symbolic neighbourhood spaces (as outlined in the PLU). Yet in both instances the form and function of public space is seemingly dependent on municipal agendas. To hazard an early conclusion, public space is equated with municipal space by some key political and urban planning actors – a space which is much more the representation of the city's goals and interests than the lived experience and expectations of current users.

The suggestion that tram users could benefit from commercial installation – or rather, that the pre-2005 Plan Cabanes did not offer these – puts to question exactly what sorts of commerce and activity would be deemed appropriate for these key city spaces. The answer has been: markets. Not, of course, the return of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, but rather a series of themed markets: a flower market, a *brocante* and used books market, and an art market were initially proposed (Midi Libre, 2006d). According to several interviewees working at various municipal posts, the focus has been on creating a series of smaller, 10-12 stand markets that would encourage a variety of shoppers from across the city to visit, use, and pass through the new Plan Cabanes. Amongst the markets proposed following the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, only the *brocante* market has come to fruition and spreads out across the Plan Cabanes every Wednesday. The rotisserie stand has given way to books, crates of tomatoes to tables lined with lamps and vases, and the material change of the Plan Cabanes can be said to include a change in the materiality of the market(s) as well – the materiality of the tarmac as detailed above, and as will be noted in Chapter 5, the materiality of stalls and their wares as well. While the public sphere is *inaliénable*, *incessible*, and *imprescriptible* it is not exempt from certain forms of material (and arguably social) change.

4.4 Contested space as empty space

I began the previous section with an assertion: that conceptualizations of public space differed noticeably between urban planners (physical and technical vision) and market users (social vision), a contention based on the material gathered through interviews, ethnographic work, and analysis of municipal urban planning documents. Viewing the Plan Cabanes as an extension of the transport network, and as a municipally-designed and managed space, has resulted in a limestone lined plaza that meets all legal requirements for public space and neatly fits the PLU and *Charte de l'Espace Public* criteria for city-centre design. Yet it is also a space that the political head of urban planning for Montpellier views as a relative failure:

“But, all this [renovation of Plan Cabanes], unfortunately, it was done like this, I would [...] at the time that all this was done I couldn't do, I couldn't say anything. Today I'm not hiding my views anymore, I am in support of the Plan Cabanes taking back its own identity, an identity for this plaza. Because without this it's useless.” (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier 2005-2011).

I also asked Philippe Saurel to describe the future of the Plan Cabanes plaza :

“What I mean is that the future of the Plan Cabanes will be improved by the, by the arrival of the tram. But I believe that, personally, that we must absolutely create an animation for the Plan Cabanes, a market or another event, but an animation. Because we can't leave this large expanse of stone empty like this. For me it doesn't have a function like this. It's not useful (*anti-productive*) for the city. For me this doesn't belong in the city. You see, when we produce (*fabrique*) a public space we must also envisage its usage. Otherwise we shouldn't do it.” (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier 2005-2011).

That the re-qualified Plan Cabanes is “useless” or lacking a function without a unique identity is an interesting proposition; the suggestion that the municipal *Adjoint d'Urbanism* was not in a position to affect this is perhaps questionable. The sense that the Plan Cabanes needs an identity is mirrored in comments from two Mission Grand Coeur interviewees, the first noting:

“And, it's [Plan Cabanes] a space that is important to the whole

of the city, to the city-centre, to the city. And even for, for, for the whole [Montpellier] Agglomeration, why not. So it's, it's, it's true, it's true, it's not easy. It's been a long time on top of it all that we've been turning in circle for, eh, to find the role of the Plan Cabanes" (Interviewee 1, Mission Grand Coeur, City of Montpellier)

This sentiment is echoed in the comments of another interviewee at the Mission Grand Coeur:

"We have lifted the life from the Plan Cabanes, and for the moment we haven't been successful in putting back some life, but we haven't forgotten this goal" (Interviewee 2, Mission Grand Coeur, City of Montpellier)

An interesting dynamic develops across these three quotes, especially in light of the emphasis placed on the materiality of public space in urban planning documents and in Philippe Saurel's discussions on the requalification of the Plan Cabanes in the previous section. For all three speakers, the Plan Cabanes cannot be viewed as a success unless it is enlivened, to borrow from the vocabulary of market users – the plaza must become a (living) neighbourhood organism, and be more than just beautifully finished tarmac and newly planted trees. There is also an admission that the municipality has intentionally removed one form of public life from the plaza by relocating the market – and equally, that the city has had limited success in infusing the renovated Plan Cabanes with a purpose, a role, or an identity.

When the first suggestions of the produce market staying in the Place Salengro swirled through local newspapers in late 2005, there were suggestions that several new markets would be created for the renovated Plan Cabanes: flowers, an artisanal market, and antiques being amongst the markets proposed in 2006 (Midi Libre 2006c). Before turning my attention to the *brocante* market, the one 'animation' actually established in the plaza, I queried several interviewees on what sort of outdoor market they felt would be most appropriate for the Plan Cabanes. Philippe Saurel had no specific idea, or at least chose not to communicate what sort of animation would best fill the Plan Cabanes. For one Mission Grand Coeur interviewee,

the Plan Cabanes' role as a reception area for North African immigrants could be re-infused into the plaza through a spice market:

“Ok, me, me, it's not entirely me, but, eh, I know that the head of *Affaires Commerciales* shared this idea that we could have a spice market at the Plan Cabanes. Why not? It would attract people from the city and it would also have some links with the neighbourhood population.” (Interview at the Mission Grand Coeur, City of Montpellier)

This approach was confirmed by an interviewee involved with the sometimes controversial labour union representing market vendors:

“My little idea is that we should create a market with artisanal product but also products from the Maghreb, along with regional products, from, from, from, from our region, so. An artisanal [market].” (Marc, association representing market vendors in Hérault)

The idea of a spice market struck me as a unique approach: an attempt to mediate the conflict surrounding the meaning and function of the Plan Cabanes. When I queried some of the 'Maghrebin' vendors in the Place Salengro on this, I was greeted with amusement and indifference. The idea clearly did not appeal to the Maghrebin vendors it was meant to entice. First, I was told, no one would be daft enough to sell expensive spices from open containers – the image of Maghrebin souk that appears on many postcards, and how these vendors imagined the municipality envisioned a spice market – in the Plan Cabanes, not with the high winds in winter, threat of rain, and constant burn of sunshine. Second, any spice market in the Plan Cabanes would be poor competition for the surrounding grocery stores which already sell high-quality spices in sealed packets and tightly closed jars. One current vendor in the Place Salengro had tried out spice sales: bringing back large barrels of powdered turmeric and cumin from North Africa, packaging it up in small sachets, and advertising them with a new poster. By the time all the packets had sold – several months after first being packaged up – the vendor claimed to have made little profit for the amount of effort required in procuring the spices, transporting them every day to market, and storing them. The idea – noted by Marc, as quoted above – that a Maghrebin market could exist alongside a 'regional' market

raises many questions on how different identities are conceptualized and how these are applied to public space, a point taken up in Chapter 5.

Admittedly, the idea of a spice market may have been wishful thinking on the part of the Mission Grand Coeur interviewee. As far as I could tell – through discussions with market vendors, consultation of newspaper articles, and queries to neighbourhood associations – no attempt had been made to institute such a market. Of the variety of markets proposed for the Plan Cabanes, only the *brocante* had come to fruition. From the comments of Philippe Saurel and the Mission Grand Coeur interviewees, the *brocante* market has evidently yet to fulfil its intended function of creating a new socio-cultural hub. Nowhere is this lack of success more apparent than in the comments of *brocante* vendors themselves. Everyone in the Broc'Art market had an opinion on what has happened in the Plan Cabanes plaza, aware that a produce market has been pushed out – their terms – and that they are there because of special circumstances. This viewpoint I found interesting, and raised it during interviews. One dealer defined his participation in the market as that of an *animateur*, meaning that although he was formally there to sell books, in reality he felt like an unpaid municipal cultural employee:

“Lucien: They put it [*brocante*] here because before there was a fruit and vegetable market, there was lots of animation. Point made. You know that in this work, we know it, they, they should be paying us for setting up the market. We pay for places but they should be paying us to do the market because, it creates an animation for the village.

Roza: Ok.

Lucien: We are very well aware of it and all. We are here to animate the village, to give it some life, but ok, it's not. When the markets are set up like this, in this spirit, they don't work.”
(Guillaume, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

The impression is of the *brocante* installed because usable public space is closely linked with a well-frequented market, especially for the Plan Cabanes with its history as a market plaza. For this vendor, as for the two Mission Grand Coeur interviewees, the *brocante* market has failed to infuse the newly renovated Plan Cabanes with the desired levels of activity. The

speaker above links this failure to the way this market has been set up – simply as a tool for animation, not because an antiques and used book market was desired by the neighbourhood. Most professional *brocante* markets are privately run – on private grounds, organized by a company that specializes in trade fairs. The Plan Cabanes market is one of a few municipal *brocante* markets and for that reason, dealers argued, there is little control on the type of merchandise, few checks on the authenticity of antiques sold. The entire thing, one book vendor said, looks more like a flea market than a real *brocante* fair. The intent of the municipality was not – it seems – to create a reliable antiques, *brocante* and book market, but rather, to establish a replacement for the Marché du Plan Cabanes capable of attracting people from across the city. Unlike vendors in all of Montpellier’s other market, the *brocante* and book dealers are not required to pay a stall-fee. The market is free for them to attend, a unique situation as this vendor explains:

“It’s very rare to have a free market like that. There are not many market where the places are free. It’s always at least €5 or €10 for the place. And the moment that they announce free spaces it makes you want to, makes you want to come. Already we don’t have to pay for the spot, not €20 or €30 like we do in Nimes, and so it allows us to set up in the market no matter how bad the weather is. We take it easy. We only have to worry about paying for the petrol.” (Lucien, book dealer, Plan Cabanes)

A no-fee market is, seemingly, an effective way of attracting as many vendors as possible, and the Broc’Art’s exemption from paying any stall charges was extended for a second year (2010-2011) as a way of ensuring that vendors would continue using the space. The lack of fees is linked to the animation factor, at least for this vendor:

“Here it’s the city that wanted to animate the neighbourhood and so they said to [the *brocante* association leader] if, beh, if they wanted to create a market because it would be free.” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

This sentiment is echoed by another vendor who, when asked why he thought the *brocante* market was created, introduced both the *animateur*

aspect and the perceived futility of having an antiques and used books market in the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood:

“Ah, beh, here, beh, we could say it’s [been created] to animate the neighbourhood, what, eh, voila, I am a neighbourhood animator ! Animation, voila, most of all, eh, that’s all, eh, because there is no interest [in the market]. The location isn’t good, ok, it’s not, exceptional, eh, the Arab neighbourhood, voila, so it’s not a great client base, it’s poor people. And it’s people who aren’t interested by what we do, already, so.” (Guillaume, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

The Plan Cabanes is a lifeless space because the activity assigned to it by municipal planners is out of step with the perceived (if tenuously assigned) desires of the neighbourhood (a point taken up in Chapter 5 and 6). Although the new Plan Cabanes meets the technical requirements for a Montpellier public space and through the introduction of a market, with adjoining animators, theoretically fulfils the socio-cultural role as well, the site appears desolate. Or, desolate in comparison to the vivacity outlined by participants and vendors in the old Marché du Plan Cabanes. The shift from high-use produce market to low-frequency book/*brocante* site has noticeably altered the way the plaza is used. Amongst all interview participants, local shopkeepers were most vocal about this point – perhaps because their own clientele depended on the crowds attracted by the markets as well. When asked to comment on the new Plan Cabanes one shopkeeper notes:

“I think that Montpellier does things well but, I think, the market [Marché du Plan Cabanes] was important. I think that they want to add something to the place. But they don’t want to return the fruit and veggies because of the history of that market with the municipality. But apart from that they can’t find something to put there that will function. There are the *brocante* vendors but, I speak with the *brocante* vendors, it’s, it’s Do-It-Yourself stuff, it’s, it’s, it’s not, there won’t be families coming over for DIY stuff” (Abdul, business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles).

The speaker continued to discuss the ‘old’ market, noting that his own shop flourished as a result of the surging crowds of the Marché du Plan Cabanes. The loss of the produce market, and the resulting shift in ‘animation’ of the plaza, has also impacted on local restaurants. One nearby café has

discharged two full-time employees since the market's relocation, and now opens much later in the day – 10am instead of 6am – and closes earlier. Apart from Wednesdays when the *brocante* dealers are there to enliven the plaza, the Plan Cabanes is described as empty, as desolate. One local restaurant owner explains:

“Me, I find it sad that a beautiful plaza like this is, so today you've visited and there is a spectacle going on [a small performance]. But afterwards it'll be empty. It's empty. And today the plaza that you have it is for me, for me, it's no longer a public entity (*bien public*). It's used mostly by the driving school.” (Damy, business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

Without the daily hum brought by the larger produce market, the Plan Cabanes is devoid of a function. The sentiment across interviews was of a space that has lost its meaning – and of a site that cannot be considered a public space unless it allows for a social, cultural or economic engagement. While in Lefebvre's (1991) lexicon spatial practice and urban design combine to produce a lived, representational space, in Montpellier friction between these elements has resulted in a very different entity: empty space, dead space. Even for local actors who acknowledge the difficulty of deciding what to do with the plaza suggest that the Plan Cabanes is a void in the neighbourhood:

“They [vendors] wanted that the market stay there. There are a lot of people who are saying that the plaza is magnificent, which is true. And it's empty, there is no life. No animation. There are some who aren't happy. And others who are. You know you can't make everyone happy. Even when god created his son, he couldn't. It's difficult.” (Juju, neighbourhood association member, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

In what seems like a catalogue of local actors decrying the empty beauty of the new Plan Cabanes plaza, another neighbourhood restaurant owner echoed these sentiments:

“It's a pity. I think that for, after all the work that has been done to enliven (*faire vivre*) the plaza, that the plaza which was liberated hasn't been used in a way that is more useful, a way that is more useful, eh, for everyone. It's the opposite. Me, I think that it's, for the moment it's aesthetically well done, but in terms of practical use, it's being wasted (*gâchée*). There aren't enough of the things that it needs. Voila.” (Jacques, business

owner, Figuerolles).

The process of lifting one meaning from the plaza and attempting to install another has seemingly produced a desert, an empty space that meets neither users' desires nor municipal goals of creating a vibrant public space linked to the new transport system. The near silence of the plaza is made all the more obvious by a fringe of activity: on the other side of the Cours Gambetta are several illegal vendors, some with crates of mint propped up against the walls of the TATI department store, others with cardboard boxes of household goods, belts, and other items spread out on plastic sheets and cloth carpets. The cafes and restaurants across the street are also heaving with people drinking coffee or tea. A cafe-turned-pizzeria on the southern edge of the Plan Cabanes is encroaching on the plaza, with permission from city hall, and another restaurant across the street from the northern edge of the plaza spreads out and welcome diners with a daily menu. The arrival of Montpellier's 3rd tramline two years after fieldwork was completed has added a further dimension, in the form of people waiting by the rows of trees and benches for the tram, and also with a line of city rental bikes tucked behind the transport platform. The centre of the Plan Cabanes is, however, relatively undisturbed. Walking diagonally across the plaza on a sunny spring afternoon in 2010 saw me skittle frantically back to the edge of the Plan Cabanes as students from the driving school made some unfortunate attempts at learning how to reverse a car and a moped within close distance of each other (and me). The spectacle of a driving instructor shouting that I should not block traffic and my retort that this was a plaza and not a street certainly created an animation of sorts for the nearby cafe, though nothing like the liveliness sustained by the large produce market that filled the plaza on a daily basis.

That on most days the Plan Cabanes looks empty is difficult to dispute. People do cross the plaza, on foot and on bikes, and twice daily students from the Catholic high school bordering the plaza fan out from the front doors. Yet, in most instances, the space looks underused – at least compared to the sociability associated with the old Marché du Plan Cabanes, and the density of activity currently taking place across the street

from the plaza. Detailing the renovation of key public spaces in Berlin and Paris, Fleury (2009) notes that without some form of activity these sites became something that is traversed, rather than places which encourage lingering. The creation of Paris Plage, the installation of outdoor markets, and other public events are for Fleury (2009) part of the urban planning arsenal that can be deployed to ensure that public life forms around newly renovated spaces. Considering the regeneration of a park in northern Paris, Newman (2011) confirms the importance of social planning alongside more technical considerations: with a stated objective of creating usable space, and avoiding what planners and neighbours termed ‘dead’ space, those involved in the park’s redevelopment sought the involvement of residents in the planning phases, included spaces for sitting and socializing in the new design, and installed playgrounds, street furniture, and other amenities to enable lingering. As both studies imply, without attention to the social processes that underline the usage of public space, that space will simply not exist in a meaningful way.

The idea of dead space is also taken up by Mitchell (2003) who comments on the challenges of corporate plazas, and in particular the hollowness associated with imposed cultural events that effectively Disneyfy public space (Zukin 1995) and produce an artificial identity. While I disagree with Mitchell’s (2003) assertion that all commercial activity is at fault – the use of outdoor food markets in France demonstrates the public utility and success of some forms of commercial ventures – the notion of an imposed meaning and usage, and its death knell for public space, rings true with respect to the Plan Cabanes. As one interviewee noted, it is not simply the renovation process which has produced the emptiness of the plaza, but the removal of a particular form of commercial and socio-cultural usage. When asked for his thoughts on the renovated Plan Cabanes, this interviewee insisted on calling the site Place Gambetta to demarcate it from its previous life as a market of diverse users, and argued vociferously that:

“There is nothing, there is nothing being developed. There is nothing, there is nothing on the Place Gambetta that is being developed. Right now it’s empty, it’s empty. We kicked out the Arabs from there and now it’s just left like that. Voila.

There is nothing. You've seen the plaza, there is nothing"
(Abdul, business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

The constitution of the Plan Cabanes as empty space is not simply a function of the failure of the *brocante* market to draw in users, but also a function of who was removed and why. The dual-naming practices of Figuerolles and Plan Cabanes – and now Place Gambetta – speak to the contested nature of this public space and indicate that through the relocation of the market, and the relocation of the social space attached to it, a fracture in public space has been produced. That all sides involved in the renovation of the Plan Cabanes – municipal actors, relocated vendors, residents, and those undecided as to the importance of the event – consistently describe the current state of the plaza as ‘empty space’, expressing a desire to see it come to ‘life’ and be ‘animated’, indicates that the coding of this space as ‘public’ is under debate. The *brocante* market has been one attempt to ‘fill’ this space and render it usable, yet vendors in this market will be the first to say that this venture is yet to produce any meaningful results.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the rhetoric surrounding the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, and current perceptions of the newly renovated Plan Cabanes plaza. Drawing on the impressions of market goers and neighbourhood residents, the produce market which existed in the Plan Cabanes plaza until 2005 is described as a social and commercial hub, witnessing a surge of people, and an expansive retail experience simply not replicated in the *brocante* market that followed. In this instance, a particular kind of commercial activity could be seen as creating social space, the presence of market stalls encouraging lingering and conversation, producing a form of neighbourhood life so valued by Jane Jacobs (1961). An overview of the municipality’s public space vocabulary reveals a different register: the focus is on the technical components of plazas, streets, and parks, the stones and vegetation used to construct the physical spaces of the city. The uniformity of materials used throughout the city-centre of Montpellier, and the insistence of re-qualifying the Plan Cabanes plaza as

part of wider transport works, suggests that public space is viewed as a symbol for the city, a representation of political ambitions that are closely tied to the aims of the broader urban development plans outlined in Chapter 2. The Plan Cabanes is, in other words, simply one of many plazas in the municipally overseen public space network. This overlay of municipal considerations for the physical structure of public space and market users' focus on the social elements of public space has produced a disjointed plaza in the newly renovated Plan Cabanes: at once described as a beautifully finished space and social void, the new plaza is viewed as empty, dead space by both municipal and neighbourhood actors. The assertion on all sides that the Plan Cabanes lacks animation, an identity, or some form of life says much about the function of public space in Montpellier, and in particular the desire for such plazas to encourage interaction, bring people together, and permit the integration of a variety of economic, social, and cultural actors. Public space is as much a spectacle as it is a physical site, and the empty beauty of the Plan Cabanes suggests that while the latter is well developed the former is absent.

The rhetoric of empty space puts to question the 'public space' status of the newly renovated plaza, and raises some points about the broader understanding of public space in Montpellier. While the legal definition of the public domain as inalienable, non-transferrable, and enduring suggests that public space cannot (theoretically) be usurped for another usage – the ability to re-qualify public space, and to lift certain meanings from a plaza in order to install a new socio-cultural usage, indicates that the usage of public space can be purposefully altered. If space is rendered public when a variety of actors can negotiate usage, access, alter and occupy a site, then the ability of municipal actors to enact drastic change in the Plan Cabanes queries whether this site is perhaps better defined as 'municipal space', as an entity that is in the realm of the state rather than one shaped by local publics. The notion that the *brocante* market is a better use of the Plan Cabanes than a diverse food market is also relevant, and has been tangentially considered in this chapter. As I move on to the next chapter, this issue of urban heritage – of whose culture is appropriate for the space,

and how this is expressed through the composition of municipally-sanctioned markets – will be taken up by the intersection between notions of an ‘Arab neighbourhood’ and those of French heritage protection policies.

Chapter 5: Memory erased, history re-imagined

The previous chapter interrogated the notion of empty space, and the failure of the new Plan Cabanes to meet the complex demands of a diverse community. The renovated plaza is viewed as: a social void, one lacking animation, a large stretch of carefully selected stones and polished benches that hold little activity or interest, a site that is static compared to the surge of activity that used to exist there. Chapter 4 questioned whether the Plan Cabanes can truly be considered public space, and argued that by consciously lifting one meaning from the plaza and attempting to insert another, the city of Montpellier had marked this space as a representation of political ambitions rather than a node for community integration. This analysis drew on Lefebvre's (1991) conception of the production of space, and in particular the friction produced when abstract space and the planning vision of how the plaza should function meets and mismatches with the lived and perceived space of users, residents, stall holders, and local shopkeepers. In this chapter I will take these points a step further by interrogating the links between local history, memory, the production of community space, and the resulting 'empty space'. Taking up the vocabulary deployed by Klein (1997), I will consider the intertwining of physical erasure (the removal of the market) and cultural erasure (the loss of certain community memories) in relation to the articulation of appropriate uses and users (Mitchell 2003) for the plaza. The impetus for this analytic approach is twofold: through semi-structured interviews and life history interviews some research participants articulated a fear of being removed, pushed aside, and made to disappear from the visual space of the neighbourhood they call home, a claim which jarred with my understanding of the structure of public space in the Plan Cabanes and reinforced the importance of maintaining a visible presence. In an area designated as an urban heritage protection zone the meaning of 'heritage' – of whose heritage is being protected, how and why – raises questions about

place-making processes, identity, and the ability of certain groups to coalesce their vision of local history into a formal policy which excludes other users (Sibley 1995; Blokland 2009). The result hints at a nuanced negotiation of notions of cultural dominance and subordination (Jackson 1989), and speaks to conflicting visions of how the public space / empty space of the Plan Cabanes should be used.

The paragraphs that follow focus on the multiplicity of local memories, histories, and what Klein (1997) terms ‘distraction’ – the inextricable and impossible to separate seeping together of fiction and fact – to examine what emerges as a hierarchy of visual cues, memories, and desirable publics. A more systematic look at the urban planning aspect of heritage protection, with adjacent legal codes and decision making processes, will be left to Chapter 6. Instead, in the sections that follow the term heritage (*patrimoine*) takes on a more fluid meaning, one used by residents and local users to speak about the past, their personal memories, and the aspects of the built environment they value most strongly. Their definitions of what constitutes heritage do not often agree, and it is with some difficulty that I have allowed what should be a precisely defined term to become unanchored and float beyond my (academically) instilled sense of clearly set parameters. My own understanding of the term heritage, and its links with memory, have been shaped by O’Keeffe’s (2007) discussion on the topic. For O’Keeffe, personal memories are emotional and sensual: it is how we felt at a particular time and place, and the sounds, smells and sounds which shaped that experience, or what Proust (1913) might describe as an ‘involuntary memory’ spurred by the tasting of a madeleine. Historical memory, for O’Keeffe, is visual and factual and revolves around “things of which we are reminded”(2007, 5) through the media, books, and formal accounts of events. This form of memory can be viewed as collective (Halbwachs 1992), and while being shared by a wider audience it shapes what might be called ‘heritage’, or, the traditions, memories, and places which are held as culturally and socially relevant by a larger community. Heritage is a hotly contested term (Wright 1985; Hewison 1987; Nelson 2003; Wertsch 2009), not least for questions of what constitutes heritage,

and how collective and personal memories intersect with this concept. The notion of ‘collective memory’ is equally contentious, and while Connerton (1989) has found it a useful analytic viewpoint for understanding how cultural identities are formed – and by extension, how political power intersects with the formation of such identities – Crane (1997) has argued that over reliance on notions of ‘collective’ overlook and reify the individual act of remembering. Only individuals, after all, have the capacity to recall past events, and link these to current conditions. By deploying the term ‘collective memory’ in the pages that follow, I am drawing on the idea of O’Keeffe (2007) on the differences between personal memory (what individual participants remember) and historical memory (how they situate these into broader narratives) – all the while conscious that these two categories are not always so easily separated – and use these notions to try to identify whose memories form the ‘heritage’ of the Plan Cabanes plaza (and its formal heritage protection designation), and who might be left out of this form of ‘collective memory’.

This chapter begins with a brief literature review examining the notion of memory, and in particular, links between memory and the formation of public space. This review argues that the way we remember the past is central to our understanding of the present (Lowenthal 1985) and comments on the particular importance of material culture to remembrance in France (Nora 1989). The subsequent section weaves together local narratives, stories, comments, and memories and tells the history of the Plan Cabanes and surrounding streets through the eyes of a multiplicity of residents. As the interviewer/ethnographer I am also present in these stories, and as noted in Chapter 2, the questions I asked and the stories I was told are undoubtedly influenced by my longer residence in this neighbourhood. The third section turns to the materiality of history, and considers how the selective form of memory attached to the Plan Cabanes insists that a *brocante* market is the only cultural and commercial venture deemed appropriate for this space. A hierarchy of heritage is revealed, and the relocation of the old Marché du Plan Cabanes takes on new meaning, one linked to gentrification and cultural purification (to be examined more

closely in Chapter 6). The final section returns to the notion of empty space, and focuses on the erasure of memory as articulated by the often challenging stories of market users and local residents. The conflict between public space as conceived by urban planners in Montpellier, and the perceived and lived space (Lefebvre 1991) of residents, is starkly highlighted in interviews, and takes the discussion back to the firmly defined notion of a republican identity, formal national and local history, and more fluid post-colonial narratives.

5.1 Public space and public memory

Several works have shaped my understanding of the links between public space and public memory, and in turn informed the theoretical and fieldwork approach that supports this chapter. Norman Klein's (1997) glimpse into the palimpsest that is Los Angeles was my first introduction to the interplay of memory, fiction, history and forgetting that so forcefully shapes the public sphere. Through Klein's critical lens L.A. is a city that both exists and doesn't: the physical structure of downtown and the layers of highways, roads, tourist trails, and city plans reveal an extensive urban structure and visual culture; yet it is also a city of decay, a landscape of empty buildings and abandoned metro tunnels, smog, poverty, film noir meets Blade Runner, and an urban imagery built on the fickle and fantastic visions of the film industry and early 20th century boosterism. Klein's work is grounded in what he terms 'anti-tours', visits to empty buildings or empty lots that see him speak with residents about what has been physically destroyed, and how this links to their sense of community, local history, and presence in L.A. Memory, film, and personal stories are, for Klein (1997), a way of creating a place by imagining it into existence. Yet erasure is also built into the process because – following on from Lowenthal (1985) and Davis (1990) – it is only through forgetting the past, and overlaying its ruins with a selective, nostalgic reading of those foundations, that the mirage of L.A. can be created. Klein's approach to research gives equal weight to personal memories, formal urban documents, film, fiction, hearsay, gossip, big-budget arts culture, and rumours. Using a technique he terms 'docufable' he captures the erasure of memory by

blending all of the above sources into a nuanced narrative of re-placement and displacement, especially around the history of downtown LA where the intermingling of physical destruction meets the glitter of film and migrants' personal memories of relocation and resettlement. For Klein, erasure functions in several ways: 1) physical forgetting, through the knocking down of old houses in neighbourhoods deemed dangerous as a way of preparing for a new image; 2) conceptual, with the removal of poverty and racial diversity from the dominant imagery of the L.A. film and arts machine; 3) social erasure; and 4) economic erasure, both of which undermine the presence of L.A.'s non-white majority, and create a particular understanding of order and lifestyle that is tied to class, race, and ethnicity. The ways in which L.A. is remembered influences how the city of today is built and re-imagined, and so public space becomes very much tied to a spectrum of public memories: space is either dangerous, filled with images of the 1992 Rodney King riots and in need of police management, or it is sunshine filled suburbs, beaches, and film openings which colour much of Los Angeles' exported image.

This interplay between the ways in which the city is perceived, conceptualized and lived (Lefebvre 1991) and the role of remembrance and forgetting is echoed by Amin and Thrift who remind that "a city named in certain ways also becomes that city through the practices of people in response to the labels." (2002, 23). This is very much true of Blokland's (2009) findings in New Haven, Connecticut, where two local festivals represent competing visions of neighbourhood identity: an Italian-American community event vies for attention with a local heritage preservation event (run by a group Blokland terms 'the gentrifiers'), each positioned at opposed ends of the same park, on the same day, and each in turn outlining a different vision of the area's history. For Italian-American residents this corner of New Haven is linked to memories of migration and strong community ties, while for 'the gentrifiers' the area is overlaid with memories of redeveloping dilapidated housing and a desire to preserve historic buildings. Chronicling the subtle tussle between the two groups – and occasional overlap – Blokland (2009) finds that the area's singular

character and identity is articulated as an up and coming Italian-American neighbourhood, one where the grit of tenement housing has been transformed into trim parks and well maintained houses, with traces of ethnic commerce and heritage woven into the landscape. Missing from this vision are the memories and histories of low-income black residents who are grouped in high-rise buildings at one end of the neighbourhood, and whose presence is entirely absent from the stories Blokland (2009) collects at the competing festivals. Actively dis-identifying with the dominant Italian-American identity of the neighbourhood, these minority groups articulate a discomfort with the organization of public space, social amenities, and constant oversight of park usage which puts to question their access to this site. The impact of such selective reading of local memory is stark, and as Blokland notes:

“residents’ historical narratives are processes of place-making that, once dominant in a public discourse, affect what defines ‘the community’ and what does not. Such symbolic representations thus help to define community needs. Erasures and absent agents in such representations then weaken the voices of those with other needs”(2009, 1594).

In many ways Blokland (2009) is taking Klein’s (1997) argument on the processes of remembering and forgetting a step further by tying a presence in local historical narratives to an ability to enact a political voice, and thus to being identified as an appropriate user (Mitchell 2003) in the public sphere.

