

# **Capital and Culture:**

**An Investigation into New Labour cultural  
policy and the European Capital of Culture  
2008.**

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I hope this study does justice to the time and support you all gave me.

*Rinne mé mo dhícheal agus is cuma liom.*

Mark Connolly  
Cardiff, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2007

## **Abstract**

This thesis is an investigation into the relationship between culture in New Labour policy and within the competition for the European Capital of Culture 2008. The study interrogates a policy paradigm which it identifies as a 'creative city/urban planning' approach to urban regeneration. It locates this approach within a wider New Labour 'Third Way' politics, in that it attempts to reconcile economic instrumentalism with a rhetorical commitment to a politics of the social.

Based on elite interviews and documentary analysis, this thesis argues that this approach to urban regeneration draws on a misappropriation of the work of cultural theorist Raymond Williams. It demonstrates how this misappropriation results in an unbounded anthropological definition, whereby culture colonises all areas of economic and social life. Within this template, culture becomes a surrogate economic and social policy. This is illustrated in the case-study of Liverpool's bidding for, winning of and plans for Capital of Culture 2008. This analysis shows how culture without parameters is usurped within both a neo-liberal economic agenda, and a policy template which recasts social inequality as a personal cultural deficit. Within Liverpool's urban strategy, culture is conceived as a social and economic panacea. However, when culture comes to mean everything, it invariably means nothing. This thesis attempts to put Raymond Williams' 'vague and baggy monster' back in its theoretical cage.



# CONTENTS

<b>Declaration</b>	ii
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	iii
<b>Abstract</b>	iv
<b>Table of Contents</b>	v
<b>Table of Figures</b>	viii
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The Personal Journey	2
1.3 The European Capital of Culture	6
1.4 The Structure of the Thesis	7
<b>Chapter Two: Putting Culture Back into its Place</b>	
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 The Negative and Positive Tradition	11
2.3 Liberal Humanism	22
2.4 Challenges to Liberal Humanism	28
2.5 Bourdieu and the Cultural Arbitrary	45
2.6 Conclusion	50
<b>Chapter Three: Neo Liberalism Culture and the City</b>	
3.1 Introduction	52
3.2 Neo Liberalism in Urban and Cultural Policy	53
3.3 Neo Liberalism Culture and the City	60
3.4 Criticisms Entrepreneurialism and Culture in Regeneration	63
3.5 Conclusion	70
<b>Chapter Four: Glasgow City of Culture 1990</b>	
4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 Glasgow's Bid for 1990	71
4.3 The Decision for Glasgow and Plans for 1990	83
4.4 Glasgow 1990: Critics and Controversies	86
4.5 The Legacy of Glasgow 1990	91
4.6 Conclusion	94

## **Chapter Five: Methods and Strategies**

5.1	Introduction	96
5.2	The Politics of Studying Culture	96
5.3	Discourse, Intertextuality and Policy	103
5.4	Research Questions	106
5.5	Research Strategies	110
5.5.1	Documents and Newspapers	112
5.5.2	Interviews	118
5.5.3	Ethics in Interviewing Elites	124
5.6	Analysis	125
5.7	Limitations of Research Design	130

## **Chapter Six: Cultural Policy and New Labour**

6.1	Introduction	131
6.2	'Old' Labour and New Cultural Policy	133
6.3	New Labour: A New Way?	138
6.4	Cui Bono?: New Labour and Instrumentalism in Cultural Policy	145
6.5	Economic Instrumentalism: New Labour and the Move to Creativity	150
6.5.1	New Labour and Creativity	153
6.5.2	Creative Cities	161
6.6	New Labour and Social Instrumentalism	171
6.7	Excursus: New Labour and Unresolved Tensions in Cultural Policy	179
6.8	Conclusion	181

## **Chapter Seven: Bidding for Capital of Culture 2008**

7.1	Introduction	185
7.2	History of City/Capital of Culture and European and British Judging Criteria	186
7.3	The Competing Cities' Responses: from twelve to six	197
7.4	Defining Culture	205
7.5	Economic and Social Instrumentalism	217
7.6	Creativity	224
7.7	Conclusion	232

## **Chapter Eight: From Liverpool to Livercool**

8.1	Introduction	236
8.2	Early History of Liverpool	237
8.3	Early Class Politics and the 'Scouse' Identity	239
8.4	Economic Downturn and Social and Political Turmoil	246
8.5	The Militant Era	249
8.6	The 'Whingeing' Scouser	255
8.7	Urban Governance and Regeneration	257
8.8	Conclusion	262

<b>Chapter Nine:</b>	<b>The People's Bid and Social Instrumentalism</b>	
9.1	Introduction	267
9.2	The History of the 'People's Bid'	268
9.3	Social and Economic Objectives and the Marketing of Liverpool	274
9.4	Replicating a Glasgow and Economic Forecasting	280
9.5	Infrastructural Development	288
9.6	Creative Communities	296
9.7	Social Instrumentalism	301
9.8	Conclusion	313
<b>Chapter Ten:</b>	<b>The Culture Company and COC08 Controversies</b>	
10.1	Introduction	316
10.2	COC08 Award	317
10.3	Urban governance within Liverpool	328
10.4	Economic Focus and the loss of 'the People'	336
10.5	Controversies around COC08	345
10.5.1	The Abandoning of Infrastructural Projects	345
10.5.2	The Breakdown of 'strong local governance'	350
10.5.3	Tension between Intrinsic Positions and Instrumentalist Imperatives	353
10.6	Conclusion	359
<b>Chapter Eleven:</b>	<b>Review and Conclusion</b>	365
<b>Bibliography</b>		379
<b>Appendix One</b>	<b>List of Interviewees</b>	412

## List of Figures

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>One:</b>	Raymond Williams' typologization of culture	39
<b>Two:</b>	DEMOS and Comedia	137
<b>Three:</b>	New Labour's Cultural Planning/Creative City Strategy	183
<b>Four:</b>	Local Newspaper reporting of the competition for COC08	221
<b>Five:</b>	The Guggenheim in Bilbao	234
<b>Six:</b>	Gondolas on Birmingham's Canals	234
<b>Seven:</b>	Belfast Peace Lines	234
<b>Eight:</b>	Assembly Building Cardiff	235
<b>Nine:</b>	Cardiff's Millennium Centre	235
<b>Ten:</b>	The Three Graces	264
<b>Eleven:</b>	'The Truth'	265
<b>Twelve:</b>	Scotland Road	265
<b>Thirteen:</b>	Dereliction in Norris Green	265
<b>Fourteen:</b>	March of Militant	265
<b>Fifteen:</b>	Yosser Hughes: a victim of neo-liberalism	266
<b>Sixteen:</b>	The Boswell Family: the rogueish Scouser	266
<b>Seventeen:</b>	Calm Down: the excitable Scouser	266
<b>Eighteen:</b>	Employment Breakdown in Liverpool by ERM definition	286
<b>Nineteen:</b>	Employment Breakdown with tourism uncoupled from Creative Industry	287
<b>Twenty:</b>	Breakdown of ERM definition of Creative Industry	287
<b>Twenty One:</b>	Culture Company Cycle of Success	310
<b>Twenty Two:</b>	The Ark and The Cloud	314

<b>Twenty Three:</b> The FACT Centre	314
<b>Twenty Four:</b> The Echo Arena	315
<b>Twenty Five:</b> The Public	315
<b>Twenty Six:</b> Peckham Library	315
<b>Twenty Seven:</b> 'Oi Terry'	326
<b>Twenty Eight:</b> 'Chateau Latour'	327
<b>Twenty Nine:</b> Gondola Across the Mersey	327
<b>Thirty:</b> Relationship Between the Culture Company and the Council	335
<b>Thirty One:</b> The Quiggins Store	361
<b>Thirty Two:</b> 08 Place	361
<b>Thirty Three:</b> The Branding of Liverpool	362
<b>Thirty Four:</b> Liverpool's Ultimate Status Symbol	363
<b>Thirty Five:</b> Talk, talk, talk and wait for the cranes	363
<b>Thirty Six:</b> Liverpool Vision	364
<b>Thirty Seven:</b> Culture of Capital	364

## Chapter One: Introduction

*'So maybe we should conduct our discussions of education and citizenship, toleration and social peace, without the talk of cultures. Long ago, in the midst of prehistory, our ancestors learned that it is sometimes good to let a field lie fallow'*

Kwame Anthony Appiah (1997)

### 1.1 Introduction

Wittgenstein once said that sometimes a word needs to be taken out of language and given a semantic cleansing; if ever there was such a word then culture is it. This 'vague and baggy monster', as Raymond Williams<sup>1</sup> called it, has driven many great minds to distraction, and famously- if apochryphally - Reichmarshal Goering's ever twitching index finger towards his holster. In a sense this study is an attempt to perform such a semantic cleansing in relation to culture in contemporary policy discourse.

Within policy 'culture'- and its theoretical bedfellow 'creativity'- is ubiquitous, yet amorphous. It has become something of a mantra, where the turn to culture is seen as both a social and economic panacea. However, as culture colonises more areas of government, Williams' monster is pulling free from the theoretical and philosophical shackles that once bound it. This study is thus an attempt to reconnect culture with some of its lost intellectual and philosophical traditions and analyse how it has been interpreted within contemporary (New Labour) cultural policies and the strategies employed by cities bidding for the title '*European Capital of Culture 2008*'.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Williams (1989, pp. 158-159) famously worried that the intellectual field based on his early writings would become a "vague and baggy monster".

## 1.2 The Personal Journey

This study was born out of various theoretical, political and personal interests that have engaged me for some time now. The theoretical issues that inform this work emerged while working in a publicly funded cultural organisation (I was without doubt one of the exploited young people within the 'creative industries' and media written about by McRobbie [2002]). While not realising it at the time, I was experiencing an ideological clash between two approaches to culture: one, grounded in neo liberalism, looked to the market to justify 'investment' in this organisation, the other believed in 'subsidising' what was culturally valuable, regardless of the market or, indeed at times, popularity. While sharing in the demonisation of the reform's enforcer, John Birt - Dennis Potter's 'croak voiced dalek'<sup>2</sup>- I also had some misgivings over the language and the tenor of the opposition to these reforms (I was working in a Music and Arts Department which had a pronounced patrician attitude). Although I would have been unable to articulate it at the time, it would be fair to say that I was caught between an innate distaste for the cultural paternalism within the organisation (which seemed at the time to smack of 'elitism'), while being equally uncomfortable with the drift towards what the reforms seemed to herald, which was an acritical form of 'populism'<sup>3</sup> and consequent celebration of consumption as the ultimate arbiter of value (the debates were, of course, a lot more nuanced than this). It

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<sup>2</sup> The debate over the Birt legacy still rages with some arguing that he actually saved the BBC from Conservative privatisation. For an informed account on both this turbulent era and more recent controversies within the BBC and an attempted rearticulation of public value in relation to public broadcasting see Born (2004).

<sup>3</sup> Both 'populist' and 'elitist' are placed in inverted commas to indicate a certain distance from the crude, binary interpretation and at times facile rallying to these terms within some political discourse (which I feel my own position shared at the time this opening paragraph describes). This study, however, is cognisant of semantic and political debates over the terms and thus employs them in a more nuanced fashion. If used without inverted commas within this study, elitism will refer to an ideological position that denigrates the tastes of the majority population, while populism will refer to discourses within politics and academia that coalesce (intentionally or not) with neo-liberal discourses which celebrate the 'sovereign consumer' at the expense of a consideration of everyday consumption within its political and economic context.

was the tension between a belief in cultural value and a commitment to democratic politics which engaged me then and, in many ways, forms the central problematic that informs this study. Although intellectually underdeveloped, the circular questions that were raised at the time reflect fundamental debates within cultural analysis, and underpin many of the questions that this study itself wishes to explore in relation to New Labour cultural policy, and strategies employed by cities competing for Capital of Culture 2008: how can a belief in value be reconciled with a commitment to democratic politics; how can majority cultural experience be validated other than by turning to the market; what are the relationships between majority tastes and economic production; does an opposition to the market result in the dismissal of majority cultural expression and the patrician attitudes and forms of paternalism that I had been experiencing; does acceptance of the market inevitably result in an acritical and 'valueless populism'?

Central to this problematic was, of course, how I defined culture. This definition of culture was informed by how I interpreted the relationship between the cultural and the economic sphere. Initially, I had a naïve belief that what was deemed cultural was defined by the fact that it was beyond economics, and that the goal of cultural policy was to attempt to ameliorate market failure in areas of life that had 'value' which was not recognised by the market. However, this template which underpinned a patronage paradigm within post-war British cultural policy (and was one of the justifications for the public funding of the organisation in which I was working) fostered much of the paternalism and 'elitist' assumptions that I had reacted against in the first place. Not that I was the first person to try to reconcile an innate sensitivity to class and democratic politics with a distaste for either elitism or freewheeling consumption as



the ultimate arbiter of taste; in an attempt to achieve such a theoretical reconciliation I was initially drawn to the writings of Raymond Williams. The influence of Williams over this study is both theoretical and methodological: the discourse analysis undertaken in parts of the study was partly influenced by Williams' sensitive approach to language through semantic history in both *Culture and Society* ([1958] 1984) and the *Long Revolution* (1965). Much of Williams' work seemed to resonate with my own theoretical struggle, in that it attempted to reconcile a commitment to cultural democracy and the undermining of 'elitist' conceptions of culture, with a belief in the retention of value. What most impressed me within these works was Williams' demonstration of how contemporary understandings of culture were rooted in the political, social and economic contexts of a particular historical period. Much as Williams attempted to historicise and contextualise discourses around culture, this work also attempts to unpack that most dense yet ubiquitous concept.

Moving from such an empirically rooted, theoretically naïve perspective, to articulating a cogent, coherent and defensible theoretical position, was a taxing though stimulating intellectual journey. Initially, my core concerns were with how to justify cultural funding without resorting to paternalism, on the one hand, and the equally unpalatable alternative of celebrating the market as the ultimate arbiter of choice on the other. This problematic remained while studying 'Popular Culture' with the Open University, where I found myself opposed to theoretical positions which conceived cultural consumption as the duping of the 'masses', but equally to those which, to my mind, indulged in an uncritical celebration of consumption and the market, lacking a political, social or economic context<sup>4</sup>. Many of the studies I read at

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<sup>4</sup> These theoretical positions will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

this time - and indeed the thrust of how the course was taught - seemed to be in danger of falling into the latter category: I felt that they lacked a critical perspective and thus represented an abandonment of the questioning of politics and power and, consequently, a commitment to progressive politics.

When I mentioned these concerns to my Open University tutor, not realising the ontological implications, he informed me that I was 'in the wrong area' and 'should study political economy'. As part of this course I wrote a dissertation exploring the economic context which framed the early positive coverage of Ireland's leading rock band within the country's foremost music magazine. This short study informed both the theoretical position and the empirical interests of this present work: the theoretical influence can be seen in my placing of culture within a political, economic and historical context; empirically this work generated an interest in the relationship between culture and economic regeneration, especially within the urban sphere (the band, U2, are now used to market Dublin and Ireland and have been integral to the regeneration of the city's former derelict docklands - in fact 2007 saw the commissioning of U2 Tower, Ireland's tallest building).

### 1.3 The European Capital of Culture

Because of this interest in the relationship between culture and urban development I became aware of the competition for the award of the accolade of 'European Capital of Culture' to a British city and felt that this might prove a worthwhile site to pursue an enquiry into the contemporary political uses of culture<sup>5</sup>. I was initially familiar with *The European Capital of Culture* - formerly known as the *European City of Culture* - through doing some non academic research in Dublin (award holder in 1991) and was aware of the award's association with the city's economic regeneration. This was especially true in relation to the experiences of Glasgow - holder of the award in 1990 - a city I had visited on many occasions. What interested me about Glasgow, however, was the anecdotal and empirical evidence that, despite its celebrated economic success on the back of its 'City of Culture' status, there remained high levels of poverty and considerable inequality. Despite this, however, within the press at the time - 2002- there was considerable interest in which of the British cities competing for the 2008 award would follow in Glasgow's footsteps. This study was thus initially conceived as an exploration the relationship between culture and urban regeneration of which Glasgow was seemingly the exemplar within the competition for Capital of Culture 2008.

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<sup>5</sup> The abbreviation COC08 will be used in this study when referring to competition for European Capital of Culture 2008.

#### **1.4 The Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is set out in eleven chapters. The second chapter attempts to reconnect culture with some of its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings. It traces understandings of culture to prehistory to make explicit some of the implicit assumptions that inform contemporary cultural discourse. The chapter then illustrates how these assumptions came to inform an Arnoldian interpretation of culture as a means to inculcate social order and reform the 'masses'. The chapter will then illustrate how this interpretation of culture influenced post-war British cultural policy, until challenged through theoretical moves which attempted to introduce more democratic cultural definitions. Chapter Three of the study considers economic justifications for the funding of culture under neo-liberalism in relation to policy in general and to urban cultural regeneration in particular. Chapter Four argues that Glasgow's strategy for its City of Culture year is framed by this neo-liberal interpretation of culture. Chapter Five introduces the study's methods and strategies, while Chapter Six considers New Labour policy in general and cultural policy in particular, to ascertain whether it represents an extension of or a departure from the neo liberal agenda which preceded it. This chapter will provide the political context for Chapter Seven's analysis of the competition for 'European Capital of Culture 2008' while Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten will consider the bid for, the winning of, and the strategies employed by the city of Liverpool. Chapter Eleven will review the study's findings and assess its implications for the political uses of culture.

## Chapter Two: Putting Culture back in its Place.<sup>1</sup>

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart never scored a goal for Wolverhampton*

(Wolverhampton Wanderers football supporters terrace chant)

### 2.1 Introduction

Culture is a word that has such semantic latitude and, consequently, theoretical and political reach, that it could have been invented by that great celebrant of semantic nihilism, Humpty Dumpty himself<sup>2</sup>. Of course, as Alice found to her interminable frustration, when a word can mean everything, invariably it can mean nothing. It is the contention of this study that within contemporary political discourse generally and the 'Capital of Culture' scheme specifically the term culture has lost many of its theoretical and philosophical linkages; as a result the word has come to mean everything and, consequently, nothing. Thus before engaging with policy it is imperative that this study outlines what exactly is being referenced when the term 'culture' is invoked since, as Lewis and Miller (2003) rightly point out, how one defines culture determines how one articulates cultural policy.

This quest for semantic clarity will begin by outlining the genealogy<sup>3</sup> of contemporary conceptions of culture. To do so, this chapter will trace philosophies of art and culture from antiquity to the liberalist humanist tradition, which provided the theoretical justification of state sponsorship of culture in Britain after the Second World War. This historical analysis will not only demonstrate the complexity of discourses around art and culture in relation to its perceived benefits to the individual and society, but

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<sup>1</sup> This heading was inspired by Eagleton's critique of the ubiquity yet vacuity of culture within contemporary discourse and his claim that culture needs to be 'put back in its place.' (Eagleton, 2000 p.131)

<sup>2</sup> In Chapter Six of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* Humpty Dumpty claims that all words mean only exactly as he wants them to mean.

<sup>3</sup> Genealogy is used here in its everyday not sociological sense.

will also provide a context for Chapter Six's detailed dissection of contemporary instrumentalist (social and economic) justifications for cultural policymaking.<sup>4</sup> The chapter will trace conceptions of art back to prehistory in an attempt to make explicit many of the accepted, implicit assumptions around the inherent benefits of culture that pervade contemporary policy. It will then track challenges to these assumptions and highlight the implications that these challenges have for how we conceive value in the cultural sphere.

In the initial part of this analysis conceptions of art will be divided into the two categories: the positive and the negative. After a brief overview of the perceived negative effects of engagement with art, this chapter will give a detailed analysis of how the positive effects of such an engagement have been theorized. The analysis of the positive tradition will highlight arguments that have informed the 'intrinsic' justification for cultural funding. The section will argue that although the British state drew on these assumptions, it never did so from a totally disinterested position, and that its justifications for cultural funding always had a social instrumentalist agenda, often articulated in terms of reforming the working class (later chapters will demonstrate how this tradition is evident within contemporary social instrumentalist discourse). The chapter will then demonstrate how these philosophical traditions informed the liberal humanist and, in a British context, Arnoldian interpretation of culture which formed the theoretical bedrock for post-war British cultural funding. The chapter will demonstrate how this approach forwarded the principle of 'arm's length' funding, where the government funded culture indirectly through autonomous non governmental bodies such as the Arts Council (the later chapters of this study

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<sup>4</sup> This is inevitably somewhat of a cursory reading of a dense and detailed intellectual tradition.

will demonstrate how, although invoked within contemporary policy and within Liverpool's strategies for 2008, the 'arm's length principle' is increasingly obsolete in a cultural policy sphere driven by social and economic instrumentalist imperatives). The second section of this chapter will then briefly outline theoretical challenges to some of the 'sacred' tenets of the modernist conception of art that informed a liberal humanist interpretation of culture- most especially transcendental aesthetics- while the final section will deal with outright challenges to aesthetic value itself. This broad historical analysis and questioning of assumptions around art and culture will raise some of the fundamental questions that this study will explore in relation to contemporary cultural policy generally and the European Capital of Culture 2008 in particular: namely, how is culture defined and how is value articulated?

## 2.2 The Negative and the Positive Tradition

*Lovely Lovely Ludwig Van* (A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess)

As Alex, the protagonist in Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* indulges in another bout of gratuitous 'ultra violence', inspired by the sounds of 'Lovely Lovely Ludwig Van', the notion that art civilises the individual is brutally challenged. Burgess' playing with the relationship between art and reality/morality, and challenging of the 'intrinsic' assumptions around the positive benefits of access to the arts, is, in fact, consistent with the original Platonic conception of the arts put forward by the eponymous author in the V century BC who viewed the arts as actually corrupting and distracting the individual from the real concerns of life<sup>5</sup>.

Belfiore (2006) outlines three strands through which Plato argues that the arts are a form of corruption and distraction: metaphysical arguments for the negative effects of the arts in that the arts provide a flawed imitation of reality; epistemological arguments for their negative effects whereby the arts are viewed as misleading when considered as an adequate source of knowledge and understanding; and finally psychological arguments, which claim that the arts can corrupt by stimulating the irrational side of man. Consequently there are strong arguments against notions of the civilising function of the arts and Plato's position that an enchantment with the arts actually diverts the individual's attention away from concerns with the real political struggles in life (Belfiore [2006], in her review of Plato's influence on contemporary cultural policy, argues that his attempts to either ban or harness poetry for the good of

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<sup>5</sup> While the study presents a Platonic and Aristotelian conception of the Arts in contrast to one another it is cognisant of Belfiore's (2006 p.230) questioning of the 'traditional contraposition between Platonic and Aristotelian views, and thus between a view of the arts and poetry as corrupting and purifying' claiming that it is 'rather less clear-cut than such a simplistic juxtaposition would lead to assume'.



the state makes him the father of contemporary instrumentalist cultural policy). Within this strand of thought the positive view of the arts is challenged on two levels: the cognitive and the ethical. On a cognitive level it is argued that there is little justification to the belief that we can gain knowledge and insight into the universals of human nature through access to art and poetry, while the ethical concern argues that not only can access to the arts distract the individual from more pressing problems but that they can actually have a negative or detrimental effect on one's ethical beliefs (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007).

In response to Plato's attacks on poetry, Aristotle drew upon the notion of catharsis to put forward a positive view of the arts, their emotional impact and cognitive value (see Cooper, 1972); Hathaway (1962 p.205) points out that 'for over four hundred years now, Aristotle's idea that the function of tragedy can be likened to a purgation has been a dynamic principle in literary criticism'. Aristotelian arguments were highly influential upon Italian Renaissance literary critics and formed the theoretical foundations for disciplines such as literary criticism, classical studies and philosophy. Aristotle, however, never forwards a clear definition of catharsis and indeed Halliwell (1986, p.295) suggests that this might have actually been one of the reasons for its popularity with literary critics of the Italian renaissance in what he calls the 'craving of classical humanism for a corpus of authoritative regulations': this is a reiteration of Baxter Hathaway's (1962 p.206) argument that 'the very brevity and mystery of Aristotle's references to a catharsis of emotions in the Poetics and in the eighth book of the Politics provided a challenge to the apologist for poetry and gave him free rein to apply his own cherished ideas in expanding upon what Aristotle had said'. However, the notion of catharsis and the idea of personal growth and moral

improvement provide some of the central rationales in the British state's funding and supporting of cultural activity: the implicit social instrumentalism that underpins a Liberal Humanist approach to cultural funding. In an attempt to provide a definition absent from Aristotle, Halliwell (1986) posits six interpretations of catharsis: moralistic/didactic catharsis; emotional fortitude; moderation; emotional release; intellectual catharsis; dramatic or structural catharsis. These interpretations of the cathartic effects of the arts manifest themselves in arguments around theories which stress that the arts can benefit personal health and well-being (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six in relation to the emergence of a social instrumentalist discourse in contemporary British cultural policy).

A further positive attribution of the arts was seen to be its ability to educate and develop the individual. As was discussed earlier, Plato's original suspicion of the arts was based on the opposite belief, that the arts had a negative effect on the human psyche. This view was countered by Aristotle who argued, instead, that it was more desirable to feed the emotional part of the psyche and that dramatic poetry, if properly structured, could both educate the unruly emotions and transmit universal truths (Lamarque and Olsen, 2004). Although Aristotle argued for the positive benefits of poetry, his ultimate aim was to separate poetry from ethics though, at the same time, acknowledging poetry's educational capacity (this was supplemented by the Latin poet Horace [65-68 BC] and indeed by Renaissance Humanists whose celebration of the arts was based on the notion of the civilising power of poetry).

Plato's initial criticism of the arts' hold on the human psyche has been inverted by authors who share his opinions on the arts' shaping of the mind but who view this in positive terms, as a means to self development through education. Lamarque and

Olsen (2004) demonstrate how this was based on an Aristotelian conception of poetry, which was seen as a means to educate the emotions and convey universal truths. Such an interpretation of the arts' educational function are based, primarily, on chapter IX of his *Poetics*, where poetry is seen to reveal such universal truths through personal experience. This educative role of the arts - most particularly poetry - was promoted and celebrated by Italian Renaissance critics who sought to defend poetry from attacks from the early Church by claiming that moral teachings can be found in all poetry where hidden meanings exist beneath the literal expression. Fifteenth and sixteenth century humanists draw extensively on such Renaissance interpretations of art to forward their own theory of poetry and art's formative and educative role. Such theories regarding the intrinsic educative function of the arts fed directly into the British liberal humanist tradition, especially the Leavisite strand which, as will be discussed in detail later, celebrated the civilising power of what Leavis saw as the greatest form of artistic expression, literature. While the moralising aspect of contact with the arts was never explicitly expressed by Aristotle, his conception of art did have strong moral undertones through the argument that great art represented an idealized version of human life (Belfiore, 2006).

These arguments for the moral and civilising function of art were further developed during the French Enlightenment. Celebration of art at this time had a pronounced civil emphasis, whereby art was seen to have the ability to imbue citizens with civic values and virtues and, consequently, art and literature were promoted for moral reasons and, in particular, public utility (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007). This link between art and morality is, somewhat surprisingly, celebrated in the works of Immanuel Kant (surprising in that his work is seen as the fountain-head of the 'intrinsic' position which, of course, calls for a complete separation between ethics

and aesthetics). In his *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Kant argued that when faced with a work of art simply taking pleasure is not an adequate response;

Unless we connect the fine arts, closely or remotely, to moral ideas, which alone carry with them an independent liking, the second of the two alternatives just mentioned (a displeasure with the object) is their ultimate fate. They serve in that case only for our diversion, which we need all the more in proportion as we use it to dispel the mind's dissatisfaction with itself, with the result that we increase still further our uselessness and dissatisfaction with ourselves.

(Kant, [1790] 1987 p.196 quoted in Belfiore and Bennett, 2006 p.120)

Kant most clearly articulates this connection between ethics and aesthetics and the powers of moral instruction in Section 59 of the *Critique of Judgement* entitled "Beauty as the Symbol of Morality":

Now I maintain that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good; and only because we refer the beautiful to the morally good (we all do so naturally and require all others to do so, as a duty) does our liking for it include a claim to everyone else's assent, while the mind is also conscious of being ennobled by this [reference], above a mere receptivity for pleasure derived from sense impressions, and it assesses the value of other people too on the basis of [their having] a similar maxim in their power of judgment.

(Kant[1790] 1987 p.228 196 quoted in Belfiore and Bennett, 2006 p.121)

As Shiner (2001, p.147) points out, Kant thus argued for an indirect connection between aesthetics and morality, in that pure aesthetic pleasure reveals our dignity as rational moral-beings: 'for Kant, there is no way to escape the fundamental paradoxes of aesthetic judgment: it is pleasurable yet disinterested, individual yet universal,

spontaneous yet necessary, without concepts, yet intellectual, without moral instruction yet a revelation of our moral nature.'

However, despite Kant's obvious linkage between art and ethics/morality his work has been interpreted as a celebration of the intrinsic, rather than the instrumental, value of art (for a detailed discussion of misreadings of Kant's notions of free beauty see Noel Carroll's *A Philosophy of Mass Art*, 1998). It is thus through Kant that the idea of the independence of art and the aesthetic sphere from moral preoccupations evolves into theories of *l'art pour l'art*. While Kant does argue that the arts have a cognitive function in that aesthetic pleasure results from the ultimately self defeating attempt to make the leap from imagination to understanding through the aesthetic experience, in his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* he claims that experience of art tends often to bring little more than simple enjoyment (as opposed to the understandings gleaned from an appreciation of the sublime) and that enjoyment itself has positive benefits for man's physical and mental wellbeing:

the agreeable lassitude we feel after being stirred up by the play of affects is our enjoyment of the well-being that results from the establishment of the equilibrium of our various vital forces. This enjoyment comes to no more in the end than what Oriental voluptuaries find so appealing when they have their bodies thoroughly kneaded, as it were, and have all their muscles and joints gently squeezed and bent- except that in the first case the moving principle is for the most part within us, whereas in the second it is wholly outside us. Thus many people believe they are edified by a sermon that in fact builds no edifice (no system of good maxims), or are improved by the performance of a tragedy when in fact they are merely glad at having succeeded in routing boredom.

Kant ([1790] 2000, p.134)

These ideas of art as essentially pleasure giving served to divorce aesthetic experience from moral/ethical preoccupations and the concerns of everyday life.

Once Kant defined the aesthetic, he used it to outline the differences between fine art and craft, the artist and the artisan. This move divided art from craft and through the endowment of the artist with some kind of aesthetic sensibility, separated the artist from the craftsperson and aesthetic concerns from those connected with utility and ordinary pleasure<sup>6</sup> (Williams, [1958] 1984; Shiner, 2001). The result of this cleavage of art from craft was the idea that the (fine) artist was in possession of a special inspiration or genius transcendently located, while the craftsperson was merely replicating a formula that could be produced indefinitely. This resulted in art being seen as dichotomous to craft or indeed society itself and to enjoy this art one had to be gifted with a special sensibility or aesthetic that was itself metaphysical; although such a dichotomous view of culture should be avoided the distinction between activity which is primarily concerned with signification from that which is not, serves to place some boundaries around what can and cannot be deemed cultural.

The emergence of this interpretation of aestheticism at this particular historical juncture cannot be understood without an appreciation of the social and economic developments of that period, most particularly industrialization: Raymond Williams ([1958] 1961) devotes most of his work *Culture and Society* to illustrating this. With industrialization there emerged a cultural market which operated on the principle of providing the public with its cultural needs and thus alienating the artist: Belfiore and Bennett (2006), echoing Williams' position, argue that the personification of the

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<sup>6</sup> In a sense the Turner prize nominated artist Simon Starling was exploring this connection between art and craft, aesthetics and utility in his work *ShedBoatShed* (see [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk))

bohemian or aloof artist that come to be crystallized around this time was a direct response to this tension between the imperatives of aesthetic production and the requirements of a prospering cultural market:

in other words artists that espoused theories of art for art's sake turned their marginal position in the current art and literary markets into a badge of honour, whereby the unmarketability and 'uselessness' (to practical ends) of their art became not only their 'trademark', but an aesthetic, moral and political asset and the foundation for their higher ethical ground.

Belfiore and Bennett (2006, p. 122)

It was thus at the height of industrialization and nineteenth century romanticism that ideas of transcendent, metaphysical art found full expression.<sup>7</sup> While art, and especially poetry, was seen as essentially pleasure-giving, the Romantics stressed its difference from the baser and less noble pleasures and indeed the finer arts were often seen as actually providing an antidote to such baser pursuits.<sup>8</sup> Along with this notion of poetry as representing a regenerative or civilising function is the representation of the heroic poet as a conduit between the spiritual and material worlds (how this was constructed in opposition to and, at times, contempt for the uncultivated masses is discussed later in this chapter).

Central to a modernist conception of culture was the distinction between high and low culture, where (high) culture is seen to be the tonic for the poison of low, which is viewed as somehow 'sickening' the 'masses'. This position was adopted not only by the Romantics but a long tradition within the European intelligentsia. John Carey in

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<sup>7</sup> Bennett (2006) points out that Romanticism was linked to the social, political and cultural conditions of various European nations and was thus far from a unified system of thought.

<sup>8</sup> Wordsworth's influence on liberal humanist thought was not only through his writings but also through his personal friendship with Thomas Arnold and influence over his son, Matthew.

his political and polemical deconstruction of cultural hierarchies outlines the 'contempt' for the masses within the European literary intelligentsia: amongst his 'rogue's gallery' are Ibsen, Flaubert, Thomas Mann, T.S Eliot, D.H. Lawrence and F.R. Leavis. In his acerbic attack on the elitism implicit - indeed explicit and unapologetically so in many cases - within this construction Carey (2005, p.54) argues that 'taste is so bound up with self-esteem, particularly among devotees of high art, that a sense of superiority to those with 'lower' tastes is almost impossible to relinquish without risk of identity crisis'. In his earlier work *The Intellectuals and the Masses*, Carey historicises this construction of the uncultivated masses claiming that 'the difference between the nineteenth-century mob and the twentieth century mass is literacy' (Carey, 1992 p.5). Within this representation of the artist s/he is endowed with a transcendental, quasi-spiritual aesthetic sensibility while the 'masses' are seen as spiritually devoid or 'soulless'. This endowment of the artist with a transcendent spirituality of which the 'masses' were devoid, served in Carey's argument to preserve their social positioning, which was under threat by the democratising of culture precipitated by the expansion of education. Carey illustrates this by quoting Aldous Huxley's claim that 'universal education has created an immense class of what I may call the New Stupid' and the Irish novelist George Moore's equally elitist and anti democratic assertion

the spectre of the plague, of war, etc. are mild and gracious symbols compared with that menacing figure, Universal Education, with which we are threatened, which has already eunuched the genius of the last five-and-twenty years of the nineteenth century, and produced a limitless abortion in that of future time.

(cited in Carey, 1992 p.16)

According to Carey's argument the intellectual and the artist were involved in a reactionary pursuit that sought to preserve the distance between them and what they



constructed as 'the masses', by endowing the artist with a transcendental sensibility, and through the creation of art and literature that was inaccessible to the newly educated majority population. While Carey's arguments are legitimate - though not original, historian Andrew Ross told a similar story: *No Respect Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (cited in Frank, 1997, p.11) - they need to be read in context as they represent a strand of populism which, while seemingly appealing in its anti-elitist/anti-intellectual rhetoric, serves what this study argues are regressive political goals. Such an attack by Carey - and perhaps a reflection of his own neglect of the social - fails to recognise how deeply involved with the social world and indeed politics many of his 'rogues' were; as Raymond Williams ([1958] 1984 p.48) asserts,

what were seen at the end of the nineteenth century as disparate interests, between which a man must choose and in the act of choice declare himself a poet or a sociologist, were, normally, at the beginning of the century, seen as interlocking interests.

While Carey is no doubt correct in highlighting the inherent elitism within much nineteenth century 'intelligentsia' discourse, by disassociating the Romantics in particular from their political commitment and contemporary social conditions, he forwards a populist discourse that fails to engage with the complex questions of value that these writers were wrestling with: Williams in fact begins his chapter on 'The Romantic Artist' in *Culture and Society* by emphasising the inherently political nature of the Romantic position:

than the poets from Blake and Wordsworth to Shelly and Keats there have been few generations of creative writers more deeply interested and more involved in study and criticism of the society of their day. Yet a fact so evident, and so easily capable of confirmation, accords uneasily in our time with that popular and general conception of the 'romantic artist' which, paradoxically, has been primarily derived from study of these same poets.

(Williams [1958] 1984 p.48)

Williams illustrates this further when he talks of writers being 'blinded' by the disassociation of the Romantics from their social commitment, commenting that 'the pattern of change was not background...it was rather the mould in which general experience was cast' ([1958] 1984, p.49)<sup>9</sup>. While the Romantics may have expressed dissatisfaction- indeed disdain- with/for the Public this was counterposed with a respect for the 'people' who had an embodied spirit which was, of course, apart from the market: to illustrate this Williams ([1958] 1984, p.49) quotes William Wordsworth;

still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is anything of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to; but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge.... His devout respect, his reverence, is due.

This insistence on a standard of excellence above the market is one of the key strands in informing a contemporary understanding of culture as 'court of appeal' where 'real' human values are determined; in this sense culture became the normal antithesis of the market.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>For an illuminating discussion on the Romantics and their position as intellectuals and relationship to the construction of cultural policy see Bennett (2006).

<sup>10</sup> In a conference held in Bristol (2006) when the author challenged Carey as to how he would define value and seemingly unaware of the contradiction inherent within his response, he answered unproblematically 'trust the canon' which is, of course, a cornerstone of the Great Tradition the central tenets of which his work attempts to undermine. His attack on aesthetics was also undermined by his anecdote concerning the author JM Coetzee working on a South African farm and realizing that he had

### 2.3 Liberal Humanism

This section will now consider how these various interpretations of art and culture feed into the liberal humanist perspective on the role of culture in society, which provided the theoretical and philosophical underpinning of post-war British cultural policy for almost forty years. As has been outlined this liberal humanist position is an extension of Aristotle and Romanticism's assumptions of the civilising power of art which, of course, privileges 'the individual' ignoring other social factors or social determinants. According to this conception, art is the product of individual talent and represents the expression of the noblest aspects of human nature. A crucial tenet of the liberal humanist position is the belief that art can relate to every human being, regardless of social and educational background, if only given the chance - this provides the philosophical underpinning of social access policies within post-war British cultural policy. Of course, as will be discussed in some detail later, this universal view of man is the antithesis of sociological accounts of man's social and historical location: as Jordan and Weedon concisely argue,

despite the clever disguise, the content of liberal universals is never universal. The 'Humanity'- or, as has often been put, 'the Man'- of which it speaks is always historically specific, always fractured by power relations of exclusion and inclusion based on class, gender, race, ethnicity or some other invidious distinction.

(1995, p.33)

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to be an author after being elevated by hearing classical music coming from a neighbour's house, a story that is rooted in the kind of aesthetic assumption that he had just dismissed as a 'farrago of superstition and unsubstantiated belief'.

This Liberal Humanist interpretation of culture must be viewed in relation to social and economic upheavals in nineteenth century Britain, especially urbanization and industrialization. As a result of these profound social changes, anxieties grew within the British middle and upper classes in connection to what was viewed as the urban 'mob': these were particularly acute in relation to the Second Reform Act of 1867 which doubled the size of the British electorate from 1.36 to 2.46 million people. While such an electorate only constituted around 8% of the population the drive towards greater democracy and reform resulted in many social thinkers becoming intensely apprehensive as to what kind of society might emerge. In response to these upheavals the doyen of liberal humanist thought in the UK, Matthew Arnold, forwarded his thesis that (high) culture could act as a civilising force within the working classes or the 'raw and uncultivated masses' ([1883] 1960, p.69).<sup>11</sup> While Arnold was not anti-democratic, he did ascribe to his class' denigration of the working class as a 'mob' or a 'mass': Bennett (2006) contextualises this by relating Arnold's firsthand experience of the Hyde Park riots of 1866 when Arnold and his wife watched from their balcony as rioters stoned the house of their friend and neighbour, the police commissioner, Sir Richard Mayne. Raymond Williams in his essay '*A Hundred Years of Culture and Anarchy*', while exposing Arnold's unquestionable elitism, argues that the Arnoldian lineage has in many ways been misappropriated by reactionary elements in society who do not share his progressive credentials;

Arnold is a source for this group, though it is significant that many of them have dropped much of his actual social criticism and especially his untiring advocacy of extended popular education. That part of Arnold, indeed, is now

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<sup>11</sup> Arnold's Culture and Anarchy thesis is generally related to his reaction to the Hyde Park Riots. However, McGuigan (1996, p.55) points out that this position was clearly articulated as early as 1861 in his essay in the *Popular Education of France*.

seen as a main symptom of the 'disease' they believe they are fighting. But that is often how names and reputations are invoked from the past.

(Williams, [1970] 1980, p.7)

(as this study will argue this final observation is particularly prescient considering how Williams' name is invoked in relation to an unbounded anthropological definition of culture within contemporary discourse). Although Arnold never actually sets out the notion of high/low culture, he does use the word 'anarchy' to describe what many would now define as 'low' or 'popular culture'. As an antidote to this emergent 'anarchy', Arnold proposed that culture could act as a civilising force within society, driving the individual towards a renewed ethics or 'right reason' as he describes it:

If we look at the world outside us we find disquieting absence of sure authority. We discover that only in right reason can we get a source of sure authority; and culture brings us towards right reason.... What we want is a fuller harmonious development of our humanity, a free play of thought upon our routine notions, spontaneity of consciousness, sweetness and light; and these are just what culture generates and fosters.

(Arnold, [1869] 1993 p.190)

This critical position regarding culture as a civilising force in society is most clearly expressed in his seminal work *Culture and Anarchy* ([1875] 1960). For Arnold, culture was a corpus of knowledge, 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1960 p.6) and it was his theoretical/political position that this could be used in a beneficial manner as 'a study of perfection...perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances' (1960, p.42). While he feared the rising urban working class who had recently been given suffrage, Arnold believed that they could be 'tamed' by access to culture through education, which he claimed is

'the road to culture' (1960, p.209). This position is consistent with the theories of art mentioned earlier in relation to the Romantic poets who saw themselves as 'the rock defence of human nature' (Wordsworth [1800] 1950, p.738). While Arnold's position has been challenged from any number of levels (many of which are discussed below) one needs to be careful not to dismiss him as an anti-democratic reactionary as he was, in fact, one of the more progressive and enlightened Victorian thinkers, though his critical spirit was always tempered somewhat by his attachment to cultural authority.

While modernist critics would argue that art should not be utilised for social purposes, being only responsible to itself- the 'art for art's sake' dictum rooted in transcendental aesthetics - the idea of art as a political instrument which can have a positive social benefit is nothing new (in fact all state justification for the funding of culture has been argued along broad instrumental lines in that it is seen to benefit the individual and thus society). Ideas around the civilising function of art found expression in nineteenth century justifications for cultural funding, where cultural activities were used for overtly political ends through their ability to shape public morals and behaviour, not only through exposure to art itself, but within the built environment where culture was displayed. Much of the rationale behind such cultural intervention was rooted in liberal nineteenth century attempts to reform the working classes through access to culture. Tony Bennett illustrates this by quoting Henry Cole's assertion that museums should go into competition with gin palaces to act as a moral reformatory. A contemporary magazine's assertion of the social benefits of culture on the opening of the Sheepshank Gallery of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1858:

the anxious wife will no longer have to visit the different taprooms to drag her poor besotted husband home. She will seek for him at the nearest museum,

where she will have to exercise all the persuasion of her affection to tear him away from the rapt contemplation of a Raphael.

(2001, p.20)

In illustrating a similar point Colin Trodd quotes Robert Peel's statement to Parliament in 1832 in support of the National Gallery;

the rich might have their own pictures, but those who had to obtain their bread by their labour, could not hope for such enjoyment.....The erection of the edifice would not only contribute to the cultivation of the arts, but also to cementing of the bonds of union between the richer and poorer orders of the state.

(1994, p.33)

A similar justification was offered in the late 1830's by William Ewart Gladstone who, while speaking of the British Museum and National Gallery, links aesthetics to the social by arguing that;

the State offers to its individual members those humanising influences which are derived from the contemplation of Beauty embodied in the works of great masters of painting....the higher instruments of human cultivation are also ultimate guarantees of public order.

(quoted in Minihan 1977, p.32)

This study will argue that this nineteenth century reformatory discourse within the state's funding of artistic and cultural institutions has parallels with contemporary social instrumentalist cultural policy - particularly in relation to discourses of social exclusion - which later chapters will demonstrate are a mutation rather than a departure from nineteenth century liberal efforts to reform the working classes (this moralizing discourse is satirised in humour relating to both Glasgow and Liverpool's City/Capital of Culture awards).

Twentieth century cultural policy has undoubtedly been shaped by the values promoted within Arnoldian Liberal Humanist thought, though as Bennett (2005, p.473) correctly argues, 'the tracing of intellectual influences in institutional and policy matters is not always straightforward, as such influences are often not articulated, let alone attributed, but rather are reflected in unspoken policy assumptions or institutional rhetoric'. Within this representation of culture, aesthetic values are hierarchically constructed and, consequently, it is clear as to what can and what cannot be counted as cultural (what can be counted as culture is a selective body of literary and artistic texts said to contain universal truths and which form the cornerstone of the European cultural tradition- Chapter Seven will argue that it was this understanding of culture that underpinned the establishment of the European City of Culture scheme). Arnold's theories clearly influenced not only the Reithian principles that underpinned the establishment of the BBC but also those which justified the formation of the Arts Council: Bennett (2005) illustrates this by quoting Roy Shaw, advisor to the Labour Party's first minister for the Arts, Jennie Lee, and secretary-general of the Arts Council between 1975 and 1983:

At its worst, democratic cultural policy assumes that the 'masses' will never be capable of enjoying the best in the arts, and so must be provided with a second best, or less. Surprisingly, Matthew Arnold detected this trend over a century ago when he wrote that: 'Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adjusted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses.' It really means giving the public what it can easily be persuaded to accept.

(Shaw 1977, pp. 9-10 quoted in Bennett 2005, p.475)

These principles, however, have been contested from a variety of intellectual standpoints (some of which are discussed in detail below). The polarised positions in



relation to Liberal Humanism is captured by Tony Davies (1997, p.2|cited in Belfiore and Bennett [2006, pp.28-29]):

on the one side, humanism is saluted as the philosophical champion of human freedom and dignity, standing alone and often outnumbered against the battalions of ignorance, tyranny and superstition. For Matthew Arnold, whose work has exerted incalculable influence in shaping educational thinking in the English-speaking world, it is synonymous with the 'culture' to which we must look as the only bulwark against the materialistic 'anarchy' of contemporary society. On the other, it has been denounced as an ideological smokescreen for the oppressive mystifications of modern society and culture, the marginalisation and oppression of the multitudes of human beings in whose name it pretends to speak.

The next section will deal with some of the criticisms of the mystifications and marginalizations within the liberal humanist position, most especially within the culturalist tradition in British academia.

#### **2.4 Challenges to Liberal Humanism**

The Liberal Humanist or Arnoldian perspective outlined earlier, dominated British interpretations of cultural policy until they were adapted in the 1930's by a school of thought that became known as Leavisism (named after two of its main proponents Q.D and, particularly, F.R Leavis). In many ways Leavisite theory was inspired by what was termed the 'cultural crisis' of the 1930's, where a 'levelling down' of culture was detected (as many cultural commentators claim to detect today) which, according to Leavis, was leading to a questioning of traditional values. More than Arnold, Leavisism stressed that the only bulwark against such cultural 'dumbing down' (to use a favoured expression in today's cultural panic) was education, and thus

advocated the introduction into schools of 'a training in resistance to mass culture' (Leavis, [1932] 1978). The essence of the argument put forward by Q.D. Leavis was that, prior to the nineteenth century and industrialization, there was a common culture in the country, but with the industrial revolution there emerged two types of culture, a minority culture along the lines of Arnold's 'the best of what's been thought and said', and a mass, uncivilised, base (working class) culture. Leavisites looked back to a mythical golden past where there was cultural and social coherence based on hierarchical and authoritarian principles: 'the masses were receiving their amusements from above... They had to take the same amusements as their betters... Happily they had no choice' (Leavis, [1932] 1978 p.65). The key to accessing this organic past was through culture, most especially, according to Leavis, education in literature, the jewel in the cultural crown. An integral part of the Leavisite project was to use education in literature to produce an 'educated public' which would help fight against the expansion of mass popular culture.

The Arnoldian/Leavisite position became the hegemonic mode of cultural analysis in Britain until the late 1950's and the emergence of writers such as Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. While this study does not wish in any way to conflate these two writers, contributing to what has been deemed the 'myth of 'Raymond Hoggart' (Jones, 2004a, b), it is essential that this work explores the continuities and, perhaps more importantly, the dissonances within their respective theoretical positions. Williams himself was keenly aware of the Williams/Hoggart conflation which he describes as academic as well as personal by playfully suggesting that their seminal texts, *Culture and Society* and *The Uses of Literacy* became '*The Uses of Culture*':

at the time when Richard Hoggart and I were inseperable, we had not yet met. It still seems reasonable that so many people put his *Uses of Literacy* and my

Culture and Society together. One newspaper went so far as to refer, seriously, to a book called the *Uses of Culture* by Raymond Hoggart

(Williams, 1990 cited in Jones, 2004a p.4)

though in the same essay he pointedly stresses the differences as well as the commonalities within their work;

But as I say we did not then know each other, and as writers we were pretty clear about our differences as well as our obvious common ground.

(Williams, 1990 cited in Jones, 2004a p.4)

It is thus important for this study not to propagate the 'Raymond Hoggart myth' since it does a disservice to both their theoretical positions; as Jones (2004a, b) argues this conflation served to 'misdirect' the focus of cultural studies and render the discipline's claim to 'Williams as a "founding father"' ambivalent. (Jones, 2004b). What Williams and Hoggart did share, however, was that they were young working class intellectuals who were challenging Leavisite assumptions, and indeed their own supposed position within that cultural framework. Hoggart, especially, objected to the Leavisite political programme of reformation of the masses through the moral values imbedded within Literature where he, as a trained practitioner in these skills of critical-consumptive 'scrutiny', would lead a vanguard of cultural missionaries to the masses; he called this role as 'behaving like an anti-tetanus team in a primitive community' (Hoggart, 1963, p.9 quoted in Jones 2004a p.6).

As a rejoinder to the Leavisite position Hoggart, in his work *The Uses of Literacy* ([1958] 1990)<sup>12</sup>, develops a clear theory of culture and education, which expands

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<sup>12</sup> When first reading this book I was struck by its lack of methodological rigour, most especially by the fact that Hoggart had used fabricated examples to illustrate his argument. However, I was later to discover this was due to the political economy of the publishing industry whereby his publisher, Chatto&Windus, fearing litigation not only compelled him to fabricate texts rather than use real

upon and challenges the prevailing Leavisite position. Hoggart's affinity with the working class is clear and he is keen to avoid the Leavisite/Arnoldian dismissal of them as 'masses'. As well as rejecting the notion of the 'masses' Hoggart also rejects the dismissal of 'mass culture' and attempts to account for popular cultural tastes by challenging the notion that the 'masses' are cultural dupes passively consuming the offerings of 'cultural industries'. He begins this assessment by attempting to define the 'working class aesthetic':

working class people have traditionally, or at least for several generations, regarded art as an escape, as something enjoyed but not assumed to have much connection with the matter of daily life. Art is marginal fun.....real life goes on elsewhere.

(Hoggart, 1990, p.17)

and goes on to celebrate the working class's capacity for resistance and ability to make critical and ironic readings based on his own experiences in a working class environment. While the book exudes a naïve romanticism and sentimentalism towards what Hoggart viewed as the working classes and their cultural pursuits- he celebrates the popular song '*How much is that Doggy in the Window*' though condemns 'Juke Box Boys' (a condemnation that inspired cultural theorist and Juke Box Boy himself Andy Tudor to hurl the book across his room [Tudor, 1999]) - it does attempt to interrogate, celebrate and thus legitimate popular cultural pursuits. His contemporary, Raymond Williams, expresses this best when he states 'We live in an expanding culture, yet we spend much of our energy regretting the fact rather than seeking to understand its nature and conditions' (Williams [1958] 1984 p.12) (the echoes of this

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examples, but also encouraged him to change the title of the book from 'The Abuses of Literacy' to 'The Uses of Literacy' (Owen, 2005 cited in McGuigan, 2006a, p.199). Chatto&Windus later came to co-sponsor the Centre for Cultural Studies founded by Hoggart in Birmingham (Hoggart, 1991).

Williams' statement can be clearly heard in the early 'Comedia position' discussed in the following chapter).

It was this emphasis on understanding the *nature and conditions* of the expanding culture, especially in relation to the political economy of production, which differentiated Williams from Hoggart- these criticisms mirror some of the criticisms made in Chapter Five in relation to the direction of cultural studies as a discipline. In reviewing *The Uses of Literacy* Williams' main critique of Hoggart - and resonant of this study's critique of cultural studies' break with political economy discussed in Chapter Five- is in its neglect of 'the methods of production and distribution' of what Hoggart calls 'popular culture' but which Williams would later refer to as the 'culture of the disinherited':

finally, he has admitted (though with apologies and partial disclaimers) the extremely damaging and quite untrue identification of "popular culture" (commercial newspapers, magazines, entertainments etc) with "working class culture". In fact the main source of this "popular culture" lies outside the working class altogether, for it was instituted, financed and operated by the bourgeoisie, and remains typically capitalist in its methods of production and distribution. The working class people form perhaps a majority of the consumers of this material, along with considerable sections of other classes.... Does not, as a fact, justify this facile identification. In all these matters, Hoggart's argument needs radical revision.

(Williams, 1989 p.27)

It is this stress on the commercial commodification of popular culture (interestingly Williams distances himself from this term by the use of inverted commas) and its production and distribution within a market economy that distinguishes Williams' position from Hoggart. Arguably, it was this abandonment of the link to the political

economy of production and distribution which lead to a cultural studies cleaved from political economy, and which, through its concentration on the micro politics of cultural resistance, lead, in some cases, to a virtual celebration of consumption as a form of subversion. Somewhat ironically, however, it is Williams rather than Hoggart who has been consecrated as the father of cultural studies and within the academic and indeed policy field, there has been a canonical association of him with what has been deemed the 'anthropological' definition of culture; a reading of Williams which is both highly 'selective' and this study argues misrepresentative.

When considering Raymond Williams it has almost become virtually canonical to give a small piece of biographical data. That this study is following this 'tradition' is not an attempt to sentimentalize Williams through biography, as Bennett (1998) has suggested, but to acknowledge his own location of his theories on culture and education within his personal background: thus it is fair to argue that his theoretical position was, in many ways, born out of a dialogue between the literary humanist tradition of which, as a lecturer at Cambridge University, he was very much a part of, and interpretations of Marxism relevant to him not least because of his working class origins as the son of an actively socialist Welsh railway signalman, which resulted in his 'congenital' class sensitivities. In his writings Williams uses the 'border country' metaphor to indicate not only the geographical position of his upbringing (between England and Wales) but his own theoretical position where he occupied a border position (dare I say it a 'third space') between Leavis and Marx. Recounting initial theoretical skirmishes between these two traditions in the 1930's Williams highlights his fundamental problems with a doctrinaire interpretation of the key paradigm within Marxist cultural analysis, the base/superstructure metaphor;

yet almost at once there was a fundamental hostility between these two groups....but why was this so? That the Scrutiny critics were much closer to literature, were not just fitting in, rather hastily, to a theory conceived from other kinds, mainly economic kinds of evidence? I believe this was so, but the real reason was more fundamental. Marxism, as then commonly understood, was weak in just the decisive area where practical criticism was strong: in its capacity to give precise and detailed and reasonably adequate accounts of actual consciousness: not just a scheme or a generalization but actual words, full of rich and significant and specific experience.

(Williams 1971, p.19)

Williams' attempt to negotiate a path between a nuanced interpretation of Marxism, and what he calls the 'older formula' associated with the Leavisite tradition (which Williams termed 'the court of human appeal' or what Arnold himself referred to as 'the best of what has been thought and said') came initially in his work *Culture and Society* (first published by Chatto and Windus in 1958); he gives an insightful analysis of his motivations and theoretical perspective when deliberating on the writing of this book over a decade later:

I did not want to give up my sense of the commanding importance of economic activity and history. My inquiry in *Culture and Society* had begun from just that sense of a transforming change. But in theory and practice I came to believe that I had to give up, or at least to leave aside, what I knew of the Marxist tradition: to attempt to develop a different kind of theory of social totality; to see the study of culture as the study of relations between elements in a whole way of life; to find ways of studying structure, in particular works and periods, which could stay in touch with and illuminate particular art-works and forms, but also forms and relations of more general social life; to replace the formula of base and superstructure with the more active idea of a field of mutually if also unevenly determining forces.

(Williams 1971, p.20)

This is an important reflection by Williams in that he outlines his position around the study of culture as 'relations between elements in a whole way of life'; there is, however, a tendency to delete the 'relations between elements' section of this statement, resulting in the cultural and the social becoming virtually synonymous.

Within *Culture and Society* Williams traces the concept of culture from the Industrial Revolution, where, he claims, it helped form and justify the social meanings and understandings that were emerging at that particular historical juncture. He then proceeds to outline the genesis of the notion of culture and how, over time, it came to occupy an elevated, transcendental status. While this work did not posit a new conception of culture, its historical and social approach helped to undermine the Arnoldian/Leavisite position which viewed culture as ahistorical and, consequently, asocial. In conjunction with this Williams also argues that the notion of the 'masses' is simply a construct that the elites of society use to describe/denigrate the 'other'; he thus argues that mass culture should not be described as the culture of the ordinary man, but rather the culture of the disinherited. According to Williams this disinheritance has been carried out by those who sought to isolate the 'Great Tradition' and that they should shoulder the responsibility for the destructive elements in what they viewed as mass culture. Essentially, what *Culture and Society* sets out to do is provide a history of the discourse of culture, its formation and subsequent transmutation and progressive rarefaction, until it came to occupy the transcendental position bestowed upon it by Arnold, Leavis and other advocates of the Great Tradition argument. Williams does attempt to posit an alternative definition of culture when, in *Culture and Society*, he looks forward to 'a full restatement of principles, taking the theory of culture as a theory of relations between elements in a



whole way of life' ([1958] 1984 p.11-12) which in a later work he develops in the politically and ideologically resonant aphorism 'culture is ordinary'(1958 p.5). Williams expands on this when he states 'that is the first fact. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning' (1958 p.11). Parallel to this Williams asserts, in relation to his background, 'learning was ordinary; we learned where we could' (p.13) and reinforced this when he states 'culture is ordinary. An interest in learning or the arts is simple, pleasant and natural' (p.14). Williams' assertion that '*culture is ordinary, learning is ordinary*' is a powerful political statement as he explains:

I wish, first, that we should recognize that education is ordinary: that it is, before everything else, the process of giving to the ordinary members of society its full common meanings, and the skills that will enable them to amend these meanings, in the light of their personal and common experience. If we start from that, we can get rid of the remaining restrictions, and make the necessary changes.

(1958 p.20)

Williams' 'counter theses' that 'culture is ordinary' and that culture is 'a whole way of life' has been viewed as the genesis of what has become referred to within cultural studies as the 'anthropological' definition of culture. This invocation of an 'anthropological' definition performed an important function in moving away from a narrow and elitist conception of culture to embrace marginal cultural activity. As will be described later when used in the policy sphere this, in effect, heralded the movement from an 'arts' to a 'cultural' policy. This study will contend, however, that the 'culture as a whole way of life' or 'anthropological' definition is not only a misreading of Williams, but that through ignoring the complexities between '*the relationship between elements*' in the whole way of life (which Williams in sometimes

tortured fashion attempted to theorise) and Williams' commitment both to a theory which stressed the retention of value and placed cultural reception within a wider political and economic context, the anthropological definition is drawn upon in a manner which expands the reach of cultural policy, and which also serves to validate and promote the kinds of reductive economic purposes which Williams critiqued (this will be discussed in detail in relation to Liverpool's plans for its Capital of Culture year). To fully understand Williams' position a thorough interrogation of his various definitions of culture- most especially culture as 'a whole way of life'- is now needed.

Within *Culture and Society* ([1958], 1984 p.229) the phrase 'whole way of life' was drawn from the writings of T.S Eliot and his *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*. It is common to dismiss Eliot as being contemptuous of the masses and indeed there is no shortage of evidence to back such claims; however, as Williams points out, his considerations of culture as 'a whole way of life' and his critique of the 'elite' had considerable influence on Williams' own thinking around the broadening of cultural definition (p.229). While Williams does not specify it, Eliot's borrowing from an anthropologically informed definition of culture was part of his attempt to include within religion a 'lived' dimension (Jones, 2004a p.11); Eliot thus somewhat playfully introduces the idea of culture as 'a whole way of life' through his now famous miscellany of English cultural activity:

Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar.

(quoted in Williams, [1958] 1984 p.30)

However, as Williams correctly points out (and again this is resonant of 'way of life' discourses within contemporary policy), Eliot's 'whole way of life' is far from an endorsement of all practices but instead draws on a conventional discourse of English leisure:

this pleasant miscellany is evidently narrower in kind than the general description which precedes it....any list would be incomplete, but Eliot's categories are sport, food, and a little art- a characteristic observation of English leisure.