Through their examination of heritage, memory and place-making in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Hanna et al (2004) suggest that remembering is a performance that requires constant attention and work. As visitors are taken on guided civil war tours through a place that identifies as ‘America’s most historic city’, the landscape of Fredericksburg is repacked into small bites of memory that allow for a personal connection with the landscape: tour bus drivers tell their personal stories of being in the town, re-enactments at an apothecary shop bring history to life, and the visitors’ centre introductory film focuses as much on the history of Fredericksburg as on the experiences of past visitors who describe their favourite parts of

town. A site that Hanna et al (2004) describe as a combined museum and shopping mall allows visitors to literally consume history, all the while forming their own memories of the civil war trails. Aside from conclusions on the performativity of the tourist experience and the negotiation of identity through the filter of historic sites, Hanna et al (2004) argue, that it is precisely this interplay of history/memory that is “often used to marshal broader social support for a particular group’s definition of, and goals for, a nation and community” (2004, 463). The notion that memory and place-making, via tourism, are central to forming a shared identity is a point also examined by Hoelscher and Alderman (2004) in terms of the negotiation of apartheid history through South African’s Robben Island, and in Till’s (2005) examination of heritage and memory in Berlin. Perhaps lending itself to the study of memory, history, forgetting, and re-imagining more easily than many other European cities (Huyssen 2003; Cochrane 2006; Jordan 2006), Berlin’s layers of conflict, trauma, triumph, and personal remembrance are viewed by Till (2005) through a variety of lenses. Alternating between personal narratives of her interaction with individual sites – a fence surrounding the construction site of a memorial, information flyers, metro stops; an approach mirrored by Macdonald (2009) in her study of Nuremberg – and discussion of the broader urban planning and urban regeneration agendas for the new Berlin, Till (2005) considers difficult memories, wartime heritage, and residents’ conflicted desire to preserve the landscape all the while selectively forgetting or changing facets of its existence. While urban planners view Berlin’s city centre as an ‘empty’ landscape in need of redesign, discussions with residents reveal a rich history and complex memory processes tied to these so-termed ‘empty’ lots: what for developers appears as a ‘new’ city holds, for East and West Berliners alike, memories of Cold War buildings and their political meaning, the shadow of the Wall, and Gestapo ruins unearthed as digging started for new high-rise buildings. Memory, in other words, is tied to a specific time and place, and it is the attachment of certain local memories to the seemingly banal fences, metro stops, and ruins of Berlin’s city-centre which creates public memory – that socio-historical entity that Lowenthal (1985), Halbwachs (1992), and Nora (1989)

relate to the creation of a national consciousness and identity – by giving these ideas physical representation. The destruction of these sites through the regeneration process creates hauntings (Edensor 2008), leaving behind wisps of the political and social milieu that has been knocked down, which may include working class heritage (Mansvelt 2010), migrant experiences (Lai 2012), and political struggle (Ross 1996). As Hayden (1997) reminds, the urban landscape is a political entity and public space is central to the fabric of identity and history which forms the city:

“Urban landscapes are storehouses for [...] social memories, because natural features such as hills or harbours, as well as streets, buildings, and patterns of settlement, frame the lives of many people and often outlast many lifetimes. Decades of ‘urban renewal’ and ‘redevelopment’ of a savage kind have taught many communities that when the urban landscape is battered, important collective memories are obliterated.”(1997, 9)

This idea is stretched further in Byrne and Houston’s (2004) study of a redevelopment project in East Perth, Australia, where Aboriginal culture is tacitly erased in favour of a staged heritage: as the buildings, wine bars, and venues used by Aboriginal peoples are closed and access to local parks limited, the regeneration project driving these changes is seen to pick up select elements of Aboriginal culture in the colour schemes and aesthetics applied to the new urban landscape as a way of paying homage to ‘heritage’. In this instance, the physical, linguistic and social erasure of Aboriginal peoples is aided by their association with what Byrne and Houston (2004) term the ‘deep past’, a notation that assigns an Aboriginal presence to a distant point in time rather than living culture, effectively removing their ability to claim social rights to the redeveloped landscape. Not only is heritage tied to economic and social issues, but through the construction of new higher-price point housing, to issues of private ownership and real estate value (Orbasli 2000), and a particular ordering of the landscape that links public memory and commercial gains (Zukin 1995).

Tracing the riots that enveloped downtown Lexington, Kentucky, after the police shooting death of a black teenager, McCann (1999) considers how dominant public space can be challenged by marginalized groups through

collective action. In a city where redevelopment has meant the removal of buildings relevant to African-American urban memory from the downtown and their replacement with glass and steel skyscrapers – what McCann, following Lefebvre (1991) terms the creation of abstract, corporate space – the return of these groups into the downtown through the difficult circumstances following this event is seen as a contestation of the dominant city order, resistance to a commercialized form of public space which excludes some users from the downtown, and a challenge to the erasure of the symbols which formed African-American identities. The ability to claim a stake in public space is, following McCann (1999), a tenuous process that requires constant renegotiation. It is a point Burk (2010) considers with respect to a trio of monuments in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, each of which is caught in local debates about how to commemorate the painful memories of overcoming violence in this neighbourhood. Suggesting that the monuments are symbols of resistance for First Nations and women's groups in Vancouver, Burk (2010) argues that the ability to shape the physical, conceptual and discursive landscape of downtown through 'organized remembrance' – or monuments – is central to the ability of residents in this stigmatized area to reclaim their right to the city. And so, the establishment of a boulder in CRAB Park is seen as a way of ensuring that the murder of countless women in the Downtown Eastside would remain in the public eye and become part of the collective memory of Vancouver.

As Nora (1989) details with respect to France, these forms of organized remembrance are deliberate attempts to determine who is included in the public sphere, which concerns are accounted for in public space, and what political discourses are given prominence. For Nora (1989) memory becomes a conscious event that is linked to what he identifies as *lieux de mémoire* – sites of memory – the physical monuments, museums, books, objects, but also celebrations and parades and grand personas, which prompt individual citizens to take part in a collective recognition of a defined national past. In Nora's (1989) lexicon, the 'personal memories' and 'collective memories' distinguished by O'Keeffe (2007) collide:

personal memories are linked to collective memories through the rituals of public remembrance and interaction with spaces, objects, and ideas dedicated to eliciting an emotional-sensual reaction. Nora's (1989) *lieux de mémoire* encourage the transmission of culture by creating spaces that embody national memory and, alongside, determine what (and who) is forgotten and erased, dropped from the collectivity of what it means to be French, and thus denied a place in the city. In this, the state is seen as having a key role in building, maintaining, and perpetuating such *lieux de mémoire* – and in turn, the state also has a hand in deciding which events and objects are elevated to the status of 'collective memory'. As Buck-Morss argues, the transmission of culture:

“is a political act of the highest import – not because culture in itself has the power to change the given, but because historical memory affects decisively the collective, political will for change. Indeed, it is its only nourishment”(1989, xi).

The city, then, is as much an imagined space as a civic space, and the embedding of certain histories in the landscape – and the deliberate erasure of others – is a political act.

In that sense notions of memory, remembering, forgetting, erasing, and re-imagining are central to understanding who is included, excluded, and able to alter the fabric of public space in Montpellier's Plan Cabanes. If, following Klein (1997), a place can be imagined into existence through the interweaving of fiction and fact, then the contested nature of the Plan Cabanes is based in part on a lively competition to assign a history, memory, and story to the space. Being able to claim to hold the 'true' history of the plaza would, arguably, give some leverage to being able to shape its current form and usage. It is neither possible nor desirable to separate history from imagination, and as Blokland (2009) reminds, the process of telling stories in and of itself defines 'community', and so who has a political voice and ability to represent the needs of the area. As Till (2005) and Nora (1989) note, part of this takes material form – through physical ruins, visual aesthetics, and the shape given to banal fences and street furniture – and ensures that memory and history are tied to a specific place and physical representation. The sections that follow first

consider the spectrum of memories and histories tied to the Plan Cabanes, before moving on to the materiality of *brocante* and food stands, and the links between these physical entities and the enactment of a specific form of memory and cultural identity.

5.2 Neighbourhood memories

Understanding the relevance of the Plan Cabanes means tracing a zig-zag of memories and histories through the neighbourhood. Fabien, who is in his eighties and has visited the area since childhood, met me for a late afternoon aperitif to tell me his Plan Cabanes stories – because, he insisted, studying the market today would tell me so little about what the area really meant to the city. Or at least his version of Montpellier, which has little to do with the universities or tourism or the high-tech sector that are so prized by city hall, and more to do with the fluidities of public life and street life. In the inter-war period before the market was fully established, Fabien tells me, there were *baladeuses* in each neighbourhood. *Balade* means to stroll or walk, and the *baladeuses* were women (never men) who would walk through the neighbourhood pushing a cart with fresh produce for sale. Between the summer heat and the late-spring humidity food simply did not keep, and with no refrigerators shopping was a daily venture that spun around the nearby covered and open markets, the small local shops, and the *baladeuses* chiming through the streets. They would sometime station themselves at street corners, calling out the selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, or pass through the streets and sell to their door. The *baladeuses* were in competition with the small shops – the *épiceries*, Fabien insists that when he was a teenager everyone was always within sight of an *épicerie* – and offered produce at discount rates.

At the time the market at Plan Cabanes was a relatively small venture, at least compared to the much larger Halles and the extensive outdoor markets in the historic city-centre, and as a small venture it was just one node in a wider network of shopping, strolling, socializing, taste, scent, and contact with the farmers and wine producers who supplied the city. Fabien's stories are never about the plaza itself, but rather that which

surrounded it. At the north end of the Plan Cabanes stands a multi-storey sandy coloured building with a cafe on the ground floor: this is (was) the head office of the famous Salins du Midi, a company with the right to harvest sea-salt in the region. According to Fabien, the Salins du Midi held the coastal franchise from Sète to the Camargue, mining the *fleur de sel* in the narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean and the interior marshlands. Their head office at the Plan Cabanes was the defining feature of the neighbourhood, overshadowing the market itself, and giving economic prominence to an area that Fabien describes as otherwise destitute: a poor neighbourhood, home to the Gitan community, whose presence set apart Figuerolles, and by extension the Plan Cabanes, from the rest of Montpellier.

Others remember these early years of the Marché du Plan Cabanes at a different scale. Many of the vendors in the produce and the *brocante* markets have close personal ties to the plaza and surroundings, and especially amongst the produce vendors there are several multi-generational stallholder families: instances where the stand was first opened by grandparents, passed on to parents or aunts and uncles, and eventually to the present vendors. They describe a market that held the world, a world in a market, stalls filling the Plan Cabanes plaza and extending into nearby streets. Farmers coming in with small carts to sell wine, gardeners and seed sellers, butchers, cheese, and stands of fresh produce. One vendor tells me stories of the stories told to him by his parents, who first opened their stand after the war and had a steady clientele who would seek them out for their fresh produce and recipes. That it was much easier then, no supermarkets for competition and everyone passing through the market at some point in the week. Little in the way of rivalries, a sense that the Plan Cabanes was one happy family. There were fewer rules on how to set up your stalls, no limits on table height, and the market was built anew each day – with a permanent tourney of daily vendors arriving to sell surplus produce, found items, and seasonal goods. The small houses that make up Figuerolles – on the rue des Saints (streets of the Saints), comprising St. Joseph, Blaise, Antoine, Etienne, and Honoré

– were the centre of the wine sellers’ community, as were the small houses climbing up the rue de l’Ecole de Droit. With their two-storey garages designed to take in vintners’ carts, and interior courts to keep livestock, these houses sent out drink and produce every morning for the market. Figuerolles and the Plan Cabanes become intertwined, a neighbourhood that traverses the busy Cours Gambetta.

Others dispute these memories and say that Figuerolles had always been a different world and, echoing Fabien’s stories, one tied more closely to the local Gitan community than the wine production and agrarian trade of the Marché du Plan Cabanes. There are childhood memories too, a particular incident of visiting the market and being nipped at by a rowdy competitor, hiding at a grandparents’ stall, getting lost in the crowds. One vendor tells me that she remembers a dog, and a bite, and that she came back to the Plan Cabanes again only when she was an adult and ready to take over the family stand. There is a certain glint to these memories of the 1950s and 1960s, and my field notes are replete with a repetition of key words: scent, especially fruit in summer, small time farmers bringing in surplus (they would be called illegal now, an informant insists that I add), the rain in winter and the winds in spring, and fighting to keep the stands together, camaraderie, profits to be made, a busy plaza, carts and horses, and of course the wine merchants from the surrounding villages bringing in their reds and rosés. No one has detailed stories to tell – but instead fragments of memories, a sense that the old market, the one that existed several decades earlier, is already relegated to that dreamlike realm where specifics are difficult to come by yet where the mention of the plaza brings to the surface firm impressions and emotions. There used to be a tramway then too, running along Gambetta, until it was removed and cars allowed to roam the streets.

Others emphasize the 19th and 20th century military history that seeps through this area. A neighbourhood association that brings together residents and shopkeepers on some nearby streets includes vignettes on military heritage in their regular newsletters. Sent out a few times a year to subscribers, the newsletter includes local recipes, promotes community

events, covers discussions with the municipality on the finer points of local bylaws, including the relocation of the produce market, and has a section on neighbourhood history. It is these historical excerpts which caught my attention, and led me to follow up with the association. Reading through the newsletters back-to-back I learn that an army barracks existed in the neighbourhood, and that many of the street names in the area commemorate French military figures: there is the Rue des Soldats (soldiers), and then the four Generals, in order, Rue General Claparede, then Dumas, Maurin, and Maureilhan, and of course the Rue de la 32ème (the 32nd division). As Azaryahu (1996) suggests, the system of commemoration through street names and plaza names became current in France after the 1789 revolution, and is “a component of French political symbolism” (Azaryahu, 1996: 313). That the neighbourhood association is actively working with the municipality on heritage protection plans and engages in many public meetings and discussions on the topic is reflected in their newsletter, and in the emphasis given to what the association terms the ‘formal’ heritage of the Plan Cabanes, the military and the wine. The neighbourhood association members I met were keen to outline this history in more detail: the Plan Cabanes was key not only to Montpellier’s defence and military might, but to France more broadly. Napoléon’s father had once lived in town (on the nearby Rue du Cheval Vert, a tram stop away from the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood; the house has a plaque I enjoy pointing out to visiting friends). Before Montpellier was a wine-filled tourist hotspot it was a wine-filled military town, one that still houses (or did, until the early 2010s) a prestigious military college and layers upon layers of military history. This heritage, an association member tells me, is not to be sneezed at. Rather, it should be protected and consciously taught to the younger generations. The association organizes school visits and cultural events to promote this form of local history. They also lobby their local councillors and have regular meetings with municipal actors and the Mission Grand Coeur on these points. This is heritage coalesced around the sorts of symbols Nora (1989) identifies as central to institutionalized remembrance of France: the statues, place names, and street names which form the *lieux de mémoire* of the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood.

Yet few other research participants cared about the military history, or noticed that the surrounding streets carried the names of Generals or army regiments. This is a key disconnect: some symbols of 19th century heritage being protected are, simply, not as important to many current users and residents. If, as Halbwachs (1992) argues, memory is important to holding communities together, then the disparate memories surrounding the Plan Cabanes are certainly capable of dividing. While one neighbourhood association lobbies for military heritage to be protected, others take a very different viewpoint on what constitutes *patrimoine* in the Plan Cabanes. One of the long-time market vendors insisted that I speak with an association in Figuerolles. Although the question of whether Figuerolles is part of Plan Cabanes is unresolvable – some would say that the old market was the defining feature of the neighbourhood, others draw the limit of Figuerolles as the Place Salengro, and thus unrelated to the large plaza – the two components Figuerolles/Plan Cabanes are colloquially tied, and so I follow the trail past the streets of the Saints, and to a small community meeting hall for an interview. There are photos of the 1950s on the walls, and more recent ones of large community dinners held in the nearby countryside. The two association members I meet tell me that Figuerolles was, and always will be, its own place. While the neighbourhood is part of Montpellier in the post-war period it formed an association to stake out some independence, electing a Figuerolles mayor and declaring itself a free community. An act of political defiance that has floated across decades and decades, and rings out in this small meeting room in 2010. Juju, one of the interviewees, describes Figuerolles as “a ghost”, it belongs to the city, but grudgingly, wishing still to be its own entity.

As the conversation with Juju and Ralph taps back and forth between them, I manage to edge in a question every other turn, sometimes asking them to stop when different dialects seep in. I begin with a static question on neighbourhood change and it is Juju, who has lived in Figuerolles all of his life, who takes over, asks me to confirm that the voice recorder is actually recording and begins:

“Roza: And in the last 20 years how has the neighbourhood changed?”

Juju: It has evolved.

Roza: In terms of commerce?

Juju: Before you had, next to there [rue Chaptal] was the train station. Chaptal. There was the train depot there. All the locomotives and cars were held there. There was the station, and all. And the train passed on the bridge. A steam train. Made lots of noise. In the Rue de Claret just next to it, there, they had their sleeping quarters there. Many people employed [...] And we would walk, put the ear to the rail like the Indians in Toronto, the Mohicans did like this, you put your ear to the rail and you can hear if the train was coming. And now you will hear the tramway. [...] And then when you go further, by St. Joseph, it was the Montpellier foundry [...] it made the fountains, all that, all the gutters, it was all there. After there is [...] the biscuit factory. It was more than 50 years ago. It means that there was a lot of work right here. And more commerce, clothing, shoes, there was good milk, and *épiceries*, butchers, hairdressers, all. There was more commerce than now. Then in the 60s, ‘62, 70s, they started to build the HLM [social housing] there, like La Paillade and all that. When people moved to them, from generation to generation, you are really, they used to live in the same house. But this generation, when they had apartments, they had showers, living room, they all left. And so the commerce closed, there was no one to take over. And then the large supermarkets started to open, and voilà. And then in ‘75 Magrebin commerce started to arrive, and it's the perfect place, it's full of empty stores. They bought there. And it's all bakeries and hairdressers.” (Juju, neighbourhood association, Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes)

Juju's narrative was the first I had heard that linked together several memories of the neighbourhood: visions of Montpellier as a smaller provincial city in the post-war period, with light industry, the multi-generational households (also noted by Fabien); a form of neighbourhood life centred on the local markets and plazas; and the arrival of a diverse market and associated commercial and social cluster. Juju went on to describe the nearby gardens, the man who used to sleep on the municipal shed in the Place Salengro, and how they used to unload stock at the Marché du Plan Cabanes in the mornings for pocket money, sleeping on a

balcony in the summer heat, and childhood games in the vineyards which bumped into the neighbourhood. And then, a vision of the city in the post-1970s period, when migrants from the Maghreb, and in particular those resettling from Algerian, had already established themselves in the city and begun to establish a commercial cluster in this neighbourhood. The train station at Chaptal is now gone, but Montpellier's brand new line 3 of the tramway does follow the same rail lines to the coast. The milk, Juju explained, used to come from the nearby field where a farmer kept a few cows just behind the military barracks. While the army still has a hovering presence in Juju's stories, it is relegated to a lesser status – and certainly not one worth preserving. For Juju and for Ralph, the heritage worth protecting centres on the small houses that dot the Figuerolles neighbourhood, with their interior courtyards, old water wells, large wine storage garages, and long history of occupation by the Gitan community, artisans, and what they describe as 'old families'.

Ralph offered to take me on a walking tour of the neighbourhood, and I followed as we criss-crossed the streets of the Saints. Just before this particularly dense network is a cul-de-sac where the official street name is matched by an unofficial Figuerolles-designated name that identifies this as the place where women used to meet to do their washing. The association has taken to covertly renaming the area, a challenge to the formal remembrance of military and religious history (cf Pred 1990) – the streets of the Saints, along with those named after Père Fabre and Père Bonnet, two important figures for the neighbourhood – and an attempt to introduce a more personal form of local history into the urban landscape. If the Plan Cabanes plaza is viewed as empty space that holds little meaning for past users, the surrounding streets certainly do not fall in the same category, and for Ralph the renaming process has been central to elevating a wider spectrum of experiences and memories. There is a house with a small tower in the garden – we enter, unannounced, all possible because as a local Ralph has a different relationship with these spaces. This is the observatory, one of the first in Montpellier, and used to give a glimmering vision of the night sky. There are small stone wells in some gardens,

almond trees, Ralph points out the house which used to keep the cows that used to supply the milk Juju remembers from his childhood. Another house has enclosed the well – apparently the stone vestiges are now in the kitchen – and there is a large curve to the outside wall to accommodate this.

We meet some nearby residents who, knowing Ralph and the association, tell us about their small street of the Saints. The pair were born in that street, and say they are Catalan but also Gitan, the whole family was born in the street and they used to live many generations together. When they were little there were no cars or TVs, and so they would build fires outside and all the elders would come down. All that is gone, I am told, it has all changed. Their parents did not work, and at the time of their grandparents it was the women who got the food. They would go to the market and sell from door to door, and their grandmother used to walk down the street singing out what she was selling, bread, and all that. They don't do this anymore, the *baladeuse* are long retired. But, Ralph insists, the association will do a mock up of this for next year's carnival, remind children what the neighbourhood used to be like. The grandmothers sitting by the door of their house agree; and I note some lively competition between neighbourhood associations on how local heritage should be taught, by whom, and in what ways, to the local schools.

The memory of neighbourhood change in the 1970s – the shift from the large local market to what some term a 'North African' market – are worth returning to. I do this with a *brocante* vendor who knows the area well, having grown up in the nearby streets. She explains:

“Madeleine : I used to go to the school there [Notre-Dame de la Merci]. Voila. I didn't grow up, I didn't live here, I lived a kilometre away. We came to school on foot, and my mother came to the market. It was a food market. And for a very long time, well, I knew it. The market was very bourgeois. Very, very, very bourgeois. The school was bourgeois, that [pointing to the surrounding buildings] was bourgeois, there it was bourgeois, the Rue du Courreau was bourgeois. It was all

people who were called Madame de So-and-So, and Madame de So-and-So⁴¹. It was very bourgeois.

Roza: When was this?

Madeleine: Me, when I was at this school I was twelve years old, thirteen years old, fourteen years old. Around then. I don't know when it changed, I had left. And my parents also moved when I was around fifteen years old. And I used to come this way from time to time when I was a teenager, sixteen, seventeen years old, and there was a woman who had taken up selling clothing. It was already a bit different than just food. And then after I left, and I came back [in the 1980s], and it had become an Arab market. I've never understood how or why. It completely changed. I don't know, I don't know at all. [...] Yes, it was lively, it was lively. There were live chickens, there were fruits, there were colours, smells, different sounds. The Maghrebin aspect brought in many things. And it was lively, I really liked it. That side of things. And after that it became a *quartier populaire* [a working class neighbourhood]." (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

The transition detailed by Juju and by Madeleine saw the arrival of a different form of commerce in the 1970s and 1980s. The changes in the market are tied to overall neighbourhood change, the idea that the public plaza is an emblem of the area as a whole, a meeting place for the diversity of residents. Market vendors remember this as well, and I hear stories of the first Maghrebin stalls: much larger than the farmers' market stalls, introducing new produce, introducing affordable prices. These changes to the market were matched by changes in the surrounding sedentary commerce, with halal butchers opening, then hair dressers, and a series of grocery stores and bakeries catering to a more diverse palate. Those leading the changes have fond memories of this period, a golden age of sorts where opportunities abounded and it was possible to succeed – financially, and in terms of social status – by establishing yourself in the Plan Cabanes. Yet the notion that this became an Arab neighbourhood is challenged by other users:

⁴¹ The 'de' in this case is intended as a sign of bourgeois status, with the assumption that having 'de' before a family name is a sign of more noble origins.

“Me, I am against the idea that Figuerolles Plan Cabanes is an Arab neighbourhood. No, there is a bit of everything. There are Arabs, there are the French, there are Gitans, there are, there are Romanians, there are tourists, a bit of everything. There are students who also come often. A bit of everything” (Mahmet, produce vendor, Place Salengro).

A walking tour with another *brocante* vendor revealed the complexity of the area, and the varied perspectives on what it means to be in Figuerolles and Plan Cabanes. This vendor was keen to point out the residential shifts which had taken place in the last three decades. One of the houses in the streets of the Saints used to have a backyard movie theatre, with neighbours gathering drinks, snacks, and having weekend viewings together. Next to it was a Gitan family. Two streets over he had spotted a grandma sweeping some illegal alcohol into the house as the police ambled up the street handing out parking tickets. There was a mechanic, many local shopkeepers lived in the area, and a few small stores used to pepper the streets [see Figure 5.1 and 5.2]. The shift to today’s neighbourhood is written on the walls, literally [see Figure 5.3 and 5.4; and also Figure 6.10].

This *brocante* vendor, along with several others, have been priced out of the area. When the houses sell, he notes, they are taken over by the municipality, renovated or converted into multiple units, and sold on (a topic to be discussed in the subsequent chapter). They call the process gentrification or, for some, *bobo*-fication. *Bobo* being *bourgeois-bohème*, moneyed buyers seeking a neighbourhood with character, heritage, and a bit of grittiness. Or at least this is the version of gentrification imagined by many of those who provided interviews for this research. The idea of heritage here has two meanings: a real estate gimmick, intended to create the sort of character and atmosphere which will draw in buyers, and allow the municipality to sell on property at a reasonable rate. And the lived heritage and local memories which define the experience of living in Figuerolles, Plan Cabanes and surroundings. When I raised queries on the gimmicky heritage being protected I was often told that it was the 19th



Figure 5.1: Faded store sign in the 'streets of saints', reading '*alimentation*' (food store), November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 5.2: Faded store sign with the words '*fabrique / bonneterie*' (production / hosiery) still legible, in the 'streets of saints', November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 5.3: Graffiti reading ‘*La rue est à nous*’ (the street is ours), in the ‘streets of saints’, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 5.4: Graffiti reading ‘*on veut vivre ici!*’ (‘we want to live here!’) at the south-eastern end of the Plan Cabanes plaza, March 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

century military history, others suggested agrarian history (the vintner houses) and religious history (through street names), though with less sense of why this might be unique to the neighbourhood. The memories that seem to coalesce many actors in this neighbourhood – that of the *baladeuse*, of local commerce, public life, market usage, and the shift from one form of usage to another in the 1970s and 80s – are absent from official versions of *patrimoine*, as is the presence of the Gitan community in Figuerolles.

Where does this leave my understanding of the Plan Cabanes?

As Blokland (2009) notes with respect to New Haven, the ability to shape political discourse is an offshoot of the capacity to define the public memory, and thus identity, of a neighbourhood. The disparate visions of how the Plan Cabanes and surroundings are labelled – North African neighbourhood, protected national heritage, Gitan community, student ghetto, filled with *bobos*, filled with military history – determines who is in a position to voice their opinions, enact their vision of local development, and gain municipal resources to support these actions. The processes of remembering and selective forgetting are, following Klein (1997), also tied to political processes that define who constitutes ‘the public’, and in this instance links to discussion on how the Plan Cabanes plaza should be used.

There is a secondary point to be made: these pages of memories say little about the Plan Cabanes plaza itself. Local storytelling never stays on track, and it was a few weeks before I clicked into the wider meaning of what I was being told. I would ask about the plaza, and hear detailed memories of a childhood spent stalking goldfish in a pond in a park in a street two blocks away. In my initial naivete I fought this divergence, tried to turn the conversation back to the market, only to find the conversation stall, halt, reverse, and flutter out to a neighbouring street. The Plan Cabanes and its market(s) are not separate stories, I eventually understood, but are closely tied to the neighbourhood as a whole. It was impossible for informants to tell me just about the market since the Marché du Plan Cabanes was one node of a wider narrative. To relocate the Marché du Plan Cabanes has, in

this instance, many more repercussions than simply shifting vendors to a smaller plaza: it breaks the chain of community memory since a key *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989) is absent. And as will be outlined in the sections that follow, it simplifies the diversity of memories and histories in the area by reducing heritage protection to a specific version of events and attached architectural style. The notion of ‘appropriate’ users (Mitchell 2003) detailed in Chapter 4 meets the idea of forgetting and selective memory, and produces a vision of this neighbourhood which actively excludes certain publics. The anger is palpable, leading local community actors like Juju to remark, “I want to raze it. There will be no more Figuerolles”, when queried on what the future holds.

5.3 Materiality and market memory

In an instance where the articulation of local history and process of remembering have produced contested identities for the Plan Cabanes and surrounding neighbourhoods, the question of what sort of market to install in the plaza is a challenging topic. The shift from a produce to a *brocante* market is, as noted in previous chapters, tied to a particular vision of how public space should be used and by whom. The role of the municipality in carefully organizing the re-development of the plaza, and an insistence on shifting to a different type of commerce, suggests a desire to re-imagine this emblematic site. Local memory is woven into the process: the *brocante* market, as I will argue below, is linked to a particular cultural setting, one that seeks to emphasize specific forms of local heritage while overlooking others.

Over several weeks of interviews and conversations with the *brocante* market vendors, I inquired about the relocation process – and the vendors’ views on why city hall specifically sought out a *brocante* market. As outlined in the previous chapter, many of the responses had to do with the need to animate the plaza through a new market in order to create a true public space. Yet for some of the *brocante* vendors this notion of ‘animation’ was more complex than simply stands and vendors filling the space. In an on going conversation with a book vendor, Pauline, we discussed the

meaning of books versus produce, and she explained that the *brocante* market was ‘cultural animation’ – a unique form of public space performance. When queried on why *brocante* and books might be cultural animation, she explained:

“Beh, it’s, it’s cultural because we, we, we are defending heritage as well. We, the, I don’t know if our trade will last forever but for the moment (pause) we are all the same defending, we are defending French heritage (*patrimoine*). Often we sell French books, eh, paintings, well, all the things that are *brocante* are after all, eh, they were, eh, designed, created in France.”(Pauline, book dealer, Plan Cabanes)

Brocante and book vending is, thus, not just a commercial venture, but closely tied to processes of French identity making. The sale of French books, as Pauline suggests, is a cultural act – and through this, it defines the Plan Cabanes plaza as a French cultural space. While the neighbourhood might have a variety of identities, and a wide range of memories about vintners, *Gitan* communities, old biscuit factories, and stories of working in the markets, the emblematic space of the neighbourhood is being deliberately tied to a very select reading of this history. If, as Pauline suggests, *brocante* is French heritage – that is the sale and exchange of heritage items – the creation of this market supports the notion that this is a neighbourhood worthy of a heritage designation, and equally suggests that the produce market which existed before was relocated for cultural, as well as re-development, reasons.

In conversation with Lucien, it became clear that the ability to take part in this form of sale – *brocante*, books, antiques, French items – is seen to require a certain cultural caché and background. When asked why he chose to be a book seller rather than deal in antiques and *brocante*, Lucien explained:

“What was easier for me to sell wasn’t porcelain, ceramic, because that requires a culture, a knowledge that is very, very detailed, eh, of all the ateliers and all the styles. Of everything, of everything, that requires a, a knowledge that I didn’t have, that I, I, I don’t come from a bourgeois background where we

deal with porcelain from Limoges⁴², that, well, as if we had some at home. So if you wish I, voila, it's an area that I didn't know and which I was lacking in. In contrast books, I know. Not all because it is impossible to know everything but I had a base, eh, cultural, well, I had knowledge, eh, of books because of their content more so than their, their form. If you wish that which I had to learn was, eh, about binding, it was, the history of books, the, the, the first editions, the first prints, etcetera. But I did this, I learnt this, and, and with books, eh, there is this advantage that everything is marked on the book to give you its history. If you take an item of furniture, the history of the furniture, you can't, you can't really know it. The history of a book you can, you can know if, by the binding, or if it wasn't bound, thanks to the editions, or another. Sometime the annotations inside which were written in the 19th or 18th century. And, eh, in terms of the topics of the books well, eh, voila. And so it was much easier for me to be a book vendor. And little by little (gesture to indicate take-off), I slipped in and I have done nothing but books." (Lucien, book dealer, Plan Cabanes)

In Lucien's explanation books and *brocante*, of the kind sold in the Broc'Art market, are cultural and class products. With echoes of Bourdieu's (1984) notion of distinction, *brocante* – porcelain, ceramics, but also linens and cloth in the Plan Cabanes market – are tied to particular socio-cultural milieu, what is here called bourgeois culture. Lucien's decision to take up book vending rather than *brocante* (or antiques) is very much tied to his perceived position in relation to these objects: as someone who comes from a rural, farming background, Lucien argues that he lacks the cultural knowledge to effectively deal with bourgeois material culture. Books, with their well marked provenance and more easily categorized value, are a form of commerce which can be learnt through studying as well as life experience. Yet, even book vending requires what Bourdieu (1984) may term class tastes – or, in my vocabulary, the ability to penetrate closed information networks. Asked how she learned book vending, Pauline explains:

“Pauline: Ok, eh, I looked, and spoke with colleagues, by searching, by being interested, so, me, I have visited many

⁴² Porcelain from Limoges is known as being the best in France, comparable perhaps to Royal Crown Derby in the UK.

museums with books in them, I have consulted many ancient books, many libraries. Also the large selling salons, when there are notable books being sold. If there are sales, very notable sales, then it is enriching. Even if you are not buying. Because, well, ok, the prices are often very, very high. But this still allows a look at rare objects, rare books. I have also seen Picassos, Dalis, and ancient books, ok. It's good when, it's, it's there that we learn in fact.

Roza: And it was easy to get into it?

Pauline: It wasn't obvious at the beginning because you are setting off in a milieu where you are not known, and so you have to find your own path." (Pauline, book dealer, Plan Cabanes)

It is through access to the closed environs of salons and auctions that Pauline acquired much of her knowledge about rare and ancient books, and thus ability to separate out the more banal items sold at the Plan Cabanes market from the more rare items she travels to Paris to sell. Book vendors, as noted in Chapter 3, acquire their items by taking part in house clearances, by attracting local sellers at markets, and through contact with other book vendors. Creating a career out of this trade requires constant triage, knowledge of the other players, and access to the information networks that shape valuations. Pauline's comments, along with Lucien's, suggest that book vending is an activity that requires a cultural consciousness and knowledge of both literary heritage and *patrimoine*, or French heritage, more broadly. While Lucien may insist that he lacks the socio-cultural background to deal in *brocante*, along with most other book vendors in this market he has a university degree in an arts discipline and has worked in fields related to cultural production. Amongst the many book and *brocante* vendors there are former teachers, film producers, those who identify as artists, trained musicians, and those who have worked with heritage protection agencies, suggesting a specific form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) at play in the market. Part of this is evident in the vocabulary used to describe the items on sale: what I may call 'books' the vendors call 'works', or sometimes 'cultural works'. These are rare objects, with an identified provenance and socio-cultural meaning (cf Bourdieu 1984).

Amongst the *brocante* vendors the notion of background is equally important, even if the term ‘bourgeois culture’ is rarely dropped into conversation. David explained why he had become a *brocante* vendor:

“I became a *brocante* vendor because of my knowledge, I have liked this trade since I was little. My parents had a *brocante* and they worked in *brocante*” (David, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

Several of the other vendors confirmed family links, while a few others indicated that they had very different types of trades before – middle-management, finance, leisure industry – and came into *brocante* or book vending through retirement or through the loss of their primary job. The notion that *brocante* may be an outlet for people who cannot find other work, as has been noted for produce or flea markets (Peraldi 1999), is thus challenged. This trade may certainly attract those who are underemployed (musicians and artists in the Plan Cabanes) or have become unemployed, but it is hardly an open trade that anyone can join. I asked Pauline to explain the difference between a flea market vendor and a *brocante* vendor, and she noted that they were not at all the same thing:

“It’s because we don’t want, it’s not the same work. It’s if you will a book vendor who is, ok it’s true that we are all vendors all the same, eh, but it’s more than commerce. It’s that we are, eh, we are all take up with a, a passion actually to look for objects that are a bit ra-, rare. Yes and also authenticity, we (*brocante* vendors) search for authenticity, authenticity before quantity, meaning quality before quantity.. [...]. Like, ok, French heritage (*patrimoine*) that is quality, that is heri-, heritage anyway. So as long as we can trace it (object/book) it can be popular culture, it can be, an object used by, by labourers, eh, or artis-, ok, it, yes, artistic material, but our preference is that it must be authentic. Voila.” (Pauline, book dealer, Plan Cabanes)

I raised the same question with another *brocante* vendor and on the difference between the type of objects and books that are sold in flea markets and those sold in the Plan Cabanes market, he replied:

“First of all I don’t do, between the ’50s and today if you want, it’s just used goods. It’s not *brocante* it’s used goods (*l’occasion*), it’s flea market goods. Voila. It’s objects (*des objets*), yes, there are ones that are nice as well, eh, for instance the objects made in the ’70s. But the ’70s that is

more designer than not. I deal in the '70s as well. [...] It's a difference in, in goods, eh. In reality, how can I explain it to you, it's, it's the quality and the, there (pointing to a vase) I have an object that is the difference, in my opinion" (Guillaume, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

The object in this case was a 1940s vase and while my untrained eye could not spot the difference between this 'quality' item and what Guillaume termed 'used goods', for a collector the small marks at the base of the item, the colour, shape, and state of the object are telling signs. It would seem that mass-market 'goods' rarely qualify as cultural 'objects' – the difference accentuated by Guillaume centering on notions of value that extend beyond the monetary worth of an item. It is a value, as Guano (2006) notes, and as I discuss below, that is linked to processes of social and cultural distinction (Bourdieu 1984).

The *brocante* and book vendors, sitting at their Scrabble game one afternoon, outlined the requirements for joining their market. As a start, all vendors must be professionals: either part of an association which brings together recognized *brocante* and book vendors, or carrying the correct permits to deal in *brocante*. They must be, in other words, pre-approved by the same closed networks which Pauline, and others, turn to for information on key book and item sales. For items to be *brocante* the vendors must also be prepared to undergo an 'authenticity' check, meaning an accredited antiques dealer from a nearby store can be called in to verify whether an item is truly *brocante* or antique, or simply a used good. The threat of copies– fake *brocante*, mislabelled vases and antiques – hangs over the group with fears of their professional standing being questioned, and the reputation of this new, still undeveloped outdoor market crashing in the process.

Two other terms enter the discussion through the above quotes: quality and authenticity. With respect to food markets and farmers' markets the dual designation of quality and authentic has been considered in some detail (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Dupuis and Goodman 2005), with the notion of quality in food seen to emanate from the social and cultural context of production (Murdock et al 2000) with links to place designations

(Leitch 2003) which in turn produce authentic products by reference to seemingly unique production methods, histories, and symbolic values (Stiles et al 2011). The notions of ‘authentic’ and ‘quality’ seep into studies on *brocante* and antiques sales as well, as with Guano’s (2006) work in Genoa. Noting that redesigning the historic city centre was the centrepiece of Genoa’s ongoing redevelopment program, Guano (2006) argues that the installation of new antiques and craft stands was used as a cultural redevelopment tool to alter the social and economic makeup of the area: drawing in middle-class women as vendors, the new antiques stands traded on these actors’ perceived knowledge of collectables to infuse the city with a socio-cultural value and alter the form of public space. The result is a new Genoa where the lived space of the historic city centre has been re-imagined as a bourgeois, cultured site – rather than the gritty, sometimes dilapidated place which has preceded the regeneration project. As Guano notes, middle-class women were viewed as the ideal cultural actors (perhaps animators, in the vocabulary of the Plan Cabanes) and vendors of valuable antiques because “you can form the ‘good eye’ only if you grow up in a family that can afford to socialize you to it” (Guano 2006, 115). Antiques, in other words, are closely tied to class tastes (Bourdieu 1984), and as Guano goes on to explain “Genoa’s transformation could succeed only if renovation of the build environment was to be integrated with a change in the spatial practice and urban imagery of Genoa’s publics”(2006, 110).

The sense that gentrification, heritage, and cultural activities are interlinked is perhaps not novel – Zukin (2008) outlines a similar process in New York City, as does Till (2005) in terms of Berlin – yet Guano’s (2006) work provides some useful comparisons for the processes at play in Montpellier’s Plan Cabanes. The shift from produce to *brocante* is part of a wider shift to actively re-imagine the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood. Particularly in an instance where French national and regional identity is closely tied to material cultures (Terrio 2000), the introduction of *brocante* and books can be seen to emphasize certain forms of local heritage – and through this, memory – over others. The creation of a farmers’ market was

noted in early debates on what to do with the renovated plaza (Chapter 4, pg 158; also Midi Libre 2006e) – a form of commerce also tied to notions of authenticity, selective heritage, and socio-cultural consumption (Slocum 2007) – yet this replacement of one kind of food with another would have produced an even more heated debate about the function of the plaza, questions about the logic of relocation, and louder accusations of racism, discrimination, and politicking. In this frame, the *brocante* market seems like a careful compromise that encourages the re-imagination of the area as more closely tied to the historic city centre and its nuanced enactment of heritage, and introduces a new subset of distinct cultural animators to the Plan Cabanes.

5.4 Memory erased/ empty space part II

The dance of memory and local history recounted in the previous sections labels the Plan Cabanes as a multi-faceted neighbourhood, a site of varied identities and communities. The discussion on *brocante* market materiality indicates that a deliberate shift in neighbourhood image and usage is being envisioned for this area, and that a variety of actors – municipal, local, market – are pushing for a new kind of public space. Between these two ideas there is a disconnect, and one that I will interrogate more closely in the paragraphs that follow, asking: which identity, if any, is being deliberately excluded from the re-imagined Plan Cabanes. Delving into these topics comes with many hesitations and care, particularly as it touches on the notion of an ‘Arab neighbourhood’ and post-colonial French identities and a consciousness that I am an outsider, even if a well established one, to these community debates. The memories and histories of vendors and users who self-identify as Maghrebin or North African necessarily intersect with the stories of other groups, making it difficult to have a clear cut vision of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Yet for many vendors, shopkeepers and market goers the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes is viewed in a specific light: not just a market relocation, but a community disrupted, and an important presence deliberately removed from Montpellier’s public space. There is a vocal challenge to the notion that the Plan Cabanes’ heritage revolves around 19th century military and

agrarian memories. And while there is an equally loud challenge to the notion that Plan Cabanes, Figuerolles, and Gambetta are only ‘Arab neighbourhoods’ – many would argue that the community encompasses a spectrum of users – the importance of these areas for Montpellier’s Maghrebin groups is in little doubt. It is difficult to ask questions on ethnicity, racism, and exclusion, not least because this information is not collected, as noted in Chapter 2. As noted in the Chapter 1, France is officially an ethnic-blind country (Nacu 2012): the definition of citizenship centres on republican notions of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, articulated in a way that leaves little space for ethnic or cultural diversity (Dikeç 2007). To become a citizen you have to effectively erase your past (Juge and Perez 2006), adopting not only a language but a cultural behaviour that ensures assimilation – rather than integration – into the public sphere (cf Weil 2010). While this ethnic-blind republican model is intended to ensure that everyone is equal by removing obvious points for discrimination, in reality it can have the opposite effect. As Simon (2003) notes, making different cultural practices disappear also makes those of different ethnic backgrounds invisible, both in terms of their absence in official statistics and their inability to claim a culturally different share of public space. This leads to instances where concentrations of immigrants – or, those perceived to be immigrants – is seen as problematic (Wacquant 2008), and prompts increased state interventions in “re-moralizing the public sphere” (Jennings 2000, 596) to ensure that it conforms to republican ideals. The redevelopment of the Plan Cabanes, where a diverse market has been replaced by one intertwined with nuanced visions of French heritage and identity, speaks to these processes. If, as Dikeç (2002) outlines, French urban policies target spaces rather than people – through, as noted in Chapter 2, the zoning of neighbourhoods as ‘problematic’ – then it is perhaps not surprising that cultural politics would follow a similar approach. With the public sphere seen as symbolic of French identity and heritage (Nora 1989), the creation of homogeneous public spaces encapsulating republican ideals would leave little room for French citizens of more diverse background to claim rights to the city (Lefebvre 1991) and be viewed as ‘appropriate’ users (Mitchell 2003).

I asked a number of trusted research participants to outline how the plaza and their relationship with it has changed through the shifting of the Marché du Plan Cabanes. In conversation with informants who self-identify as North African and those who self-identify as French, we circled around the meaning of being French, the role of the plaza, and how the removal of the Marché du Plan Cabanes affected local memories and communities. The municipality's reasons for the selection of a *brocante* market I have left to the subsequent chapter on public space order.

In conversation with Julie, a *brocante* vendor in the new Plan Cabanes and long time visitor to the Marché du Plan Cabanes – for the weekly grocery shop, but also for its ambience – I asked her to explain what the plaza looked like before. Her answer introduces the notion of a public space memory, a point that intersects with Nora's (1989) vision of *lieux de mémoire*. Julie explains:

“Julie: Yes, no, it's, yes, because it's the, the plaza, it was, if you wish, how to explain it to you, yes, I have the impression that we, it's that we can't recognize it (new Plan Cabanes). Meaning, ok, it's paved and redone. It's a site that, how to explain, sites keep their memories. They are guardians of memory, the sites. But this plaza, if you wish, when there were people here it was the people whom I found interesting. The pla-, in reality it was the people who animated the plaza. So you see the actual physical plaza, I don't have any memories of that, the, the, architecture it was, well it was an architecture of people.

Roza: Ok.

Julie: You see, it was the human dimension. By contrast now the plaza itself, we are now obliged to look at it. The plaza is completely redone. It's been renewed. Empty. Almost empty of meaning because, well, you cross it, yes, there are cars, there are, there are always cars of the, the, the, the driving school. You have them but it's curious. It has lost its spirit, it's empty. [...] It's empty, meaning that, you know there are the pi-, there are always some presences. Eh, the pigeons.”(Julie, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

For Julie, the plaza itself did not leave an impression (or exist) before the 2005 relocation because the space impressed users through the levels of social and commercial activity and interaction – rather than the physical components of stones, benches, fences, and trees. That the Plan Cabanes is

viewed as a site that holds memories, and that these memories have been lifted through relocation, leaving the site empty, meaningless, and void, is a significant point. The Plan Cabanes has, effectively, been derailed as a *lieux de mémoire* (in Nora's (1989) vocabulary), and its spirit drained. That Julie struggled to explain these elements I found significant, and when approaching two key community gatekeepers – Abdul and Damya – I outlined the particular challenge of knowing what was lost, and why it was important in the first place.

In a long conversation at a cafe table overlooking the plaza, Damya detailed the transformation and relocation as he saw it. The one point he was particularly keen to make was that before, pre-2005, there were many more elder men, migrants from the Maghreb in the 1960s and 1970s, who used to walk amongst the stands and chat with the vendors. Damya noted that he had ample opportunities to join them, and pointed out two elder men sitting on a bench in the Plan Cabanes, said that most do not come this way anymore. Following the relocation they visit the Place Salengro, but that market is smaller and there is nowhere to sit. Damya lamented this loss, saying that it was important for the men to be there, but also for the rest of us to remember how they got there. He tells several stories he has heard from his parents, of moving to France, and the Algerian wars, and then remarks that the plaza is void of meaning. Like Julie, he finds that it is not just empty, but drained of the socio-cultural milieu that made it relevant – this perspective, it seems, transcends the boundaries of ethnic identity. In his view the memory of Algerian migration has been wiped from this public space. He explains:

“Damya: It was, I think that it was a visible market, very visible which attracted a lot of people and it was largely of, it was immigrant populations. And maybe it was this which annoyed, (Cours) Gambetta is an important boulevard, I personally think it was this. No one has said otherwise. It was the desire of, I think, of (Mayor) Georges Frêche to begin with, and that it was then followed by (Mayor Hélène) Mandroux. And of course supported by the councillors. But, it's true that it was a bit like in Paris. If you go to Paris there is a Chinese neighbourhood, the Maghrebin neighbourhood, in Paris they

did the same thing with Barbès⁴³. Ok Barbès is still there but it has changed. And here they have done the same thing. In Nice they did the same thing. The old centre of Nice it was, there was a neighbourhood that was used mainly by Maghrebin. In the same way they lifted the market. All of a sudden there was no more market. [...] There is no longer anyone who comes here (Plan Cabanes). I think that it was good before. I think it was the desire of city hall that it was their desire to hide the, to simply hide the immigrants, that's the term.

Roza: Why would they want to do that?

Damya: Ah that you'll have to ask them. Maybe for the image of Montpellier, maybe to re-valorize the neighbourhood, maybe, I don't know. But it was deliberate." (Damya, business owner, Plan Cabanes/Figuerolles)

In this instance the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes centres on a municipal wish to remove a visible immigrant presence from a key urban site. The process is seen to erase a certain memory of immigration, of the French occupation of Algeria into the 1960s, and the extensive migrant trajectories of the 1960s and 1970s that so fundamentally changed Montpellier's urban and social makeup. The selection of *brocante* as the replacement market is, in this context, highly politicized and revolves around re-valorization (to use Damya's words), a form of redevelopment that seeks to infuse a more valued and valuable form of commerce into the plaza. The *brocante* market fits in precisely because it is tied to French national heritage, French identities, and French cultural traditions – a set of cultural values that mirror visions of the Plan Cabanes as a protected architectural heritage with links to 19th century military and agrarian feats. Yet Damya, along with other local shopkeepers and market vendors who identify as Berber, Kabyle, Algerian, Moroccan or Tunisian, does not view this as a battle lost. Speaking about these events openly and making the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes a media spectacle – the local *Midi Libre* newspaper has consistently come in on the side of vendors and called for a return of the market – is one way of challenging the process. Many shopkeepers also own their premises, and the idea of re-valorizing

⁴³ Barbès is an ethnically diverse neighbourhood of Paris, and one that has undergone extensive regeneration (cf Ross 1996).

the neighbourhood through the removal of ‘North African’ commerce will not be – as they tell me – an easy task for the municipality.

In a turbulent conversation with Abdul, another local businessman and community leader, the sense of injustice and anger at the ‘cultural logic’ for the market relocation is palpable. I asked Abdul about the redevelopment, his thoughts on the new Plan Cabanes, the notion of heritage protection, and why a *brocante* market may have been installed. He situated the relocation into broader national discourses on immigration, and in particular ongoing debates about a national crisis of identity brought on by the presence of too many immigrants, too many culturally unassimilated Maghrebin, and too many North African suburban ghettos that mar the image of France (cf Wacquant 2008; Weil 2010). He explained, with reference to the North African community in Montpellier:

“Today, alright, we (North African migrants). We like this country, it’s a good country, but I find that all the same there are some imbeciles who are running things, they must start to understand. I will call them out. Who, they must start to understand, they must respect us, they must respect us. We didn’t come on our own. I think. We came because they asked us to come. Ok. We worked. We are continuing to work, we pay our taxes like everyone else, and they must respect us. We are not a trash bin, we aren’t nothing. Today I, a person like me, I am in my 40s, I have been in France for almost 20-something years. If I go back home what would I do? What would I do? They must, that’s why, there must be a minimum of respect towards others. A minimum of respect. They must not take us like nothing, we are not shit. They must view us as equals, like everyone else, like everyone else. At least, at least a little but, a little bit diff-, but not shit. And here (Plan Cabanes) they don’t respect us. They take decisions, they run meetings, they take decisions, and they don’t even invite us.”
(Abdul, business owner, Plan Cabanes/Figuerolles)

The relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes is, in this view, a function of broader political trends that undermine the role and position of immigrants and French citizens of North African origin. The idea that migrants did not arrive on their own but were rather part of a national immigration drive to fuel the *trente glorieuses* economic boom, is echoed in Abdul’s comments. He is not asking for access to public space, but rather articulating his right to it, all the while arguing that the process of market relocation has

extinguished that right in central Montpellier. The importance of the Plan Cabanes plaza as a site of Maghrebin-French identities is paramount, and the shifting of North African vendors (amongst others) amounts to a sign of disrespect and deliberate erasure from public space. The limited involvement of vendors and local shopkeepers in the market relocation process – echoed by other research participants – heightens this sense of displacement and exclusion. By outlining what has been lost through the redevelopment of the plaza, Abdul, along with the speakers above, also focus on the cultural and social meaning of the plaza: as a site where Montpellier’s North African immigrants were visible, as a public reminder of the colonial period, and most of all as a site where a diversity of residents were permitted access to the city and the right to occupy public space. The Plan Cabanes is empty space not only because it is devoid of animation and usage, but because it is a *lieux de mémoire* that is being erased, a site of forgetting, one where cultural identities are actively being removed.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the links between memory, identity and public space, and argued that the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes was an instance of cultural erasure and active re-imagination of a diverse neighbourhood. French citizenship centres on adherence to a certain set of cultural, linguistic and social values, and the transfer of this ideology to the public sphere leaves little space for difference. In view of this, the relocation of the old food market and its replacement by a *brocante* and book market speaks to a desire to simplify the local urban landscape, value certain elements of its history, and give prominence to a form of public memory and public space usage that draws on specific socio-cultural identities. Local memory and history intersect with public space starkly, with the redevelopment of the Plan Cabanes plaza heightening broader national narrative that assign North African-French identities a different public role.

The Plan Cabanes is a place that both exists and doesn’t, following Klein (1997). The physical space is there, the stones and benches that form the plaza, yet the cultural meaning and milieu have moved, shifted, and been

hidden from view. In an instance where street furniture and landscapes encapsulates certain memories (Till 2005) and historical narratives are tied to place making (Blokland 2009), the displacement of the Marché du Plan Cabanes is a form of physical and cultural erasure. Particularly in an instance where many participants are unable to separate their memories so the Marché du Plan Cabanes and its plaza from those of the surrounding neighbourhood, the shift of this one market has implications beyond the simple movement of stalls between plazas. While a range of memories float through this neighbourhood, the material changes of the market from diverse food to French *brocante* and books have given prominence to those which support a national heritage designation – and in the process simplified the meaning and history of the area. The rhetoric of the Plan Cabanes as empty space creeps back in a fuller, more detailed version, with the lack of animation and the lack of cultural relevance combining. Erasure and forgetting are tied to institutional and municipal decisions, and in the next chapter the use of heritage as a tool for displacement – along with a more detailed examination of how ‘appropriate’ users (Mitchell 2003) are articulated – will be considered.

Chapter 6: Re-ordering public space

Dirt, chaos, unhygienic – *saleté, impossible à contrôler, manque d'hygiène* – some of the terms used to describe the state of the old Marché du Plan Cabanes and deployed as part of the explanations for its eventual removal. Leafing through newspaper articles of the relocation reveals a juxtaposition of images and representation that see the market, at once, in desperate need of a clean-up and as a well functioning community organism (Nithard 2005; Fo 2006; G.T. 2006). As Douglas (1966) reminds, dirt is a relative designation, a way of speaking about matter out of place that reveals much about what is considered 'the norm' and that which is labelled taboo. In the specificities of the French context the notation of dirt, when coupled with disorder and hygiene, echoes the *mission civilisatrice* discourses so prominent in the colonial re-ordering of North African cities and subjects (Rabinow 1989) that has reverberated once more in the post-colonial *banlieue* of France with their heated revolts and constant renovation projects (Dikeç 2007; Ross 1996). In Montpellier it was not just the Marché du Plan Cabanes that tossed up fears of overwhelming dirt – decaying produce, unwashed tarmacs, phantom rats – but the neighbourhood of Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles / Gambetta as a whole. Here, blighted buildings and insalubrious conditions spoke to a need for new spatial and architectural management, while the perceived crumbling of heritage structures were thought to require rapid state intervention in the form of expropriation and enforced facade renovations. What could be defined as municipally-led gentrification (Slater 2004) in Montpellier plays on images of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles as an ailing organism (cf Foucault 1978) in need of physical and social renewal, making way for strategic cuts into the neighbourhood fabric and the cleaning-up of problematic structures.

In this final empirical chapter I will consider the relocation process in more detail, with particular attention to two themes: the reasons given for the relocation of the old Marché du Plan Cabanes; and the mechanisms

deployed as part of the heritage protection system in the neighbourhood. These two points are, I will argue, closely linked through their focus on re-ordering the urban landscape, removing 'dirt' in its multiplicity of meanings, and visually sanitizing the neighbourhood. This approach seeks to build on the discussion of empty space from the preceding chapters by adding a further dimension to the place-making process: the importance of institutional power and its intersection with social and community relations in the Plan Cabanes, and the often opaque political process surrounding the heritage-led urban renewal initiative. The idea of a spatial re-ordering in the Plan Cabanes will first be contextualized through a review of the concepts of 'dirt' and hygiene, and their connections with forms of state-led gentrification that trade on images of blight and urban decay to encourage redevelopment. Using interview materials and newspaper sources the subsequent section will interrogate these terms in relation to the Marché du Plan Cabanes, drawing in competing and conflicting voices to describe the (dis)order and perceptions of dirt that cropped up so persistently during the relocation process. Attention will then turn to the wider sense of the Plan Cabanes as an insalubrious neighbourhood, a site of decline, and one where low real estate prices are seen as an outgrowth of the presence of immigrants. The idea of municipal power - and the particular ways in which the dual designations of 'protected heritage' (ZPPAUP) and 'precarious neighbourhood' (ZUS) make way for a series of institutional interventions - will then be examined, with a view to tracing some of the administrative and urban planning systems used to re-order the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood into a new outgrowth of the historic city centre. While it is difficult to speak of a new city order – not least because the Plan Cabanes is still unsuccessfully labelled as empty space by neighbourhood and municipal actors alike – by tracing the re-ordering process, the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes is situated into broader state-led gentrification trends that re-define who constitutes an appropriate user of the plaza and surroundings.

6.1 Dirt meets heritage

In a study of the growing organic food industry Jordan (2007) poses the beguiling question of how to identify a ‘heritage tomato’: it is imperfectly shaped, has traces of soil sticking to its sides, comes in many colours, varies in weight from a few grams to a sizable half-kilo, and is wholeheartedly difficult to define without the added context of labels, vendors’ stories, farmers’ markets, and selling price points. That a small clump of farm soil is used to identify one tomato as more authentic and desirable than another (presumably washed) tomato highlights the nuanced cultural meaning of dirt (cf Eden et al 2008). This emphasis on context - that notions of ‘dirt’ can only be understood as part of wider cultural and social rituals distinguishing that which is unwanted from that which is valued (Douglas 1966; McClintock 1995) – is taken up by Ross (1996) and Chevalier (1994) in their separate examinations of mid 20th-century urban development in Paris. Chevalier’s (1994) work wavers between a personal lament for a Paris deconstructed by redevelopment programs, and a detailed examination of the political atmosphere that saw the extensive regeneration of the central city. As part of his wider review of mid-20th century Parisian politicking Chevalier (1994) takes up the cause of the Halles, a site that inspired seemingly contrasting opinions. For some, the Halles were nothing less than a condemned place: the seeming lack of hygiene in the stalls, garbage piling up alongside the markets, armies of rats taking over the city – what Chevalier terms “the old medieval fear of rats”(1994, 213), a vision which collides with Foucault’s (cf Elden 2003) comments on plague cities and state order – prostitution, as though this was an outgrowth of market activity, and endless traffic jams blamed on the beehive of delivery trucks and shoppers in the surroundings so starkly poxed this market that no solution aside from tearing it down could be found. For others the Halles were the heart of the city, a social hub that allowed life – in the form of food, but also in terms of sociability – to flow out of the market, infusing the surrounding streets with a type of conviviality that distantly echoed the Paris of Baudelaire (1869), a cultural capital with a gritty side. That the Halles were ultimately disassembled and wholesale vendors moved to the

Parisian suburbs in 1971 speaks, for Chevalier (1994), of a failure of political vision and urban planning, and an instance in which discourses of blight, infestation, and hygiene were overstated and used to remove a key Parisian institution in favour of real estate profits and tourist attractions.

The contestation over the relocation of the Halles is picked up by Ross (1996) in her careful analysis of Parisian urban renewal programs. Ross re-situates the Halles into a broader narrative of tidying public (and private) space in Paris as part of what she terms the “generalized postwar atmosphere of moral purification, national cleansing, and literary laundering” (1996, 73). Urban redevelopment in Paris in the 1960s, argues Ross, was closely linked to a new vision of what a 'modern' France should look like: mechanised, standardised in the Fordist sense, a renewed capital of modernity (cf Harvey 2006), clean and also hygienic. Ross attaches particular value to this latter idea – that is hygiene – and links it not only to a sense of things being clean, meaning without garbage and dirt, but also in the sense of social and cultural cleanliness. Purity of space meant modernization, which meant that the dirty and busy Halles were dismantled and relocated, as were the high-density working-class and North African populations (Evenson 1973, 312) living in the surroundings (Evenson 1979; Ross 2006). The notion of urban redevelopment takes on a very nuanced meaning in Ross’s work: the idea of spaces and buildings as being ‘liberated’ from users who are no longer seen as desirable, no longer deemed appropriate. Modernization, in a word, required the uprooting of a series of practices that belonged to an imagined, pre-modern, colonial past. In the process a certain group of people lost access to a central public space and the Halles became a shopping mall, a different usage with a different price point, and one also full of tourists. As Evenson explains in relation to the Halles:

“Closely tied to the function of the market, the surrounding neighbourhood was long a boisterous working-class district, famed for its all-night bistros and restaurants. The removal of the market function would in any case have brought changes to the area. The planned redevelopment served to accelerate the process, however, and as buildings were demolished or renovated in accordance with improved standards, their

generally impoverished inhabitants were forced out.” (1979, 307)

The relocation of the Halles markets to their current suburban location initiated – intentionally, or not – a neighbourhood gentrification that has seen the economic and social background of Halles neighbourhood residents shift away from the diversity that existed in the 1970s (TenHoor 2007; Kasten 2013).

Considering the dual impact of modernization and cleanliness discourses Ross notes that as the century progressed “these effects would become increasingly racial in nature in the form of a kind of ‘purification’ of the social (urban) body (a purification that would find an almost comical reflection in Malraux’s⁴⁴ decision, under de Gaulle, to ‘whiten’ the city by sandblasting the surface of the most famous Parisian facades)” (1996, 150). The gleam of the Parisian landscape and the urban renewal ethic which pushed forth this cleansing speaks to a re-ordering of space that has seen dirt – in terms of the grey dust clinging to building, and in the more contested sense of people and cultures out of place – physically removed from the city, creating a new scene that is deeply marked by a racialized sense of appropriate users and uses (Mitchell 2003; Sibley 1995).

For Ross (1996) the interconnected notions of dirt, hygiene and order are tied to a vision of space formulated during the colonial period and one that, with the 1962 Algerian wars of independence, ceased to have a function abroad and was brought back to the metropole. As Hargreaves (2005) notes, this homeward return of *mission civilisatrice* discourses produced a fracture in national identity (Ireland 2005) that challenges French cultural coherence by pushing towards a new, hybrid sense of belonging (McMurray 1997). For Oscherwitz (2005) this complexity is a function of the competing visions of what it means to be French: one version views French culture and history as established, a completed and coherent idea that can be communicated abroad, and which sees citizenship and belonging as predicated on the adoption of these values; and another that views participation in French society as a process built on civic belonging and

⁴⁴ André Malraux was France’s first Minister of Culture, serving between 1959-1969.

republican ideals of *égalité* and *fraternité*, where citizenship means adherence to a philosophical ideal (Wieviorka 2005). While this dual definition of citizenship functioned spatially and politically during the colonial period, with the arrival of Algerian migrants after 1962 – legally French citizens, yet linguistically, religiously, ethnically outside the socio-cultural definition of what it means to be French – the two spheres collided, producing legal citizens who were still seen as culturally belonging elsewhere (Hargreaves and McKinney 1997). As Blatt (1997) notes, this “awkward coexistence of republican ideals of universalism with racism and second-class citizenship during the colonial era has reproduced itself on French territory, reinforcing suspicions and distrust between majority and minority populations” (1997, 53). Or, as Oscherwitz (2005) succinctly notes, it is an instance where those who have been conditioned through the *mission civilisatrice* are suddenly no longer viewed as acceptable or capable of assimilating in the metropole. It is a moment where republican notions of citizenship falter in the face of increasingly hardened definitions of French cultural and ethnic identities (cf Brubaker 2001), with one outcome being what Hargreaves (2005) has termed a collective amnesia – or, the erasure of colonial history from public life and a failure to recognize the multi-faceted meaning of citizenship. Hargreaves (2005) provides a catalogue of examples that start with colonial-era institutions being renamed or closed down, the scant outline of the Algerian wars in history textbooks, infrequently mentioned in public discourse – Hargreaves critiques Nora’s (1984-1992) work on *lieux de mémoire* for not recognizing any monuments or places tied to the colonial period – and end with the limited academic research on the topic (a point also taken up by Amiraux and Simon 2006).