(Williams, [1958] 1984 p.230)

What Williams does draw from Eliot is not an 'anthropological flattening' (Jones, 2004a p.13) but a questioning of the relationship between the social relations of cultural creation/production and its transmission and what has been viewed as an 'arts and learning' tradition; or how a definition of culture as 'a way of life' fitted with traditional conceptions of culture. To answer this Williams forwarded three definitions of culture: the ideal, the documentary and the social. This general typology is most clearly articulated in *The Long Revolution* (1965) where, rather than the third, the social, subsuming the first the ideal - Culture collapsed into culture - Williams is at pains to emphasise the contingent nature of these various definitions of culture. Williams' position and the methodological implications arising from this are most clearly set out by the typology outlined by Jones (2004a p.17) where the Ideal, the Documentary and the Social exist as elements and the study of culture is concerned with the relationships between them:

**Figure One:** Typologization of 'The Analysis of Culture' taken from Williams' work in the *Long Revolution* (pp.57-58)

'Definition of Culture'	Analysis of culture which follows from this definition	Possible methodological range within such an analysis
(i) Ideal 'a state or process of human perfection'	'the discovery and description in lives and works, of those values which can be seen to compose a timeless order'	None provided
(ii) Documentary 'the body of intellectual and imaginative work in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded'	'the activity of criticism, by which the nature of the thought and experience, the details of the language form and convention in which these are active, are described and valued'	From (Arnoldian) <i>ideal criticism</i> that focuses on a particular work- 'its clarification and valuation being the principle end in view' to <i>historical criticism</i> 'which, after analysis of particular traditions and societies in which they appeared'
(iii) Social 'A description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also institutions and ordinary behaviour'	'the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture'	From <i>historical criticism</i> (as above) to the (sociological) analysis of arguably 'extra-cultural' elements: organization of production, structure of the family, structure of institutions, characteristic forms of communication.

As this typology demonstrates Williams' redefinition of culture was indeed a powerful political statement; it was not, by any means, a complete attack on 'Ideal Culture' or the anthropological flattening that it is often argued to be. By abandoning the 'relationship between elements' section of Williams' theory of culture many commentators have tended to read Williams' work as performing such an attack when it was, in fact, merely an attack on *transcendental* value (there is not a contradiction, as some might point out, in arguing that value assumptions are socially

constructed and historically located and believing in cultural value, if at a local rather than a universal level: Wolff [1983] makes a similar point by claiming that while aesthetic judgment is historically located, within any historical moment, questions of value are inevitable):

I find it very difficult, after the many comparative studies now on record, to identify the process of human perfection with the discovery of 'absolute' values, as these have been ordinarily defined. I accept the criticism that these are normally an extension of a particular tradition or society. Yet, if we call the process, not human perfection, which implies a known ideal towards which we can move, but human evolution, to mean a process of general growth of man as a kind, we are able to recognise areas of fact which other definitions might exclude. For it seems to me to be true that meanings and values, discovered in particular societies and by particular individuals, and kept alive by social inheritance and by embodiment in particular kinds of work, have proved to be universal in the sense that they are learned, in any particular situation, they can contribute radically to the growth of man's powers to enrich his life, to regulate his society, and to control his environment.....It seems reasonable to speak of this tradition as a general human culture, while adding that it can only become active within particular societies, being shaped, as it does so, by more local and temporary systems.

(Williams, 1965 pp.58-61)

This retention of judgments of value is key to Williams and he argues that what passes as 'popular culture' has little cultural value. Consequently, despite the fact that Williams categorically rejects the 'high/low' 'minority/mass' binary to distinguish what is and what is not of value, he at no time abandons qualitative judgment that the adoption of an unbounded 'anthropological' definition would imply. Those attributing such an attack to Williams tend to invert the object and subject in his 'culture is ordinary' aphorism so that the 'ordinary' becomes 'cultural', 'implying an

indiscriminate 'equalization' of all artefacts' (Jones, 2004a p.1). To invoke Williams to justify a freewheeling, boundless definition of culture is a profound misreading of his work: one could provide any number of quotations to illustrate this:

we use the word culture in two senses: to mean a whole way of life- the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning- the special process of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one of the other of these senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction.

(Williams, 1983 p.4)

the suggestion that art and culture are ordinary provokes quite hysterical denials, although, with every claim that they are essentially extraordinary, the exclusion and hostility that are complained of are in practice reinforced. The solution is not to pull art down to the level of other social activity as this is habitually conceived. The emphasis that matters is that there are, essentially, no "ordinary activities", if by "ordinary" we mean the absence of creative interpretation and effort.

(Williams, 1965 p.54)

The tension between the expansion of culture and the retention of value is constant throughout Williams' writing. As early as *Culture and Society* Williams can be seen to grapple with the retention of value and hints at the notion of works having value in what might be seen as their own 'discursive field' by arguing that:

the strip newspaper, the beer advertisement, the detective novel- it is not exactly that they are good, but they are good of their (possibly bad) kind; they have the merits of being bright, attractive, popular

(Williams[1958] 1984 p.294)

Having stated that, however, he does defend a notion of value, not as a transcendental ideal, but in terms relative to other forms of cultural expression in what can be identified as its particular genre:

yet, clearly, the strip newspaper has to be compared with other kinds of newspaper; the beer advertisement with other kinds of description of product; the detective novel with other novels. By these standards-not by reference to some ideal quality ,but by reference to the best things that men exercising this faculty have done or are doing- we are not likely to doubt that a great deal of what is now being produced, and widely sold is mediocre or bad.

(Williams, [1958] 1984 p.295)

Williams' struggles with a commitment to a democratisation of culture and a belief in value are reflected in contemporary cultural debates and, indeed, educational debates (the work of DEMOS, for example, has been at the forefront of the attempt to rearticulate cultural value: see Holden [2004]). This can be illustrated by his deliberation over the agenda set out by R.H. Tawney to the Labour Party in 1922 where Tawney not only argued for universal secondary education, but for appropriating culture from the elite and extending it to the masses, the basis of the discourse of social access. Rather than following his innate democratic impulses Williams questions the central tenets and rationale of Tawney's position arguing that while culture must be extended 'standards of excellence' must be kept intact :

the case for extension (the entirely appropriate word) is strong; the dangers of limitation are real and present. But to think of the problem as one of 'opening museums' or of putting the specimens in the marketplace is to capitulate to a very meagre idea of culture. Tawney's position is both normal and humane. But there is an unresolved contradiction, which phrases about broadening and enriching only blur, between the recognition that a culture must grow and the hope that 'existing standards of excellence' may be preserved intact. It is a

contradiction which, amongst others, the defenders of inequality will be quick to exploit.

(Williams, [1958] 1984 p.222-3)<sup>13</sup>

As this study will illustrate it is what is deemed as the anthropological view of culture that came to inform cultural studies in Britain and, as Chapter Six will illustrate, strands of New Labour thinking, where it was argued that new sites of political struggle were in the cultural rather than economic arena. This also served to move away from 'elitist' ideas around Art to embrace popular cultural forms. However, in policy terms, as will be illustrated empirically in relation to Liverpool's plans for Capital of Culture, it expands the compass and reach of culture to such a degree that anything and everything can fall within its purview, as Chapters Six, Seven, Nine and Ten will illustrate. While Williams saw the anthropological definition sitting alongside his other two definitions (Bennett, 1998), within contemporary policy culture as art and culture as process are 'embedded silences' (Stevenson, 2004, p.123).

To quote Williams so extensively in relation to 'value' may labour the point of this argument a little but it is imperative for this study that Williams' theorizing around an anthropological definition of culture is considered in relation to, rather than apart from his other conceptions of culture. What Williams' work attempted to do was both to retain cultural value while, at the same time, recognising its embeddedness in society. To disengage with the complexities within Williams' typology and invoke an

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<sup>13</sup> Considering the discussion of social instrumentalism and the normative function of culture within contemporary cultural policy in Chapter Six, it might be worth noting that the 'father' of access, Tawney, viewed culture within a normative framework and expressed his ideas of access within an Arnoldian reformatory discourse where culture is seen as being an '*active principle of intelligence and refinement, by which vulgarities are checked and crudities corrected*' (Tawney, 1921 p.7 cited in Williams [1958] 1984, p.222).



anthropological definition of culture, while certainly broadening culture's reach, results in a cultural discourse where the cultural and the social become virtually synonymous. To set up dual, unconnected definitions of Culture/culture where rhetorically the first is collapsed into the second though within the actual policy domain culture is cleaved onto Art/culture, not only misrepresents Williams' theoretical position but sets up a policy template based on inherently incompatible assumptions: a quote from a slightly flippant Eagleton (2000 p.32) highlights this central problematic;

it is hard to resist the conclusion that 'culture' is both too broad and too narrow to be greatly useful. Its anthropological meaning covers everything from hairstyles and drinking habits to how to address your husband's second cousin, while the aesthetic sense of the word includes Igor Stravinsky but not science fiction.....it is the contention of this book that we are trapped disablingly wide and discomfortingly rigid notions of culture, and that our most urgent need in the area is to move beyond both.

Similarly, a recent article Richard Hoggart expressed his frustration at the polarised debate over these seemingly antithetical ideas of culture:

to some of us the scuttling between the two main uses of the word culture used to be irritating. Do you mean culture in the anthropological sense, as the whole way of life of a society?. In England, Eliot and Orwell played interesting tunes on that end of the keyboard. English culture as boiled cabbage cut into sections or bad teeth. At the other end is Matthew Arnold's definition, that recurrent 'the best of what's been thought and said', the high arts, high thinking and the power to bring sweetness and light. The second definition is too constricting and the first too worldly.

(Hoggart, 1999 p.4)

Hoggart's and Eagleton's criticisms are extremely apposite for this study since much of the British cultural policy under consideration can be seen to 'scuttle' between the two definitions initially suggested by Williams, without dealing with his complex theorization of the relationship between his three definitions and his stress not on culture as 'a whole way of life' but culture as '*the relationship between elements within a whole way of life*'.

## **2.5 Bourdieu and the Cultural Arbitrary**

Having established that Raymond Williams did not perform an outright attack on aesthetics the study will now consider a writer who did perform such an attack: Pierre Bourdieu. Both Williams and Bourdieu had an interest in the social function of the arts and an deep unease towards cultural hierarchies and the links between these and social position. Both their writings attempted to theorize a space where the social action was neither objectively determined nor subjectively voluntary.<sup>14</sup> This next section will, through the work of Bourdieu, consider how cultural value and aesthetic assumptions have been challenged in the manner that Williams declined to do, but for which he is often credited. It will discuss how cultural hierarchies are seen as socially constructed and question many of the assumptions within what has been outlined in the previous section as the 'intrinsic' tradition.

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<sup>14</sup> Jones (2005a) claims that Williams was especially impressed by *Reproduction* (1977), favourably reviewing this work and incorporating it into his *Sociology of Culture* (1995).

As has been described in the previous section of this chapter aesthetics has had a profound impact on how culture is conceived in western thought; John Carey (2005) muses how Kantian aesthetics could have achieved a position of dominance in Western society. While aesthetics has been attacked from a number of positions one of the most articulate and incisive deconstructions has come from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In his writing Bourdieu seeks to emphasise the social and political nature of culture, viewing it as part of the struggle between the dominant and subordinate groups in society, and arguing that cultural consumption is used as a means to legitimize, support and concretize class distinctions.<sup>15</sup>

Bourdieu initially outlines his socialisation of value thesis in *Distinction* (1986) where he argues, using his concept of habitus, that our judgements are conditioned by the dispositions that we develop through our socialization. Consequently, while we may claim our 'taste' is a transcendental attribute derived from aesthetics, Bourdieu sought to prove that it is firmly social, emanating from our particular habitus or social condition. For Bourdieu, therefore, taste itself is inherently ideological and is used as a means to distinguish a person's class, both as a marker of socio-economic position and as a category or level of quality. This position has been extended by authors who have argued that not only are cultural choices class based, but that the prestige attached to a class is gained from its cultural associations and distinctions at the higher end of the high/low continuum (Angus and Jhally, 1989). The link between the social and the cultural is, according to Bourdieu, education. He argues that rather than one class being born with superior aesthetic sensibility, there must be some kind of

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<sup>15</sup> Such an analysis was reinforced through contemporary research in Britain by the Open University which reinforced the relationship between cultural participation and social positioning with its author, Tony Bennett (unpublished) concluding that 'it would appear that not only is cultural consumption still a force for social distinction in today's society, but that, to a certain extent, the 'high/low' culture divide is also part of the mechanism of taste formation and refinement that reflects social and educational divisions.'

learning, either formal or informal, that allows one to appreciate or acquire the knowledge necessary to 'appreciate the aesthetics' of high art: 'a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is the code, into which it is encoded'. (1986, p.2).

A key to understanding and linking Bourdieu's theories of culture is his notion of 'symbolic violence' explained in his work *Reproduction in Society Education and Culture* (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1990). Thus 'symbolic violence' has been described as 'the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate' (Jenkins 2002 p. 104). It is through the normative principles embedded in and derived from Kantian aesthetics that one is lured into his/her spurious interpretation of 'a culture' as 'the legitimate Culture' resulting in power relations being obscured and, consequently, reproduced. A polemical description of symbolic violence in *Distinction* can be found in the appendices:

If there is any terrorism, it is in the peremptory verdicts which, in the name of taste, condemn to ridicule, indignity, shame, silence... men and women who simply fall short, in the eyes of their judges, of the right way of being and doing: it is in the symbolic violence through which the dominant groups endeavour to impose their own life-style.

(Bourdieu 1986 p. 511)

Bourdieu's 'war on terrorism', while taking place on several fronts, is primarily aimed at overthrowing the tyrant Culture by slaying his loyal footmen taste and aesthetics, removing him from his elevated, transcendental throne. Inscribed in the subtitle of *Distinction - A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* is an explicit rebuttal of Kant's notions of 'pure or innate cultural taste' and much of the work is directed at

countering Kantian aesthetics (Richard Jenkins goes so far as to call Kant Bourdieu's 'whipping boy'[2002, p.137]). In this work in an equally forthright rejection of Kantian ideas on taste Bourdieu suggests;

...the theory of pure taste is grounded in an empirical social relation, as is shown by the opposition it makes between the agreeable... and culture, or its allusions to the teaching and educability of taste. The antithesis between culture and bodily pleasure (or nature) is rooted in the opposition between the cultivated bourgeoisie and the people.

(Bourdieu, 1986 p. 490)

According to Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p.72) the mainstay of the exercise of 'symbolic violence' is 'pedagogic action', a form of education that occurs in both formal and informal environments: in the interaction with competent members of the social formation, within family education and in formalised, institutionalised education. Thus 'pedagogic action' is an integral part in the dialectic of cultural and social validation that underpins Bourdieu's theory of culture and taste. These forms of knowledge (usually those associated with formal learning) are conferred with much more cultural capital than those forms of learning associated with informal environments. Because this cultural knowledge is inequitably distributed, knowledge becomes a marker of distinction and social privilege.

Bourdieu's socialising and historicising the reception (if not the production) of what are considered high cultural forms and his claims that forms of learning link cultural choices and social positioning offers a great scope in the theorization and reinterpretation of culture. Added to this, his attack on Kant and liberal notions of transcendental aesthetics, the claim that all cultures are arbitrarily sanctioned (his 'cultural arbitrary') has profound ramifications for the study of culture. This raises

important questions for cultural policy in that it not only questions what is deemed cultural, but undermines the assumption that access to 'high' culture, without the requisite 'keys' provided by education, is a futile exercise. Even increasing education and access to the Cultural canon can be equally unavailing since Culture has retreated to more inaccessible areas.

While it may seem that adopting Bourdieu's ideas precipitate the now familiar (some would say passé) relativistic arguments, the implications for the study of culture are far more profound. While a reconceptualization of culture as outlined by Bourdieu may act as a call to reconsider the accepted canon, allowing for the incorporation of formerly excluded (and generally working class) cultural expressions, Bourdieu's ultimate conclusion (the overthrow of Culture and aesthetics and the collapsing of Culture into culture) also has profound cultural, social and political ramifications (Eagleton, 2000). The problem raised by Bourdieu's work is that if all judgments are arbitrary, and value is an ideological construct to reinforce social and economic advantage, how then is culture defined and what principles are used to justify cultural policies; as will be discussed in relation to discourses which emerged in relation to COC08 culture can become both everything and, simultaneously, nothing (for a critique of the policy relevance of Bourdieu's cultural analysis see Garnham [1993]).

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has laid some intellectual foundations for this study's subsequent analysis of contemporary cultural policy. Consequently, the first section of the chapter provided a genealogy of the philosophical, intellectual and theoretical traditions that manifest themselves in contemporary cultural policy discourse. It demonstrated how Art has been conceived as having both a negative and positive effect on the individual and society. It has traced the appropriation of Aristotelian positive theories by Renaissance humanists and Romantics to argue for the positive benefit gleaned from an engagement with Art. It also discussed how Kant's theorizing of 'free beauty' served to divorce aesthetics from aesthetics and cleave art from craft and the artist from the artisan. This section ended by outlining how these theories came to influence the Arnoldian (and subsequently Leavisite) cultural position which formed the basis of post war cultural funding with the UK.

The second section of the chapter outlined challenges to the cardinal tenets of the liberal humanist position. It demonstrated how Raymond Williams attempted to negotiate a path between an expansion of culture and a retention of value. It showed how Williams theorized culture, not as has been attributed to him, as 'a whole way of life', but as 'relations between elements within a whole way of life'. This is an important distinction because without the link to an Ideal culture, then the cultural and social become virtually synonymous. The next section illustrated this in relation to the writings of Pierre Bourdieu, and his assertions that taste and value are socially located which raises the fundamental question: if aesthetics is undermined and a broad, anthropologically rooted definition of culture adopted, how is 'value' constructed and cultural funding justified?

Informed by this general analysis, the next chapter will outline how the liberal humanist position and problematic questions of intrinsic value have (rhetorically) been bypassed through the move first to an economic instrumentalist, and secondly to a combination of economic and social instrumentalism within contemporary British, and in particular, New Labour cultural policy. In line with this, the chapter will demonstrate how the theorizing of Williams has been drawn upon to move from a liberal humanist to a culturalist influenced cultural policy-from Arts policy to culture policy- and how the tensions which Williams attempted to resolve have been bypassed (rhetorically) by the adoption of what has been labelled as a 'broad', 'anthropologically rooted'/ 'Williams inspired' definition of culture.



## Chapter Three: Neo Liberalism, Culture and the City

*'Bread and circuses was the famous Roman formula that now stands to be reinvented and revived, while the ideology of locality, place and community becomes central to the political rhetoric of urban governance which concentrates on the idea of togetherness in defence against a hostile and threatening world of international trade and heightened competition'*

(David Harvey, 1989)

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how various theorists attempted to account for the role of culture in an increasingly democratic society. It traced conceptions of culture from antiquity to policy in post-war Britain. This chapter will consider the impact that the political changes wrought under neo-liberalism had upon both cultural and urban policy<sup>1</sup>. The first part of the chapter will trace the movement away from a cultural policy based on liberal humanist thinking, to one under neo-liberalism where cultural funding was forced find a justification through economic instrumentalism. In line with this move to instrumentalism, culture shifted from a position peripheral in policy to being at the heart of policy; from being beyond economics to being central to economics; from being marginal and irrelevant to being ubiquitous and fundamental. The chapter will illustrate how these changes were mirrored within urban policy: this will be identified as a change from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism. It will show how under the urban entrepreneurial paradigm, culture moved from being a peripheral concern to being central to cities' rebranding/regeneration strategies (this will provide the context for Chapter Four's consideration of Glasgow, the UK's first winner of the *European City of Culture* designation).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> While neo-liberalism is outlined in this chapter it is discussed in detail in relation to New Labour in Chapter Six.

<sup>2</sup> In its analysis of culture documents this chapter draws on some of the techniques outlined in detail in Chapter Five.

### 3.2 Neo Liberalism in Urban and Cultural Policy

The fundamental belief that underpins neo-liberal ideology is that open, competitive and unregulated markets, freed from the shackles of the state, represent the optimum mechanism of economic development, or what one of its most trenchant critics, Pierre Bourdieu, disparagingly dismisses as a 'utopia of unlimited exploitation' (Bourdieu, 1998). While the origins of neo-liberal thought are located in the ideas of commentators such as Milton Friedman (1953) and Friedrich Hayek (1991), it was not until the 1970's and 1980's that it manifested itself in policy as an antidote to prevailing global recession. The economic ailments of this period, caused by the declining profitability of mass-produced industry, were seen to be matched by a crisis in Keynesian welfare policies. As a response, national governments in the older industrialized world were 'forced'<sup>3</sup> to dismantle institutional components of the post-war settlement and initiate policies which would foster market discipline and competition throughout all sectors of society: the deregulation of state control over major industries, the progressive emasculation of organized labour, corporate tax reduction, increased global capital flow and the intensification of interlocality competition.

These economic changes impacted greatly on the urban landscapes of North America and Western Europe which underwent dramatic transformation. The massive deindustrialization of the 1970's saw the flight to the suburbs amongst the highest earners, resulting in a concentration of impoverished residents in the inner areas. Parallel to this, cities were faced with the decline of national fiscal support and

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<sup>3</sup> The use of the verb 'forced' does not mean that this study is drawing upon discourses of inevitability and immutability of neo-liberalism and globalization as critiqued, for example, by Pierre Bourdieu (1998).

policies based upon wealth distribution, fundamental to the Keynesian welfare consensus. These changes, in line with more general moves under neo-liberalism, saw the political regulation of cities undergoing a profound reconstruction: identified as the move from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). Harvey identifies urban managerialism as a combination of Keynesian economics and concomitant politics of redistribution, aimed at extending the provision of public services to local city populations, while he sees urban entrepreneurialism, drawing on neo-liberal theory, as being concerned with developing the competitive position of urban economies through the emancipation of private enterprise.

Similarly, neo-liberal thought had a profound impact on how cultural policy was conceived within the British policy sphere. Post-war British cultural policy had two distinct strands: the first of these drawing on an Arnoldian lineage was a policy towards the arts which was based in the most part on principles of patronage, where the state would intervene in the cultural field to protect valuable cultural products that could not survive in the market; the second relating to the 'mass media' and, therefore, the provision of 'mass' or 'popular' culture where the main concerns were press freedom and pluralism, defence of a national film industry, and the regulation and public service provision of broadcasting on grounds of spectrum scarcity. Such policies towards the 'mass media' were formulated on the basis of an analysis of economic activities, or industries, where regulation of the market was justified on various social grounds. The clear distinction between these various policy strands manifested itself in an equally clear demarcation in governmental departments: the Department of Trade and Industry dealt with the press, the Postmaster General and,

latterly, the Home Office regulated broadcasting, while the Arts Minister in conjunction with the Arts Council controlled arts policy.

This policy template resulted in two key institutions—the BBC and the Arts Council—being funded by the state yet operating with a high degree of autonomy (government was, theoretically, kept at arm's length). This paradigm was accepted as these institutions were seen as intermediary bodies between the state and civil society: Raymond Williams (1979 cited in McGuigan, 1996, p.58) argued that this structure avoided the pitfalls of direct government control and commercial sponsorship (Chapter Ten will clearly demonstrate the problems which Liverpool experienced in its plans for 2008 when cultural policy came directly under political control).

Although questioned theoretically this policy template continued until the early seventies, when there were challenges to this liberal cultural consensus from the political left in Britain. Much of the resistance focussed on the Arts Council's distribution of public money; the criticisms being that the organisation funded national institutions in London while 'virtually starving' community artists, political theatre groups and so forth of the resources they needed. Such challenges were made within the discourse of social access and equitable distribution of public funds where, under the rallying cry of social equity and justice, it was questioned why the less well off pay for the cultural pursuits of a minority of better off citizens (such debates are again in the mainstream in relation to both public funding of the BBC, while the Arts Council's very existence is now seen as being under threat).

These criticisms were matched by attacks from the Thatcherite right under the neo-liberal banner which was ideologically opposed to what they viewed as a form of latter day cultural Keynesianism in the form of publicly funded cultural intervention policies.<sup>4</sup> Right-wing think tanks, such as The Adam Smith Institute, forwarded the argument that public subsidy distorted the market in taste and that cultural choices were simply a matter of consumer preference and that the market, not the state, should be the arbiter of such choice. While state cultural institutions such as the BBC and Arts Council were far from 'socialist', they were seen to be under threat (they may have survived, however, due to the right's emphasis, not only on market freedom, but also on a strong national identity). Many attacks on institutions such as the BBC and the Arts Council from the New Right echoed those of longstanding critics from the radical left, if not in their political motivations and solutions, then certainly in their criticisms; while the left advocated social access, the right consumer sovereignty (the homology of left and right approaches to culture will be explored in more detail in later chapters of this study).

Initial economic instrumental justifications for arts funding were a response to these attacks and thus based on culture's putative economic benefits. This manifested itself in a new cultural discourse where 'subsidy' was replaced by 'investment' and the commitment of public resources to the cultural sphere were justified through job creation, tourism promotion, invisible earnings etc. - in a sense the instrumental cultural policies of the 1980's could plausibly be labelled "policies of survival" to which the British cultural sector had to turn in the face of reduced government spending and the erosion of the legitimacy of its traditional theoretical ground. This

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<sup>4</sup> The economist John Maynard Keynes not only played a key philosophical role in the establishment of the Arts Council but was chair of its antecedent the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts.

superseding of a liberal humanist patronage paradigm by an economic instrumentalist model resulted in discourses of 'grants' based on 'excellence' being replaced by those of 'investment' based on 'outputs' (Selwood 2001).

This heralded a new discourse that began to supersede that of social-democratic public funding and began to move towards the notion that culture/art (or 'creativity') was not only intrinsically 'good' but had important economic benefits too (initial economic justifications for funding the arts can be traced back to the mid seventies and the Arts Council document *Value for Money* [McGuigan, 1996, p.64]). Such economic arguments emerged in other public cultural policy documents, such as the November 1985 Arts Council document *A Great British Success Story*, subtitled '*An Invitation to the Nation to Invest in the Arts*'. This document marked a sea change in how cultural funding was theorized: the provocative subtitle where the verb 'invest' is used instead of 'subsidy'; cultural activities were referred to as 'the product'; the audiences as 'consumers'. A key researcher in justifying the funding of culture in economic terms was John Myerscough (1988) who was also the leading advocate of the economic successes of Glasgow's City of Culture year- see Chapter Four.

The economic justification for arts 'funding' increasingly drew upon a discourse of 'creativity'. This notion of creativity as an economic driver was first articulated in the Arts Council's *A Creative Future* document (Webber and Challans, 1993) where economic instrumentalist and liberal humanist thought were melded together (the 'create the future' title would be used by both the Labour Party [1997] and the Welsh Assembly Government [2002] in outlining their respective cultural policies). *A Creative Future* begins by questioning the conception of transcendental art, freed

from utilitarian constraints discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Kant and the Romantics, and in doing so attempts to reconfigure the relationship between the utilitarian and the aesthetic;

once the term [art] implied a skilful activity carried out according to firmly prescribed rules; in modern times it has come more often to be applied to a non-pragmatic product which is free from constraints as to its utility, but whose creator possesses extraordinary qualities. The notions are often mixed up, but great differences exist between cultures as to who is thought to be and who is thought not to be an artist..... the Palaeolithic cave painter probably thought that his or her images of bison would help the hunters. Today those images are experienced as the purest examples of non-utilitarian art. There survives in our day a romantic view of the artist as being necessarily in constant conflict with a constraining society.

(Webber and Challans, 1993, p.4)

The document then proceeds to outline a view of the arts informed by a 'cultural industries' perspective that links the cultural and the economic which was being formulated within the Comedia think tank, discussed in detail in Chapter Six (these are the unacknowledged 'writers' referred to in the text);

the "fine arts" tradition is still very strong especially in formal education but many feel that the time has come not just to admit one or two to the pantheon but to pull down its dainty barriers altogether and evolve a different and more social notion of the arts. We have retired the muses and instead we enjoy a democracy of the arts. "Who is going most to shape British culture of the 1980's?", asked two recent writers on the subject, "Next Shops, Virgin, W.H. Smith's, News International, Benetton, Channel Four, Saatchi&Saatchi, the Notting Hill Carnival and Virago or the Wigmore Hall, Arts Council, National Theatre, Tate Gallery and Royal Opera House? Most people know the answer and live it every day in the clothes they wear, the newspapers they read, the music they listen to and the television they watch.

(Webber and Challans, 1993, p.5)

While not abandoning the 'intrinsic' position (the document quotes Charles Darwin's lament that if he had his life to live over he would 'read some poetry and listen to some music once a week') the document does seek to justify support for the arts in clearly economic terms:

the arts are inescapably part of a material world with materialist values, and one of the most powerful (and just) defences of the arts is to argue the economic case for them. An opera house creates hundreds of jobs, brings in tourists and large sums of VAT. An internationally recognised orchestra raises the pride of a city. A best selling author helps to balance the payments. A successful rock group can be as beneficial to exports as a new model of car or a pharmaceutical product. Cultural industries can be critical in promoting regional regeneration, in restoring the life of cities, in creating skilled jobs in areas of unemployment and environmental decline.

(Webber and Challans, 1993, p.6)

This document thus introduces the tensions between intrinsic and economic instrumentalist justifications for cultural subsidy that would dominate cultural policy discourse over the following fifteen years (this tension is suggested within the authorial voice of the document where the economic instrumentalist argument as 'just' is added as a sotto voce aside): as will be illustrated in relation to New Labour cultural policy documents the tenor of the argument is often 'prove' the instrumental. 'believe' in the intrinsic.



### 3.3 Neo-liberalism, Culture and the City

Neoliberal thought thus challenged the basic principles of redistribution which underpinned a Keynesian grounded approach to government. Consequently urban strategies grounded in Keynesian-based policies, whereby government allocated resources to Urban Priority Areas based upon need, were anathema to such an ideology in that they were seen to foster and ingrain a culture of dependency which militated against cities becoming creative and entrepreneurial. This new approach to urban development – a part of the shift from local government to local governance - represented a clear ideological break from previous strategies which stressed social investment in the hope that economic activity would follow: Castells and Hall capture the thinking behind this when they claim that:

in the process of generating new growth, they compete with each other: but more often than not, such competition becomes a source of innovation, of efficiency, of collective effort to create a better place to live and a more effective place to do business.

(1994, p.7)

The first phase in this transition has been delineated by Oatley (1998) as the 'entrepreneurial' phase between 1979 and 1991, involving a greater emphasis on the role of the private sector in urban policy which manifested itself in the creation of business elites and growth coalitions and the privatisation of partnerships and business representation; the result of this move were property led initiatives in regeneration.<sup>5</sup> However, the economic slump of 1989-91 and the decrease in demand for property initiated a rethink in urban policy with the realisation that '[property] is

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<sup>5</sup> Although this study uses the adjective 'entrepreneurial' to describe policies adopted by Liverpool in relation to COC08, it is cognisant of the distinction made by Oatley (1998) and thus does not equate Liverpool's strategies directly with the policies of the 1980's.

no panacea for economic regeneration and is deficient as the main focus of urban policy' (Turok, 1992, p.376) with Oatley claiming the 'the poor performance of urban policy can be seen as a reflection of the poor performance of the government's attempt at economic management generally' (Oatley, 1998, p.28). According to Oatley (1998) this entrepreneurial phase was thus superseded by the 'competitive policies' of 1991-97 whereby the local state and community organisations were, to some extent, reintroduced within organisations established to bid for regeneration funds; in heralding these changes the then Minister of the Environment Michael Heseltine claimed that this would be a source of innovation and release the creative potential within British cities (Heseltine, 1991 quoted in Oatley, 1998 p.29). Within these new initiatives cities were encouraged/forced to compete with each other for money (Challenge Funds) which were awarded not on 'need' but on 'merit' (Oatley, 1998, p.11). According to Dicks (2003, p.74), this 'transformed the role of local government into place promoters, and institutionalized the role of the private sector in creating partnerships for the launching and delivery of bids'.

Within this paradigm cities attempted to attract investment, focussing on providing support for businesses, in particular start-up companies, often accompanied by property development which, in turn, evolved into the idea that places themselves, with cultural as well as economic resources, could be sold. Although these strategies aimed at the selling of a place to attract both visitors and investment through the traditional tools of promotion – literature, advertisements, videos and exhibitions- they were rather ad hoc and thus could not be said to follow a coherent or targeted strategy<sup>6</sup>. Such piecemeal initiatives were given an economic and political stimulus by

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<sup>6</sup> The selling of cities to attract both visitors and business was, of course, nothing new with British seaside resorts being at the forefront of such place promotion.

central government which, through the passing of the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act, forced local authorities to devise strategic corporate plans for their economic development<sup>7</sup>. This resulted in the British government developing bidding initiatives that would encourage cities to address the need to be globally competitive and attractive.

These changes precipitated a move towards the 'marketing' as opposed to the 'selling' of urban environments, which meant that cities began to focus on what their 'market' wanted rather than what they had to sell. This was more than a semantic shift as it formed the basis for the marketing of a certain type of culture that appealed to corporate investors or upmarket tourists that city planners were trying to attract. The upshot of this, as Briavel Holcomb points out, was that,

places are now commodities to be consumed and the role of the place marketer is to construct a new image of the place to replace either vague or negative images previously held by current or potential residents, investors and visitors.

(1993, p.133)

This move to marketing a city within neo-liberalism is in line with other linguistic moves within neo-liberal ideology, whereby the city is seen as an entity that actively constructs its own position - the 'reification' of the city (Harvey, 1989) - rather than being viewed as an agent of political-economic development (this will be discussed later in relation to the discourse of the 'Creative City' and in relation to New Labour's social inclusion policy, which reconstructs social disadvantage as being a personal

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<sup>7</sup> Oatley (1998) points out that the subsequent urban initiatives represent a further paradigm shift from the property based approach of the 1980's, whereby economic and social regeneration was justified in terms of neo-liberal 'trickle down' economics: he claims that this shift came as a result of the 1989 Act which itself was a response to the increasing effects of globalisation, where cities were forced to compete against one another to establish a place in the national and global hierarchy in a bid to attract outside investment.

deficit rather than in terms of structural inequality). A key element in this reconstruction/manufacturing of city image was seen to be its cultural resources which, prior to the move to entrepreneurialism, were viewed as peripheral to the economic activities of urban life.

### **3.4 Criticisms of Entrepreneurialism and Culture in Regeneration**

This paradigm of neo-liberal urban entrepreneurialism has been heavily criticised, especially by academics from the left. One aspect of regeneration strategies that is anathema to these critics is the institutionalisation of public-private partnership in the cultural regeneration of cities. Harvey (2002, p.458) argues that 'public-private partnerships' are entrepreneurial in that they are based upon speculation 'as opposed to rationally planned and co-ordinated development'. He further claims that within this paradigm the public sector takes the risk while the private sector takes the benefits (2002, p.458)- as Chapter Ten will discuss the mayor of Liverpool has lamented the fact that they are throwing the biggest party ever in the city and that it was time the private sector 'brought a bottle'. An essential element within this is the marketing of place which moves the focus of urban policy:

the new urban entrepreneurialism typically rests, then, on a public-private partnership focussing on investment and economic development with the speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory as its immediate (though by no means exclusive) political and economic goal.

(Harvey 2002, p.458)

Even the most progressive urban governments, according to Harvey, are unable to resist the forces of 'capitalist spatial development' through which competition results in the lowest common denominator of social responsibility and welfare provision within a competitively organised urban system. While the rhetoric of regeneration

schemes is based around partnerships- not only between local government and private business but also, especially within a cultural planning paradigm, local community organizations – it has been argued that this element of regeneration is, according to Dicks (2003, p.74), ‘often merely gestural’.

Those who promote the notion of urban cultural development justify cultural regeneration schemes, not only in terms of their economic impacts but also with regard to claims that culture can be utilised to create a more socially just, culturally enriched urban environment<sup>8</sup>. This aspect of ‘the regeneration game’, a central tenet in the social justification of cultural regeneration, seems to lack both a robust theoretical platform and sound empirical evidence. Many critics - most notably Harvey (2002) - have dismissed the cultural element of regeneration schemes as merely marketing speak, claiming that the projects are essentially economic and arguing that, in some cases, they actually militate against efforts at creating socially just, culturally enriching cities: in his caustic analysis of the regeneration of Baltimore Harvey contrasts the city’s successful image transformation based around culture with its continued economic problems and concludes, using the classic though increasingly hackneyed metaphor, ‘the circus succeeds even if the bread is lacking’ (Harvey, 1989 p.17).<sup>9</sup>

The movement away from modernist ideas of culture and economy as polar opposites to the notion that they share a mutually beneficial relationship has been a major feature of these contemporary urban cultural strategies; this relationship, rather than

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<sup>8</sup> The social rhetoric under consideration here differs from much of the social inclusion rhetoric of New Labour which will be discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>9</sup> In a witty reformulation of this metaphor in relation to ‘creative city’ discourse and urban bourgeoisification, Jamie Peck talks of ‘biscotti and circuses’ (2005, p.746).

being an organic union could be seen more as a shotgun wedding. Andrew Pratt (2002) captures this concern when he questions whether the marriage between culture and regeneration is one 'made in heaven or hell'. Pratt's concerns are based around the role of culture within the regeneration scenario for which he outlines three separate functions;

Is it the regeneration of culture, in which there'll be a nice cultural output? Is it the culture of regeneration where there's an interesting process about that, or is it regeneration through culture, where culture is just an instrument to produce some economic output? I think that unfortunately, for a whole variety of reasons, it's normally the third we're dealing with, with a sprinkling of the other two and I think that's what we have to be a bit concerned with.

(Pratt, 2002, p.2)

Most criticisms cited here would agree with Pratt's analysis that many regeneration strategies can be seen to use culture simply as a marketing strategy or a veneer to gloss over or give a social cachet to economic projects. Culture in these projects is often presented as a social and economic panacea acting as all things to all people which raises its own problems: Pratt captures this when he states 'you can't be the sort of social palliative, you can't be the sort of economic regenerator and you can't produce the most astounding pieces of art all at once' (Pratt, 2002 p.5).

Pratt's concerns illustrate the inherent tension between planners who, for the most part, are interested in culture as a means towards achieving their goal of economic development and the practitioners of culture themselves, many of whose notions of the arts and the artist are rooted in modernist ideas of aesthetics and transcendence, the very antithesis of the structuralist outcomes that are the *raison d'être* of the marketers and planners. As will be discussed in the following chapter in relation to

Glasgow, a source of conflict within the move from selling to marketing of place in general are debates around the authenticity of the cultural identity that is being celebrated and marketed for that city. While the selling of cities as tourist destinations has a longstanding tradition (see, for example, Hall [2001] on the selling of British seaside towns or Hannigan [2003] for a perspective on the selling of European cities) more recent moves suggest that cities are being branded and marketed rather than simply being advertised and sold with the result that, rather than serving to celebrate, promote and sell a city's cultural resources, P R agencies are now commissioned to construct cultural images or myths of place which match the demands of a market. According to its advocates - an interviewee for this project, who heads one of Britain's major cities' marketing divisions, referred to his job as a 'shaper of place' - branding not only extends to the city but to the nation (Chapter Six will argue that discourses of creativity form part of New Labour's rebranding of Britain) where national identity can itself be considered as a brand.

As will be discussed in relation to Glasgow, this can result in considerable tensions over the 'ownership' of the city's cultural and historical legacy and accusations of silencing of the city's working class culture in favour of the promotion and celebration of a culture rooted in middle class cultural pursuits and aimed at economic and city centre focussed regeneration- Chapter Nine will illustrate how Liverpool deliberately promoted a discourse of local ownership to distance itself from accusations of their bid being a top down marketing exercise. Within a marketing discourse a city (indeed a country) does not have an 'identity' but is in fact a 'brand' to be 'shaped': one of the key aspects to successfully promoting that brand is, according to Hankinson (2004, p.117) 'building relationships with key community

stakeholders which can be crucial to the success of the core brand'. Gilmore (2002, p.290) gives a more detailed account of how fostering local loyalty to a brand is essential to the new brand's success:

in the building of commercial brands, a brand manager seeks to develop loyalty amongst its customers (internal and external) and in countries this is even greater due to issues of national identity... loyalty to this brand can be achieved by using a migration of hearts and minds of local people: moving people from being uninformed sceptics (who have become disillusioned with the way an area is being managed and how the brand is being developed) to being informed believers.

From this it is obvious that using culture to promote, 'brand' and develop a city has contentious social as well as economic outcomes. The most obvious site for contention is between local communities whose culture is supposedly being celebrated and developers and planners who only wish to promote the aspects of local culture that fit in with their marketing strategy. This deliberate manipulation of culture to maximise a city's appeal to the relatively well-off and well-educated workforces of high-technology industry, 'up-market' tourists and to the organisers of conferences, results in conflict between what is sanctioned and legitimated as the local, 'authentic' culture of the city. This contested nature of culture is thus absent from the plans devised by the place marketers who promote culture as a social emollient and a means of achieving social consensus. This is observed by Kearns and Philo (1993, p.4);

the pivotal role that culture has come to perform for capital is in the selling of places, principally as a resource for economic gain (through attracting inward investment) but also as a device for engineering social consensus (although the emotive quality of culture can often shatter consensus politics).



The most trenchant of cultural regeneration critiques are based on the excesses of US inspired development where private finance increasingly impinged on what was formerly public space, militating against the social inclusivity that forms the rhetorical cornerstone of the cultural regeneration agenda<sup>10</sup>. While this study questions the direct application of some of these criticisms in a British context and thus adopts what might be termed a nuanced application of these arguments, it does agree with the general thrust that development under the auspices of culture can lead to the privatisation of public space. Those writers who adopt a more direct interpretation of works such as Harvey's do equate urban policies in Europe with those in the US and argue that cities are becoming increasingly privatised into acceptable zones of consumption, presenting a marketable 'culture' in an effort to stimulate consumption: McGuigan (1996, p.99) - in what could be read as a critique of the 'Creative Class' thesis discussed below - claims that 'such urban regeneration, in effect, articulates the interests and tastes of the postmodern professional and managerial class without solving the problems of a diminishing production base, growing disparities of wealth and opportunity, and the multiple forms of social exclusion.'

According to these critics, in conjunction with the gentrification of parts of the city, comes the 'fortress impulse', which has seen the installation of a network of surveillance cameras and private policing systems throughout the city to protect 'gentrified enclaves' (see, for example, Fyfe and Bannister [1998] for a general discussion or Coleman [2004] for a specific discussion of this increasing surveillance on the streets of Liverpool). According to Dicks these serve,

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<sup>10</sup> Some authors - such as Castells [1994] - argue that it is wrong to consider European policy in this manner since, in line with its social democratic politics, urban planning has generally displayed elements of social responsibility absent from US urban policies underpinned by a neo-liberal agenda celebrating consumerism and privatisation.

to banish certain visible groups, such as homeless people and groups of teenagers, who might commit little actual crime but do disturb the impression of public order, narrows and segregates the social and cultural life of the city.

(2003 p.84)

Moreover, Zukin (1989) claims that artists themselves have become a cultural means of framing space in that,

they confirm the city's claim of continued cultural hegemony, in contrast to the suburbs and exurbs. Their presence-in studios, lofts, and galleries - puts a neighbourhood on the road to gentrification.

(Zukin, 1989, p.11)

The problem outlined here by Zukin is that in the arts-led development scenario regeneration 'purifies' an area by driving up house prices and banishing the residential community; artists in this sense establish a bridgehead in enemy cultural territory. Miles (1997) provocatively claims that;

state gentrification 'clarifies' an area, substituting a simplified and constructed identity (or representation) for the muddle of ordinary use. This is a contemporary form of purification of parts of the city for bourgeois life which took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

(Miles 1997, p.107) <sup>11</sup>

Miles supports the view that development has a bad reputation and that art and architecture address this by 'providing "beauty" (conventionally associated with truth and goodness), whilst the commissioning of art through intermediaries-'art experts'-replicates that sense of a 'they' who remotely determine the form of a city' (1997, p.107).

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<sup>11</sup> This is taking place in the borough of Hackney where local residents are protesting over the regeneration of Broadway market and the forced closure of local shops (see Kunzru, 2005, 2006).

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has traced how under neo-liberalism British urban policy moved to an urban entrepreneurial model and how within this culture shifted from being a peripheral to a central policy concern. It highlighted how this was accompanied by cities marketing rather than selling places, and how cultural resources are seen as an essential tool within the marketing of the city. However, this raises certain questions regarding the function of culture: does it have a social function other than job creation and economic development; if it does have a social function what is it and how is this articulated; does culture simply offer a marketing opportunity, providing a gloss or aesthetic veneer for economic projects; what are the distributional outcomes of culture led regeneration scenario; what type of culture is marketed and who decides this; what impacts does this have on expressions of culture which are not marketable; what is the relationship between cultural led development and urban public space? These questions will now be explored through an analysis of Glasgow 1990, the first British winner of the City of Culture award in 1990, whose cultural strategy the chapter will argue was located firmly within the neo-liberal context outlined in this chapter.

## Chapter Four: Glasgow City of Culture 1990

*I remember being ashamed of my father  
when he whispered the words out loud  
reading the newspaper.  
"Don't you find  
the use of phonetic urban dialect  
rather constrictive?"  
asks a member of the audience.  
The poetry reading is over.  
I will go home to my children.*

Fathers and Sons by Tom Leonard (1985)

### 4.1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

It was within the political and ideological context of neo-liberalism that the Scottish city of Glasgow bid to become the first British winner of the City of Culture award.

This chapter will illustrate how the city used the accolade as a catalyst for urban rebranding and regeneration. Using both primary and secondary sources the chapter will trace not only the controversies which emerged within the Glasgow year, but the emergence of the 'Glasgow success narrative', which this study will argue offered an implicit, parallel narrative within the competition for and the awarding of the COC08 accolade to Liverpool.

### 4.2 Glasgow's Bid for 1990

Under the City of Culture guidelines - these are discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven - the UK was designated as the holder of the 1990 award and, under the EU directive, it was the prerogative of the UK government to decide which city should go forward. Unlike the other previous holders, and in line with the urban entrepreneurial drive associated with the then ruling Conservative Party, the UK government initiated an inter-urban competition for the 1990 accolade. The competition was overseen by

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter draws on empirical work carried out using primary data. The methodological rationale for this is discussed in Chapter Five.

the Department of Arts and Recreation, which released its criteria to the various competing cities in March 1985 (Glasgow District Council, 1985a p.115). These criteria matched those outlined by the EC, which viewed the City of Culture as essentially an arts festival which would facilitate cultural understanding across the European Union; 'arts activities' were seen as 'painting, craft, sculpture' while 'cultural events' are viewed as 'dance, theatre and music':

- The Ministers of Culture of the European Community recently agreed that a 'European City of Culture' should be nominated annually, as a means of encouraging 'awareness of the cultural links within the Community'. The concept is seen as celebrating the contribution made to European culture by a particular region or city, and, at the same time, acknowledging the Community's common cultural heritage.
- The intention is that the designated city would be responsible for a programme of art exhibitions (painting, crafts, sculpture and so on) and other cultural events such as dance, theatre and music. The scope of these activities is not in any way pre-determined: they can range from popular culture to specialised events; and could involve artists, directors, performers and others.
- Our view is that the occasion should primarily be an opportunity for the host city or region to display its own culture. But it may be that our partners in the Community would offer to supplement this indigenous celebration with examples of their own countries' culture, to give the festival a more European flavour; indeed there will be an important British presence at the Athens festivities later this year.

(Glasgow District Council, 1985a p.221)

In line with the prevailing belief in urban entrepreneurialism, the British government emphasised the fact that the year would have to be self financing (though, as in 2008, the government did make a small grant to the winning city):

In the preparatory discussions on this European project we have emphasised our view that responsibility for the organisation and for raising the necessary finance should lie with the nominated City of Culture: the Government do not envisage providing any additional funding for this purpose. We would expect that the prestige of the European City of Culture would attract a considerable influx of tourists and artistic performers, which would provide a boost to the local economy. There would also be increased opportunity for business sponsorship. Overall, however, we do not envisage a cultural festival of this nature being created from scratch: it would obviously be sensible to build on existing activities and facilities, and this of course may affect the choice of year.

(Glasgow District Council 1985b, p.224)

In all, four British cities submitted entries to Arts and Recreation Committee: Bristol, Swansea, Birmingham and the eventual winners, Glasgow (both Bristol and Birmingham would also make the shortlist for the 2008 award). The first reference to the European City of Culture within Glasgow Council was March 1984 where 'a letter was submitted from the Secretary to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities indicating (a) that the Ministers of the European Economic Community had agreed that a European City be nominated annually as a means of encouraging awareness of cultural links within the community and (b) that C.O.S.L.A has nominated Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow as candidates from Scotland'. A submission for the nomination was passed to go forward on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1984 with acceptance of the nomination noted on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1986. Glasgow's nomination for

Scotland was accepted later that year, with a steering group established on the 15 January 1987 (Glasgow Council 1985c, pp.224 and 1026).

The steering group set up to consider the bid for 1990 saw the application as an extension of previous marketing and rebranding initiatives within the city. Although the approach taken by Glasgow to the European City of Culture has been lauded as the template for successful urban cultural regeneration, its strategy was not the result of some visionary policy making, but a series of marketing exercises born out of the perceived need to reposition the city in the service economy due to the collapse of its traditional industrial base. In its industrial heyday Glasgow was heralded as the second city of the empire, but its industry was over-reliant on steel and ship building in particular. During this period of relative prosperity there was little investment in new technologies and when strong competition from abroad emerged for its markets, the city's manufacturing base fell into a precipitous and irreversible decline: between 1971 and 1983 77,597 manufacturing jobs and 18,622 service sector jobs were lost (Glasgow City Council, 1985a). To combat this economic downturn and subsequent urban blight, Glasgow had to attract alternative capital investment; this, however, was hampered by the fact that the social impacts of this economic upheaval had left the city with a negative image that militated against attracting investment. The negative image of the city was being addressed by a particularly pro-active and controversial figure within the city, its head of Public Relations, Harry Diamond - Diamond's sometimes fraught relationship with various councillors and allegiances he formed with a young Labour councillor, later to be Lord Provost, Michael Kelly and Council leader Pat Lally have many resonances with the fractious relationships that developed within Liverpool's Council's PR team in the run up to 2008. Despite opposition from

the left within the city, Glasgow's ruling Labour Party embraced the new spirit of urban entrepreneurialism and made the decision that if it was to develop a successful service based economy, it was imperative that it tackled residual negative images of poverty, sectarianism, crime and violence<sup>2</sup>. In an attempt to counter this prevailing image, Glasgow Action, an enterprise organisation of business and council leaders, was formed with the explicit remit of marketing and branding the city. Glasgow Action formed the basis of the partnership model within the city which, as explained below, was paramount in it receiving the 1990 designation from the Department of Arts and Recreation.

As a result of this strategy a series of branding initiatives were undertaken which included: the founding of a geographically specific Greater Glasgow Tourist Board; the opening of the Burrell Collection; the opening of the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (part of a wider attempt to establish the city as a conference destination); the hosting of the 1988 UK Garden Festival; and the launch of the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign. The reworking of the city's image was accompanied by a germinal revival of the city centre that seemed to have a cultural inflection. This gradual, though perceptible, 'renaissance' in city centre living was accompanied by a flourishing of artistic activity, most especially in the field of theatre. Such embryonic cultural activity attracted the attention of some middle class homeowners, allowing for the emergence of a modest, though definable cultural area known as the Merchant City.

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<sup>2</sup> These residual images persist. An interviewee for this study involved in the marketing of Liverpool told of the recent experiences of a colleague who performs the same job for Glasgow. When celebrating Glasgow as a city of love because of the contentious and some would say spurious claim that it housed the bones of St. Valentine, the marketing officer was incensed when his efforts were undone when the interviewer warned him not to give out any 'Glasgow kisses' (British slang for a head butt).



In 1983 the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign- modelled on 'I Love New York' in the eponymous city- became the ubiquitous symbol of Glasgow, emphasising the city's new 'cultural industries'. In the 1980's it was often cited that far more people worked in the arts in Glasgow than were involved in building ships on the Clyde - the 'cultural industries' approach to regeneration which emerged in left councils in Britain will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

This campaign was recognised within Glasgow's City of Culture bid as the 1990 campaign's precursor:

the Glasgow's Miles Better Campaign', based on the successful "I Love New York" model, was launched in June 1983. The campaign took as a starting point the conviction that the prevailing image of Glasgow was outdated, inaccurate and unfair and set out to demonstrate that there had been very real and remarkable changes in the city in recent years and to promote the positive and good factors of a much improved city. Successive phases of the campaign have been aimed at the people of Glasgow themselves, at the Southeast of England (where research indicated that Glasgow's Image was at its worst), at decision takers and influencers at the UK level, and at a wider European audience. To date, around £700,000 has been spent on the campaign, around half of which has been generated through donations from commerce and industry.

(Glasgow District Council, 1986a p.1)

The late 1980's saw this strategy evolve as the Council became convinced that the city's cultural resources were key to its tourist development, and that tourist expenditure in itself could generate a substantial amount of service sector employment - this was on the basis of a report by John Myerscough, one of the leading proponents of arts' economic benefits and the urban cultural regeneration

paradigm. Strategies within the City Council thus began to emphasise the role of culture as a catalyst for regeneration:

You can't stand still; you can't rely on the achievements of the past, no matter how impressive these may have been.....Glasgow's days as a great industrial city are over. Sad as this may seem, its consequences are clear. Glasgow's post-industrial future will stem in large part from its civic and cultural heritage..... With Glasgow perceived as a great city of culture, we can expect arts related tourism to grow-and with that comes jobs.

(Glasgow 1990 Festivals Office)

Marketing the city's cultural resources thus became a key objective in Glasgow's regeneration strategy and, after appointing the advertising agents Saatchi and Saatchi, Glasgow was already being marketed as 'European Capital of Culture' when the decision was made to pitch for the European City of Culture award (there was considerable opposition to the appointment of Saatchi and Saatchi within the council [Glasgow District Council, 1988]). The decision to go forward for the City of Culture accolade was seen as a further means to generate and develop a new image for the city and, thus, the marketing and rebranding of Glasgow was very much to the fore of the bid put forward for the 1990 nomination:

The European City of Culture will have an enormously beneficial effect on the city in continuing the momentum of the regeneration process and by providing the opportunity, perhaps once and for all, of confirming the new image of Glasgow.

(Glasgow City Council, 1986 a, p.6)

This image transformation was viewed as fundamental to repositioning the city as a service rather than an industrial economy. The distancing of the city from industrialism can be seen by a close analysis of one of the opening sentences within the Glasgow bid document which seeks to celebrate the 'magnificent Victorian city'

while its 'industrial history' (some would later argue working class history) is associated with 'grime', which camouflaged its 'traditional beauty'. While it could be argued that 'the grime' the document speaks of may be the literal cleaning of buildings, the use of the phrasal verb 'cast off' suggests that it is a metaphorical grime or a stigma of industrialism that the city sought to rid itself of - there is obviously no recognition of the political economy of industrialism, and that its 'Victorian splendour' was the direct result of industrialism ;

today Glasgow has cast off the grime of its past industrial history. Its traditional beauty has been restored to reveal the most magnificent Victorian city in Europe..... massive investment by the public and private sectors has produced a tourism infrastructure second to none.

(Glasgow District Council 1988, p.1024)

The City of Culture, according to the bid document, would provide Glasgow with an opportunity to position itself as a culturally vibrant, service orientated, post-industrial city. Thus Glasgow's interpretation of the year was consistent with the government's (and EC's) that it was, primarily, an arts festival celebrating a European arts tradition illustrated by its listing of the city's Cultural resources: 'Glasgow is the home of Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, the Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Theatre Company, the Citizens' Theatre and the Scottish Early Music Consort', each of which supplying a letter supporting the bid. The one exception to the traditional arts establishment within this list was the Citizen's Theatre and within their letter of support was a harbinger of some of the subsequent cultural and class politics that were to emerge during Glasgow's year: 'we think it is vital that the distinctive and original

identity of Glasgow as represented by organisations such as the Citizens' is given full justice in any submission' (Glasgow District Council, 1986a, p.8).

In line with Glasgow City Council's adoption of the entrepreneurial paradigm encouraged by central government, the bid for 1990 - as with those for 2008 - promoted the fostering of public/private partnerships within the city. Consequently, within the bid Glasgow Council was keen to answer the government's questions on self financing, and consistently throughout the document celebrated the adoption of a model of partnership within the city. While the document recognised funding culture under the patronage model 'the Council's Arts and Culture budget runs at about £18million', within the spirit of urban entrepreneurialism it sought to emphasise economic arguments around cultural/artistic funding: 'the council has recently agreed, with other public agencies in Glasgow, to contribute towards a study by the Policy Studies Institute into the Economic Importance of the Arts.' (Glasgow District Council, 1986a, p.10).

Within this initial submission virtually no mention was made, or consideration given to impacts of the award on local people. In the document's summary, the aims of the city are listed in a hierarchical order with image building, creating a marketing platform and development of partnership all listed before the single aim focussed on the local population, rooted in a patronage model of artistic funding, that of 'increasing awareness in the arts':

- Maintain momentum already generated by image building initiatives which played a key role in promoting the City's revitalised character

- To provide a corporate marketing platform for the City's vast range of cultural, historical and artistic institutions
- Utilise and build upon the organisational experience and co-operative effort which have been developed in Glasgow
- Stimulate increased awareness and participation in the arts by Glaswegians, and act as a launching pad for new cultural developments and events which could become permanent features of Glasgow

(Glasgow District Council, 1986a, p.11)

Following a visit from the Office of Arts and Libraries on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1986 to discuss the city's bid a supplementary submission was made to the Office of Arts and Libraries. It is within this document that the first overt reference to regeneration is made (though it is implicit in the writing on the marketing campaign):

the process by which cultural facilities and cultural investment have contributed to the regeneration of Glasgow has relevance for the European City of Culture concept, and it is intended that this aspect of the city's regeneration will play an important part in the "post industrial city" theme.

(Glasgow District Council, 1986b, p.3)

This regeneration strategy is located within the development of service sector employment within the city through tourism, and through Glasgow being promoted as a major Conference Centre destination (though the claim to hosting the Baptist International Youth Congress is far from convincing) and the physical regeneration of the city centre; 'the city centre is re-emerging as a place in which to live and work, and this in itself will be of considerable benefit to European City of Culture in providing a vibrant and alive setting for the event' (p.8). This regeneration strategy

according to the city's supplementary submission would be based on the marketing and image transformation offered by the City of Culture designation:

we believe that there will be a widespread view that European City of Culture should provide tangible benefits for the host city. As a result of the groundwork laid by the city's regeneration programme, and the boost which will be given to the image building campaign by the National Garden Festival, Glasgow will be in a unique position in 1990 to capitalise on European City of Culture. European City of Culture will have an enormously beneficial effect on the city in continuing the momentum of the regeneration process and by providing the opportunity, perhaps once and for all, of confirming the new image of Glasgow. We trust then that the image issue will be viewed as a positive factor in the decision equation in favour of Glasgow's nomination for European City of Culture.

(Glasgow District Council 1986b, p.4)

This marketing thrust of the submission is evident in Appendix 2 (a). This section reflects upon the 'Glasgow's Miles Better Campaign' and in indictment of the social justice implications of the Glasgow approach, lists not the purported positive social effects of regeneration, but the 'perception' of such 'perceived negatives' amongst potential visitors and investors:

for example a 13% increase has occurred in terms of culture; a 22% increase in environmental terms; a 9% increase in terms of shopping facilities and 16% increase in terms of Glasgow being a pleasant place to work in. What is even more encouraging are the advances made against perceived negatives, i.e. violence, drunkenness and urban deprivation. Glasgow is now perceived as having less violence, an 11% decrease, a 9% decrease regarding poor housing and an 8% drop regarding views on drunkenness.

Also included within the appendix are two newspaper articles that have relevance to the 2008 award. The first of these is a *Sunday Times* article from 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1984 'The Repackaging of Glasgow' (Appendix 2 [b]) which not only traces the physical 'regeneration' of the city but hints at discourses around post-industrial transformation which will later come to predominate in the 2008 scheme:

....in Glasgow, the Victorian boom town to cap them all, it can look like a revolution in social and civic behaviour. Many Glaswegians now see their city differently. Optimists among them say that Glasgow could become Britain's first major post-industrial success.

The second article, listed as Appendix 2(c), is taken from *The Economist*, December 1985, and is entitled 'A Scots Lesson for Liverpool'. This article celebrates the entrepreneurial paradigm adopted by Glasgow while, at the same time, denigrating the oppositional stance taken by Liverpool Council at the time (characterised as 'two cheery letter to Brezhnev fingers'):

Two great cities.....What makes the difference between Glasgow and Liverpool?....One city works, the other does not. Instead of collapsing, Glasgow is becoming - as few people imagined five years ago - a place to live and work in. And telling everyone loudly, about it. While Liverpool has reacted to a harsh world by putting two cheery letter to Brezhnev fingers up at it, Glasgow has preferred to get the world on its side.

(*The Economist*, December 1985, p.25 cited in Glasgow District Council, 1986b)

Somewhat ironically, when Liverpool eventually won the award for 2008 (as discussed in detail in later chapters) one of the reasons cited was its strong civic administration which had adopted an entrepreneurial approach to regeneration within the city.

### 4.3 The Decision for Glasgow and Plans for 1990

The designation of Glasgow as European City of Culture 1990 was made on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1986 by Richard Luce, the Arts Minister. When reviewing his decision Luce reiterated the criteria his department set when initiating the bidding process: international prestige, diverse cultural life and, arguably most important of all, financial independence:

Earlier this year, following consultations with the local authority associations, I invited submissions from cities in the United Kingdom. I also made it clear that cities would be expected to meet three main criteria in putting forward bids: appropriate international prestige, and a willingness to project the city in European terms; a developing and diverse cultural life and the ability to host a suitably high profile programme of cultural events (including the provision of adequate services and accommodation); and the financial commitment to carry this out without calling on extra resources from central government. I took the view that, in addition, the city chosen should be a forward-looking one, which related to the Europe of the present and the future as well as of the past.

(Luce, 1986)

According to Luce what set Glasgow apart from the other contestants was not only its cultural heritage, but its strong partnership model and civic structure that convinced the Department that the city exemplified the urban entrepreneurial model it was promoting, and would thus be able to host the year without needing additional financial support from central government that was anathema to its neo-liberal politics (these justifications were very similar to those given for Liverpool winning its award as will be discussed in Chapter Nine):

It showed a determination to succeed, an impressive variety of proposals, and convincing evidence of the ability to fund them. I have therefore decided to nominate Glasgow as the European City of Culture for 1990.



.....I am convinced that the city will mount and finance a programme which will do credit to the United Kingdom, and demonstrate to Europe some of the most positive aspects of the arts in Britain today.

..... Glasgow has the ability to present a programme of events attractive to Europe from its own resources, supplemented by sponsorship; the capacity to host those events; and the strong commitment of Glasgow District Council, the business consortium 'Glasgow Action', local arts organisations, the Scottish Development Agency, the local hoteliers association, the Greater Glasgow Tourist Board and the Scottish TUC.

(Luce, 1986)

The regeneration discourse and the city's move to a post- industrial economy that was introduced by Glasgow in the supplement to its submission was cited by the government as another key reason for its winning the nomination:

Glasgow to my mind offered an additional lesson in the way that it has rejuvenated itself and used the arts as a very important aspect of this development. There are many people who still do not realise the scale of the change that has taken place.....Glasgow is a city with a proud past associated with its great historic industries of shipbuilding and engineering. Now it is looking not only to the past but also, with confidence, to the future.'  
 ....'Glasgow-unique among those selected- will be in the proud position of demonstrating how the arts can invigorate a city under industrial change.

(Luce, 1986)

Following its nomination and in line with the thinking within its bid, Glasgow City Council placed great emphasis on how the event would be marketed with the City Council drawing up a shortlist of agencies to pitch for the brief of marketing the City of Culture: Struthers Advertising, Ogilvy and Mather and the eventual winners, Saatchi and Saatchi. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There was some controversy in the award going to a London based rather than either of the Glasgow based firms (this is hinted at by a letter from Hamish McPherson, Managing Director of Ogilvy&Maher to Glasgow City Council Town Clerk which stated '*as you say we were certainly well aware of this decision!... We were obviously very disappointed not to have been successful, but it was particularly upsetting for the whole team when a month*

The Saatchi and Saatchi pitch that convinced the council stressed the 1990 campaign as an extension of the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign- it outlined the target audience of the marketing campaign as 'yuppies', 'backpackers' and 'arts consumers' within Glasgow, concluding with two proposed strap lines: 'we need Glasnost for Glasgow' and the chosen and highly contentious line 'there's a lot Glasgowing on in 1990' (considering the opposition to the chosen strapline the overtly political message in the former line would surely have infuriated the left opposition in the city even further). In the press release that accompanied the announcement of the appointment of Saatchi&Saatchi, Pat Lally, the Council Leader, claimed that 'we must grasp this chance to sell Glasgow as an international metropolis in our efforts to create new employment opportunities in tourist related industries as well as high-technology, financial services and manufacturing' with what was seen locally as the somewhat ironic assertion, given that he had just awarded the brief to a London based company, that 'during the period of the campaign we will insist that the maximum possible efforts are made to create work for local businesses in all kinds of related work, including design, printing, photography, advertising and publicity'.

(Lally, 1986)

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*had passed since the announcement without any formal notification or thanks* - the Press Statement was made on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1989 (letter 314, Box 2 1989 Glasgow District Committee Papers).

#### 4.4 Glasgow 1990: Critics and Controversies

*1990 was a year when an intellectually bankrupt and brutally undemocratic administration projected its mediocre image onto the city and ordered us to adore it.*

Michael Donnelly

*Marketing does not suddenly make Glasgow the cultural capital of Europe. In itself it is an interesting city, but it would be better if it would refrain from promoting itself with all that rubbish you are obliged to put out when you are selected to be European Capital of Culture. It costs money and helps nobody'.*

Andreas Wiesand (director of the Institute of Cultural Research in Bonn)

*Lend us ten pence for a cappuccino* Rab. C. Nesbitt

When a Glasgow tramp in BBC Scotland's comedy Rab C. Nesbitt asked for 'ten pence for a cappuccino', he was not only satirising what was seen by many as the bourgeoisification of the city but also highlighting the cultural controversy and mixed discourses that emerged from Glasgow's year as City of Culture. Glasgow has consistently been trumpeted as the template for cultural regeneration (for example see Bianchini & Parkinson 1993; Sayer 1992), and, consequently, its perceived success has formed many of the reference points for the 2008 bidding process. This unquestioning celebration and subsequent 'discourses of success' have, however, been challenged of late with the realization that Glasgow has been much talked about but little researched (Garcia, 2004 p.105).

As has been discussed, the thrust of the bid for the award was very much towards cultural tourism and aimed at promoting Glasgow to international markets. Thus the arts were used as a strand of economic planning and as a means of city promotion that might, in the long term, bring inward investment from international business. This led to criticism that the event-based programme failed to relate to the people of Glasgow themselves and their working class cultural heritage. Leading the charge against this

were the playwright John McGrath and novelist James Kelman<sup>4</sup>. While speaking on a Radio 3 debate McGrath claimed that 'the value of working class culture revolves around culture for culture's sake, while the function of the City of Culture strain is 'primarily economic' (cited in Khan, 2003, p.13) (McGrath was at the forefront of cultural politics with his oppositional 7:84 Theatre Company which was in the end closed due to the withdrawal of Arts Council funding). Boyle and Hughes (1991) point out that McGrath's opposition to the City of Culture was rooted in his belief that it was little more than an economic tool and public relations exercise, lacking any cultural substance and attempting to erase the city's working class culture.

One of the main criticisms of Glasgow's year was that it focussed on grand events that alienated local working class communities. While this criticism should be tempered somewhat by the smaller events programme that took place throughout the year, it does highlight the contested nature of culture within such schemes. This is endorsed by Beatrice Garcia and her analysis of Barcelona where she claims that the city's dependence on big events has led to 'an emphasis on style over substance, which hides an inability to tackle the day-to-day challenges of urban life' and cites critics such as community representatives, non-governmental associations as well as academics 'who question whether great events can truly benefit the local community' (Garcia, 2002 p.8). Garcia argues that one of the failures of Glasgow was its 'excessive focus on immediate needs such as attracting media and visitor's attention

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<sup>4</sup> Kelman himself was later to become embroiled in a culture /class battle when his controversial award of the Booker prize enraged much of the traditional literary world most especially because of his provocative acceptance speech when he declared 'my language and my culture have a right to exist.' Kelman elaborated on this when he argued that his statement 'was not an argument in favour of the local at all costs, an acceptance of the mediocre just because it happens to be a home-grown product. It is simply to say that the existence of my culture is a fact and why should that be denied? It's an argument not for the supremacy of my culture, just for its validity, and by extension, the validity of any culture. There is no such thing as an 'invalid' culture, just as there is no such thing as an 'inferior' or 'superior' culture. What else is a culture but a set of ideas, beliefs, and traditions held by any given community of people: a set of infinite extension, shifting and changing. Cultures will function in the same way as languages, not to mention the people who use them: unless dead they live.' (Kelman, 1997)

via spectacular shows at the expense of the less visible but deeper-rooted needs of the local community' (2002, p.9). In her research on the media perceptions of Glasgow before and after 1990 she raises the concern of social exclusion and the confusion in the city as to who the City of Culture year was for: this fundamental problem is outlined when she states;

Glasgow 1990 contained what could be seen as a paradox, for the official formulation of the Year of Culture was a celebration designed to present the best of Glasgow to the world and the best of the world to Glasgow. This comfortable homily conceals the significant ideological and political implications balanced within this ambition. As an event profiling international artists and companies, the Year of Culture could be accused of elitism, top-down organisation and of having nothing to do with the culture or the people of Glasgow. Alternatively, this could be seen as Glasgow successfully demonstrating its ability to host world-class events. On the other hand, concentration on local (or even Scottish) culture could potentially be labelled parochial, inward-looking and not matching the new image of Glasgow as a first rank European city.

(2002, p.5)

The conviction that the organisation of Glasgow was 'top down' (one that Liverpool sought to avoid by promoting a 'people's bid' narrative) was certainly held by Kelman, McGrath and the confederation of left leaning artists and writers who joined together under the banner Workers' City. The main concern of these protestors was that the scheme was more to do with the interests of capital and politics than culture, and that in their attempt to present the city in a positive light, authentic working class culture was being 'eroded'. They also argued that the purported economic benefits would bypass the average Glaswegian and that the Labour Council was involved in an ideological sell out by forming partnerships with private business and industry: 'the

great year of culture has more to do with power politics than culture' (McLay, 1990 p.87). Worker's City counterposed the slogan 'There's a lot Glasgowing on in 1990' with 'there's a lot of con going on in 1990' to display their opposition to what they believed to be the ersatz culture being presented as part of the year (Boyle and Hughes, 1992). One of the focuses of their concern was that 'elitist' cultural events were being imported and imposed upon the city at the expense of working class cultural expression, and that those who highlighted the heritage of class conflict in the city were ostracised or, according to them, in the case of Elspeth King, victimised. The Elspeth King affair was one of the major controversies of 1990 which saw King, a social historian and curator of the People's Palace museum in the city, being overlooked for the post of Keeper of all the city's museums for which she had been widely tipped and seemed the most likely candidate. This precipitated a wave of criticism captured by the then assistant curator Michael Donnelly (who himself was fired one week later) who wrote in the local newspaper:

'the daily victimisation of Elspeth King as an obscene obligata to Glasgow's year as European Capital of Culture has finally lifted the lid on a labour administration which, under the leadership of Pat Lally...has shown a steady abandonment of its historic commitment to socialism....and wish to bury facts of the past which have become inconvenient for its new, sanitised, marketable image of the city.....this is one of the dirtiest and most immoral witch hunts since the days of McCarthy'

(Glasgow Herald, 29 August 1990, quoted in Boyle and Hughes, 1992, p.74)

The affair sparked a wave of protest evidenced by the 500 letters received by the *Glasgow Herald* newspaper and the issue being raised in the House of Commons. Worker's City also criticised the economic arguments claiming that, on the whole, the working classes of the city would be relatively unaffected, while the 'haves' of

Merchant City 'will see their pockets lined'. A familiar argument arose on the uses of public money - and one that will undoubtedly surface in Liverpool when the extent of public spending in relation to COC08 is revealed - with Kelman claiming that 'as much as 10 per cent of the general services' budget has been "milked" from every council department in Glasgow to pay for the 'cultural celebration' (Kelman, 1992, p.53). These criticisms, however, are in direct contradiction of statistics offered by supporters of the Capital of Culture year who claimed it as both an economic and cultural success. Myerscough (1993, p.432) claims that;

the year delivered a major boost to Glasgow's cultural system. The much expanded tide of activity (eg. theatre/concert performances 32% more than in 1989) neither engulfed nor harmed existing institutions. The public responded with a 40% jump in attendance at theatres, halls, museums and galleries, rising from 4.7 million in 1989 to 6.6 million in 1990.

The battle over the cultural ownership of 1990 exposes the wider ideological clashes that were taking place throughout the country at the time (*The Economist* would no doubt have denigrated Workers' City and placed them in the same 'Letter to Brezhnev' box as Liverpool Council: Chapter Eight explains these ideological battles on Merseyside). These battles continue to this day with Farquhar McLay attacking contemporary Glasgow which has become, according to him, 'a happy-land of yuppiedom and grotesquerie where the young, upwardly-mobile middle class with fat salaries and expensive tastes are to be the centrepieces and soul....the wine bar economy is all we've got and it's flourishing' (Hetherington, 2004). The intensity of these clashes surprised some of the main protagonists with James Kelman claiming that 'By drawing attention to certain awkward realities we encountered a quite remarkable venom' (Kelman, 1992, p.1) and Mooney (2004, p.330) asserting that;

'the venom that Kelman refers to has hardly dissipated. At a seminar on Glasgow's 'Changing International Appeal' at the end of January 2004, it was not surprising to hear one of the keynote speakers referring to Workers' City as 'self-appointed representatives of Glasgow people, Stalinists who argued that ordinary Glasgow folk were not for 1990. But they were wrong.'

Although the artists and politicians involved in the Workers' City movement did not have a popular mandate, they did represent an ideological tradition within Glasgow that opposed the entrepreneurial approach to regeneration embraced within the city—an ideological resistance that would manifest itself nearly two decades later on Merseyside rather than Clydeside.

#### **4.5 The Legacy of Glasgow 1990**

Within research around the European City/Capital of Culture it seems accepted that Glasgow's designation marked a turning point where cities moved from a paternalistic/arts paradigm to the economist/regeneration/culture strategy often identified as the 'Glasgow model'. Garcia (2005) recognises that Glasgow's innovative approach in many ways represented such a watershed, in that the city was the first to gather funds from both the public and private sectors, thus understanding the potential of the ECOC as a catalyst for urban regeneration. The *real* success of Glasgow, however, (and what this study argues is the *real* aim of Liverpool) was in meeting its marketing and branding objectives for the city as part of an industrial restructuring whereby the city moved to a service sector base.



This 'Glasgow success narrative' not only played a role in the official documents concerning the Capital of Culture (this will be discussed later) but was a prominent narrative in media reports leading up to Liverpool being granted the 2008 award which focussed on the city's image transformation and economic revival.<sup>5</sup>

The economic benefits of Glasgow's culture led approach have been much vaunted in regeneration literature: Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourism Board quotes an increase of 88% UK and 25% international visitors between 1991 and 1998 and a 200% growth in conference sales since 1997 (Garcia, 2003); Myerscough (1991) claimed that for a public sector investment of £33 million, Glasgow saw a net economic return of up to £14.1 million. Mooney (2004), however, rightly questions this narrative and especially the use of statistics based on Myerscough's study as evidence of the Glasgow success story and calls for 'proper reflection' which would include a consideration of the social impacts of Glasgow's year of culture, often ignored by quantitative research (a longitudinal study of this nature has recently been commissioned in relation to Liverpool). The changes in Glasgow's labour market in recent years seems to vindicate the strategy initiated in the 1980's in that it has moved from its industrial base to a situation where, in 2003, 82.5% of its workforce were working in services (Mooney 2004); while it has been claimed that Glasgow has been enjoying its most buoyant economy in over three decades (OECD, 2002, p.27 quoted in Mooney, 2004). However, such service sector employment can be short-term or cyclical and it remains true (as feared by the Workers' City and others) that many of the benefits are not reaching Glaswegians living in the city's periphery: the OECD

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<sup>5</sup> Garcia (2004) reviewed 350 articles debating the bidding competition between January 2002 and June 2003 and of these 90 per cent featured positive references to Glasgow: the emphasis on the city's image transformation featured in 31 per cent, followed by reference to the event's positive economic legacies in general in 19 per cent while 17 per cent focussed on the growing levels of tourist visits within Glasgow following its year as City of Culture.

noted that 50% of the jobs were taken by non-Glasgow residents (OECD, 2002 cited in Mooney 2004).<sup>6</sup>

Such uneven distributional outcomes in the labour market are matched by health statistics, with Glasgow having the highest premature death rate in the UK: the findings of a longitudinal study for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Mitchell, Shaw and Dorling 2002) which showed that Glaswegians had the shortest life expectancy in the UK were corroborated in a more recent study by Shaw, Smith and Dorling (2005) in which Glasgow again had the lowest life expectancy in the UK (72.9 years) with the life expectancy for a man in some areas being as low as 53.9 years. These findings were supported in a study by the National Health Service in Scotland which concluded that 'men living in Glasgow's poorest constituency, Shettleston, have a life expectancy of 63 years ten years less than the Scottish average and 14 years less than that for the U.K' (NHS Scotland, 2004 p.5). Research for the Scottish Executive showed that more than half of the city's electoral wards were in the poorest 10% for Scotland as a whole, with around 55% of the entire population living in areas classified as deprived. Glasgow accounts for 16 of the 20 most deprived areas in Scotland and by 2004 the city accounted for 17 of the poorest areas in the country (Scottish Executive, 2004). In support of this, a study by the Child Poverty Action Group (2005) listed the three most deprived areas in Britain all being in Glasgow: Shettleston, Sprinburn and Maryhill while Ballieston features in the top ten.

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<sup>6</sup> Another British city which has followed a cultural regeneration strategy, Manchester, has recently been accused of creating a socially and economically polarised city by the Centre of Social Justice (2007).

As will be illustrated in the following chapters, 'the Glasgow success story' or 'replicating a Glasgow', forms a parallel narrative within the competition for COC08. However, this narrative can be questioned on several fronts. While the award facilitated a reimagining and rebranding of the city, did this favour an interpretation of culture geared towards a middle class audience at the expense of the city's working class culture? This rebranding is said to have facilitated the city's economic revival: however, there needs to be more detailed analysis of what kinds of jobs have been created within the city and who have benefited from them as statistics would suggest that while the centre of Glasgow has undoubtedly flourished the periphery has continued to decline. Issues around such social and cultural legacies have not only been broached by academics (Booth, 1996 cited in Garcia 2005; Boyle, 1997), but have also been the subject of increasingly astringent critiques from the left, rooted in the claim that the award simply generated limited low wage jobs while benefiting political, corporate and cultural 'elites'.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The main challenge to this Glasgow success story is of the empirical evidence rallied to support this narrative. The absence of longitudinal, qualitative analyses has led to the proliferation of unquestioned 'myths' around Glasgow and the benefits of hosting the ECOC which militates against other cities learning from Glasgow's experience, and thus being able to replicate models for successful and, most importantly, sustainable, socially equitable culture-led regeneration. However, given the ostensibly entrepreneurial model that underpinned the city's bid and year, the uneven distributional outcomes within Glasgow should come as little surprise. As discussed in relation to the city's bid, Glasgow Council saw the year as primarily an opportunity

to market and rebrand the city to attract middle class consumers- in the words of Saatchi and Saatchi 'yuppies, backpackers and art consumers'; in this they were undoubtedly successful.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that many of the social problems which stigmatized the city still exist - or have become exacerbated- is, in terms of urban marketing, in many ways irrelevant (as was seen in the bid document that emphasised 'perceptions of drunkenness' rather than *incidence* of drunkenness within the city). The marketing triumph/social justice failure of 1990 is illustrated by the fact that unemployment is still greater in Glasgow than in any other city in the UK, despite the fact that it is the third most popular tourist destination after London and Edinburgh. From an urban marketing perspective Glasgow was an unqualified success; from a social justice perspective it was, arguably, a failure.

The next section of this study thus wishes to explore how far New Labour policy generally, and urban cultural policy in particular, is an extension of or a departure from the neo-liberal approaches critiqued in Chapter Three and illustrated within this case study of Glasgow. Following from this the study will then consider whether or not the strategies employed within the competition for Capital of Culture 2008 represent a departure from the entrepreneurial approach of Britain's first holder of the European City/Capital of Culture crown.

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<sup>7</sup> There is evidence however in brand fatigue/decay, particularly in relation to Charles Rennie Mackintosh who was adopted as a cultural icon for the city (Mackintosh design, much like that of Gaudi in Barcelona, became emblematic for the city in ubiquitous reproductions in city logos, souvenirs, furniture and jewellery). The renowned Glasgow School of Art has recently changed its logo and lettering from a classic Mackintosh inspired design, perhaps as a reaction against inauthentic reproductions which have been denigrated in artistic circles within the city 'Mocintosh' or 'Fakeintosh'



## Chapter Five: Methods and Strategies

*Each man kills the thing he loves,*

Oscar Wilde 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol'

### 5.1 Introduction

In an analogy that is said to stretch back to Plato, Perti Alaasturi (1995) likens scientific research to a love affair. This seems like an apt metaphor, since my experiences in the field of research map almost perfectly onto those in the field of love: the initial rush of naïve excitement and idealism; the slow encroachment of pragmatism; the gnawing disillusionment; the destructive recrimination; the inevitable break up, and now, looking back, a certain mellow fondness tinged only slightly with regret. This section is an account of that research journey.

### 5.2 The Politics of Studying Culture

*'We should look not for the components of a product but for the conditions of a practice.'*

Raymond Williams

The previous section's detailed discussion of the role and nature of culture and its function within a highly commodified economic sphere, not only provides the theoretical backdrop for this work, but also impacts upon this study's position within debates around the theoretical and political orientations of cultural studies as a 'discipline' and thus informs the research questions posed and the methodological strategies adopted within this study.

In my first engagements with cultural studies, I was drawn towards arguments that the discipline was 'anti' disciplinary, invoking the 'deterritorializing' metaphors of

1990's which viewed cultural studies as a radical progressive movement which was liberated from the shackles of conventional disciplinarity: Shepperson and Tomaselli (2004, p.258), for example, argue that 'concrete social problems ignore disciplinary fences: therefore, solutions should traverse disciplinary boundaries.....interdisciplinary enquiry should be a sine qua non to grasp the multidimensionality of the human condition'<sup>1</sup> However, since then I have been influenced by writers such as During (2005) who argued that such metaphors of resistance have little political value, and that an understanding of cultural studies' institutional conditions as a framework, rather than a limit, is a more effective approach. This study thus aspires to the original orientations of cultural studies as an intellectual practice ethically embedded in politics, and shares some of the political and empirical interests with its somewhat controversial offshoot, 'critical cultural policy studies'.

While cultural studies may have been institutionally incorporated, this has not yet translated into in a unique and identifiable 'cultural studies methodology', which has allowed for the methodological eclecticism within this study. At a very general level, what cultural studies initially meant and the epistemological tradition which this work draws from, is that of a research space where those specialising in empirical disciplines can draw on their at times disparate methodological specializations to address social problems. Thus while it may be impossible to offer a concrete definition of cultural studies, what this study shares with this approach is a

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<sup>1</sup> The need to locate a study within a certain discipline can, at times, be somewhat counterproductive since all academic traditions are, in a sense, essentially inter-disciplinary in their formation and are only formed into disciplines by what Perti Alasuutari calls 'institutional logic of universities' (Alasuutari, 1995 p.24) Maton and Wright (2002, p.384) dismiss such anti institutionalization as 'an allure' and in a spirited call for cultural studies to engage with its own educational practice, call debates over institutionalization 'kaons'- a Zen word for an unsolvable dilemma that cannot be answered by the intellect- ironically their work is actually a call for intellectual engagement with these issues.

commitment to relate culture and systems of meaning with questions of power and politics; as Perti Alaasutari (1995, p.2) argues,

this means that one should not be content with just making new observations about qualitative data with the methods borrowed from the humanities. Such observations must be put to use in explaining or at least problematizing social phenomena.

The emphasis on the *original* political orientation of cultural studies is important, in that this study believes that the loss of focus on cultural production (most especially the bridge with political economy and concomitant commitment to the politics of social justice) has resulted in a redefinition of the field of cultural studies as a cluster of common topics such as gender, body, masculinity, ethnicity, and away from fundamental concerns in relation to progressive politics. This move not only serves to blunt cultural studies' critical and progressive orientations, but in its extreme, leads to a 'consumptionist' cultural studies which serves to validate, if unintentionally, the sovereign consumer within neo-liberal ideology - what McGuigan (2006b, p.137) describes as the 'curious homology' between discourses of neo-liberalism and certain strands of cultural studies. While Thomas Frank's (1997, p.17) polemical broadside on the direction of the discipline may overstate the case, it nonetheless highlights the implications of a break with a critique of production within analyses of contemporary culture:

taking for granted that youth signifiers are appropriated, produced and even invented by the entertainment industry, recent writers argue that resistance arises from ways in which these signifiers are **consumed** by the young, used in ways that are divergent or contradictory to the manufacturer's original intent. Whatever form prefabricated youth cultures are given by their mass culture originators ultimately doesn't matter: they are quickly taken apart and

reassembled by alienated young people in startlingly novel subcultures. As with the counterculture, it is **transgression** itself, the never-ending race to violate norms, that is the key to resistance (emphases in the original).

(both Frank [1997] and McGuigan [2006b], in their critique of what McGuigan terms the 'consumerist trajectory' of British ('Hallian') cultural studies, trace the genealogy of 'cool' and its incorporation in capitalism. As later chapters of this study will illustrate, discourses of 'cool' cities, predominate within the marketing campaigns of those cities competing for the COC08 award.)

While important insights may be gained from studying how certain aspects of cultural consumption offer a form of resistance through transgression, there has been a tendency to ignore the equally important processes of cultural production. A number of commentators - McGuigan (1992) Garnham (1997) and Frank (1997) - have argued that this split has grown in the field due to the fear of crude economic reductionism and determinism of the now maligned 'mass culture' theorists, resulting in the broader economic dynamic of consumer culture being rarely interrogated; the political economy baby has been thrown out with the stagnant reductionist bathwater: as Nicholas Garnham (1997, p.56) argues 'to move on and fulfil the promises of its original project, cultural studies now needs to rebuild the bridges with political economy it burnt in its headlong rush towards the pleasures and differences of postmodernism.'<sup>2</sup> The fear of being tainted by economic determinism has thus resulted in some areas of cultural studies losing its original thrust, founded as it was on the basis of a set of political and economic assumptions: the revalidation of British

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<sup>2</sup> When such a call was originally made John Storey provocatively described it as moral vacuousness and took the opportunity to taint this position with the stigma of determinism by claiming that 'this kind of thinking was long ago exposed by feminists unwilling to lie back and think about the economic base' (1993, p.205).



working-class or popular culture as part of a broadly socialist programme whereby those involved in its establishment were clearly committed to a wider political struggle - even though they saw education as the site for that struggle (Garnham, 1997, p.57)<sup>3</sup>.

While not wanting to take an orthodox Marxist position or indeed a 'mass culture' approach, I feel that there is a place for determinism within this study and cultural studies in general, though through the more nuanced understanding forwarded by Stuart Hall where determinism constitutes the boundaries and parameters of cultural consumption;

understanding 'determinacy' in terms of setting limits, the establishment of parameters, the defining of the space of operations, the concrete conditions of existence, the givenness of social practices, rather than in terms of the absolute predictability of particular outcomes.....it would be preferable from this perspective, to think of the 'materialism' of Marxist theory in terms of 'determination of the economic in the first instant' since Marxism is surely correct, against all idealisms, to insist that no practice or set of relations floats free of the determinate effects of the concrete relations in which they are located.

(Hall, 1996 p.45)<sup>4</sup>

Although Hall claimed to have grounded cultural studies in such a model, British cultural studies (and, as my own experiences illustrated, the study of Popular Culture within the Open University) moved towards a stress on consumption which severed all links with political economy: ironically, both McGuigan (1992) and Kellner (1997) put this down - at least partially- to Hall's own ambivalent relationship to political

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<sup>3</sup> For an informative account of the emergence of cultural studies within the educational politics of EP Thompson and Raymond Williams see Steele (1997).

<sup>4</sup> Hall's influence within this study not only comes from his academic writings and his influence over the direction of cultural studies but, as later chapters will demonstrate, his political writings especially in relation to *Marxism Today* and the emergence of the "New Times" theory.

economy with Kellner commenting (1997, p.21), 'Hall's swerving towards and away from political economy is somewhat curious.... he has been rather inconsistent in articulating the relationship between political economy and cultural studies, and rarely deployed political economy in his work'. Kellner does, however, propose a model which both bridges cultural studies and political economy and complements Hall's own writings in relation to determinancy. This multiperspectival approach recognises culture's ontological complexity as part of a circuit of production and consumption which involves: the study of the production and political economy of culture; textual analysis and cultural critique; audience reception and how cultural products are used. While this study does not deal with reception or consumption, it does provide the conceptual framework for such an enquiry in a subsequent project on, for example, visitor/local experience of Liverpool in 2008, or the material structures within the city such as the newly opened visitor centre *08 Place* (see diagram 32 p. 361) which, as a text, is inscribed with the material traces of the cultural and political economic contexts which this study explores.

With the schism between cultural studies and political economy, the examination of culture through the lens of class became something of an anachronistic and indeed, in some quarters, recidivistic pursuit. Added to this is the linguistic hegemony of neo-liberalism (discussed in detail in Chapter Six), where under what Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001, p.5) call the 'new planetary vulgate', concepts such as 'domination', 'inequality' and 'class' are silenced<sup>5</sup>. Thus within discourses of both academia and politics, 'class' has become almost a signifier of crude determinism and reductionism and in the process, as Roger Bromley argues, is now 'the ghost machine

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<sup>5</sup> British Keynesian economist Will Hutton makes a similar point when he claims 'this language is but a first step in the construction of a sealed thought process impregnable to criticism or evidence from the outside world' (Hutton, 1997 p.9).

of contemporary politics' spoken of in 'euphemisms, soundbites, neologisms' (Bromley, 2000 p.51). When Sally Munt (2000, p.3) undertook a similar project that attempted to reintroduce class into cultural studies she claimed that<sup>6</sup>;

talking about class is unpopular; many conversations about this book have provoked curiosity, disapproval and unease, as though it is an ill-conceived project of marginal merit- as one journalist recently put it, "the very phrase "working class" tends to stick in the throat like a large chunk of stale Hovis.

However, this study is committed to retaining class as a key lens through which to consider contemporary cultural policy and approaches to economic and social regeneration within Capital of Culture 2008.

Debates over the relationship between such a critically informed cultural studies and the study of cultural policy have been well rehearsed (see for example Bennett, 1998). While not wanting to become embroiled in or indeed to rehash arguments over the critical versus applied orientation of cultural studies,<sup>7</sup> it is important to state that this study's interests in the construction of policy does not in any way blunt its critical edge; as described earlier, 'criticism' is invoked here as part of a dialectic driven by the desire to improve life and, importantly, to offer alternatives: as Lewis and Miller (2003, p.2) rightly state this involves both theoretical excavations and practical alternatives. Thus while defining the objectives of this study I wished to include both an engagement with policy and policy construction, though not in isolation but in relation to the ideological assumptions and hegemonic positions they promote.

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<sup>6</sup> It must be acknowledged that there has been a renaissance of class analysis within the field of sociology (see for example Sociology 39 [5]).

<sup>7</sup> This does not suggest that this is a theoretically homogenous group. For a clear delineation of the political and theoretical positions of those working within a cultural policy studies tradition in Australia see Cunningham (1992).

### 5.3 Discourse Intertextuality and Policy

One of the primary interests of this study are discourses of culture employed within both contemporary cultural policy and in relation to COC08. While formulating my research questions in relation to these interests I was conscious that the employment of the term 'discourse' was somewhat of a theoretical minefield, having read studies where its facile utilization has resulted in obfuscation rather than clarification (in fact, like that other theoretical chameleon 'culture', 'discourse' is one of those words that might be a strong contender to be taken out of language and given a good 'cleansing'). Consequently within this study the term was not employed loosely - not least because it is associated with approaches that moves critical analysis away from this project's cardinal concerns with class and ideology . The approach to discourse adopted in this work, in its very broadest sense, is rooted in the idea that language and social life are bound up in a dialectic relationship: what Kristeva calls 'the insertion of history (society) into a text and of text into history' (1986, p.39). While policy has always been mediated through language (this may seem to be a rather obvious fact to point out, however, there seems to be a tendency with some critiques of contemporary 'spin' culture to evoke an ideal where language did not play a part in political communication) there has been, undoubtedly of late, an increasing awareness of the role of language in politics (Bourdieu and Wacquant [2001] and Norman Fairclough [2000; 2006] discuss this in relation to neo-liberalism, New Labour and Globalization respectively). This study, however, shares the view of Finlayson (2003), that it is wrong to dismiss this contemporary concern with language in politics as nothing more than rhetorical posturing, reflecting the vacuousness of contemporary politics, but rather to view it in relation to previous political language: thus this study's interest is

in the *intertextuality* of language. This notion of intertextuality is fundamental to the conception of discourse drawn upon in this work in that any theory of discourse begins with the idea that meanings are not objectively formed at a moment of immaculate textual conception: as Foucault argues discourse and intertextuality allow meanings to both escape an objective function and cohere into certain discursive formations:

there is no free, neutral, independent statement; a statement always belongs to a series or a whole, plays a role among other statements, is part of a network of statements.... There is no statement that does not presuppose others.

(Foucault, 1969 quoted in Lemke, 1995 p.30)

Thus this study wishes to unpack contemporary urban cultural policy discourses and contextualise them within the wider and dominant discourse of neo-liberalism that not only frames all areas of political and social life, but which has become so hegemonic that it is 'virtually impossible to think outside of' (Young, 1981 p.48 cited in McGuigan, 2004 p.35).

While the employment of the concept of discourse inevitably draws one to the work of Foucault, as Dianne MacDonnell (1986 cited in Mills 1997 p.7) argues, what links Foucault with theorists such as Kristeva, Bakhtin and Althusser is the institutional and social nature of discourse. She points out that 'dialogue is the primary condition of discourse': all texts are part repetition, part creation.<sup>8</sup> Thus this study draws heavily upon the approach to discourse as dialogue contained, initially, in the work of

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<sup>8</sup> Fairclough (1992) notes that although the concept of intertextuality is generally attributed to Bakhtin he, in fact, did not use it; it was coined by Julia Kristeva in her account of Bakhtin's work.

Bakhtin and his stress on the mutually dependent and dialectic relationship between differing discourses:

the speaker is not the biblical Adam, dealing only with virgin and unnamed objects, giving them names for the first time... In reality.....any utterance, in addition to its own theme, always responds (in the broad sense of the word) in one form or another to others' utterances that precede it. The speaker is not Adam, and therefore the subject of his speech itself inevitably becomes the arena where his opinions meet those of his partners (in a conversation or dispute about some everyday event) or other viewpoints, world views, trends, theories, and so forth (in the sphere of cultural communication). World views, trends, viewpoints, and opinions always have verbal expression. All this is others' speech (in personal or impersonal form), and cannot but be reflected in the utterance. The utterance is addressed not only to its object, but also to others' speech about it.

(Bakhtin, 1986 p.68 cited in Allen 2000, p.21)

It is this repetitive, dialogical or intertextual nature of discourse that is drawn upon in this study. The theoretical justification for the employment of these concepts comes not only from the writings of Bakhtin and Kristeva but also Michel Pecheux (cited in Mills, 1997) and his claim that discourses exist in an oppositional dialogue with one another, and that they tend to operate within discursive frameworks or discursive parameters which are defined by others.

Consequently, the concept of intertextuality and dialogical discursive networks is fundamental to this study, as it provides the theoretical framework and operationalizing principles for an analysis of how discourses around culture and economics come to coalesce in contemporary governmental cultural policy. As was discussed earlier, this move to the employment of discourse does not blunt the study's critical position and, as in the work of Pecheux, close attention will be paid to

ideology within the study (their meanings will not be conflated as is sometimes the case). Ideology retains a Gramscian inflection and is thus seen as the arrangement of certain discourses in the interests of power: this approach to ideology and discourse is most clearly highlighted by Purvis and Hunt (1993, p. 476):

if discourse and ideology both figure in accounts of the general field of social action mediated through communicative practices, then discourse focuses upon the internal features of those practices, in particular the linguistic and semiotic dimensions. On the other hand, ideology directs attention towards the external aspect of focusing on the way which lived experience is connected to notions of interest and position that are in principle distinguishable from lived experience.

The study will thus engage with the linguistic features within the texts under scrutiny but will undertake its discourse analysis in relation to the wider ideological positions those discourses promote.

#### **5.4 Research Questions**

This study was conceived as an attempt to analyse how culture was interpreted within contemporary New Labour cultural policy and how this interpretation influenced the competition for the European Capital of Culture 2008 award and the strategies put in place by the winning city.

These interests were reflected in the two broad aims set out for this project:

- To unpack the theoretical and philosophical strands which inform contemporary New Labour cultural policy discourse

- To examine how these were interpreted within the European Capital of Culture project itself

These aims were then broken down into seven specific objectives for the research project:

- to investigate the relationship between culture and economic and social regeneration within contemporary cultural policy;
- to analyse the relationship between cultural organisations and government at a national and local level;
- to investigate the relationship between culture and economic and social regeneration within the European Capital of Culture Scheme 2008;
- to investigate, excavate and trace conceptions of culture and creativity in contemporary urban regeneration policy discourse at both a governmental and local level;
- to map definitions of culture onto institutional structures at a local level;
- to investigate the relationship between class and culture in urban regeneration schemes;
- to analyse the relationship between culture, marketing and urban identity.

As these objectives straddle various academic, theoretical and policy arenas it was imperative that I narrowed them down to a focussed and, more importantly, answerable set of research questions. While one of the initial objectives of the study was to assess what impacts COC08 would have at a local level within the winning city, it was felt that this was not feasible or justifiable until the actual year's activities



and celebrations had taken place (this would, obviously, be a rich site for further empirical enquiry). In some ways the project was thus conceived as providing the political context for such a local enquiry. Consequently, my research questions focused on how Capital of Culture 2008 was framed by both New Labour's broad political programme and its particular cultural policies, and how these were interpreted by the cities competing for the COC08 accolade. In addition to this I wanted to probe how culture and economics relate, most especially through the concept of creativity which seemed to be driving both cultural and economic policy. Finally, I aimed to assess how these conceptions of culture and economics framed not only the bidding of competing cities, but also both the institutional structures they put in place to bid - and in the case of the winning city to deliver on their bid - and any forms of physical intervention that were planned or commissioned on the back of bidding for or winning the COC08 award.

I thus posed the following research questions:

- What discourses of culture and creativity are drawn upon in New Labour policy documents and how do these relate to conceptions of culture within the European Capital of Culture scheme?
- How does culture relate to economic and social regeneration within New Labour policy generally and the Capital of Culture scheme specifically? How far is this an extension of or a departure from the economic objectives of neo-liberalism?
- What are the relationships between culture and class within urban cultural regeneration projects?

- Why was Liverpool awarded the European Capital of Culture accolade and how far have the claims within its bidding document been realised in its plans for 2008?
- How do discourses of culture and creativity map onto policy, observable forms of civic intervention and institutional structures at a local level in Liverpool?

These research questions were answered initially through a detailed excavation of the competing discourses that inform contemporary British cultural policy. This involved a consideration of the various strands that fed into the notion of the intrinsic worth of art and culture, and how these positions which informed a patronage model of cultural funding were subsequently challenged. The study then interrogated how economic changes under neo-liberalism impacted upon how culture was understood and considered Glasgow's year as City of Culture in 1990 within this context. In relation to this the study then considers New Labour policy generally and cultural policy specifically, in an attempt to ascertain the continuities and departures from an approach informed by neo-liberal ideology. From this the study moves on to an investigation of the competition for European Capital of Culture 2008, with particular focus on the relationship between conceptions of culture invoked within this competition and New Labour's approach to culture. This section of the thesis thus explores whether or not the criteria set out for the various cities competing for the Capital of Culture designation differed from a European to a national level, and how far the national criteria reflected a particularly New Labour conception of cultural policy. It then considers how far the competing city's bids were conditioned by an understanding of culture developed under the British New Labour government. Finally the thesis unpacks the reasons for Liverpool's winning of the accolade Capital

of Culture 2008 and the understanding of culture which drove both the city's bid and subsequently turbulent preparation for the 2008 celebration.

### **5.5 Research Strategies**

Having outlined this study's theoretical position, its field of empirical enquiry, its research aims and objectives and, most importantly, research questions, I would now like to consider the specific technical and practical strategies (methods) I employed to answer the questions posed. To begin I feel I need to outline the general methodological rationale behind the study, initially in relation to the choice of qualitative methods. Essentially the aims of this research project could only be realised through the utilization of qualitatively based methods; if we reconsider the stated aims it will be clear why this approach was taken:

- To explore the relationship between culture and economics in cultural policy in general
- To examine how this was interpreted within the ECOC project itself

These broad aims are primarily concerned with meaning construction, with meaning being seen as something fluid, subjective and socially constructed. They are not interested in the objective, nor frequency, distribution or statistical measurement that are the concerns of positivist enquiry, and which would lead to a quantitatively based approach. Obviously you cannot count meaning (though as discussed later you can count words) and what interests this study is the construction of meaning as a dynamic, evolving process which is formed through mutually reinforcing and validating cycles of interpretation and reinterpretation. There have, of course, been

studies of policy that rely on quantitative measurement using content analysis to illuminate the frequency of words or terms. While this may illuminate these studies, I am not wishing to treat policy as a fixed or bounded entity but am interested in exploring how the construction of policy and the emergence of discourses of urban cultural regeneration are dynamic and interrelated processes.

As discussed above in relation to the origins of the discipline, cultural studies is seen as inherently catholic in both its theoretical origins and its method of academic enquiry. Consequently this study is not married to or shackled with one method in answering the research questions posed above and thus adopts a pragmatic approach to the methods employed, drawing on the concept of bricolage;

cultural studies starts from the idea that theories and methods should become not blinders but additional viewpoints on reality. Cultural studies methodology has often been described by the concept of bricolage: one is pragmatic and strategic in choosing and applying different methods and practices. The cultural studies perspective emphasizes that the real objective of research should not be to repeat old 'truths', it is to find out about new points that contribute to the scientific and public discourse on social phenomena.

(Alasuutari, 1995 p.3)

In line with this pragmatic approach and guided by the principle of tracing discursive networks, I decided I could best answer my research questions from data gleaned from two primary - interviews and documents - and one secondary source - newspapers. The triangulation of methods was aimed to give a better understanding the research questions that I posed in the hope that it 'adds rigour, breadth and depth' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998 p.144) to my research (the study does not see triangulation as some kind of methodological panacea and is cognisant of Coffey and Atkinson's

[1996] warning against a naïve belief in the power of triangulation to solve methodological problems).

### **5.5.1 Documents and Newspapers**

The multi-disciplinary nature of this project can be seen by the choice of documents as the main source of data generation. There are certainly ‘ambiguities and tensions’ (May, 1997 p.178) involved in the use of documents in the social sciences since they are considered, by some, as poaching in the bailiwick of the humanities, most especially the historian. Of late, however, with their increased availability and use, such objections have been abating with the increasing recognition that documents have been a classic tool of the sociologist from Marx to Durkheim; this is reinforced by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), who have questioned why social scientists and researchers produce accounts of complex, literate social worlds ‘as if they were entirely without writing’; Silverman claims that public documents actually represent a ‘goldmine for sociological investigation’ and bemoans the fact that they have been ‘sadly neglected by field researchers’ (2001, p.135).

Drawing on the principle of dialogical or discursive networks this work began by tracing the evolution of discourses around art and culture. The study will now consider how these understandings of culture influence contemporary cultural policy through an evaluation of several keynote New Labour documents. The interrogation of these documents aims to provide a wider political context for the examination of the COC08 scheme itself by tracing the evolution of discourses around culture, economics and creativity which were to frame the responses and subsequent policies

of various cities at a local level. All these documents were relatively easy to locate, either on the DCMS website as a download or through the library's inter library loan service; these documents consisted of:

- *Create the Future: a strategy for cultural policy, arts and the creative economy* (Labour Party)
- *Creative Britain* (authored by Chris Smith)
- *A New Approach to Investment in Culture* (DCMS)
- *A New Cultural Framework* (DCMS)
- *Policy Action Team 10* (DCMS)
- *Addressing Social Exclusion: A Framework for Action* (Arts Council England)
- *Valuing Culture* (authored by Tessa Jowell)

The second layer of documentation under scrutiny related directly to COC08 itself. The European directive which initiated the European Capital of Culture Scheme had to be requested as an inter-library loan, while the DCMS document setting out the criteria for the bidding cities was available from the DCMS website (this document was, in many ways, the most important as it initiated the competition for COC08 and thus framed the response from the competing cities through the various questions it posed). The next set of documents that were scrutinised were the competing city's responses to the DCMS' criteria, which were all freely available online - except the submission from the Newcastle Gateshead team - during the competition year (2003). The Newcastle Gateshead document was easily obtained, however, by contacting the

Newcastle/Gateshead Initiative, the public/private body who were responsible for the city's ultimately unsuccessful submission. As part of the data collection a request was forwarded to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) for any documentation or correspondence between the department and the competing cities during the competition for COC08 (I was especially interested in any advice given to the competing cities following their initial submission and shortlisting). This initiated a lengthy process with the Department forwarding some of the requested material but withholding other material, claiming that some of the documentation was 'exempt from disclosure under section 35(1) (a) (formulation and development of government policy) of the Act' and that 'the balance of public interest' did not rest with the releasing of such documentation.

The documents which I did consult can be listed as:

- European directive (EU decision 1419/1999) which initiated the European Capital of Culture Scheme (formerly the European City of Culture)
- The document produced by the British government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) setting out the criteria for those cities bidding for the 2008 award which, under EU decision 1419/1999, had been granted to a British city
- The documents produced by the competing cities in response to the DCMS document which formed each city's bid for the 2008 European Capital of Culture designation. These cities were: Belfast, Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Canterbury, Cardiff, Inverness, Liverpool, Newcastle/Gateshead, Oxford, Norwich.
- The Judging Panel's feedback to all twelve cities.

- Letters written by the DCMS to the twelve cities explaining the reasons for their inclusion/omission from the final shortlist.
- Supplementary feedback from the DCMS to the losing cities on the reasons for their omission from the final shortlist.

The study also probed what was deemed the ‘Glasgow success narrative’ by considering both primary and secondary data in relation to its year, 1990 (it was felt that Glasgow 1990 needed to be interrogated as its year as City of Culture was cited as the template for cultural regeneration within much academic literature, the British government criteria and the submissions made by the various competing cities). The primary data was collated during extensive and quite laborious archival work in the city’s Mitchell Library where Council Minutes, pitches by marketing agencies, marketing materials and the city’s bid document itself were all analysed. Finally, documents relating to the winning city Liverpool and the organisation set up to deliver its Capital of Culture Year, the Liverpool Culture Company, were accessed. While there was a sense of defensiveness within the Culture Company regarding interviews (discussed below) through a personal recommendation I quickly established a key contact within Liverpool Council who provided me with all the relevant documents (indeed embargoed ones ahead of time). The documents assessed in relation to Liverpool and its plans for 2008 were:

- *Liverpool’s Bid for European Capital of Culture* (including a socio-economic assessment study by ERM Economics)
- *‘Building the Case for Creative Communities’* (DTZ Consulting for the Liverpool Culture Company)
- *The Art of Inclusion* (Liverpool Culture Company)



- *08 What's it All About?* (Liverpool Culture Company)
- *Liverpool Culture Company Review* (2005-2006)
- *Liverpool Culture Company Strategic Business Plan* (2005-2009)

The next layer within the discursive network and thus my next focus for empirical enquiry was local and national newspapers. While the notion that newspapers represent contemporary discourse is debatable, in that their production is dictated by the political economy of newspaper production and sales, they do interpret policy (and policy is increasingly written for them) and are a conduit between government and civic policy and the public; indeed Adam (1998, p.165) argues that they are 'the principle social theorists of contemporary industrial societies'. This study did not intend to see newspapers as somehow reflecting everyday discourse but, instead, in line with notions of intertextuality and discursive networks, aimed to interrogate the dialectic between policy (both at a governmental and civic level) and newspapers - especially within a scheme where marketing and urban image promotion is paramount: Norman Fairclough (1992, p.110) describes this relationship between public and private language within newspapers;

'newspapers...translate the language of official written documents into a version of popular speech..a translation of public language into private language'

For the majority of my newspaper research I used the database Lexis Nexis Professional (I did do a week of archival work in the National Newspaper Library as Lexis Nexis only contains simple text version of stories and thus omits all visual representation - pictures, cartoons etc.- which were also of interest to this study). In addition to this I wanted to source some newspaper articles in relation to Glasgow

1990 which the Lexis Nexis database does not hold. I used four broadsheet papers *The Times* (including *the Sunday Times*), *The Independent* (including *the Independent on Sunday*) and *the Guardian* and *the Observer* and three tabloid newspapers *The Sun*, *The Mirror* and *The Star*. These searches yielded an abundance of data: 749 responses from *the Guardian*; 1212 from *the Independent* and *the Independent on Sunday*; 315 from *the Observer*; 1260 from *the Times* and *the Sunday Times*. The tabloid papers yielded much fewer results: *The Star* 39; *the Mirror* 222; *the Sun* 119. These were sifted through initially to eliminate articles with no relevance to the research (a large proportion of which were from the sports section and related to teams playing 'cultured' football in Europe). The next layer of newspaper analysis related to the local papers in the bidding cities. The same search words 'European Capital Culture' were entered, though the search dates were modified to January 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 to July 30th 2003 (this was due to the fact that I was only interested in how each of the competing cities generated support through the local press in the build up to the COC08 award): the results from these searches were Bristol Evening Post 471 hits; the Birmingham post 954; Liverpool Echo 513; Newcastle Evening Chronicle 492; South Wales Echo 360. There was a slight flaw within this areas as the database does not hold any local newspaper for the Oxford area, and I was thus unable to assess how the support or not for the local bid within this city's local press (this was especially disappointing as an interviewee from Oxford pointed the their lack of a marketing budget as the reason that they were unable to promote the bid in the press and generate the kind of local enthusiasm that was apparent in Liverpool).

The final layer of newspaper analysis was within Liverpool itself where both the Liverpool Daily Post and Liverpool Echo were searched to give as wide a political

and cultural spread as possible. To access and collate the articles I again used the database Lexis Nexis Professional, this time searching for the key words 'European', 'Capital', 'Culture', though narrowing the search by year and by paper. This generated a wealth of data: 2006 *Daily Post* 296 articles, *Liverpool Echo* 461; 2005 *Daily Post* 379 articles, *Liverpool Echo* 580; 2004 *Daily Post* 400 articles, *Liverpool Echo* 662; 2003 *Daily Post* 425 articles, *Liverpool Echo* 800; 2002 *Daily Post* 228 articles, *Liverpool Echo* 483; 2001 *Daily Post* 82 articles; *Liverpool Echo* 161.

### **5.5.2 Interviews**

The study supplemented the data collected from document analysis with semi structured interviews with key players within not only Liverpool, but the other competing finalists in the 08 competition (twenty eight interviews were conducted in total – for a complete list of interviewees see Appendix One). The prominence of interviews within contemporary society has resulted in this method being inappropriately applied in certain research situations (Silverman, 2001), though as part of the discursive chain outlined earlier they were essential to this study. There is a wealth of literature on the relative strengths and weaknesses of semi-structured interviews (Atkinson [1990], Coffey and Atkinson [1996], Warren [2005]). While expressing diverse opinions on the nature and structure of semi structured interviews, these authors agree that they offer respondents the opportunity to express their values in ways that are meaningful to them. While scheduling these interviews I was mindful of Morrissey's (1970) advice on flexibility in timetabling due to the time demands on my interviewees (I only experienced one cancellation- discussed in detail below; however, after having travelled over 200 miles to one interview a clearly ill

interviewee felt obliged to conduct the interview and I actually interviewed him in his car on the way to and in the waiting room of his doctor's surgery).

The first layer of elite interviews were with key players in the formulation of the strategies of the six finalists in the COC08 competition. Initially I aimed to interview two key personnel from each of the bidding cities, broadly representing the public and private sectors. Although contact was made and prospective interviewees earmarked while the competition for the 2008 award was in progress - summer of 2003 - when I was ready to move into the field many of the organisations set up to deliver the bids had been disbanded with key personnel and many potential interviewees moving to other jobs - both within and in many cases outside that particular city. However, despite the fact that they failed to win the award, the structure of the Newcastle/Gateshead Initiative remained intact and, consequently, I was able to secure my first interviews with both the head Newcastle/Gateshead team and the head of cultural services within Gateshead Council. This latter interviewee proved to be an invaluable contact since it was through him that I secured interviews with representatives of the public sector from all the other competing cities.

When I came to identify potential interviewees and arrange interviews in Liverpool I became aware that I had to be extremely careful how I presented myself - one of my first interviewees warned me to be particularly wary as Liverpool was a small, somewhat defensive place where reputations are established quickly, and if it was felt I was taking a critical stance to COC08 then 'doors would close'. This contact again proved invaluable, not only for his savvy advice on Liverpool, but also as he worked in public relations and introduced me to the even smaller world of PR in the city. This

proved exceptionally important in an age when organisations rely heavily upon PR representatives as vigilant gatekeepers and, consequently, I was able to interview and win the trust of PR representatives of the North West Development Agency and the Culture Company which allowed me further access to key individuals within those particular organisations.

I was thus acutely aware of this contact's warning when interviewing the first of my councillors, as City Hall is renowned as hotbed of gossip where rumours blossom and reputations are made and destroyed (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Ten). With this in mind when conducting this interview I tempered my questions a little by avoiding any of areas of my study that might be deemed controversial. This interviewee was an affable and garrulous councillor and although the interview did not generate much useful data, my gentle questioning won his trust and his recommendation to other councillors until, eventually, I was able to secure an interview with the (by then ex) council leader himself.

There were, however, many interviewees whom I earmarked but who declined to be interviewed - this included all the DCMS appointed judges, anyone within the Executive of Liverpool Council, several employees of the Culture Company. That these interviews failed to materialise was not a reflection of any flaw within the research project design but one of the pitfalls in interviewing elites. As much of my data was politically sensitive I was asked by many of my interviewees to anonymise either all or parts of these interviews, while others were keen that their comments were attributable.

Although rejection is part of the process in interviewing 'elites' I feel that I have one regret regarding what would have been a key interview within the project. One of the central controversies within Liverpool's plans for 2008 was the cancellation of the building of an iconic structure on the city's waterfront - what became known as the 'Fourth Grace' debacle; as will be described in Chapter Ten, this ended in a series of mutually recriminatory pronouncements between Liverpool City Council and the commissioned architect Will Alsop. Alsop was thus earmarked as a key interviewee, though the chances of securing an interview with such a world renowned and controversial figure seemed remote. However, a contact within a PR agency in Liverpool who I had interviewed and won the trust of, gave me the telephone number of the PR agency that dealt with all media requests for interviews with Mr. Alsop. Having called this official 'gatekeeper' and won her trust as to the seriousness of this project (I donned my 'academic' rather than 'PhD student' hat), she passed me the contact details of Mr Alsop's private secretary. Establishing a rapport with this particular gatekeeper was remarkably easy and she forwarded my written request for an interview to Mr. Alsop. Although I didn't hold out hope she e-mailed back informing me that Mr. Alsop had agreed to be interviewed, though suggested a telephone interview. In agreeing to this telephone interview I made what might be viewed as an error, not only due to the fact that a face to face interview tends to yield much richer data, but as I was to find out to my cost a telephone interview is much easier to cancel than if someone is waiting for you in person. Consequently, on the day scheduled for the initial interview, Mr. Alsop's secretary cancelled claiming that he was too busy to take my call and a second interview was scheduled. While on hold on this second appointment one of the senior managers within the practice spoke to me and informed me that Mr. Alsop had agreed a gagging clause with Liverpool

Council the day before and was, consequently, no longer able to be interviewed. This was one of the major disappointments of the project not only as Alsop is a world renowned, controversial architect, his iconic buildings making him the darling of urban regeneration bodies, but also for the fact that he could have provided an informed and opinionated insight into the role of architecture in urban regeneration and his fraught relationship with both Liverpool and other councils in the UK.

Establishing contact with the Culture Company proved equally problematic. Initially I wrote and e-mailed them but received no reply. Following a subsequent e-mail I decided to phone who I thought might be my key interviewee directly. On receiving the call she seemed more than willing to help, but when I again e-mailed she did not reply. It was then that I decided to change tack since I believed that with the increasing negative publicity at that time that the Culture Company were becoming somewhat reclusive and defensive. As my research had indicated that there were considerable crossovers between Liverpool Council and Liverpool Culture Company I approached a key interviewee within the council whose trust I had won. He agreed that he would approach the Culture Company for me and secured an interview with a low ranking official. Again I approached this interview as an opportunity to win favour with the organisation, rather than to generate data for the study. In parallel to this my PR contact approached the Culture Company's public relations representative who agreed to an interview. Although I had the imprimatur of my contact, I felt a defensiveness on his behalf and there was the feeling that I was almost being interviewed (or certainly assessed). In both these interviews I again avoided any of the controversial issues I wished to probe thus winning their trust and, consequently, interviews with key personnel within the organisation.

The structure of these interviews followed the principles of semi structured interviews with the professional/business person, using the paradigm outlined by Stroh (2000), beginning with open ended questions which, in most cases, allowed the respondents to elaborate, as well as 'funnel' questions to narrow down responses - the latitude of structure and (superficially at least) laissez-faire approach adopted in these interviews allowed for the emergence of many unforeseen concepts during the interview process. These interviews were not standardised and thus I gave each interviewee considerable scope as to how they chose and presented information to me as it was important for me that the interviewees were proactive in choosing what information they felt was relevant. While I devised an aide memoir for each interview I did reflexively formulate other questions during the interview process.

While conducting the interviews I was aware of the fact that although I had considerable prior knowledge of the research area, I did not want to present myself as an 'insider' since what some of my interviewees might deem as taken for granted knowledge was, in fact, valuable data for my study. In line with this and depending on the research question, my approach varied along this expert/novice continuum (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). All the interviews were recorded digitally, though the act of recording did not seem to impinge on the interview process as most of those interviewed were professional informants, many in their professional capacities so were au fait both with the technology and 'cultural codes' that accompanied its use. The tone of these interviews was formal and professional as most were conducted during a normal working day and while I wanted to foster a comfortable social



atmosphere I did not want the interview to seem simply like an 'informal chat' since my area of interest was located within their professional identity.

### **5.5.3 Ethics in Interviewing 'Elites'**

Categorizing certain groups as 'elites' can be problematic (Dexter, 1970) as it may be seen as acquiescing to notions of superiority/inferiority in the interviewer/interviewee relationship. However, within this study the term is used to identify interviewees who have a particularly well-informed understanding of the area which I wished to research, regardless of their social standing. While interviewing elites the researcher is constantly 'vulnerable to ethical dilemmas... such as personal disclosure, exchange, trust and the building of relationships' (Ozga and Gewirtz, 1994 p.133); this next section outlines how I dealt with some of these ethical dilemmas.

All the interviewees for this project were provided with an overview of the research project (primarily through e-mail though a brief overview was included in my initial letters of introduction). While this outline was clear about the objectives of the research, its theoretical commitment was not included as this may have militated against access - this did not, however, violate any ethical considerations as the outline clearly stated the objectives of the study so allowing the interviewees to make an informed decision on their willingness to participate. In addition to this eleven of the interviewees also requested interview schedules which I provided in advance of the interview - I did, however, indicate to these interviewees that since I would be conducting semi-structured interviews there would be considerable scope and latitude within the interviewing process.

Issues around sensitive data had considerable ethical implications for my interviews. Of all the interviews only five explicitly requested anonymity as the topics under consideration were not only 'sensitive' but could have compromised their public position. However, during a further five of the interviews sensitive data emerged which could have compromised that particular interviewee, so these interviewees were also anonymised; conversely some interviewees were keen that their identity be known as they wanted their opinions to enter the public arena. Consequently, some of my interviewees are quoted by name while others are anonymised.

An added ethical issue emerged in relation to one key interviewee whose responses were so informed and had such an insider's perspective into an aspect of the Culture Company that I felt s/he would have been easily identified. After post interview analysis and consultation with this interviewee I decided to omit this compelling and insightful data to protect his/her identity. The full list of interviewees, duration and place of interview, rationale for contact and reasons for anonymising is attached as Appendix 1.

## 5.6 Analysis

While the structure of this chapter has followed the data generation/data analysis template, the relationship between analysis and generation, in reality, bore more resemblance to the fluid and nuanced dynamic outlined by Coffey and Atkinson (1996, pp.10-11);

Analysis is a 'pervasive activity throughout the life of a research project, not simply one of the later stages of research, to be followed by an equally separate phase of 'writing up.

The methodological pragmatism which governed the collection of data within this study also dictated the strategies employed in analysing that data and, consequently, I developed the most appropriate methods of analysis for answering the particular research questions posed. Such pragmatic choices are, however, governed by the study's ontological perspective.

In uncovering and articulating the ontological perspective adopted in this study it might be helpful to draw upon two paradigms outlined by Pertti Alasuutari (1995): what he deems as the factist or specimen perspectives (I am painting with broad ontological brush strokes here as there can be overlaps between these two perspectives). The former of these two perspectives wishes to probe reality and sees data as an interlocutor or conduit to that reality- the data can either reflect or distort that reality. The specimen perspective, on the other hand, does not see data as a window on reality but as an example of a genre. To illustrate these two perspectives on the analysis of data in relation to this study I will take an interview with a PR consultant for the Culture Company as an example (say in relation to the Fourth Grace controversy outlined above). This interview could be approached from a factist perspective: what is he telling, what is he omitting about the truth of this incident; or, alternatively, this could be approached from a specimen perspective where there is no objective truth and the data itself is thus part of the reality, rendering questions of truth and honesty irrelevant- the data could thus be analysed in terms of the institutional language of the Culture Company. Obviously the perspective adopted depends on the research question being asked: in the former example if one was

asking ‘what was the reason for the pulling of the Fourth Grace?’ and trying to uncover the truth then the factist perspective would be appropriate; if one was interested in discourses around iconic buildings and regeneration then the specimen perspective would be most appropriate; consequently my interview analysis was a combination of both the specimen and factist perspective depending on which of my research questions I was attempting to answer.