With rhetoric of hygiene, cleanliness, and re-ordering, and the removal of dirt and disease from North African cities such a central aspect of colonial programs (Fanon 1961), the application of this discourse to urban renewal programs that lead to the removal of ethnically diverse groups from public space cannot be viewed as incidental. Ross’s (1996) work in Paris demonstrates this collusion in detail, outlining how fear of disorder, dirt,

hygiene, and the ‘un-modern’ were deployed to re-organize the social, physical and community spaces of the city (cf Evenson 1973). In much the same way that descriptions of the *banlieue* revolts in 2005 were set in a vocabulary of dirt, contagion, and rapidly spreading disorder that speak to the continual racialization of space (Dikeç 2007; Body-Gendrot 2013) – Sarkozy’s famous comment on the need to clean the streets of scum (*racaille*), for instance (Riots in France 2006)⁴⁵ – the deployment of similar terms to describe the need for the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes in Montpellier flag the importance of identity, ethnicity, and cultural hegemony to this process. The comments of research participants in the previous chapter certainly speak to these issues: the sense that the Plan Cabanes represented a memory of North African arrivals in Montpellier, and that through redevelopment this memory was being erased from public space, starkly define this regeneration project as one wrapped up in discourses of race, colonial history, and selective definitions of heritage and French culture.

While in Ross’s (1996) work the notions of dirt and hygiene are directly tied to colonial discourses and an articulation of order, modernity and use of space that have been re-applied to the metropole, the links between the ideas of chaos, blight, and urban development are not exclusive to the French context. Considering redevelopment projects in San Francisco, Lai (2012) also notes an overlap between neighbourhoods marked as blighted and those with a higher proportion of non-white minorities. Focusing on a San Francisco neighbourhood with long-standing African American and Japanese-American populations, Lai (2012) argues that the identification of this district as one of decay and unsanitary conditions effectively pathologizes the people living in that area and opens the space to expropriation, demolitions, and in this instance the construction of large scale entertainment venues. Blight is an almost medical disorder, a

⁴⁵ The 2005 suburban uprising was inflamed by Sarkozy’s (then Minister of the Interior) comments that *racaille* (scum) needed to be pressure-hose (karcher) cleaned from the streets. As the uprising continued President Chirac invoked a 1955 state of emergency law – until then only used during the Algerian wars of independence, and during a political uprising in the overseas department of New Caledonia. This situation has led some to label the situation as ‘postcolonial urban apartheid’ (Silverstein 2006).

contagion that spreads through the city, which is itself imagined as a living organism. Foucault's (1975) analysis of state power comes to mind, in particular the system of quarantines and division of space used to manage 17th-century instances of the plague – a system of spatial order, behaviour monitoring, and state intervention in the public and private sphere that was maintained long after the threat of illness had subsided. Visions of the city as an organism encourage and call for measures to halt decay and discipline those in danger of breaching moral (and behavioural) codes.

For Weber, the deployment of decay terminology is used to open cities to new cultural, social and economic actors by using “the dual authorities of law and science in order to stabilize inherently ambiguous concepts like blight and obsolescence and create the appearance of certitude out of the cacophony of claims about value”(2002, 520). Arguing that those who profit from real estate transactions around blighted areas are the same groups who set the definition of ‘blight’, Weber (2002) suggests that state bodies and private investors were, for instance, complicit in the application of these designations to non-white city centre zones in mid-20th century USA renewal projects. The Barcelona model of urban renewal – noted by several Montpellier municipal actors as a key example of how to manage urban areas – also plays on this vision. As Arbaci and Tapada-Berteli (2012) note, Barcelona’s renewal targeted both physical and social structures with an aim of creating new urban identities, new public spaces, and establishing an evolving sense of regional heritage and architectural protection measures. Arbaci and Tapada-Berteli argue that “analogies between the historic city and an ailing body that needs to be healed through intervention – accurate scalpel cuts – underpinned the whole philosophy of urban renewal employed in Barcelona” (2012, 293), and saw the expropriation, forced renovation, and knocking down of city-centre structures and appearance of new museums, plazas, and residential units. The resulting relocation of low-income residents and effective gentrification of Barcelona’s old quarter has transformed the socio-economic make up of the area.

While analysis of blight discourse and notions of matter (or people) out of place can be traced through multiple studies on urban renewal and regeneration, the particularity of the Montpellier case study relies on a further element: the close involvement of municipal agencies in encouraging the renewal process, leading to what could effectively be viewed as state-led gentrification. Ross (1996) comments on this overlap as well, noting the involvement of municipal and state agencies in the funding, planning, overseeing and completion of several Parisian renewal project. While gentrification more often speaks to profit-driven capital intervention in real estate markets and the resulting displacement of low-income groups from urban neighbourhoods (Ley 1994; Smith 1996), the idea of state-led gentrification outlines a series of different goals. As Davidson (2008) notes, state-led gentrification is packaged as a more positive approach to redevelopment – one geared towards ensuring that existing residents remain in place while surrounding urban infrastructures are upgraded. In principle state-led gentrification seeks to improve living standards for a neighbourhood as a whole, and through the direct and purposeful engaging of state funds and planning capacity it aims to establish a mix of income levels and social backgrounds in each neighbourhood. The resulting socio-economic diversity is seen to lead to more sustainable and better integrated communities (Bacqué et al 2011), ones that are less prone to unrest, crime, and physical degradation.

Yet as Ross (1996) argues in her study of Paris, this idealized vision of state-led gentrification rarely pans out. Through their research in Rotterdam, Uitermark and Duyvendak (2007) support this point, and outline how the involvement of municipal institutions in the gentrification of several low-income neighbourhoods labelled as problematic resulted in the social, and sometimes physical, displacement of residents. In this instance, state intervention included a partnership with housing associations and other non-profit agencies, and sought to revitalize parts of the city where social problems were seen to be “inevitably caused [by] incivilities” (Uitermark and Duyvendak 2007, 128). In an instance where gentrification is prompted by a narrow definition of what constitutes a liveable

neighbourhood, the amenities pursued through these programs included the physical upgrading of buildings and the insertion of middle-class households into low-income areas that are ethnically diverse. For Uitermark and Duyvendak (2007) the results are far from the intended aims, with the pre-existing racial tensions glazed over and any sense of social cohesion around a joint (class or ethnic) identity being disintegrated. Describing this as an “attempt by state actors and housing associations at generating social order in disadvantaged neighbourhoods” (Ibid 2007, 125), the authors suggest that state-led gentrification is no less exclusionary than market-led redevelopment processes. The particular notion of re-ordering space through municipal intervention is also commented on by Zukin (2012) in her more recent research in the Netherlands. Taking up the question of who manages the redevelopment process and for what ends, Zukin (2012) follows the redevelopment process on a single Amsterdam street over a 20-year period: what was once a down-beaten commercial street has, in the space of a few decades, become one of the most expensive residential and retail stretches in the city. At the same time the wider cultural and ethnic diversity of the area has been replaced by what Zukin (2012) identifies as white, middle- to upper-class consumers and residents, which has left notable gaps in how the area is represented. The heritage espoused through this redevelopment process has seen references to the once thriving Jewish community erased, and those to the long-standing Turkish community also lifted, with few of the residents who occupied the local apartment units several decades earlier present in the neighbourhood. As in Uitermark and Duyvendak’s (2007) study, Zukin’s (2012) work points to the more subtle processes of displacement linked to state-led gentrification.

Davidson (2008) notes this with respect to London redevelopment projects, and argues that the notion of ‘displacement’ must have a wider meaning than people moving away from the area due to rising housing costs: changes to social service provision, loss of community identity, the up-scaling of food and retail provision, and shifts in social patterns can all lead remaining residents to consider moving out of a neighbourhood. Church closures because of a drop in parishioners or a high-end organic food shop

replacing a discount dealer can, according to Davidson (2008), lead to resident disenfranchisement and eventual exodus. Considering the state-led renewal of Roubaix, a former industrial town near Lille in France, Rousseau (2009) notes that the key aim of the program was to “adapt the city centre to the taste of the middle classes” (2009, 779), a point also made by Bridge and Dowling (2001) with respect to Sydney, and Slater (2004) with reference to Toronto. Although Lelevrier (2013) suggests that in France this form of state-led redevelopment can have positive effects – by allowing residents to step away from what they view as undesirable living locations or situations – the nuanced forms of displacement outlined by Davidson (2008) and Uitermark and Duyvendak (2007) point to the uneven impact of these relocations, and put to question the suggested positive effects of gentrification.

The more contested aspect of these juxtaposed ideas of heritage-gentrification-hygiene-colonial discourse is the resulting racialization of public space. This notion comes through very forcefully in Ross’ (1996) work where the modernization of Paris depends on the relocation of the ‘colonial other’, and the role of state agencies in pushing through this process is neatly outlined. Dikeç (2007) also considers the racialization of (sub)urban spaces, and the role of the state in excluding certain citizens, successfully demonstrating how the rhetoric of security, contagious criminality, and deprivation results in certain zones and their residents being labelled as problematic, and thus in need of more extensive intervention. The work of both Ross (1996) and Wacquant (2008) points to a particularity of the French urban and political context: in an instance where speaking about religion, ethnicity, and race is socially unacceptable, denoting these issues means problematizing space instead. That is, problematic suburban zones, difficult urban milieu, and neighbourhoods in need of intervention are all terms used to speak about ‘non-white’ areas and their seeming lack of integration into French society. While popular media and right-wing speakers may denounce the erosion of French culture and the perceived unassimilability of non-white immigrants (Silverman, 1999), this viewpoint is rarely stated so starkly in official documents and formal

government policy. Instead there is a dance around the idea of urban space, one that replaces ‘ethnicity’ with ‘zone’, and seeks to divide the urban landscape into problematic zones, intervention zones, heritage preservation areas, and successful neighbourhoods. In this instance, the vocabulary used to designate different urban zones – and by extension, the people who occupy them – are central to understanding state policy and the role of public space in encouraging community cohesion and civic engagement.

It is at once impossible to prove the institutionalization of racism and the racializing of public space, and difficult to ignore these issues in the wider context of urban redevelopment policy. Neither Wacquant (2008) nor Dikeç (2007) can provide definitive evidence of these process – there is no state document outlining the deliberate racial coding of urban or suburban zones, or interviewee who will admit to a policy of ethnic exclusion – yet each of these authors convincingly demonstrates a collusion, or perhaps an overlap, between interventionist urban policy and the marginalization of non-white groups. The politics and policies applied to Montpellier’s Plan Cabanes plaza and surroundings are no different. After months of digging through archives, interviewing residents, market goers, and municipal actors, I have no irrefutable evidence that the Marché du Plan Cabanes was relocated because of its association with the North African community, or that this is an instance of state-led gentrification seeking the erasure from public space of a certain non-white group. At the same time the overlap between these discourses – of colonial memories erased and French heritage protected; of former market vendors raising the spectre of discrimination, while other neighbourhood actors retort with an all too familiar rhetoric of hygiene, dirt, and cleanliness while municipal agents speak about ‘suitable developments’, as will be outlined in the paragraphs below – point to an overlap of meaning that is difficult to ignore. Rather than attempt to prove (or disprove) these assertions, my approach in the paragraphs that follow is to give voice to the contested understandings, conflicting opinions, and sometimes polarizing viewpoints which frame the process. At the same time, as became amply clear during fieldwork, not all opinions have equal political or economic weight, and in outlining the

diversity of viewpoints on the Plan Cabanes plaza I have tried to contextualize these approaches in the broader urban redevelopment decision making process. While the conclusion of this chapter moves towards a commentary on the seeming racialization of public space in Montpellier, it does so with some trepidation – the redevelopment processes in this neighbourhood is far from over, and the ultimate role of the Plan Cabanes plaza and impact of the overall program is difficult to judge.

The concept of state-led gentrification and its intersection with themes of heritage, urban aesthetics, real estate markets, and the racialization of space, as outlined above, in many ways frames the processes witnessed in Montpellier's Plan Cabanes neighbourhood. The inflammatory rhetoric of 'dirt', 'hygiene' and a need to clean up the space of the old Marché du Plan Cabanes link to Ross's (1996) comments on the sanitization of urban space. The role of Montpellier's municipal council as leading this redevelopment processes hints at a system of state-led redevelopment, and the resulting displacement of certain users from the Plan Cabanes plaza suggests that gentrification is perhaps ticking forward in this neighbourhood. Certainly some residents think so, and a stream of graffiti appearing in the Figuerolles area makes visible their awareness of this process (see Section 6.4, and Figure 5.4).

6.2 Chaos, dirt, disorder and the market

Discussion of the cleanliness and state of the Marché du Plan Cabanes shot through the local press several months after the 2005 relocation, when the possibility of its non-return swirled through the neighbourhood. And once the debate on the market's non-return opened the rhetoric of dirt, disorder, disease, and rampant illegality bubbled over. In the absence of archival sources⁴⁶, newspaper articles have proven to be the most useful resource for tracing the multitudes of comments on the relocation in process. For one vendor in support of the relocation, speaking to a local newspaper, the

⁴⁶ The limited access to municipal documents relating to the Marché du Plan Cabanes and the redevelopment process are noted in Chapter 2.

old market had become:

“...more and more like a bazaar. There were resellers without authorization, and too much slackness. At the market’s finish, there was refuse everywhere, it was impossible to control. To return there in the same conditions seems difficult to us.”
(Nithard 2005, 9)

A member of one of the local neighbourhood associations supported this opinion in the same December 2005 article, arguing that:

“We wrote to the municipality because we don’t want a market like before. It was no longer a neighbourhood market. Some stocked goods in garages. Cars were parked everywhere, blocking the parking lots. In terms of hygiene it was unacceptable. Refuse was stacked up to the bottom branches of the poplar trees. The palettes stayed there overnight and served as toilets before being reused the next day. It brought back rats. We will no longer support this filth (*saleté*), we will not support a market like before. The plaza will be magnificent, and if the market comes back, we want written proof from the municipality that it will be well managed.”
(Ibid. 9)

These descriptions of the old Marché du Plan Cabanes are stark and paint a site sullied by a profound lack of organization, and one which has failed health and hygiene criteria. The suggestion that the market had become more like a bazaar than a neighbourhood vending space is particularly poignant, and taps into a specific understanding of how space should be used. The notation of ‘bazaar’ hints at something less than French, a form of vending that is defined as ‘oriental’ or ‘disorganized’, that is perhaps more closely threaded to North Africa (Geertz 1978) than the sort of quaint farmers’ markets – or neighbourhood markets, as the speaker above refers to – detailed by de la Pradelle (2006). The bazaar links to the sort of pre-modern, perhaps colonial, public space use that Ross (1996) outlines as being problematic when associated with French urban spaces. For Zukin (1995) the bazaar is a site where Americans can meet the ‘other’, or at least where New Yorkers can safely enter Harlem and its vibrant and multicultural market spaces – before, that is, these spaces were rapidly redeveloped as part of a regional commercial regeneration strategy and became shopping malls instead. To call the Marché du Plan Cabanes a

bazaar is an insult, short-hand for unacceptable, and a turn of phrase that appeared often in interviews and other newspaper sources. The comments on rats, refuse, and filth, the accusations of illegality and uncontrollable vending are equally powerful, and envision the space of the Marché du Plan Cabanes as an ailing organism, a site in need of immediate intervention and containment (Elden 2003) lest it spills out of the plaza and engulfs the surrounding neighbourhood. As Atkinson and Laurier (1998) remind, the high-voltage rhetoric splayed out in the media should be carefully analyzed: in a study of Bristol's preparations for the 1996 'International Festival of the Sea', newspaper articles and editorials outlined in painstaking detail the blight, impurity, and criminality brought by two visible travellers camps near the event venues. Looking at this rhetoric more closely Atkinson and Laurier (1998) conclude that such descriptions have less to do with the reality of the travellers' sites, and much more with a vision of Bristol that is determined to portray the city as a coherent landscape of neat maritime history – a vision which the travellers' camp sites were perceived to distort.

It is difficult to respond to such direct accusation, especially as one of the speakers is a former Plan Cabanes vendor who, presumably, has a more nuanced view on the topic. In that spirit the comments put forth by those campaigning for the right of the Marché du Plan Cabanes to return to its namesake plaza take a different route: noting the importance of the market to the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood, the loss of profits, and raising questions about the decision making process. One vendor explained their grievances to the local paper in March 2006 as:

“Not once has city hall spoken to us or explained what was going to happen. On the signs [put up around the market] our relocation is ‘temporary’. And so we held out for a year, we stuck together. Our colleagues who were not regulars at the Plan Cabanes don't have space here...They arrive, take turns, but putting up a stall once a week, over time, it's guaranteed bankruptcy⁴⁷ [...]” (Fo 2006, 8)

⁴⁷ This is a reference to differences in vendor registration: while some vendors have an annual registration and guaranteed space in the market (ie, they are regulars); others are labelled as 'dailies', and can find a spot in the market only if one is available. With the number of daily spots in the Place Salengro limited to one or two and only on some days of

In this instance the relocation of the market is taken as a municipal failure to inform the affected vendors, and the argument for a return to the Plan Cabanes outlined in terms of the resulting unemployment and loss of income for those who cannot attend as often as they need. This line of argument is taken a step further by a member of a local association, who in a newspaper interview questions the municipality's desire to:

“integrate the Maghrebin community, very present here [Plan Cabanes], when the neighbourhoods where they live are pulled away after they are renewed. The Plan Cabanes will be too nice for the vendors and their market, that's their [municipality's] conclusion and this doesn't support the solidarity⁴⁸ that we would hope for.” (O.L.N 2006, 8).

This response follows on from a controversial remark by Montpellier's Mayor H el ene Mandroux that, in her opinion, the market should be retained in Salengro because there are more trees in that plaza to provide shade. These comments were rapidly seized as evidence of the very personal decision making process involved and the seemingly trivial factors considered by the city when relocating the market, leading to accusations of discrimination from those calling for the March  du Plan Cabanes' return to the plaza. The debacle prompted Mayor Mandroux to explain to a local paper that:

“Some thought they could wrongly accuse me of racism. Because I said that it would seem preferable that the market stays in Salengro. It was just a common sense reflection on the part of a client. I find that when buying fruits and vegetables, or fish or meats, it is better to have a market in the shade than in full sun.” (Midi Libre 2006e, 3)

Sifting through these newspaper articles several years after these debates is an interesting process: the accusations of discrimination are responded to with claims of unhygienic market activity; and the claims of disorder and dirt countered with recriminations of racism and municipal impropriety.

the week, daily vendors can no longer rely on this market to generate a substantial income since they cannot participate frequently enough.

⁴⁸ The reference to solidarity is a comment on two key mottos of the city: 1) the idea of *solidarit *, which is part of a formal national policy on increasing social and economic cohesion in urban areas; and 2) Montpellier's one-time motto of '*mieux vivre ensemble*', or 'living better together', which the municipality articulates as a desire to end indifference, and instead engage more closely with all residents.

Accusations of disorder and dirt do not comment on the importance of the Marché du Plan Cabanes to the city's North African community – the two, sanitization and ethnicity – are never explicitly linked. At the same time, actors commenting on discrimination do not engage with, or acknowledge, the accusations of hygiene and chaos assigned to the site. The two spheres collide noticeably (and feebly) only in Mayor Mandroux's comments, where the reference to shade and sunlight are linked by some vendors and community associations to their concerns about racism and non-representation in the decision making processes. Yet both dialogues – those of dirt/disorder and those of racism/discrimination – are applied to the same space, the same relocation processes, and play out in the loud contestation over the meaning and function of the plaza. This makes for the sort of overlap and juxtaposition of rhetoric that forms so much of Ross' (1996) and Dikeç's (2007) work on the racialization of urban space in France.

When I initiated interviews on the Marché du Plan Cabanes and the renovated Plan Cabanes plaza in 2009 and 2010, I pursued these topics anew. Several years later the rhetoric of dirt, hygiene, exclusion, and political turmoil were still very much present – and viewpoints just as polarized. With Mayor Mandroux's comments on the desirability of a shady food market flushing out the (often sidestepped) links between race, space, and usage, I raised this point in an interview with the elected official in charge of urban planning in 2010, who responded:

“So, yes, in reality it's the, it's, it's a subject that is beyond me since I wasn't at all involved then. But I know the polemic. Ok it's, it's the, it was the Mayor, eh, who decided in the end that, that the Place Salengro would be used. We, we, by arguing that it was more shaded than the Plan Cabanes plaza. It was more agreeable to go shopping in the Place Salengro than the Plan Cabanes. I think that trees must be added, me I said this earlier, to the Plan Cabanes. But I also think that there must be a market in the Plan Cabanes plaza.” (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier, 2005-2011)

The question is both side-stepped and addressed, the importance of trees to the food market experience affirmed – yet with little explanation as to why

they are so important, and the nuanced meaning of this notion of the particular desirability of green shade is difficult to pin down. Philippe Saurel declined to comment further on Mayor Mandroux's point, noting again that he was not involved at the time. Taking up the issue of why the market was moved in interviews with vendors and neighbourhood associations led back to the themes of cleanliness, disorder, discrimination and racism noted in the original newspaper articles. For some local actors these terms still occupied different spheres, as the food vendor below explains. Asked why the market was moved, he says:

“The Plan Cabanes had become unmanageable. Problems with, with refuse which were, there were large rubbish, there were, there were vendors who sorted their merchandise in the market, or those who did their sorting⁴⁹. And so there were complaints from residents in terms of health, there were rats, there were. After there was illegal vending. There were daily vendors who were there, who were there but put up anywhere, where, the market was so incredibly large, so you could set up on the sidewalk, have the, anywhere. So when we came here [Salengro], there was just enough space basically for the regular vendors and a quota of one, two dailies. And this automatically resolved all the problems” (Michel, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

The key issue with the Marché du Plan Cabanes was said to be the lack of cleanliness – or problems with its healthiness – and the seemingly haphazard arrival of daily vendors who operated outside the assigned market place, and without the appropriate vending licenses. Several years after the market relocation and debates that followed (the above interview was completed in 2010), the blame for the Marché du Plan Cabanes' difficulties are squarely placed with one specific group: daily vendors, who through their disregard for market bylaws and municipal public space governance sorted their merchandise in public, discarded unwanted products on the plaza, and stretched their stands onto the sidewalk. A subtle response that absolves all regular vendors – the ones who are currently set up in the Place Salengro – from fault, and suggests that the

⁴⁹ Before setting up their stalls, vendors typically sort the unsellable merchandise from that which will be displayed, discarding the former, a process outlined in Chapter 3.

new Marché du Salengro is in much better shape. The above speaker continued:

“No, we couldn’t manage it anymore, city hall couldn’t manage it, there were sanctions in place, suspensions of vendors. They couldn’t manage it anymore. And then Nicollin⁵⁰ charged us a huge sum for cleaning, so, ah yes, we asked them to put in a compactor truck over there [in the Place Salengro] which we didn’t have in the Plan Cabanes.” (Michel, produce vendor, Place Salengro)

The reference to a compactor truck in the last sentence is key, and links to a point made by several other interviewees: that the state of the old Plan Cabanes was in part, at least, the fault of the municipality for their failure to maintain the space and the market. That is, if the municipality had wished for a tidier Marché du Plan Cabanes, they could have installed a compactor truck, functioning toilets, and controlled access to the plaza to ensure that only registered vendors could enter. One local resident explains:

“So the Plan Cabanes, it was the avenue for going into town for people from La Paillade. There was a bus stop. The Plan Cabanes was a large market that was very interesting. People have different opinions on this, those who say that the market was dirty and everything. But there are lots of other markets. A market is dirty because it’s decided that it will be dirty. And if a market isn’t dirty that means that there is correct cleaning behind it. It’s not because of the people who sold there that the market was dirty. It’s what was said left and right, theories, thoughts on the market. This market was very mixed. There was everyone. There was a diversity which, the Plan market, Salengro is nice, it’s nice, but it’s little, it’s a little market. It’s, good. This other one [Plan Cabanes] it was an exchange of, and also we found exactly, people from La Paillade who were going into town. They went there to do their grocery shopping and all that and it was their reason for going into town. But we won’t have that anymore. You could say we have really kicked them out.” (Rita, resident, Figuerolles)

For this speaker the Marché du Plan Cabanes was dirty because it was left to become so – and not because of the actions of the vendors who worked

⁵⁰ Nicollin is a private contractor working for the city of Montpellier in street cleaning, garbage removal, and general maintenance.

there. The links to La Paillade⁵¹ shape this into a nuanced commentary on race, ethnicity, and the function of the market: the role of the Plan Cabanes as a secondary city centre (Faure, 1998) and an entry point into the old town for a diversity of people is carefully articulated, as is the seeming desire to remove this diversity from the area. The quietly-noted assumption that the Marché du Plan Cabanes was seen as dirty because of the types of vendors who were present is also noted, and challenged by suggesting that vendors cannot be blamed for the state of the old plaza. A business owner in the area also put forth these arguments, though with much more emphasis on the fault of the municipality in creating a problem in the Plan Cabanes:

“Once construction was finished, we had, the vendors they got moved to the Place Salengro, they had, they wanted to go back. And there, city hall said that there was no chance of them returning. There was no, there was no question that they would return because they were badly organized, because it was a mess (*bordel*⁵²). We had a meeting with the municipality and they showed us photos that were taken from, from the top of buildings, of the garbage bins and all. Meaning, it’s a bit the city of Montpellier’s politics. We let people do as they wish. It’s like today on Gambetta [main road next to Plan Cabanes] where you have in front of TATI [department store] where people put clothes to the left, to the right, all selling illegally. And from one day to the next they then say ‘ah, these people we’ve got to kick them out’ along with the vendors because it’s a dump. And people will agree with the city. But why do you let people do as they wish. We are in a country of law and rights. People should respect the law, they should respect hygiene, they should respect the roads, the respect is a right. It’s a right, a right, ok. Today you let people do as they wish and after you say ‘ok, we’re going to kick them out’, and I think it’s you that has set out to create this.” (Abdul, business owner, Plan Cabanes/Figuerolles)

This speaker presents a nuanced reading of the arguments put forth by Rita above. In Abdul’s view the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes on the

⁵¹ La Paillade is a high-rise, ethnically diverse, social-housing neighbourhood on the city’s periphery, as noted in Chapter 2.

⁵² Translation can sometimes be a challenge: used colloquially the word ‘*bordel*’ means ‘mess’ or ‘dump’; its second meaning is ‘brothel’ or ‘whorehouse’. The reference here is to a very particular kind of insidious, immoral mess.

basis of hygiene and disorder is a political distortion: as with the current illegal vendors on Gambetta, the municipality turns a blind eye for a while only to strike back with removals and displacement a period of time later. For Abdul this is part of a wider municipal logic that seeks to build people's support for such actions by using the resulting disorder as a reason to intervene, yet allowing the disorder to develop unchecked in the first place. The implication being that the Marché du Plan Cabanes' apparent lack of hygiene and organization is the result of deliberate political oversight – and relocation is the final act of a redevelopment decision taken long before.

Yet, I wondered, what if the Marché du Plan Cabanes really had an exceptional garbage problem and was swimming in rats and refuse? I first arrived in Montpellier in 2005, several months after the market had been relocated – and years before I had an academic interest in urban planning issues. With the archives on this topic nominally closed, the question of how to gauge the true state of the Marché du Plan Cabanes was a thorny challenge. Not that garbage problems can be discursively evaluated: even if I had seen the original Marché du Plan Cabanes, and despite several months of working at various market stalls in the city, the ability to compare across markets and determine which ones cast off too much refuse and which are within the norm (if such a thing exists), would be well beyond my ability to judge. Instead, I dipped into the archives and sought out information on Montpellier's other outdoor and indoor markets with an eye to determining if 'garbage' or 'refuse' problems pop up on a regular basis. What feels like a small foray into investigative research (or a small attempt at backing up my findings), resulted in some interesting discoveries.

All of Montpellier's markets have, at some point or another, had serious issues with refuse collection or health and safety concerns. The most detailed archival material is linked to the indoor markets – largely because these buildings are owned by the municipality, and as a landlord the city of Montpellier has a legal responsibility to maintain them. The Halles des Quatre Saisons (formerly the Marché de la Paillade), a covered market located in the high-rise social housing suburb of La Paillade / Mosson, has

had an ongoing tiff with the municipality about building maintenance: in 2005 vendors formally requested more municipal assistance in caring for the building, and especially ensuring that refuse was collected and the toilets functioning (Archives de la Ville de Montpellier boîte 625W1), this following on a much tenser exchange of letters several years earlier when La Paillade vendors had written to their national elected representative with complaints, when the municipal representative and Mayor had failed to respond (AVM boîte 448W17). The series of documents on this indoor market note that municipal employees met with market vendors on several occasions to discuss strategies and determine which course of action would best suit the vendors. The conclusions include ensuring that a security guard is present at all times, locking bathrooms so that only vendors have access, and installing a compactor truck.

The Halles Castellane, a covered market in the middle of the historic city which shares the premises with a Virgin Megastore, had a particularly challenging ordeal in 2005 when the market was infested with insects (AVM boîte 625W2) and required immediate municipal action. This followed on a series of meetings between municipal employees and market vendors on ensuring that health and safety norms were met, and which included a vote amongst vendors on which types of renovations they would prefer for their market (AVM boîte 625W10). Outdoor markets receive little attention, with the exception of the Marché aux Puces (flea market) where illegal vending, fights between vendors, and a constant recourse to calling for the intervention of national and municipal police is documented in some detail (AVM boîte 297W23). The series of smaller 4- to 6-stall markets that exist in the Beaux-Arts, Malbosc, and many other neighbourhoods do not register in the boxes of documents cross-referenced to 'markets'. What is now known as the Marché de la Comédie and which sits in the main city plaza (and was once the Marché de Jean-Jaurès, attached to the Halles Castellane) appears in the archives with a series of letters and articles noting that vendors wish to remain in the Comédie and not return to the Jean-Jaurès plaza, following the latter's renovation in 1994.

The old Marché du Plan Cabanes seems to exist on paper only in the 1980s, with a series of documents that note: in 1980 Plan Cabanes vendors were so incensed by municipal inaction on garbage collection they refused to pay their stall fees until the problem was dealt with (AVM boîte 1036W32); only for the refuse problem to reappear again in 1982 when vendors are noted as complaining that the market is attracting flies (AVM boîte 1036W32); and in 1984 when there are complaints about rats, piling garbage, and clogged toilets – with a note from an engineer suggesting that electrical cables are dangerously exposed in the market plaza (AVM boîte 1036W32). Piling garbage, clogged toilets, and invading insects are, it seems, almost routine hazards of market life. Certainly the Marché du Plan Cabanes has some (1980's) history of difficulties in managing refuse and ensuring safe working conditions in the plaza. The reference to disorder, garbage, and organizational problems in the 2005 relocation of the market– especially in light of the simultaneous bug infestation in the Halle Castellane, and complaints of non-maintenance in the Halles des Quatre Saisons – suggest that the Marché du Plan Cabanes was not exceptional in the difficulties it faced.