There are, of course, many methods of analysing the data contained within any document (Prior, 2003): one method is content analysis which, in its most basic, empirical, sense involves enumerating the frequency which certain words or categories appear in a text (see, for example Goode and Hatt [1952] in relation to political speech). However, counting words alone would not have allowed me to access the networks of reference in which the discourses around culture, economics, creativity and regeneration operate, and thus the need for an element of discourse analysis within the study: Lindsay Prior (2003) explains the need for analysis of discourse within the documents under scrutiny by drawing upon the concept of intertextuality outlined above;

one has to move into the realm beyond the mere words on the page and into some form of discourse analysis. That is to say, one has to begin to ask questions – and obtain answers – about how the various terms and concepts that are counted are interlocked into the other to form a stance or position

(Prior, 2003 p.116)

Prior is correct in his call for some form of discourse analysis but just as there are many ways to conceive discourse there are many different types of discourse analysis (VanDijk, 1997). One of the main divisions between approaches within discourse

analysis is between those which employ a close and detailed reading of texts (though often ignoring linguistic features) and those forms of analysis which focus upon the language of texts while not engaging with wider social, political and theoretical issues. This study attempted to bridge this text/context division by drawing on the principles outlined in the strand of critical discourse analysis most closely associated with Norman Fairclough (1995) and its stress not only on a text's linguistic features but its political context and inherent intertextual borrowings:

intertextual analysis crucially mediates the connection between language and social contexts, and facilitates more satisfactory bridging of the gap between texts and context.....text analysis is seen as not only linguistic analysis; it also includes what I have called "interdiscursive analysis", that is, seeing texts in terms of different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together.

(Fairclough, 1995, p.3)

Within the analysis of these documents and in line with the principles of intertextuality outlined above, attention was paid to the explicit and the implicit within the text;

the concept of 'preconstructed' has been used to give an intertextual understanding of implicit content (presupposition); the unsaid of a text, what it takes as given, is taken as the already-said-elsewhere, the form in which a text is shaped and penetrated by (ideological) elements from domains of prior textual practice.

(Fairclough, 1995 p.6)

While it is generally accepted that interviewing is a relatively unproblematic method of gathering qualitative data, some social scientists (Scheurich, 2001 p.63) question the tendency to treat data emerging from interviews as representing an objective reality;

is not the development of an accurate representation of the data, as the positivist approach assumes, but a creative interaction between the conscious/unconscious researcher and the decontextualised data which is assumed to represent reality or, at least, reality as interpreted by the interviewee.

While interpreting the data which emerged from these interviews I was aware that the interview was far from such a 'pipeline for transmitting knowledge' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995 p.112) as a factist perspective might promote but was, instead, interested in how discourses I had identified within my documentary analysis were interpreted and articulated within my interview data.<sup>9</sup> The qualitative data collected from all my data sources were analysed initially using "notes and theoretical memos" (Wengraf, 2001 p. 225) which were developed throughout the transcription process relating back, as Wengraf (2001) suggests, to the relevant research question. The analysis performed composed of code-and-retrieve methods, where the interviews and documents were read and re-read to ensure an awareness of the different themes and how they developed within the accounts. Initially the software package Atlas TI was used for the coding. In some ways I came to this programme with the naïve belief that the package itself would code the data for you. Obviously this is not the case and as I tried to negotiate it (and not being particularly computer savvy) I found that I was wasting huge amounts of time and that its employment was proving counterproductive. Consequently I resorted to coding manually (though I do believe that with extra time to become au fait with this package it could be a valuable

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<sup>9</sup> The critique of the value of interview data from those who take a 'naturalist' position is itself critiqued by Hammersly and Atkinson (1983) who argue that its stress on data 'untouched by human hands' actually aligns itself philosophically with positivist approach which sees data as neutral, unbiased and representative.

resource). The focus was on emergent ideas and cultural signifiers, which often did not have words or phrases in common but were linked by a cultural reference or historical understanding. This meant that a high level of familiarity with the texts, developed through reading and re-reading, was the most important aspect of the analysis.

### **5.7 Limitations of the design**

The research was limited by issues of access to elites. I believe that there is an interesting story to be told in relation to the decision for Liverpool but none of the judges were willing to be interviewed even under anonymity. I also feel that I was not able to penetrate the Culture Company as deeply as I would have liked but this was not a reflection of the design but a result of a defensiveness which emerged in the wake of the controversies that engulfed the Company. Of course this was an account of New Labour cultural policies and Capital of Culture 2008 and I feel that this has provided the context for a more detailed exploration of the social and economic outcomes of Liverpool's COC08 year.

## Chapter Six: Cultural Policy and New Labour

*'A successful creative economy is one of the Government's priorities, and a key source of jobs of the future. The only way that we will compete in these new sectors is through the talents of our people'*

Tony Blair

*'If you put the arts in the bigger picture, and talk about them as part of the framework of the creative and cultural industries, the argument that asks 'can the arts really make a splash, do they really matter?'' becomes very clear, "They are part of something fundamental and big, which is the creative economy, which is now what we live off. And when you look at it like that then arts funding becomes a no brainer - our future depends on creativity'*

Tony Hall Chief Executive of the Opera House

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapters Three and Four of this study illustrated how, under neo-liberal ideology, cultural policy moved from a paternalism based on liberal humanist thinking to one where, increasingly, culture was justified in terms of economic instrumentalism. Parallel to this, it traced movements in urban planning away from managerialism to entrepreneurialism. This chapter will consider how far these moves to economic instrumentalism and urban entrepreneurialism were extended or modified under the present New Labour government. It will argue that New Labour cultural policy displays the characteristics of New Labour policy generally, in that it mixes the economic instrumentalism of neo liberalism, with a discourse of social instrumentalism, thus providing both an economic and social justification for cultural funding; in this culture becomes something of an economic and social panacea - what Yudice (2005) calls the 'expediency of culture'. From this it will be demonstrated how such instrumentalist justifications are melded to residual philosophical and normative assumptions within an 'intrinsic' discourse, that result in New Labour cultural policies being an admixture of competing and contradictory assumptions. Through an empirical study of key New Labour cultural documents the section will then map how social and economic instrumentalist arguments have been drawn together to form the conflation of mixed discourses that serve to justify cultural



funding to the Treasury. It will argue that despite this rhetorical commitment to an instrumentalist agenda, key players within the construction of contemporary cultural policy are increasingly aware of the contradictions at the heart of their own policy and are attempting to move the cultural discourse back towards what has been described as the intrinsic position.

The second half of this chapter will interrogate New Labour policy in the urban arena; this will parallel the previous section's illustration of the mix of social and economic instrumentalism within New Labour cultural policy generally. It will explain how economic instrumentalism is somewhat crudely welded to New Labour's social inclusion discourse to give cultural funding a social justification. The chapter will then demonstrate how these discourses come together under the ubiquitous term 'creativity', which not only lends culture the economic kudos associated with the high tech economy, but is a key rhetorical device within New Labour's social justification for cultural funding. The chapter will then illustrate how these ideologically heterogeneous and potentially contradictory and conflicting theories form the key legitimizing discourses within the loose complex and tautological policy template which the study will identify as a 'cultural planning/creative city' strategy. This strategy proceeds in a circular fashion, where 'creative activity' and the development of creative industry are the scaffolding to both revitalize the local economy and rebrand the city by attracting both tourists and footloose capital. In addition to this, such 'creativity activity' develops the 'cultural capital' of the local population which addresses social exclusion and fosters participation in the economy. The later chapters of this study will illustrate how Liverpool's strategy for Capital of Culture 2008 is an exemplar of such 'creative city/cultural planning' approach.

## 6.2 'Old' Labour and New Cultural Policy

This section will trace the genealogy of New Labour's urban cultural policies at a local level to help unpack the mixed discourses that feed into what will later be identified as a cultural planning/creative city strategy. The roots of New Labour's cultural policy are most closely associated with Labour controlled councils in the U.K, where cultural policies were developed that sought to marry disparate and contradictory policy orientations: the support of marginalised cultural communities, the nurturing of the arts and the fostering of cultural industries and entrepreneurship. The source of many of these policies was within the Greater London Council's Arts and Recreation Committee and its cultural policy, driven by the Council's egalitarian ethos.

While applauding the democratic thrust and social justice orientations of these policies, researchers associated with the subsequently highly influential Comedia research group (Lewis et al. 1986) (see below), challenged their efficacy in delivering a culturally democratic agenda.<sup>1</sup> Although politically to the left, these researchers criticised the results of the GLC's cultural policies which were aimed at widening access to the arts for the working classes, by arguing that the community arts programme favoured by the GLC merely served an educated middle class audience who, although politically disaffected, were much the same as the traditional audience for 'high-brow' arts. These findings were endorsed by key theorists in the subsequently highly influential Comedia research group, Mulgan and Worpole (1986). As will be described Geoff Mulgan not only wrote for *Marxism Today*, was a director of Tony Blair's 'favourite think tank' DEMOS but became a key strategist

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the GLC's social access strategy did deliver some notable successes, especially in relation to 'ethnic' and 'Black' arts McGuigan (1996, p.82).

within the New Labour government; Ken Warpole was also to write for both *Marxism Today* and DEMOS (see Figure Two p.132). These writers criticised community arts not only for their emphasis on producer satisfaction rather than actually building audiences for their products, but, more generally, for their lack of financial and organisational skill and their apparent ignorance of or indifference and hostility to audiences for their work. Fundamental to this line of thought was the critique of the notion of the transcendental artist, 'creating' in splendid isolation and then bemoaning the fact that there were no audiences for her/his cultural product: Nicholas Garnham highlights this when he states,

a further crucial component of this ideology is the special and central status attributed to the 'creative artist' whose aspiration and values, seen as stemming from some unfathomable and unquestionable source of genius, inspiration or talent, are the source of cultural value. The result of placing artists at the centre of the cultural universe has not been to shower them with gold, for artistic poverty is itself an ideologically potent element in this view of culture, but to define the policy problem as one of finding audiences for their work, rather than vice-versa. When audiences cannot be found, at least at a price and in a quantity which will support the creative activity, the market is blamed and the gap is filled by subsidy.

(Garnham,1990, p.155)

Garnham's position was rooted in his belief that without a fully developed understanding of the political economy of cultural production, then cultural policy would have little practical relevance. He claimed that grassroots criticism of 'elitism' in arts funding, while theoretically and ideologically sound, was, nonetheless, politically redundant since it reinforced the cultural policy paradigm, leaving publicly funded cultural projects on the margins of the cultural field. By doing so such publicly funded arts and culture patronage offered a parallel, though inevitably marginalized

cultural policy. Thus the thrust of Garnham's argument was that the idealistic, unqualified opposition to the cultural market found in leftist cultural theory was self-defeating in its ignoring of the economic realities of cultural production and reception - a position consistent with that outlined earlier in relation to the work Raymond Williams. While acknowledging the inequities caused by the market, Garnham's thesis also highlighted the fact that it was a much more efficient means of registering popular tastes than state-sponsored programmes. However, this was far from a celebration of popular consumption, as Garnham argued that in its ignoring of the market, a community arts or social access paradigm failed to engage with the real power structures of culture which were private and capitalist controlled rather than public: as McGuigan (1996, p.84) claims 'this was a reality that even the most dyed-in-the-wool socialists had to recognise'. This movement in the theoretical understanding of culture and its newfound awareness of the political economy of cultural production was endorsed by Mulgan and Warpole (1986, p.5) – the unnamed authors cited in the Webber and Challans report in Chapter Three - whose work sowed the seeds for the 'creative industry' strategy adopted by New Labour and discussed in detail later in this chapter;

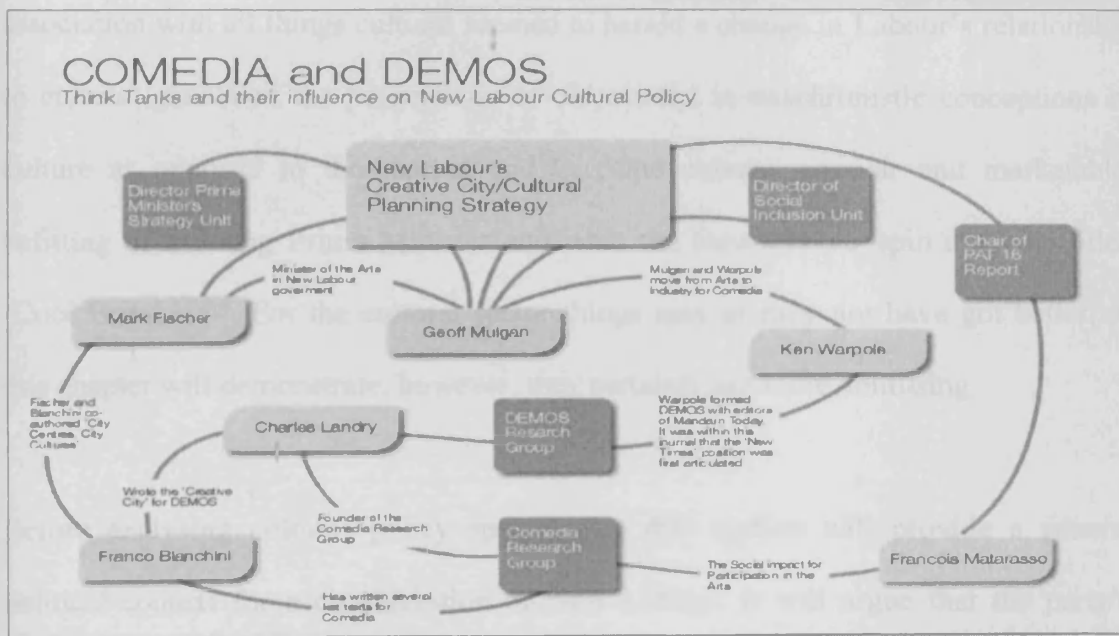
What was once thought of as the ideological superstructure has now become a significant part of the economic base. To buy a Style Council or Kiri Te Kanawa record, a new book by Fay Weldon or Alice Walker, or to watch a Victoria Wood programme or a Channel 4 film on television, involves standing at the end of a massive line of producers and printers, tape operators, script-writers and sleeve designers, printers, engineers, camera crews, promoters, record pressers, distributors, lawyers, accountants, musicians and editors, not to mention the people who designed and made the hardware on which the music, film or book was recorded, printed or watched.

The model defined by Mulgan and Warpole sees culture as the part of the material process of production and exchange, and thus places cultural policy at the centre of cultural activity, rather than being a reactive pursuit at the periphery of cultural life. Although this approach had resonances with neo-liberal cultural policy - the progressive homology of these accounts is tracked throughout this work - it was forged out of a socialist political commitment and a fear that the public purse would subsidise the cultural pursuits of a well-off minority while the market system catered for majority cultural interests. This model offered the theoretical basis for the new cultural industry strategy initiated by the GLC, which argued that public funding which facilitated alternative forms of cultural production were not enough without an efficient and developed distribution network (Landry et al., 1985) (Landry founded the Comedia research group. His *'Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators'* [2000] is discussed later in this chapter and in Chapters Eight and Ten. The relationship between Comedia, DEMOS and New Labour policy is explored in this chapter and outlined in Figure Two p.132). Despite having only limited time and, consequently, few policy impacts, these theoretical and subsequent policy initiatives did provide a theoretical template for other Labour-controlled councils attempting to regenerate their inner cities (Bianchini 1991). The move to a cultural industry approach marked a seismic theoretical and political shift as indicated by Jim McGuigan (1996, p.83);

This shift can be described as moving away from an idealist arts patronage model, which was qualified to some extent by community arts, towards a materialist model of cultural exchange, signified by the terminology of 'industry' and 'markets'.

Although the policy shift contained within this theory was not to be realised because of the imminent abolition of the GLC, much of the thinking informed the cultural

strategy of then opposition Labour Party. This policy marked a huge discursive shift in the theorizing of culture away from the accepted mode of idealist cultural analysis within liberal democracy (both on the left and the right), which viewed culture in opposition to material and economic reality, to one where culture is viewed as being inherently embedded within those processes (if the link with a political economy of production is lost, then this approach can be - and is some contemporary instances is - usurped within a wider neo-liberal programme).



**Figure Two:** The nexus of writers associated Comedia and DEMOS and their influence over New Labour cultural policy and Creative city/cultural planning strategies.

### 6.3 New Labour: A New Way?

*'Things can only get better'* D-ream

When New Labour were elected to the irritatingly catchy rhythm of Derry's D-ream's dance pop anthem, there was the feeling within the cultural community that things were indeed about to 'get better'. The election of New Labour and its immediate association with all things cultural seemed to herald a change in Labour's relationship to culture: gone was the paternalism of old, rooted in anachronistic conceptions of culture as opposed to the market and in came culture, popular and marketable, befitting of a young Prime Minister and what the New Labour spin machine titled 'Cool Britannia'<sup>2</sup>. For the cultural sector things may or may not have got better; as this chapter will demonstrate, however, they certainly got more confusing.

Before analysing cultural policy specifically, this section will provide a general political context for a consideration of New Labour. It will argue that the party's approach to culture is consistent with much of the wider political moves in that it attempts to negotiate a path between the economism of neo-liberalism and the traditional social justice concerns of left of centre politics.

There has been much debate around New Labour's 'Third Way' policy as an identifiable and coherent political strategy; some commentators (Callinicos, 2001) dismiss it as little more than a rhetorical smokescreen, while others (Giddens 1994, 1998) defend it as an articulate, justifiable and necessary political strategy, born out of

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<sup>2</sup> This PR tagline not only distanced Britain from the imperial past (it was a pun on 'Rule Britannia') but invoked the counter cultural kudos associated with 'coolness'.

a political imperative to adapt to a changing political and economic 'landscape'.<sup>3</sup>

While there is little doubting the fact that New Labour policies can, at times, verge on rhetorical vacuity, this study does not support theories that dismiss its politics as nothing more than empty rhetoric; Alan Finlayson, while attempting the somewhat unenviable task of 'Making Sense of New Labour', rightly rebuts the sometimes facile dismissal of its political thinking as merely rhetorical;

However weak critics may find the Third Way, and the ideology of New Labour, they will get nowhere by refusing to take seriously what is being argued. The Third Way is not just cynical spin and the very fact that its advocates exist, and are attempting to provide some kind of analysis, is surely evidence of this. (Finlayson, 2003 p. 47)

Other critics who do not dismiss New Labour as mere rhetoric view the New Labour 'project' as the wolf of neo-liberalism dressed up in the sheep's clothing of social democracy: Stuart Hall (cited in Finlayson 2003, p.87), for example, while favouring this view, employs a more diabolical metaphor when claiming that New Labour is a 'double regime', 'speaking with a forked tongue', where the party's social democracy is a veneer for an inherently conservative agenda; Hay and Watson (1999 p.172) make a similar claim when they argue that 'New Labour's Third Way exhibits..... neo-liberal economic sensibility camouflaged in the legitimating rhetoric of neo-communitarianism'. This study shares these concerns and will argue that within the urban cultural regeneration approach adopted under New Labour it is primarily neo

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<sup>3</sup> The term 'Third Way' is used here somewhat reluctantly as debates over its origin and efficacy are somewhat passé. Added to this, perhaps because of press hostility and supposed vacuity of the term, New Labour is reluctant to employ it in policy discourse (Finlayson, 2003 p.106). However, when it is employed here it is used to indicate a political programme that attempts to negotiate a path between neo-liberalism and social democracy.



liberal economic objectives which are being pursued, albeit increasingly couched within a legitimating discourse of social democracy.

While much of New Labour's political thinking around globalisation and the 'new economy' was developed within the centre left of American politics, many of the political ideals which evolved (or some would say mutated) into New Labour policy emerged from the British left and a loose body of writing which became known as 'New Times'. The New Times 'position'<sup>4</sup> was formulated within a series of articles within the journal *Marxism Today* whose contributors included Tony Blair himself, Geoff Mulgan, Charles Leadbetter and indeed Stuart Hall who, although a vociferous critic of New Labour, has written 'I feel a peculiar responsibility for the Blair phenomenon....we're responsible for launching some of these new ideas which have been appropriated cosmetically and installed in a different kind of project' (Hall, 1997 cited in Finlayson, 2003, p.117). While certainly not Marxist in its outlook, the New Times project was certainly Marxist in its form of analysis in that it linked forms of production to changes in class relations, state forms and individual identities: 'it thus pursues the far-reaching scope of explanation and connection between disparate phenomena that has previously been expected of Marxist political economy' (Rustin, 1990 p.303) (it could be argued that New Times saw Stuart Hall adopt the kind of political economic perspective that cultural studies was seen to have lost under his stewardship - see Chapter Five). These authors were writing within the left tradition and highly influenced by Gramscian hegemony theory, seeing the success of

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<sup>4</sup> Writers who helped formulate some of the ideas grouped under the 'New Times' banner themselves recoiled from identifying it as a 'position' or a 'project': 'we use the word "project" advisedly. "New Times" is not, and was never intended to be, a position. Some critics have sought to interpret "New Times" as a new line, an orthodoxy. This is to misunderstand what is involved' (Hall and Jacques, 1990, p.11).

Thatcherism not in terms of classic Marxist analysis around struggle or exploitation but, instead, as an hegemonic project which managed to construct a sense of unity out of social and economic difference which they related to the economic structures of the period:

the New Times argument is that the world has changed, not just incrementally but qualitatively, that Britain and other advanced capitalist societies are increasingly characterised by diversity, differentiation and fragmentation, rather than (sic) homogeneity, standardisation and the economies and organisations of scale which characterised modern mass society.

(Hall and Jacques, 1990, p.11)

Fundamental to this thinking was that there was now a new phase of economic development due to the impact of IT on industrial organisation and consumer lifestyle which promoted a particular set of values associated with postmodernism; this is highlighted in the *Manifesto for New Times* which reads;

At the heart of new times will be production based on a shift to information technology and microelectronics. New technology allows more intensive automation and extension for large to smaller companies, pulling together the shop floor and the office, the design loft and the showroom. It allows production to be both more flexible and integrated.

(Hall and Jacques, 1990 p.25)

Such economic restructuring, it was argued, both disrupted classic class formations and undermined traditional forms of identity which now found expression in areas such as consumption, lifestyle and sexuality. These ideas were applied to urban politics by Geoff Mulgan, whose theorising around the 'soft infrastructure' of cities and the economic importance of 'milieu' (articulated within COC08 as being 'cool' or

having a 'buzz') is a clear antecedent of the 'creative city' discourse deconstructed below:

the success of the post-Fordist industrial districts such as Silicon Valley has also focused attention on the economic role of milieu, the social atmosphere of an area and profession within which people develop new ideas.

(Mulgan, 1990 p.270)

In both *New Times* and, subsequently, New Labour thinking, the economic restructuring resulting from the movement from a Fordist to a post-Fordist paradigm, provided the analytical lens through which to view Thatcherism's achievement in superseding Keynesianism as the hegemonic force in British politics. It contended that the language and the political strategies of the left were somewhat anachronistic in the 'new times' and with such a formidable adversary:

this was not least because the Left was faced with a new protagonist- one which it did not really understand, though always thought it did. It fought this new protagonist- Thatcherism- on old ground, with old ideas and old practices, on the basis of an old analysis and an old political agenda. It was akin to employing the cavalry against the tanks- and had much the same, predictable result. The Left got splattered and dispersed.

(Hall and Jacques, 1990 pp.14-15)

In 1993 following the winding up of *Marxism Today* its former editor, Martin Jacques, and contributor and Comedia writer, Geoff Mulgan, formed the think tank DEMOS. These authors brought with them many of the ideas originally formulated within the *New Times* position, especially with regards to the new economy, its relationship to national government, and the importance of culture in the processes of social change. The notion that the new economy somehow emasculated national government became part of an orthodoxy, both within New Labour and think tanks

closely associated with its policy construction: a DEMOS collection on the Third Way, produced shortly after the 1997 General Election, spoke of;

The profound forces of globalisation, which have sharply altered the operating environment for government. Governments can no longer easily erect barriers to the exchange of money, regulate precisely what media their citizens consume, insulate their economies from global business cycles or pursue autonomous defence strategies. One of the core challenges is that of achieving the transition to an economy based on the intensive application and development of knowledge.

(DEMOS, 1997 p.121)

The argument that we are entering into a new economic era with certain social and economic conditions which call for a different form of politics was also forwarded by a key author of the Third Way, sociologist Anthony Giddens. Giddens argued for a form of politics which would fundamentally challenge the principal doctrines that underpinned the traditional Left's attempts to counter the excesses of capitalism through the state;

if social democrats are to have real purchase on the world their doctrines have to be rethought as radically as half a century ago when social democracy originally broke away from Marxism.

(Giddens, 1998 p.41)

According to Giddens' analysis, old ideas of Keynesianism and socialism are now obsolete and, as a result, concepts of knowledge and control need to be rethought to fit a society too complex, too fluid and diverse to be managed by a central state. This notion that the 'Third Way' is somehow beyond ideology is built upon the idea that there are certain fundamental societal changes which render 'polarized' political positions passé and, consequently, traditional left/right affiliations/ideologies need to

be 'synthesised' (or in New Labour discourse 'transcended') through a new, ideologically unfettered politics. The concept of 'ideology' is used here pejoratively - it has been suggested that this is, in part, an attempt to distance New Labour from 'Old Labour' left 'ideologues' - though this 'anti-ideological turn' (Weltman and Billig, 2001) can seem to result in 'politics without adversaries' (Mouffe, 1990).

This 'post-ideology', 'anti-adversarial' politics manifests itself rhetorically in the confluence of traditional right and left discourses, brought together in a series of equivalencies from which New Labour offers a rapprochement or 'Third Way': 'enterprise and fairness', 'economic dynamism and social justice', 'ambition and compassion' (Fairclough, 2000 p.43) and, as this study will argue, between economic and social instrumentalism within cultural policy (as well as between intrinsic and instrumentalist assumptions generally). Fairclough, however, correctly points out that constructing elements as equivalent masks hierarchical and asymmetrical relations: economic dynamism can cause social injustice while education that stresses liberation can often militate against the best interests of the national economy.

As well as offering equivalencies which implicitly suggest a rapprochement, New Labour discourse also explicitly stresses reconciliation between formerly antithetical concepts. These reconciliations often find expression through the favoured New Labour formulation of 'not only but also' or a stressed 'and', as well as 'yet also' which, while drawing attention to the assumed incompatibilities between the two concepts, simultaneously denies them. By the use of this construction the authors of the 'Third Way' do not claim to find a compromise between the two opposing themes but, instead, to 'transcend' them. However, because of its ideological

heterogeneity/promiscuity attempts to locate the Third Way along a traditional political continuum could, in fact, be self defeating (some advocates of the 'Third Way' would argue that such distinctions are, in fact, passé thus rendering such attempts anachronistic).

What is of interest to this study are the inherent contradictions within New Labour thinking generally and cultural policy specifically and the notion that the New Labour policy somehow 'transcends' ideology; in many ways this study sees the Third Way much in the same manner as Weltman and Billig (2001 p.25) who see the Third Way as a camouflage for a shift to the right in British politics and argue that it is 'an ideology that denies its ideological character'.

#### **6.4 Cui Bono?: New Labour and Instrumentalism in Cultural Policy**

*'Tell Gordon'* Tessa Jowell 'Building Tomorrow: Culture in Regeneration' (Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> 2003)

Having discussed New Labour's political project in general, the chapter will now consider its specific approach to culture; an approach which through its offering of both an economic and social justification for cultural funding fits into the general New Labour template outlined above.

New Labour's justification for cultural policy was based upon a combination of both economic instrumentalism - expressed through a discourse of 'creativity industry'- and a form of social instrumentalism drawn from policy initiatives formulated around social exclusion. These mixed, overlapping and theoretically inconsistent economic and social instrumentalist approaches are, at times, actually conflated within a discourse of 'creativity', and find their expression within the urban sphere under the

loose policy template which this study will identify as a 'cultural planning/creative city' strategy.

New Labour's celebration of the 'cultural industries' was heralded in its 1997 document 'Create the Future: a strategy for cultural policy, arts and the creative economy'; this document which promotes the economic instrumentalist position adopted by New Labour begins with a quote from John Ruskin emphasising the cathartic effects of the arts : 'a person who every day looks upon a beautiful picture, reads a page from some good book, and hears a beautiful piece of music will soon become a transformed person- one born again' (Labour Party, 1997 p.3). The new approach to culture was celebrated in the document's Forward by then opposition leader Tony Blair who links the arts to cultural industry to promote a 'creativity' discourse that would become pervasive within New Labour's cultural strategy;

for too long, arts and culture have stood outside the mainstream, their potential unrecognised by government. That has to change, and under Labour it will..... in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are going to see the world increasingly influenced by innovation and creative minds. Our future depends on our creativity. And the arts and cultural industries, broadly defined, are at the cutting edge of the industries of the future.

(Labour Party, 1997 p.6)

This economic instrumentalism is then supplemented by a social instrumentalist argument forwarded by Jack Cunningham, Shadow Heritage Secretary;

the arts and cultural activities are an essential part of intellectual development for everyone. They stimulate, challenge and inform us through shared experiences. The arts strengthen communities as well as defining them. (Labour Party, 1997 p.6)<sup>5</sup>

The combination of social and economic instrumentalism is again highlighted in the Introduction which argues that:

we believe that the quality of our arts and cultural industries, our creative talents exemplify the Age of Achievement which will be the hallmark of the next Labour government. They are central to the task of re-establishing a sense of community, of identity and of civic pride, the undermining of which has so damaged our society. (Labour Party, 1997 p.9)

The adoption of an instrumentalist discourse articulated within a cultural/creative industry strategy found its institutional expression in the renaming of the National Heritage Department (the DNH was ridiculed within political circles as the Department of Nobody Home) as the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Central to this was the aim both to project a forward looking image ('heritage' was seen to connote backwardness) and to recast culture from the 'ministry of fun' to being a central concern within the governmental apparatus. The arguments around the centrality of culture that were first outlined in Labour's 'Create the Future' document were further developed by Chris Smith in one of his first post-election speeches - at the time he was still referred to as Secretary of State for National Heritage - an address to the Royal Academy which began with the bold assertion that

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<sup>5</sup> The final forward is given by Mark Fisher former Comedia author and then Shadow Arts Minister- see Figure Two p.137.



'within the new Government my Department is no longer a political afterthought' (Smith, 1998 p.2). With the repositioning of the Department at the centre of politics, it was essential that the DCMS justify cultural funding along instrumentalist lines; culture was, to paraphrase Francois Matarasso (1997), more 'use' than 'ornament' (this move also called into question the arm's length principle as government increasingly sought outcomes for its 'investment' in culture - these tensions will be explored in detail in relation to local government in relation to Liverpool's plans for COC08). This instrumentalist imperative (or 'telling Gordon' as Tessa Jowell [2003] puts it) within a contemporary policy paradigm driven by the need for evidence, can be illustrated by comments made by Chris Smith, who, when going into 'battle' with the Treasury (or 'touching the right buttons' as he calls it) outlines how he would don an instrumentalist hat and forward instrumentalist arguments 'if it helped get more funds into the arts':

unashamedly that when I was Secretary of State, going into what always seemed like a battle with the Treasury, I would try and touch the buttons that would work. I would talk about the educational value of what was being done. I would be passionate about artists working in schools. I would refer to the economic value that can be generated from creative and cultural activity. I would count the added numbers who flock into a free museum. If it helped to get more funds into the arts, the argument was worth deploying.

(Smith, 2003 p.2)

Essentially what Smith is arguing here is that he believes in the intrinsic value of the 'arts', but is playing the instrumentalist game in order to secure funding from the Treasury by providing 'evidence' under the strictures set out in that department's Green Book: it is telling that Smith did not state that he 'believed' the argument but that he felt that it was 'worth employing if it got more funding into the arts'.

The longest serving New Labour Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, makes a similar claim in her provocative essay *Valuing Culture* (Jowell, 2005) where she argues that ‘we need to keep proving’ that culture makes a difference in terms of education and crime, but that the instrumentalist imperative should not override intrinsic argument;

so politicians have enough reasons to support culture and to stop apologising for it by speaking only of it in terms of other agendas. Yes, we will need to keep proving that engagement with culture can improve educational attainment, and can help reduce crime. But we should also stand up for what culture can do for individuals in a way that nothing else can.

This follows the same rhetorical pattern outlined at the beginning of this chapter: prove the instrumentalist argument; believe in the intrinsic. Smith illustrates this further when reflecting on instrumentalism he argues that ‘These are bold objectives. But let us never forget that the primary joy of art is the value it has, of and for itself’ and indeed ends his talk by quoting a piece from William Hazlitt, where he eulogises the arts and directly attacks the kind of utilitarian or instrumental argument that he has just been making (it seems that Smith was, at the time, unaware of the irony of Hazlitt’s depiction of the utilitarian Scot asking ‘what is the use of that?’ in relation to his own forthcoming ‘battles’ with his own ‘utilitarian’ Scot, then at the Treasury, Gordon Brown):

Scotland is of all other countries in the world perhaps the one in which the question ‘what is the use of that?’ is asked oftenest. But where this is the case, the Fine Arts cannot flourish, or attain their high and balmy state..... for they are their own sole end and use, and in themselves ‘sum all delight’. It may be said of the Fine Arts that they ‘toil not, neither do they spin’, but are like the lilies of the valley, lovely in themselves, graceful and beautiful, and precious in the sight of all but the blind. They do not furnish us with food or raiment, it

be true: but they please the eye, they haunt the imagination, they solace the heart. If after you ask the question, Cui bono? There is no answer to be returned.

(Smith, 2003 p.6)

### **6.5 Economic Instrumentalism: New Labour and the Move to Creativity**

*'The arts, business and society all interact, all derive support and enlightenment and life from each other. Creativity in its widest sense is at the heart of much of what we in this country are good at. It is the foundation of a new generation of high-tech., high-skills industries. Ideas are the building blocks of innovation and innovation builds industries'*

Chris Smith MP

*'I've never painted, never written, never taken any photos, but I've always thought of myself as a creative person. Business is my canvas'*

Anita Roddick

While quoting William Hazlitt's dismissal of utilitarianism, the first New Labour Culture Secretary was, simultaneously, articulating a decidedly utilitarian, instrumentalist justification for the financing of culture. New Labour's version of economic instrumentalism was heralded by the publication of the *New Cultural Framework* document (DCMS,1999a) which was, in itself, a response to the 1998 *Mapping Document* (DCMS, 1999b) and a spending review under the title *A New Approach to Investment in Culture* (DCMS, 1999c) earlier in the year. This document signalled what Secretary of State, Chris Smith, indicated as being 'a serious and timely review of the relationship between Government and the cultural world' (DCMS, 1999c p.1); the use of the adjective 'serious' hints at the move from culture being peripheral and inconsequential in relation to the 'real' issues of the economy under the patronage model, to its new position as vital to the economy.

The emergence of an economic discourse is consistent with the increased profile of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport within the governmental apparatus, whereby the Department is answerable to the Treasury and its quantifiable criteria. This move to 'seriousness' is evidenced by the language of the business report proliferating in the section where the Culture Minister outlines his plans for the future: 'strategic', 'outputs', 'streamline', 'efficiency and financial management' - a discourse that could have been drawn straight from Osbourne and Gaegler's (1992) classic new public management text *Reinventing Government*;

To establish a new role for the DCMS, giving it a more strategic place in the complicated structures of cultural policy and funding; to announce a new relationship between us and the bodies we fund to ensure the delivery of appropriate outputs and benefits to the public; to streamline the way we deliver our policies and programmes; and to raise standards of efficiency and financial management across all sectors.

(DCMS, 1999c p.2)

While committing itself to greater 'investment' of public money in the cultural sector the document signals an end to arm's length patronage model within 'a new relationship' where the Department outlines targets;

The announcement in July said a lot about the investment of public money in modernisation and reform, and the return that should be expected for that investment. Three year funding will be accompanied by three year funding agreements and all recipients of funding from DCMS will have a clear responsibility to deliver against demanding output and outcome base targets. These funding agreements will be developed between now and April next year. The advent of resource accounting across Government will ensure that DCMS ties its expenditure to its objectives, and we will need to be assured that public money is being used appropriately to meet public objectives.

(DCMS, 1999c, p.3)

The document signals a further break from a liberal humanist based patronage approach which critics argue favours the artist/producer over the audience/consumer- this reflects the position outlined by Mulgan and Warpole (1986) and Garnham (1990) earlier in the chapter - when it states that New Labour cultural policy would 'reduce bureaucracy by putting an emphasis on the public rather than the producer'. In this New Labour model targets are set and met and the document both in tone and rhetoric becomes increasingly managerialist;

the Government has provided the resources and the will, but we know that we cannot just sit back and hope that these are transformed into better and more accessible performances, sporting records, improved cultural education and more opportunities for the excluded. We will give direction; we will set targets and chase progress; and where appropriate we will take direct action to make sure our objectives are achieved.

(DCMS, 1999c p.4)

This declamatory section draws on political rhetoric- the uses of the 'declarative three's' in conjunction with semi-colons to give thrust, verve and authority in an attempt to delineate this policy from a model of removed patronage: culture will be financed but there will be outputs and objectives which must be met (this drive to quantifiable outputs is articulated through the need not just for participation in sport but, also, the achievement of 'sporting records'). The overriding message of this section is the DCMS is no longer 'the department of fun' but pivotal within government and essential to the economy; the documents ends, in fact, with an even more assertive - indeed aggressive - metaphor that the department intends to

develop stronger links between central and local government to provide a strategic framework within which our common interests can be pursued, take direct action where appropriate to take forward our objectives and, if necessary bang heads together to solve problems

(DCMS, 1999c p.6)

A cornerstone of this economic justification for cultural funding (indeed somewhat of a 'mantra' within cultural policy and contemporary urban cultural regeneration initiatives) is the ubiquitous yet highly ambiguous concept of 'creativity'. This next section will attempt, primarily through the lens of political economy, to decipher what the origins of the discourse of creativity are (creativity and economic instrumentalism are considered; however, as will be discussed later in this chapter, creativity becomes a key legitimizing discourse within both economic and social instrumentalism). It will then explain how this was linked to a version of the knowledge economy - primarily based around high tech industry - to provide the arts with its long sought after economic justification (Chapters Seven and Nine will illustrate how cities competing for COC08 draw upon creativity and its association with the knowledge economy as part of their marketing strategies) .

### **6.5.1 New Labour and Creativity**

The move to 'creativity' within cultural policy discourse, far from being an inconsequential semantic adjustment, instead signalled a fundamental realignment in how cultural policy is theorised. Garnham (2005), in his interrogation and deconstruction of the discourses around 'creativity' and 'creative industries' which emerge from this shift, is correct when he argues that although the term is virtually hegemonic in policy, identifying what exactly is being referenced is somewhat problematic;

creativity serves as a slogan, as a shorthand reference to, and thus mobilises unreflectively, a range of supporting theoretical and political positions.....this lack of reflexivity is essential to its ideological power. It disguises the very real contradictions and empirical weaknesses of the theoretical analyses it mobilises, and by so doing helps to mobilise a very disparate and often potentially antagonistic coalition of interests around a given policy thrust. It

assumes that we already know, and thus can take for granted, what the creative industries are, why they are important and thus merit supporting policy initiatives.

(2005, p.15)

Before engaging with the 'antagonistic coalition of interests' that constitute the discourse of 'creativity', 'creative industries' and in particular 'creative cities', it is important to distinguish it from its theoretical predecessor, 'cultural industry'. The seemingly inherent contradiction within the term 'cultural industry' was deliberate when first mooted by Adorno and Horkheimer, as it was employed for polemical reasons to highlight what they saw as a paradoxical linkage between its two key components, culture and industry (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979)<sup>6</sup>. For Adorno and Horkheimer societal division was not the result of a manipulative use of ideology and propaganda but, rather, the result of a general shift to the commodification of cultural products, and the alienation of the cultural producer as a wage labourer within increasingly concentrated large-scale corporations. However, the term re-emerged in the 1970's without its pejorative baggage to refer to an economic sector that dealt with cultural products. For political economists the cultural sector had two meanings: the first, influenced by information economics, related to the special features of the economic structure and dynamics of symbolic production, distribution and consumption; the second referred to the processes of concentration whereby formerly distinct industries of print publishing, film, broadcasting and music were mutating into a unified, global economic sector which militated against the creation of policies

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<sup>6</sup> The Frankfurt School has been dismissed because of its overly deterministic stance. While it is easy (and right) to denigrate their mass culture theory as 'elitist', one must be careful not to dismiss their work out of hand: as Thomas Frank (1997, p.11) argues 'the tumult of the 1960's is impossible to understand apart from the central fact that the mass culture critique was, if not populist, enormously popular'.

and regulations for industries in isolation. This increasingly interrelated economic sector was further affected by advances in technologies of distribution and, as will be discussed in detail later, debates emerged in relation to the changing nature of such distribution. Originally within the cultural industries, profits were returned to the controllers of the technological distribution systems rather than producers of the cultural product. However, it was argued that with the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT's) and digitalisation, control and profit would move to the cultural producer, rather than those in control of the means of distribution. Thus to fully appreciate the move from 'cultural' to 'creative' industry it is essential that theories around ICT are rigorously dissected.

The discourse of the 'information age' or 'information society' is fundamental to this study in that it drives much contemporary cultural and economic policy. In order to understand the supposed impact of information technology upon the economy, a brief overview of the political economy of what has been identified as the cultural industries is first needed. According to Caves (2000), there are three main attributes which distinguish cultural industry from other forms of industrial production: the first of these relates to the high fixed costs of production and low to zero costs of reproduction and distribution; the second contends that the demand for a cultural product is uncertain - what Caves (2000) calls 'nobody knows'- whereby there is a high risk in investment thus favouring those with the greatest resources since they are able to endure the losses on failed products; thirdly the cultural product is inherently a public good in that the symbol is not destroyed in consumption and thus there is a huge difficulty in maintaining exclusivity - one person's consumption of a cultural good or service in no way diminishes another's enjoyment of it. Thus, within the



cultural industries, the normal market relation between the producer and consumer does not apply (this explains the need for intervention and the importance of intellectual property to the sector). It is within this latter category that the economic importance of ICT's is seen to rest, as material benefit is derived from complex contractual relationships over Intellectual Property, whereby profit is extracted at key nodes along a value chain and 'creative labour' is exploited not, as in classical Marxist analysis in terms of surplus value, but through contracts determining the distribution of profits to rights' holders - as Caves (2000) argues these are often negotiated from positions of unequal power, where the controllers of technological distribution systems retained the profit rather than the original producers of the cultural product or service.

ICT revolution theory, however, challenges these basic assumptions over the political economy of the production of cultural goods. Central to this are theories of post-industrialism (Bell, 1973) and human capital theory where technological innovation is seen as the driving force of capitalist growth and within which ICTs provide the tools of scientific discovery - it should be noted that in this theory the core information workers are scientists not artists and that 'creativity' applies to the application and thought and imagination that characterises all human labour. This was inflected by Schumpeterian ideas that capitalism progresses through competition in innovation; ICTs being the new generation of products which have been driving this new long wave of capitalist growth. The basis of the creativity discourse within innovation in science has been lost and Garnham argues that it has been appropriated/hijacked by the 'artistic' sector to provide an economic justification for its interests:

I would want to argue that the shift to creative industries has been the attempt to capture the current prestige of this theory of innovation, and the very general

concept of 'creativity' that accompanies it, for a sector and a group of workers to whom it does not really apply. Even worse, in many cases, advocates of the creative industries approach wish to appropriate for themselves, as "artists", the attribute of creativity and exclude science and technology.

(Garnham, 2005 p.22)

The subsequent ubiquity of discourses around IT and the 'information society' within policy has resulted in both cultural and educational policies being aimed at fostering 'creativity'; however, labour market analysis suggests that the move to a post-industrial economy has resulted in jobs within the service rather than the amorphous 'creative' sector - the 'waiting not creating' thesis that will be discussed later in this study. It is thus through the appropriation of high tech industry within the discourse of creativity that culture becomes central to the country's economic development and the cultural sector finds an economic justification. While such instrumentalist arguments have become hegemonic it is the contention of this study that they lack both empirical robustness and philosophical continuity and can act, as Mirza (2006) suggests, as little more than a 'mantra' within governmental policy.

The discourse of creativity underpinned much of the initial cultural policy analysis within the DCMS, especially within the thinking of the first Culture Secretary Chris Smith. Smith's invocation of a creativity discourse is most clearly articulated in his collection of essays entitled *Creative Britain* (1998) where he argues that creativity is an all encompassing concept through which Britain will be both socially regenerated and economically rejuvenated;

this is a book which is about creativity. It is about the cultural ferment and imaginative heights to which creativity leads, the enormous impact that both creativity and culture have on society and the growing importance to the

modern economy of Britain of all those activities and industries that spring from the creative impulse.

(Smith, 1998 p.1)

Throughout this work Smith argues forcefully that culture pays and 'proves' this through the alignment of the arts with technology, claiming that both are driven by creativity: as an example of this he points to the creation of organisations such as NESTA (National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts) which, according to Smith, is about 'pulling down the artificial barriers between science, technology and the arts, because in the worlds of new design techniques and multimedia and digitized images such barriers are becoming meaningless as well as counter-productive' (1998, p.8). The basis of Smith's economic justification is outlined in a speech he made to the Thirty Club on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1998, where he argues that the new economy relies on innovation and creativity and that it is 'cultured individuals' or those who 'work in the traditional creative sector' (the arts) who have the creative talent that the business world now needs;

creativity in its widest sense is at the heart of much of what we in this country are good at. It is the foundation of a new generation of high-tech, high-skills industries. This is especially true in a mature industrial economy such as ours. If Britain is to build new industries which fully exploit new technologies and capture new markets, then we are going to need our share of creative, cultured individuals. Those who work in the traditional creative sector therefore have a lot to offer the business world.

(Smith, 1998, p.9)

New Labour had demonstrated this commitment to 'creativity' by the formation of the Creative Industries 'Task Force'. The work of the Task Force fed directly into the

1998 Mapping Document (DCMS, 1999b) which listed the Creative Industries as: art and antiques; architecture; crafts; design; designer fashion; film; interactive leisure software; music; performing arts; publishing; software; television and radio (as explained earlier the 'cultural industries' plus software design). This document sets out in clear terms both what each category represents (for example art and antiques covers 'dealers and auctioneers of antique jewellery, clocks and watches, paintings, drawings, prints/maps, sculpture and ceramics, antique furniture, silver and coins, 20<sup>th</sup> century memorabilia and textiles, costumes, carpets and rugs') and, most importantly, their contribution to the economy (DCMS, 1999b, p.4). The nebulous nature of this category - which will be illustrated in Chapter Nine's deconstruction of the job projections which accompanied Liverpool's winning bid - can be illustrated by the fact that a dealer in carpets is categorized as part of the creative industries.

Another basic contradiction at the heart of attempts to give the traditional arts an economic justification can be seen in the document's celebration of the performing arts on economic grounds. It defines the performing arts as 'ballet, contemporary dance, opera, drama and music theatre. It embraces the core activities of content origination, production, performance, touring, costume design and making, set making, lighting and sound' and states that revenue from these performing arts consists of £883m, 'of which 44% comes from private sources (box office, donations and business sponsorship) while 56% 'comes from public sector sources' (DCMS, 1999b p.6). The mixed discourses around cultural funding are clearly evident in this circular, self-fulfilling argument whereby public money, granted under the patronage model, is used as an indicator of revenue generated from the performing arts and, as such, a justification of its economic importance so justifying its funding from the

public purse. This attempt to find an economic justification is stretched to 'secondary economic impacts' when the document states that 'the live performing arts are an important training ground for participants in other creative industries, whether content creators, performers or producers, including film, television, radio, the music industry and advertising' (DCMS, 1999b p.6). Particularly revealing here is the appropriation of ICT revolution theory to suggest an association between those involved in the performing arts and 'content creation' within ICT's; it fails to explain how being trained in the performing arts equips one for providing content within the digital revolution.

### 6.5.2 Creative Cities

*'A successful creative economy is one of the Government's priorities, and a key source of jobs of the future. The only way that we will compete in these new sectors is through the talents of our people'*

Tony Blair

*'Creativity is the Icing, not the Cake'*

Max Nathan

As has been illustrated, much of the reinterpretation of culture and reconsideration of cultural policy has taken place within the urban setting, with urban cultural regeneration/renaissance at the forefront/faultline of the ideological shift from state subsidy and public provision to that of market maximisation. This chapter has already discussed the emergence cultural industry within the urban sphere; it will now unpack the various strands that feed into the promotion of 'creativity' within urban cultural planning.

In parallel to the move to a cultural industry strategy within Labour Party politics generally, was a shift to the incorporation of cultural policies as a focus for regeneration. An element within these strategies was an attempt to forge a European influenced reclamation of the city as a public space, in reaction to the property-led retail revolution of the 1980's which resulted in increased homogenisation and privatisation of city centre living. The influence of cultural policy within European regeneration was celebrated by Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) in their influential 'Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration' which argued that investment in culture results in economic growth (as with much cultural regeneration literature there is little evidence or detailed economic analysis of the type of growth that the celebrated cities actually enjoyed). Bianchini and Parkinson's work advocated an 'holistic cultural planning' approach and along with Charles Landry (Landry and Bianchini, 1995)

argued against the limitations of instrumental reasoning in urban planning and instead called for creative, lateral thinking amongst urban planners.

The writing of Charles Landry is central to the contemporary shift to a discourse of urban creativity (Landry is a central figure within the DEMOS/COMEDIA nexus- not only did he co-author '*The Creative City*' for DEMOS but also '*Beyond Charity: a new settlement to harness the potential of voluntary action*' with Geoff Mulgan [Mulgan and Landry, 1995]). Landry's seminal work in this area is *Creativity: a toolkit for urban innovators* (2000) - Liverpool historian John Belchem discusses the influence of this book when participating in the writing of the Liverpool bid (see Chapter Nine). One of Landry's key arguments is that through rebranding and marketing - which this study argues COC08 primarily is an exercise of- a city can change its image and thus attract talent, precipitating 'a virtuous circle of creativity':

cities increasingly use branding devices such as 'Intelligent', 'Educated', 'Green' or 'Creative City'. These marketing slogans raise expectations and can be mechanisms to focus strategy on reducing the gap between hype and reality..... well-educated marketing campaigns, such as the now famous Glasgow's Miles Better, which successfully recreated awareness of a changing city, can have substantial multiplier effects. This campaign, with its associated culture and inward investment strategies, helped Glasgow to the crown of European City of Culture in 1990. That prize itself helped attract new talent to the city, creating a virtuous circle of creativity.

(Landry, 2001 p.154)

However, discursively, Landry's work on cities has resonance with a wider New Labour discourse which ignores the structural and emphasises the cultural ; he argues that 'human cleverness, desires, motivations, imagination and creativity are replacing location, natural resources and market access as urban resources' (2001, p.3). As evidence of this he cites Glasgow as one of the success stories of pursuing a creative city strategy: in a slight at left urban managerialism, he states that successful cities follow a '*determined, not a deterministic path*' and in a discourse that resonates with the pathologization of the poor within New Labour social exclusion discourse, claims that unsuccessful cities sit 'passively by' and allow decline to take place (2001, p.4). Landry argues that culture is at the heart of creativity, but it is here that his work is lost in the vacuous rhetoric that clouds discourses around creative city thinking (2001, p.7):

cultural resources are the raw materials of the city and its value base; its assets replacing coal, steel or gold. Creativity is the method of exploiting these resources and helping them grow. The key problem was not how to identify them, but how to limit the imagination, as the possibilities were endless.

It is where Landry talks of the 'impact of culture' that the arguments that inform the creative city/cultural planning template frames Liverpool's 08 strategy, emerges:

tourism feeds off culture, yet most tourism focuses on a narrow conception of culture- museums, galleries, theatre and shopping. We could see the positive glow from cultural institutions and how the cultural sector had a direct impact on inward investment by attracting international companies who seek a vibrant cultural life for their employees. In assessing the social and educational impact of culture we saw how they help foster the development of social capital and the organizational capacity to respond to change. Culture can also strengthen social cohesion, increase personal confidence and improve life skills, improve



people's mental and physical well-being, strengthen people's ability to act as democratic citizens and develop new training and employment routes.

(2001, p.8)

Here Landry's work reflects the economic and social instrumentalism of New Labour's approach to culture. On the one hand the culture of a city – meaning its artistic infrastructure - can attract tourists and inward investment (this is an established position within a neo-liberal urban entrepreneurial approach as discussed in relation to Glasgow, although the argument that companies and individuals make locational choices on the basis of culture is disputed- see below). Landry then cites culture's supposed social benefits: it fosters social capital; strengthens social cohesion; increases personal confidence; improves life skills; improves mental and physical well being; strengthens people's ability to act as democratic citizens; and finally develops employment and training routes. Within such an approach creativity is without doubt a panacea for contemporary urban problems.

At a local level (and, to a certain extent at a national level too) Landry's work resonates with and has been married to work emanating from the United States by academic Richard Florida (2002, 2005a, 2005b)<sup>7</sup>. In a recent speech then Creative Industry minister James Purnell (DCMS, 2005 p.1), ties New Labour's ideas on creativity to Florida's thinking and suggests that it has real implications for policy in that 'cities can regenerate themselves through creativity';

Richard Florida's work suggests that an open society will be a prosperous society. A society that is intolerant, afraid of change and uncomfortable with

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<sup>7</sup> These writers do not forward the same argument: Landry's work is concerned with 'creative thinking' in urban planning, while Florida's writing celebrates the emergence of and the importance of his 'creative class' to urban competitiveness. Having recognised this they are drawn together within policy templates celebrating urban creativity and what Peck (2005 p.766) refers to as 'the burgeoning business of manualized local creativity strategies'.

diversity will be a less creative society. A society that shuts down economic migration risks strangling its creative industries.

Florida's thesis has been readily received within Britain-certainly at the local level. The cultural regeneration discourse that emanates from this amongst British urban planning authorities, development coalitions and urban marketing agencies, is that diverse, tolerant or 'cool' cities tend to perform better economically. This turn to creativity is caustically ridiculed by Tom Dyckhoff (2004) who parodies both 'creative/blue sky thinking' discourse and its physical accompaniment 'loft living';

Creativity is, to mayors, the saviour of the Western city, now all its factories have slunk off to China. In Britain every last Nuneaton apes Bilbao. In North America, city halls cling to Richard Florida's book 'The Rise of the Creative Class' as if it were Mao's Little Red Book, an ABC to an enlightened- and profitable- future city, peopled entirely by loft-living blue-skyers.

The result of these theories have been initiatives within UK cities where urban planners have been attempting to create/foster such an environment. Florida's (2002) academic work seeks to interrogate 'creative cities' by linking social diversity, human capital and high-tech industry, which he tests in an empirical study across fifty cities in the United States. To assess this thesis he uses:

- A Bohemian Index which seeks to measure the number of 'creative' people in each area
- A Talent Index measuring numbers of people with degrees
- A Melting Pot Index, assessing numbers of non-native residents
- A Gay Index measuring the numbers of same sex households.

Florida's findings point to two major conclusions: firstly, that bohemianism is spatially concentrated and, secondly, that centres of bohemianism have a skilled population, are ethnically diverse and have a large concentration of high-tech industry. This leads Florida to his series of causal connections and assumptions: a bohemian environment creates a milieu that attracts individuals with high human capital which in turn both attracts and generates innovative, technology-based industries. His later work (Florida, 2005a) develops this to argue that advanced economies are dominated by a Creative Class and because they value cosmopolitanism, ethnic and social diversity they tend to gravitate towards cities which have a 'cool', bohemian feel. Florida outlines the causal linkages in a linear fashion when he states;

The presence and concentration of bohemians in an area creates an environment or milieu that attracts other types of talented or high human capital individuals. The presence of such human capital in turn attracts and generates innovative, technology-based industries.

(Florida, 2005a, p.10)

Florida (2002) provides Dublin as an exemplar of this phenomenon. However, his analysis of the dynamic that saw the rise of the much vaunted Celtic Tiger in many ways highlights the shortcomings within his own theory. He argues that the reasons behind the Irish 'miracle' were rooted in the policies of the Irish Development Authority which, primarily through tax breaks and the lure of a skilled workforce, sought to entice high-tech giants to the country. Added to this was the government's support of Enterprise Ireland which gave generous funding to start-up companies which helped foster a healthy indigenous high-tech sector. While Florida gives only a limited account, these factors have been long established and accepted; however, it is

when Florida turns to the cultural that his arguments are exposed. His description of Dublin as a place where,

the streets team with a mixture of people from button-downed businessmen to geeky software developers, edgy black-garbed artists and bohemian musicians .... a fusion of history and progressiveness, Ireland has turned cities like Dublin into lifestyle centers for dynamic creative people and those who want to be around such amenities

(2002, p.47)

displays the vacuousness and woolly rhetoric of a tourist brochure or soft marketing article. It is when he attempts to provide some concrete evidence to match his rhetoric that his theory is further exposed. He puts forward the notion that Dublin's economic development is related to tax breaks given to artists in the country (something that the Irish government is presently rescinding) and argues that it has led to Dublin retaining its celebrities such as U2, Van Morrison and Liam Neeson (it seems irrelevant the latter two are both from Belfast and Ballymena in the north of the country and that neither live in Dublin - Neeson famously lives in New York). He also cites the Temple Bar area as an example of 'authentic' renewal (despite the fact that most Dubliners see it as both inauthentic and irrelevant to their lives) and in a remarkably crass appropriation of Irish literary culture claims that the pubs in the area are as authentic as they were when James Joyce or Samuel Beckett might have had a pint: Beckett was, in fact teetotal, and both were expatriates, famous for leaving Ireland: Joyce referred to as the 'nets' of Ireland: in fact, as with much of Joyce's work, 'Gas from a Burner', not only ridiculed the kind of easy nationalist sentiment Florida peddles here in the caustic couplet 'o lovely land where shamrock grows, excuse me ladies till I blow my nose' but condemns Ireland as a land 'that always sent, her writers and artists to banishment' (Joyce, 1976). Perhaps these factual inaccuracies

are unimportant in that Dublin is certainly economically successful and is perceived to be a cultural centre and in marketing discourse it is perception rather than reality that is important.

While Florida's work has been enthusiastically received at a local level, it has been tentatively endorsed by the British government with DEMOS (Florida and Tinagli, 2003) working with him to create a British version of his Creativity Index. This study weighted cities according to the number of patent applications per head, non-white residents and levels of gay-friendly services: the top ten British cities according to this index were Manchester, Leicester and London (joint second), Nottingham, Bristol, Birmingham, Brighton, Coventry, Cardiff and Edinburgh. These theories have been enthusiastically endorsed and adopted by planners working within urban regeneration in former industrial British cities, but are open to a number of criticisms.

Essentially the concept of creativity and a creative class has no clear demarcation and, as Nathan (2005) points out, results in any number of anomalies and inconsistencies: funeral directors form part of the Creative Class while pilots do not, while there are few areas of work that do not display a level of creativity. Florida's Gay Index is open to criticism in that he relates the number of 'gay' households to those of single-sex households, ignoring the fact that a lot of shared houses - especially in university towns - are same sex households, while not necessarily gay. A further criticism and - one that is especially relevant to urban planners in the UK - is that made by Markusen (2005) who points out that the US Metro Areas used in Florida's sample cover both city cores and suburban areas, and that many of those deemed creative by Florida live in the suburban areas. Added to these, numerous studies have shown that far from

being a culturally and socially homogenous group which enjoys city living, those deemed the Creative Classes by Florida have diverse cultural tastes: in fact Champion and Fisher (2004) found that professionals, managers and technical staff were more likely to leave cities than any other group. While discounting the theory that the Creative Classes repopulate urban environments, Champion and Fisher argue that there are economic benefits to a city that is seen as 'cool' or generates a 'buzz' in that it can attract young professionals and students which can, in turn, boost property prices and create primarily service sector employment. These people, however, are not as Nathan (2005) points out, Florida's 'Creative Class' and they gravitate towards the city for consumerism as much, if not more than culture, where shopping and drinking alcohol are greater pulls than museums or performance spaces (though within an appropriation of an anthropological definition of culture these pursuits are deemed 'cultural').

While discounting much of the 'creative city' thesis there are, of course, some elemental truths within it: a pleasant urban environment attracts people and culture is an important element within that environment. However, the turn to culture and creativity - as is the case in much of the discourse within COC08 - is not a panacea for a city's economic and social ills. Culture and creativity within urban planning provides urban authorities with a deliverable development agenda; however they do so within an essentially neo-liberal development framework, which favours interurban competition, middle class consumption, place marketing and, in some cases gentrification. Discourses of creativity are thus central within artistically inflected strategies of place promotion which this study argues COC08 essentially is. Within such a strategy urban cultural assets are repackaged and revalued in terms of economic utility and the success of such strategies are indicated not in terms of job

creation or the alleviation of poverty but, increasingly, in terms of house or property prices which, according to Florida, indicates the desirability of the location (the rise in property prices within Liverpool in the wake of its COC08 award is discussed in Chapter Ten). Within this discourse cities which promote, foster and generate creativity will be seen as 'cool' or 'buzzing'<sup>8</sup> and attract the peripatetic 'creative class'; those 'uncool' cities which follow a 'deterministic' path will stagnate and only have themselves to blame. This urban creativity strategy reworks many of the arguments within urban entrepreneurialism though inflected through a discourse around new technology and in, a British context, is married to arguments around social inclusion. In his comprehensive, incisive and at times witty deconstruction of creative city discourse Jamie Peck (2005 p.766) locates urban regeneration strategies driven by a creative agenda firmly within a neo-liberal entrepreneurial paradigm:

the script of urban creativity reworks and augments the old methods and arguments of urban entrepreneurialism in politically seductive ways....the tonic of urban creativity is a remixed version of this cocktail: just pop the same basic ingredients into your new urbanist blender, add a slug of Schumpeter lite for new-economy fizz, and finish off with a pink twist.

While the urban creativity discourse endorsed within the UK differs somewhat with its (rhetorical) emphasis on the social, it does nonetheless facilitate moves within urban policy that ignore structural inequalities and politics of redistribution for a policy template which aims at generating an image and milieu (buzz, coolness etc.) to attract not only the tourist and footloose capital under the entrepreneurial model of regeneration, but a new 'class' of workers - 'creatives' - who are the key to economic success within the new knowledge based economy.

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<sup>8</sup> Two of the competing cities in COC08 Belfast and Newcastle had used the tagline 'buzzing' in previous urban marketing campaigns.

### **6.6 New Labour and Social Instrumentalism**

As has been illustrated what distinguishes New Labour policy is its attempt to reconcile the economic imperatives of neo liberalism with the traditional social justice concerns of left of centre politics. It is the social element within New Labour's cultural policy discourse which this section now wishes to explore. The section will begin by tracing how through rallying to an 'anthropological' definition of culture and invoking discourses around social inclusion/exclusion New Labour cultural policy articulates a social instrumental justification for cultural funding (it must be noted that this social instrumentalism has an economic inflection since within a social exclusion discourse the ultimate evidence of inclusion and engagement is 'engagement' with the economy - a phenomenon formerly referred to as employment).

New Labour's approach to community draws on various strands of civil society thinking. Delanty (2000), for example, argues that New Labour's Third Way politics draws heavily on the conservative communitarian ideal of civil society; he argues that this is evidenced in its emphasis on strengthening the bonds within communities and its stress on the use of partnership as a means through which community groups can achieve empowerment. In addition to this, however, it might also be argued that New Labour's philosophy is strongly linked to civic republicanism, in which voluntary organisations and associations are brought into projects of local governance. However, this celebration of the local is often justified in economic terms whereby, drawing on liberal individualist notions of civil society, community involvement is a means whereby the citizen is prepared for entry/re-entry into the labour market. The impediments to such 'engagement' with the labour market are often seen as



insufficient social capital, articulated as a cultural (personal and social) deficit which in her influential essay *Government and the Value of Culture* (2004) Tessa Jowell describes as 'poverty of aspiration'. Within New Labour cultural policy discourse generally and in urban cultural planning/creative city strategy specifically, culture is seen to be the key to rebuilding social capital and thus regenerating 'excluded' communities.

As was discussed in Chapter Two, government subsidy for culture could always be seen to follow a social instrumentalist agenda, in that the essential benefits of access to art were seen to cultivate the individual and to reform the 'masses'/ working classes. However, this was articulated within an intrinsic discourse that both smacked of elitism and was anathema within a policy sphere driven by an evidential imperative. Fundamental to New Labour's social justification for cultural funding was Francois Matarasso's then groundbreaking work *Use or Ornament: The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts* (1997). This work was based on research conducted between 1995 and 1997 for the Comedia research group and although Matarasso denies any link to New Labour these denials are more than a little disingenuous as the close associations between Comedia and New Labour are clear. In addition to this Matarasso chaired the hugely influential PAT 10 committee (discussed in detail later) which linked culture policy to the government's social exclusion agenda (Matarasso's role in COC08 is also discussed in Chapter Seven as he was a consultant for the Newcastle/Gateshead bid for the COC08 designation). Matarasso's work drew on various claims from the 'positivist' tradition discussed in Chapter Two around the social impacts of participation in the arts: these claims included arguments that participation in the arts can increase people's confidence and sense of self-worth; encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities ;

provide a route to rehabilitation and integration for offenders; give people influence over how they are seen by others; develop contact between the generations; help people extend control over their own lives; have a positive impact on how people feel (the influence of this work on New Labour cultural policy cannot be overstated: for example the research was cited by the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Chris Smith, in speeches at the Fabian Society conference at the Playhouse Theatre, London, on 19th September 1997, and at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield on 14th January 1998 [Smith, 1998]). What this study essentially attempted was the somewhat unenviable task of rearticulating the arguments of liberal humanism (which as we have seen are rooted in discourses of transcendental aesthetics) within the instrumentalist discourse that pervades contemporary policy making. Not surprisingly Matarasso's work was warmly received at the time and has had a huge influence on how the social justification for cultural funding has been articulated within New Labour policy: in a recent article defending his work, the author accounts for such a warm reception;

The report was largely well received, particularly perhaps by people active in participatory arts work, partly because it showed that the outcomes of work, which had been seen as too "soft" to be taken seriously, could be analysed and described methodically.

(Matarasso 2002, p.337)

What is surprising is that this work was not challenged until 2002; Matarasso (2002, p.337) himself claims that 'the mills of academe grind slow'. When it was challenged it was on two grounds: methodologically and politically. The former position was outlined by Paolo Merli (2002) and contained the following criticisms of Matarasso's

methodology: lack of internal validity (the evaluation process did not appear to be informed by the hypothesis that the exercise aspired to verify empirically); the questions posed by Matarasso were worded ambiguously; there was a lack of control groups; most importantly the study lacked a longitudinal perspective. While this study does not intend to enter into this methodological debate - though it does agree that, if viewed through a rigorous social scientific lens Matarasso's methods are inherently flawed - it must be acknowledged that Matarasso (2002) himself asserts that at no time did he ever claim that his work was a longitudinal social science study. What is of interest, however, is how Matarasso's work was interpreted within the political sphere (the author claims that his work was appropriated as it gave a social justification for cultural funding and was thus a symptom rather than a cause of instrumentalism).

As will be discussed in the next section of this chapter New Labour policy uses works such as Matarasso's to justify cultural funding on social as well as economic instrumentalist grounds (as will be explained these discourses meld within the notion of 'creativity'). However, it is when these arguments are fused with discourses of social exclusion that New Labour's cultural policy becomes a surrogate social policy. While this study supports Merli's position, it must be recognised that such diversion comes from a misappropriation of Matarasso's work and not the work itself: in fact within *Use or Ornament*, Matarasso, in a forthright and at times self-deprecatory section, satirises arguments that seek to use the arts as a surrogate for social policy,

The current problems of British society will not be solved if we all learn to make large objects out of papier-mache, play the accordion or sing Gilbert and Sullivan. Nor will British culture be improved by being sold into bonded labour to a social policy master.

(Matarasso, 1997, p.85)

Despite Matarasso's warnings some contemporary cultural discourse in relation to urban regeneration does seem to suggest that papier-mache making is indeed the most effective way to tackle the country's complex social and economic problems.<sup>9</sup>

The binding of cultural policy to social policy within New Labour came through a welding of cultural and social inclusion/exclusion discourses. This was initially evident within Chris Smith's post election speeches where he claimed that the social justification of cultural funding comes through the celebration of the local and the community as a means of reinventing civil society and encouraging active citizenship, thus fostering both social and economic 'inclusion'. Within these speeches Smith reiterates the argument that one of the main reasons for New Labour's election victory of 1997 was the need to rebuild society and strengthen communal bonds, in which culture had a key role;

it is also vital, however, to remember that culture and creativity have immense intellectual, spiritual and social value as well as economic importance. One of the reasons for New Labour's election victory on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1997 was surely a very simple realization by the British people, after eighteen years of a contrary doctrine, that there is such a thing as society. A realization that we are not isolated individuals but that we achieve our best fulfilment in the interrelationship between the individual and the community of which we are a part.... Culture and the creative activity that give it expression both play

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<sup>9</sup> James Fenton (2004) argues that 'supposing you were a potter, and you went to your bin of clay and scooped out a lump, and threw it on a wheel, and took the result, and baked it, and glazed it, and baked it again, and at this point the minister arrived and asked what you were up to, and you had the wit to say, "I am attacking adult illiteracy" - you would be a very savvy potter indeed. This is precisely the kind of potter the government has been on the look-out for. This is the kind of rhetoric they have wished to reward' and goes on to claim that such thinking where 'an oboe concert is expected to help young mothers escape the poverty trap' is in fact 'Stalinesque'.

an essential role here.... Without culture there can ultimately be no society and no sense of shared identity or worth.

(Smith, 1998 p.4)

Having invoked this broad conception of culture ('culture in its widest meaning') Smith then draws upon a distinctly Arnoldian perspective, that has clear resonances with the reformatory Victorian discourses cited in Chapter Two, when he recounts the experiences of teenage boys in a Bristol housing estate where 'rough' boys have been 'entranced' by the beauty of ballet;

on a rough, tough estate in South Bristol, the teenage boys have been gradually introduced over the last four years to the magical world of ballet and dance. In pursuing this most improbable-sounding conjunction, they have had visiting performances on the estate; they have attended performances and workshops in Cardiff and London; they have learned the hard physical work of dance for themselves; they have been entranced by what they have seen and learned and experienced.

(Smith, 1998 p.8)

These links between culture and the facilitation of social regeneration and the tackling of social exclusion were written into policy following the Social Exclusion Unit's report on Neighbourhood Renewal and the establishment of a Policy Action Team 10 (PAT10) (DCMS, 1999d) to explore the role of culture in promoting social inclusion. The social benefits resulting from an engagement with culture (referenced with the report as 'arts and sport') arise from growing cultural industries and strengthening community bonds:

it is tempting to regard arts and sport as subsidiary and incidental to the task of 'turning round' neighbourhoods with multiple disadvantages. But arts and sport can tackle not only symptoms of social exclusion but also its causes... there are various distinctive contributions which the arts and sport have to offer to (sic) tackling the causes of social exclusion. These can be summarised

under the headings of growing industries, engaging and strengthening local communities and an emphasis on people not buildings or places.

(DCMS, 1999d p.30)

Drawing on Matarasso's work (he chaired the PAT10 committee) the report then expands on this claim to argue that participation in arts and sport activities can effectively contribute to neighbourhood renewal through four key areas: health, crime, employment and education. The Foreword to this report again reflects the mesh of conflicting cultural discourses that would come to dominate New Labour cultural policy for the next eight years (and inform the social instrumentalism within Liverpool's plans for COC08). According to the arguments within this foreword participation in culture and leisure is part of a 'virtuous circle' and that 'culture and leisure have an important role in revitalising and sustaining communities'. While drawing on notions of participation and the building of social capital the document then draws upon assumptions within notions of the intrinsic value of art, by citing as an example of 'sustaining communities' an opera which visited a housing estate in Birmingham (this repeats the Bristol ballet boys example in Creative Britain):

who would expect to enjoy a world class opera on a former 'worst estate' in Birmingham? How many opera companies expect to find an enthusiastic audience there?

(DCMS, 1999d p.22)

These social instrumentalist arguments are then linked by association with economic arguments by the next sentence 'the creative industries are outperforming other areas of the economy in their rate of growth, while people are reconnecting to learning and training through participating (sic) in cultural and sporting activities.' (DCMS, 1999d

p.22). Through this association New Labour introduces the self reinforcing argument that social exclusion is the result of social and cultural capital (culture here articulated along anthropological lines); this can be addressed through the access to culture (generally within the artistic discourse and often drawing upon the normative assumptions within the Arnoldian lineage); this will then help bind community and tackle social exclusion and through fostering creativity lead to economic regeneration (how this manifests itself within the urban sphere will be illustrated in the next section and identified as ‘creative city/cultural planning’).

The link between cultural policy and the fight against social exclusion was incorporated into the strategic aims of the Arts Council which in 2001 published *Addressing Social Inclusion: a framework for action*. As part of this framework the Arts Council commissioned a research project to explore the arts’ role in promoting social inclusion. An aspect of this was the development of a method of evaluation for arts organisations themselves to judge their contribution to fighting social exclusion. This was written by Gerri Moriarty and published as *Sharing Practice* (Arts Council, 2002); Moriarty is head of the organisation Merseyside ACME which was hugely influential in developing the ‘community first’ strategy within the Liverpool bid (see Chapter Nine). The conclusion of the research commissioned within this framework was the publication *The Art of Inclusion* (Jermyn, 2004) - a title shared by one of Liverpool’s key social documents discussed in detail in Chapter Ten.

### 6.7 Excursus: New Labour and the Unresolved Tensions within Cultural Policy

The blend of the intrinsic and the instrumental, the aesthetic and the anthropological, has resulted in New Labour cultural policy being riddled with contradictions and antinomies. While the antinomies at the heart of New Labour cultural policy discourse have been hinted at in speeches by previous Culture Secretaries Chris Smith and Estelle Morris, it was the longest serving minister, Tessa Jowell, who articulated these inconsistencies most clearly in her personal essay *Government and the Value of Culture* (Jowell, 2004). This essay is a clear attempt to shift the axis of cultural interpretation back towards discourses of art and transcendental value based on a definition of culture which not only seems to exclude the anthropological,

culture is a slippery concept. The term is now used in so many senses that one has to start with some definitions and exclusions. In this essay I am talking about the cultural life of the nation, the intellectual and emotional engagement of the people with all forms of art, from the simplest to the most abstruse.

(Jowell, 2004 p.3)

but once again adopts the discourse of liberal humanism ('great art', 'complex art', 'transcendental thrill' and indeed 'mass' culture) that have previously been silenced within New Labour cultural policy discourse. In fact the move towards such a discourse is so profound that the essay can, at times, be read as a polemic against her own department:

too often politicians have been forced to debate culture in terms only of its instrumental benefits to other agendas- education, the reduction of crime, improvements in wellbeing-explaining- or in some instances almost apologising for- our investment in culture only in terms of something else. In political and public discourse in this country we have avoided the more difficult approach of investigating, questioning and celebrating what culture actually does in and of itself. There is another story to tell on culture and it's



up to politicians in my position to give a lead in changing the atmosphere, and changing the terms of the debate

(Jowell 2004, p.8)

However Jowell's essay is far from the cogent rearticulation of the intrinsic position that some cultural commentators interpreted it as (see for example Edgar [2004] or Fenton [2004]). While there is a sense that Jowell is trying to reintroduce transcendental value into cultural policy discourse, for her to wholeheartedly endorse the intrinsic position would be a complete volte face and indeed antithetical to her own Department's espoused position. What Jowell attempts to do is emphasise the value of art in terms of an investment in 'personal social capital', whereby art raises aspiration and thus forms part of New Labour's attempt to fight social exclusion. Jowell's essay thus locates cultural policy within the aims of social inclusion where exclusion is caused in part- if not wholly- by a personal lacking and physical poverty is a result of 'poverty of aspiration';

sixty years ago Beveridge set this country a challenge: slaying the five giants of physical poverty- want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. At the beginning of this century, in a country hugely richer than it was at the end of the second world war, it is time to slay a sixth giant- the poverty of aspiration which compromises all our attempts to lift people out of physical poverty. Engagement with culture can help alleviate this poverty of aspiration - but there is a huge gulf between the haves and have nots.

(Jowell, 2004, p.3)

The change of emphasis initiated by Jowell was virtually completed by her successor in the DCMS, former Creative Industries minister, James Purnell. His first speech as Culture secretary at the National Gallery in London in July 2007 was a 'mea culpa'

(he uses this phrase himself) for the ‘tyranny’ of targets which emerged from instrumentalism and which governed culture for the previous decade (Purnell invents the word ‘targetology’ to describe this [Purnell, 2007]). Discursively this speech invokes a liberal humanist, paternalistic discourse with Purnell repeatedly emphasising ‘art’ and ‘excellence’ throughout (not only does he dispose of the art/culture couplet but he does not mention the word ‘culture’ until paragraph seventeen of the speech). The speech not only implicitly celebrates the intrinsic position but explicitly too, with Purnell claiming that ‘the arts matter in themselves’ and ‘that they are intrinsically valuable before they are instrumentally so’ and that the arts’ community ‘no longer needs to quote export figures to get a hearing’ (Purnell, 2007) (Purnell claims that the battle over access is won and as evidence for this uses the example of a production of Punch Drunk Faust in a disused warehouse in Wapping. However, this was for aesthetic reasons and reflects a growing trend for site specific art rather than for reasons of ‘access’. A similar claim by the Oxford bidding team for COC08 is deconstructed in the following chapter).

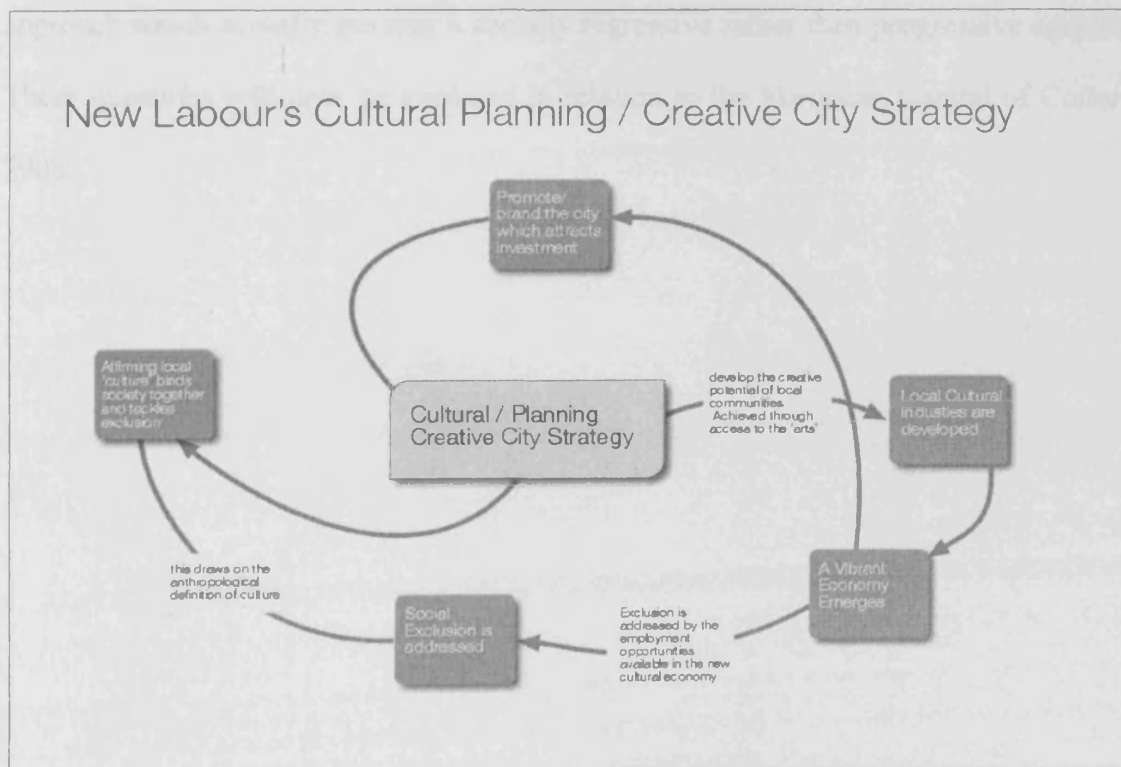
## **6.8 Conclusion**

This long and somewhat dense chapter has analysed the general political context within which contemporary cultural policy operates. It began by outlining how this study conceives neo-liberalism and globalisation and then proceeded to interrogate the political programme of the ‘Third Way’ as a reaction to these phenomena. It has critiqued arguments that present New Labour thinking as transcending old dualisms and has argued that the party’s cultural policy, rather than offering transcendence, draws upon incompatible theoretical positions to form a conceptually incoherent set

of arguments. The most fundamental of these relates to definitions of culture and unresolved tensions in relation to cultural definition itself - this manifests itself in the 'arts and culture' couplet in New Labour cultural policy discourse. Related to this are reconciliations between intrinsic and instrumentalist justifications for cultural funding and within instrumentalism itself between economic and social justifications. The chapter demonstrated, however, that far from a rapprochement there is still considerable friction between an intrinsic and instrumentalist position not least based around unresolved tensions around cultural definition and aesthetic assumptions. This section ended by arguing that the DCMS, aware of these antimonies, have resorted to a reconstituted intrinsic discourse under the somewhat spurious argument that the instrumentalist case has been made.

The chapter then unpacked the complex and interwoven discourses within New Labour cultural policy in relation to urban regeneration which come together in the urban sphere under a loose paradigm which this study has identified as a 'creative city/cultural planning' template. This approach to culture within urban planning clearly demonstrates many of the cardinal features of the 'Third Way' in its pursuit of an economic, entrepreneurial development strategy without, rhetorically at least, abandoning the economically and socially marginal. In part due to its rallying to the anthropological definition of culture, the scope of a 'cultural planning/creative city' strategy is huge, leading it to be seen as a panacea for urban problems. Within this approach culture and creativity are seen as a tool to have the following economic benefits: market a city; attract investment; attract creative people; revive local economies. In addition culture and creativity can have the following social benefits: tackle social exclusion; nurture community; develop creative skills; tackle unemployment. To draw these arguments together a 'cultural planning/creative city'

strategy proceeds by arguing that creativity is fostered, which develops creative industries which in turn creates a vibrant economy (culture based) which helps rebrand the city- this is achieved by the development of the creative capital of the population who, through newly acquired creative skills, become socially included- primarily through engagement with the economy (these strategies are, at times, collapsed together). Thus social inclusion is achieved through economic development which is achieved through fostering creative industries and the cultural capital of communities – this is usually articulated through the intrinsic assumptions of an ‘arts’ discourse, but discursively invokes an anthropological definition of culture; in either sense it is pivoted on an understanding of culture as a force to civilise rather than empower the ‘socially marginal’ (see Figure Three below).



**Figure Three:** New Labour’s cultural planning/creative city strategy.

The chapter thus raises certain fundamental questions in relation to strategies which adopt a 'cultural planning/creative city' approach: how is culture/creativity defined; how is the relationship between economic and social goals conceived; divorced from aesthetics and the principles that underpinned liberal humanism, how can notions of value of the 'transformative' power of culture be articulated and, likewise, how can engagement with culture be argued to be more beneficial to other forms of engagement; what is it within culture that fosters the kind of creativity that is needed within a high-tech economy (if we actually accept that it is hi tech jobs that are emerging); finally, and most importantly within this study, is the move to the cultural simply a means through which New Labour actually avoids engaging with issues relating to structural inequality and, as such does, it simply validate a neo-liberal approach which actually pursues a socially regressive rather than progressive agenda? These questions will now be explored in relation to the European Capital of Culture 2008.

## Chapter Seven: Bidding for Capital of Culture 2008

*'If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.'*

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

*At their inauguration, public leaders  
must swear to uphold unwritten law and weep  
to atone for their presumption to hold office –  
and to affirm their faith that all life sprang  
from salt in tears which the sky-god wept  
after he dreamt his solitude was endless.*

Seamus Heaney

### 7.1 Introduction

In November 1983 the charismatic actress/singer turned Greek politician, Melina Mercouri, invited fellow European culture ministers to Athens and in her trademark tobacco husky voice, proposed the founding of a scheme to celebrate the Culture of great European cities; in the same month of the same year the equally charismatic and newly elected deputy leader of the local Labour party, Derek Hatton, was standing in front of fellow councillors on Dale Street Liverpool imploring them in his nasalised, undulating, Scouse accent to join in a class struggle within this once great 'world' city. It would be safe to surmise that on making her proposal the Greek culture minister's thoughts were far from the port city in the north west of England in the throes of deep political, economic and social unrest. The next three chapters of the thesis will trace the journey of Mercouri's award, the European City/Capital of Culture, from her beloved Athens to the 'people's' beloved Liverpool.

Tracing this journey will begin by this chapter's consideration of the bidding process for the award of the designation of European Capital of Culture 2008 to a British city. Before considering the British interpretation of the award the chapter will consider how Mercuri's proposal was initially interpreted at a European level, before dissecting how this was then re-interpreted by the UK's New Labour government. The chapter will then analyse the responses of the competing British cities which it will argue are written within the theoretical paradigm and discursive terrain of the Third Way and New Labour's cultural planning/creative city strategy discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

## **7.2 History of City/Capital of Culture and European and British Judging Criteria**

The antecedent of the European Capital of Culture was the European City of Culture scheme. As discussed in the introduction the European City of Culture was the result of an initiative by the late Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercuri, when in November 1983 she invited European Community (EC) culture ministers to Athens and forwarded the idea of a project that would promote European integration through European countries' shared cultural traditions.<sup>1</sup> Mercuri's vision was deeply rooted in the arts strand (most particularly the European Cultural Tradition) where it was envisaged as a showcase for cities to celebrate their contribution to European Culture and thus foster closer cultural ties and political and social harmony; she argued for the

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<sup>1</sup> Since culture has never been considered a 'technical competence' of the EC no official definition was forwarded and indeed it was not until the Maastricht Treaty (1992) that the EC first proposed a cultural 'article': this was Article 128 which evolved into Article 151 in the Treaty of Amsterdam stating that the EC should support the 'flowering of the cultures of the member states, while respecting national and regional diversity and bringing common cultural heritage to the fore'.

benefit of the arts from within an intrinsic position and reiterated the arts/economy dualism when she stated 'Culture, art and creativity are not less important than technology, commerce and economics'. The proposal was accepted by the Council of Ministers on 13 June 1985, with Athens declared the first European City of Culture.

The initial formulation as conceived by Mercuri was intended to provide a means of facilitating and fostering EU (or EC at the time) harmony and integration through its shared culture. These integrationist aims of the event were outlined in the EC directive (7081/85 Brussels, 4 June 1985 Cult 64):

The Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs consider that the European City of Culture event should be the expression of a culture which, in its historical emergence and contemporary development, is characterised by having both common elements and a richness born of diversity. The event has been established to help bring the peoples of the Member States closer together, but account should be taken of wider European cultural affinities.

Within this directive it was decided that a city from each member state should hold the award annually, on a rotational basis, with the final decision resting with the respective government of the state nominated for that year. The first winner of the award and the only city to have celebrated its year when the competition for 1990 began was Athens, home of the scheme's initiator. The year of Athens was true to the initial formulation, in that it was, essentially, an arts celebration aimed at promoting Athens' contribution to the European Cultural Tradition; as a festival, little thought was given to the event's legacy or impact (Palmer Rae, 2002). The fact that, initially, the event was seen primarily as an Arts Festival resulted in a short term focus within the strategies of all early European City of Culture winners- Athens 1985, Florence



1986, Amsterdam 1987, Berlin 1988, Paris 1989 (Palmer Rae, 2002). Glasgow 1990, however, deviated from this in several ways. As has been discussed in Chapter Four, Glasgow won the award following the kind of inter urban competition promoted under a neo-liberal political agenda within Britain - the previous winners had been designated by their respective governments. In addition Glasgow's award mirrored neo-liberal economic justifications for cultural funding whereby the scheme was seen as means of providing a catalyst for urban regeneration within the city.

This initial formulation was amended by Decision 1419/1999/CE - which itself was amended by Decision 649/2005/CE. This amendment not only renamed the accolade 'the European Capital of Culture', but also set out a chronological list of Member States entitling them to host the event in turn; it was here that the UK was awarded the 2008 designation.<sup>2</sup> Although this changed Mercuri's initial proposals, the original thrust of the scheme as a vehicle through which European cities could express and celebrate their contribution to the European cultural tradition was reiterated. These changes were influenced by a report from the influential Palmer Rae Associates which suggested that there was a loss of focus on the European and cultural elements of the scheme in favour of economic regeneration (somewhat ironically, one of the report's authors, Robert Palmer, was the Director of Culture for the city of Glasgow from 1987-1997, whose City of Culture year was the first to promote an economic regeneration agenda. Palmer is now Director of Culture and Cultural and National Heritage at the Council of Europe). It is worthwhile quoting at length two of the major findings of the Palmer Rae report, as these findings and their criticism of politicisation of culture and its use for economic and social purposes, match those of this study:

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<sup>2</sup> This amendment recognised 'problems in the selection process laid down in Decision No 1419/1999/EC and recommended monitoring the proposals in order to enhance the European dimension, improving competition and redefining the role of the panel.'

ECOC has encompassed the rhetoric of cultural, social, urban regeneration, economic, marketing, creative and European goals simultaneously. Although it may not be possible to set limits for the goals of each ECOC, the expectations set by cities needs to be formulated more precisely to achieve realistic outcomes.

Culture as a unifying concept has not been the central focus of ECOC. The cultural dimension has often been overshadowed by political ambitions and by other primarily non cultural agenda.

(Palmer Rae, 2002 p.188)

In the light of these recommendations the European directive clearly stated that the overarching aim of the Capital of Culture is that various European cities should be allowed the exposure through which they could celebrate their contribution to European culture and, through this, facilitate in fostering some level of European integration and understanding.

While the document does not forward the social instrumentalist agenda discussed in Chapter Six in relation to New Labour 'creativity city/cultural planning' approach, it does promote a social agenda in its concern with 'access', implicitly referencing the liberal humanist assumption that access to art alone is good for the individual. This assumption, which underpinned a paternalistic arts policy - and which was critiqued in Chapters Two and Six - focussed on 'bringing people to the arts', with the implicit assumption that this will have positive benefits. This drive towards increasing access emerges as a reaction to criticisms of the elitism of previous City of Culture years. As a result the Prologue involves an analysis of the previous City of Culture scheme and,

in part, appears to be written in dialogue with criticisms of previous winners of the accolade in terms of access and lasting social benefits of hosting the COC award:

whereas the positive impact has none the less not always produced results lasting beyond the duration of the project itself and whereas, while recognising their competence to decide about the content of their project, the attention of public decision-makers in the cities chosen should be drawn to the need to integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process.

To ensure the mobilisation and participation of large sections of the population and, as a consequence, the social impact of the action and its continuity beyond the year of the events.

(European Union, 1999 p. 3)

The main objective of the scheme, however, is consistent with Mercuri's original formulation as a means to use culture to promote and foster European identity and harmony: this clearly stated in Article 1;

A Community action entitled "European Capital of Culture" shall be established. Its objective shall be to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens.

(European Union, 1999 p.1)

As will be illustrated later in the chapter, this European integrationist focus is, however, somewhat lost in the British interpretation of the scheme, becoming merely one of the eleven questions posed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to the competing cities. This realignment of focus and subsequent tension between the EC and British interpretations is discussed by Yvette Vaughan Jones, author of the Cardiff bid for COC08, who argues that Europe wanted to move away from the

economic, regenerative focus that drove the British competition and which most commentators felt secured the award for Liverpool:

there is a tension between how Europe and Britain viewed the scheme but it wasn't so big that the jury would overturn the UK decision but I do know that in Europe they are moving away from that sense of regeneration and the U.K is very keen on regeneration and for Liverpool it was the regeneration card that won it. There is a tension, it's interesting.

The British government in issuing its criteria (DCMS 2000) acknowledge this European directive and explicitly reference Article 3 and Annex II, both of which are included as supplements within the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's document. Annex II of the European directive provides clear guidelines as to how the European Commission views the project and the list indicating planning and evaluation criteria can be broadly divided into four subgroups which seem to be listed in descending order: European, artistic, social and economic (though some of these do overlap). As with the Prologue, the European element is prioritized, concentrating particularly on the European Cultural tradition. The list of objectives which can fall under the European theme are:

- Promotion of shared artistic movements and styles in the development of which the city has played a particular role
- Promotion of European public awareness of the figures and events which have marked the history and culture of the city
- Joint organisation of initiatives designed to promote dialogue between the cultures of Europe and cultures of other parts of the world

(cited in DCMS, 2000)

Within what has been highlighted as the 'artistic' criteria the discourse is that of the European Cultural tradition, indicated by phrases such as 'shared movements and

styles'. Within this European art discourse the noun 'art' and adjective 'artistic' are used unproblematically - as Chapter Six illustrated the use of 'art' or 'artistic' were avoided within New Labour cultural documentation - if used it was within an 'arts and culture couplet' - until the 'volte face' initiated by Tessa Jowell and forwarded most recently by James Purnell:

- Organisation of artistic events (music, dance, theatre, visual arts, cinema, etc.) and improvement of the promotion and management of the arts
- Promotion of shared artistic movements and styles in the development of which the city has played a particular role

(cited in DCMS, 2000)

Although the document does cite social objectives in connection with the designation these are rooted in the discourse of access within a social justice paradigm where arts policy sought to increase access to an established artistic tradition for traditionally underrepresented groups. These social objectives of the scheme are listed as:

- Organisation of measures to increase access to and awareness of fixed and movable artistic assets and artistic productions specific to the city
- Organisation of specific cultural projects designed to bring young people to the arts
- Taking the planned activities to a wider public, particularly through the use of multimedia and audiovisual means and multilingual approach

(cited in DCMS, 2000)

While Vaughan Jones is correct in stating that the European criteria opposed the idea that the scheme could be used as a tool for economic regeneration, it does list economic objectives for the competing cities. These economic aims, however, differ from the complex arguments around creativity, the new economy and high tech industry employed by the competing British cities and, instead - as was the case with Glasgow - focus on the creation of jobs and the generation of wealth in the service sector, primarily relating to tourism:

- Contribution to the development of economic activity, particularly in terms of employment and tourism
- Need to develop high-quality and innovative cultural tourism with due allowance being made for the importance in this connection of managing the cultural heritage on a sustainable basis and reconciling the wishes of visitors with those of local population
- Organisation of projects designed to encourage the development of links between the architectural heritage and strategies for new urban development.

(cited in DCMS, 2000)

These European aims, however, contrasted somewhat with the aims and objectives that were formulated by the British government and contained within the same document. These general criteria have been criticised, not only by Vaughan Jones, but also by many of those involved in the project for both their vagueness and lack of clear directions to the bidding cities. Most of the representatives of the cities interviewed for this project felt that this was the result of complacency on the part of the Department, which failed to anticipate the intensity with which the competition they were initiating would be received; it was expressed by many of the interviewees

that the DCMS were not prepared for the level of interest that emerged. Andrew Ormston, head of Cultural Services at Birmingham Council, argues that this was, in part, due to the traditional paternalistic view of culture as apart from the economic, rather than new thinking around culture emerging from the DCMS which placed it at the centre of economic development;

Well, I think that one view around that process was that the government did not have any idea how ferociously this was going to be fought over, you know, central government. What's culture, well culture was a bit of insignificant dressing on the side sort of thing, so we bang out this thing for a bit of competition. What happened of course was that we got this very high profile slugfest going on that actually got a lot of press and attention and all of a sudden they have to change their view.

This argument that the government were overtaken by the level of interest generated and were thus releasing its criteria on a somewhat ad hoc basis is supported by Vaughan Jones;

One of the difficulties was that the DCMS didn't know what had hit them. Actually they were worried that no cities would put themselves forward, they didn't expect twelve cities to take it very seriously so they were kind of making it up as they went along.

Although the DCMS document states that its guidelines are a direct interpretation of the original European document, its cultural orientation is very much towards the anthropological definition of culture, and its emphasis on the social and economic themes, rather than the European theme which predominated in the previous document. Unlike the European criteria, the concern with the local community within the DCMS document is not around access, but around 'employment', 'growth' and 'regeneration' which, as illustrated in Chapter Six's deconstruction of a creative

city/cultural planning paradigm, is linked to 'cultural experiences' and 'learning opportunities': this is illustrated in the document's Executive Summary:

the bid should demonstrate the potential to achieve long-lasting benefits for the local community and for the wider European community. This will encompass cultural experiences, learning opportunities, employment opportunities, new growth and regeneration.

(DCMS, 2000)

It is within this document that the complex interplay between social/community and economic regeneration that features in the British competition is introduced. This takes place through a melding of the social and community discourse, where culture is seen to be essential to 'understanding, interpreting and transforming our communities', and the economic discourses around culture led regeneration (or replicating the Glasgow effect). It is important to note, in this context, that economic regeneration is not outlined within the official questions that were put to the competing cities and that, in effect, economic regeneration, or 'doing a Glasgow', becomes a parallel narrative within the bidding process for COC08. This is introduced by Chris Smith, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, in his Foreword where he cites the Glasgow success narrative to argue that the Capital of Culture award could be used to promote economic regeneration;

Glasgow experienced substantial economic and social benefits and made excellent use of the arts and culture to strengthen and communicate its regeneration.



The document ends with the DCMS initiating a bidding competition and inviting responses from interested cities to the following eleven initial questions:

- What is your concept of culture for your city?
- How does this fit within a European context?
- What are your themes and objectives?
- What organizations will be involved?
- How will you ensure local commitment and participation, particularly amongst traditionally under-represented groups?
- How will you involve people from other parts of the UK, Europe and the wider world?
- What is the scale of your budget and how will resources be provided?
- What is the nature of the city's cultural/transport/tourist infrastructure and how would these be utilized or developed in the delivery of the programme?
- How will the event exploit the potential of the historic heritage, urban architecture and quality of life of the city?
- What innovative/imaginative means would you employ to increase dissemination of various events?
- What do you envisage as the long-term outcome of the event?

### **7.3 The Competing Cities' Responses: from twelve to six**

In March 2002 the DCMS appointed a panel of independent judges, chaired by a leading light in the British media, Sir Jeremy Isaacs to act as an independent judging panel for COC08. One of Isaac's co-chairs on this panel was broadcaster Sue McGregor; while the economic thrust within the competition was illustrated by the fact that the business leader Dame Judith Mayhew was the other co-chair. The remaining panellists reflected the DCMS' broad definition of culture, with former Olympic gold medal winner Tessa Sanderson representing sport, journalist Miranda Sawyer representing 'popular culture'; while the remaining judges Barry Douglas, Hilary Lade, Magnus Linklater, Stewart McGill, Professor Peter Stead and broadcaster Ruth Wishart came from more traditional arts backgrounds.

Much to the surprise of the DCMS, twelve cities attempted to answer the questions and put themselves forward to the panel for the British nomination for Capital of Culture 2008. While there were multiple and diverse reasons for the various cities putting themselves forward for the COC08 award, each city saw entering the competition as an effective marketing and promotional exercise through which they could increase their city's cultural profile. There was also the sense from cities that had used culture as a marketing tool and focus for regeneration previously that if they didn't enter the competition they would be sending out a negative message to the rest of the country: Andrew Ormston of the Birmingham bid team explains this position when he argues that, 'it would have been strange if Birmingham had decided not to bid I suppose. Birmingham, as you know, has a deserved reputation for culture as being at the heart of its urban regeneration' while Yvette Vaughan Jones, author of the Cardiff bid, relates how she convinced the City Council to go forward by arguing

that they would be giving out a negative impression if they did not enter: ‘when it came up I got in touch with Cardiff and mm, they came into the game late but when I was asked that question, ‘why should Cardiff do it?’ I answered what signals will you be giving out if you don’t do it.’ Paul Barnett from Bristol Council relates a similar story by explaining how he persuaded his city to enter the competition by emphasizing the fact that rather than focusing on actually winning the competition, by simply entering Bristol would be demonstrating its commitment to using culture to transform the city;

I’d only just arrived when we started the bidding process which was very early on and one of the first things I remember saying to the Dean of the Council is what are you doing about Capital of Culture because everyone was talking about who was bidding and I think there was a kind of nervousness around and I said to them why would you possibly not want to bid for this, it’s a great cultural city and they said “well we don’t want to lose” cause they’d been battered in one way or another on all sorts of issues, cultural issues and they didn’t want to put themselves up to be mocked in some way so I remember saying to them it’s not a matter whether you win or lose, that’s not what it’s about, it’s actually about demonstrating a commitment to a new approach to culture both locally and nationally.

As stated earlier the DCMS was surprised by the level of interest generated amongst British cities, with twelve initial applications to government: Belfast, Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Canterbury, Cardiff, Inverness, Liverpool, Newcastle/Gateshead, Oxford, Norwich. Of these twelve, six cities were chosen to go forward while Belfast, Bradford, Brighton, Canterbury, Inverness and Norwich were all eliminated. These cities, as with the finalists, stressed the social, economic as well as the cultural fillip that winning the accolade would provide. All of the eliminated cities had already attempted to market and rebrand themselves through culture. This

was particularly true of the bid submitted by Bradford, '*One Landscape, Many Visions*', in March 2002 (the title of the bid was inspired by a photo-montage by Bradford born artist David Hockney). Bradford promoted an avowedly social instrumentalist agenda within its bid arguing that the city's various 'cultures' are a means to bind and gel community rather than divide and fracture;

Bradford has a vision of economic and social regeneration, at the heart of which is culture. We understand that culture is the way in which individuals and their communities celebrate their identities, understand each other better, recognise their diversity and build new relationships. That is why 2008 is key to the achievement of our long-term ambitions.

(Bradford, City Council, 2002)

The advisory panel visited Bradford on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2002 and the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2002 with a delegation from the city making its presentation on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2002. While the panel was impressed by the city's community engagement and its social instrumentalist ambition it felt that Bradford lacked the cultural infrastructure to host the COC08 year:

the city had recognised that it still had some way to go in developing its cultural provision and in overcoming the problems of the past, but it had faced up to the task with a huge amount of energy, imagination and confidence and this had been reflected in the bid and in the way the bid had been promoted. The big challenge that the bid still faced was that the great strength of the attraction of Bradford's communities was not yet matched by the cultural infrastructure.

(DCMS, 2002 a)

Norwich submitted its bid, '*Norwich a fine city of culture*', in March 2002. The bid defined culture as 'multidimensional' from 'cultivation of the spirit' to 'diversity of

vision among different groups' and drew on the cultural planning/creative city discourse to argue that culture had the 'power to address social and economic issues';

a multi dimensional concept of culture: one which encompasses the cultivation of mind, body and spirit; creativity; discovery and enterprise; science as an integral part of culture; diversity of vision among different groups; and the power of culture to address social and economic issues.

(Norwich City Council 2002)

The only Scottish bid for 2008 came from Inverness and the Highlands. The Inverness bid was submitted on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002 and the panel visited the region on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2002 with a delegation making the trip south to present Inverness and the Highlands' case on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The Inverness bid was titled '*Failte*'- Gaelic for welcome- and highlighted the regions' Gaelic culture. The Inverness bid invoked a New Labour cultural discourse touching on all New Labour buzzwords: 'excellence' 'creativity' 'inclusiveness' 'education' 'sustainability':

Our core values are Excellence, Inclusiveness, Education and Sustainability.. The Capital of Culture title will generate confidence in the abilities of our people and the confidence of our communities. It will encourage creativity in our schools, workplaces and leisure spaces and our government. It will create employment and extra income, especially from our second biggest industry, tourism.

(Inverness and Highland Council, 2002)

Within this the bid matched New Labour discourse on the cultural policy moving from the periphery to the centre of government, illustrated in Chapter Six:

we will create a Cultural Plan that will provide the opportunity for all public bodies in the city-region, as with non-governmental organisations and the voluntary sector to position cultural activity in their proper place: for cultural

activities to be an equal partner at the top table of issues influencing policy and development strategy, resource allocation and investment decisions.

(Inverness and Highland Council, 2002 p.13)

Unlike Bradford, the Inverness bid did not draw upon a social instrumentalist discourse to argue that the award would regenerate the city but instead drew upon a marketing discourse arguing that COC08 would provide Inverness with a means to market the area and challenge stereotypes:

2008 offers the opportunity to address the twin issues of 1. de-mythologizing Inverness and the Highlands to get rid of inaccuracies in perception, and 2. evolving the identity of a new city.

(Inverness and Highland Council, 2002 )

In its internal feedback to the DCMS the judging panel claimed that, as with Bradford, Inverness lacked both an established cultural infrastructure and adequate transport links to host Capital of Culture 2008;

given the presence of so many cultural ‘gems’ spread in small pockets throughout the regions the adequacy of transport and tourism infrastructure throughout the year was a concern. There was a lack of cultural substance and infrastructure in Inverness itself and a relatively limited vibrant (sic) cultural life in the city itself.

(DCMS, 2002a)

Brighton and Hove’s application, ‘*Brighton and Hove- where else?*’, adopted a more traditional view of celebrating culture- it was one of the few documents that consistently used the noun ‘art’ throughout. The Brighton bid highlighted the city as a zone of creativity and argued that the award would unleash the creative potential of the city<sup>3</sup>;

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<sup>3</sup> In a typically provocative dismissal of Brighton and Hove’s New Labour Council Julie Burchill (Burchill and Raven 2007) dismisses Brighton’s bid for City of Culture and City status as ‘fur coat and no knickers’ governance

We think our city should win because of our established international reputation as an artistic and cultural centre... we anticipate the main benefits of winning the European Capital of Culture title will be a major boost to our artistic and cultural sector. We also expect it to help publicise the contribution arts and culture can make to employment. It will, we believe, attract additional investment and unlock the city's creative potential.

(Brighton and Hove Council, 2002)

Brighton's stress on the 'arts' rather than the 'cultural' was highlighted by the panel's internal report which argued that 'the bid did not place sufficient emphasis on social inclusion' (DCMS, 2002 a) which was reiterated in its feedback letter given after a request from the city;

The Panel thought also that too little emphasis had been placed on relating the bid to local communities and on social inclusion. Overall, the Panel considered that, despite its many attractive features, the Brighton & Hove bid should not be included amongst the shortlisted cities.

Belfast submitted its bid to the DCMS in March 2002 with a delegation from the judging panel visiting Northern Ireland on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August of that year. Belfast was one of the initial favourites for the award and, consequently, was a surprise omission from the shortlist (the bid came under scrutiny by the Northern Ireland Audit Office after it was revealed that £1million of public money had been spent on its promotion [NIAO, 2004]). The city's bid- *Imagine Belfast*- however, was one of the most controversial of the initial bids with what was seen both inside and outside the city as its somewhat romantic stress on culture and its claim that it could be the

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and tells the joke: 'How can you tell Robin Hood wasn't on Brighton and Hove council? Because he didn't take from the poor and give to a theatre troupe.'

source of salving the city's social and political wounds.<sup>4</sup> Added to this, and an indictment of 'cultural cities' as marketing rhetoric and the realities of cultural policy, was the fact that the city's arts community staged a protest at the bid's launch, highlighting the irony of the huge marketing budget spent on the bid and the promotion of the city as a centre of culture while, simultaneously, proposing a twenty per cent reduction in art's' funding. When interviewed for this study, one of the leaders of the protest, Paula McFetridge, explained the reasons for their opposition:

we were not against the bid in itself, far from it., we were for it in many ways though we didn't feel part of it. We just thought it was a bit rich that here was all this money being spent to promote Belfast as a city of culture and here we were facing some of the most draconian cuts in our spending.

The complex interplay between politics and culture within the bid was evidenced by the strapline 'where hope and history rhyme', a couplet from Nobel Prize winning poet Seamus Heaney, 'when justice will rise up/ and hope and history rhyme' (Heaney, 1997), which was quoted by Tony Blair on the signing of the Good Friday Agreement;

If there is one thing anyone who is remotely connected to Belfast knows, it is that the people of this city will not be dictated to. There is an excitement and vitality in the city that eludes many so-called cultural centres of the world. All proposals in the bid- entitled 'one Belfast, where hope and history rhyme'- are challenging, pioneering and reflect the passion, paradoxes and creative tensions that will give the Belfast bid a unique and honest edge.

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<sup>4</sup> This impression was given in personal conversation with some of the city's leading cultural commentators within the media and a leading theatre director within the city. However, not all commentators shared this with Yvette Vaughan Jones complimenting it as 'a beautifully written and conceived response'.



However, it was felt locally that there was something quixotic in the bid's assertion that the award of Capital of Culture status would lead to a city 'living without walls'; a literal, not metaphorical, reference to the demolition of the 'peace lines' - large walls built between conflicting interface areas - and their replacement by history or cultural centres (it could in fact be argued that these walls were built to separate groups with conflicting cultural identities [see **Diagram Seven p.221**]). The quixotic nature of the city's bid was reinforced in the internal report given by the panel to the DCMS where it was noted that,

the Panel noted that Belfast was a city still deeply divided. The Panel has seen this reinforced in some of the evidence presented to it. For many visitors too there was the thought of danger with no sign of such concerns being allayed. There was thus a reliance on hopes and dreams rather than the comfort of certainty.

(DCMS, 2002c)

Canterbury and East Kent submitted its bid document, *Odyssey*, to the DCMS in March 2002 with the panel visiting the area on July 16<sup>th</sup> and September 10<sup>th</sup> 2002. The Canterbury bid stressed the fact that it was an historic town in an economically deprived region, and as with Bradford, emphasised a broad definition of culture which would promote community and social inclusion. However, while applauding the community orientated thrust of the city's bid in line with the other failed bids the judging panel highlighted the lack of both an established cultural infrastructure and poor transport links as the reason for the city's omission;

the panel noted the poor transport links between London and Canterbury and from Canterbury and other destinations. It was not clear that the city's existing infrastructure could be scaled up to the level appropriate to meet the demands of the UK's Capital of Culture.

(DCMS, 2002 b)

#### 7.4 Defining Culture

Within the DCMS document it was somewhat apposite that the first question forwarded to the competing cities was, in many ways, the question that the Department itself had been wrestling with since its inception: ‘What is your conception of culture?’ (Chapter Six illustrated the Department’s own confusion around cultural definition and, indeed, the DCMS’ own website admits ‘there is no official government definition of “culture”’). Not surprisingly, given the mixed discourses around notions of culture outlined earlier in this study, this question proved somewhat contentious among the various cities competing for the COC accolade. This lack of clear theoretical guidance on the fundamental question as to how culture should be defined resulted in this question being criticised on the grounds that, since the government had not provided a definitive definition of culture, then it was impossible for them to actually ‘score’ the question. This issue was aired by Yvette Vaughan Jones, author of the Cardiff bidding document, who claimed that although this was an ‘interesting’ question theoretically it was, nonetheless, a ‘nonsense’ question in that it was impossible to score such a question if the government did not have a clear definition and a definitive criteria for judging the competing city’s answers;

They didn’t ever say what they meant though I did have a very funny talk with Bob Carman who was the advisor and was also the judge of Cork Capital of Culture and said what the very first question they were asked, what was your city’s definition of culture and his response was how will they score such a question, what a nonsense question and interesting question but a nonsense question because how could you score it..... What the DCMS never did was define it, mm, and I think that a better question would have been what approach would you take to being a European Capital of Culture.

Most interviewees acknowledged that their response to this question was conditioned by New Labour's definition of culture, and in line with this the mixed discourses of New Labour itself are transposed into the bid documents. Having said this all the competing cities attempted to rally to as broad a definition of culture as possible and indeed there was the sense that competing cities were attempting to 'out-anthropologize' one another and, in doing so, culture becomes everything and, at the same time, nothing: this can be illustrated in an exchange at an Urban Renaissance Conference in Manchester in April, 2003 where Sir Bob Scott, leader of the Liverpool team claimed 'Culture is everything that takes place in Liverpool on the weekend except throwing up on the pavement', only to be outflanked by Steven Heatherington of the Birmingham team who countered with 'Culture is everything that takes place in Birmingham including throwing up on the pavement'.

The conflict between the anthropological and artistic definitions of culture presented by government is explained by Bill MacNaught, head of Cultural Services at Gateshead Council;

There is a problem with the word culture, it's only in the last ten years, it's not even ten years, that we started using the word culture and that started with Chris Smith and the Labour government coming in the late nineties, changing from National Heritage to Culture, Media and Sport. The government's definition of culture was very clear, they had media, culture, sport, tourism and stuff and yet you get the Secretary of State standing up on a platform talking about arts and culture as an inextricably linked phrase....sometimes she'll use it interchangeably. Usually when she talks about culture it's pretty clear in her own mind she's thinking of the arts, it's just not helpful if the government cannot send out consistent messages about culture.

Here MacNaught traces the discursive shift around culture precipitated by New Labour's first term in government: this was most clearly evidenced by the change of the departmental name from 'National Heritage' to 'Culture, Media and Sport'. As discussed earlier this renaming of the Department signalled an ideological commitment to a broad definition of culture and an eschewing of what New Labour viewed as the cultural elitism that pervaded the post-war cultural funding model. However, the resistance to this discursive shift from arts to an all-encompassing 'culture' can be seen in the emergence of the pairing 'arts and culture' that MacNaught identifies with the then Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, Tessa Jowell; a pairing which is used within the responses of all the competing cities. This pairing has both a class and a spatial inflection (art for the city centre consumer, culture for the 'community' and the periphery - in fact Chapter Ten will illustrate how this construction framed Liverpool Culture Company's institutional structure).

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the use of contrasting pairs is a central feature of New Labour discourse, where New Labour and its Third Way politics offer a rapprochement between two seemingly polar concepts (Fairclough, 2000) articulated through various similar constructions throughout the bid documentation: 'art/sport'; 'excellence/inclusivity'; 'excellence/access'; 'city centre/community'; 'iconic/rooted'; 'the ordinary/the extraordinary'; 'the everyday/the unique'; the learning/ the learned'. These constructions are seen to represent the supposedly 'post-ideological' politics which are a central feature of the Third Way and which are drawn upon in the arguments put forward by many of the cities competing for the COC accolade. Neil Rami, director of the Newcastle/Gateshead Initiative, explicitly adopts this post-ideology approach, arguing that how Newcastle/Gateshead conceives

culture is 'beyond ideology' in that they 'not only' adopt the modernist idea of 'arts for arts' sake' but also the broad view of culture- interestingly this is articulated as 'sport'- which is seen to have economic outputs ;

I think this part of the world has overcome the ideological approach because what people have realised is that if they build the cake they all have a bigger slice so it's about building the cake together rather than trying to have your own segments and actually I think this is quite a sophisticated approach that has evolved here because what you're finding is sport and arts working together....., having said that I think what's really interesting is everybody across that broad spectrum now recognises that some things are there for their own sake so the argument that arts for arts sake is as strong today as it was previously so we I think we have the complement of you know culture led regeneration which is very much economically focussed, with arts for arts sake.

Rami again draws on this post-ideology argument - articulated by both himself and Paul Barnett, head of Cultural Services at Bristol Council, as 'crossing the Rubicon'- when talking about the relationship between 'commercial' and 'community based' arts, where he claims that in Newcastle/Gateshead the two are not seen in opposition to one another but instead as working together or, as he terms it, respecting 'the iconic as well as the rooted';

I mean I think it's fair to say that if you look at Baltic ok when what you might call the community based arts people were very concerned and sceptical about the amount of money going into Baltic. What Baltic has spawned is that we have four, five now commercial art galleries, in fact the Biscuit Factory is the largest commercial art gallery in Europe, what that has created is a market for everybody's art right so it's not just about self expression, being able to do what you want to do, I think we've crossed a Rubicon here because people realise that you need the iconic as well as the rooted and in fact you don't get one without the other.

The institutional structure used to deliver these 'post-ideological' policies is the public/private partnership, whereby local authorities can position themselves as efficient partners to secure the inflow of private investment. Consequently, each of the six finalists celebrated the effectiveness of partnership within each of their respective cities. Just as Glasgow stressed the new model of partnership in its bid for the 1990 designation, Cardiff's bid stressed the strong civic leadership within the city and the pursuit of a successful partnership model;

we have a powerful partnership committed to delivering a successful strategy and to raising the bridge of funding... Cardiff already has a cultural infrastructure that has grown from very distinctive stories. New partnerships between the public and private sectors have been formed.

(Cardiff Council, 2002)

This stress on partnership was also evident in the Bristol document which repeatedly emphasised this aspect of the city's administrative structure, billing itself as 'the city where partnership works';

that we have made such a success of this work is due to our long commitment to partnership working. This bid has been led by Bristol Development Partnership- Bristol City Council, Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative and South West Arts. As with all our work, we have extended this partnership to our colleagues in education, the arts, science, sport, health, and environmental groups. Most important of all, our partnership embraces the people of the city and the South West. This bid is what the people of Bristol and the region want. We pledge to deliver it.

(Bristol Council, 2002)

To explain and justify this claim the Bristol document presents a narrative of regeneration through partnership; it begins this narrative by spending two paragraphs outlining the city's previous economic and social problems but then goes on to argue that these problems were solved by the formation of various partnerships within the city;

The launch of The Bristol Initiative in 1990 meant that new solutions began to be found through the determination of individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors to understand one another better and to work together to make Bristol a great city once again. Relationships fostered have seen an integrated approach to city development with new people being brought into projects and new resources obtained. The Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (BCDP), which started in 1993, saw culture rise to the top of the city's agenda. Since BCDP, many other partnership initiatives have been launched to develop and promote visitor attractions, develop housing, sport and retail facilities, and to provide economic, social and community regeneration.

(Bristol Council, 2002)

Paul Barnett explicitly links this model of partnership to Bristol's ability to invoke an interpretation of culture and pursue cultural policies unshackled by 'ideology' and, using a rhetorical rapprochement, claims that the structure of the partnership allows the city to invest in both the 'city centre and the communities';

I tried to make it clear in the policy documents that we produced that it doesn't have to be one or the other. We can invest in the city centre and we can deliver to the communities what they want and what they need as long as the two sections don't see that as ideologically opposed and they're prepared to work for it so we set up a neighbourhood of community based cultural workers who also have links back into the city centre and we have legal

contracts for our funding city centre organisations forcing them to actually work with target communities.

Despite such protestations of moving ‘beyond ideology’, Barnett acknowledges that the competing political agendas around cultural definition within his own partnership have caused considerable conflict. To illustrate this he explains how such conflicts emerged within Bristol’s partnership over the seemingly innocuous and uncontentious issue of swimming pools which the public side of the partnership, through their democratic definition of culture, were committed to, but which the private side saw as being irrelevant to the culture of the city;

constant, constant tension yea, cause we’re trying to pull together two different worlds around a table and when it worked well you know you can see the light going on around the table and when it’s not going well people fall out. We had a falling out over swimming which is an interesting one where the politicians wanted to include free swimming for kids as part of a programme of cultural activity partly to illustrate that sport was just as important as art and partly to get the message out that this was about real inclusiveness and the partnership were really anti this, they couldn’t understand why it was relevant at all to have swimming in let alone free swimming and there was quite a vitriolic discussion on that around the table and it did go in eventually and it did get supported but that was one of the rare occasions as an authority that we had to flex our muscles on the partnership by saying this is our company cause as you might imagine the Arts Council would be agnostic about sports things and I think that everybody is trying to see it from everyone’s point of view when you’re into a bidding process or into prioritisation everyone in the end wants their thing on the table don’t they?

Although the issue of free swimming may seem trivial it does illustrate how interpretations of culture can cause real friction and tensions within a partnership organisation established to promote culture led urban regeneration: tensions and



frictions which, as Chapter Ten will illustrate, served to destabilise and undermine Liverpool's plans for COC08.

Bill MacNaught, head of Cultural Services at Gateshead Council, identifies similar issues arising within the Newcastle/Gateshead partnership with himself, as head of a public body, identifying with a broad definition of culture - though again articulated as 'sport'- while other members of his team, from what he terms an 'arts' or 'Arts Council' background, tended to adopt the traditional view of culture which underpinned the patronage model upon which, as has been previously discussed in Chapter Two, the Arts Council was formed;

the guy who wrote the bid, a guy called Paul Collard, Paul is just stepping down as chair of the Arts Council in the North East and Paul's background is absolutely the arts world, not really interested in sport particularly.

MacNaught's acknowledgment of the conflicting positions within the bid team is clearly evident in the Newcastle/Gateshead bid document, resulting in a strong dialogue between conflicting and competing interpretations of culture. Such internal dialogue is usually absent from policy documents since the process of producing a policy paper is one 'of conflict to consensus' so that, within the text itself, there is no intertextualising of voices. However, a close examination of the Newcastle/Gateshead document illustrates MacNaught's claim over the conflicting positions within his team. When answering the DCMS' question on how the city defines culture, the Newcastle/Gateshead submission challenges the central thrust of the patronage model of cultural funding and the access discourse of the European criteria where the drive was to increase access to the established cultural canon for underrepresented groups. Newcastle/Gateshead's democratic, anthropologically based definition of culture on

the other hand seeks to validate all cultural experience, rather than increasing access to a 'predetermined best';

If, as we believe, culture brings benefits which arise from active participation, we aim to go well beyond existing access policies towards a more genuinely democratic culture. Not all culture is good, any more than all human conduct is good, but democracy requires that people freely determine their own standards and values. An inclusive culture recognises that some will find other people's culture difficult to understand or accept. In other words, we are not concerned simply to increase access to a predetermined 'best', but to increase participation in all aspects of culture, including debates around what the best might be and whose voices are heard.

(Newcastle/Gateshead Councils , 2002)

However, having embraced culture in its widest 'anthropological' sense, the document adopts the artistic discourse, referencing one of its rhetorical cornerstones, the transcendental notion of 'excellence', until it finally divorces itself from the anthropological and embraces the 'irrational', metaphysical and transcendental discourse that aestheticizes and fetishizes art to the extent that it becomes 'magical';

art cannot be wholly explained by the intellect, any more than we can be considered purely rational beings. Great art triggers change in us which stays, long after direct contact is over and has the ability to provoke inexplicable, inexpressible reactions: it becomes part of ourselves, a ghostly presence, haunting and not entirely friendly.