The consideration of how discourses of 'dirt' and 'disorder' have been applied to the Marché du Plan Cabanes and its plaza have, so far, relied on a series of newspaper articles and interviews to frame the debate. The idea that the old market was messy, and that this mess was in part due to the type of vendors present in the market has given rise to accusations of racism and discrimination – one reading of this is as a political rhetoric targeting North African vendors, and leading to the deliberate displacement of a diverse (and not culturally French) market. The suggestion that the *brocante* market that replaced the Marché du Plan Cabanes was chosen for its links to French heritage affirms this vision of the relocation processes, as outlined in Chapter 5, and has led some local actors to argue that hygiene failings are the result of deliberate municipal oversight with an eye to changing the social makeup of the plaza. These points nudge towards several early conclusions. That the old Marché du Plan Cabanes had difficulties in dealing with refuse and illegal vending is not under debate –

no party seems to deny that these challenges existed – rather, the flashpoint is why and how the market arrived to this state. Those supporting the relocation of the market suggest that the presence of a produce market inherently leads to a dirty plaza. Others arguing for the market’s return counter by noting that overwhelming dirt is the result of poor municipal management – a fate corrected in the new Place Salengro location with the arrival of a compactor truck. Mayor Mandroux’s comments on shade being taken as discriminatory in the newspaper article cited above, and interview participants making links between notions of ‘dirt’ and the ethnic background of market vendors, suggests that the issue of garbage or disorganization in the Marché du Plan Cabanes has as much to do with a potentially real garbage removal problem as with an imagined sense of who might be causing that problem.

6.3 The insalubrious neighbourhood

These are lingering impressions, and on the evidence above I might gingerly tip-toe around the issue of racialized space. Yet, the notion of disorder – matter out of place, both physical (refuse) and cultural (diverse vendors and clients) – extends beyond the old Marché du Plan Cabanes and infuses the neighbourhood as a whole. Once interviews moved away from the flashpoint of the plaza and its produce market, links between immigration, ethnicity, and inappropriate usage were more clearly articulated. The Figuerolles / Gambetta / Plan Cabanes neighbourhood is designed as both protected architectural heritage (ZPPAUP) and as a zone in need of particular intervention (ZUS and OPAH)⁵³. In an interview with the political head of urban planning for the city of Montpellier, I asked him to explain why there were so many buildings labelled as ‘blighted’ or ‘degraded’ in the area. Philippe Saurel responded:

“Because there are a lot of slumlords. Because it’s a neighbourhood which depreciated at the level, in terms of financial levels. Because as alw-, because a lot of immigrants lived there the price of real estate diminished. Because they are worse or better than others. Because there was a space, you know neighbourhoods function like trends, it’s like

⁵³ Definitions of these acronyms are included in Chapter 2.

schools when, and a lot, it's the demand and availability on the market. So there were few people who wanted to buy there. And so the price of real estate progressively diminished. And so it was the perfect place to make huge profits. So there are people who bought houses for very low prices and then rented them out cheaply. And then people who sub-let them to 10 others who are often in illegal situations and pay very high rents every month. So everyone works their thing and makes profits. And the houses that were bought, they were paid off in two years. And so all these pockets which are disadvantages, I mean little by little, we, we intervene there. But we do it slowly." (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier 2005-2011)

A very specific urban planning (and political) logic informs the extensive interventions in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area. Philippe Saurel makes a link between low real estate prices and the presence of immigrants, one factor seemingly leading to the other (cf. Ross 1996), and suggests that the resulting low real estate prices have attracted further illegality and profit-oriented subletting. The combined effect of immigration and depreciating real estate leads to insalubrious conditions, with both residential and commercial units deemed in need of state intervention. Philippe Saurel's remarks stand out for the ease of linking together these factors – a rhetoric made all the more notable for his earlier hesitations in commenting on the Marché du Plan Cabanes' relocation and the issue of trees and shade. That insalubrious conditions are tied to immigrants – and North African migrants in particular – is an idea that seems to inform the way other actors understand developments in the Plan Cabanes. Speaking with vendors in the *brocante* market highlighted these associations as well, and when I asked Guillaume what he thought about changes in the neighbourhood over the last few years he responded:

"I'm not interested by neighbourhood life, if you wish. Me, I come to market, I'll see my clients, and after that, voila, what, I mean to say, I can't tell you how things have evolved here, I don't know anything. But it's certain that in the last 30 years, before all this was lived in by Montpelliérain, but since it's housing which is degrading and which is not of good quality, now it's lived in by immigrants, voila. That's all." (Guillaume, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

This association between poor housing quality and immigrants is further articulated by Madeleine. When I asked her why the neighbourhood was undergoing redevelopment, she explained:

“It’s real estate pressure behind it because it’s a pretty neighbourhood which is close to the city centre and where there are nice little houses with interior gardens that aren’t expensive. So there are people who invested money once upon a time, and who would like to create a neighbourhood for *bobo*(bourgeois-bohème). And so if you have Arabs you can’t sell it at a high price. So there is a sort of desire to revalorise the neighbourhood and make it become bourgeois again I think. But I don’t have proof (laughs).” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes).

Real estate prices echo through this quote, as they do in Philippe Saurel’s words, and suggest that redevelopment in the Plan Cabanes is about profit, and that profits are being undermined by the presence of immigrants in the neighbourhood. As Madeleine indicates, she has no proof of this theory – it is a difficult point to prove – but her understanding of the situation insists on an association between ethnicity, real estate value, and purposeful municipal intervention. In continuing our conversation I asked her how she had reached these conclusions:

“Roza: What made you think this, I’m curious?”

Madeleine: I heard, me, I know through links with people who work in real estate. I know there are some who invested. And it’s been a long time. And that must have started to bother them I think. Ok, this I know, like they told me, the folks who invested. And on top of that we see the desire to make the Arabs leave the market. We made them go down there [Salengro]. And they made us [*brocante*] come here [Plan Cabanes]. At first they said to us ‘yes, it has to be a nice little *brocante* market, with tables, no flea markets’. To go back a bit to when the bourgeois, that the bourgeois start to come back to the neighbourhood. It’s really a desire.” (Madeleine, *brocante* vendor, Plan Cabanes)

In her understanding of neighbourhood change, Madeleine is very clear in her view on the links between public space alterations and wider gentrification trends: real estate prices have dropped as a result of the area’s reputation as one of Montpellier’s North African neighbourhoods,

which in turn has led to efforts to change the atmosphere and character of the area, starting with the relocation of the market. The *brocante* market has been set up in the Plan Cabanes because – as outlined in the previous chapter – it links to a specific understanding of French culture and heritage, and one that Madeleine seems to think would attract a more bourgeois clientele.

As Harvey (2005) reminds, the redevelopment of public space is closely tied to the redevelopment of private space: the nature and meaning of the public sphere depends on the commerce, landlords, and institutions in its surroundings; for the redevelopment of one to be successful necessitates that the other is also transformed. Or, as Mitchell and Staeheli (2006) note,

“publicly funded beautification of public spaces is used to jumpstart private property redevelopment, in part because improvements in public space have relational benefits to the value of the surrounding private property. In this sense, private property development *relies* on public property redevelopment.” (2006, 150; italics in original).

In many ways Madeleine is correct in her assessment: the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes is part of a wider trend to alter both public and private spaces in the neighbourhood. While all of the municipal actors interviewed during fieldwork emphasized the importance of ensuring that the diverse population of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area remains in place after redevelopment, the social and cultural displacement resulting from these municipal interventions has the opposite effect. As Davidson (2008) notes with respect to state-led (or municipally-led) gentrification, the notion of displacement when taken in its wider scope of changing neighbourhood identities, alternations in service provisions, and shifts in shopping amenities can act as an equally powerful push factor. Although residents are not being en-masse relocated to new neighbourhoods, the stark changes to the Plan Cabanes plaza and surroundings have certainly altered how this area is used – and by whom. I raised the idea of municipally-led gentrification with interviewees at the Mission Grand Coeur, one of whom explained the logic of their intervention:

“And right at the mom-, in 2002 the Mayor of, of Montpellier who at the time was Georges Frêche said that it was all fair and good to construct new neighbourhoods, but it must also be, that the city centre neighbourhoods have been abandoned (*délaisser*) where, eh, where eh, there are developments (*évolutions*) which we didn’t find suitable (*conviennent*). And we want this to be a liveable neighbourhood, an animated neighbourhood, like all the other neighbourhoods. So eh, to do this type of project in the central neighbourhoods he [Frêche] said that we would create an agency called Mission Grand Coeur, with the ability to act across all departments: on housing, on commerce, and the quality of life in general.” (Interviewee 1, Mission Grand Coeur)

There are several points to take away from this quote. The influence of Georges Frêche and his centrality to municipal politics and decision making, as outlined in Chapter 2, is again highlighted with respect to the creation of the Mission Grand Coeur and the redevelopment of the city centre. The idea that these central neighbourhoods had been abandoned while the municipality focused on the development of new urban areas – like Antigone, Port Marianne, and others – explains the labels of ‘blight’ and ‘insalubrious’ in part as a result of the city’s step away from these areas. Or, that the municipality has a central role in ensuring quality housing, commerce, and public spaces, and in managing urban landscapes and their social and cultural manifestations. The idea that the neighbourhood was evolving in a direction the municipality did not find suitable drives to the heart of the matter, and much like other municipal actors, this interview participant went on to explain these unwanted evolutions in terms of blight, insalubrious housing, and a ‘low-quality’ commerce – which is presumably undesirable, as this interviewee explained when I asked why the municipality had redeveloped the Plan Cabanes plaza:

“At that time we did it so that we could bring back a market to the plaza. Eh, if we look closely there are electrical outlets which are integrated into the ground⁵⁴, there are cables that, that would help with returning the market. So why, so we

⁵⁴ In the early 2000s the city of Montpellier began to apply an EU-wide code for market maintenance and upkeep to all municipal markets. This code requires: running water, electricity, and toilets to be provided for all city markets (cf. AVM boîte 520W5).

relocated it to Salengro during the construction period, and the question is why did we leave it in Salengro. So there is, the main reason all the same is that, ok, the market which took place in the Plan Cabanes had, had evolved in a sense which did not suit (*convenir*) us completely. Because it was, eh, it was no longer only a local market, a local food market, it had become more or less a wholesale market, eh, so there effectively wasn't an interest that the Plan Cabanes no-, but, but it was a type that we didn't want to see being developed in that place with, with sales from the back of trucks. We wanted to once more have (*retrouver*) a neighbourhood market, a food market...And so we asked ourselves, do we move it back or not? And it was eventually decided that, eh, we couldn't take the risk that the market developed once again in, in the other sense, on the Plan Cabanes." (Interviewee 1, Mission Grand Coeur)

The complaints of piling garbage and filthy conditions, so prominent in the explanations given by some community actors above, are absent in this discussion. The market was closed by the municipality because its form and function did not meet their expectations for this neighbourhood: it was evolving in a direction that was unsuitable, more a wholesale market than a neighbourhood market, a type of commerce they could not risk seeing re-established in the Plan Cabanes after the renovations. As this speaker explains in the preceding quote, the Mission Grand Coeur and Georges Frêche hoped to create a liveable neighbourhood through their interventions – one that is 'like other neighbourhoods' and which, it seems, required a very different form of vending. After further discussion the notion of a 'neighbourhood market' was defined by this interview participant as a form of vending which has food, but also other goods, with small market stalls, and that sells 'quality' products. The very large organic and local foods Marché des Arceaux and the farmer's market (Marché Paysan d'Antigone) were given as examples of quality markets, while the small 4- to 6-stall markets in the Beaux-Arts⁵⁵ neighbourhood as an example of a manageable neighbourhood market.

⁵⁵ A few additional notes on these markets are included in the 'setting the scene' section of Chapter 2.

The Mission Grand Coeur meeting minutes suggest that a good market is judged based on “the nice appearance of its surroundings” (AVM boîte 625W4 February 2003) and the way goods are presented to shoppers. In this context, the Marché du Plan Cabanes, with its large (sometimes rambling) stalls and emphasis on affordability, is evidently a mismatch – the unsuitable development being the more extensive form of commerce, and the lack of organic, local produce. The *brocante* market currently stretching out across the plaza seems to fulfil these criteria more closely, and provides the sort of small-scale, ‘quality’ space envisioned by the Mission Grand Coeur. That the *brocante* market has little clientele and the Plan Cabanes plaza is described as empty space by municipal and neighbourhood actors speaks to the challenge (or perhaps failure) of this interventionist approach to community planning. As *brocante* and book vendors frequently noted, they are the only market in the city which is not required to pay a per-day usage fee for the Plan Cabanes⁵⁶ – affirming, in their eyes, once more that they are ‘unpaid municipal employees’ and ‘cultural animators’ rather than true vendors. In their words, they are there to give the space a usage and to create a cultural atmosphere capable of attracting a new clientele to the neighbourhood.

Starting to combine the comments made by this series of interview participants leads to several points. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a wide variety of explanations are given for why the Marché du Plan Cabanes was relocated: hygiene problems, garbage, inappropriate use of public space, discrimination, unsuitable vending, the wrong kind of atmosphere. In many instances interview participants explain the relocation of the Marché in very personal terms – these are their views on why the market was moved, and their understanding (as observers, residents, vendors) of why the plaza has changed. The explanations given by municipal actors should be treated differently: as the municipality’s city-centre redevelopment agency, the Mission Grand Coeur makes urban planning decisions and has

⁵⁶ Further comments on this are included in Chapters 4 and 5: the vendors in the Broc’Art market are not required to pay a fee for using the space, and successfully petitioned the municipality to extend this fee-amnesty into their second year as a market on the basis that their profits are too low to continue otherwise. This is the only market in the city of Montpellier to exempt vendors from paying a fee.

a mandate to physically alter the urban fabric, and guide social and cultural development; Philippe Saurel, while not in charge in 2005 when the Marché du Plan Cabanes was relocated, had, at the time of these interviews in 2009 and 2010, a political mandate to guide the continuing urban regeneration project in the neighbourhood. Their explanations are not based on personal views or experience – during interviews it was specified that I was not asking for individual opinions - but are articulations of the municipal policy and urban planning ethic applied to the city centre. The idea that real estate values diminish through the presence of owners and renters of immigrant background – the assumption being that increasing real estate prices are desirable – and that the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood was not developing in a suitable manner speaks volumes about views on what is considered appropriate usage of the city-centre. The direct association between ‘immigrant’ or ‘Arab’ (the two almost interchangeable) and depreciating real estate value, and the more indirect suggestion that the culturally diverse Marché du Plan Cabanes and its form of vending further degrade the area, in many ways support the point made by several local actors on the racial undertones of the redevelopment project. It would seem that urban regeneration based on heritage protection in the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood means removing non-French social and cultural uses from the area, with the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes one of the earlier steps in the processes.

This is not to suggest that protecting architectural heritage or developing effective public space maintenance are not in and of themselves valued municipal tenets. Rather, of particular interest here are the ways these ideas are called into action as part of a wider attempt to define what and whom is included in the so-termed ‘suitable’ neighbourhood developments – all the while skirting around the issue of ethnicity, race, and the displacement of culturally diverse groups of users. The idea that the Marché du Plan Cabanes and its neighbourhood were not evolving in a suitable manner suggests that there is some central, joint, and measurable trajectory for neighbourhood development. If the Plan Cabanes is expected

to be like other neighbourhoods, this immediately poses the question what these other neighbourhoods might be like. Both Mission Grand Coeur interviewees suggested, in a few words, that this involved an animated, liveable, and convivial space of solidarity amongst residents. Philippe Saurel, in his position of political head of urban planning, relied on similar vocabulary of activity, a clear sense of local identity (as indicated through a coherent local urban landscape), and the provision of sufficient services. Neither set of interviewees could give a definitive definition – likely because one is impossible, and the malleability of the term ‘suitable development’ and the haziness of ‘other neighbourhoods’ leaving much room to redefine these ideas as the program rolls on.

From this, there is a sense that the Plan Cabanes is being subjected to some invisible measures to determine its status as a successful or failing neighbourhood. Or, at the very least, measures which are not clearly articulated (to me, as a visiting researcher) or to the public (as documents in newspaper articles and the comments of residents and vendors). The importance of the *brocante* market and of the limited reading of heritage being protected in this neighbourhood give one hint of what might be deemed ‘suitable’ development. The suggestion that this is an immigrant neighbourhood and thus an insalubrious neighbourhood suggests that one version of ‘unsuitable’ is linked to a certain type of resident and usage. For an area that was, in its pre-2005 form, described as a secondary city-centre capable of drawing in shoppers and visitors from the low-income, ethnically diverse suburbs (Faure 1998; Besombes-Vailhe 1995), the profound alterations to the physical form and cultural make-up of the area have seemingly begun to shift understanding of who is an ‘appropriate’ users of these spaces (Mitchell 2003).

6.4 The Plan Cabanes re-ordered

Described as a neighbourhood in need of municipal intervention, and a site which is not developing in a suitable trajectory, the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood and its surroundings have been the subject of a series of administrative and urban planning measures. As one set of municipal

documents outline, the plaza itself is central to a wider program of intervention and redevelopment:

“...at the heart of the Gambetta-Clemenceau, the Plan Cabanes constitutes a major public space for the organization of the image of the sector [Plan Cabanes/Gambetta neighbourhood]. It constitutes a key element which has proven to be a priority for the city in its strategy to re-qualify the living environment, housing, retail activity, and economic activity in the neighbourhood” (AVM 669W38, Oct 2003)

This process of re-ordering the neighbourhood is expressed in several ways: through measures that affect private residential housing [see Figure 6.1]; the introduction of the tramway, noted in Chapter 4; interventions in local commerce, including the Marché du Plan Cabanes; and changes to the public sphere, the redeveloped plaza amongst them [see Figure 6.2]. The ZPPAUP designation protecting architectural heritage in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles / Gambetta area allows the municipality – in cooperation with the Préfecture – to label certain buildings as *utilité publique* (public interest), and to impose renovation requirements. These could involve changes to the interior of buildings along with renovations of building facades [see Figures 6.3 and 6.4]. As Mission Grand Coeur documents available through the municipal archives indicate, the ZPPAUP designation has several benefits: it ensures that private funds have to be used for a substantial portion of the renovations; yet, at the same time allows for the coordination of centralized state funds for the renovation of buildings and facades deemed as being in critical conditions. Through ZPPAUP the municipality can compel residential and commercial unit owners to carry out critical renovations, and in some instances invest state and municipal money in building maintenance – some of the costs detailed for 2004 indicate that upwards of 80% of residential renovation costs can be covered by state funds when insalubrious buildings are concerned, and between 15-35% of the cost of facade renovations (AVM boîte 625W4, March 2004).

The ZPPAUP has another advantage: while it ensures that architectural features are protected and gives the municipality the right to intervene in the protection of the city’s urban landscape, these protection measures are

not so stringent as to stifle redevelopment – as is the case with the *secteur sauvegardé* designation applied to the historic city which prohibits even the most minute changes to the urban landscape⁵⁷ (AVM boîte 625W4, October 2004; AVM boîte 669W38). The ZPPAUP, in other words, ensures that state funds (along with private money) can be collected and spent on a neighbourhood but only in a way deemed appropriate by the municipality – the type of architecture being protected, and that which is deemed ‘suitable’ or ‘appropriate’ being defined by the municipality, all the while avoiding a *secteur sauvegardé* designation which bars redevelopment.

To carry out these heritage-based renovations requires the coordination of several state and municipal agencies⁵⁸ – the role of coordinator taken by the Mission Grand Coeur – and has seen 16% of housing in the Gambetta area (AVM boîte 625W4, 2003) declared insalubrious, and several streets of building facades declared as being a *utilité publique*. Turning to Mission Grand Coeur meeting minutes once more, these interventions have (as of 2004) seen the renovation of 155 residential units, of which 110 were deemed insalubrious, 80 facades renovated, and a further 215 privately owned units renovated (AVM boîte 625W4, March 2004). The same document notes that the 155 insalubrious units were ultimately converted into 126 new residential units, with the hope that the larger size of unit would better meet the needs of future residents. In the vocabulary used to describe these renovations there is a subtlety – one poorly articulated in these internal meeting minutes – whereby the differentiation between ‘privately owned’ and ‘residential units’ refers to a process of pre-emption and expropriation in operation in the area.

Through the application of the ZPPAUP, along with other municipal codes, SERM and the social housing agency OPAH buy real estate with the intent of renovating it (on their own) or passing it on to private developers who

⁵⁷ Archives have left traces of disputes between the municipality and the central state on changes to the historic city centre, with the Architect des Bâtiments de France writing letters to the Mayor of Montpellier decrying changes to gutters or doors in the historic city centre without prior authorization from the Préfecture, which governs the *secteur sauvegarde* designation (cf. AVM 669W38).

⁵⁸ OPAH, ANRU, etc, as noted in Chapter 2.



Figure 6.1: Building facade colour choices, as displayed at the Mission Grand Coeur, November 2012. The lighter colours are intended for buildings that are classed as ‘*grande qualité*’ (high quality) or ‘*collectif*’ (municipal buildings) or those classed as *très dénaturé*’ (meaning, having lost their building quality), while the blue, grey, orange and reds are for ‘*peu dénaturé*’ (not so degraded) and ‘*cohérent*’ (those which fall under a specific urban landscape coordination initiative, like the ‘streets of saints’). Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.2: Renovation in progress, Cours Gambetta, November 2012. The trees lining the street have been wrapped in protective plastic, and the mixture of materials used in the city-centre (the beige-grey flagstones) clash with those used in the faubourg (asphalt). Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.3: The Broc'Art market in the Plan Cabanes plaza, and the facade of a building at the southern edge of the plaza, March 2010. The right-side of the building has had its façade renovated (with colours matching the '*grande qualité*' section of the Mission Grand Coeur prism; while the left-side is yet to be renovated. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.4: The same building and viewpoint as Figure 6.3, however at a moment when the driving school is using the Plan Cabanes plaza, November 2012. The building at the southern edge of the Plan Cabanes plaza has now seen both facades renovated. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

are required to renovate while operating under stringent conditions⁵⁹ - while the ‘privately owned’ units could mean individual owners renovating their personal buildings following a legal notice to do so from the Mission Grand Coeur. As noted in Chapter 2, the city of Montpellier holds the right of first purchase over the neighbourhood, and Mission Grand Coeur meeting minutes reveal that in 2004 a total of 44 units had been acquired in this manner (through pre-emption or expropriation), with a desire to acquire a further 54 units⁶⁰, and build 30 new ones, throughout the duration of the program (AVM boîte 625W4, November 2004). The ability to pre-empt real estate sales is a key administrative tool deployed in this area, and ensures that SERM and the Mission Grand Coeur have a say in who buys residential units in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area. If you do not fit the profile set out by the municipality, you cannot buy in the area. The application of this process is outlined by one interview participant, who explained why he was not able to purchase a house in the area:

“Roza: Have you heard of SERM?”

Jacques: Of course (laughs). SERM.

Roza: So how does it work in the neighbourhood?

Jacques: Just across the street there is, there is, this is interesting, over there, the street where I wanted to buy a house a long time ago. And so I negotiated with the owner and we reached an agreement and SERM intervened. And the Grand Coeur. No, they did, they did, they wanted to pre-empt and at half the price that I had proposed. Which was already very cheap. Ok so it, it was, the guy he did, he didn’t want to sell. And they obligated him to renovate, which is a good thing but the guy, when you obligate someone to renovate who doesn’t have the money to do it, they do whatever they

⁵⁹ Private developers can create social housing under Mission Grand Coeur guidelines in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles under the following conditions: the unit must be priced at the ‘social housing’/‘accessible housing’ rate for nine years, after that time the unit can revert to the open market, with rental prices set by demand. As interviewees at the Mission Grand Coeur explained, this will ensure that social housing is available for some time – though evidently after the nine-year limit is finished, this will no longer be the case. Thus, the municipality pre-empt residential units with the intent of turning them into affordable housing, only to return these units to the private rental market several years later. A tacit form of ownership transfer from one type of owner to another.

⁶⁰ Municipal register lists the renovation of these at around 14€-million (Municipal Register Oct 2004). The renovations include redoing the staircase, fixing gutters, renovating living space. The houses are all on the block of residential units between the Rue Daru and Rue du Faubourg Figuerolles, where nearly every house is affected.

want, they cheat, do this and that, and then the result (laugh). I think that when they take up something like this, either they [SERM] give funds to the guy if he's doing it himself and then get them back later on when he starts to collect rent, or sells. Or instead they take things up themselves and they buy things at the promised rate." (Jacques, business owner, Figuerolles)

The house Jacques was interested in was a two-storey building, and he intended to turn it into an artist's retreat that could be linked to the existing network of small theatres and visual arts studios in this neighbourhood. SERM, he explained, offered all of 30.000€ for the house – he had offered closer to 60.000€, a sum he regarded as laughable – and yet, despite his intentions of creating an artistic venue, was turned down. Our discussion continued on this topic for some time, with Jacques suggesting that his non-residential use had probably hampered the purchase. His critique of the low prices offered by SERM and the inefficacy of the renovation processes – the problem of doing things on the cheap just to get them done – highlight some of the practical difficulties with this form of intervention. SERM's right to pre-empt the purchase of residential buildings in the area became the topic for a conversation with two other interview participants:

“Roza: So SERM want to do what in the area?

Ralph: SERM want...

Juju: Ah SERM....

Ralph: They want to make it [Figuerolles] part of Grand Coeur [city centre] [...]. Here in Figuerolles there are people who feel that it's [the renovation program] not the best, like the municipality doesn't redo the roads. The municipality doesn't take care of the streets, they don't take care of the gutters, things like that. And SERM are there, they shield the municipality, it's the municipality that wanted the tramway. Or the Agglomération, I don't know. And they strip owners, who are thrown out, to buy them off, the old buildings, and that is all SERM. But SERM and the municipality of Montpellier are like this (squeezes together hands), they are stuck together, seriously, seriously. [...]

Juju: In the neighbourhood you don't have the right to sell, if you sell it's the municipality that buys.

Ralph: If you want to sell SERM will pre-empt your sale. There are signs everywhere, 'renovation of building', that's SERM and they have bought for next to nothing. Nothing.” (Juju and Ralph, neighbourhood association, Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes)

SERM, and by extension the Mission Grand Coeur, emerge as an unwelcome presence in the Figuerolles and Plan Cabanes neighbourhood. Their joint ability to compel owners to sell to the city is viewed as putting undue pressure on the neighbourhood, with these two interviewees seeing the close relationship between SERM and the municipality as problematic. While the city of Montpellier fails to take care of basic public amenities – the recent flooding in this neighbourhood was raised as an example of the failure to maintain gutters and drainage by Juju and Ralph – the municipality’s redevelopment agency, SERM, is incredibly efficient in its intervention and engagement with the area. The sentiment of SERM stripping owners of their buildings and throwing them out reframes the urban redevelopment of the Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes area as a process of displacement driven by the municipality. As Weber (2002) reminds, the conflicting role of the state in some instances of redevelopment – the city of Montpellier’s mandate to define ‘blight’ while at the same time guiding SERM, the main agency in charge of expropriating buildings labelled as such – raises questions about the purpose and intent of such projects. For Uitermark and Duyvendak (2007) and their study of state-led gentrification in Rotterdam, the further involvement of social housing agencies in this intervention demonstrates that state-led gentrification, despite its claims to protecting vulnerable groups, leads to neighbourhood re-ordering in much the same way as market-led gentrification.

While municipal actors claimed that maintaining the Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes’ diverse population is a key element of the Mission Grand Coeur mandate, the process of pre-empting sales and selecting buyers for these buildings puts to question this commitment. I raised the issue of pre-emption and expropriation during interviews at the Mission Grand Coeur, asking how they acquired buildings and compelled owners to carry out expansive renovations to their units:

“Interviewee: And what was the most difficult to, ok there are some that we haven’t yet succeeded in, in convincing [to renovate], but what we, what’s a little bit more difficult to decide on sometimes are the most critical cases. Meaning it’s the, the buildings which have been identified as most critical in terms of the quality of the building, in terms of stability, in terms of meeting building norms, etcetera. And so if it’s a procedure that requires a public inquiry and a prefectural decree, so it’s, it’s not just the authority of the city. We have a program that requires a minimum of construction to be done to these buildings. We have declared the *utilité publique*. So it means that, this program is imposed on the owners. They have no choice.

Roza: Ok.

Interviewee: And if they don’t take a decision, eh, we can go as far as expropriating them if that’s the case. We do a landholding survey afterwards which can go as far as expropriation. And if we get to that point, our developer the SERM will buy the building and carry out the work that needs doing.” (Interview, Mission Grand Coeur).

The urban planning programs in place require owners to renovate, and in instances when these renovations are not carried out to the satisfaction of the Mission Grand Coeur, SERM is engaged to acquire the buildings and perform the necessary work. In many ways this sounds like a logical process: buildings that are structurally unstable, degraded, or a threat to residents and nearby occupants would understandably require state. All of the local business owners and residents interviewed knew of a building or a person who had been expropriated or pre-empted. The Mission Grand Coeur plaques mentioned by Ralph in the previous quote – those saying ‘renovation of building’ – are clustered in many of the local streets [see Figures 6.5 and 6.6]. During a walk through the Figuerolles neighbourhood with a resident we noted the number of expropriated building, blocking former owners or anyone else from entering the premises through the use of what are known as ‘SERM doors’ – dark brown metal doors that are attached to the entrance or garage of a building. In the so-called ‘streets of the saints’ there were several such ‘SERM doors’ [see Figures 6.6 and 6.7].



Figure 6.5: SERM / Grand Coeur renovation in progress, 22 rue de Metz, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.6: SERM / Grand Coeur renovation in collaboration with OPAH, 10 rue de Metz, November 2010. The orange and yellow renovated facades have taken the colours from the Mission Grand Coeur colour prism, Figure 6.1. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.7: SERM/ Grand Coeur renovation 4 Rue du Père Fabre, with a brown metal SERM door on the building, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.8: SERM / Grand Coeur renovation, 15 Rue du Père Fabre, with a brown metal SERM door on the building, November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

The stories told by residents and business owners suggest that pre-emptions and expropriations are the rule, rather than an exception. Their sense that every building up for sale is bought by the city is matched by the landscape of Mission Grand Coeur plaques throughout the area – the rate of expropriation, if taken as the number of ‘SERM doors’, would amount to at least six buildings on one walk through the streets surrounding the Place Salengro in 2010. Faced with such rapid changes in ownership and widespread upset from residents, it is difficult to ignore the sense that the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood is being purposefully reordered. With the Mission Grand Coeur and SERM documents on this program still closed to public access, I turned to the books of municipal decrees for a sense of how the pre-emption rate of this neighbourhood compares to the rest of the city. Consulting the 2005 municipal registers, eleven⁶¹ of the 49 properties pre-empted by the city of Montpellier were located in the Figuerolles / Plan Cabanes area (Municipal registers, 2005) [see Figure 6.9]. These Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles pre-emptions account for nearly 1/4 of the city’s activity, with another 1/3 of the remaining pre-emptions situated in the historic city centre, along with some locales where the tramway will pass, and several suburban and peri-urban locations linked to ZAD projects (larger map of all pre-emptions is included as Appendix 2). Evidently at the time of the Marché du Plan Cabanes’ relocation in 2005, the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood was the focus of particular attention on the part of SERM and the municipality.

⁶¹ Some difficulties of using the municipal register to count pre-emptions: 48 and 50 Rue de Faubourg Figuerolles are listed on the same pre-emption action, yet are in reality two different but adjoining addresses. I have counted them as two. In other instances, the same address appears twice, and it is not clear if more than one unit has been bought in the same building, or if the pre-emption is being registered twice for another reason. In these instances I have counted an address only once.