(Newcastle/Gateshead Councils, 2002)

This example, drawn from the Newcastle/Gateshead bid, is illustrative of a tension within all the cities' bidding for the COC08 designation. On the one hand the cities rhetorically adopt a broad, anthropological definition of culture to promote the inclusiveness and people centred, community focussed nature of their schemes;

invariably draw upon the assumptions within an artistic discourse and, in fact, as will be illustrated in Chapter Ten's deconstruction of the social element of Liverpool's plans for COC08, rather seeing culture as a means of empowering local communities, instead invoke an understanding of culture as a civilising process rooted in aesthetic assumptions - an extension of Chris Smith's 'Bristol ballet boys' discussed in Chapter Six.

MacNaught explains this apparent inconsistency by pointing out that as a representative of a public body he wanted the bid to be as inclusive as possible, citing the example of Glasgow as forwarding an exclusionary definition of culture rooted in the arts tradition:

I've been in Gateshead twenty years so I was the only one out of the four of us who was actually here when we made the decision that we were going to bid for Capital of Culture and the first thing that I did was look at what it was that was going to be underpinning our whole bid and I've got memories of Glasgow 1990 and the wonderful Rab C. Nesbitt episode where they've got Capital of Culture and Rab gives a mime artist a Glasgow kiss saying 'culture, I'll give you culture.'

This anecdote illustrates how aware the Newcastle/Gateshead bid team were of accusations of elitism and the possible alienation of the city's working class, as discussed in relation to Glasgow in Chapter Four and satirised by Rab C. Nesbitt author Ian Pattison, both in the anecdote above and in the famous request by a Glaswegian tramp for the loan of 'ten pence for a cappuccino'.

This tension between the anthropological and artistic definition of culture are particularly apparent in the document written for Oxford. The strength of Oxford's bid would seem to rest with its tradition of arts and learning; these, however, are rooted firmly in the arts tradition and could be exposed to accusations of cultural and social elitism. When the leader of the Oxford bid would later claim that the city lost due to its 'Brideshead Revisited reputation' there was the sense, in an almost Orwellian inversion, that the city was too 'Cultural' for the Capital of Culture. The rhetorical device of claiming a high culture pursuit and adding a popular culture element - an extension of the 'arts and culture' pairing- is again evident in the following excerpts from the Oxford bid;

Oxford has not just educated thousands of talented artists in the fields of literary, visual and performing arts; the county has proved itself to be an inspiring permanent home for many of them. Of course the universities are cultural powerhouses in artistic terms, and celebrating their increasing accessibility to the public will be part of this theme, but what make Oxfordshire extra special is the grass roots strength of its artistic enterprises and the strength of its youth arts provision and participation.

Oxford is proud of its many published writers, its theatres large and small... But it is also proud of smaller scale events that arise from grass roots activity: performances of Shakespeare in the open air and industrial plants.

(Oxford Council, 2002)

The second quotation is an interesting example of the document attempting to cite both notions of culture, first by tapping into the artistic strand by referencing Shakespeare, the high priest of Leavisite culture, while, simultaneously, gaining some anthropological kudos through 'grass roots activity'- the use of the colon suggests

examples of grass roots activity by the fact that it is performed in the open air or in an industrial plant. The production mentioned was, however, performed by a professional theatre company, Creation Theatre; their reasons for choosing an industrial plant were aesthetic as the production was suited to 'the gothic industrial setting' - this mirrors a similar claim for 'grass roots' activity by the DCMS discussed in Chapter Four.

In its proposal document Cardiff steps outside the theoretical paradigms traced in this study by employing a Welsh word for the conception of culture:

Our concept of culture is encapsulated in the Welsh word "diwylliant"- it is an active word that embraces exploration, debate and discovery. Cardiff, as a new capital, has a fresh approach to the way culture and the city work.

(Cardiff Council, 2002)

This rhetorical strategy in many ways freed the bid from having to engage in the complex theoretical debates around culture: this is recognised later in the document when it is stated that, 'Untrammelled by historic institutions and conceptions of culture, it is characterised by a youthful spirit of energy and enquiry'. The document uses the rhetorical device of claiming a Celtic origin for the city and claiming that 'Cardiff's Celtic roots go back to a time when nation states did not exist and culture did not recognise borders. The Culture of Cardiff is quintessentially international' . While this frees Cardiff from engaging with the culture debate, it results in them indulging in rhetoric that seems to lack an identifiable theoretical or philosophical underpinning or lineage resulting in fanciful, though essentially meaningless rhetoric;

Cardiff is a web of transactions and interactions. Its open, networked structure means it is essentially egalitarian.

(Cardiff Council, 2002)

### 7.5 Economic and Social Instrumentalism

The interpretation of culture as a social panacea is tied to the rhetoric of social inclusion and local/community access and involvement and was paramount within all the city's entries. Bill MacNaught explains how this was one of the founding principles within the Newcastle/Gateshead bid and his feeling that during the course of the competition they lost sight of this social inclusion agenda. As was discussed in the previous chapter, social inclusion through culture is a key element in New Labour's policy and Newcastle Gateshead employed the author of *The Social Impact for Participation in Arts*, writer for Comedia and chair of the PAT 10 report, Francois Matarasso, as a consultant on their team. MacNaught points to the fact that Liverpool won the nomination on the grounds that it was seen - or marketed- as the 'people's bid' (see Chapter Nine) though he hints at some of the potential problems now being realised that the winning city might face in delivering on this community first rhetoric;

Because what we're saying is absolutely essential that people did not feel alienated from this bid, that they felt it was as much for them as for tourists and therefore social inclusion was the theme that underpinned what we wanted to do and we got Francois Matarasso involved as our consultant from the outset but I have to say that I suppose I would say that we lost our way a bit, with hindsight and it was just one of those things that kind of happened gradually and at no point could you say, wait, we're forgetting about the social inclusion but it is a bit ironic that is why Liverpool won.

Matarasso's work for Newcastle/Gateshead included the writing of two scoping documents which argued strongly for the city to approach COC08 as a means to deliver social as well as economic regeneration through culture:

no city has yet sought to base its strategy as capital of culture (sic) as much on the social as the economic impacts, still less on strengthening social inclusion as such.... However there is a growing body of research which explores the positive impact of cultural activity on individual and community development, addressing such aspects as its contribution to learning, social cohesion, community capacity building etc. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (sic) (DCMS) has recognised this in the publication of the PAT10 report on the role of art and sport in combating social exclusion.

(Matarasso, 2001 p.3)

Matarasso raises fundamental questions around how Newcastle/Gateshead intends to define its culture, illustrating how certain cultural products may be silenced because they do not project the correct image of the city/region: he discussed this in relation to the works of Catherine Cookson;

Catherine Cookson is certainly the best known and most widely read author to have come from Tyneside and, what's more, the area was the framework for much of her work. Because her novels are set in a past just distant enough to make us nostalgic- especially when we don't have to live there- for many readers Cookson represents older, better values. But for others, her work is retrograde, sentimental and a big obstacle to the North East developing a mature post-industrial identity.

(Matarasso, 2001 p.6)

and warns that the process must be seen as being bottom up rather than a top down marketing exercise;

...if the principles underlying the Newcastle/Gateshead bid are confused or wrong, the result could be much less positive. If people feel that decisions are being made without their participation, that their values are not reflected in the bid, or that it represents a marketing puff without relevance to their lives only discord will be sown.

(Matarasso, 2001 p.6)

Matarasso's warnings illustrate the tensions within a culture led regeneration scenario. On the one hand there is the need to celebrate and market the cultural resources of the city - inevitably at 'top down' marketing exercise- yet, at the same time, present this not as 'marketing puff' but, instead, as part of a 'bottom up' community based regeneration project.

This need to be seen to be socially inclusive was felt to be a weakness amongst the authors of the Oxford bid in relation to their submission. Rachel Martin argued that while their city's submission attempted to forward a social inclusion agenda, it was, in the first instance merely gestural and somewhat rhetorical;

I think that if we're being honest about the process the rhetoric was about being inclusive but the actuality wasn't and that was a criticism that was made by the shortlisting team.

When questioned as to whether Liverpool's was a genuine engagement and that there was real local participation she, like MacNaught, questions how authentic and genuine the level of participation, claiming that training taxi drivers alone is not evidence of real and genuine engagement with the local population;

Certainly they had their taxi drivers well trained (laughs) you know if you got into a cab in Liverpool at that time the taxi driver gave you the spiel very proficiently.

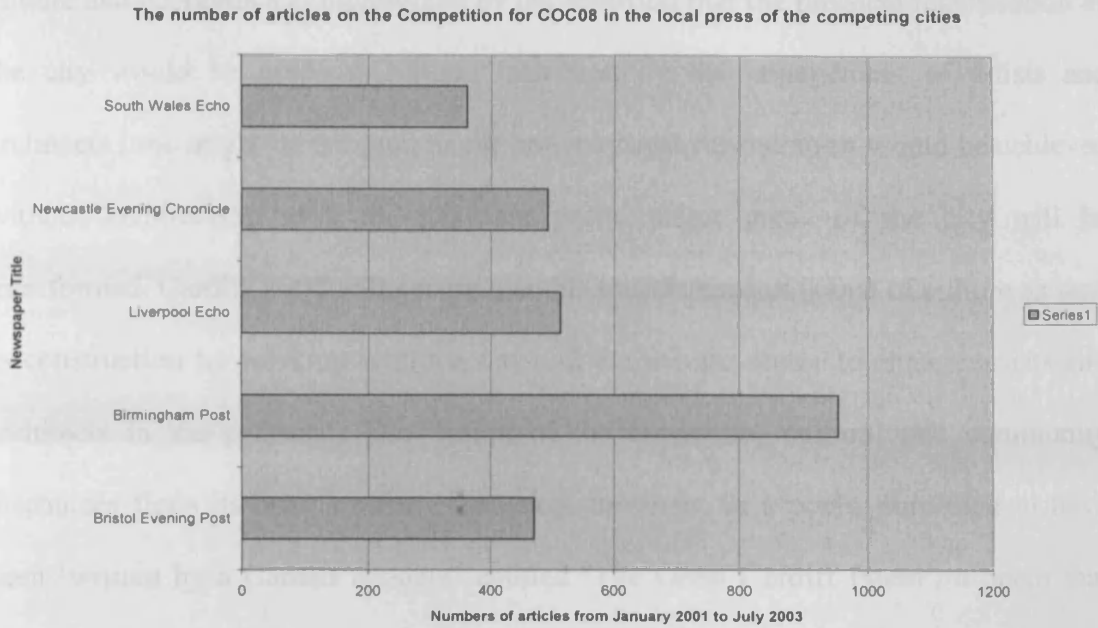
In fact Liverpool did put out a call for 'cultural cabbies' to help promote the city to visitors [The Guardian, August 18, 2004]). The Liverpool cabby also became a signifier of the inclusive nature of Liverpool's year when in June 2007, after the resignation of the Labour leader of the council from the Culture Company board, the



Culture Company went on a media offensive telling of the group of cabbies who get together to discuss modern art [BBC Radio 5, June 19 2007]).

Despite this criticism Martin does recognise that, in a sense, there was a level of engagement in that Liverpool's marketing budget allowed them to both project a discourse of local ownership and to generate a level of pride and enthusiasm for the bid that was absent from Oxford's campaign; while Liverpool did generate enthusiastic media coverage, it was Birmingham's local press which gave the competition for COC08 the most coverage- it should be noted that during the bidding campaign all the competing cities' local press coverage was positive- see Diagram Four below;

in a sense very really in that they had a real engagement with what was going on and that they had a real pride and they thought they should win and that certainly wasn't the case here..... There was always the problem in Oxford with our resources as we didn't have the backing of our local development agency because three cities were bidding in the south east and only one in the other RDA areas, because of the economics of the south east we do not have access to some of the large streams of funding that are available for some of the other cities that bid. We had a tiny, tiny marketing budget, something like £15,000 and that hurt us and we didn't until the very end build that very real sense of public awareness.



**Figure Four:** Local Media Coverage within cities competing for COC08.

All the cities competing for the award of COC 08 invoked the discourse of regeneration. This regeneration discourse not only focussed on social regeneration and the purported aims of communities finding a voice and articulating their culture but had a definite and in some cases, primarily, an economic thrust and focus. This economic regenerative focus was more pronounced in the Cardiff document than most of the others. In his introduction to the document, the city mayor, Russell Goodway, sets out an image of Cardiff that fits into the entrepreneurial city paradigm: ‘Cardiff ranks among the most successful and enterprising cities in the UK.’ and immediately refers to regeneration and the city’s key regeneration project, Cardiff Bay; ‘Cardiff Bay is an internationally significant regeneration project and a hub of commercial and cultural activity.’ (see Figures Eight and Nine p. 235). This is in fact the first reference to culture within the document - before ‘cultural’ the adjectives ‘successful’ and ‘enterprising’ are used, while when mentioning Cardiff Bay it is significant that the ‘commercial’ is prioritized over the ‘cultural’. The complex relationship between

culture and economics is highlighted by the assertion that the physical regeneration of the city would be given a cultural inflection by the engagement of artists and architects (one might be tempted to ask how physical regeneration would be achieved without architects); ‘over the next six years, major areas of the city will be transformed. Cardiff 2008 will ensure that this transformation is one of culture as well as construction by working with the city and the private sector to engage artists and architects in the process’. This fusion of the economic, cultural and community discourses finds its most bizarre expression, however, in a poem purported to have been ‘written by a Cardiff resident’ entitled ‘The Great Cardiff Poem’, a poem that actually reads as critique rather than a celebration of the entrepreneurial approach of Cardiff City Council:

‘Corporate, corporate Cardiff,  
Corporate, corporation, co-operation  
Corporate, incorporation,  
Corporate, corpuscle  
Cor! Cardiff!

(Cardiff Council, 2002)

Such economic regeneration discourse is also paramount within the city of Bristol’s bid, where great emphasis is put on the physical transformation of the city centre, though as in the city centre/community construction used by Paul Barnett, the document distances itself from being simply centre focussed entrepreneurial strategy by stressing the excellence of its activity in the city’s periphery:

the high priority placed on cultural activity over the past twenty years, and during the last decade especially, has seen the city transformed. Our harbourside development, with new science and environmental attractions, renewed arts organisations and modern office and housing projects, has created a new heart of the city and a model for all those seeking to develop waterfront sites effectively and sympathetically..... And we are not

preoccupied with the city centre: Bristol's culture spreads throughout the city, with a range and excellence of activity that is the envy of other cities.

(BristolCouncil, 2002)

One important aspect of these economic arguments within the bids is that the winning of the ECOC award would allow the city the opportunity to market or rebrand itself through culture - especially those post-industrial cities such as Liverpool and Newcastle which suffered from a negative urban image. The Newcastle/Gateshead document stresses the importance of the award in marketing the city, where the area's 'low visibility' had resulted in lack of both investment and visitors. Of all the bids Newcastle/Gateshead was the most ebullient in its economic forecasting, using an analysis by Price Waterhouse Cooper to claim that the award would create 17,000 new jobs for the region (the role of such economic forecasting within entrepreneurial regeneration is discussed and deconstructed in relation to Liverpool's bid in the following chapter);

our research has established that Newcastle Gateshead's low visibility, nationally and internationally, results in a much lower level of tourism than our attractions merit. As part of an independent economic impact assessment, looking particularly at tourism and based on the cultural programme and supporting strategies, Pricewaterhouse Coopers have estimated that up to 3.569 million domestic tourists, half a million international tourists and 288,500 business tourists/conference delegates would be attracted to the area, bringing over £700 million and creating 17,000 jobs in the local economy.

(Newcastle/Gateshead, 2002)

The discourse of increasing the 'visibility' of the region is essentially a marketing discourse and the marketing and urban branding element of the ECOC award was first realised by the UK's initial designation Glasgow (as illustrated in Chapter Four). As

part of the marketing campaign all cities wanted to promote themselves as ‘youthful’ (only Bristol made any reference to the elderly), with Cardiff especially promoting this discourse of youth, arguing that it was a young city in a young nation; ‘Cardiff is a young city and a youthful capital in a newly devolved Wales’ with the noun ‘youth’ and the adjective ‘young’ used four times in the Executive Summary alone.

## 7.6 Creativity

While celebrating discourses of cultural diversity, the competing cities tended to draw on arguments which claim that culturally diverse cities are places where ‘creativity’ is fostered. Following its recognition of the potentially divisive nature of culture, the Newcastle/Gateshead submission introduces the idea that cultural diversity can spark creativity and innovation;

But these ideas can also be a fruitful source of innovation and creativity, sparking off new ideas or challenging us to articulate better what we are trying to say. If we create a climate of tolerance and engagement, where culture and its values are enabled to thrive by being debated and tested, we can nurture a cultural life which is essential to the city’s development. We can make Newcastle Gateshead not just a culturally exciting city which people want to live in and visit, but a place which is generating ideas, innovations and products with a national, even an international resonance.

(Newcastle/Gateshead, 2002)

As has been discussed in Chapter Six this creativity discourse is a complex mix of competing cultural, artistic and economic arguments, and while it is a concept that is often rallied to, it lacks clear theoretical grounding and simply performs the hegemonic function of amalgamating a series of contradictory values into feel-good rhetoric. Invariably within regeneration discourse, creativity is articulated as the

future source of the employment and wealth, resulting in the arts lobby using the concept to provide economic justification for the funding of the traditional arts. More often than not these arguments around creativity are tied to theories of high tech industry and the 'creative class' thesis forwarded by creativity 'gurus' such as Charles Landry or Richard Florida (see Chapter Six). Bill MacNaught acknowledges the influence of Florida's thesis within urban regeneration at a local level within the UK and expressed some scepticism of the easy endorsement of Florida's work at a local level, claiming that 'creativity' is a concept that 'is bandied about' and that Florida's work is endorsed so readily because people at this historical juncture are receptive to the concept;

It's interesting cause on the basis of conversations I've had with a few people, people can read Richard Florida the way it suits them. Florida is himself quite clear in his thinking that people hear what they what to hear and disregard the rest and I think that's the case with Florida. He's produced his publications at a point in history when a lot of people are very receptive to the idea that creativity is important.... It's a word that's bandied around but what we're struggling with in this region is joining up the thinking.

MacNaught correctly points out that since the concept of creativity has various theoretical lineages, it is claimed by organisations and local government departments with divergent, indeed opposing, ideological commitments and, consequently, policy orientations;

Lots of people who are doing bits of creativity and some people would try to protect their turf in this whole discussion which again is not helpful. We're trying to break down this kind of mentality but the sum will be bigger than the parts when we join it up and I'm optimistic that we will, not we might, but we will join a lot more of this stuff up. My argument is that it will give competitive edge to the region that first joins it up and at the moment we still have too many people who just don't get it and with Florida's stuff he's

producing it at a time when it's helping more people understand that there is something in there regarding creativity.

MacNaught details two differing interpretations of creativity: one associated with the arts where, as has been discussed earlier, creativity is seen as almost metaphysical endowment and the other being an interpretation of creativity which is essential to a new high tech economy. He highlights the fact that a concept such as creativity requires an institutional shift, in that it is claimed by various interest groups who have competing agendas. MacNaught argues that one concept of creativity is associated with the arts and is claimed by the Arts Council which excludes economic arguments and leads to the DTI viewing creativity not as an essential prerequisite within the new hi-tech economy but as a transcendental concept inherent in the Arts;

I actually think that one of the biggest obstacles we have is the arts establishment because the arts establishment is trying to say, hey, we do creativity, which is the flip side of the DTI saying we don't do creativity, as long as the arts council say, hands off we do creativity, the bigger problem I've got in persuading other people that creativity is not just about the arts.

In this sense MacNaught celebrates the need for developing the creative thinking skills which will lead to the new economic development particularly within the new knowledge based economy. However, as discussed in Chapter Four this interpretation of creativity draws upon and collapses together competing artistic and economic discourses without providing a clear theoretical linkage between creative expression 'that is not primarily about producing a commercial product' and creative thinking skills that are seen as fundamental to the development of the 'knowledge economy';

My argument is, it's quite a simple argument, my starting point for winning hearts and minds is that if we're serious about the knowledge economy and

we're serious about we're living through a revolution like the industrial revolution, only the raw material for this new economic age is going to be ideas. People will have to be creative.

Yvette Vaughan Jones, author of the Cardiff bid document, claims to similarly value creativity, though her nebulous almost ethereal understanding of creativity is drawn from a transcendental artistic rather than the more economically focused discourse utilized by MacNaught. Vaughan Jones argues that one cannot simply impose or create a creative environment but that there are certain conditions that planners ('with a light touch') can do foster creativity within the city;

Well I think that you can foster creativity, well I mean I think there are conditions where creativity can thrive and conditions which are really difficult and, mm you have to do all this with a very light touch I think, you can't impose structures and say now be creative but it's about valuing creativity, for it to be seen around you and that the city values it, I always felt that in Brussels there was a real sense, though it was a grotty city in many ways there was always room for posters for example and cafes would have a lot of poetry reading and jazz, the fabric of the city felt that it was a very creative city then when you unpick there were things for everybody to do to explore whether it was science was creative or engagement in dance or whatever else the city mm felt that it was a very creative city.

When pressed on particular policy interventions that might be initiated to facilitate the fostering of a creative environment, Vaughan Jones' response reflects the overarching nature of the concept of creativity and how, in policy terms, the development of creative thinking skills is linked to creativity within the arts which is in turn linked to the creative economy/creative industry (which is a close reflection of the template set out by Landry and endorsed by New Labour). As well as this Vaughan Jones values



the fostering of an artistic ambience as part of generating creativity as she believes this challenges people, forcing them to engage critically with art, arguing that ‘the more you debate art and culture the more people understand.’

While all the competing cities in some measure rally to this concept of creativity, it is Cardiff which explicitly and repeatedly allies this to economic development within the new hi tech economy. Cardiff’s bid stresses the regeneration of the city- both physically and socially- drawing heavily on ICT revolution theory and the notion of the ‘networked’ city (‘network’ is an interesting concept in itself as it draws on the positive associations of both hi tech and the idea of a social network which is fundamental to theories of social capital that underpin much community regeneration discourse). The creative city/hi tech industry theme is invoked throughout with the first sentence of the opening paragraph of the Executive Summary stating; ‘our vision for Cardiff is that of a network of creative people’ with the economic, the new economy, high tech industry and creativity all drawn together in an empty rhetorical flourish;

the power of creativity and culture to generate jobs and prosperity has been recognised across Europe. In Wales, talent, innovation, entrepreneurship, knowledge and the opportunities of the new economy are all key elements in the National Economic Development Strategy.

We want to underline a vision of the individual within the community, the city and the country networked through shared creative endeavour.

Cardiff is experiencing rapid growth. It has had to reinvent itself and re-imagine its future.

it is developing new infrastructure to support the knowledge-based and creative industries throughout Wales.

(Cardiff Council, 2002)

This creative class/creative city argument is endorsed by Neil Rami of Newcastle/Gateshead Initiative who forwards the Florida inspired view that creative people migrate to urban areas that promote creativity- articulated as 'cool' places, places with a 'buzz' etc. which Rami asserts is 'an image that the city has created' - a key element within this is the need to be seen to be multicultural. He endorses a Richard Florida inspired argument by claiming that Spanish IT workers located to Newcastle because they realised that it was a 'cool place';

Then you've got the culture and creative industries themselves, we have a software and computer games manufacturer here in Newcastle and between them they have 80% of computer driving games produced in the world today. Now one of them has got 80 staff, twenty of those staff are Spanish they literally arrived off a plane, walked into that facility and said we want to work here because this is a cool place, so what we're creating is a sense that this is a lifestyle offer that people who are in the creative industries want to be a part of and that is part of the image that the city has created..... But the final thing I think what's kind of more interesting economically at the end of the day is we are now persuading 24 year old, mm, you know, engineers from the San Jose valley to come and work in what are existing manufacturing bases, now they come to a city because of the lifestyle as well as the career and I think, you know, Florida's thing, where it's not just about creativity it's about diversity and tolerance, that's the next part of the journey for Newcastle/Gateshead because we've got to be seen as multicultural, we've got to offer everything that people want, we've got to be seen as the cutting edge, not just in culture but in how we build our houses if you go to Barcelona you've got mixed use developments where you've got a club on one floor, a solicitors firm on the next floor, residential developments and so on, the whole density of the city has to be developed.

These arguments forwarded by Newcastle/Gateshead map perfectly unto the paradigm outlined in the previous chapter where the economic and the social aims are interwoven in the mutually reinforcing and self validating argument whereby a city's cultural resources not only attract tourists and footloose capital but also raise the self confidence of the local population, facilitating both economic and social regeneration;

The European Capital of Culture title delivers one major benefit- national and international visibility. The region's greatest current weakness is its invisibility. It substantially reduces the impact of tourism on the region's economy. It creates barriers in the recruitment of qualified personnel into the region. It reduces the region's potential to attract investment. Above all it undermines the region's confidence in itself. We believe that by delivering the best European Capital of Culture ever we will significantly raise the profile of the region and challenge outdated perceptions of who we are. This will transform the region's tourism market, and facilitate inward investment and the attraction and retention of staff. Above all it will develop a self confidence in the people which will enable them to participate fully in the economic transformation.

(Newcastle/Gateshead, 2002)

A key element within this social regeneration discourse and celebrated in all the bidding documentation is the concept of 'community'. This concept is utilized to lend a social argument to the economic discourse and is often being articulated in an antithetical pairing in opposition to 'the city centre'. This 'community/city centre' construction is drawn upon by Paul Barnett, who as a public representative sees his role as 'tipping the balance back towards the communities and away from the city centre'. While setting out this role he is keenly aware that such a commitment to the 'communities' is highly political and in fact uses the metaphor 'Stalinist' to describe its overt political intentions;

we can invest in the city centre and we can deliver to the communities what they want and what they need as long as the two sections don't see that as

ideologically opposed and they're prepared to work for it so we set up so we set up a neighbourhood of community based cultural workers who also have links back into the city centre and we have legal contracts for our funding city centre organisations forcing them to actually work with target communities and so it's an almost Stalinist approach to actually say look it's going to change and even if you the directors of these cultural organisations don't believe what we are doing we're going to force you to do it through what little power that we have.

Barnett's insistence that the public representatives within his partnership organisation should adopt what he calls a 'Stalinist' approach to ensuring that cultural organisations fulfil a social function reflects some of the tensions within the instrumentalist approach to culture adopted by New Labour. If culture is concerned with meeting social and economic objectives, then public bodies- government at a national level, councils at a local- must ensure that these are met. This, in turn, renders the institutional relationship between government and cultural organisations- the arm's length principle- obsolete since the public bodies must ensure that cultural organisations are meeting their social and economic goals. The tension between public bodies and their instrumental objectives and cultural organisations which believe that government should be kept at arm's length is one which came to destabilise Liverpool's plans for 2008 and is discussed in detail in Chapter Ten.

## 7.7 Conclusion

This chapter's analysis of the bidding competition for COC08 has shown how all the shortlisted cities invoked elements of the paradigm identified in Chapter Six as a New Labour influenced cultural planning/creative city approach. The analysis has demonstrated how within the British competition there has been a discernible movement away from a discourse that focuses on the European Cultural/Arts tradition - and European integration in general - to a social and economic regenerative discourse, allowing for culture to be represented as both an economic and social panacea. Within this discourse the social function of the scheme moves away from a paternalistic paradigm concerned with improving access to cultural resources, to the mesh of arguments around social exclusion and creativity that form both the social instrumentalist argument within New Labour cultural policy and justifications for local ownership within the COC scheme. Central to this social instrumentalist discourse is an anthropological definition of culture which serves to expand the reach of cultural initiatives, but which at times within the bidding scheme resulted in culture becoming something of an empty concept.

However, despite rallying to this definition, all the bids drew upon the normative principles and underlying aesthetic assumptions within an artistic discourse. This artistic discourse was referenced within the economic arguments around COC08, especially in relation to the city centre and marketing of the various cities. These marketing and economic regenerative discourses were accompanied by ebullient economic forecasting around wealth and job creation based around the experiences of Glasgow. Bridging these social and economic instrumentalist justifications is the ill defined concept of creativity. Within creative discourses there is a need to meet a

Landry/Florida inspired template and thus represent the city as youthful and multicultural to attract creative individuals and also foster local creativity. As Chapter Nine will demonstrate, it was Liverpool's bid which fitted best with such a template, both in its forwarding of a social regenerative/local ownership discourse, and in its economic regenerative arguments around replicating the 'successes' of 1990. Considering the problems and controversies which have subsequently engulfed and undermined Liverpool's COC08 strategy, Francois Matarasso's concerns while writing for the Newcastle/Gateshead submission are not only apposite and prescient but eerily prophetic;

'in the **worst case** scenario the accepted bid is based on unrealistic aspirations of content, values and financing. After a period of self-congratulation on winning, the city gets to work slowly on preparation, failing to give time to build on the support that secured the title. Inconsistent values and expectations in the partnership begins to unravel and the excessive rhetoric of the bid is challenged by the media and by local people who do not recognise their own city and identity in the programme. The pressures make it hard to appoint or keep a good management team, while the board becomes increasingly alienated from the process..... the year ends in bitterness, recrimination and (sic) which casts a shadow over local cultural, economic and political life for years to come.'

(Matarasso, 2001 p.15)





**Figure Five:** Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao celebrated as the gold standard in culture led regeneration (photograph author).



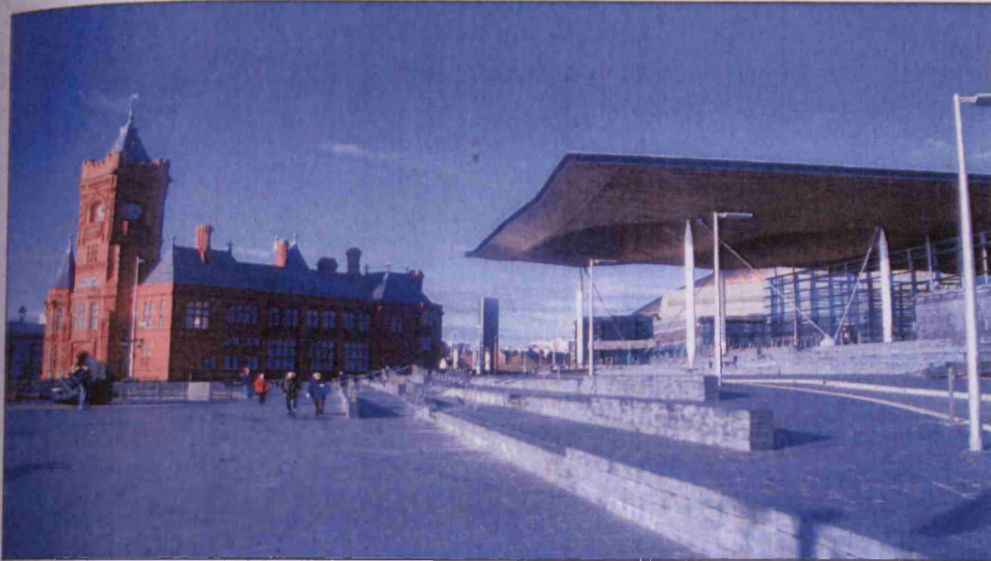
**Figure Six:** Birmingham's canals replete with Gondola, a signifier for urbane cosmopolitanism (photograph author).



**Figure Seven:** Belfast Peace Lines. (photograph author)



**Figures Seven and Eight:** Images of Cardiff's regenerated bay area. The top picture shows Norman Foster's award winning Assembly building. Picture two is of Cardiff's Millennium Centre, the building of which was caught up in similar controversies as Liverpool's Fourth Grace when the now celebrated architect Zaha Hadid's Opera House was cancelled after a public backlash. (photographs author).





## Chapter Eight: From Liverpool to Livercool<sup>1</sup>

*'Albion's most lovely daughter sat on the banks of  
the  
Mersey dangling her landing stage in the water.'*

*The daughters of Albion  
arriving by underground at Central Station  
eating hot Eccles cakes at the Pierhead  
writing 'Billy Blake is fab' on a wall in Matthew Street.'*

From 'Mrs Albion You've got a Lovely Daughter by Adrian Henri

*'The brand was hailed as the model for personal life; as the model for urban rebuilding; as the model for national identity. According to some the brand was even the single greatest factor in geopolitics'. (Frank, 2001 p.252)*

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter will construct an historical overview of the city of Liverpool to provide a political, social and economic context both for its contemporary regeneration strategy and its bidding for the COC08 award. The chapter will trace the city's class politics from the nineteenth century to the present day, illustrating how these have informed the contemporary image of the city which, as Chapters Nine and Ten will argue, Liverpool's bid for COC08 is attempting to reinvent. From this the chapter will give an overview of the contemporary political context which framed the city's cultural regeneration strategy and its winning COC08 bid. It will explain how public governance was reintroduced in the city under the partnership model outlined by New Labour and how Liverpool Council embarked on a programme of reform of the Council Executive itself which, whilst facilitating a general shift to a more

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<sup>1</sup> The reimagining of Liverpool as 'Livercool' has been attributed to an article in the magazine Tatler which 'devoted 22 pages of its latest issue to capturing the 'hip' vibe of the city.' An insight into the political economy of regeneration and its relationship to marketing and public relations can be gleaned from the fact that the article cited Eloisa Anson, the niece of the Duke of Westminster, the financier behind the city's Paradise Street Development, as one of the city's new 'hip' woman. (BBC News, 2003a)

entrepreneurial approach to regeneration and giving the city a reputation of having strong local governance- one of the reasons given for its COC08 award- created some of the tensions and faultlines that would subsequently fracture and destabilise Liverpool's COC08 strategy.

## 8.2 Early History of Liverpool

At a recent European football match as the new Liverpool football club anthem 'The Fields of Liverpool'<sup>2</sup> echoed around a familiarly febrile Anfield, a banner was revealed in the famous 'Kop' end, the bold white letters on the ruby red background declaring defiantly; 'we're not English, we are Scouse' (see Figure Fifteen p. 251). It is this complex Liverpool identity, this sense of otherness that tends to inspire sentimental loving from within or an almost visceral loathing from some elements without, that this chapter will attempt to contextualise.

Liverpool's early history was based on its position as a port on the north bank of the estuary of the river Mersey and it had its first historical mention as a base for the conquest of Ireland by Henry II in the twelfth century. In 1207 King John established a charter for the city creating 168 burgesses allowing it to become a base for sending supplies to Ireland. While the city had limited importance as a base for control of and importation to and from the neighbouring island, it was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the emergence of trade with the West Indies- primarily around slaves, tobacco and sugar- that its importance started to grow: in this period the population of Liverpool grew from 7,000 in 1708 to 34,000 in 1773 mostly from

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<sup>2</sup> The recent adoption of this song by Liverpool supporters is a reflection of how they see their Liverpool/Scouse identity and its relationship to nineteenth century immigration in that the song is a corruption of an Irish famine song 'The Fields of Athenry' (the song is also used in Glasgow as an expression of identity amongst some of its football supporters).

in-migration from neighbouring counties but also from Wales, Scotland and Ireland, introducing a strong 'Celtic component' before the massive nineteenth century Irish influx. Wilks-Heeg (2003), reflecting on this era and the city's subsequent twentieth century slump, remarks that Liverpool has descended from 'world city' to 'pariah city' in a century. He argues that Liverpool's place as a 'world city' dates to this seventeenth century period and, consequently, predates the industrial revolution; he points out that, soon after becoming an independent port in 1647, Liverpool started competing with Bristol, Cardiff and London for the highly lucrative slave trade and by the end of the eighteenth century the city had captured over half the British slave trade market.

When the Atlantic slave trade was abolished in 1808, the city became the site for importation and exportation, primarily based around Lancashire cotton: the port imported 85% of the 1.75 million cotton bales that entered the country (Victorian Society, 1967 cited in Wilks-Heeg, 2003 p.37). To accommodate this eight new docks were built between 1815 and 1835 and by 1857 Liverpool exported half of all British goods.<sup>3</sup> As a centre for global trade the city became integrated into the world economy and its emerging and burgeoning banking, insurance and futures markets. The global importance of Liverpool was further advanced when it became the key point for migration from the British Isles. This development occurred in conjunction with the evolution of the steamship travel industry which manifested itself physically in the development of an extensive office sector in the city (the largest outside London) dominated by international cotton traders and shipping agents. While

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<sup>3</sup> Liverpool pioneered the enclosed wet dock system where ships could lie out the Mersey tide. Somewhat ironically given the fact that it is now central to the city's maritime heritage the Albert Dock was actually atypical of the Liverpool Dock system and opposed locally as it was based on the enclosed London dock system (Belchem 2006).

Liverpool had a history of small scale craft industry based around shipping, the city prided itself in its mercantile as opposed to industrial image; this resulted in the juxtapositioning of the 'Liverpool gentleman' with the 'Manchester man'. Liverpool thus celebrated the fact that it was free from industry and its workers from the curse of the factory system, while the international importance of the city was furthered by it becoming a centre for the insurance industry, primarily shipping insurance, which provided Liverpool's key financial service (the vanity of this position is evidenced by the fact that, as late as the 1920's when only thirty seven per cent of Liverpool workers were involved in production and much needed industrial diversification was imperative, Liverpool Corporation was still celebrating the absence of manufacturing and concomitant industrial blight). The air of confidence and global aspirations within the city found expression in Liverpool's new architecture, primarily its grand 'iconic' waterfront buildings: the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Building (1907), the Royal Liver Building (1911) and the Cunard Building (1914)- collectively known as 'The Three Graces'- (see Figure Ten p.264) (the plans for the building of a 'Fourth Grace' will be discussed in detail in Chapters Nine and Ten).

### **8.3 Early Class Politics and 'Scouse' Identity**

Despite Liverpool's contemporary reputation for class-based political militancy, the city's class politics evolved along lines that were atypical of the class politics in British Victorian cities. The Chartist movement had, somewhat surprisingly, little support within what Liverpool Chartists themselves dismissed as a 'Whig and Tory ridden town' (cited in Moore, 1992 p.38). The political affiliations of the Liverpool working class were divided between waterfront artisan, freemen who looked to the

Tories to defend their interests through protectionism, and dock workers who voted Liberal as global trade liberalization meant more work on the docks (Moore, 1992). The nature of this dock work was generally unskilled casual employment as seafarers, dock labourers, carters, tugboatmen etc. The relationship between casual employment and Liverpool's class politics has been a source of historical debate: for Belchem (2006) casualism - along with sectarianism - did not completely explain the absence of class politics within the city, pointing to other factors such as the weakness of independent popular radicalism and the absence of an independent working class Liberal tradition; Taplin (1992, p.136), however, suggests that these factors were partly, if not wholly, caused by casual labour practices. He points to the influx and availability of cheap, unskilled labour due to migration from North Wales and Ireland and thus a plentiful supply of blacklegs to replace any casual worker tempted to organize into trade unions as militating against the formation of a strong union based politics within the city (Taplin, 1992 p.136). However, the absence of class based politics within Liverpool cannot be explained without reference to the impact caused by the massive wave of immigration into the city from its neighbouring island in the middle of the nineteenth century.

It was Liverpool's geographical position, both as a gateway to the New World and its geographical proximity to Ireland, that had a huge bearing on its nineteenth century social, economic and political history. In 1847 Ireland suffered a potato blight which due to the political economy of the country's agricultural production and laissez faire economics of the British government resulted in what is known in that country as 'An Gorta Mor'- 'the Great Hunger'. As a consequence of this famine, many of the country's starving poor escaped by sea to Liverpool: it is estimated that between

January and June 1847 300,000 starving Irish arrived in a city whose population was only 250,000. While many of these immigrants did pass through the Liverpool port, many stayed in the city itself: from 1841 to 1851 Liverpool's population rose from 286,000 to 376,000 (Wilks-Heeg, 2003) (in 1847 the Government passed a law authorising the authorities to deport the homeless back to Ireland. Liverpool is said to have shipped up to 15,000 back to Dublin and Cork. Interestingly for this study the only other British city to make use of this law was Glasgow).

This wave of immigration had a profound impact on Liverpool's social fabric with a huge tranche of poor immigrants settling in the Vauxhall and Scotland Road areas of the city, close to the docks where they worked as dock labourers - Pooley (1977) estimates that 77 per cent of dock workers in the 1870's lived within one mile of the nearest dock; this area became known as 'Little Ireland' and, latterly, 'Scouseland' and was said to be the densest slum in Europe with a population of 142,000 every square mile and a life expectancy of 17 years (see Figure Twelve p.265). These immigrants were disparaged as 'the dregs' by one Father Nugent (ironically an Irish Liverpudlian himself) (quoted in Belchem, 1992 p.68)<sup>4</sup> and in an early pathologization of the urban poor Dr. Duncan, Liverpool's medical officer of health, disdainfully dismissed the physical and moral contamination spread by these new arrivals:

The native inhabitants are exposed to the inroads of numerous hordes of uneducated Irish, spreading physical and moral contamination around them... By their example and intercourse with others they are rapidly lowering the standard of comfort among their English neighbours, communicating their

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<sup>4</sup> In an attempt to reclaim their identity and history, heritage studies within the city has come to celebrate 'slummy' Liverpool as the 'true' city with those tracing their roots back its mythical heartland, Scotland Road, being seen as bona fide Scousers.

vicious and apathetic habits, and fast extinguishing all sense of moral dignity, independence and self-respect.

(quoted in Belchem, 2006 p.147)

Belchem (2006, p.148) is correct in pointing out that these immigrants were 'dismissed as the *caput mortuum*, a kind of underclass, as it were, unable, unwilling, or unsuited to take advantage of opportunities elsewhere in Britain or the new world' - a discourse which has resonances in how 'whingeing Scousers' were portrayed in the 1980's and, indeed, within contemporary policy, where poverty is seen not as structural but as a result of a cultural or personal deficit which disallows the poor from availing of the opportunities offered in the contemporary economy.

It was this area that was first associated with the term 'Scouse'. 'Scouse', as with many class signifiers, is linked to food; the term itself is derived from a corruption of 'lobscouse', a type of stew made from potatoes, carrots, turnip, onions and beef generally eaten by Scandinavian sailors during their journeys though associated with Liverpool's poorest residents (Speigl, 2000). The immigrant poor, however, did not just spread 'physical and moral contamination' but linguistic contamination as well.<sup>5</sup> Knowles' (1973 quoted in Belchem 2000 p.43) study on the emergence of Scouse argues that the accent deemed Scouse was the result of a two way flow between differing social strata, where the grammar, vocabulary and phonological structure moved from the non Irish to the Irish immigrants, while the phonetic forms and tonetic characteristics that tend to differentiate the Scouse accent moved in the opposite direction. It should be noted, however, that this account is challenged as

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<sup>5</sup> Scouse is treated here as an accent not a dialect in that its distinguishing features are phonological: these include the production of nasal and plosives and the prominence of diphthongs and pitch patterns (Knowles, 1973).

being somewhat oversimplistic by oral historians such as Tony Lane (1987) who point out that Scouse as a distinctive accent was not evident in Liverpool until well into the twentieth century. Of course accent, like food, served to act as a class signifier with the accent of the Liverpool poor being seen to represent their congenital slovenliness as illustrated by Dixon Scott's appraisal in 1907 (quoted in Belchem, 2000 p.45) ;

the majority here are either Irish or of Irish descent. It follows, therefore, that here alone in Liverpool do you get a specific dialect. They speak a bastard brogue: a shambling degenerate speech of slip-shod vowels and muddled consonants- a cast-off clout of a tongue, more debased than Whitechapel Cockney, because so much more sluggish, so much less positive and acute.<sup>6</sup>

This port area developed and nurtured a unique identity and according to Knowles (1973 cited in Belchem 2000 p.44) there is evidence to suggest that the Scouse accent was actually cultivated by dock workers as a form of bonding and that it became a lingua franca within the dock area - this was given as the reason for the high incidence of adenoidal problems amongst the nineteenth century Liverpool poor. Once established in the city's central areas 'slummy' Scouse soon spread outwards, mostly through working class contact with the outer, more affluent parts of the city. There was considerable resistance to such linguistic contamination from the middle classes (indeed this remains the case today).

A consequence of this concentration of immigrant Irish within the docks area - an aspect of both Liverpool and Glasgow's social history and evidence of the divisive nature of cultural expression - were the sectarian confrontations that often engulfed the area. The first Orange and Green riot took place in Liverpool in 1811, while in

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<sup>6</sup> This association of the Liverpool accent with the 'unpleasant' characteristics of its populace is made by Alan Bennett who (in an illustration of Bourdieu's claim that classification tells more about the classifier than the classified) claimed that 'there is a rising inflection in it, particularly at the end of a sentence that gives even the most formal exchange a built-in air of grievance' (Bennett, 1994 cited in Belchem 2006 p.33).



1910 a state of emergency was called in Liverpool because of the intensity of the sectarian confrontation which took hold of the city. The sectarian social tensions within the city were reflected in its political structure. In the mid 1830's, following their ejection from office, the Tories sought to widen their electoral base by adding a sectarian element to the protectionist rhetoric which had secured them the support of the city's freeman vote. This emergent sectarian politics was facilitated by the fact that a large number of Irish immigrants had come from the neighbouring north east of Ireland and had taken their religious allegiances with them. It was, according to Belchem (2006), the presence of such Ulster Protestants that acted as a catalyst for the latent anti-Catholicism of the native workforce, with Liverpool being the home to inflammatory, demagogic Ulster pastors, the most famous being the Rev. Hugh McNeile who was both Protestant and protectionist and whose popular political rhetoric was infused with both biblical knowledge and old testament zeal. Orangeism and sectarianism came to the fore within Liverpool politics when it was appropriated and incorporated into the Tory narrative of religious and constitutional freedom and thus, Orangeism became the expression of allegiance and identity for all Protestants, whether native or immigrant. Working class 'Irish' Catholic voters thus tended to rely on their own political networks which were based around nationality and religion rather than class: the main political opposition to the Conservative and Liberals being conservative, middle class Irish Nationalists to whom class based politics were anathema (Crick, 1986). Sectarian clashes within the city took place primarily in this docks area and remained a key element within Liverpool until the inter-war period when many of the slums were cleared leading to the rehousing of up to fifteen per cent of the Liverpool population in the newly developed suburbs.

This area and its sectarian politics was in sharp contrast to Liverpool's merchant class who continued to prosper and whose political affiliations were, primarily, with the Liberal Party. This merchant class' economic interests stretched well beyond the city into Britain's colonial empire, resulting in Liverpool's economy being increasingly tied to Britain's industrial output and its unhealthy dependence on Empire markets. As a result of this Liverpool became a commercial not an industrial centre, with the city's wealth almost completely dependent upon Britain's standing in the international economy; as British industrial manufacturing declined, so did Liverpool's standing, resulting in unemployment rates reaching nearly 30 per cent by the 1930's. Initiatives were formed to combat this decline which interestingly, in terms of this study, adopted a structure similar to the partnership model that governs the city today: Atkinson and Wilks-Heeg (2000) point to both the Liverpool Organisation, formed from the local council and business to promote the city - they call this 'a remarkable portent of future forms of governance in the city'- and the fact that the city was the first local authority to seek legal power for local economic development in the form of the Liverpool Corporation Act (1936) as evidence of economic necessity generating 'partnership' within Liverpool (Meegan [2003 p.56] jokes that 'urban entrepreneurialism got off to an early start in Liverpool'). Further decline of the city followed with the demise of transatlantic ocean travel and the changing geopolitical axis whereby increasing trade with Europe left the city on the wrong side of the country; as trade moved to the east, Liverpool slipped to sixth in the league of British ports by the 1960's.

Despite this economic downturn, Liverpool and 'Scouse/Scousers' had a generally positive image throughout the rest of Britain. The emergence of a Scouse identity which was associated with the verbal jousting that seemed to predominate in the

docks area was reinforced by the emergence of Liverpool raised comedians (Arthur Askey, Tommy Handley, Derek Guyler, Ted Ray amongst others). These comedians prized surreal word play and comic malapropisms (known as Malapudlianisms or Merseypropisms) and a certain level of circumlocution - said to be derived from Irish oral culture of the seanachi or story teller. This type of humour served to distinguish Scouse humour both from the anecdotal northern monologue and the chirpy patter of the cockney comic. These positive associations of Scouse and Liverpool were reinforced in the 1960's by a boom in popular culture not only in the vibrancy of the Beatles and other proponents of the 'Mersey Sound' but with the novelists, poets and playwrights of the 1960's cultural boom (Belchem, 2006).

#### **8.4 Economic Downturn and Social and Political turmoil**

Despite the booming of popular culture within the city, Liverpool's economy continued to decline. Attempts to reverse this seemingly inexorable downturn in Liverpool's economic fortunes followed through a drive to create a manufacturing base within the city; international companies were encouraged to locate to the region (Dunlop, Ford, Lucas and Kodak) which, at its height, accounted for 24,000 jobs, two thirds of Liverpool's total employment. It was at this point that Liverpool, for the first time in its history, became primarily an industrial rather than a mercantile city and the remaining inner city urban poor were decanted from the areas north of the port to new housing projects in the suburbs. However, this brief period of regeneration was short-lived, with the movement to the global restructuring of production in the period 1975-1978. Ironically for this study - where the city's European allegiances are being used as a catalyst for regeneration - it was again the emergence of greater political as well as trading ties with Europe that helped cement

the city's decline. As an example of this Meegan (2003) points to what he identifies as the resonant closure of the Tate and Lyle sugar factory in 1984. This closure was caused by the fact that membership of the EEC meant that the use of sugar beet instead of sugar cane was encouraged, resulting in both the decline of the West Indies as producer and Liverpool as a manufacturing site. This period thus saw 50,000 redundancies within the city's manufacturing base which had, as one might expect, profound and destructive economic and social consequences. Socially, the movement to the suburbs which accompanied the promotion of manufacturing has, since the sector's demise, been calamitous for Liverpool, with the dual scourge of depopulation of the city centre being matched by the emerging social and economic problems in the estates on the city's periphery - these social and economic problems manifested themselves most visibly in the Toxteth riots of 1981. It is these outlying suburban areas, amongst the most socially and economically deprived in Britain, with which Liverpool is often associated. During this period, Liverpool's economy was decimated: employment and population fell by 23% and 12% respectively. This downturn extended into the nineties and by 1996 Liverpool's GDP had fallen to less than 90% of its 1981 level, whereas national GDP rose by over 50% in the same period. Within the government's index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 six of the fifteen most deprived wards in England are in Liverpool (Jones and Wilks-Heeg 2004 p.345).

Efforts to reverse this descent in the 1980's were undertaken under the neo liberal principles offered by the then Conservative government, whose ideological commitment to the diminution of state managerialism not only resulted in a trend towards the deregulation of urban policy, but actually called the *raison d'être* of local government itself into question (Clarke and Newman, 1997 cited in Imrie and

Thomas, 1999 p.4). In an attempt to lure private capital back to post-industrial cities the Conservative government encouraged the removal of planning zone regulations and relief from rates through the creation of Enterprise Zones and subsidy through grants such as the Urban Development Grant. In line with this, there was an increasing downgrading of local control with the introduction of centrally organised bodies such as Task Forces, City Action teams and quangos with urban regeneration remits such as Urban Development Corporations. According to Imrie and Thomas (1999), these reorientated urban policy towards the objective of pump priming inner city land values through infrastructure projects and the use of private sector capital, thus enabling spaces of production and consumption through the use of private sector capital. Liverpool was a 'laboratory' for such regeneration initiatives (Couch 2003): it had one of the first Enterprise zones (in Speke in 1981); the first Task Force (the Merseyside Task Force); one of the first City Action Teams (in Granby and Toxteth) and the first National Garden Festival site. The paradigm that such policies followed cast the local state in a subordinate role and argued that economic and social advantage would accrue from the supposed trickle down effect precipitated by such economic development (for a detailed comment and criticism of such a property based approach see Chapter Three).

## 8.5 The Militant Era

The policy shifts under neo-liberal attempts to reduce state managerialism generally and local government at the urban level specifically, resulted in considerable tensions, not only in Liverpool, but between Labour controlled councils and national government throughout the country. Boddy and Fudge (1984), for example, place Liverpool Council's confrontation with Whitehall within the wider 'municipal socialist' defiance of Tory policy which manifested itself in the 1985 rate capping standoff. Liverpool Council, however, differed from other Labour controlled councils in that the local party had adopted policies espoused by the far left Militant grouping.<sup>7</sup> This 'Militant' grouping gained its name from the *Militant* newspaper which its supporters sold. The organisation was founded in 1964 by a group of Marxists, mainly in Liverpool, who were previously involved in the Revolutionary Socialist League and its recently defunct newspaper *Socialist Fight*. How this Militant grouping gradually came to hold considerable influence within the Liverpool Labour Party is, as with most of Liverpool's history, a little complicated, somewhat convoluted and passionately contested .

As with much of the city's political and social history, Liverpool's history of class politics owes much to the massive nineteenth century immigrant influx. As a

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<sup>7</sup> This study will refer to Militant as a 'grouping' or 'organization', avoiding both the nouns 'faction' and 'Tendency' (with a capital 'T') as the organization, while referring to itself as a 'the tendency' never used a the title 'Militant Tendency' (with a capital T) in any of its internal or external literature (Crick, 1986) while 'faction' has connotations of subversion that supports the entryist discourse considered below. While Crick's (1984) book is seen as the definitive study of Militant and despite the author's claim that it is 'not a hatchet job' (p.13) its political bias (or that of the publisher Faber and Faber) is clear from change of cover and name from 'Militant' (1984) to 'the March of Militant' (1986) with its cover picture that suggests a fascist salute (see Figure Fourteen p.265). As well as suggesting fascism Crick's work hints at cultism: 'to be a member of Militant is almost to adopt a new way of life, which consumes most of one's spare time, energy and cash. Many who eventually leave the tendency are burned out and never again become involved in politics. In some ways Militant has more in common with religion than with democratic politics'. (p.6)

consequence of this mainly Irish migration, it was the Irish Nationalists and not Labour who represented the city's working class. However, with the partition of Ireland in 1921, most Irish Nationalists switched to Labour, bringing the city's Catholic working class vote with them (though not the city's working class Protestant vote which tended to go to the Working Men's Conservative Association). With this switch the Liverpool Labour party absorbed both Catholic councillors and a brand of politics that were more concentrated on the pulpit than the proletariat and it was this Catholic religious caucus that, according to Lane (1987), dominated the party. However, as a result of inner city slum clearances and the subsequent unravelling of the spatial proximity and associational networks upon which sectarianism bred, class slowly began to supersede sectarianism/nationalism within the city's politics allowing Labour to gain full control of Liverpool Council for the first time in 1955 (although sectarian divisions within the working class polity and the Labour Party remained with councillors standing as 'Protestants' being elected on to Liverpool Council as late as 1972).

Because of these sectarian tensions and considerable nepotism and cronyism around the Braddock family, the post-war Liverpool Labour Party is often presented as a moribund and sick institution. According to this line of argument politics in Liverpool resembled the Tammany Hall type system of cronyism and patronage associated with Irish immigrant politics in the United States: Lane (1987, p.42), in his analysis of the Liverpool Labour Party's unique evolution argues;

there has always been a flavour of Tammany Hall about the Labour party in Liverpool...Where in other parts of Britain the Labour Party fell heir to the radical wing of the Liberal Party, no such process took place in Liverpool. The Labour party, instead of inheriting the democratic, non-conformist tradition of

the Liberal Party, acquired the conspiratorialism of Irish politics as practiced in England <sup>8</sup>

While this may be true the discourse of a 'sick' party tends to ignore real political struggles within the Labour movement and thus serves a discourse that depoliticises the subsequent ideological struggles between a left Militant grouping within the party and Labour's ruling cadre (in line with this Militant is often presented as a political parasite feeding off an unhealthy host: Thomas-Symonds [2005] uses the verb 'infestation' in relation to Militant's involvement in the Labour Party, while Neil Kinnock was prone to referring to Militant as 'a maggot in the body of the Labour Party'). Such a discourse ignores not only key and longstanding ideological battles within the Liverpool Labour Party but also the political activism and acknowledged far left affiliations of Militant founders and Labour Party members: Jimmy Deane, for example, was an electrician and shop convenor at Cammell Lairds in Liverpool who joined the Labour Party in 1937 and openly argued a Trotskyist cause on Merseyside. It was through the proselitizing of Dean, particularly in the Walton constituency Labour Party, Tommy Birchall, who played a key role in the 1945 Docker's Strike, and Peter Taffe that the Liverpool Labour Party came to be dominated by a grouping with Marxist/Trotskyist political affiliations. While the Marxist leanings of most Militant members were openly declared, there was an increasing fear that they were, in fact, an 'entryist faction' intent on subverting the Labour Party to pursue a Marxist revolutionary agenda.<sup>9</sup>: in 1975 *The Observer* newspaper exposed Militant

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<sup>8</sup> Tammany Hall refers to the corrupt network of patronage and political affiliations associated with the Irish in New York and their alignment with the Democratic Party. In his recent work which seems to combine social history with place promotion John Belchem puts a glamorous spin on such politics: 'immune to the blandishments of Westminster, local 'boss' politics revelled (American-style) in the bustle and manipulation of the municipal machine'. (Belchem, 2006 p.3)

<sup>9</sup> Entryism was a political tactic associated with Leninist political theory whereby a revolutionary vanguard would lead a proletarian revolution. Trotsky applied this in his 'French turn' where he advocated the subversion of the French Socialist party from within. The 'entryist' intentions of Militant are convincingly argued in John Callaghan's 'The Far Left in British Politics' (1987, p.194) who quotes an internal party memo which instructs 'AU members holding public office, paid or unpaid, shall come under complete control of the party (that is



with the headline: 'Trot conspirators inside Labour Party', where Nora Beloff claimed that Militant was a 'party within a party', implying its entryist intentions; in 1976 Militant featured prominently in the British press in relation to the election of the Trotskyist Andy Bevan to the position of National Youth Officer, which *the Daily Telegraph* claimed was equivalent to the Conservatives appointing a Nazi in the same position (cited in Crick, 1986 p.109).

It was in the 1982 Council Elections that the Liverpool Labour party gained two seats while adopting a Militant platform of fighting the Tory policy of cuts in public expenditure and promising to use the Council position to as a 'platform to expose the political bankruptcy of capitalism' (this clearly articulated agenda and the fact that the Liberals campaigned along the lines of 'Liberals In, Marxists Out' dispels claims that the electorate were somehow 'duped' into voting for Militant). In the 1983 election, running on a similar agenda and again against a national swing towards the Conservatives, Labour managed to win twenty-three of the thirty-three seats contested, resulting in the first Labour majority in over a decade on the city council. This swing to the left both within the Liverpool Labour Party and the city's electorate was, on the most part, a political reflection of the prevailing economic conditions on Merseyside (this is acknowledged by Crick [1986 p.86] who argues that 'extreme economic conditions encourage extreme politics').

Despite the fact that only sixteen of the fifty one Labour councillors were actually Militant members, the Labour party were true to their election promises and thus began to defy central government's neo-liberal policies which cut public spending and encouraged entrepreneurialism in urban governance. While the Militant influence

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Militant) and its organs... All members are required to enter the mass organs of the working class..... for the purpose of fulfilling the aims of the party'.

certainly exacerbated this confrontation, it seems certain that a Labour controlled council in Liverpool would have collided with central government over curbs in public spending which affected Liverpool in an iniquitous fashion: the 1970 Liberal budgets kept Liverpool's rates and expenditure low but also lowered the baseline for the city upon which the Conservative government's financial penalties were assessed thus punishing Liverpool for its parsimony in the 70's (Crick, 1986).

The Council flagrantly ignored cuts in public spending and under Councillor Tony Byrne (a ex Jesuit seminarian who was not a member of Militant) initiated an Urban Regeneration Strategy which involved an unprecedented scheme of public building. These policies were made possible in the first year of office by stretching the previous Liberal budget to a £34million deficit; in the second year to realise its promises Labour had either to cut 5,000 jobs, initiate a 170% rate rise, or run up a huge budget deficit (Crick, 1986). Labour proposed a deficit budget for 1984-85 but due to the fact that six right wing Labour councillors- many were survivors of the Braddock era and became known, according to Crick (1986), as the 'sensible six' though were pilloried on Merseyside as the 'scabby six'- refused to vote with the Labour bloc and, consequently, the budget could not go through. However, in the May elections of that year, Labour's position received an electoral endorsement with the party increasing its number of seats by seven thus facilitating the passing of the deficit budget. With the Conservative government then locked in a dispute with the miners, there was reluctance to engage in what would have been interpreted as a second class based confrontation; to prevent this from happening, and after lengthy, acrimonious and highly controversial negotiations between the Council and the Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin, a balanced budget was eventually negotiated: *The Times* decried the

deal with the verdict that 'today municipal militancy is vindicated' (The Times 11<sup>th</sup> July 1984 cited in Crick [1986 p.245]). While Labour claimed a victory and gains between £50 and £90 million for the city in reality according to Parkinson (1985), the council conceded as much as it got; Jenkin accused Liverpool Labour of 'dancing on his political grave' and was sacked a year later.