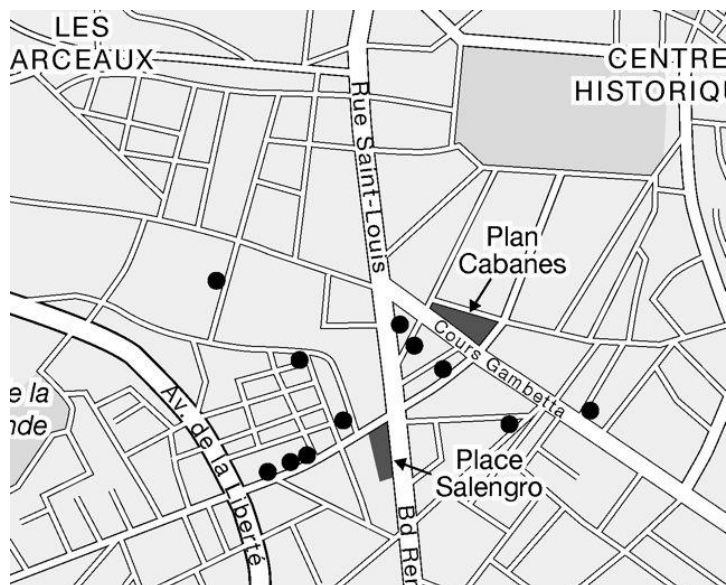


Figure 6.9: The 11 pre-empted properties in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area for 2005. Map prepared by: Paul Coles, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield.

The system of re-ordering the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood extends to retail units as well. Mission Grand Coeur meeting minutes in November 2004 note the need to start acquiring retail units in order to manage neighbourhood change (AVM boîte 625W4), while a SERM document from November 2003 raises alarm over the commercial developments in Rue du Faubourg du Courreau, which stems from the Plan Cabanes plaza:

“...information points to the need for an intervention for the revitalization of this emblematic street [Faubourg du Courreau]. If nothing is done by the public authority (*puissance publique*), devalorization, already in progress, towards low-grade services will continue, and gain the lower end of the Rue St-Guilhem”(AVM boîte 625W4, 1).

The reason for SERM intervention is clear: the Faubourg du Courreau is sliding towards a low-grade, or low-quality, type of commerce. The document was written in 2003, two years before the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, and goes on to note that SERM already has 23 buildings in this area, and is equally keen to ensure that Maghrebin commerce on the Rue Daru continues to be linked to the Plan Cabanes. The document creates a complex vision of how SERM (and the Mission Grand

Coeur) are acting in the area: low-quality commerce is evidently seen as undesirable, especially when it threatens to seep into the Rue St-Guilhem, one of the main streets of the historic city centre. At the same time, what is termed by Mission Grand Coeur documents as ‘ethnic commerce’ further into the neighbourhood is seen as needing better integration – a comment that could perhaps signal tacit support for more diverse forms of vending. At this point in 2003 the Marché du Plan Cabanes and its large, diverse stalls (and dirty, disorganized, bazaar vending), separated the Rue Daru and the Faubourg du Courreau (see Figure 2.12). Considering that the municipal interviewees quoted earlier in this chapter outlined the unsuitability for the Marché du Plan Cabanes’ form of vending for this area, it is difficult not to coalesce these comments into a broader understanding that sees the market’s relocation as one point in a wider strategy of deliberately changing the commercial and economic structure of this neighbourhood.

Interview participants put forth a similar argument when asked why SERM was so active in the acquisition of commercial units in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area. One speaker explained:

“They [SERM] are in the process of buying all the buildings. They buy the retail units which are at the bottom [of the building], and like you asked to, they are in the process of modifying, disfiguring the neighbourhood, disfiguring. What I mean is that this is a food (*alimentaire*) oriented neighbourhood, here it’s a food neighbourhood. We can’t, no one who has opened a clothing boutique has succeeded here, they have closed. Today what are they, they are in the process of buying all the retail units and today when you go and ask ‘Madam, will you rent to us’ the, this unit or that, SERM will tell you no, what are you planning on doing? If you tell them that you will be doing food or, or a restaurant or a fishmonger, no matter what, no, there’s no question, no. We must set up, we must do a bar⁶², you must sell evening dresses.” (Abdul, business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

⁶² A more subtle meaning of this comment has to do with the difference between a restaurant and a bar: many restaurants in the Figuerolles and Plan Cabanes neighbourhood do not serve alcohol, in accordance with Muslim beliefs. A bar would, by definition, serve alcohol. One local business owner I interviewed insisted on pointing out that their restaurant served alcohol, noting that this meant they were open to any and all

In this description the redevelopment project is associated not only with protecting architectural heritage and maintaining the neighbourhood, but with a desire to alter the function and form of vending associated with the Plan Cabanes area. The replacement of the food-centred Marché du Plan Cabanes with a *brocante* and antiques market is seemingly part of this program – which, as Abdul notes above, has seen SERM set limits on the type of stores and venues which can be opened in the neighbourhood. The acquisition of retail units through the Mission Grand Coeur program can be seen – in light of the above quote, and the previous extract noting a need to up-grade the type of commerce in the area – as an instance of retail gentrification, one determined to transform the Plan Cabanes into a district with different types of retail attractions. This point is also articulated by Philippe Saurel, who explained his vision for the future of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood:

“There are, there are two things which will encourage the emergence of a new usage for the Plan Cabanes [plaza]. It’s, the first thing is the, the tramway station which will be just next to it. And the second thing is the long-term pedestrianization, and there we will be producing a district that is supplementary to the city centre. And we can give it supplementary uses. In my opinion it’s, it’s the only coherent evolution that this neighbourhood desires. As much as the Rue du [Faubourg du] Courreau borders the Plan Cabanes, it also merits being pedestrianized. So we must give ourselves the means to be able to renew the buildings which are in a bad state. To restore them, produce businesses on the ground floors, and a varied kind of commerce which is not only luxury boutiques. But it’s also not just kebab shops. There must be both types. So it’s a subtle, subtle equilibrium. But one which should ultimately lead not to a ghetto, not to exclusion either, but to a, a lifestyle we can share. A equitable sharing of public space, voila. That’s how I see the city.” (Philippe Saurel, political head of urban planning for Montpellier 2005-2011)

That the municipality is taking the lead in re-ordering the retail and commercial make up of the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood is not under question. As Philippe Saurel notes, they are seeking to create a mixture of

customers – but also pointing out that none of his Muslim peers were content with this decision.

ventures that allow for ‘low-grade’ selling – the kebabs shops, already present on the Rue du Faubourg du Courreau – all the while introducing more luxury shops (the evening dresses and bars noted by Abdul above). The Plan Cabanes is being subsumed by the city-centre, and as part of its new life as a central neighbourhood, it is being re-imagined not only as protected architectural heritage, but also as a higher-end form of commerce that does not risk devaluing the existing prestige of the historic area nearby. The arrival of the tramway is, as noted in Chapter 4, seen as a reason to alter the function of the Plan Cabanes plaza: the assumed arrival of tram users, and the new transport links between this neighbourhood and the rest of the city, seemingly necessitate a different type (and quality) of public space usage. The introduction of a *brocante* market fulfils these ambitions neatly, as noted by two vendors in that market who explained how and why the municipality asked them to create the Broc’Art market:

“They [municipality] told us, they gave us the green light to, so, authorized us to take up (*investir*) this, this plaza. In fact this, this plaza to be able to, for them they wanted to return to a neighbourhood a bit more, eh, a bit more high-value in reality. And by, eh, by bringing us here, because before there was a vegetable market. But since they have restored the plaza and also there will be the tramway so they wanted to have a different event. I am speaking about quality because the vegetable market is also useful. But they displaced it to, I don’t know, so they could in fact have cultural activities here” (Pauline, book dealer, Plan Cabanes)

Returning to the issue of public space order, a fellow book vendor outlines why the *brocante* market may be seen as a suitable use of the new Plan Cabanes. When asked why he thought the municipality wanted to install a *brocante* market in the plaza, he explained:

“Eh, because we’re seriously at work with our association that’s why. We have, we have a good relationship, we’ve always had a good relationship with the municipality, whether with Frêche, or Mandroux and the head of commerce of, the municipality, with the cultural attaché as well, we are after all in a cultural sector. Voilà so, eh, and then also we have a clear type of management. There is no trouble, no scheming, there are, the accounts are open, and on top of that we don’t overcharge our members” (Lucien, book dealer, Plan Cabanes)

The extracts above delineate a particular form of municipal intervention keen on changing the commercial network of the Plan Cabanes area. As the area is being subsumed into the historic city centre, the form of vending deemed suitable in the market and in the surrounding shops and restaurants is changing – and in this, the municipality is taking the role of managing the change and determining what is suitable. The sense that the *brocante* market represents a type of cultural commerce tied to French heritage, as outlined in Chapter 5, and that the association managing the market already has close ties to the municipality, provides an explanation for why this particular market has been installed in the newly renovated Plan Cabanes plaza. In this context the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes can be recast not only as an unfortunate consequence of neighbourhood redevelopment – but as a deliberate action to remove a form of commerce seen as not sufficiently high quality, too disordered, and unsuitable for the new image of this ZPPAUP listed neighbourhood.

Intervention in residential real estate and in the commercial character of the area are matched by one final form of municipal intervention: a building facade renewal program that requires building owners (whether residential or commercial) to upgrade the frontage of their properties. As the Mission Grand Coeur interviews explain, the facade renewal program is central to the overall redevelopment and re-imagination of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood:

“Interviewee 1: For public space the facades count enormously.

Roza: Ok.

Interviewee 1: It gives an impress-, it’s, in a very obvious way we can pull up the quality of the area by working on the facades.

Interviewee 2: It will give, in fact especially on the (overlap)

Interviewee 1: (overlap) ah yes, it has the effect of giving a sense of urban cleanliness (*propreté urbaine*).

Interviewee 2: A change in ambiance.

Interviewee 1: It, it puts, it puts to question the efficacy of all of our efforts, of everyone’s efforts [if someone doesn’t

participate]. It's a point of public interest." (Interviews, Mission Grand Coeur).

The idea of re-ordering the urban landscape, of cleanliness and re-imagining the Plan Cabanes in the image of the historic city centre, come together in this discussion. Facade renovations are central to creating a new ambiance for the neighbourhood, and even though the buildings in question are privately owned – through the application of a ZPPAUP, their appearance becomes a point of public interest and municipal involvement. That upgrading facades creates a sense of a very particular form of cultural cleanliness – owners refusing to comply are seen as working against the greater good, and could be expropriated – and also a homogeneity to the area is not lost on residents. As members of one local association outlined in a discussion on the idea of 'dirt':

“Roza: What does a clean neighbourhood mean?

Ralph: A clean neighbourhood is a neighbourhood that isn't *populaire*⁶³. Where we keep quiet. And where we say the same thing.

Juju: That's not a neighbourhood. A *populaire* neighbourhood is this one. It's the most *populaire* of Montpellier. It has a history. But with the evolution that it's taking, ok. I don't know, I don't see a good development, in ten years with this rhythm.

Ralph: It will be all yellow and blue.

Juju: Yes, they have sent letters to owners.

Ralph: Must redo facades

Juju: If they don't do it a business will come and do it, and you have to pay. Voila. In ten year's time it will be all pink. There are three colours. Pink or blue or something like that. In ten years it will be like that. Ah, the Faubourg Figuerolles, *dans la vie en rose* (starting to sing the Edit Piaf song 'La Vie en Rose')." (Juju and Ralph, neighbourhood association members, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles)

⁶³ The word '*populaire*' directly translates as 'for the people' or a 'people's neighbourhood'. While in the mid-20th century this might have referred to a working class neighbourhood, the current connotation of the word *populaire* is an immigrant neighbourhood. A clean neighbourhood would then be a neighbourhood without a noticeable proportion of immigrants.

The cleanliness of the facades in Figuerolles and the Plan Cabanes are not just about colour coding this area and creating an imagine of pastel pinks and muted blues⁶⁴ – it is also about cleaning up the sorts of people who live here, and for these two speakers, removing the *populaire* quality of the neighbourhood. Juju’s humming of the Edit Piaf song ‘La Vie en Rose’ has a dual meaning: pink-coloured facades are permitted in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles; and the melancholy happiness of the song’s lyrics, he added, mirrored the melancholy of the changes in Figuerolles [see Figure 6.10 and 6.11].

The colour-coding of buildings is matched by the coding of public space materials, as noted in Chapter 4: the types of stone and street furniture used in the Plan Cabanes, Figuerolles and nearby Gambetta fit into a hierarchy of textures, colours, and forms that will visually integrate these areas into the historic city centre. The Mission Grand Coeur redevelopment project has impacted visibly on the urban landscape of this neighbourhood [see Figure 6.12 and 6.13], yet as the interviewee noted below explains, the slow, step-by-step process of announcing these changes has made it more difficult to organize and oppose this municipally-led gentrification project:

“But, I, at the start I had the impression that things were questioned a lot, a lot, a lot. Because we see so much of it now, it’s become banal. All of a sudden it’s all, it’s the, problem, like with the, the things of, of the Plan Cabanes. Things are put in place, it’s made so that people get used to things and, it’s like the history of the frog that we put in lukewarm water. And that we slowly raise the temperature. A frog that you put in hot water has enough of an impetus to get

⁶⁴ The colours permitted for facades in the Figuerolles area are different from those allowed in the historic city-centre. For instance, around the Plan Cabanes facades must show the unpainted stone – with a gloss-less finish, like that pictured in Figure 4.5. Around Figuerolles and the so-called ‘streets of the saints’, facades can be painted in a selection of pastel colours (yellow, pink, blue, green, Figure 6.1). In the hierarchy of Montpellier urban spaces (Figure 4.1), I might guess that the ‘streets of the saints’ are class as a Faubourg-Level 3, where complete uniformity of facades is not required – for instance, compare images of streets in Montpellier’s historic city-centre (Figures 2.5, 2.6) with those around the Plan Cabanes (Figures 6.3, 6.4), and the Rue du Faubourg Figuerolles (Figure 2.20) – all of which have a similar colour scheme – but one that is very different from the colours of the ‘streets of the saints’ (Figure 6.6), which are locally used streets and not main thoroughfares.



Figure 6.10: 'La gentrification c'est pas très cool'/'Gentrification isn't that cool', graffiti in the 'streets of saints', November 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.11: Poster against the construction of a new building in the Figuerolles area, calling for the space where an expropriated house was knocked down to be converted into a park instead. Poster seen in the Plan Cabanes, March 2010. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.12: Renovated facades in the Rue du Père Fabre, in the ‘streets of saints’, November 2012. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.



Figure 6.13: The Course Gambetta during tramway line #3 renovation, March 2010. Certain facades have already been renovated, others have yet to be started. Photograph: Roza Tchoukaleyska.

out and save itself. For people that, we do like this and increase the heat a little, they have what, they are cooked after like that and they no longer have the drive to rebel and to, to fight. And sometimes we have the impression that it's like this, that this is happening.” (Rita, resident, Plan Cabanes /Figuerolles)

The pace of change – the market relocated provisionally, then permanently, then a new one instated, the facade renewals followed by pre-emptions, the long-planned arrival of the tram, and the newly articulated desire to pedestrianize the neighbourhood, along with the ZPPAUP designation gained in the mid-2000s – are the slowly rising temperature which has, for this speaker, seen Plan Cabanes and Figuerolles residents become habituated to the SERM signs and pastel coloured buildings, and no longer able to stop the gentrification process which is swiftly moving this neighbourhood from a *quartier populaire* to one seemingly destined for a higher-grade, higher-price type of client and resident.

6.5 Conclusion

Examining the physical and social spaces of the financial centre of London, Allen (2003) argues that not all workers are equally recognized in the power relations of the City: cleaners, support staff, and many other groups are seemingly erased from urban (and economic) space. As Allen explains, “such groups are not physically excluded; rather their presence is *smothered* by a dominant coding of space which takes its cue from finance” (2003, 164; italics in original). While arguably anyone can walk through the City, their invisibility and inability to alter or influence these surroundings, or to profit from the financial winnings of City firms, speaks to a nuanced form of exclusion (Dikeç 2007; Sibley 1995) and the subtle expression of power – one that is relational, and as Allen notes “constituted by the many networked relationships which compose it” (2003, 37). The spatiality of power, and in particular institutional power (Foucault 1975), certainly comes through in the events and actions witnessed in the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood. The re-ordering of this neighbourhood through pre-emption, redevelopment, retail displacement, and the creation of a new *brocante*-oriented culture for the main plaza, reveals a spatial coding that

seeks to define a new set of appropriate users and uses (Mitchell 2003) – and one that, following Allen (2003), is an expression of a particular network of municipal political, economic and cultural power. The use of *utilité publique* allows the municipality to intervene in real estate markets, and through pre-emption policies shape who becomes an owner in the area. The suggestion that diminishing real estate value is linked to the presence of immigrants, and further that the Marché du Plan Cabanes was deemed unsuitable for its particular form of vending – and association with the city’s North African community – gives a clear indication of who might be excluded from the new Plan Cabanes. The sentiment that this is a dirty, disorganized, or insalubrious neighbourhood speaks not only to the presumed physical condition of the space – but also to a set of cultural and social usages, which are coded as undesirable and are slowly being disbanded and replaced with quaint multicoloured houses and the sale of French books and antiques.

Heritage protection and the ZPPAUP, along with the redevelopment mandate of the Mission Grand Coeur, are in this sense urban planning tools deployed by the municipality for the re-ordering of the neighbourhood and its integration into the historic city centre. Following on from the work of Ross (1996) and Dikeç (2007), it is possible to speak about racialized space in the Plan Cabanes – and the association of ‘unsuitable’ development with a non-French presence; and the desired urban evolutions being linked with a narrow definition of the cultural, social, and heritage practices permitted in the area. The purification of space (Douglas 1966; Sibley 1995), though, relates not only to the public sphere – the plaza, building facades, urban materials – but also the private sphere of residential and retail units, and a stated desire to remove the low-grade goods which have until now been so central to shaping the identity and function of the Plan Cabanes. A new type of neighbourhood is being imagined in this district of Montpellier. In the thesis conclusion that follows, the re-ordering of the Plan Cabanes will be set into the wider narrative of civic belonging, public memory, and community development articulated through the preceding chapters.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Through this thesis, I have set out to consider how meaning is assigned to public space, how those meanings are contested, and what these contestations can tell us about broader debates on civic engagement, cultural identity, and urban belonging in France. I have defined public space as a site that is accessible to all citizens and one that, following Lefebvre (1991), Habermas (1962), and Mitchell (2003), is a place where a diversity of residents and users can meet, interact, and recognize each other as equal participants in the urban sphere. I have posited that an inability to access public space can translate into an inability to establish a visible, and viable, presence in the city, which in turn can hamper the ability to appropriate urban space and thus limit civic engagement. I have chosen to examine these issues through a study of a series of three outdoor markets in Montpellier, where debates on how the Plan Cabanes plaza should be used – which market will be allowed to claim that plaza, and why – link to broader debates on who has the right to assign a function and meaning to public space. The contestations over Montpellier’s Plan Cabanes plaza overlap with broader French debates on immigration, identity, and cultural belonging: the 2005 relocation of the diverse Marché du Plan Cabanes from the Plan Cabanes plaza, in favour of a market selling French *brocante* and books, hints at specific visions of how ‘appropriate’ uses and users (Mitchell 2003) are constituted and puts to question who exactly has rights to this city’s public spaces (cf Lefebvre 1996).

In approaching this case study I have been guided by a series of interlinking questions. First, I have sought to understand how public spaces are invested with meaning, and in particular the role played by outdoor markets in establishing an inclusive and open public sphere (de la Pradelle 2006; Guano 2006). Following on from this, I have considered the opposite scenario: if outdoor markets contribute to the formation of the public sphere, then how can the relocation of a diverse food market be understood?

This has led me to consider the cultural and social disinvestment of public space through urban renewal processes (Zukin 1995; Till 2005), and to pose questions on the links between the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes and broader French discourses on embodied difference and problematized ethnic identities (Freedman 2004; Weil 2005). Finally, through my research questions I have queried the impact of state-led gentrification on diverse neighbourhoods (Uitermark and Duyvendak 2007), and questioned whether the processes witnessed in Montpellier's Plan Cabanes plaza can speak to a racialization of public space (Ross 2006; Dikeç 2007).

7.1 Thesis summary

Selecting the Plan Cabanes plaza as my field site was predicated on several considerations: the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes had resulted in considerable public debate on the kind of activities deemed appropriate for a city-centre plaza (Midi Libre 2006c, 2006e); the city of Montpellier's extensive urban city-centre regeneration programs, through the Mission Grand Coeur, had provided a basis for understanding how urban space is envisioned, formed and managed by the municipality; and finally, my previous research in this site allowed me to re-enter the Plan Cabanes neighbourhood quickly, and engage with key actors involved in debates around the usage and future of the Plan Cabanes and its market(s). This thesis is based on fieldwork completed between September 2009 and June 2010 in Montpellier, and follows on from MA-level fieldwork on farmers' markets and outdoor vending in that city. Ethnographic research in 2009/10 saw me stationed in the Place Salengro produce market and the Plan Cabanes *brocante* market over the 10-month fieldwork period, and was complemented by 21 semi-structured interviews with neighbourhood and municipal actors, a series of life-history interviews and walking tours in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood, archival research, newspaper research, and the use of photography as a visual method.

In Chapter 3, I drew on the work of de la Pradelle (2006), along with Slocum (2007) and de Certeau (1984; et al 1998), to consider how the

outdoor market intersected with public space. Both the *brocante* and the Place Salengro produce markets can be viewed as municipal institutions: with market opening and closing times, the selection of vendors, stall height and size, and the type of products permitted in each market determined by the municipality, both spaces demonstrate local political visions of how outdoor markets should appear, be organized, and managed. On top of this layer of municipal oversight is another, more subtle, series of codes: the internal rules and behaviour norms of the vendors, noticeably different in the two markets, and leading to the formation of distinct communities of practice (Amin and Roberts 2008). While in the *brocante* market stallholders play at listlessness and disinterest, letting potential customers browse at their own pace, in the Place Salengro vendors quickly engage visitors in conversation, hand out cooking advice, and tacitly try to build up client loyalty through free food giveaways. The market is thus a performance of sorts, and the marketplace a site where most participants overlook social, cultural or economic differences in order to establish a conviviality and sense of equality amongst users. The rules – both municipal and internal codes – are often broken, with vendors occasionally lying about the provenance of merchandise, using unregistered stall workers, turning a blind eye to food recuperation, and dealing with theft (whether of books, or by eating unpaid for produce). The municipality's approach of organizing the outdoor market, together with the internal codes of practice in each market, produce a particular public space experience (cf Lefebvre 1991) that sees increased sociability and interaction, encourages strangers to acknowledge each other, and sees a diversity of people descend on the Plan Cabanes and Place Salengro – certainly a heightened form of public space usage, at least compared to the limited usage of each of these spaces (as a parking lot; and as a driving school venue and thoroughfare) when the markets are not in session.

In a context where outdoor markets are noted as increasing public space usage and leading to greater civic engagement, the 2005 relocation of the old Marché du Plan Cabanes stands out as a notable act. Chapter 4 interrogated the Marché du Plan Cabanes' relocation, and considered the

resulting downgrading in the eyes of both municipal and neighbourhood actors of the Plan Cabanes plaza from a ‘public space’ to an ‘empty space’. Tracing the municipality’s indecision on the fate of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, the chapter began with an overview of the polarized opinions on the form and function of the pre-2005 produce market: described as both a lively, beloved, and unique meeting point for Montpelliérain descending from the social housing suburbs along with those living in the city-centre; the market was at the same time seen as difficult to manage, noisy, and disorganized. The actual act of market relocation was quickly eclipsed by the inflammatory rhetoric surrounding the decision, while the debate – as carried out in local newspapers in 2005 and 2006; and recorded in fieldwork interviews in 2009/10 – quickly descended into a contestation over appropriate uses and users (cf Mitchell 2003) of the newly renovated plaza.

Chapter 4 went on to consider the meaning of ‘public space’ in French legal and urban planning vocabulary, and notes that while public space is inalienable and non-transferrable, it is also under the management, oversight, and influence of municipal governments. For urban planners at the Mission Grand Coeur and the municipality, the relocation of the market was less a social process and more a technical program: an upgrading of the materials used for the plaza’s tarmac, the selection of colours to ensure homogeneity and continuity in the city-centre urban landscape, and a need to prepare for the arrival of Montpellier’s new tramline #3 at the Plan Cabanes. Neighbourhood and municipal actors espouse different understandings of the elements which identify the Plan Cabanes plaza as a public space: vendors and users speak about the plaza as having lost its sociability through the relocation of the market, thus emphasizing the social aspect of market life; while municipal actors focus on the technical and administrative elements required by the redevelopment. As a result, the newly refurbished Plan Cabanes and its new *brocante* market fail to meet expectations: both *brocante* vendors and neighbourhood actors argue that the Plan Cabanes has become ‘empty space’ for its lack of use, animation, and in the absence of the expansive Marché du Plan Cabanes;

municipal actors equally recognize the 2009/10 variant of the plaza as 'empty space', lacking in meaning and still in need of a function. Together, these discourses indicate that while the Plan Cabanes plaza was considered an urban 'public space' while the Marché du Plan Cabanes was in action, through the market's relocation, the site has lost its 'public' function and become 'empty'. The indication being that public space without social or cultural usage cannot be truly considered 'public', and further, that such a social usage cannot be imposed through technocratic urban planning.

Chapter 5 continued to examine the theme of 'empty space' in relation to the newly renovated Plan Cabanes plaza through a focus on the aforementioned social and cultural meaning. The chapter detailed different memories and personal stories about this area, and considered how these memories are represented (or not) by the newly redeveloped plaza. Personal and collective memories are implicated in the production of space (O'Keefe 2007), and the stories vendors, market users, and neighbourhood actors tell about the old Marché du Plan Cabanes are revealing: through personal memories it becomes clear that the market and the neighbourhood are closely linked, remembrance of one prompts memories of the other, which in turn supports the notion that the Marché du Plan Cabanes and the pre-2005 Plan Cabanes plaza were important community spaces. In part, these memories reveal notable changes to the urban and social landscape of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles market and neighbourhood in the 1980s: the arrival of North African vendors, residents, shoppers, and users of the area, and the adjoining transformation of this site into a key node for a growing diversity of people. Yet, the designation of this neighbourhood as a protected heritage zone fails to capture this key shift, and *brocante* vendors are quick to point out that their arrival in the neighbourhood in 2009 is part of a cultural re-imagination of the site. *Brocante* is linked to a particular vision of French national heritage, one that excludes immigrant history, and is tied to a collective reading of porcelains, books, antiques, and similar objects as representations (to borrow from Lefebvre's (1991) vocabulary) of what it means to be 'French'. The *brocante* vendors recognize this function, and claim that their market

was installed in the Plan Cabanes precisely because it is a material representation of 'French' culture – the implication being that a protected French urban heritage zone also requires a form of public space usage that can be perceived as traditional 'French' culture. While the Marché du Plan Cabanes and its plaza were once a visible reminder of France's immigration (and colonial) history and the ethnic and cultural diversity of its population, through the 2005 relocation of the produce market this cultural meaning was also erased. As a result, for some neighbourhood actors, the Plan Cabanes was emptied of its cultural meaning, and France's collective memory of immigration and colonization displaced from a prominent public space. It is these sentiments which have resulted in accusations of discrimination and racism on the part of the municipality, and suggestions that the Marché du Plan Cabanes was not an 'appropriate' use of the space because of its cultural connotations.

The final empirical chapter picked up these ideas, and further considered the degree to which the erasure of certain identities from this public space speak to an institutional desire to deliberately re-order public space in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles. Chapter 6 first considered the vocabulary used by neighbourhood actors and municipal actors to explain the need for the Marché du Plan Cabanes's relocation: comments on dirt, lack of hygiene, and disorder are noted in 2005/06 newspaper articles and in 2009/10 interviews as the reasons for the need to relocate the market. Municipal actors further comment that the Marché du Plan Cabanes was not developing in a suitable direction, and that the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood as a whole was insalubrious, declining, and in need of direct intervention. The implication of this is two-fold: first, that relocating the market to a smaller plaza is seen as being able to solve the 'dirt' problem (a claim contested by many Place Salengro vendors and neighbourhood actors who claim that the municipality failed to provide adequate market cleaning); and second, that in the eyes of municipal urban planners, neighbourhoods have seemingly clear developmental trajectories that place the Plan Cabanes in the 'unsuitable' stream – a direction that can be corrected through intervention in the built environment. What this means

in practice is revealed through the measures instituted in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood: pre-emption and expropriation of buildings by SERM and the Mission Grand Coeur, a change to the materials used to build the urban landscape (stones, colours, textures), and the introduction of the *brocante* market as a more suitable type of vending for the newly renovated Plan Cabanes plaza. Opponents of the Marché du Plan Cabanes' relocation take a different viewpoint: municipal intervention in the built environment is seen as being linked to real estate prices (a point confirmed by some municipal actors); and the relocation of the old food market is seen as the first step to annexing the Plan Cabanes plaza to the historic city centre, thereby disrupting the diverse Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood dynamic.

As Chapter 6 notes, the application of the terms 'dirt' and 'lack of hygiene' to a neighbourhood recognized as being important to Montpellier's North African community links to a series of broader discourses on (post)colonial legacies and, following Ross (1996) and Dikeç (2007), the notion of purified urban spaces. This in turn leads to questions on the racialization of space: in an instance where speaking about ethnic identity is not socially or politically acceptable in France, and speaking about 'problematic' spaces has become one way of dealing with urban ethnic communities (Wacquant 2008), the notation used to identify the Plan Cabanes plaza and surrounding neighbourhood as demonstrative of 'unsuitable' development puts to question whether it is also unsuitable uses and users who are at stake. Market vendors, users, and neighbourhood actors have argued that the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes had the underlying motive of removing a highly visible North African presence from the city-centre – while the pre-emptions and expropriations have had the effect of shifting the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles resident base – which together speak to a municipally-led gentrification process that is resulting in certain uses and users being labelled 'inappropriate' (cf Mitchell 2003). The discourses of dirt, and the municipal intervention tactics, speak not only to the presumed physical conditions of the space – but also to a set of cultural and social usages being coded as undesirable, with the resulting re-ordering of the

Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles neighbourhood changing the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the area.

7.2 Conclusions and implications

Together, these findings have led me to several key conclusions:

First, **public spaces can be rendered more inclusive, engaging and open through the use of outdoor markets** – with some caveats. In Chapter 3 I argued that the outdoor market is in part a performance. Participation in the *brocante* market and the Place Salengro market requires that strangers meet, converse, and recognize each other as quasi-equal participants in this event (cf de la Pradelle 2006). The pleasantries elicited from vendor-shopper exchanges, and the sense that in the Place Salengro market vendors initiated conversations with clients, and encouraged discussion between clients, indicates that this market – and to a lesser extent the Plan Cabanes *brocante* market – open up the plaza in the way envisioned by de la Pradelle (2006). Chapter 5 outlined the links between the *brocante* market and a particular form of collective memory that ties this vending space to a specific sense of French tradition. Thus, the market is not only a performance in the sense of pleasantries and a staged equality – but in this case, also in terms of the performance of a specific reading of French culture. *Brocante* vendors’ suggestion that their market was installed in the Plan Cabanes as part of a municipal drive to change the culture of the plaza, and to attract a new clientele, attests to this cultural performance: the outdoor market is assumed to be capable of attracting more plaza users through the enticement of vending, selling, and interaction; and the choice of a *brocante* and books market intended to shift this performance and engagement towards one centred on objects and materials seen as representative of ‘French tradition’. In both the case of the *brocante* and the Place Salengro produce market, the outdoor market encourages a more active use of public space – both spaces are more often frequented by cars than pedestrians when the markets are not in session. The loss of the seemingly boisterous Marché du Plan Cabanes is lamented precisely because its relocation resulted in a loss of sociability in the Plan

Cabanes, and while the *brocante* market has been instituted as a way of re-animating the redeveloped plaza, from participants' comments it is clear that by 2010 it had not achieved this aim. Thus, the outdoor market can create a more open, inclusive public sphere – but only when the market itself connects with the social, cultural, economic, or (arguably) emotional needs of users. While in some instances commercial activity is seen to close off public spaces (cf Sibley 1995; Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo 2009), in this instance, the exchange engendered within the buying and selling of goods opens up plazas to a wider diversity of users. The placement of a *brocante* market in the Plan Cabanes plaza has not prevented that site from being labelled 'empty space' – perhaps attesting to the mismatch of meanings and functions assigned to the Plan Cabanes, and the contested history of the plaza.