The obstructionist stance of Militant and its increasing tactical blunders not only led to conflict with national government but also local trade unions, sections of the working-class polity and the national Labour party itself (Meegan, 1990, Crick, 1986). The national Labour Party had long been aware of the existence of Militant but due to its increased profile - not least because of Liverpool Council's stance - led to it purporting to fear Militant's subversive machinations. Thomas-Symonds (2005) claims that Militant were viewed as the 'illegitimate' left rather than the 'legitimate' left of the party of which their nemesis, Neil Kinnock, was once a part.<sup>10</sup> Kinnock bided his time before tackling Militant but when he did make his move, at the 1985 Labour conference, he did so with the kind rhetorical flourish that was both his blessing and his curse (the speech's contrasting of 'ideological' with 'practical' politics has resonances with Tony Blair's final TUC conference speech in 2007- see Blair [2007]);

I'll tell you what happens with impossible promises. You start with far-fetched resolutions. They are then pickled into rigid dogma, a code, and you go through the years sticking to that, outdated, misplaced, irrelevant to the real needs and you end up in the grotesque chaos of a Labour council - a Labour council - hiring taxis to scuttle around a city handing out redundancy notices to its own workers

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<sup>10</sup> Both Militant and Kinnock were part of the movement, Campaign for Local Democracy, which sought to democratise the party and limit the power of the leadership. Kinnock, however, initiated the reforms which in the end resulted in the empowerment of the Executive in an attempt to purge the party of its left leanings in an attempt to make it 'electable'.

(cited in Crick, 1986, p.277)<sup>11</sup>

The speech, however, signalled a 'purge' within the Labour Party of its 'militant faction' with those seen as entryist being expelled (many went on to form the Socialist Party). How far this move reflected a genuine fear that Militant would subvert the party, is open to debate: this study shares the view of Thomas-Symonds (2005) that the ostentatious expulsion of Militant was more to do with the realignment of the Labour party whereby it was seen as imperative that it jettison the albatross of its left wing in its attempt to gain electoral credibility, rather than a genuine fear that the Labour Party was the Trojan horse through which Militant would take a hold on power. Liverpool Militant, however, were not only being tackled by their own party but by District Auditor McMahon who surcharged Liverpool councillors for setting a rate late. This confrontation ended in the courts, with the forty seven recalcitrant councillors appealing all the way to the House of Lords; the councillors lost this appeal and not only had costs of £242,000 added to the surcharge of £106,000 but were disqualified from office for 'wilful misconduct'.<sup>12</sup>

### 8.6 The 'Whingeing Scouser'

It was with the city's severe economic downturn and political recalcitrance that the image of the witty, musical Scouser was superseded by associations with truculent industrial militancy and economic impoverishment. While Liverpool came to be represented as 'Britain's Beirut' (Scraton, 1995), the 'whingeing' Scouser came to represent an internal other who, just like his ancestors, was incapable or unwilling to

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<sup>11</sup> In what seemed like a co-ordinated effort the day before Kinnock's address the Catholic and Anglican bishops of Liverpool signed a jointly written article in the Times condemning Militant's role in the confrontation with Whitehall.

<sup>12</sup> How much support was given to the Militant councillors from within the Liverpool polity is highly contested, though it should be noted that Labour were victorious in the council election of that year standing on a platform of support for the forty seven councillors.

take advantage of the economic opportunities offered under neo-liberalism. The recalcitrant, militant Scouse working class male was represented as an obstacle to progress, fighting anachronistic class battles due his inability to adapt to the 'realities' of economic change. These representations are consistent with that of the Victorian Irish immigrant (and have resonances with contemporary discourses of social exclusion), where the impoverishment of the new immigrant was not structural but cultural and temperamental, they were 'reckless and feckless' and unable to take advantage of the opportunities offered in Victorian England or the New World. Similarly the contemporary Scouser was seen as part of a lumpenproletariat who chose to give a 'two fingered letter to Brezhnev' salute (see Chapter Four), rather than embrace the modern, entrepreneurial future offered under neo-liberalism.

These representations of the Scouser can be illustrated with reference to one of the most poignant events in the city's recent and often tragic history: 'the Hillsborough Disaster' where ninety six Liverpool football fans died in a crush at the Sheffield stadium in April 1989. In a vindictive, factually inaccurate and maliciously motivated article which appeared in the *Sun* newspaper- and, to a lesser extent, other tabloids and broadsheets- shortly after the tragedy, under the headline 'Truth', the paper accused Liverpool football fans of not only stealing money from the pockets of the dead but of urinating over their corpses and abusing a dead girl (see Figure Eleven p. 252). The article touched on nearly every point of the pathologizing register of the underclass male as set out, in a different context, by Beverly Skeggs (2004): thieving, drunken, violent, corporeal and sexually excessive.

### 8.7 Urban Governance and Regeneration

The turbulent eighties not only resulted in pejorative representations of the Scouser but had considerable ramifications for Liverpool, not least in terms of its local democracy. Liverpool's 'recalcitrant' local authority was virtually emasculated, with local powers being divested in a series of quangos within the city which pursued the urban entrepreneurial politics against which Liverpool's council had made its abortive stand. Towards the end of the 1980's, however, there was the recognition that this paradigm was failing, both in terms of its delivery of the 'trickle-down' benefits promised and in its ability to tackle social and environmental change within the city (see, amongst others, Lawless, 1996). In line with this came a new emphasis on partnership, whereby local authorities were reintroduced as part of structures which included the private and voluntary sectors; this began with the urban competition City Challenge. This restructuring was also facilitated by Europe since the city's successful bids for European Regional Development Funding was based upon the partnership model; as Meegan states (2003, p.63), 'while Liverpool was clearly experiencing economic difficulties as a result of the country's geopolitical turn towards Europe, these difficulties were themselves making the city eligible for intervention from the European Commission's Structural Funds programme'. The cross section of public agencies at both local and regional level formed what Meegan (2003) calls a shadow city-regional governance which lobbied for increased subsidy and in 1993 Merseyside moved from Objective Two to Objective One funding- reserved for those regions whose GDP was at or below 75% of the European average, Merseyside being the first conurbation in an old industrial region to be so designated. Support for such a partnership model was reinforced by the implementation of The Local Government Act (2000) which marked a shift back to local administration away from the

increasingly centralised governance of the previous two decades. This ideological shift was signalled by not only giving local authorities powers of intervention but also imposing upon them a duty to work in partnership with other agencies. Much of the recent major physical regeneration within the city has been the result of such partnership, with Mersey Development Corporation reclaiming land that is now used for housing and office space, City Challenge developing the east of the city and a combination of Objective One funding and English Partnership assistance has resulted in an upturn in the fortunes of the city centre: rents have almost doubled from £150 to £250 per square metre from 1995 to 2000 which in turn has attracted private developers such as Urban Splash, the Beetham Organisation and, latterly as discussed below, the Duke of Westminster, to invest in Liverpool's city centre (Meegan, 2003).

This partnership model flourished further with the formation of the Liverpool Partnership Group which brought together the chief executives of 18 public, private and voluntary organisations; a paradigm which was reinforced nationally by the election of New Labour. Somewhat ironically, however, in 1998 Liverpool Council became dominated by the Liberal Democrats who have zealously reformed local public services. As part of these reforms the controlling Liberal Democrats initiated a radical shake-up of the management of the council, with the appointment and empowerment of an Executive sanctioned to reform what they viewed as a bloated, underperforming administration: when the Liberal Democrats took power Liverpool had, according to the Audit Commission, the third worst performing council in Britain and the highest council tax in the country. To implement these reforms the Liberal Democrats turned to a fellow Liverpudlian and then Chief Executive of neighbouring Knowsley Council, David Henshaw. Henshaw had already established a reputation for somewhat ruthless reform and he realised this by cutting nearly four thousand

public sector jobs in the city; these cuts, however, enabled the council to turn a £25million deficit to a £10million surplus, allowing for a two year freeze on council tax (Henshaw's ruthlessness in pursuing this reform agenda of slashes and cuts resulted in him acquiring the sobriquet 'Sir David Chainsaw' (*The Independent*, June 18 2005); Interviewee 5 claims that he celebrated this reputation on his arrival in Liverpool when in a speech shortly after his appointment, he claimed that while in Knowsley he was known as David 'Hacksaw', he should actually go by the monicker 'Chainsaw')<sup>13</sup>. The reformist zeal of Henshaw and his colleagues within the Council Executive resulted in a high level of resistance and tension, initially within the council itself (council officials were said to be 'quaking in their boots' [Liverpool Daily Post, January 21, 2006]) but, latterly, as discussed below, between this newly empowered Executive and their putative employers, the elected representatives with Councillor Mike Storey at their head.

Part of this new entrepreneurial drive within the Council saw the establishment of Liverpool Vision, the country's first urban regeneration company. Set up in 1999 under the direction of the then Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, Liverpool Vision was an attempt to bring local politicians, development agency chiefs and business leaders together, with its main partners being Liverpool City Council, the North West Development Agency and English Partnership. The entrepreneurial slant of Liverpool Vision can be gleaned from its declared role 'to harness the entrepreneurial energies of the private sector and co-ordinate the activities and interventions of public partners' (Liverpool Vision, cited in Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004 p.346). This commitment to physical urban regeneration undertaken under the auspices of Liverpool Vision is

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<sup>13</sup> With this appointment Henshaw became one of the highest paid civil servants in the country with an annual wage of £130,000 -£20,000 more than the Prime Minister (Liverpool Daily Post, January 21, 2006).



illustrated by the various entrepreneurial initiatives it sanctioned: plans to transfer control of Liverpool airport to the private sector; the proposed development of King's Dock; and the building of an iconic, culturally orientated structure on the city's waterfront (the tensions between these two projects are discussed below)<sup>14</sup>. Such moves mark a profound ideological shift within the city's urban regeneration policy where attempts to tackle social deprivation through redistribution were replaced by an entrepreneurial model which favoured the promotion of business growth and property development within the Liverpool city centre (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004 pp.346-347).

Although these city centre focussed attempts at regeneration had a cultural inflection, Liverpool did not embrace a cultural strategy until 1987 when the Council formed its first ever formal structure for cultural policy making. This in many ways due to the Labour Left's association of cultural policy as something irrelevant to the city's pressing economic and social needs. Du Noyer (2002) illustrates this by recounting how councillors rejected a proposal in 1977 to erect a statue to mark the legacy of the Beatles. While there was an emphasis on the promotion of heritage on the city's Albert Dock, other mooted flagship projects such as the establishment of a cultural quarter in the Ropewalks area and the creation of a centre for the performing arts received limited political support in the eighties and early nineties, while other culturally based initiatives were regarded with scepticism (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993).

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<sup>14</sup> Liverpool Vision was both commended for its part in the physical transformation of the city and offered as a template for other cities' regeneration plans in a report to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in December 2005 (Liverpool Daily Post, December 05, 2005).

However, from the mid-nineties on this attitude changed with culture based regeneration moving to the centre of the city's economic strategy. Central to this was the establishment of the Liverpool Institute of the Performing Arts (LIPA)<sup>15</sup> - built in 1996 with the help of Sir Paul McCartney - which has attracted considerable attention as a centre for the arts and entertainment industries. In addition considerable redevelopment has transformed the Ropewalks area with the FACT Centre (Film, Art and Creative Technology) as its focus. Rather than being a peripheral concern culture is now at the heart of the city's regeneration agenda.

With this concentration on city centre regeneration as a symbol of the city's economic upturn, cultural policy has moved from the periphery to centre of the city's regeneration policy. However, in line with this centre orientated growth and apparent 'renaissance', Liverpool has indeed aped Glasgow in that this city centre focussed policy has resulted in considerable economic disparities and uneven distributional outcomes. Certainly, there has been considerable economic benefits to some of the city's residents, with Jones and Wilks-Heeg (2004) quoting the 2003 CACI 'Wealth of the Nation' survey which indicates that Liverpool and Merseyside contains pockets of considerable affluence. This contrast between the developing centre and the neglected periphery is actually endorsed by the same CACI survey which found that five of the eighteen postcode sectors in the UK with the highest percentage of households with income under £10,000 per annum are found on Merseyside - ironically the only other city to have a larger concentration of low age households in the country is Glasgow.

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<sup>15</sup> LIPA has received quite a lot of criticism locally in that the justification for using public funds- to develop local talent- has not been realised.

## 8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an economic, social and political history of the city of Liverpool. This history has provided the context for the subsequent chapter's consideration of its bid and plans for COC08. The chapter traced the economic rise and fall of the city and the resultant negative image of Liverpool and its residents within the UK. It illustrated how many of the pejorative associations of the indolent Scouser are derived from residual representations and pathologization of the city's initial lumpenproletariat - the Irish famine immigrant. As the subsequent chapters will illustrate one of the key aims of COC08 is to rebrand the city and move away from associations with this white 'underclass'.

The chapter then explored the unique nature of local politics within Liverpool, outlining how the city gained a reputation for class based 'militancy'. The chapter recounted in detail the city council's standoff with national government in the 1980's. This section challenged the depoliticisation of this conflict, placing it within the context of a political and ideological resistance to the neo liberal policies of central government; while Glasgow was adopting an entrepreneurial approach to regeneration with culture at its core, Liverpool was, as quoted in Chapter Four, giving it a 'two fingered Letter to Breznev salute'. The chapter then illustrated the ramifications this had for the city, not least in the bypassing of local democratic structures.

The chapter then discussed how in line with this 'quangoisation' of the city there were attempts to regenerate Liverpool through neo liberal property based initiatives of the 1980's and then the partnership model of the 1990's. It showed how cultural policy was, initially, seen to be irrelevant within a city with such pressing economic and

social needs. The chapter ended by illustrating how, in the mid nineties, Liverpool moved culture to the centre of its regeneration strategy. It demonstrated how this was part of the city's adoption of a centre focussed, entrepreneurial approach to urban regeneration. This approach was facilitated by both the urban entrepreneurial leanings of the ruling Liberal Democrat party and reforms of the city's municipal governance which empowered a Chief Executive who not only committed to a boosterist agenda, but also to reforming the city's urban administration.

It was within this context that Liverpool bid for the accolade European Capital of Culture 2008. As the following chapters will illustrate the bid was very much within the entrepreneurial spirit of its recent reforms and was thus seen as a means to rebrand the city as a (multi) cultural and creative centre. In addition the bid was also able to draw upon the city's sense of 'otherness' to generate levels of local support and, by doing so, both harness invocations of 'the people' to forward the interests of capital and provide the much needed social cachet demanded by the DCMS.



Figure Ten: Two of the 'Three Graces'. Above is Liverpool's Liver Building, one of the 'Three Graces' on the city's historic waterfront. On top of the building stands the Liver Bird, once the symbol of the city but absent in COC08 marketing materials (photograph author). Below is the Port of Liverpool building which graces Pier Head (photograph author).







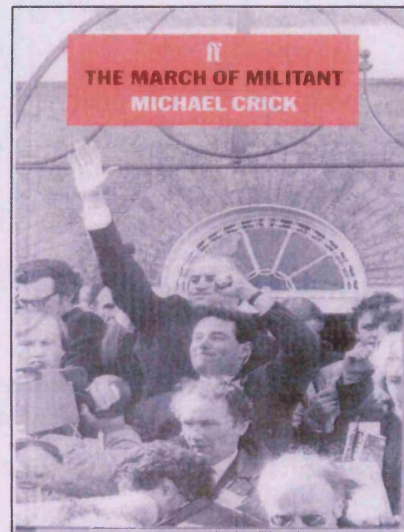
**Figure Eleven:** 'The Truth!'



**Figure Twelve:** Scotland Road, seen as the spiritual home of the Scouser. (photograph author)



**Figure Thirteen:** dereliction in the Norris Green area of the city.

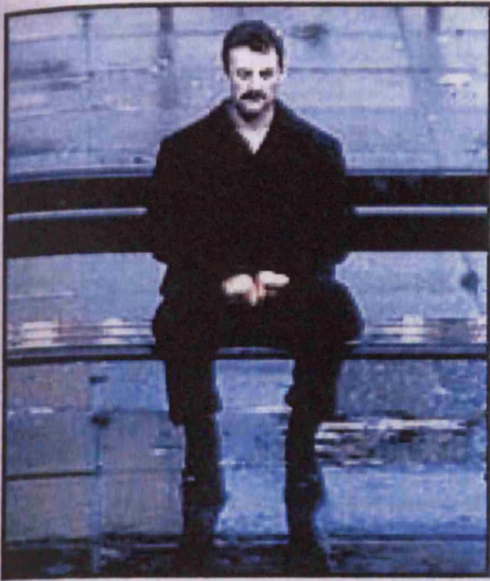


**Figure Fourteen:** Michael Crick's definitive account of Militant. The choice of cover photo suggests a fascist salute.



Chapter Nine: The People's Bid and Social Instrumentalism

**Various popular representations of the 'Scouse' identity.**



**Figure Sixteen :** Alan Bleasdale's Yosser Hughes a victim of neo liberalism.



**Figure Seventeen:** The Boswell Family: the roguish Scouser



**Figure Eighteen:** Calm down: Harry Enfield's excitable Scouser

## Chapter Nine: The People's Bid and Social Instrumentalism

*'Enthusiasm is a wonderful thing. In South America they throw flowers to you. In Greece Greeks throw themselves.'*

Melina Mercouri, initiator of the European City of Culture

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider both the Liverpool bid for COC08 and its subsequent plans for social regeneration through culture. The analysis of the bid itself will trace the genesis and evolution of the cultural regeneration template that is being celebrated as the 'Liverpool model' (this was referenced in two interviews—a researcher in Liverpool Council and a member of the Culture Company— and is the title used in a longitudinal research project being undertaken within the city's two main universities). The chapter will demonstrate how this model, through its celebration of both economic and social regeneration, maps perfectly onto the creative city/cultural planning paradigm outlined in Chapter Six. The earlier section of the chapter will highlight how in the bidding process, the Liverpool team both endorsed an entrepreneurial strategy around infrastructural development, rebranding and marketing the city (or doing a 'Glasgow'), while simultaneously denying an entrepreneurial approach through the promotion of a discourse of local ownership and 'community based regeneration'; a 'rapprochement' which this study has argued is central not only to a creative city/cultural planning paradigm but to New Labour politics in general.

The second section of this chapter will illustrate how this social element has been developed within Liverpool's plans for 2008. It will show how the arts/culture pairing discussed in Chapter Four has manifested itself in the institutional structure of the organisation set up to deliver Liverpool Capital of Culture year. In deconstructing the 'community' section of Liverpool's plans, the second half of the chapter will demonstrate how these both draw on and develop the Policy Action Team 10's



theoretically inconsistent and crude matching of intrinsic, instrumental and creative discourses with New Labour's social inclusion/exclusion objectives, resulting in the cultural replacing the structural as the source of inequality and, consequently, cultural policy becoming a surrogate social policy within the city.

## **9.2 The History of the 'People's Bid'**

The decision to bid for COC08 by Liverpool Council was taken at an early stage within the new Liberal Democratic administration: a Liberal Democratic councillor with a cultural remit claimed when interviewed that the decision was taken by councillors during a trip to New York to honour John Lennon in 1998. As a means of developing the city's bid a new organisation, The Liverpool Culture Company, was established by Liverpool City Council in 2000, initially with the sole remit of writing the bid for Capital of Culture 2008. The structure of the company was that it was 'limited by guarantee'- meaning that all its financial liabilities were held by the council- which would prove hugely significant in its planning for 2008 as it resulted in its control by powerful elements within the Council.

The choice of the name 'Culture Company' was deliberately intended to link the city's bid to economic regeneration: head of the Council, Mike Storey, claimed it was chosen to show that 'Liverpool's Capital of Culture would be about regeneration'; the head of public relations within the organisation claimed that the name was chosen to 'show that we meant business' (this could be read both metaphorically and literally), while a Liberal Democrat councillor putting forward the same economically instrumentalist argument claimed that 'we didn't want to seem like just an Arty organisation'. This conflation of the cultural and the economic within the name

'Culture Company' is, however, evidence of the homology of left of centre 'cultural industry' thinking, with a neo-liberal discourse within British cultural policy; the tensions between its 'economic' and 'cultural' imperatives is discussed in more detail in the following chapters (the disillusionment with the organisation and its pursuit of an economic agenda resulted in the organisation being referred to within some quarters in the city as the 'Vulture Company' [Interviewee Eight, a full time worker in a community arts organisation]).

The key appointment within the team set up to manage the bid for Capital of Culture 08 was, undoubtedly, the shrewd and canny Sir Bob Scott who, at the time, was seen as the man who delivered the 2002 Commonwealth games to the city's rivals and economic nemesis, Manchester (Scott would subsequently become embroiled in the political dispute over Liverpool's £22 million overspend in 2007, when figures revealed to the *Liverpool Daily Post* under the Freedom of Information Act showed that during the preparations for 2008 Scott received £8,000 a month in consultancy fees and expenses [Liverpool Daily Post, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2007]). When commenting on Scott, Interviewee One, the head of a rival bidding team, while acknowledging his importance to Liverpool's subsequent triumph, at the same time damns both him and, indeed, it could be read the kind of inter urban competition that the competition for COC08 represents, with the following praise;

Scott is a great political operator. He knows how to work the system, play the game if you like. He knew what the government wanted to hear and he gave it to them. It didn't matter to him if they could actually deliver because once the bid was won his job was done.

Three interviewees (two from inside and one from outside Liverpool) identified the emergence of the 'community first/people's bid' strategy with the prescience of Scott, who astutely predicted and subsequently correctly interpreted the Government's questions and, as a result, put in place a strategy that resonated with a New Labour cultural planning approach which celebrated culture as a means to deliver both economic and social regeneration. The key link in the chain between Scott and those working with communities in Liverpool was Claire McColgan, one of the initial members of the bid team and now head of the Communities team within the Culture Company. McColgan's background was as an Arts officer within Community Art projects in the impoverished Speke/Garston area of the city, and she was seconded to the Culture Company at an early stage in the bidding process and was fundamental to pushing the community agenda at both the bidding and, presently, the planning stage for Liverpool 08. When questioned as to what drove Liverpool's community first strategy forward, McColgan acknowledges the foresight of Scott in recognising the need to promote the notion of local engagement/local ownership;

Bob Scott took very seriously he said that that was the one thing that will define us from other people, it was how we would engage people and he was absolutely right and that was very foresighted of him.

Thus in its preparation for the bid the Culture Company consulted leading practitioners of community arts/community regeneration within the city, most especially, according to two members of the team, an organisation named Merseyside ACME (Arts, Culture and Media Enterprise) - see Chapter Six. Merseyside ACME was launched in 1997 to develop businesses in the creative industries sector though increasingly their remit evolved to balancing an economic with a social agenda through demonstrating the power and effectiveness of 'creativity' within community-

based regeneration activity; their publication *'As Broadcast in Beijing'* (Hill and Moriarty, 2001) is often cited as a key text within 'creative community regeneration'. While writing its bid document Liverpool Culture Company drew on the work developed by Merseyside ACME, particularly its director, Kevin MacManus. While undoubtedly committed to the regeneration work of his company, MacManus highlights the lack of a clear and consistent theoretical position in relation to the function of 'creativity' in regeneration; when asked to explain how to define the role of creativity in community regeneration MacManus drew upon an interpretation of creative industry which he relates to economic arguments around Intellectual Property;

It's difficult without being too technical, again it's borrowing, I mean we don't see any sense in us going off on our own path when the DCMS is saying these things, it's around the exploitation of intellectual property, it's all about us trying to achieve uniformity between us and various agencies and stuff and mm that's sort of the nub of it really, it's Intellectual Property Rights and stuff.

MacManus' definition highlights the mixed and competing artistic, cultural and economic discourses that feed into the increasingly deracinated notion of 'creativity'. When asked the same question, Claire McColgan reflects her community arts background and argues that 'creativity' is rooted in the psychological makeup of the individual and does not relate it to ideas around the creative economy or creative industry;

I think for us it's very simple, when you're little and when you're growing up really creativity is absolutely part of what you do cause you play and you imagine and you live on a world of imagination really and at varying degrees throughout your life that creativity is knocked out of you and if strong enough that will stay with you but if you're not that's put in the background and it's

just when that bit of imagination was knocked out of them, you know and that all depends on schools and it all depends on opportunity.

Another interviewee who had associations with the Merseyside ACME team was keen to acknowledge that what emerged as the Culture Company's 'creative community' approach was rooted in the work that his own organisation had been pursuing in Speke/Garston . While doing this, however, he casts some doubts on the motives behind this endorsement of community and creativity within the Liverpool bid and suggests that, if viewed cynically, the strategy could be conceived as an attempt to match the government's criteria, rather than a genuine commitment to Liverpool communities (these whispers became a roar as 2008 approached as the community arts sector became increasingly disillusioned with the direction taken by the Culture Company);

If I was being cynical I would say they thought look we've got to do the community element how are we going to do it and we were good at doing it and we probably gave them some answers to question five, that's the cynical approach, but I think that there's an element of truth in that cynicism and I think what happened was a change slightly because they started to realise the value of what we were doing. It as interesting to watch Bob Scott cause I think he was treating it in a fairly cursory way, but to give him his due, he's very sharp and quickly within a few months he realised that this could be the central plank of the bid. Partly it was due to his insight and partly it was due to us convincing him with the strength of what we've achieved. All the indications from the DCMS suggested that that's what won them the title.

Although this interviewee acknowledges that Creative Communities has formed a central plank within Culture Company strategy, he casts doubts over its level of engagement and claims that 'counting numbers' and meaningful engagement are not the same;

Our approach is to be in touch with the communities and Culture Company say that that's going on but I'm not sure that that is what's going on as much as they say. If you're just in the business of counting numbers is that worthwhile in terms of a meaningful engagement. Someone who has an afternoon engagement with a dancer and does a city centre performance in front of the mayor, I don't see that as having any value whatsoever..our approach is very much bottom up and Culture Company will say that that is their approach but I don't know how true that is.

This scepticism - subsequent to the award - was endorsed by Interviewee Ten the head of a community arts organisation which was later to receive a small grant from the Culture Company towards an exhibition in 2008 (because of this he did not wish to be identified). While acknowledging his disillusionment may have been based on the fact that he did not receive the substantial grant he had requested from the Culture Company his comments are, nonetheless, worth quoting as they reflect a general disillusionment within the city's community arts sector (none of the five interviewees from within the city's community arts organisations expressed confidence in the Culture Company);

We were approached by the Culture Company when they were bidding, I think that was mainly because we had done a lot of work in Europe and they wanted this European angle and we were really excited and thought that we would be right in the mix of things. But that hasn't happened and to be frank with you we feel like we've been used a bit.

Despite these subsequent criticisms, in preparation for its bid, Liverpool's Culture Company did manage to generate high levels of support within the city. This was partly through engagement with the city's vibrant community arts sector and considerable work within the city's schools. Through this the Culture Company were

able to promote the idea that the bid that they were preparing was 'owned' by the people of Liverpool: it was claimed that 'more than 150,000 people backed the bid and a further 102,000 Liverpoolians including 35,000 school children were involved in shaping it, that it involved more than 50,000 people in 100 community arts based projects' (Liverpool City Council, 2002a).

### **9.3 Social and Economic objectives and the marketing of Liverpool**

Consequently the rhetoric of 'inclusion', 'participation' and 'people's ownership' is promoted vigorously throughout Liverpool's bid for COC08 (Liverpool City Council, 2002b). However, in line with a creative city/cultural planning template, the bid does not abandon the economic in favour of the social. This can be illustrated by the two letters of introduction which open the city's bid document: one of these is from Professor Peter Toyne, Vice Chancellor of Liverpool John Moores University, the other from Council Leader, Mike Storey. Using a variation of the art/culture, centre/periphery construction outlined in Chapter Six, Storey's Foreword claims that culture can both rebuild the economy and develop the community; 'ambitions are high- we are committed to building a more competitive, modern economy and developing healthier, safer and more inclusive communities.' The bid forwards two strategies for such economic regeneration. The first of these is that of city promotion and branding through culture, whereby culture will attract both visitors and inward investment (and of course regenerate the community);

Regenerating the industrial landscape is top of the agenda. Culture, with its potential to drive both tourism and inward investment, as well as deal with the enormous challenges of regenerating communities, is a key tool in dealing with this.

(Liverpool, City Council 2002b)

The second strategy of economic regeneration suggested in the bid revolves around the notion of creativity. This creative city discourse is expressed both in terms of the city's cultural and economic output and the bid thus rallies to the notion of Liverpool as a 'creative' hub, by associating it with new high tech industry which, as in New Labour policy, it then links to the 'creative sector'. However, what the 'creative sector' comprises is not established, and as will be argued later if the definition used by ERM Economics later in the bid is utilised, then it will include not only the 'cultural industries', 'high tech industry' but may well include the city's service sector as well;

With companies such as Sony Psygnosis, Amaze, River Media and Rage, the city is burgeoning with new media and electronic games talent and boasts a creative sector which employs over 16,000 people and offers unrivalled opportunities for talented designers and thinkers.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

In his letter of introduction, Professor Toyne balances the economic regeneration discourse with a social regeneration discourse and thus forwards the people's ownership narrative by stressing the collaborative nature of the Liverpool submission;

over the last two years, the people of Liverpool have been actively engaged in an extensive consultation process which has galvanised public support for this bid as we have defined what we mean by culture and planned an innovative programme of cultural activities for each of the remaining years of this decade.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

Toyne's Forward shows an awareness of the tensions between marketing and branding the city for an external audience and the idea that the Liverpool identity that is being marketed is the expression of the 'people'. Consequently Toyne attempts to



pre-empt criticism that Liverpool's bid is merely part of a top down public relations exercise - which this study argues it essentially is - rather than the bottom up, organic process celebrated in the bid itself;

building on Jung's famous description of our city as 'the pool of life', we have identified 10 major features of that life which underpin our claim now to be 'The World in One City'. That claim is not an abstract construct of a PR agency but the genuine expression of our people.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

(it goes without saying that 'The World in One City' was a public relations company construct, developed by John Egan of the October Communication Agency in the city). Marketing, branding and image change are thus paramount within the Liverpool submission with its boosterist tenor illustrated by its claim that the most important reflection of the change of image of the city is the increase in land values (ironically in line with his own party's rebranding as 'New Labour' - and, arguably, an abandonment of its historical links with class based politics - Tony Blair is quoted as celebrating the emergence of a 'new Liverpool'):

Image plays a huge part in this. The challenge of changing Liverpool's image is being met not just by the cultural community in the city, but also by the City Council, Liverpool Vision, the NWDA and The Mersey Partnership. Change on this scale is not something that will happen overnight but already there is clear evidence, illustrated in both the local and national media and, more importantly, confirmed by land values, that Liverpool is on the move. This was reinforced by the Prime Minister at a Merseyside Reception at the House of Commons on 25 February 2002 when he spoke of 'the new Liverpool.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

The justification for promoting the notion that the bid was owned by the people was the consultation process undertaken by the Culture Company in its preparation and the argument that it was through this consultation process that the city came to find its definition of culture;

we decided to ask the people of Liverpool what is unique about Liverpool, its culture and its place in Europe. Through a lengthy process of polls and public meetings we asked Liverpool people to study and select the main reasons why Liverpool should be chosen to be European Capital of Culture in 2008.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

This 'public consultation' resulted in what is claimed as a wide definition of culture ('the city takes a very broad view of culture and is the richer for it' ) that maps perfectly on to the arts/culture pairing which this study has identified as a New Labour discursive construction. Central to establishing this broad definition was the city's 'Bottle your Culture' scheme, where Liverpudlians - generally schoolchildren - were encouraged to express what they viewed as the culture of their city by filling a bottle with personal artefacts (the use of children as representing the voice of the 'community' is a common strategy when public consultation is called for). What emerged from this project was, according to the bid, a broad view of culture that encompassed the art of the centre and the culture of the periphery/community: expressed throughout the bid in terms such as 'highbrow or pop'; 'theatre or football' or in this case 'the Royal Philharmonic to Kirsty Jones from Speke' or 'Tate Liverpool to Amy Leatherbarrow of Norris Green'- Speke and Norris Green being the most socio-economically deprived areas of the city ;

each bottle is an individual work of art which stimulates thoughts about cultural identity and diversity. From the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic to

Kirstie Jones from Speke, each represents a view of culture that strengthens our bid

....culture is much more than the art we show or the activities we run. It's about the relationships we foster and the idea we help to generate. (Tate Liverpool) 'I filled my bottle with the Fazakerley clock.... I walk past it every day to school and it makes me happy and proud' (Amy Leatherbarrow Age 10. Norris Green, Liverpool).

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

As was illustrated in Chapter Seven's discussion of rival city's submissions, there is a silence around the culture of groups in society that are not easily marketable or who do not project the correct image of the city - the elderly, the white working class. An image that all of the competing cities attempted to project is, however, that of multiculturalism (it must be stressed that this study does not wish in any way to silence the rich multicultural voice within Liverpool's history but, instead, interrogate how this has been appropriated in urban marketing strategies). While historically, as Chapter Nine demonstrates, Liverpool was undoubtedly cosmopolitan and ethnically diverse it is, in fact, one of the least diverse cities in the UK with only 1.1% of the city's population Asian or British Asian compared to an average of 4.6%, while 1.2% of the city's population was registered as Black British compared to 2.1% nationally. However, multiculturalism is seen as a prerequisite in marketing a city and scoring highly on the Richard Florida inspired 'Boho Britain Creativity Index' (DEMOS, 2002): this has led local historian and contributor to the Liverpool bid John Belchem (2006, p.xxvii) to worry;

it may indeed be open to question as to whether Liverpool, the most multicultural and un-English of Victorian provincial cities, now has a sufficiently

cosmopolitan and bohemian complexion to attract the highly mobile 'creative classes' regarded by Richard Florida as the key drivers of economic growth in the post industrial city.

Indeed, as has been argued in Chapter Eight, not only is the city's supposed multiculturalism, which forms the basis of the strapline 'The World in One City' adopted for COC08, at odds with statistics which suggest that Liverpool is one of the least ethnically mixed cities in Britain, but also with the city's history - as Chapter Eight demonstrates, the experience of past and present migration to Liverpool is from the utopian vision where every person 'is given the right to be themselves' illustrated by the fact that large numbers of starving Irish were actually shipped back to Dublin and Cork in the middle of the nineteenth century:

culture is at the heart of our vision for the City of Liverpool. The cultural wealth and diversity generated by 800 years of maritime history together with our long-established Black, Chinese and Irish communities, produces a unique identity which is both national and international.'

'Liverpool is a veritable cocktail of cultures; Irish, Welsh, Scots as well as English; Jewish, Muslim, Hindu; Chinese, Greek, Italian, Spanish; more recently Caribbean, Somali and Yemeni; and more recently still refugees asylum seekers from the Balkans and the Middle East. Liverpool accords to every person the right to be themselves. The city is proud that it is home to the longest established Chinese community in Europe, that the first ever mosque in Britain was opened here in 1889, that the Somali community, now over 3,000 strong, goes back to the start of the last century.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

Another key element within a Florida informed creative city discourse is a large gay population which the Liverpool bid is also keen to promote:

I filled this bottle with these items to represent and express our gay culture. Each level represents coming out, friendship and safer sex' *GYRO* (Gay Youth R Out)

Thus within Liverpool's bid multiculturalism, ethnic diversity and gay culture are celebrated as they project the correct image for the marketing and rebranding of the city. Not only does this ignore exclusions and inequalities experienced by many of these groups, but it excludes a large section of the Liverpool population - primarily the white working class - who do not fit with the image the city wishes to project.

#### **9.4 Replicating a Glasgow and Economic Forecasting**

While the other bids were reluctant to identify themselves explicitly with Glasgow- the head of the bidding team for a rival city suggested that this was because Glasgow 'lost the people'- the Liverpool bid was unapologetic in its claim that their city was in the best position to replicate the successes the UK's previous winner;

'The template of Glasgow, which made such a success of their City of Culture year in 1990, sits most comfortably on Liverpool. Glasgow, a great seaport and ship-building centre, with a remarkable population, magnificent buildings and a stirring history, looking for a new place in the world, determined to take on the new without abandoning the old, with a successful city rival 30 miles down the road- this could be Liverpool. In 1985 Glasgow made its bid, and 5 years later, by common consent, enjoyed the most successful City of Culture Year of all. The legacy is a new Glasgow which has become a major tourist destination. Again, this could be Liverpool.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

When endorsing Glasgow as the paradigm which Liverpool wished to follow- the bid describes this as 'the gold standard'. The document suggests that the 'new administration' within Liverpool - a Liberal Democrat council and empowered executive - would follow the template established by Glasgow though opposed under the former left councils in the city;

Liverpool was the first city in the country to decide to bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2008.... The city instinctively knew the importance of the prize and that the Glasgow experience 10 years earlier was exactly the model for Liverpool at the start of a new century under a new administration.

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

In its citing of Glasgow, the bid makes explicit that the aim of Liverpool is not 'simply having a good party and showing off the cultural assets of the city', but that of regeneration and especially rebranding. In line with a cultural planning/creative city approach such rebranding initiatives not only change the profile of the city and thus attract tourism and investment (as discussed in Chapter Four this was the explicit aim of Glasgow) but also alter internal perceptions and 'restore self confidence', thus forming part of the virtuous circle of economic and social regeneration;

perceptions of Glasgow were transformed by 1990; if ambitions for City/Capital of Culture go beyond those of having a good party and showing off the cultural assets of a city, then Glasgow has been the gold standard since the inception of the concept

.... In pure economic terms the year was a success, generating a net economic return of £10 million-plus and creating over 5,000 temporary jobs during the year. But this was the least of it. The key impact on Glasgow was to change perceptions- to transform the city's reputation in the UK and abroad and to restore self-confidence and pride in the city to Glaswegians devastated by years of post-industrial gloom

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

The replication of Glasgow's successful economic regeneration was certainly the narrative that the Liverpool bidding team wished to promote to the extent that when submitting its bid to the DCMS Bob Scott argued that the economic report that accompanied the bid 'proved' that Liverpool was in the best position to replicate the Glasgow effect:

The ERM report suggests that Liverpool is the city most likely to replicate the 'Glasgow effect'. We can now independently demonstrate the substantial and sustainable benefits that would flow from a successful capital of culture bid.

(cited in Carter, 2003a)

This 'independent' economic analysis which, according to Scott, 'proved' that Liverpool would replicate Glasgow was provided by a report from the Manchester based consultancy company ERM Economics (the report is referenced under its authors, Sadiq et al). While being interviewed for this study council leader Mike Storey rejected the suggestion that the economic projections in relation to winning the award were optimistic arguing for the 'independence' of the agency commissioned to undertake the study and calculate these economic projections:

At an early stage we commissioned a consultancy called ERM who were quite well known in terms of how culture can regenerate and they looked at past Capital of Cultures and they reckoned it would be worth an additional 14,000 jobs on top of everything else we're doing, it would see an extra 17 million tourists come in to the city and it would see an extra 2 billion pounds of investment flowing in and those for us were figures to die for. That was independent commissioning work and we put that in the document as well to show the judges how it would not only be a hugely successful Capital of Culture Year but that it would be about the continued regeneration of the city.

While Liverpool was not alone in making bold claims around the economic benefits that the designation would reap, such boosterist forecasting has been criticised by academics (see Chapter Four) and indeed by those involved in the bidding for COC08 (Interviewee One acknowledged that economic projections are certainly 'not the most robust, to say the least'). This much heralded - and as the following chapter will demonstrate much cited - 'independent socio-economic impact assessment' provided the basis for subsequent claims around the job creation and economic development. While the report paid somewhat cursory attention to the social, it focussed heavily on the economic and the contribution that culture can make to urban competitiveness.<sup>1</sup>

The ERM report warrants close attention as it formed the basis of the ebullient economic projections which accompanied Liverpool's winning of the COC08 accolade. The report forwarded a creative city agenda, drawing theories around the cosmopolitan city attracting what Richard Florida has deemed the 'creative class';

the cosmopolitan city, then, attracts knowledge intensive activity, skilled labour, international tourists and business elites, all of which in turn introduce new ideas and creativity and generate a demand for quality and high value added goods and services, which in turn creates a more attractive environment capable of attracting more activity.

(Sadiq et al., 2003 p.6)

Thus, according to this report, it is essential that Liverpool is seen as a creative hub in order to attract these 'creative' workers; 'Liverpool has an aim to be recognised the world over as a 'city of creativity' and to reap the social and competitive advantages such recognition will bring'. (p.6) To present Liverpool as a centre of creativity, the

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<sup>1</sup> The social benefits of the award were considered in detail in the Creative Communities Report commissioned by the Culture Company and produced by the Manchester based research consultancy PTZ Piedad Consulting- this report is discussed in detail later in this chapter.



ERM report not only uses some dubious economic forecasting, but also employs the rhetorical device of association to give the city more 'creative kudos'. An example of this is in its detailing of the economic and employment opportunities offered by the city's media sector: 'Mersey Television is the largest regional independent production company in the UK, with a turnover of £3.9 million in 1998/99. New Media, Film and Television employs over 62,000 and the sector has a combined turnover of £6.45 billion' (Sadiq et al., 2003 p.27). By placing these two statements beside one another the reader assumes that the latter statistic relates to Liverpool; unfortunately for the city this is a national statistic and the actual total of those employed within film, video, radio and television in the city, using ERM's own dataset is the much less, though not insignificant figure of 2,140. As well as rhetorical strategies such as this the report also recategorizes Liverpool's industrial sectors to promote the notion of it being a 'creative city'; a detailed deconstruction of this recategorization of industrial sectors under cultural and creative industry will illustrate how the discourse of creativity owes as much to a marketing as to a coherent industrial strategy.

The report claims that it takes what it deems as a 'broad' view of the cultural industries. This 'broad' view encompasses the 'creative industries'- which, as Chapter Six demonstrated, were the original 'cultural industries conjoined to high tech industry'- combined with 'tourism, sports and heritage' (p.19). The report actually recognises that it is notoriously difficult to pin a definition on cultural and creative industry,

the definition of what exactly a 'cultural' and 'creative' industry is, is something that seems obvious at first when the term is loosely applied to museums, the arts and entertainment. Once there is a need to tie down the definition is (sic) becomes more difficult.

(Sadiq et al., 2003 p.61)

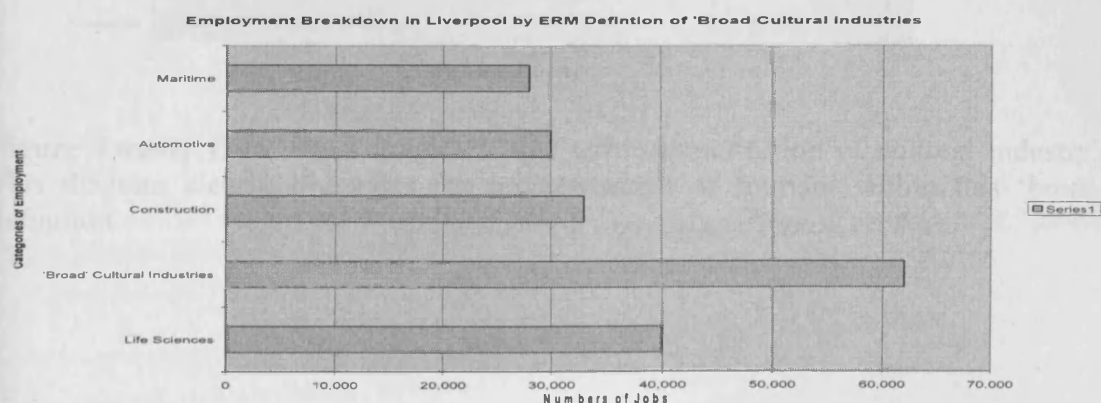
and while it does draw on the DCMS' definition of 'creative industry' it at no point justifies its own definition of 'broad cultural industry': where within a DCMS definition creative industry is cultural industry plus ICT, the ERM definition of 'broad cultural industry' is creative industry plus tourism, sports and heritage. To add to this obfuscation in definition, at times the cultural and creative industries are treated as synonymous and, at times distinct: 'the strategy adopted by Liverpool in its 2008 bid programme and its broader approach to regeneration of the City is to view the cultural industries in its entirety, recognising the importance of the creative industries for the future of the city' (p.23) This is not a matter of semantics as it has huge implications since one of the main generators of employment within Liverpool's economy, tourism, is now cast within the 'creative' sector (see Figures Nineteen, Twenty and Twenty One below):

the broad cultural industries in Liverpool employed 29,000 people in 2001 and of this, 5,000 were employed in creative industries and 24, 000 in cultural industries' (p.20) or 'the percentage of the workforce of creative and cultural industries employment compared to total employment has been steadily increasing. In Liverpool the creative industries accounted for 2% of the total workforce in 1991 growing to 3% by 2001. Cultural industries rose from 10% in 1991 to 11% in 2001 with the broad cultural industries accounting for 14% of the total workforce in 2001'.

(Sadiq et al., 2003 p.21)

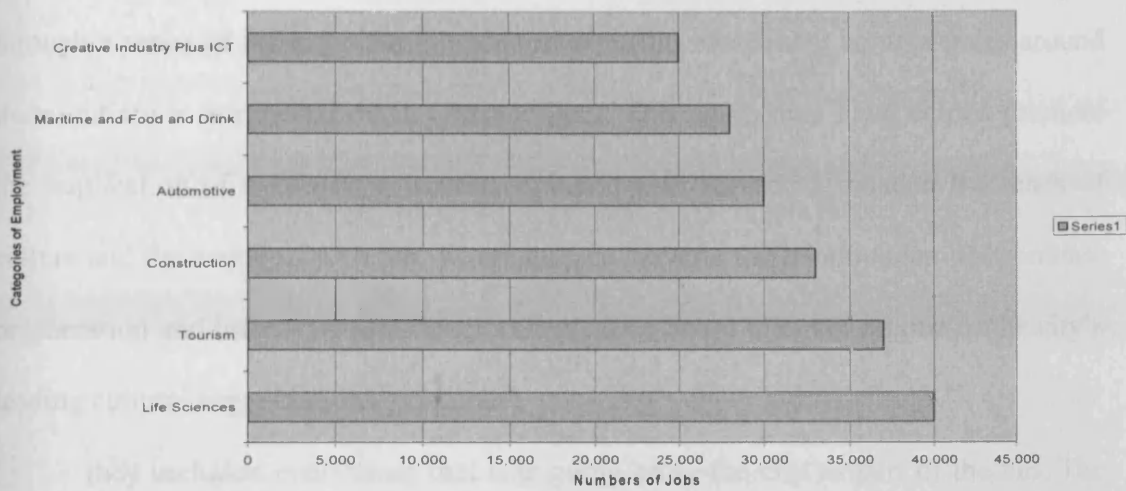
This definition of the cultural industries is a huge, unrelated field that includes kitchen porters as well as graphic designers and mime artists. Thus using this broad definition of culture the ERM report argues that the projected economic returns for the cultural sector, based on 'detailed analysis of the Liverpool bid and employment trends', would be '13,200 new jobs by 2012 as a result of trend growth, new cultural

investments and a successful Capital of Culture bid' (Sadiq et al., 2003 p.2). This much cited 13,200 figure in fact reflects economic growth that was incidental to COC08, and even given the latitude of definition of the 'cultural sector', the actual number of jobs created directly by COC 08 was estimated as 1,380. Using this number and taking ERM's dataset of the sector's breakdown (obviously more jobs will be created in certain areas - in all likelihood primarily related to tourism - than others and these projections are merely illustrative) the projected jobs created directly by COC08 might be tourism 579; sport 231; media 48. Obviously within the boosterist discourse that exists in relation to such bids headlines such as '600 service sector jobs' as opposed to '14,000 cultural industries jobs' is less likely to catch a sub editors or, more importantly, a government appointed judge's eye. These projected economic returns from the Capital of Culture, however, were rarely questioned and as Interviewee One, who was closely involved in the putting forward the economic arguments for his own city, stated 'since there is rarely a post hoc economic assessment these figures are difficult to disprove.'



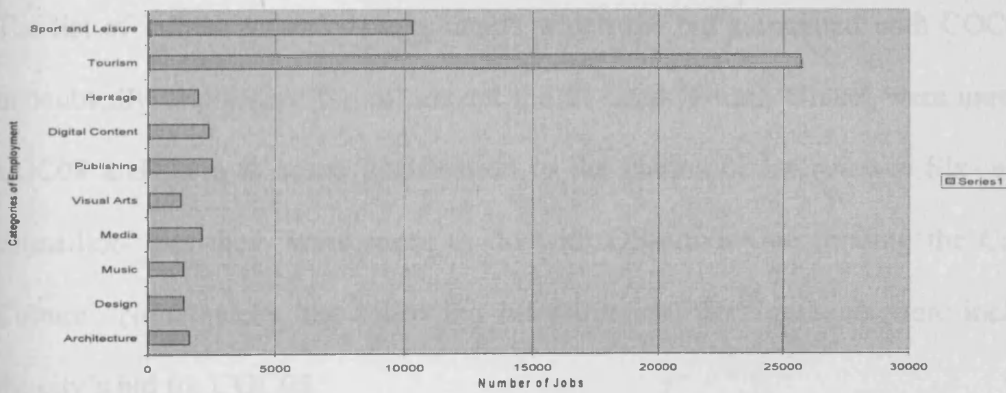
**Figure Nineteen:** Employment Breakdown in Liverpool using ERM's definition of 'Broad Cultural Industries'. This diagram would seem to indicate that Liverpool is, indeed, a 'creative city'.

Economic Breakdown in Liverpool by ERM definition with Tourism uncoupled from Creative Industry



**Figure Twenty:** Employment Breakdown in Liverpool by ERM definition with tourism uncoupled from ‘Creative Industry’. ‘Creative Industry’ now employs only 25,000 (this includes employment within the IT sector).

Breakdown Of ERM's 'Broad Definition of Cultural Industry'



**Figure Twenty One:** Breakdown of ERM’s ‘broad definition of cultural industry’. This diagram clearly illustrates the predominance of tourism within this ‘broad’ definition.

### 9.5 Infrastructural Development

The bid also made bold claims around the physical regeneration of the city's centre through a series of infrastructural developments (the subsequent controversies around these initiatives are discussed in Chapter Ten). This again may have helped promote the 'replication of a Glasgow' narrative, but it also served to broaden the reach of culture and the scope of COC08, where culture became the handmaiden of economic regeneration and infrastructural development. As a board member on one of the city's leading cultural organizations explained;

they included everything that was going on in the city as part of the bid. The only development that was directly linked to Capital of Culture was the Fourth Grace. The others would or would not have gone on anyway. I think that was a mistake because the Capital of Culture became everything that was happening in the city.

The list of infrastructural developments which the bid associated with COC08 were undoubtedly impressive but all except the ill fated 'Fourth Grace' were unrelated to COC08 and there is some justification to the claims of Interviewee Six- a Labour councillor- that they 'were more to do with Objective One funding the Capital of Culture'. Nonetheless, the following infrastructural developments were included in the city's bid for COC08:

- A cruise liner and ferry terminal; an assessment of the cruise liner market has identified the clear potential for the city to achieve a share of the Round Britain Cruise market, as a stop-off for shore excursions based on the culture of the city;
- King's Dock Waterfront Park which would contain a landmark, multi-purpose 55,000 soccer stadium, the future home of Everton Football Club, a 150

bedroom 4/5\* hotel, health and fitness facilities, bars and restaurants, a multiplex cinema a 650-unit housing development, a late night live music venue;

- Leeds-Liverpool Canal Link;
- Merseytram 'Opportunities for all'. Merseytram is a new modern tramway system being promoted on Merseyside. The proposed network radiates from Liverpool City Centre to serve Croxteth/Kirby, Page Moss/Prescot and Speke/Garston';
- Paradise Street Retail Development;
- 'The Fourth Grace will express Liverpool's 21<sup>st</sup> Century aspirations as powerfully as the Three Graces articulate the civic and mercantile ambitions of a former age, be iconic in style and represent and (sic) attraction in its own right, integrate existing architectural features and adjoining water space, Create an attractive and accessible environment for visitors'

(Liverpool City Council, 2002b)

The 'Fourth Grace' was conceived as an icon of Liverpool's city centre regeneration, a contemporary structure on the city's elegant waterfront to complement the Cunard, the Liver and the Mersey buildings known collectively as the 'Three Graces' (the winning architect was later to carp that it was the 'only thing in Liverpool's bid'- see Figure Twenty Three p. 297). The Fourth Grace was thus viewed as the jewel in the city's cultural regeneration crown and it was generally seen by interviewees for this study that it was Liverpool's attempt to replicate the much aspired to 'Goog effect'- the 'Goog' effect refers to the use of a landmark, iconic buildings in regeneration, the most successful of which is seen to be Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in the

Spanish/Basque city of Bilbao (see Figure Five p.235).<sup>23</sup> The sanctioning- and subsequent axing - of the original design for this building, however, is illustrative of the dissonance between discourses of local ownership within Liverpool's cultural regeneration strategy and the real politic of de-democratisation within Liverpool's urban governance (this is discussed in detail in Chapter Ten).

The land on Pier Head that was earmarked for the Fourth Grace development was jointly owned by the North West Development Agency and the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, and the project involved a complex public/private partnership made up of the North West Development Agency, the regeneration company Liverpool Vision, and the City Council. The competition for the commission to build on Pier Head was administered by Liverpool Vision, the board of which had representatives from each of the partner organisations (however, it was argued by three interviewees for this project that NWDA and Council Executive had too much influence over decisions made by Liverpool Vision in relation to this project: Interviewee Six, a Labour Councillor, claimed that 'there was an uneasiness amongst some of our party that Liverpool Vision were following the Henshaw line'. Liverpool Vision invited tenders for the build, revealing a shortlist of four on Wednesday August 14<sup>th</sup> 2002, headed by some of the countries' leading architects: Sir Richard Rogers; Will Alsop; David McLean; Norman Foster. In an attempt to generate local enthusiasm for the development, Liverpool Vision put the competing entries on show at the Walker Gallery and encouraged the public to vote on the entry

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<sup>2</sup> Replicating the 'Goog' effect was explicitly acknowledged locally: '*the doughnut-shaped space ship*' designed by architect Will Alsop is considered to be in the same style as the futuristic Guggenheim Museum which put the small Spanish city of Bilbao on the global map' (Liverpool Echo, December 6, 2002)

<sup>3</sup> A letter writer to the local Liverpool press humorously deconstructed the discourse of the 'iconic' building and the complex relationship between avant garde architecture and the public by arguing that 'its apparently compulsory to use the word 'iconic' when talking about new dramatic buildings- I think that it's another way of saying 'unpopular' (Paddy Shennan Liverpool Echo, December 11, 2002).

which they most favoured. The exhibition attracted more than 15,000 visitors, 7,000 of whom were said to have filled in the questionnaires which graded the entries: Will Alsop's 'The Cloud' received 18.5% of the vote; Rogers and McLean 26% each; with Norman Foster's Ark winning with 29.5% . On December 6<sup>th</sup> 2002 the decision was taken to commission Will Alsop's 'The Cloud'; the building which came last in the poll.

The choice of Alsop's building should not have been altogether surprising in that he was, at the time, becoming a favoured architect for city planners wishing to cause an architectural stir (it was only in recent years that he has come in from the cold after his futuristic scheme for Wales's National Literary Centre in Swansea was abandoned after opposition from local councillors). Famed, and in many places ridiculed, in Britain for his provocative plans to, amongst other projects, remodel Barnsley as a Tuscan mountain village, Alsop has, in equal measure, been lauded as a visionary and received acclaim both nationally for his iconic design of Peckham library which features his trademark stilts but which has been criticised for favouring form over function (the elderly complained that the library itself was on the fourth floor while it took four workers four days to change the building's light bulbs) and internationally for award winning projects in Toronto and New York. For a flavour of Alsop's architecture see Figures Twenty Five and Twenty Six p.315. The first of these is Peckham Library, the winner of the prestigious 2000 Stirling Prize while the second of these buildings, *The Public* in West Bromwich. This building, an arts centre, is an indictment of culture led regeneration, as it stands empty in the rundown West Bromwich area of Birmingham, funded by £52 million of public money. However, within the UK, Alsop's avant-gardist sensibility has - as in the case of Swansea - clashed with the innately conservative instincts both of the public and some of the



public bodies that commissioned his work. Such public scepticism, however, is shared by some leading architects in Britain who argue that Alsop's provocative architecture appeals to planners following a particularly boosterist template of regeneration: Irene Bauman, (quoted in *The Guardian*, November 24, 2003), a member of a panel of design experts set up by Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency that appointed Alsop as masterplanner for Barnsley argues;

With Alsop, it's a case of emperor's new clothes.... Because he's a big name architect, he's given a certain benefit of the doubt. We don't know how to question his ideas....His style appeals to clients who want a quick-win solution and want to get their names in the press. It is brave, conceptual stuff, but it is flawed because it cannot be delivered.

(Weaver, 2003)

The choice of Alsop against the wishes of the public, however, involved a form of cultural paternalism that is anathema to a people's ownership narrative; consequently when the Council's Chief Executive David Henshaw defended the selection of the Cloud in the local press he claimed that the public's choice, Norman Foster's Ark design, would not have been economically viable: 'the Foster design included a huge amount of office space and they were talking about building it in segments. This would have been a great challenge to the office market as it would have meant a mammoth over supply or could have stripped office use out of other parts of the city' (Daily Post, December 9, 2002).<sup>4</sup>

Interviewee Four, while supporting the choice of Alsop, criticised the approach of putting the various tenders out to public vote, claiming that the more challenging, iconic or avant-garde building would always lose out in any public consultation;

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<sup>4</sup> This was vigorously denied by Foster's agency (see for example 'The Grace Debate: Grace Losers Hit Back at Decision Liverpool Echo December 10). For an overview of Foster's design go to [www.fosterandpartners.com](http://www.fosterandpartners.com)

A lot of people didn't like the Fourth Grace, I loved it, it would have given the city a feel of Barcelona, people would have come to the city and said what the fuck goes on here, the mistake I think they made was that they commissioned a design company without actually thinking about what was going to go in it. The museum was going to go in there, the life museum, it could have worked there's a lot of public space, I thought that the two flat blocks at the back were great and I think that it would have worked wonderfully.

There were a lot of negative reports coming from the ground because they didn't like the design but what they had done, which was stupid really, they'd put the four or five short listed designs in the Walker and asked people to come and vote on them. Three thousand people voted and the majority, not surprisingly in my view, voted it least of all because they didn't read the information that went with it, they didn't read how it worked conceptually, the others were awful they could have been anywhere.

While this study does not wish to enter into a debate over whether Alsop's aesthetics are too avant-gardeist for the British public, the choice of 'The Cloud' illustrates the fatuousness and rhetorical vacuity behind discourses which suggest that Liverpool's regeneration is 'owned by the people'. This was certainly the view in the local press—in its comments, editorial and letters pages. Of the 65 people who called the Liverpool Echo sixty four were strongly against the choice of the Cloud (*Liverpool Echo* December 9, 2002). The comment page in the same paper (December 7, 2002) also highlighted the dangers in consulting the public and then ignoring their opinions:

they are in danger of courting controversy at the expense of selecting the best option for the future of the city..... the public was consulted, and put it at the bottom of its four choices. Having gone to the trouble of consulting the public, is ignoring what they say really a good idea?

while a similar theme was taken up by columnist Mike Chappel (*The Liverpool Echo* December 30, 2002) who wrote;

what is certain is that hell hath no fury as a Merseysider spurned and that the anger conveyed was reserved more for first being asked for a choice and then being ignored. We demand and deserve a little more respect from our leaders- but in 2003 don't hold your breath waiting for it.

The letters pages of the local press were bombarded with criticism of the decision to consult the public and then not only ignore their opinion but to commission the work which they least favoured<sup>5</sup> - the following are a selection and represent the general tenor of the many letters: John Durand wrote 'so there is a proposed scheme at the Festival Garden site which may cause some controversy. Following the consultation process for the Fourth Grace, let's all go and say that we hate the scheme- to make sure that it gets built.' (December 31 2002); Paul Corner (*Liverpool Echo*, December 23, 2002) forwards a cogent critique of culture as spectacle and urban cultural regeneration driven by the gaze of the tourist; 'I thought the Fourth Grace was to be a gift to the people of Liverpool, not some tacky dome-like freakshow for tourists'; a letter written by J. Kennedy (*Liverpool Echo*, December 30<sup>th</sup> 2002) not only pillories both the local ownership discourse within Liverpool's regeneration strategy and iconic architecture, but also displays some of the comic word play and verbal dexterity with which Scouse humour is associated:

'Someone said we were short of a grace, That Pier Head had a spare space.  
And so four designs were prepared, 'Go see them' the Vision board blared.  
The Walker's visitor numbers soared, 'Place your votes we were implored  
In truth I voted for none, Although the models were well done.

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<sup>5</sup> There were some letters of support: Andrew Robinson (*Liverpool Echo* December 11 2002) Sonia Harris (*Liverpool Echo* December 11 2002), Matthew Griffiths (*Liverpool Echo* December 11 2002),

An Ark was the people's first choice, 'Not the Cloud' said many a voice.  
But the people's cries went unheeded, Something different was supposedly needed.  
Seems the spec wrongly asked for a Grace, It should have read 'I-Con in its place!'

Despite the controversy over the sanctioning of Alsop as the architect of the Fourth Grace in the face of public opposition, Liverpool's bid promoted a strong discourse of local ownership- indeed the bidding team generated considerable support in the city itself, not least through its championing within the local press. Added to this social or community focussed agenda the bid forwarded the argument that it was the city which was best placed to replicate the economic successes of Glasgow which, as was argued in Chapter Five, was introduced by Chris Smith as a parallel criterion.<sup>6</sup> The bid also promoted a creative city discourse which, as Chapter Five has argued, involves a complex mesh of social and economic justifications that underpin a cultural planning/creative city template for urban regeneration. As the next chapter will indicate, it was the social element within Liverpool's bid which, in the end, secured the award for the city. The next section of this chapter will thus consider how the social instrumentalism within the Liverpool bid manifested itself within both the institutional structure and policy initiatives of the Culture Company following the COC08 award.