Discussion with market goers and neighbourhood actors about the relocated Marché du Plan Cabanes also reveal that this outdoor market was a key community node, and a site that spoke to both neighbourhood memories (of vending, shopping, and visiting the market over many decades) and memories of immigration (both for those who arrived in France and took up vending posts and started to shop at the market, and for the diversity of established neighbourhood actors who witnessed these changes). Thus, the pre-2005 Marché du Plan Cabanes can be identified as one site of collective (neighbourhood) memory – a *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989) of sorts that many participants identified as central to their experience of neighbourhood life. The sentiment that since the 2005 relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes, the Plan Cabanes plaza has become 'empty space' – rather than 'public space' – indicates that this collective memory function has been lost, or at least displaced and downsized to the Place Salengro. Certainly the arguments put forth by opponents of the market's return to the Plan Cabanes plaza indicate that not all neighbourhood actors agreed with the '*lieux de mémoire*' function of the Marché du Plan Cabanes. Yet the number of personal memories I collected on the pre-2005 market suggests that for a certain demographic the Plan Cabanes plaza was 'public space' precisely because it represented

their collective memories (cf O’Keeffe 2007). Through the loss of the market the Plan Cabanes plaza was disinvested of its cultural meaning, and so became an ‘empty space’ twice over: for the lack of animation and usage; and for the lack of cultural meaning.

I have found Lefebvre’s (1991) comments on the production of space particularly useful in considering these points: space, for Lefebvre (1991) is *conceived* by urban planners and designers, *perceived* by users who assign symbolic meaning to a site, and these elements together produce the *representational* spaces that define daily life. It is through the experience of moving through the city, and through the plaza, that citizens claim the city as their own, appropriate space, and transform thoroughfares into neighbourhoods (cf de Certeau 1984; and also Jacobs 1961). In many respects, this Montpellier case study functions as a re-contextualization of Lefebvre’s (1991) work, **demonstrating that Lefebvre’s theories of the production of space continue to be relevant to French urban policy**. As outlined in Chapter 4, public space is conceived by Montpellier’s urban planners in at least two ways: as an entity that is inalienable, non-transferrable, and whose status as ‘public domain’ cannot be altered; yet as something that is also the creation of the urban planning department, whether through the process of drawing a line on a map and seeing it realized in stone and tarmac, or through the capacity to re-valorize and re-develop plazas and streets. Equally, as outlined in Chapters 4 and 5, Plan Cabanes users assign certain symbolic meanings to the plaza, transforming the stones and tarmac into a community and social space, and a *lieu de mémoire*. The way in which users perceive the plaza, the meaning and functions they assign to that space, and the visual cues used to communicate this function/meaning demonstrate that Lefebvre’s (1991) theory on *perceived* space is both supported by these findings, and equally, has proven a useful guide for understanding how to analyse, evaluate, and encapsulate the varied meanings assigned to public space.

Lefebvre’s (1991) assertion that *conceived* and *perceived* space produce the *representational* spaces of everyday life is both supported and furthered by the Plan Cabanes case study, and is a point on which this thesis make a

significant contribution to the study of urban geographies. The *brocante* market was situated in the Plan Cabanes by the municipality, yet this market failed to intersect with the expectations of neighbourhood users who have long come to expect a particular form of vending and type of merchandise to occupy the plaza. The mismatch between the municipal urban planning vision of spatial hierarchies and assigned urban uses, and the social and cultural function of the Plan Cabanes plaza as envisioned by some neighbourhood actors, have resulted in a space that – arguably – meets no one’s needs. This supports Lefebvre’s (1991) argument that meaningful public spaces – ones that are ‘animated’, in the words of some of my research participants – require a functional meshing together of the interests and desires of urban planners and public space users. When these elements clash and the meaning and function of public space is vocally contested, the result is not *representational* space (as Lefebvre argues), but rather a site that is poorly integrated into wider community, urban environment, and social networks.

Imbued within the above discussion are question on the meaning of public space, and in particular the issue of **who has the ability to define the meaning of public space** (whether in relation to the establishment of an outdoor market, or another type of usage). In de la Pradelle’s (2006) argument that outdoor markets are effectively municipal institutions: organized and managed by municipal governments, they reveal much about local ambitions and political goals. While in France public space is defined as inalienable and non-transferable – and effectively protected from privatization – it is still under municipal oversight, which in the case of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles urban redevelopment project has resulted in a form of municipal appropriation of the plaza and its function. The Plan Cabanes plaza has not been transferred to private usage (the driving school’s use aside), yet its meaning and role in the neighbourhood and the city has been arguably transformed through municipal intervention. As noted in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes was contested by a variety of local actors, and the debate over how to use the newly refurbished Plan Cabanes plaza quickly became a

discussion on what type of vending, and by extension which types of items and shoppers, would be most appropriate for the space. Debates around plaza usage, and the different viewpoints on the relocation captured through fieldwork, indicate that the Plan Cabanes is a contested public space: a variety of uses are envisioned, and a series of seemingly distinct groups have attempted to claim the space as their own. While a single plaza arguably cannot represent the spectrum of all urban identities (Klein 1997), the arbitration of whose identity is attached to which public space reveals much about who is considered an appropriate users in which context (cf Mitchell 2003). The municipality's refusal to allow the return of the *Marché du Plan Cabanes*, and the perhaps more relevant decision to install a *brocante* market in its place, suggests that in this case the 'appropriate user' would be seeking out French books and bric-a-brac rather than discount food, household items, and the diversity of other items offered up by daily market vendors. The renovation of the Plan Cabanes plaza using colours and materials that match the higher levels on the municipal 'urban space hierarchy' (Figure 4.1) further suggest that the Plan Cabanes plaza is being more closely integrated with the historic city-centre – a change of function in terms of the Plan Cabanes' relation to the rest of the city. The Plan Cabanes' long-time status as an important social and commercial node for Montpellier's North African communities is thus being challenged, and the notion of a desirable user shifted to reflect a new, municipal, vision of this space as an extension of the historic city and a reception area for Montpellier's new tramline.

These points have led me to several further comments on the meaning of public space in Montpellier. First, through the above-noted tangle of contested meanings and designs for the Plan Cabanes, it becomes clear that this neighbourhood has a diversity of identities and actors, with sometimes clashing viewpoints. Rather than function as a space of inclusion, and a site where these differences can be encountered and (perhaps) mediated, the Plan Cabanes has become the opposite – a site from which certain users have been tacitly excluded as the plaza is re-imagined into a space of French cultural consumption, and one more closely associated with the

historic city-centre than the surrounding faubourgs. While the state (or, the municipality in this case) is theoretically meant to consider the interests of all citizens, the vocabulary of dirt and hygiene, and the pathologizing of the Marché du Plan Cabanes and surroundings as insalubrious urban zones has effectively labelled some citizens as less desirable. The intersection of this hygiene-oriented vocabulary with colonial-era discourses on the purification of North African spaces – and the status of the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles as an area of particular importance to Montpellier’s North African community – raises the spectre of racialized urban space. Rather than envision the Plan Cabanes as a ‘public space’ or an ‘empty space’, it is perhaps more useful to consider it a ‘politicized municipal space’.

This suggests that in **the French context, public space is much more a representation of municipal ideals (and ideas) than of neighbourhood identity and interests.** The debate around the usage of the Plan Cabanes plaza reveals much about what it means to be Montpelliérain, and through the selective vision of what kind of usage would be ‘appropriate’ – or, in the vocabulary of certain municipal actors, constitute ‘a suitable development’ – for this space, it builds a narrow vision of French heritage and identity. Although public space may be officially considered inalienable and non-transferrable, it is certainly susceptible to alteration by state actors who can deploy a range of administrative and urban planning tools to augment the identities and meanings of existing sites. Identifying French public plazas as ‘politicized municipal (or state) spaces’ indicates that the French public sphere holds a set of values and functions which set it apart from the kinds of public space that are debated in Anglo-American geography (cf Sibley 1995; McCann 1999; Mitchell 2003). While in Mitchell’s (2003) work and in McCann’s (1999) analysis, public space is a site where private capital, state oversight, and resident interests clash and intersect – with private capital having considerable weight (Zukin 1995, 2008) – in the French context (as the Montpellier case study confirms), it is state/municipal actors who have the most influence. The ability to use ZPPAUP (heritage protection) and ZUS (precarious neighbourhood) designations, along with pre-emptions and the

extensive use of expropriations as noted in Chapter 6, and the systematic coding of urban spaces as either ‘problematic’ (cf Dikeç 2007) or on a ‘suitable development’ trajectory, all rests in the powers of the municipal and state governments. While private capital enters the public space debate, it does so in the form of market vendors and real estate developers, all actors who, as I note in Chapters 4 and 6, are required to function within the remit set out by the municipality. The conclusion that French public space might be more appropriately termed ‘state space’ has led me to two further conclusions, outlined in more detail below: that the status of ‘state space’ has implications for social exclusion in France; and further, that it leads to a particular form of municipally- or state-led gentrification.

Lefebvre’s (1996) notation of ‘appropriate’ user and rights to the city, along with the notion of ‘state space’ as outlined in the paragraphs above, have led me to a subsequent conclusion: **the dynamics of social, cultural, and arguably ethnic exclusion more often associated with the French *banlieue* is also, evidently, at play in French city-centres.** As is outlined in Chapter 5, the Plan Cabanes plaza can in some ways be considered as a *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989) – and as a variety of market and neighbourhood actors have noted, the removal of the Marché du Plan Cabanes resulted in the erasure of certain memories from this public sphere. If the right to the city, as defined by Lefebvre (1996) and also Harvey (2003), requires that different interest groups are able to establish a visible and viable presence in the city – including the ability to shape the urban environment, and claim a stake in political and social life – then the displacement of these identities from a key public space puts to question certain users’ civic belonging. My conclusions on the displacement of immigrant/ethnic identities and memories from public space, and the role of the municipality in facilitating these erasures, are not unique in French urban studies. The work of Silverstein and Tetreault (2006), Dikeç (2007), Wacquant (2008), and Weil (2010) have already very effectively established the polemics surrounding French citizenship, its cultural dimension, and the role of the state in tacitly excluding certain bodies from full civic participation. Yet, many of these works have also been concerned with the

French *banlieue*: the immigrant suburbs are contrasted with the ethnically 'French' city centre, the physical distance between the centre and periphery is made to speak to the social and political distance between different types of citizenship, and the moniker of 'problematic' spaces linked to high-rise social housing districts outside Paris, Marseille, and other large cities. *Banlieue* citizens are denied rights to the city not only because they seemingly fail to fit into the cultural connotations of French citizenship (Wieviorka 2005), but also because they are not technically of the city – the *banlieue* is, by definition, a space on the urban periphery, and the ability of *banlieue* residents to appropriate, claim, and transform public space in a way visible to a wider urban audience therefore hampered.

In the case of Montpellier's Plan Cabanes, these immigrant identities are much more visible. The Marché du Plan Cabanes effectively functioned as a secondary city-centre (Prat 1994), bringing shoppers and users from the *banlieue* of La Paillade and La Mosson to the historic city-centre, and making their presence visible to a wide city audience. It was, until 2005, a site of urban appropriation, and one where a diversity of people could challenge the seemingly homogeneous look of Montpellier's historic city by establishing a diverse presence on the edge of the Ecusson. In selecting the Plan Cabanes as my field site, as noted in Chapter 1, I have been interested to consider the degree to which the findings of Silverstein and Tetreaul (2006), Dikeç (2007) Wacquant (2008) on the *banlieue* and the exclusion of certain ethnic identities from the French city apply to a new scenario: that of the city-centre. In this task I have been guided by the detailed work of Ross (1996) on the gentrification of certain Parisian neighbourhoods, and in particular, her notion of purified urban spaces as attached to certain forms of state-led gentrification in France.

The *banlieue*, it would seem, is not the only racialized space of exclusion in France. As the case of Montpellier's Plan Cabanes plaza reveals, the issue is not one of wealthy-city-centre versus impoverished-immigrant-suburbs – but rather one of contested identities in visible public space, and a racialization of city spaces more broadly. The **transformation of these spaces through municipally-led gentrification indicates that the**

French urban redevelopment model – and its resulting impact on displacement, exclusion, and racialization of space – has some distinct characteristics. First, municipally-led gentrification intervenes not only in public spaces, but also into privately owned properties through façade renovation programs, enforced upgrades to apartment units, and planned alterations to the socio-cultural (and arguably socio-economic) make-up of an area. With public space already queried as ‘state space’, as noted above, the capacity of municipal governments to dictate alterations across the spectrum of public/state/private spaces indicates a blurring of boundaries between different property and ownership models – and a form of urban redevelopment that differs noticeably from the more real estate/private property-centred forms of gentrification that forms the focus of most Anglo-American research (cf Ley 1994; Zukin 1995; Smith 1996; Blokland 2009). The French model of municipally-led gentrification thus has the capacity to intervene much more widely and extensively than the forms of market-led gentrification outlined in existing research on the topic. Secondly, municipally-led gentrification focuses not only on residential or public spaces, but also on commercial and retail sites. As outlined in Chapter 6, Montpellier’s Mission Grand Coeur program aimed to alter not only the Plan Cabanes market, but also the type of commerce rooted in surrounding streets through a stated desire for more upmarket goods, and a reduction in ‘unhygienic’ food and kebab shops. In this instance, the relocation of the Marché du Plan Cabanes from its namesake plaza was the first step in beginning a wider urban redevelopment process, and suggests that retail-led gentrification is not only an important part of municipally-driven redevelopment, but the starting point for a wider intervention into residential and public spaces.

Alongside these more specific conclusions, I have also drawn out a series of broader research implications. As the Montpellier case study demonstrates, urban landscapes are imbued with symbols and imagery of cultural and social significance (Jackson 1989). Alternations to the symbology, and by extension the meaning and function, of urban spaces – and in particular public spaces – has profound implications for residents, and their ability to

use, appropriate, and claim a stake in the public sphere. Urban imagery is, thus, significant in two ways: it is central to the formation of urban identities; and further, urban redevelopment programs can have such notable implications for neighbourhood life precisely because they re-imagine neighbourhood landscapes, spaces, and cultural symbols. The research presented in the preceding chapters suggests one method for tracing the impact and significance of urban imagery on neighbourhood identity, the formation of social and cultural communities, and the impact of re-imagining. Neighbourhood walking tours, discussions on the aesthetics of urban spaces alongside the experience of using those spaces, a consideration of neighbourhood memories, and tracing the visual cues left behind through facade improvement programs – alongside municipal documents outlining how and why certain materials and colours are assigned to specific spaces – all contribute to understanding how distinct neighbourhoods are imagined into being, and in turn, how those neighbourhoods are altered through redevelopment. The visibility of the under-development landscape also reveals a wealth of information about contestation by citizens: the appearance of graffiti, jokes about an imposed facade colour scheme, and unofficially renaming streets all signal disagreement with some aspect of the redevelopment (and re-imagining) process. As Davidson (2008) argues, the study of displacement through gentrification must be broadened to include more subtle exclusionary processes, and in this respect the approach to studying urban re-imagination outlined in this thesis provides one avenue for doing so. Gentrification, it appears, is not just about private capital and real estate re-investment, but involves public spaces, retail spaces, and municipal funding as well. Urban imagery thus has real consequences for all urban users, and need to be considered alongside economic, social, and political facets when analyzing redevelopment programs.

The idea of collective memories is a central theme of this thesis and has in turn led me to consider the broader implications of the overlap between public space and remembrance. As noted in the paragraph above, urban imageries contribute to the formation of urban identities. Yet, these

identities are often contested and draw on a selective reading of the past, limiting what (and whom) is included in imagined urban communities. While imageries are important to how neighbourhoods and cities are constituted, their exclusive nature leads to equally exclusive notions of how formal ‘heritage’ and heritage-protection measures are instituted. The notion of ‘collective memories’, and the process of tracing how these are formed and what they include, is both useful to analyzing the urban landscape – and to recognizing that collective memory (in the singular) is a reified concept. This in turn has some practical implications. As argued in this thesis, public space can function as urban *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989): they prompt memories of neighbourhood life, of public space interaction, and through their ‘public’ nature, these public spaces-turned-*lieux-de-mémoire* make visible a variety of urban actors and their memories. The Plan Cabanes plaza served as an important *lieux de mémoire* for a diversity of Montpellier residents, and the re-imagination of that space signals how urban redevelopment programs can impact – and alter – forms of community remembrance. Lefebvre’s (1996) concept of rights to the city is also relevant here: the notion of *lieux de mémoire*, and the importance of public spaces to making visible a wide diversity of memories, suggests that the right to the city is not only a question of political, economic or physical access to urban space (cf Harvey 2003; Mitchell 2003; Dikeç 2007), but also of cultural and social rights as well (cf Attoh 2011). Studying urban public spaces and the imageries associated with these sites provides one avenue for tracing whose memories form the ‘collective’, and in turn, of understanding who is denied rights to this important cultural process.

Throughout this thesis I have gingerly danced around the notion of racialized space, making a more forward argument to this effect only in the last chapter. The challenge of making a case for the racialization of space has led me to my final set of broader conclusion. As an analytic notion, ‘racialized space’ is both difficult to work with, yet important to how urban redevelopment programs and urban identities are understood and studied. Formal municipal or state documents will rarely, if ever, make direct

reference to race or ethnicity when considering redevelopment projects. Yet, as the case of the Plan Cabanes demonstrates, these ideas are still embedded in urban process: the anecdotal association between low real estate prices and immigrant residents (and deployment of municipal policies to mediate this), the sense that certain forms of cultural consumption are more appropriate for prominent public spaces, and the ways in which redevelopment programs encourage certain actors to take up positions in redeveloping neighbourhoods while encouraging others to leave, all point to a tacit – but very much present – undertone of exclusionary politics. The racialization of space may be difficult to demonstrate, yet a close reading of urban processes can reveal its power to shape city life, and further attention to this concept would be important to understanding and mediating exclusionary processes.

7.3 Directions for future research

This set of conclusions have, perhaps unsurprisingly, spurred me to consider in more detail how these topics can be more fully examined and further elaborated. First, the renovation of the Plan Cabanes plaza, in conjunction with the pre-emptions and expropriations in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area, have led me to consider not just ‘public space’ – but neighbourhood space more broadly. The redevelopment processes has, in certain ways, blurred the boundary between public and private space: municipally mandated renovations of private building facades, and the declaration of many privately owned buildings as being ‘of public utility’ for their heritage value, have made me wonder where public space ends and the private sphere begins. This is especially relevant for the so-called ‘streets of the saints’ where, just as I was ending PhD fieldwork, a local anarchist group instituted a program of squatting and re-appropriating SERM expropriated properties and using them as homeless shelters and squat residences. The duality of expropriation / re-appropriation provides one fascinating avenue for further considering the meaning of public space, who constitutes ‘the public’ in the Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles area, and whose interests are espoused through municipally-led gentrification.

Further, as noted in the preceding chapters, there are some French precedents for the type of public space redevelopment witnessed in Montpellier's Plan Cabanes. The extensive renovations of central Marseille and the relocation of Marseille's Belsunce market, along with more historic redevelopment work in the centre of Paris, and more recent urban regeneration programs in the centre of Lille, all seem to have points of similarity with the process I have documented in Montpellier. Such comparative studies would allow me to more fully contextualize Montpellier's urban redevelopment program, and further, to perhaps generalize (or not) my finds from the Plan Cabanes. As a future research direction, I am keen to more fully integrate my work with that of others researching urban regeneration and public space management, and the intersection between public space and French cultural identity in particular.

Finally, the links between the Plan Cabanes plaza and the La Paillade and La Mosson high-rise social housing neighbourhoods on Montpellier's periphery have prompted me to consider the importance of this specific public space to a wider audience – not least because, as noted in the paragraphs above, so much research on French ethnic identities and processes of social exclusion have focused on the *banlieue*. The Marché du Plan Cabanes was arguably important not just for the vendors, neighbourhood actors, and shoppers who have continued to use the Place Salengro produce market – and whom I could meet and interview. According to many research participants – and especially Place Salengro produce vendors – the pre-2005 market drew in a much wider user base. While I was particularly keen to follow up on this during PhD research, tracing former Marché du Plan Cabanes users who live in La Paillade (and perhaps had ceased to visit the Plan Cabanes) proved difficult and entry (as a researcher) into La Paillade and La Mosson would have required much more time than was afforded by the 10-month research period. Since completing PhD fieldwork in 2010 I have returned to these ideas frequently, and when applying to a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) postdoctoral fellowship, I chose to reposition my research as an examination of city centre/ suburban dynamics in Montpellier (and

Toronto, for the Canadian case study). Through the SSHRC postdoc I will have the opportunity and time to trace the circuits which connect the Plan Cabanes with La Paillade, La Mosson, and conceivably other suburban areas in Montpellier, and move my research towards a broader consideration of how public space is formed, interlinked across different neighbourhoods, and used to express a diversity of cultural and social practices.

References:

- Alkon, A. and C. McCullen. 2011. Whiteness and farmers markets: performances, perpetuations...contestations? *Antipode* 43(4):937-959.
- Allen, J. 2003. *Lost geographies of power*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Amin, A. and J. Roberts. 2008. Knowing in action: beyond communities of practice. *Research Policy* 37(2):353-369.
- Amin, A. and N. Thrift. 2002. *Cities: reimagining the urban*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Amiriaux, V. and P. Simon. 2006. There are no minorities here: cultures of scholarship and public debate on immigrants and integration in France. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 47(3-4):191-215.
- Anderson, J. 2004. Talking whilst walking: a geographical archaeology of knowledge. *Area* 36(3):254-261.
- Arbaci, S. and T. Tapada-Berteli. 2012. Social inequality and urban regeneration in Barcelona city centre: reconsidering success. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19(3):287-311.
- Atkinson, D. and E. Laurier. 1998. A sanitised city? Social exclusion at Bristol's 1996 international festival of the sea. *Geoforum* 29(2):199-206.
- Attoh, K.A. 2011. What kind of right is the right to the city? *Progress in Human Geography* 35(5):669-685.
- Audric, S. and O. Tasqué. 2010. La population de Montpellier Agglomération a triplé au cours des cinquante dernière années. *INSEE* http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref_id=16088#un (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Azaryahu, M. 1996. The power of commemorative street names. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14(3):311-330.
- Bacqué, M.-H., Y. Fijalkow, L. Launay, and S. Vermeersch. 2011. Social mix policies in Paris: discourses, policies and social effects. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(2):256-273.
- Barone, S. 2010. Le projet Grand Coeur. In: *Montpellier: la ville inventée*, Volle, J.-P., L. Viala, E. Négrier, and C. Bernié-Boissard, eds, 92-109. Marseille: Edition Parenthèse / Gip Epau.

Baudelaire, C. 1869. *Paris Spleen*. Translated by L. Varèse. New York: New Directions (this edition 1970).

Bava, S. 2000. Reconversions et nouveaux mondes commerciaux des Mourides à Marseille. *Hommes et Migrations* 1224:46-55.

Beaudoin, A.-L. 2003. *Le quartier Belsunce dans la réhabilitation du centre-ville de Marseille*. Thesis prepared for Université de Droit, d'Economie et des Sciences d'Aix-Marseille III.

Benjamin, W. 2002. *The arcades project*. Translated by H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Bérard, L. and P. Marchenay. 1995. Lieux, temps et preuves. La construction sociale des produits de terroir. *Terrain* 24(mars):153-164.

Besombes-Vailhe, P. 1995. *Emergence des 'faites de frontières culturelles' autour 'd'un espace communautaire' maghrébin: le quartier du plan Cabanes à Montpellier*. Etude pour la compte de la Mission du Patrimoine.

Bessière, J. 1998. Local development and heritage: Traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas. *Sociologia Ruralis* 38(1):21-34.

Black, R.E. 2005a. The Porta Palazzo farmers' market: local food, regulations, and changing traditions. *Anthropology of Food* 4 (May 2005). <http://aof.revues.org/157?&id=157> (last accessed 14 February 2013).

---. 2005b. Feeding the city: social welfare, food supply and urban markets in Lyon, France. *Journal of the Oxford University Historical Society* 3(Michealmas): <https://sites.google.com/site/jouhsinfo/issue3michaelmas2005> (last accessed 27 August 2013).

---. 2007. Eating garbage: Socially marginal provisioning practices. In: *Consuming the Inedible: Neglected Dimensions of Food Choice*, MacClancy, J., J. Henry, and H. Macbeth, eds, 141-149. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Blatt, D. 1997. Immigrant politics in a republican nation. In *Post-colonial cultures in France*, Hargreaves, A.G., and M. McKinney, eds, 40-58. New York: Routledge.

Blokland, T. 2009. Celebrating local histories and defining neighbourhood communities: place-making in a gentrified neighbourhood. *Urban Studies* 46(8):1593-1610.

Blomley, N. 2004. *Unsettling the city: urban land and the politics of property*. New York: Routledge.

- Body-Gendrot, S. 2013. Urban violence in France and England: comparing Paris (2005) and London (2011). *Policing and Society: an International Journal of Research and Policy* 23(1):6-25.
- Bondi, L. and M. Domosh. 1998. On the contours of public space: a tale of three women. *Antipode* 30(3):270-289.
- Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (this edition 2002).
- Bramadat, P. and D. Seljak, eds. 2005. *Religion and ethnicity in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bridge, G. and R. Dowling. 2001. Microgeographies of retailing and gentrification. *Australian Geographer* 32(1):93-107.
- Brubaker, R. 2001. The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24(4):531-548.
- Brunet, R., L. Grasland, J.-P. Garnier, R. Ferras, J.-P. Volle, and M. Lacave. 1998. *Montpellier europole*. Montpellier: GIP Reclus, Maison de la Géographie.
- Buck-Morss, S. 1991. *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bull, A. 2007. Montpellier: salubrious and très Français – shame about the rugby. *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2007/sep/16/montpelliersalubriousandtre> (last accessed 7 August 2013).
- Burk, A.L. 2010. *Speaking for a long time: public space and social memory in Vancouver*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Butler, J. 1999. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Byrne, J and D. Houston. 2005. Ghosts in the city: redevelopment, race and urban memory in East Perth. In: *Consent and consensus: politics, media and governance in twentieth century Australia*, Cryle, D., and J. Hillier, eds, 319-349. Perth: API Network,
- Caro, R.A. 1974. *The power broker: Robert Moses and the fall of New York*. New York: Vintage Books (this edition 1975).
- Cattell, V., N. Dines, W. Gesler and S. Curtis. 2008. Mingling, observing, and lingering: everyday public spaces and their implications for well-being and social relations. *Health and Place* 14(3):544-561.

Cerwonka, A. 2007. Nervous conditions: the stakes in interdisciplinary research. *Improvising theory: process and temporality in ethnographic fieldwork*, Cerwonka A. and L. Malkki, 1-40. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cerwonka, A. and L. Malkki. 2007. *Improvising theory: process and temporality in ethnographic fieldwork*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Charbonneau, J.-P. 1997. La politique d'espaces publics à Lyon. *Revue de Géographie de Lyon* 72(2):127-130.

Chevalier, L. 1994. *The assassination of Paris*. Translated by D.P. Jordan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cochrane, A. 2006. Making up meaning in a capital city: power, memory and monuments in Berlin. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 13(1):5-24.

Connerton, P. 1989. *How societies remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (this edition 2003).

Crane, S. 1997. Writing the individual back into collective memory. *The American Historical Review* 102(5):1372-1385.

Crawford, M. 1995. Contesting the public realm: Struggle over public space in Los Angeles. *Journal of Architectural Education* 49(1):4-9.

Crawshaw, R. and K. Tusting. 2000. *Exploring French text analysis: interpretations of national identity*. London: Routledge.

Cresswell, T. 1996. *In place/out of place: geography, ideology, and transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Crewe, L. and N. Gregson. 1998. Tales of the unexpected: exploring car boot sales as marginal spaces of contemporary consumption. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 23(1):39-53.

D.P., and O.L.N. 2006. Figuerolles Place Salengro, le marché ne fait pas l'unanimité. *Midi Libre*, 8 November: 9.

Davidson, M. 2008. Spoiled mixture: where does state-led 'positive' gentrification end? *Urban Studies* 45(12):2385-2405.

Davis, M. 1990. *City of quartz: excavating the future in Los Angeles*. New York: Verso (this edition 2006).

- De Certeau, M. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- De Certeau, M., L. Giard and P. Mayol. 1998. *The practice of everyday life volume 2: living and cooking*. Translated by T.J. Tomasik. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- De la Pradelle, M. 1995. Market exchange and the social construction of a public space. *French Cultural Studies* 6(18):359-371.
- . 2006. *Market day in Provence*. Translated by A. Jacobs. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Descombes-Vailhe, J.-P. 1995. *Emergence des 'faits de frontières culturelles' autour d'un espace communautaire maghrébin: le quartier du Plan Cabanes à Montpellier*. Paris: French Ministry of Culture.
- Dikeç, M. 2002. Police, politics, and the right to the city. *GeoJournal* 58:91-98.
- . 2007. *Badlands of the republic: space, politics, and urban policy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Dines, N. 2002. Urban renewal, immigration, and contested claims to public space: the case of Piazza Garibaldi in Naples. *GeoJournal* 58:177-188.
- Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge.
- Duneier, M. 1999. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Dupuis, E.M. and D. Goodman. 2005. Should we go "home" to eat?: towards a reflexive politics of localism. *Journal of Rural Studies* 21(3):359-371.
- Duruz, J., S. Luckman, and P. Bishop. 2011. Bazaar encounters: foods, markets, belonging and citizenship in the cosmopolitan city. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 25(5):599-604.
- Eden, S., C. Bear, and G. Walker. 2008. Mucky carrots and other proxies: problematizing the knowledge-fix for sustainable and ethical consumption. *Geoforum* 39(2):1044-1057.
- Edensor, T. 2008. Mundane hauntings: commuting through the phantasmagoric working-class spaces of Manchester, England. *Cultural Geographies* 15(3):313-333.
- Elden, S. 2003. Plague, panopticon, police. *Surveillance & Society* 1(3):240-253.

- Esposito, L. 2001. From meaning to meaning: the influence of translation techniques on non-English focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research* 11(4):568-579.
- Evenson, N. 1973. The assassination of les Halles. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 32(4):308-317.
- . 1979. *Paris: a century of change, 1878-1978*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fanon, F. 1961. *Wretched of the earth*. London: Penguin (this edition 1990).
- Faure, P. 1998. *Un quartier de Montpellier: Plan Cabanes, étude ethnologique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Fleury, A. 2009. Espace publics et environnement dans les politiques urbaines à Paris et à Berlin. *Annales de Géographie* 5(669):522-542.
- Fo, C.-S. 2006. Plan Cabanes Marché: le sujet fâche riverains et commerçants. *Midi Libre*, 7 March:8.
- Foucault, M. 1975. *Discipline and punish*. Translated by A. Sheridan. New York: Vintage.
- 1978. *The history of sexuality: an introduction*. Translated by R. Hurley. New York: Vintage Books (this edition 1990).
- Fourcaut, A., ed. 1988. *Un siècle de banlieue parisienne (1859-1964): guide de recherche*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Frêche, G. 2003. *Les éléphants se trompent énormément*. Paris: Jacob Duvernet.
- . 2010. *Trêve de balivernes: pour en finir avec l'hypocrisie*. Paris: Editions Héloïse d'Ormesson.
- Freedman, J. 2004. *Immigration and insecurity in France*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- G.T. 2006. Gambetta Plan-Cabanes: un marché disparu sous les pavés? *Midi Libre*, 11 June:10.
- Geertz, C. 1978. The bazaar economy: information and search in peasant marketing. *The American Economic Review* 68(2):28-31.
- Gehl, J. 2011. *Life between buildings: using public space*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Glaser, B.G. 1978. *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, California: Sociology Press.

- Gonzalez, S. and P. Waley. 2012. Traditional retail markets: the new gentrification frontier? *Antipode* 45(4):965-983.
- Gregory, D. 1994. *Geographical imaginations*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Grzegorzcyk, A. 2012. Socio-spatial diversity of Marseille at the turn of the 21st century. *Bulletin of Geography Socio-Economic Series* 17:45-55.
- Guano, E. 2006. Fair ladies: the place of women antique dealers in post-industrial Italian city. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 13(2):105-122.
- Guiral, A. 2012. Montpellier à béton rompu. *Libération* 5 October. http://next.liberation.fr/design/2012/10/03/montpellier-a-beton-rompu_850689 (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Guthman, J. 2004. *Agrarian dreams: the paradox of organic farming in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Habermas, J. 1962. *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an enquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Translated by T. Burger. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press (this edition 1991).
- Halbwachs, M. 1992. *On collective memory*. Translated by L. A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hanna, S., V. Del Casino Jr., C. Selden and B. Hite. 2004. Representation as work in 'America's most historic city'. *Social & Cultural Geography* 5(3):459-481.
- Hargreaves, A. G. 1995. *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity in contemporary France*. London: Routledge.
- . 2005. Introduction. In *Memory, empire and postcolonialism: legacies of French colonialism*, Hargreaves, A.G., ed, 1-10. Oxford: Lexington Books.
- Hargreaves, A.G. and M. McKinney. 1997. Introduction: the post-colonial problematic in France. In *Post-colonial cultures in France*, Hargreaves, A.G., and M. McKinney, eds, 3-25. New York: Routledge.
- Harrison, B. 2002. Photographic visions and narrative inquiry. *Narrative Inquiry* 12(1):87-111.
- Harvey, D. 2003. The right to the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27: 939-941.
- . 2005. The political economy of public space. In *The politics of public space*, Low, S. and N. Smith, eds, 17-34. New York: Routledge.
- . 2006. *Paris, capital of modernity*. New York: Routledge.

Hayden, D. 1997. *The power of place: urban landscape as public history*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Heller, C. 2002. From scientific risk to paysan savoir-faire: Peasant expertise in the French and global debate over GM crops. *Science as Culture* 11(1):5-37.

Henderson, H. 2004. Beyond currywurst and doner: the role of food in German multicultural literature and society. *Glossen* 20: http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/lang_facpubs/2/ (last accessed 26 August 2013).

Hewison, R. 1987. *The heritage industry: Britain in a climate of decline*. London: Methuen.

Hily, M.-A. and C. Rinaudo. 2004. L'expérience des vendeurs migrants sur le marché de Vintimille. *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales* 2(2):165-180.

Hochschild, A. 1983. *The managed heart: commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press (this edition 2003).

Hoelscher, S. and D. Alderman. 2004. Memory and place: geographies of a critical relationship. *Social & Cultural Geography* 5(3):347-355.

Holloway, L. and M. Kneafsey. 2000. Reading the space of the farmers' market: A preliminary investigation from the UK. *Sociologia Ruralis* 40(3):285-299.

Houssay-Holzschuch, M and A. Teppo. 2009. A mall for all? Race and public space in post-apartheid Cape Town. *Cultural Geographies* 16(3):351-379.

Hubbard, P. 2001. Sex zones: intimacy, citizenship and public space. *Sexualities* 4(1):51-71.

Huysen, A. 2003. *Present pasts: urban palimpsests and the politics of memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hyndman, J. 2001. The field as here and now, not there and then. *Geographical Review* 91(1-2):262-272.

INSEE. 2012. Taux de chômage au quatrième trimestre 2012. http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=1&ref_id=tratco3301 (last accessed 14 August 2013).

---. No date. Commune de Montpellier (34172). <http://www.insee.fr/fr/bases-de-donnees/esl/comparateur.asp?codgeo=com-34172> (last accessed 14 August 2013).

- Ireland, S. 2005. The Algerian war revisited. In *Memory, empire and postcolonialism: legacies of French colonialism*, Hargreaves, A.G., ed, 208-215. Oxford: Lexington Books.
- J.M.R. 1980. Qui a peur de Bofill? *Midi Libre*, 23 February: M1.
- J.-F. B. 1980. Antigone comme si vous y étiez: une exposition dans le hall de la mairie. *Midi Libre*, 6 February: M2.
- Jackson, P. 1989. *Maps of meaning: an introduction to cultural geography*. London: Routledge.
- . 1998. Domesticating the street: the contested spaces of the high street and the mall. In *Images of the street: Planning, identity and control in public space*, Fyfe, N., ed, 176-191. London: Routledge.
- Jackson, P. and P. Russell. 2010 Life history interviewing. In: *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography*, DeLyser, D., S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang and L. McDowell, eds, 172-192. London: SAGE Publications.
- Jacobs, J. 1961. *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Vintage books (this edition 1992).
- Jarrassé, J. 2010. Frêche: Mandroux règle ses comptes au mauvais moment. *Le Figaro* 25 October. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2010/10/25/01002-20101025ARTFIG00529-freche-mandroux-regle-ses-comptes-au-mauvais-moment.php> (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Jennings, J. 2000. Citizenship, republicanism and multiculturalism in contemporary France. *British Journal of Political Science* 30(4):575-598.
- Jordan, J.A. 2006. *Structures of memory: understanding urban change in Berlin and beyond*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2007. The heirloom tomato as cultural object: investigating taste and space. *Sociologia Ruralis* 47(1):20-41.
- Jugé, T. and M. Perez. 2006. The modern colonial politics of citizenship and whiteness in France. *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 12(2):187-212.
- Kasten, S. 2013. *Destroying the mystique of Paris: how the destruction of les Halles served as a symbol for Gaullist power and modernization in 1960s and 1970s Paris*. Unpublished MA thesis, Georgia State University: http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/history_theses/70/ (last accessed 27 August 2013).

- Katz, C. 1994. Playing the field: questions of fieldwork in geography. *The Professional Geographer* 46(1):67-72.
- Kendall, J. 1999. Axial coding and the grounded theory controversy. *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 21(6):743-757.
- Klein, N.M. 1997. *The history of forgetting: Los Angeles and the erasure of memory*. London: Verso (this edition 2008).
- Koné, D. 1995. Noirs-Africains et Maghrébins ensemble dans la ville. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 11(1):99-114.
- Krzywoszynska, A. In review. Translating lives: on being a foreign body in the field.
- Lai, C. 2012. The racial triangulation of space: the case of urban renewal in San Francisco's Fillmore District. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102(1):151-170.
- Law, L. 2011. The ghosts of white Australia: excavating the past(s) of Rusty's Market in tropical Cairns. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 25(5):669-681.
- Le Ny, O. 2005. Plan-Cabanes: Ce petit mur où l'on causait de l'air du temps. *Midi Libre*, 12 March:11.
- Le Ny, O. 2006a. Plan-Cabanes 400 signatures pour un retour de marché. *Midi Libre*, 21 April:8.
- Le Ny, O. 2006b. Plan Cabanes Six mois d'attente et pas de décision sur le marché. *Midi Libre*, 21 September:8.
- Le Roi Ladurie, E. 1962. *Histoire du Languedoc*. Paris: Presse Universitaire de France (this edition 2000).
- Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The production of space*. Translated D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell.
- . 1996. The right to the city. *Writings on cities*. Translated by E. Kofman and E. Lebas. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lees, L. 1998. Urban renaissance and the street: spaces of control and contestation. In *Images of the street: Planning, identity and control in public space*, Fyfe, N., ed, 236-253. London: Routledge.
- Lehrer, U. A. 1998. Is there still room for public space? Globalizing cities and the privatisation of the public realm. In *Possible Urban Worlds: Urban Strategies at the End of the 20th Century*, INURA, ed. Basel: Birhause Verlag.

- Leitch, A., 2003. Slow Food and the politics of pork fat: Italian food and European identity. *Ethnos* 68(4):437-462.
- Lelevrier, C. 2013. Forced relocation in France: how residential trajectories affect individual experiences. *Housing Studies* 28(2):253-271.
- LeMonde.fr. 2010. Georges Frêche, un habitué des dérapages. *LeMonde.fr* 25 January http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2010/01/28/georges-freche-un-habitué-des-derapages_1298203_823448.html (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Ley, D. 1994. Gentrification and the politics of the new middle class. *Environment and Planning D* 12(1):53-74.
- Lindenfeld, J. 1990. *Speech and sociability at French urban marketplaces*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Longhurst, R., E. Ho and L. Johnston. 2008. Using 'the body' as an 'instrument of research': kimch'i and pavlova. *Area* 40(2):208-217.
- Low, S. and N. Smith, eds. 2005 *The politics of public space*. New York: Routledge.
- Lowenthal, D. 1985. *The past is a foreign country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (this edition 2003).
- Luckman, S. 2011. Tropical cosmopolitanism and outdoor food markets in (post)colonial Australia. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 25(5):653-667.
- Macdonald, S. 2009. Reassembling Nuremberg, reassembling heritage. *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2(1-2):117-134.
- Maoudj, K. 2007. *Georges Frêche, grandes heures et décadence*. Paris: Les Editions de Paris-Max Chaleil.
- Mansvelt, J. 2010. Geographies of consumption: engaging with absent presences. *Progress in Human Geography* 34(2):224-233.
- Mars, G. 1982. *Cheats at work: an anthropology of workplace crime*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Massey, D. 2005. *For space*. London: Sage.
- Mattila, H. 2002. Aesthetic justice and urban planning: who ought to have the right to design cities? *GeoJournal* 58:131-138.
- Mayol, P. 1998. The neighbourhood. In: *The practice of everyday life volume 2: living and cooking*, De Certeau, M., L. Giard and P. Mayol, eds,

7-13. Translated by T.J. Tomasik. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mazzella, S. and N. Roudil. 1998. La place du marché dans les politiques urbaines Marseillaises. *Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaine* 78:65-71.

McCann, E.J. 1999. Race, protest, and public space: contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. City. *Antipode* 31(2):163-184.

McClintock, A. 1995. *Imperial leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial context*. New York: Routledge.

McMurray, D.A. 1997. La France Arabe. In *Post-colonial cultures in France*, A.G. Hargreaves and M. McKinney, eds, 26-39. New York: Routledge.

McRae, D. 2007. France aims to re-awaken the spirit of '98. *The Guardian*, 3 September.
<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2007/sep/03/rugbyunion.rugbyworldcup20075?INTCMP=SRCH> (last accessed 14 August 2013).

Midi Libre. 2005a. Figuerolles: Le marché a pris ses marques place Salengro. *Midi Libre*, 16 March:10.

---. 2005b. Figuerolles: Hélène Mandroux en visite surprise sur le marché. *Midi Libre*, 10 April:11.

---. 2006a. Oui ou non? *Midi Libre*, 5 March:3.

---. 2006b. La puce à l'oreille. *Midi Libre*, 25 March:3.

---. 2006c. Plan Cabanes: et maintenant? *Midi Libre*, 8 November:9.

---. 2006d. Brèves hors séance. *Midi Libre*, 7 November.

---. 2006e. Gambetta Plan-Cabanes: un marché disparu sous les pavés? *Midi Libre*, 11 June:10

---. 2006f. Réactions. *Midi Libre*, 11 November 2006: 12.

---. 2008. Enquêtes les "bulles": argent facile et arnaque Montpellier Le placier du Marché de La Paillade écroué pour corruption. *Midi Libre*, 4 April: 5

Mitchell, D. 2003. *The right to the city: social justice and the fight for public space*. New York: Guilford Press.

Mitchell, D. and L. Staeheli. 2006. Clean and safe? Property redevelopment, public space, and homelessness in downtown San Diego. In *The politics of public space*, Low, S. and N. Smith, eds, 143-176. New York: Routledge.

- Mitchell, K. 2011. Marseille's not for burning: comparative networks of integration and exclusion in two French cities. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101(2):404-423.
- Montpellier. 2012. Recensement. <http://www.montpellier.fr/189-recensement.htm> (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Montpellier Office de Tourisme. 2011. Rapport d'activité. http://www.ot-montpellier.fr/_objets/medias/autres/ract-ot-2011-1963.pdf (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Morales, A. 2009. Public markets as community development tools. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 28(4):426-440.
- Morvan, S. 2013. Montpellier peine à avaler sa croissance sans limites. *L'Express*. http://www.lexpress.fr/region/montpellier-peine-a-avaler-sa-croissance-sans-limites_1234706.html (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Murdock, J., T. Marsden, and J. Banks. 2000. Quality, nature and embeddedness: some theoretical considerations in the context of the food sector. *Economic Geography* 76 (2):107-125.
- Nacu, A. 2012. From silent marginality to spotlight scapegoating? A brief case study of France's policy towards the Roma. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38(8):1323-1328.
- Négrier, E. and J. Préau. 2010. Cultures urbaines, cultures métropolitaines. In: *Montpellier: la ville inventée*, Volle, J.-P., L. Viala, E. Négrier, and C. Bernié-Boissard, eds, 162-181. Marseille: Edition Parenthèse / Gip Epau.
- Nelson, K. 2003. Self and social functions: individual autobiographic memory and collective narrative. *Memory* 11(2):125-136.
- Newman, A. 2011. Contested ecologies: environmental activism and urban space in immigrant Paris. *City & Society* 23(2):192-209.
- Nithard, C. 2005. Gambetta: Le marché de plan Cabanes pourrait rester à Salengro. *Midi Libre*, 21 December:9.
- Nora, P. ed. 1984-1992. *Les lieux de mémoire* (seven volumes). Paris: Edition Gallimard.
- . 1989. Between memory and history: les lieux de mémoire. *Representations* 26(Spring):7-24.
- O'Keeffe, T. 2007. Landscape and memory: historiography, theory, methodology. In: *Heritage, memory and the politics of identity: new perspectives on the cultural landscape*, N. Moore and Y. Whelan, eds, 3-18. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

Orbasli, A. 2000. *Tourists in historic towns: urban conservation and heritage management*. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Orwell, G. 1933. *Down and out in Paris and London*. Toronto: HarperCollins (this edition 2012).

Oscherwitz, D. 2005. Decolonizing the past: re-visions of history and memory and the evolution of (post) colonial heritage. In *Memory, empire and postcolonialism: legacies of French colonialism*, A.G. Hargreaves, ed, 189-202. Oxford: Lexington Books.

Parkin, D. 2000. Templates, evocations, and the long-term fieldworker. In: *Anthropologists in a wider world*, P. Dresch, W. James and D. Parkin, eds, 91-108. New York: Berghahn Books.

Peraldi, M. 1999. Marseille: réseaux migrants transfrontaliers, place marchande et économie de bazar. *Culture & Conflits* 33-34:51-67.

Plan Local d'Urbanisme (PLU) Montpellier. 2011. Ville de Montpellier. <http://www.montpellier.fr/2299-plan-local-d-urbanisme.htm> (last accessed 14 February 2013).

Plattner, Stuart. 1983. Economic custom in a competitive marketplace. *American Anthropologist* 85(4):848-858.

Prat, A. 1994. *Le Plan Cabanes*. Montpellier: Université Paul-Valéry.

Pratt, G. 2004. *Working feminism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Pred, A. 1990. *Lost words and lost worlds: modernity and the language of everyday life in late nineteenth-century Stockholm*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Probyn, R. 2000. *Carnal appetites: food/sex/identity*. London: Routledge.

Proust, M. 1913. *In search of lost time, volume 1: Swann's way*. Translated by D.J. Enright (1992). London: Vintage (this edition 2005).

Rabinow, P. 1989. Governing Morocco: modernity and difference. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 13(1): 32-46.

Rap, C. 2010. Les statues du commandeur Frêche. *Libération* 19 August. <http://www.liberation.fr/politiques/0101652848-les-statues-du-commandeur-freche> (last accessed 14 August 2013).

Reno, J. 2009. Your trash is someone's treasure: the politics of value at a Michigan landfill. *Journal of Material Culture* 14(1):29-46.

- Richardson, M. 1982. Being-in-the-market versus being-in-the-plaza: material culture and the construction of social reality in Spanish America. *American Ethnologist* 9(2):421-436.
- Riots in France (2006). <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org> (last accessed 15 July 2013)
- Rollat, A. 2008. *L'assassinat raté de Georges Frêche*. Paris: Singulière.
- Rose, G. 1997. Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivity and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography* 21(3):305-320.
- . 2012. *Visual methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual materials*, 3rd edition. London: SAGE.
- Ross, K. 1996. *Fast cars, clean bodies: decolonization and the reordering of French culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Rousseau, M. 2009. Re-imagining the city centre for the middle classes: regeneration, gentrification and symbolic policies in 'loser cities'. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Studies* 33(3):770-788.
- Savitch, H.V. 2011. A strategy for neighbourhood decline and regrowth: forging the French connection. *Urban Affairs Review* 47(6):800-837.
- Sibley, D. 1995. *Geographies of exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- SIG SIV. 2009a. ZUS: Gély-Figuerolles.
<http://sig.ville.gouv.fr/Territoire/9105030> (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- . 2009b. Non-ZUS Gambetta. <http://sig.ville.gouv.fr/Territoire/9134008>
 (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Silverman, M. 1992. *Deconstructing the nation: immigration, racism and citizenship in Modern France*. London: Routledge.
- . 1999. *Facing postmodernity: contemporary French thought on culture and society*. London: Routledge.
- Silverstein, P.A. and C. Tetreault. 2006. Postcolonial urban apartheid. *Riots in France*. http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Silverstein_Tetreault/ (last accessed 15 July 2013).
- Simon, P. 2003. France and the unknown second generation: preliminary results on social mobility. *International Migration Review* 37(4):1091-1119.
- Sims, R. 2009. Food, place and authenticity: local food and the sustainable tourism experience. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 17 (3):321-336.

- Slater, T. 2004. Municipally managed gentrification in South Parkdale, Toronto. *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 48(3):303-325.
- Slocum, R. 2007. Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum* 38(3):520-533.
- . 2011. Race in the study of food. *Progress in Human Geography* 35(3):303-327.
- Smith, K.E. 2006. Problematizing power relations in 'elite' interviews. *Geoforum* 37(4):643-653.
- Smith, N. 1996. *The new urban frontier: gentrification and the revanchist city*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, N. and S. Low. 2006. Introduction: the imperative of public space. In *The Politics of Public Space*, S. Low and N. Smith, eds. New York: Routledge.
- Smithers, J. and A.E. Joseph. 2010. The trouble with authenticity: Separating ideology from practice at the farmers' market. *Agriculture and Human Values* 27(2):239-247.
- Spinousa, N., M. Peraldi, and N. Foughali. 1995. Le marché des pauvres, espace commercial et espace public. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 11(1):77-97.
- Stiles, K., O. Altiok, and M. Bell. 2011. The ghosts of taste: food and the cultural politics of authenticity. *Agriculture and Human Values* 28(2):225-236.
- Strauss, A. and J. Corbin. 1990. *Basics of grounded theory methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Tailhades, B. and O. Tasqué. 2010. Les chiffres clés de Montpellier Agglomération. *INSEE*. http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref_id=16187 (last accessed 14 August 2013).
- Tarrius, A. 1995. Naissance d'une colonie: un comptoir commercial à Marseille. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 11(1):21-52.
- . 2002. Un forme migratoire autre: Réseaux et sociétés du migrants en méditerranée occidentale. *Ville-Ecole-Intégration Enjeux* 131:38-47.
- Tchoukaleyska, R. 2010. Gecontesteerde etnische markten in Montpellier. Translated by Heidi Hanssens, David Bassens, Anneleen De Vos. *AGORA: Magazine Voor Sociaalruimtelijke Vraagstukken*, 26(2):33-36.

- . 2013. Regulating the farmers' market: *paysan* expertise, quality production and local food. *Geoforum* 45:211-218.
- Temple, B. and A. Young. 2004. Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative Research* 4(2):161-178.
- TenHoor, M. 2007. Architecture and biopolitics at les Halles. *French Politics, Culture & Society* 25(2):73-92.
- Terrio, S.J. 2000. *Crafting the culture and history of French chocolate*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Till, K.E. 2005. *The new Berlin: memory, politics, place*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tregear, A. 2003. From Stilton to Vimto: Using food history to re-think typical products in rural development. *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(2):91-107.
- Tribalat, M., J.-P. Garson, Y. Moulier-Boutang, and R. Silberman. 1991. *Cent ans d'immigration, étrangers d'hier, français d'aujourd'hui*. Paris: Institut National d'Études Démographiques.
- Uitermark, J. and J.W. Duyvendak. 2007. Gentrification as a government strategy: social control and social cohesion in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam. *Environment and Planning A* 39(1):125-141.
- Valentine, G. 1996. Children should be seen and not heard: the production and transgression of adults' public space. *Urban Geography* 17(3):205-220.
- Vallianatos, H. and K. Raine. 2008. Consuming food and constructing identities among Arabic and South Asian immigrant women. *Food, Culture, and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 11(3):355-373.
- Viala, L. and J.-P. Volle. 2010. De Polygone à Odysseum, une dessin/dessein de ville. In: *Montpellier: la ville inventée*, Volle, J.-P., L. Viala, E. Négrier, and C. Bernié-Boissard, eds, 32-65. Marseille: Edition Parenthèse / Gip Epau.
- Volle, J.-P., L. Viala, E. Négrier, and C. Bernié-Boissard, eds. 2010. *Montpellier: la ville inventée*. Marseille: Edition Parenthèse / Gip Epau.
- Wacquant, L. 2008. *Urban outcasts: a comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Walker, D and F. Myrick. 2006. Grounded theory: an exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative Health Research* 16(4):547-559.
- Watson, S. 2009. The magic of the marketplace: sociability in a neglected public space. *Urban Studies* 46(8):1577-1591.

Weber, R. 2002. Extracting value from the city: neoliberalism and urban redevelopment. *Antipode* 34(3):519-540.

Weil, P. 2005. *La République et sa diversité: immigration, intégration, discrimination*. Paris: Seuil.

---. 2010. *How to be French: nationality in the making since 1789*. Translated by C. Porter. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Weintraub, J. 1997. The theory and politics of the public/private distinction. In: *Public and private in thought and practice: perspectives on a grand dichotomy*, Weintraub, J. and K. Kumar, eds, 1-42. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wertsch, J. 2009. Collective memory. In: *Memory in mind and culture*, P. Boyer and J Wertsch, eds, 117-137. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whyte, W.F. 1943. *Street corner society: the social structure of an Italian slum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (this edition 1981).

Wieviorka, M. 2005. *La différence: identités culturelles, enjeux, débats et politiques*. Paris: L'Aube.

Wright, P. 1985. *On living in an old country*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (this edition 2009).

Zukin, S. 1995. *The cultures of cities*. Oxford: Blackwell.

---. 2008. Consuming authenticity: from outposts of difference to means of exclusion. *Cultural Studies* 22(5):724-748.

---. 2012. The social production of urban cultural heritage: identity and ecosystem on an Amsterdam shopping street. *City, Culture and Society* 3(4):281-291.

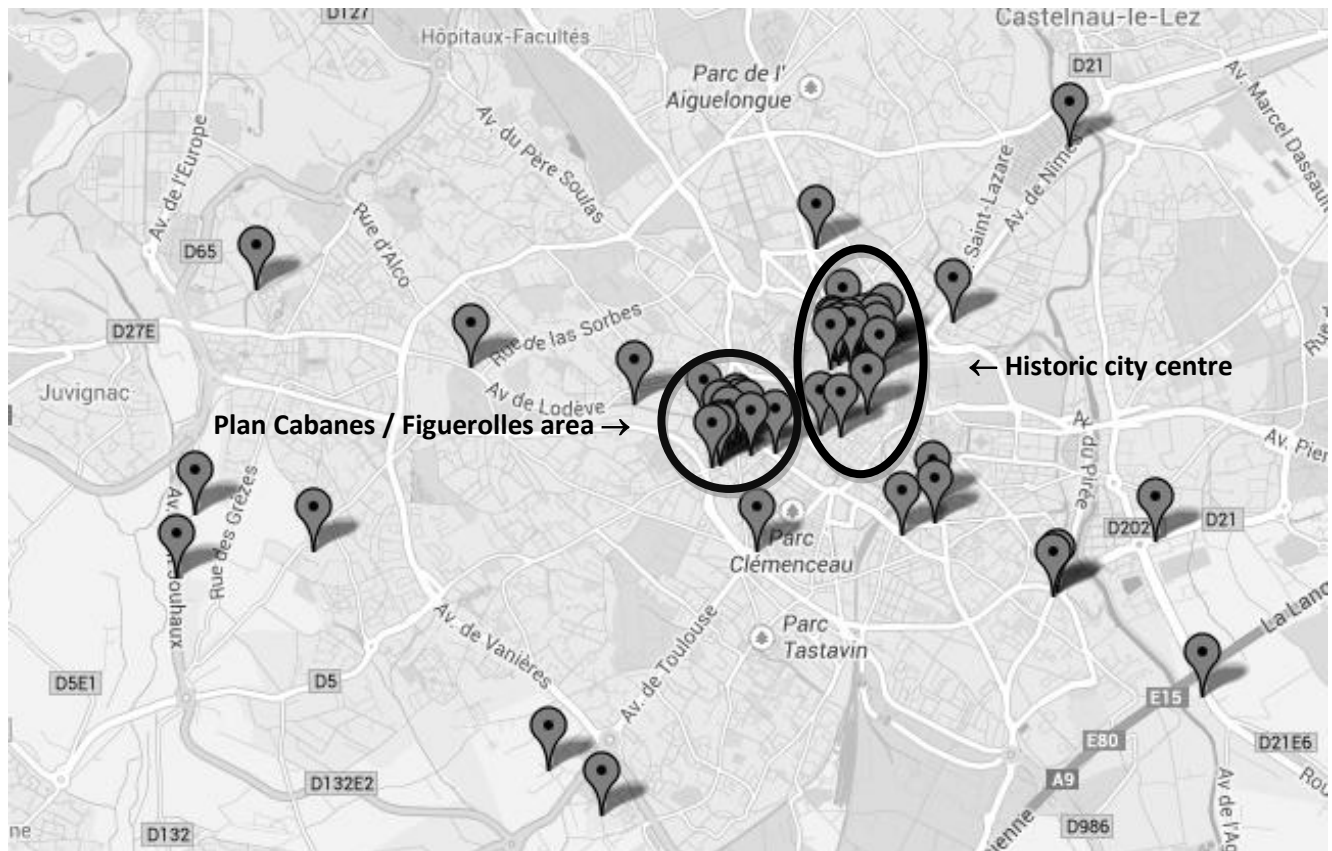
Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview lists

	Pseudonym	Role	Format and date	Added notes:
1.	Mahmet	Produce vendor, Place Salengro	Semi-structured interview March 2010; informal market conversations October 2009-June 2010	Interview was held at a cafe near the Place Salengro, after market hours.
2.	Michel	Produce vendor, Place Salengro	Semi-structured interview April 2010; informal market conversations October 2009-June 2010	Interview was held during market hours at a Place Salengro cafe.
3.	Rita	Resident, Figuerolles	Semi-structured interview March 2010	Interview was held at Rita's home (which is near her place of work in the neighbourhood) during the work day.
4.	Fabien	Resident, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles	Life history interview held February 2010	Two-part interview: part 1 held at a Figuerolles cafe on a Saturday afternoon; part 2 at a local community meeting space on a Sunday afternoon.
5.	Jacques	Business owner, Figuerolles	Semi-structured interview May 2010	Interview held at Jacques' place of work during the work day.
6.	Hussain	Business owner, Plan Cabanes	Semi-structured interview February 2010	Interview held at Hussain's business during the work day.
7.	Abdul	Business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles	Semi-structured interview May 2010	Interview held at a cafe near the Place Salengro, during Abdul's lunch break.
8.	Damya	Business owner, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles	Semi-structured interview May 2010	Interview was held at Damya's business during the work day.
9.	Amandine	Neighbourhood association,	Unrecorded semi-structured interview, April	Interview held at an association

		Plan Cabanes	2010	meeting room. Amandine requested that I not record the interview.
10.	Juju & Ralph	Neighbourhood association members, Plan Cabanes / Figuerolles	One semi-structured interview with both Juju and Ralph present in April 2010; walking tour of Figuerolles area with Ralph April 2010 and May 2010	Interview was held at an association meeting room.
11.	Marc	Association representing market vendors in Hérault	One semi-structured interview, June 2010	Interview took place in an outdoor market, during the market day.
12.	Madeleine	<i>Brocante</i> vendor, Plan Cabanes	Two semi-structured interviews, March and May 2010; a series of informal market-side conversations January-June 2010; walking tour of the Plan Cabanes area, May 2010.	Interviews took place in the Broc'Art market during the market day.
13.	Julie	<i>Brocante</i> vendor, Plan Cabanes	One semi-structured interview, April 2010; a series of informal market-side conversations October 2009 -June 2010	Interviews took place in the Broc'Art market during the market day.
14.	David	<i>Brocante</i> vendor, Plan Cabanes	One semi-structured interview, May 2010; a series of informal market-side conversations February -June 2010	Interview took place in a cafe close to the Plan Cabanes plaza, during the market day.
15.	Guillaume	<i>Brocante</i> vendor, Plan Cabanes	Two semi-structured interviews, April and May 2010; a series of informal market-side conversations October 2009 -June 2010	Interviews took place in the Broc'Art market during the market day.
16.	Nicholas	<i>Brocante</i> vendor, Plan Cabanes	One semi-structured interview, May 2010.	Interviews took place in the Broc'Art market during the market day.
17.	Lucien	Book dealer, Plan Cabanes	Two semi-structured interviews, April 2010; walking tour of Figuerolles area, May 2010; information market-side conversations	Interviews took place in the Broc'Art market during the market day.

			October 2009- June 2010	
18.	Pauline	Book dealer, Plan Cabanes	One semi-structured interview, March 2010; informal market-side conversations October 2009- June 2010.	Interviews took place in the Broc'Art market during the market day.
19.	Antoine	Urban Planner, City of Montpellier	One semi-structured interview, June 2010	Interview took place at the municipal urban planning department.
20.	Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2	Mission Grand Coeur, City of Montpellier	One semi-structured interview with both participants, June 2010	Interview was held at the Mission Grand Coeur offices.
21.	Real Name: Philippe Saurel	Political head of urban planning for Montpellier, 2005-2011.	One semi-structured interview, June 2010	Interview held at Philippe Saurel's municipal office.

Appendix 2: Pre-emptions in the City of Montpellier, 2005.



Source: Extrait du Registre des Décisions de la Mairie de Montpellier, 2005 (available at the Archives de la Ville de Montpellier); and GoogleMaps France 2013.