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<sup>6</sup> In the run up to the decision the BBC commissioned a 'Clash of the Cities' programme which encouraged each of the shortlisted cities to present their city to the public (a representative of Oxford was particularly critical of the lack of editorial control that they had over the programme which resulted in their city being represented by 'choirs on Magdalen bridge, the opposite of the image we were trying to project'). The BBC then encouraged viewers to phone in and vote for the city they most favoured (many thought that they were actually choosing the actual Capital of Culture): Newcastle/Gateshead won this pool with 52,241 votes followed by Liverpool with 51, 514, Birmingham scored 20,523, Bristol came in fourth with 17,115, Cardiff fifth with 13,834 then finally Oxford which amassed 10,753.

### 9.6 Creative Communities

This section will illustrate how the 'people's first' narrative within the Liverpool bid, and the social instrumentalist discourse within a New Labour cultural planning/creative city strategy, manifested itself within the social element of Liverpool's plans for Capital of Culture 2008. Drawing on interviews with key players within the Culture Company and Liverpool City Council (Chapter Ten will discuss how these are virtually the same) and on documents commissioned by the Culture Company for Liverpool 08 ('Building the Case for Creative Communities', authored by PTZ Pieda Consulting and 'The Art of Inclusion' [2005]), this section will interrogate how key themes within cultural planning - broad definitions of culture, local ownership, local engagement, holistic community regeneration and, perhaps most importantly, creativity- are drawn upon to provide the socially regenerative arguments that form the rhetorical keystone upon which Liverpool 08's 'holistic regeneration' strategy is built. As has been illustrated this strategy draws upon competing discourses around culture and this section will illustrate how, despite a rhetorical rallying to broad cultural definition and social inclusion/exclusion discourses around cultural deficit, the strategy in fact draws upon the normative assumptions within an Artistic discourse that can, at times, sound distinctly Arnoldian in its attempts to reform the working classes.

The analysis of Liverpool's social instrumentalism will demonstrate how this turn to the cultural and creative as part of a social inclusion discourse, marks a profound ideological shift in that it disallows an engagement with the structural - which underpinned a social justice approach - and endorses an essentially neo-liberal conception of exclusion that focuses on the cultural rather than the structural as the

key locus for social marginalization (discussed in detail in Chapter Six). Added to this the empirical analysis will demonstrate how the adoption of the anthropological definition of culture and the equally nebulous concept of creativity expands the reach of cultural policy, thus allowing for virtually all policy areas to be colonised by the cultural and creative agenda.

The key strategy within the Community section of the Culture Company is entitled 'Creative Communities'. The employment of 'creativity' and 'community' draws upon two powerful ideological strands within a 'cultural planning' paradigm: as has been outlined, the concept of creativity has become a central New Labour construct in the cultural field, drawing together diverse cultural practices under its amorphous banner; while community, linked to ideas around social capital, is again fundamental to much New Labour thinking (as Raymond Williams points out who could be against 'community'). As has been discussed the notion of creativity- and indeed culture- is such an unwieldy concept that it lacks any clear theoretical platform and thus sound policy intervention. Kris Donaldson Marketing Director at the Culture Company highlights the theoretical ambivalence when attempting to define the concept of 'creativity' which he again associates with the traditional Arts:

I guess creative just means that you are overlaying performing arts or visual arts or music or whatever and you're using those for community to focus on key issues and engage the people of the community and I guess that's why we use the word creative communities.

Essentially Liverpool's 'Creative Community' strategy was designed to take an 'holistic' approach to regeneration and tackle accusations of elitism and city-centrism that were voiced in connection with other culture led regeneration initiatives. In

response to this and in dialogue with the excesses of boosterist regeneration, the Culture Company states that its regeneration is people led and community focussed;

Creative Communities is pioneering the scaling up of organic arts based regeneration that is concerned with building people rather than physical structures, using arts and creative activities to help people understand and value themselves, the people around them and their place in society: as well as helping them to access, discover, own and enjoy culture in its widest sense. This approach recognises that people are at the heart of vibrant communities and signals Liverpool's commitment to and recognition of all her residents. In the context of cultural regeneration that is commonly perceived, rightly or wrongly, as physical development led, it is important that Liverpool's 'people led' approach is shown to be successful at a number of levels.

(PTZ Piedad, 2005 p.3)

This statement can be read as an explicit critique of centre-focussed, boosterist attempts at regeneration, which the Culture Company claims that Liverpool's strategy is opposed to: 'building people rather than physical structures'. It was this holistic, 'people's first' discourse that was seen to differentiate Liverpool 08's cultural regeneration paradigm from their competitor's in the COC08 competition - other cities did promote this aspect but, as one of the defeated entrants argued, Liverpool simply 'marketed this better' both inside the city and to the judging panel. This local ownership discourse was not only fundamental to the Liverpool bid but paramount to the city's winning of the Capital of Culture accolade. It is this local ownership discourse that underpins the ethos of the 'Communities' section of the Culture Company, extolled somewhat romantically by Kris Donaldson its Marketing Director;

From what we understand and in discussions with DCMS and other parts of government there's no other programme like it in the country in terms of the scope and the breadth of it. Really where it started was trying to be true to the promise that we made in the bid process that all Liverpudlians would have an

opportunity to become involved if they wanted and it was their involvement in the bid and their desire to actually play a role and participate, it was that that really touched the judges and they realised that it was not about the city council but about the people of Liverpool.

Donaldson's narrative is consistent with the discourse of community ownership promoted within the bid, which in turn was reproduced and validated by the judging panel when awarding Liverpool the designation. This promotion of local engagement is justified rhetorically - if not theoretically - by disavowing Cultural distinctions and rallying to the broad, anthropologically rooted definition of culture that underpinned a cultural planning approach to urban regeneration. However, as has been discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, this supposed collapsing of art/culture into broad notions of culture has never been complete, resulting in the emergence within New Labour policy discourse of the 'arts and culture' pairing.

The arts/culture pairing which became a rhetorical cornerstone of New Labour cultural policy and underpinned the cultural strategy of Liverpool's successful bid, manifested itself in the actual structure of the Culture Company itself: Council leader Warren Bradley described this as 'We will need high art for the city centre for tourists, but it must hold the hand of community art' (Ward 2006a) while Culture Company board member and spokesperson Phil Redmond described Liverpool's strategy as 'its treats for the Toffs are bigger and better than elsewhere but so is its Creative Communities and mass participation programme' (Redmond, 2007). The structure of the Culture Company itself reflects this pairing, with an arts section which draws its theoretical lineage from an artistic tradition and is focussed on traditional arts, the city centre and 'toffs' and tourists, and a community section, whose focus is on the periphery. This distinction is reinforced by the first artistic director of the



Culture Company, Robin Archer (Archer's resignation will be discussed in the following chapter, though one of the reasons behind her departure according to Interviewee Four, were the tensions between her vision of COC08 as an international 'arts festival' and the council's vision of it as an exercise in regeneration). In her introduction to the Creative Communities programme, Archer attempts to bridge these two distinct remits of the Culture Company, though her artistic discourse where the Arts (capitalization in the original) draw their inspiration from the 'community', is far removed from the social instrumentalism that pervades the latter part of this document;

At the heart of the Artistic Programme is what's relevant to Liverpool. Local and international artists will explore sensitivities and interpretations relating to the above themes. This coincides with a trend in the Arts, precipitated by artists themselves to create art that is relevant to the community. In this context, Creative Communities is a fertile ground for art and the development of the Artistic Programme.

This creates a stepping off point for the Arts Programme, since many fine international artists are now seizing on the strength and intensity of very local stories and local participation to make new works.

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.4)

### 9.7 Social Instrumentalism

Unpacking the intricate web of discourses that inform Liverpool's social instrumentalist policy for COC08, is a taxing and complex exercise as it draws upon a plethora of incompatible and heterogeneous sources. Essentially what this strategy does is match a creative city discourse to ideas of social inclusion/exclusion primarily associated with the Office of Deputy Prime Minister. What these share, at a basic level, is a use of the word culture. Leaving aside the complex use of culture within a creativity discourse, within the rhetoric of social inclusion/exclusion itself there are competing definitions of the word: one strand, allied to social justice thinking and its progressive orientations, sees 'exclusion' being the result of structural inequalities; the second is that 'exclusion' is caused by a cultural (personal and social) deficit. If this deficit is addressed then 'inclusion'- more often than not 'employment' - will follow.

The confluence of these disparate discourses is most evident in 'The Art of Inclusion' document (2005a) where the Culture Company outlines its social regeneration strategies. The influence of the Landry position within this document can be seen by the assertion that Liverpool is moving from an old style to a new style of urban governance based around 'creativity';

cities of the future will be differentiated not by their physical environment but by the quality of the experience they offer. Liverpool is releasing its latent energies, moving completely away from old style governance to a new model where creativity is at the core of innovative regeneration. Ours is a creative agenda. A liberating agenda, empowering the people of the city and helping to unleash their creative potential.

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.6 )

Thus within Liverpool's creative agenda there is not only a denial of the structural but also the physical where any link to the material is lost in the heady ether of 'creativity'. This turn to creativity as a virtual social and economic policy is certainly 'risky' as acknowledged by both Chief Researcher in the Council Martin Thompson 'we are in many ways going out on a limb on this but it is something that we truly believe in' and the document 'the Art of Inclusion'; 'some might say that this is a risky policy. Given the City Council's and strong cross-party support, many experienced professionals clearly see Creative Communities as a chance worth taking.' (p.9)

Although recognising that Liverpool may be 'going out on a limb' with these strategies, within both 'the Art of Inclusion' and 'Building the Case for Creative Communities' (2005), there is implicit and explicit recognition that the 'Creative Communities' strategy is an attempt by the city to meet key social objectives set out by national government, where culture can 'change mindsets and practices':

DCMS are positive about the engagement that the Creative Communities programme has already enabled, but their main interest is in long term outcomes and legacy post 2008 so that a broad based cultural offer (not just iconic buildings) becomes an integral part of regeneration processes, changing mindsets, practices and outputs in the process. At the same time DCMS wants to see clear fit between such an integrated regeneration approach and the policy objectives of the key government departments.

(PTZ Piedad, 2005 p.5)

The document then recognises this engagement/citizenship/social inclusion discourse as emerging from national government;

over the last eighteen months, issues of citizen engagement and involvement in community life have become increasingly prominent, to the extent that positive engagement- particularly with the most marginalised communities of interest and place- now sits at the heart of the government's plans for neighbourhood renewal, sustainable communities and civic renewal.

(PTZ Piedad, 2005 p.9)

Drawing directly from both the work of Francois Matarasso and its appropriation within the (PAT10) report, 'the Art of Inclusion' argues that 'creative activity' can have the following social benefits;

- Creative activity strengthens and empowers communities
- Creative activity encourages integration and promotes diversity
- Creative activity effectively engages local people in the regeneration process
- Creative activity is vital in raising awareness of issues

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.12)

These claims around the social function of culture are then linked to policies emerging from the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and its theorizing around social capital. This social capital discourse within the Creative Community document is endorsed by Martin Thompson who, as chief researcher on regeneration within Liverpool Council, was key to the promotion of this strategy. When explaining this approach, Thompson draws heavily on New Labour's interpretation of social capital theory where participation or engagement with cultural projects builds both social and human capital and can thus be a first step back into education, training and work;

One of the key things that we were interested in was getting people involved who were not part of a club or a church who and no social capacity in their lives really who are not working whose parents don't work, got very limited networks and the only social capital they have getting people involved in these

projects can be a stepping stone or a pathway back into education or a first step back into work I'm convinced that it is possible. That's what I was getting at earlier, we're going at this from a kind of conviction, if we can prove it it's a bonus but at a local level it's been driven by a conviction rather than evidence.

Thompson references his thinking to work on neighbourhood renewal emanating from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, in particular the document 'Smarter Delivery, Better Neighbourhoods' (January 2005). Both he and The Culture Company argue that the approach adopted within the Creative Communities programme can fit with objective four and five within this framework, in that cultural delivery can act as a third space between local populations and government;

- Mistrust and low expectations-residents can have low confidence in government services and interventions in deprived areas. Public service providers can have low expectations and mistrust of residents
- Problems with access and engagement-residents face a range of barriers (including confidence and motivation) to accessing services and engaging with service providers. These include not only health services but also employment agencies and community support services. Poorer socio-economic groups tend to use public services less, relative to their need,

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.v)

Within this strategy, however, two incompatible approaches are juxtaposed. The first of these is a progressive discourse that draws on the principles within a traditional social justice approach, and constitutes non engagement as the result of both structural inequalities and the mainstream's ignorance and undervaluing of certain minority cultures. The second discourse which predominates within Liverpool's social instrumentalist strategy is a melding of artistic and social capital/ social

exclusion/inclusion discourses whose reformatory agenda has clear echoes with an Arnoldian approach to culture's role in reforming the masses. Within this version of social exclusion (and very much evidence of Bourdieu's [1998] 'new planetary vulgate') there is an avoidance with engaging with the structural, most of all those 'bogey' concepts employment/unemployment. Consequently, this discourse moves policy away from social justice concerns with the structural causes of 'disengagement', to a New Labour interpretation of social capital theory where 'disengagement' or 'non involvement' are rooted in social, cultural and personal deficit. In setting out its social inclusion strategy the Liverpool Culture Company highlights how a discourse of 'non inclusion' is, in effect, a discourse of 'unemployment' in disguise. Within this social inclusion discourse the ultimate expression of engagement is engagement with the economy – employment - and thus those who are 'least engaged' and thus those who the programme identifies as a priority group are:

- Local concentrations of Incapacity Benefit recipients
- Local concentration of Income Support recipients
- NEET-16 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.vi)

The Culture Company documents offer two approaches to culturally 'engaging' with the 'disengaged' (leaving aside the fact that one might be on Income Support, captain the local football team on a Saturday and play the clarinet of a Wednesday evening). The first, as has been argued, conceives of exclusion or disengagement as the result of 'cultures' being undervalued by individuals, community and the 'mainstream' and is a radical endorsement of the anthropological definition of culture where culture is seen

as synonymous with 'traditions' and 'ways of life' which are 'underrepresented, undervalued and undersold' (within this discourse there is even mention of 'old' Labour concepts such as 'socio economic deprivation'):

disengagement is rooted in individual disenfranchisement and cultural ignorance by the mainstream. Individuals have been marginalised because of socio-economic deprivation and in addition some cultures, traditions and ways of life underrepresented, undervalued and undersold (untapped markets may present commercial opportunities e.g Liverpool Black History Month Magazine)

Creative Communities has a particular role in connecting with people who as a rule do not get involved with current offers of engagement. Disengagement is in part a consequence of cultures, traditions and ways of life being underrepresented, undervalued and undersold. For some, this has resulted in entrenched isolation so they feel dislocated from where they live.

all too often in many parts of Liverpool there is a lack of awareness of other people-even amongst neighbours. The resulting isolation and ignorance allow fear and prejudice to take hold. Traditions and ways of life in differing cultures go unrecognised and are misunderstood; people shut down and turn in on themselves away from the social world...people in such communities have been historically difficult to reach.

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.14)

This progressive discourse is then conjoined with an interpretation of social exclusion which sees 'non engagement' not as a result of 'socio economic deprivation' nor of 'cultures not being recognised by the mainstream' but as a result of a 'deficit' which is both social and personal (Tessa Jowell describes this as 'poverty of aspiration'- see

Chapter Six). Within this discourse the opportunity for 'connection' is there if only the excluded were willing to take it;

School, employment, sports and cultural attractions and existing neighbourhood services offer connections they are not inclined to take. The Creative Communities programme succeeds in opening up the world for the disenfranchised and isolated. It is an eminently realistic and practical route with the power to engage residents at a profound emotional level.

(Liverpool Culture Company 2005a, p.14)

Within this, cultural policy becomes reformatory and draws upon the normative assumptions contained within an artistic discourse, where participation in 'creative activity' - really Artistic activity - is superior to other forms of participation (despite the fact that 'creative activity' is broadly defined and that sport is one of its key elements). Consequently within this discourse art is fetishized as a superior form of engagement;

the Programme objectives can be summarised in a single aim, that is: to bring more people into circulation through the arts, applying creative activities more widely than was previously the case and linking them more clearly to the regeneration process.

The use of creative arts and artists within the community has shown to get people involved- more so than more traditional forms of engagement- because at their best creative activities have the following characteristics:

- Motivations are explored and built in (e.g. what people are interested in)
- People take part, actively- they are not passive recipients
- They are out of the ordinary and enjoyable
- The participants have ownership of the activities

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.15)



Within this paradigm the structural – social - individual linkages that underpin a social justice approach to poverty are inverted, so that the onus is no longer placed on the structural but on the individual instead: a change of 'culture' leads to higher aspirations, leads to better neighbourhoods, leads to employment, leads to prosperity (like the nineteenth century Irish immigrant the 'excluded' or those with 'low employability' could take the chances offered to them if they could only change their culture);

by starting with promoting a positive peer culture, more interaction and higher aspirations, an almost organic mode of improvement can begin. Anti-social behaviour is reduced, the neighbourhood becomes more popular, the employment rate amongst residents rises poverty declines; property investment increases, the environment improves still further..... and its all driven by people.

positive 'social capital' is increasingly recognised as a major influence upon an individual's life chances. In reaching the individuals within Liverpool's priority wards, the Creative Communities Programme is directly laying foundations on which to build that all important positive social capital. In so-called 'problem areas', the cycle of decline is centred on negative peer cultures, limited interaction between residents and low aspirations. Poor housing and environment, unstable communities, anti social behaviour, low employability and a host of other issues are both the result and the symptom.

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.11)

Within this reformatory discourse the ultimate expression of 'engagement' is 'engagement with the economy', where the 'unemployable' become 'employable', (author's emphasis) they gain confidence, they feel so good about themselves that they walk into a JET centre;

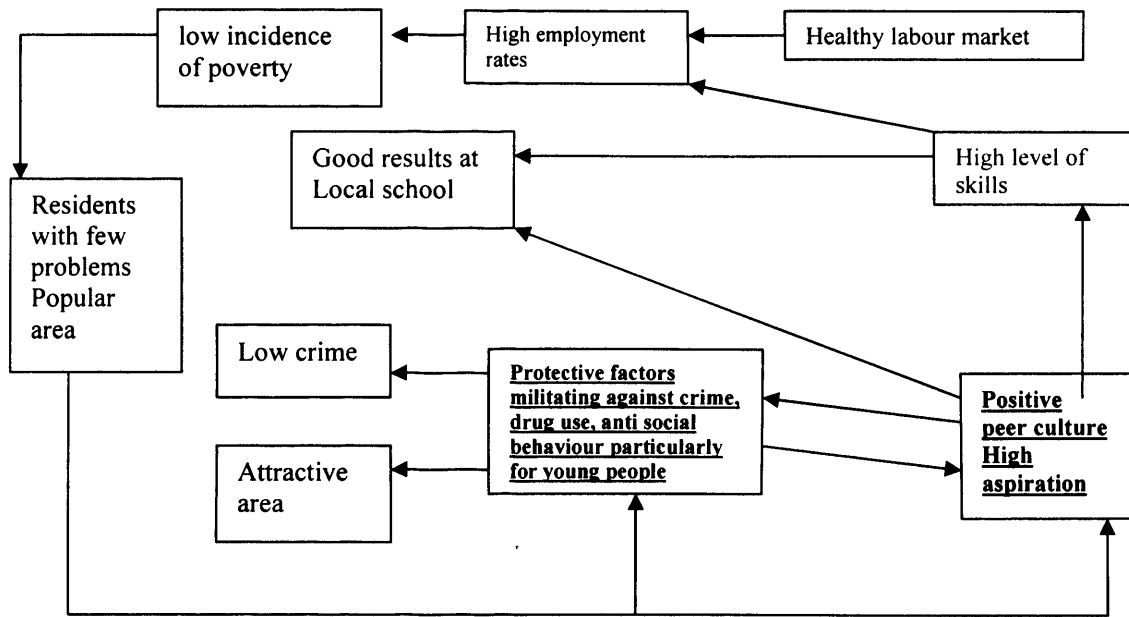
when done well, such activities inspire people and this is perhaps the fundamental contribution to the rest of the regeneration architecture. People discover that they have ability, confidence, ambition and ownership. They broaden their experience and do something that they wouldn't believe they were capable of. They come into contact with other people- professionals and other residents- and after these experiences; they are able to make choices and decisions that would previously be unthinkable. A few have set up businesses, some are now involved in other creative activities, many more just feel good about themselves- good enough to walk into the JET centre.

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.11)

The quixotic claims for the role of 'creativity' within urban regeneration then follow in a series of overlapping causal linkages which are a classic cultural planning/creative city construction;

The Creative Communities Programme provides the impetus that brings participation by people in creative activities. This leads to an inclusive, dynamic community and to regeneration and a sustainable cultural infrastructure. In turn, a new urban experience and celebration of diversity make the city whole and strong.

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.12)



**Figure Twenty Five:** Liverpool Culture Company’s Cycle of Success. (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005 p.17) Creative Communities draw upon work from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The bolded, underlined sections indicate ‘where Creative Communities can positively impact upon aspirations and peer cultures (building positive social capital)- from within and conjunction with (sic)’ (p.17). It is indicative of this approach that the arrows suggest that high aspiration and positive peer culture lead to employment thus casting unemployment as the result of a personal or cultural deficit.

Two of the sections within the Creative Communities project are ‘Creative Health’ and ‘Creative Learning’. The theoretical justification for the inclusion of health and learning within this cultural planning paradigm is drawn from arguments forwarded by the Arts Council SE (January, 2005) - drawing of course on Francois Matarrasso’s work - which lists a series of justifications for the argument that access to the arts improves health, well being and educational levels. This turn to culture eliminates the structural from social analysis and, thus, the complex relationship between social position and health and educational achievement is lost within the facile assertion that access to the arts raises educational levels and improves health. Indeed, there is a complete inversion of the social justice paradigm with the suggestion that lower

educational levels and poverty are actually *caused* by 'less access to the arts' and that lower self perceived levels of health are a *result* of 'culturally inactivity' (it does not take a Marxist or indeed a sociologist to suggest that economic resources and social positioning frame access to healthy living or one's social class to determine access to educational resources - a crudely determinant superstructure could now be seen to dictate unidirectionally to a reflective base):

- Participation in the creative arts serve to enhance a sense of purpose and help develop meaningful relationships
- Lower educational levels and poverty are linked with less access to the arts
- The arts provide an important contribution to building social capital
- The arts can transcend cultural and demographic boundaries that divide society
- People who are culturally inactive report lower self perceived levels of health
- The arts provide a platform to engage people in community development and regeneration
- Creative processes act as a catalyst for positive change in the social and economic fabric of communities

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a p.36)

The absence of theoretical robustness and the rhetorical nature of the move to creativity can be highlighted not only by the lack of empirical examples but a study of the findings of the stakeholder workshop established to discuss the Creative Community project within the *Building the Case for Creative Communities* document. Within this workshop delegates were invited to undertake a 'Creative Blitz' and split into four groups which reflected the partner organisations within the Creative Communities programme:

- Health, sport and leisure
- Education, skills and employment
- Community safety and supported living

- Housing, environment, transport and heritage

Each of these groups were asked to develop two creative project ideas; the results highlight the rhetorical nature of rallying to this ubiquitous yet virtually deracinated concept of creativity, where the participants resort to meaningless rhetoric around dealing with profound social problems 'in a creative way' or 'with a creative twist' that has clear resonances with the rhetoric discussed in Chapter Six in relation to both Tom Landry and Richard Florida:

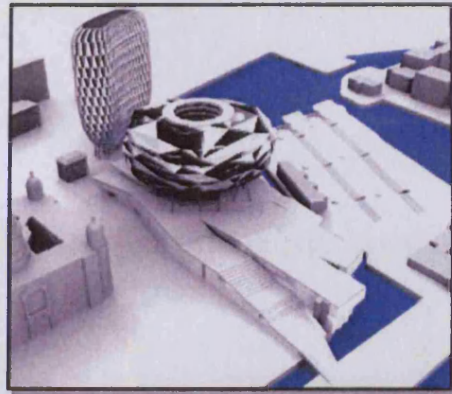
Our Place- about promoting neighbourhoods and the city. Would involve designing posters with schools-how do they see their neighbourhoods. Competition would be developed looking at seven neighbourhoods and the activity could be linked to the National Curriculum. The winner would be displayed in the city centre and also around the rest of the city. About looking at issues with a clear focus and in a creative way' (sic)

'Not necessarily about coming up with new solutions and projects-lot of work already ongoing but different agencies and organisations are unaware what others are doing- need to fully understand what is already going on and then look at how to add a creative twist

(Liverpool Culture Company, 2005a Appendix A)

## 9.8 Conclusion

This chapter has interrogated both the 'people's first' rhetoric within Liverpool's winning bid for COC08 and the social instrumentalism within the Culture Company's strategies for Capital of Culture. It has demonstrated how the structure of the Culture Company is a reflection of the arts/culture pairing within New Labour which itself creates a series of destabilising tensions which will be discussed in the next chapter. The chapter has thoroughly deconstructed the social instrumentalism within the 'community' section of the Culture Company and illustrated how this reflects the wider theoretical ambiguities and inconsistencies within social instrumentalist discourse at a national level. It has demonstrated how these instrumentalist assumptions are predicated upon incompatible definitions of culture and how intrinsic and indeed Arnoldian assumptions have been crudely matched with social inclusion and social capital rhetoric. The chapter illustrated how this facilitates a move away from an engagement with structural issues, to a turn to the cultural that rearticulates disadvantage as exclusion which is the result of a personal cultural deficit.



**Figure Twenty Three:** Impressions of two of the designs in the competition for the building of Liverpool's 'Fourth Grace'. On the left is Norman Foster's 'The Ark' the building which came first in the city's public vote, on the right Will Alsop's ill fated 'Cloud' the building that came last in the competition but which was subsequently commissioned and then controversially axed.

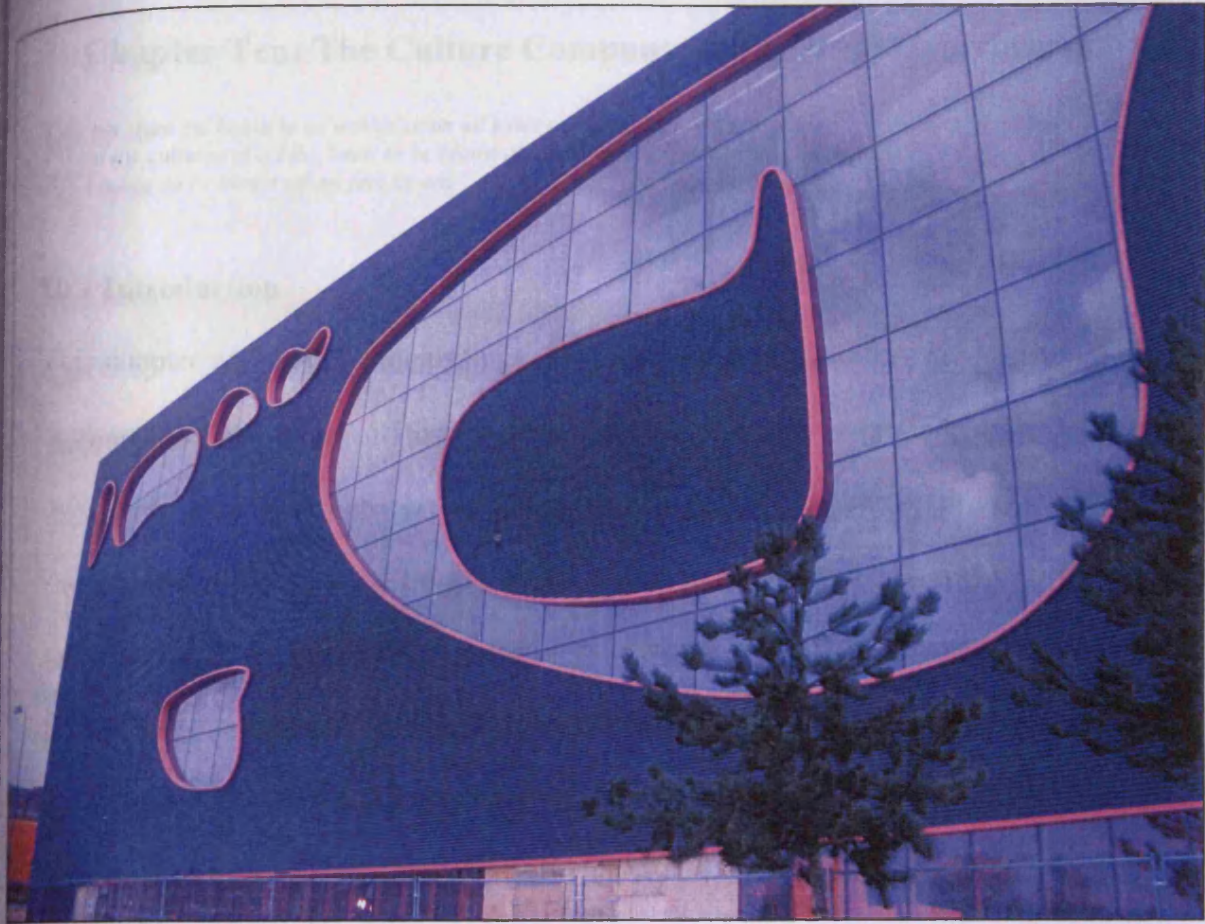
**Figure Twenty Four (left):** The FACT (Film, Art and Creative Technology) centre the building spearheading the culture led revival of Liverpool's Ropewalk's area (photograph author).



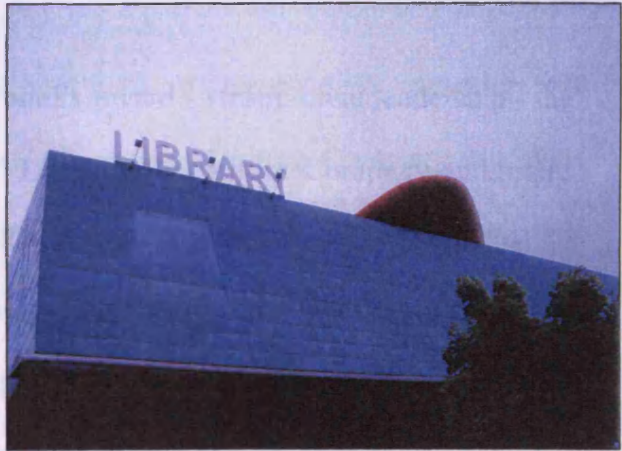
**Figure Twenty Five:** The Echo Arena on the city's King's Dock. Originally conceived as a stadium for Everton Football Club it is now a 10,000 seater arena and will host the opening ceremony for COC08 (photograph author).







**Figure Twenty Six:** 'The Public' in the rundown West Bromwich area of Birmingham, an indictment of the vogue of culture led regeneration (photograph author).



**Figure Twenty Seven:** Internal and external shots of Alsop's Peckham library building (photograph author).



## Chapter Ten: The Culture Company and COC08 Controversies

*'I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed.  
I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.  
But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any'* Mahatma Gandhi

### 10.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin by analysing why Liverpool won the award for COC08. It will demonstrate how three of the main narratives forwarded within its bid - people's ownership, economic regeneration (or aping a Glasgow) and strong urban governance - were cited as the reasons for giving the award to Merseyside. It will then illustrate how the claims made within the city's bid formed a narrative of success within the British national press. The chapter will then demonstrate how the boosterist tenor of the ERM economic impact study was interpreted by the press and celebrated by the Culture Company. This resulted in the COC08 award being articulated in purely economic terms and presented as a panacea for Liverpool's social and economic problems; an unrealizable promise that, inevitably, resulted in disillusionment.

In relation to the first justification of Liverpool's award - strong civic leadership - the chapter will analyse the structure of both Liverpool's Culture Company and, more generally, urban governance within the city. It will demonstrate how the 'strong civic leadership' celebrated within its bid came to unfold, not least due to tensions caused by the concentration of authority and empowerment of Executive Officers within the council which bypassed civic democracy and resulted in a lack of democratic accountability within both the council and the Culture Company. It will then examine the relationship between the Culture Company and the Council and argue that the model adopted by Liverpool not only reflects the instrumentalist agenda within its own bid, but the tensions between a cultural policy driven by instrumentalism - and a

broad definition of culture - and an arm's length paradigm based upon patronage and narrow cultural definition. The chapter will also demonstrate how the tensions within the 'Liverpool model' between the intrinsic and the instrumental and between economic and social instrumentalism have come to destabilise Liverpool's plans for 2008.

## 10.2 COC08 Award

On Wednesday June 4<sup>th</sup> 2003 the leaders of the six cities bidding for the nomination of European Capital of Culture 2008 gathered their respective teams together for the announcement of the award, broadcast live to the country. Judging by both the concentration of journalists on Tyneside and the odds offered by bookmakers, this was to be the crowning moment in Newcastle/Gateshead's policy of culture led regeneration. In contrast to the fevered anticipation amongst the competing cities, Tessa Jowell, the Culture Secretary, announced soberly that the award would go to 'Liverpool'. As the announcement was made the television producers cut from the reserved Jowell to the ecstatic, raucous celebrations on Merseyside. In the midst of this cheering throng, arms aloft in a spontaneous victory salute were Bob Scott, the bid leader, flanked by the two men whose 'strong civic leadership' (DCMS, 2003) had helped Liverpool secure the nomination: the Council's Chief Executive David Henshaw and the Council Leader Mike Storey. The shock decision took everyone by surprise, not least, according to Interviewee Four, the men in charge of delivering the Liverpool bid, whom he claimed hadn't prepared for this victorious eventuality, as they were merely using the bid as part of the city's boosterist strategy;

The thing was they didn't think they were going to win and I remember talking to David Henshaw way before and saying, what's going to happen if we win, well I said, what's going to happen if we lose, we've got an exit strategy for that, we know what we're doing, but what happens if we win, well we're not going to win so there's no need to worry about it, that was the answer and Bob Scott tells the story every week and it's true, that when they won, they won at 8.30 in the morning and by 8.45 he gets a phone call from a little man saying "excuse me is that the capital of culture at Liverpool" Bob says "yes", "well I've got a plane here with a thing saying Capital of Culture 2008, do you want it?" Bob says, "sorry we've got no money at all, our budget is spent." "No you don't have to pay for it cause Newcastle's paid for already". But it's as simple as that, we just hadn't prepared. <sup>1</sup>

Once the shock receded and analysis emerged there was only one question on everyone's lips, not only the deflated, vanquished team from Newcastle/Gateshead but also the victorious one from Merseyside; why Liverpool?<sup>2</sup> As feedback began to filter through from the head of the judging panel, Sir Jeremy Isaacs, it became clear that it was not simply the wealth of the city's cultural infrastructure that impressed the panel but the argument that this, the 'people's bid', was owned by the residents of Liverpool;

If one had to say one thing that swung it for Liverpool, it would have to be that there was a greater sense there that the whole city is involved in the bid and behind the bid.

(BBC News, 2003b)

This 'people's bid' narrative was endorsed by Magnus Linklater (BBC News, 2003b), another of the judging panel, who drawing on both the people's ownership narrative

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<sup>1</sup>When questioned on this Neil Rami, head of the Newcastle/Gateshead initiative claimed that the story was apocryphal.

<sup>2</sup>It was suggested by one conspiratorial interviewee that the Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Blair, had been campaigning behind the scenes for her native city.

promoted in the bid and residual discourses around the city's working class argued that Liverpool had 'one priceless asset in its favour- the resilience and warmth of its people' claiming that 'there was a spirit and spontaneity about Liverpool that we never encountered anywhere else'. Another of the judges, Ruth Wishart, argued that it was local enthusiasm generated by a broad view of culture (though that breadth was indicated through the inclusion of sport) that won the award for the city: 'Liverpool edged it because of its people. Wherever you went in that city, it was clear that the locals were up for it, clear that their culture would be a broad concept building on its sporting strengths as well as international arts events like their Biennale' (BBC News, 2003b).

This narrative of Liverpool's being an inclusive, community orientated bid was quickly endorsed and celebrated within the media following the award being made; head of the council, Mike Storey, reiterated this when he stated 'I know there was surprise up and down the country. But we did win and the reason we won is because we were the people's bid'. This narrative was retold in an anecdote by leading radio journalist and member of the Culture Company board, Roger Phillips, who recounted how the city mayor was mobbed on the street following the announcement;

When the Lord Mayor left that ceremony that announced Liverpool had won he went out to leave and while he was crossing the road a bus came round the corner, the bus stopped, he was still in his glad rags, the bus driver got out and came over to him all the buses were cheering the driver was congratulating him. It was a real feeling within the city.

While this narrative of an organic, inclusive, community-based 'people's bid' became prominent after Liverpool's success, an alternative economic discourse did

emerge; the most commonly cited being that Liverpool was the city most likely to replicate 'the Glasgow success story' of culturally-led urban renaissance. This narrative of economic regeneration through culture was emphasised by Magnus Linklater, who, while justifying Liverpool's nomination, endorsed the economic regenerative/creative city arguments within the winning city's bid, where 'creativity' would transform the 'post-industrial' into what he terms the 'paracultural' city of the twenty first century;

It is as if the post-industrial cities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have evolved, almost without us noticing, into something one might term the paracultural cities of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Once centres of thriving local economies, dependent on a few big employers, they have had to reinvent themselves as factories and plants closed down. They have done so switching the emphasis from commerce to culture to transform their image and encourage the creativity that they see as the key to the next stage of their development.

(Linklater, 2003)

According to the judges there was the sense that while Liverpool had yet to achieve this move, though it was the city which showed most potential to do so. This interpretation is consistent with Interviewee One's claim that Newcastle/Gateshead failed because they had moved much further along the regeneration route than Liverpool which was echoed by those involved in the bidding teams for Newcastle/Gateshead, Oxford and Bristol;

Well Newcastle had done its work, we hadn't done our work and that's why it was a good reason to win, it has helped us drag ourselves up by the ankles but although I think the infrastructure issues are separate, they are, but because of 2008 it's meant that all those infrastructural developments we've been 'we've gotta get going now, they would have happened but not by 2008 but now they're all happening because of 2008' so it has helped us.

The contention that Liverpool was nominated for its potential to deliver the economic regeneration that is associated with Glasgow was endorsed by Peter Mearns of the North West Development Agency, who supported the view that other cities were too far along the cultural path and that the award was made to the city which showed the most 'potential' for culture led regeneration; this resulted in the award being described as a 'kick start' or the 'rocket fuel' which would propel Liverpool's regeneration. In this interview Mearns emphasised the fact that the award was not 'about culture' but 'about regeneration' and, echoing the instrumentalist imperative forwarded by the New Labour government claims that 'people who talk about culture are missing the point' (the North West Development Agency retained a representative on the Culture Company board and was later to become involved in its internal wranglings when its Chief Executive, Steve Broomhead, accused the Culture Company of pursuing a programme which was 'too elitist');

I think people fall into the trap of thinking that the award is given to a city that is already a Capital of Culture, it isn't, it's given to a city that has the potential if you like and the artistic programme for 2008 is about regeneration and how culture can kick-start that if you like, I think the judges felt and certainly the government felt that there was a need in Liverpool and at the same time that Liverpool could meet the challenge and deliver something and it was described at the time that the Capital of Culture would be the rocket fuel that would power the regeneration of Liverpool and in a way the people who talk about culture are missing the point as it's about the people of Liverpool and how their lives could be improved especially in terms of jobs and Glasgow is a really good example of what could happen and they haven't looked back.

The economic projections contained in the bid became virtually hegemonic within the national press following Liverpool's designation as COC08. Helen Carter and Peter Hetherington, for example, writing in the Guardian (Carter and Hetherington, 2003)

argued that the award was a vindication of the city's new efficient urban governance ('it seals a renaissance of a city once seen as 'basket case') and quoting the economic forecasts made in the ERM report with the headline figures of £2 billion of investment and 14,000 new jobs for Liverpool (the 14,000 job figure was universally cited though the figure did actually rise to 17,000 in one of the most ebullient articles which compared Liverpool to Barcelona [Carter, 2004]):

Liverpool represented all that was wrong with local government. It was beset by industrial unrest, the city council was on its knees after struggles with the hard left. Liverpool also had unemployment and social deprivation.... Becoming Capital of Culture 08 will continue the regeneration bringing huge investment to the city. An estimated 14,000 jobs will be created and £2billion invested.... The city hopes to replicate the Glasgow effect and transform its image from that of a grim northern city to that of being a European player'<sup>3</sup>.

The other main broadsheets *The Daily Telegraph* (June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003, byline Sally Poole and Nigel Bunyan) and *The Times* (June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003, byline Russell Jenkins and Jack Malver) all cited these headline economic forecasts in their coverage of Liverpool's award - though with the caveats 'hoped for' (*Daily Telegraph*) and 'expected' (*The Times*). The British tabloid press also appropriated the people's ownership and economic regeneration narratives celebrated within the Liverpool bid. *The Sun* newspaper (June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003, 'A City full of Art and Heart', byline Dave Wooding) displayed not only the ambivalence in the relationship between this paper and the city - discussed in detail later in this chapter- but the complex relationship between culture and economic deprivation by quipping 'somebody once said that the only culture in Liverpool was growing on the walls of the city's slums'- this pun in fact emerged in

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<sup>3</sup> It is debatable whether the Liverpool image was that of the 'grim northern city' and as chapter x highlights historically the city's image was constructed in opposition to the 'grim' northern industrial town.

relation to criticisms of Glasgow's culture led regeneration from the left in the city. The article proceeded to air all the negative associations with the city and pejorative representations of its working class 'toffs raised eyebrows when a northern seaport known for car crime, militancy, and dole cheats should land the honour' before invoking the narrative of resilient rather than the militant working class to explain Liverpool's success 'but what swayed the judges was the people. Now they are convinced come the hour those 500,000 folk can put on an even better show'. *The Daily Mirror* (June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 'Liver Bird meets Culture Vulture') while promoting the Glasgow success narrative 'it's hoped that the title will spark the same sort of revival enjoyed by Glasgow after it became City of Culture 1990' cited the headline figures within the ERM report 'the city beat five rivals to grab the honour which will bring 14,000 jobs, 2 billion pounds of investment and 1.7 million visitors' while a separate article in the same paper (*The Daily Mirror*, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 byline Sue Carrol) lamented the fact that Newcastle 'just missed out on 14,000 extra jobs and 2 billion pounds of investment'<sup>4</sup>. *The Daily Star* (*Daily Star* June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 'Arty boost for Scousers: we're dead cultured') reworked the representation of the shell suited, excitable, pugilistic Scouser created by the comic Harry Enfield (see **Figure Eighteen, p.253**). This article juxtaposed this with Enfield's other famous creation, the vulgar southern materialist 'Loadsamoney', who celebrated the excesses of the eighties southern economic boom by yelling his eponymous catchphrase and waving 'wads' of cash at those, like most of Liverpool, who did not share in his new found wealth (to give this added potency to this image London based football fans were said in the 1980's to have thrown ten pound notes at supporters of Liverpool FC while chanting 'loadsamoney): 'Loadsamoney Liverpool is toasting a wonderful £2billion

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<sup>4</sup> In a vindictive swipe at the city Carrol claimed that Liverpool had more whingers per square mile than anywhere else in Britain- her article was criticised in the paper's letters page as lacking magnanimity (June 9<sup>th</sup> 2003).



windfall... the historic announcement will also cut dole queues as 14,00 jobs are created'. Within both *the Star* and *The Daily Mail* (June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003, byline Andrew London 'Beatle City becomes Bonanza City') the figure of a projected £2 billion in investment became a 'windfall' or a 'bonanza' leading to the suggestion that Liverpool was about to receive a 'prize' of £2billion for winning the award (in fact the award from Europe was less than 1million euros matched by an initial £1million allocated by central government).<sup>5</sup>

This interpretation that Liverpool won for its potential for economic development, rather than its actual cultural infrastructure, was forwarded by Simon Hoggart writing in *the Guardian* (June 7<sup>th</sup> 2003) who with his acerbic wit and acute observation, questioned the juxtapositioning of the economic and cultural discourses in the award of the title to Liverpool, arguing that the award was given for the city's potential for economic development (though expressed as 'they haven't got much but they do need the money');

I can imagine a very cultured day by the Mersey. You could visit the Walker Art Gallery in the morning, then pop into the Cavern club. After lunch you might go back to the Walker to take in any paintings you'd missed. Then it would be time for your train. Actually most of the coverage amounts to "well, there may not be much there, but they do need the money". ...I suspect that the city, with its dwindling population, hideous high rises and fine but long demolished buildings, exists less these days as a place and more as a state of mind, symbolising warmth, wit, artistic endeavour and cheerfulness in the face of adversity.

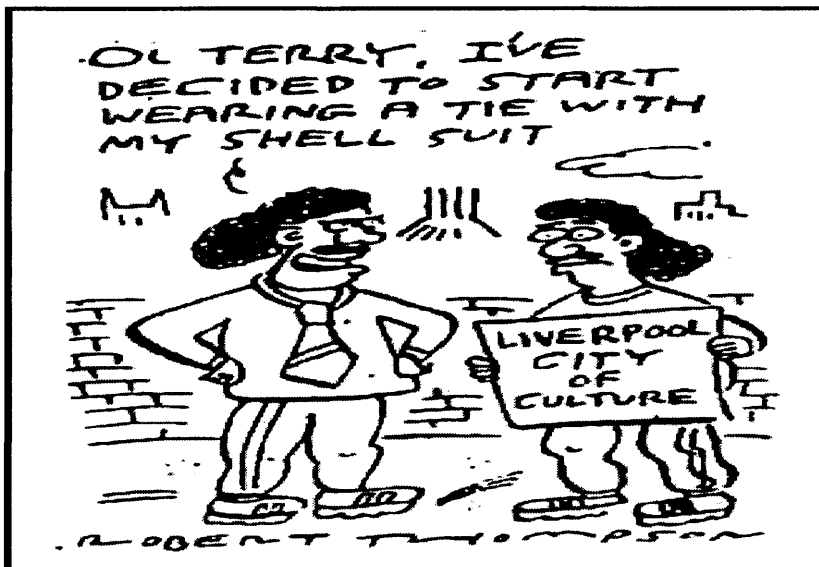
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<sup>5</sup> Although the government stated that all entries must be self sufficient it did relent and grant Liverpool a further £5 million (32/12/2004) for building and infrastructural development though a more recent request for a further grant to cover the costs of policing by the Bishop of Liverpool in the House of Lords May 2007 has been rejected.

The most caustic analysis of Liverpool's award for COC08 came within cartoons and humour following its designation. As with Glasgow this humour was based around the juxtapositioning of the city's working class heritage and popular cultural identity with a new culturally based urbane cosmopolitanism and the normative function of the Arts in reforming the working class. An example of this were cartoons which juxtaposed the Mersey ferry with Venetian gondola rides where a working class Scousers (signifiers of vest and cigarette) is seen offering or a gondola across the river Mersey (Venice being a bastion of Culture symbol of urbanity and cosmopolitanism - see Figure 29 p.327).

Similarly a cartoon in *The Observer* June 2003, alongside a report of Liverpool winning the nomination to be European Capital of Culture 2008 shows two men, who are identified as working-class 'Scousers' by the cultural signifiers of training shoes, shell-suits and permed hair; one of the 'Scousers' is holding a placard which reads 'Liverpool City of Culture', the other is wearing a tie and saying 'Oi Terry, I've decided to start wearing a tie with my shell suit' (Robert Thompson, *The Observer* 8 June 2003) (see Figure 27 p.326). The shell suit became a signifier of working class Liverpool following the award, while the Armani suit served to signify economic speculation within the city: this was satirised by poet Roger McGough who wrote; 'it's off with the trackies and on with Armani's; out with the champagne and caviar sarnies'. A ubiquitous joke in relation to Liverpool's Capital of Culture award and both an expression of the residual pejorative discourses around the city's working class and an ironic commentary on the supposed social and economic outcomes of the Capital of Culture award, is that of the Toxteth 'scally' who steals the wheels from cars but now props the cars up with encyclopedias (in the common denigration of the

Liverpool underclass male the scallies' economic desperation is seen by the fact that he doesn't steal cars- which could be seen as glamorous- but that he actually steals the wheels from cars): this was cited in the *Daily Mirror* (November 12th 2004); *The Times* (London) July 29<sup>th</sup> 2006 and *The Independent* (London) July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006 where Brian Viner wrote 'scallies are getting excited about Capital of Culture- a man came out of a Toxteth pub to find his car propped up on four encyclopedias'. What this type of humour does is expose the reformatory, class based discourse which underpins the social instrumentalism within the Liverpool bid. This chapter will explore the tensions between Liverpool's social and economic instrumentalist imperatives after it considers the other major factor given for Liverpool's winning of the COC08 designation: the city's strong urban governance.



**Figure Twenty Eight: 'Oi Terry'**  
Robert Thompson, *The Observer* June 2003 draws on the signifier of the shell suit to represent working class Liverpudlians and the tie (rather than the Armani suit) to represent the supposed bourgeoisification of the city following its COC08 award.



### 10.3 Urban governance within Liverpool

As discussed earlier in this chapter, one of the reasons given by the DCMS for the award of COC08 to Liverpool was what was viewed as the city's strong urban governance, based around the relationship between the Council's Chief Executive David Henshaw and the Council Leader Mike Storey. The emergence of this relationship must be viewed in the context of local government reforms introduced by New Labour which moved to an executive model of governance for local authorities. While these reforms were intended to promote stability, they militated against democratic accountability within urban administrations in that the vast majority of elected members played no part in decision making processes (although members are involved in scrutiny committees these rarely exercise any real power). Inevitably, it tends to be the executive officers who run these departments and this was certainly the case in Liverpool, where the elected officers willingly conceded ground to a newly appointed Chief Executive who was driven by the goal of making the council 'more efficient'. To push through his reforms the Chief Executive within Liverpool appointed a sub grouping (later to be pilloried as a 'cabal') of key officers which forged what Liam Fogarty of the campaign 'A Mayor for Liverpool' deemed '*a band of brothers mentality*' (this in fact is very similar to the concentration of power within the ruling Labour Party discussed in Chapter Six).

When formed to bid for the COC08 designation the Culture Company was clearly part of Liverpool Council but the city's bid claimed that if the award went to the city, then an independent company would be formed to deliver COC08. However, the degree of independence of this 'company' and its relationship with Liverpool Council has caused many of the tensions that were to subsequently destabilise the city's plans for

COC08; it was, in fact, neither a 'company' in the traditional sense nor was it an arm's length cultural organisation. It was, in fact, a 'company by guarantee', a structure usually used by non profit making organisation which have no share capital. In effect, this structure facilitated in presenting the Culture Company as an arm's length cultural organisation when, in fact, it was a de facto subsidiary of the council (the Culture Company had 100 staff- most of whom were seconded from the Council- a turnover of £18 million and assets of £1,000). When interviewed on the structure of the Culture Company the head of a partnership organisation in one of Britain's leading cities decried this institutional structure since he feels emasculated, with the power resting with the city council; 'we have our hands tied. All the power is with the council and to be honest at times it's a real pain for us'.

When quizzed for this study, many of those within the Culture Company invoked the arm's length principle that governed the relationship between government and cultural organisations within a patronage model as the paradigm that underpinned the relationship between Liverpool Council and the Culture Company: Kris Donaldson, marketing director of the company, explains its structure as a separate company at arms length from the council, though acknowledging that employees are in fact employed by Liverpool Council;

It was set up in 2000 as a subsidiary of the City Council with the remit of running the bid but it all intents and purposes it was a separate company, during the bid it was just a handful of folks and they brought in some other consultancies and agencies to support, mm, then of course when the bid was won in 2003 there was a lot more structure put to the company and a board of directors created and it grew from five to eighty and a full board..... It's still within the council but it's at arms length, it's still a subsidiary of the council. Of the total funding the council puts in over 50% so it's still a significant

contributor and the employees are employed by the city council but seconded to the Culture Company.

This mixing between the Culture Company and the council, in many ways reflects the nature of the relationship between cultural organisations and the DCMS where an arm's length principle is almost anachronistic in an era driven by the imperatives of instrumentalism. Similarly, such a model does not fit within the creative city/cultural planning paradigm adopted by Liverpool, in that its objectives were avowedly instrumental, with the Culture Company being more a regeneration than a Cultural organization: when quizzed for this study Councillor Storey asserted that Liverpool 08 was 'not about culture but about regeneration'. This close link between the Culture Company and the Council resulted in three interviewees claiming that the Chief Executive of the Council in effect controlled the Culture Company (Interviewee Four, a cultural commentator in Liverpool, quipped 'if it's at arm's length from the council then it's a very short arm indeed'). This can be illustrated by the original structure of the Culture Company, when shortly after its formation, David Henshaw became both the Chief Executive of the Culture Company and of the Council resulting in one interviewee (a marketing officer for one of Liverpool's theatres) claiming that the Culture Company was a de facto marketing arm of the Council. Although claiming that COC08 was not about culture but about regeneration, Council leader Mike Storey endorses the criticism of the structure adopted by the Culture Company, hinting at some problems that were later to emerge whereby 'you want to control everything from the centre';

One of things that I'm sure you know is that when we became the Capital of Culture we set up a separate company with a separate board which was arms length from the council although 80% of the money is coming from the council and we're uplifting that money each year by five million, 80% is

coming from the city and most of the staff are being seconded from the city and I think there's a learning curve in that there's a great danger that you want to control everything from the centre and tell people what to do. There's a bit of blurring at the edges between the Culture Company and the Council because you've got some of the staff of the council seconded to the Company so there will be a bit of blurring.

While Storey claimed that the board ran the Culture Company, it was a consensus from all interviewees for the study that the Council members of the board were by far the main players (none of the board members approached for this study agreed to be interviewed but one of the interviewees for this study who was highly critical of the structure of the Culture Company later went on to have an acrimonious stint as a board member). This criticism of the structure of the Culture Company and the undue influence exerted by the Council is supported by Interviewee One who cites Robert Palmer, artistic director in Glasgow 1990, now head of the influential Palmer Rae Associates (see Chapter Seven) who, following Liverpool's winning of the award, claimed that the city was making a fundamental mistake in that the event had to be 'apolitical'- this obviously ignores the fact that Liverpool won the award because it was inherently political/instrumental. This interviewee illustrates the tensions between an intrinsic and an instrumentalist approach by arguing that a city council would never sanction avantgarde or challenging art because of its public accountability, citing the city of Graz as an example of best practice;

The guy who ran Glasgow says that we're making one hell of a big mistake in that the council and the Capital of Culture Company are one thing here and this doesn't give the company the freedom it needs, the people who work for councils work to budgets while these running culture tend to take risks. In Graz, for example, they've got a wonderful statue of Mary like Nelson's column with Mary and one of the artists decided that what he wanted to do



was to build beside it a completely glass lift that you would go up, there was absolute outrage, the papers were saying that you cannot be on the same level as Mary, you cannot look Mary straight in the eye and the Council was able to say that it's nothing to do with us mate, but they put it in and it was the most successful thing and at the end of the year there was outcry because they wanted to take it down and that would never have got through a council, not in a million years so if say the Fourth Grace had have been left to a private company it would have happened and if you look at the make up of the Culture Company they're mostly Council operatives who have been moved over.

However, given discourses of 'people's ownership' and the Culture Company's social and economic instrumentalist orientation, COC08 could never have worked within the arm's length Artistic company model and, in a sense, had to be controlled by the Council if culture becomes a surrogate economic and social policy.

Despite Liverpool's claim to be the people's bid there is compelling evidence to suggest that the city is, in fact, one of the least democratic in the country. As was discussed in Chapter Eight in the aftermath of the politically turbulent eighties Liverpool experienced the removal of local powers from the democratically elected council and their divestment in unelected quangos. This quangoisation of the city has resulted in a Byzantine network of interconnected partnership agencies<sup>6</sup> as explained by Frank McKenna of Downtown Liverpool an organisation calling for one agency running policy in the city (formerly known as a Council);

we've done our own thing in that we've set up a campaign called Liverpool One which is basically saying we want one agency running different strands of policy in Liverpool in that you'd have Liverpool Vision running planning and

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<sup>6</sup> The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, pledged to cut down on the glut of quangos on Merseyside while visiting Liverpool in February 2006 (Liverpool Daily Post, February 24<sup>th</sup> 2006)

regeneration, you'd have Business Liverpool for the business support services, what we've got in Liverpool is a plethora of agencies and partnerships and they're all tripping over one another and it doesn't help and nobody takes responsibility for anything.

While the promotion of partnership within the city is heralded by some as successfully reintroducing the public sector into urban regeneration - as Figure Thirty p.335 illustrates the influential voice from the public sector is not that of the people's representative but the city's Chief Executive, in the case of Liverpool David Henshaw;

There are far too many public/private bodies about and David sits on them all.. take Liverpool Vision for example, they were set up to get the city centre going and it could be argued that the council should do that but the government like to have the council at a remove and there were definitely a mechanism for improving the city centre and there's no reason for them any more..

Liam Fogarty supports this position arguing that this multiple partnership model serves to reinforce a bypassing of local democracy;

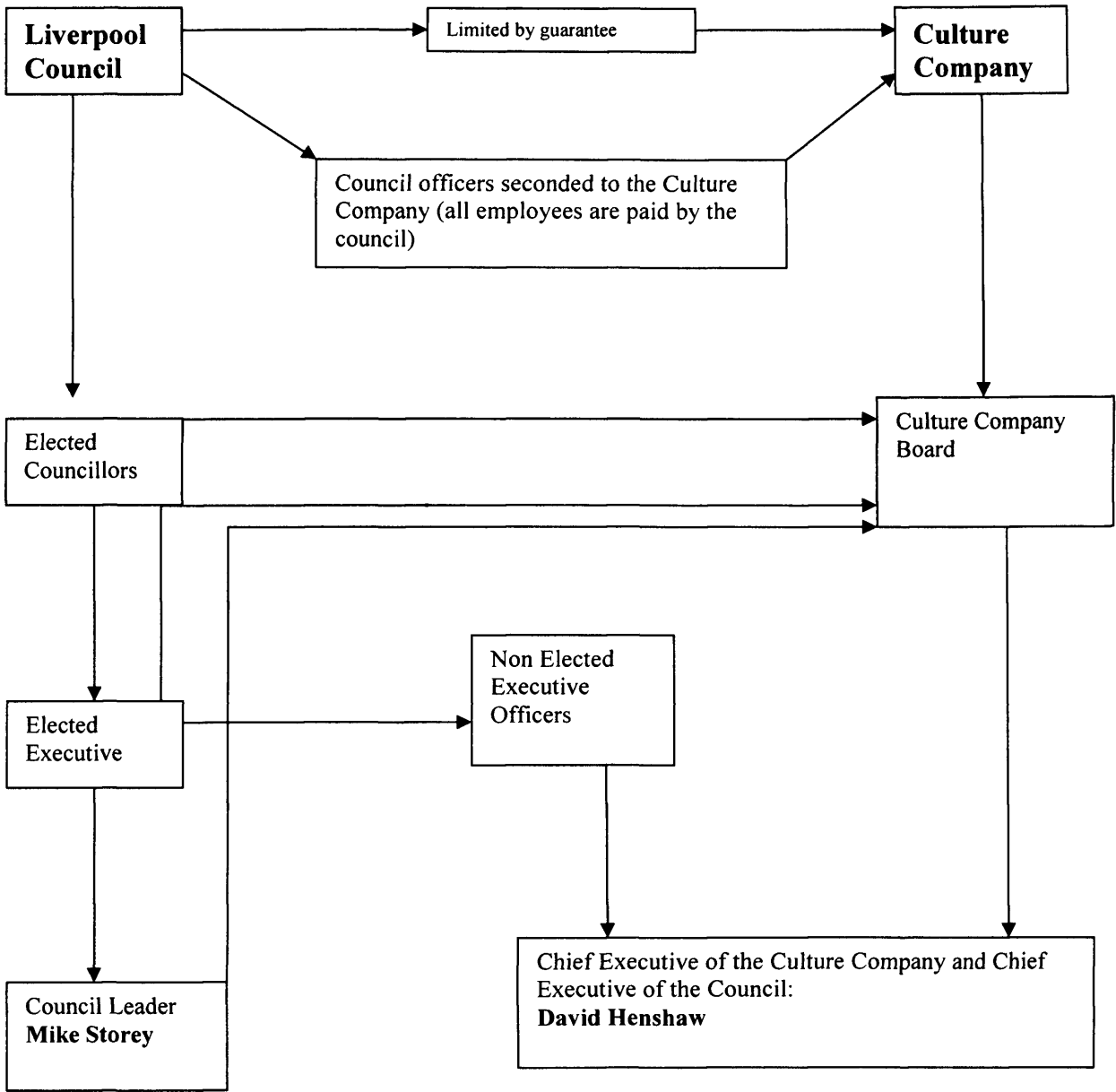
The multiple partnership model is part of what is undermining the whole democratic procedure here. By the last count the IPPR published an analysis this year which found that there were thirty three partnership organisations responsible for regeneration in Liverpool alone, now the council is a player in all of those but again what that does it fragments authority, it militates against transparency and if you have a forceful to use a charitable word Chief Executive who wants to make sure what those partnership organisations are doing meets his vision for Liverpool City Council and is given the space to do that then there are going to be tensions.

By all accounts David Henshaw's reputation was certainly that of a 'forceful' Chief Executive. As discussed in Chapter Eight Henshaw was appointed and given carte blanche to reform what they saw as an 'underperforming' council with strong unionised labour: this was described by those interviewees supporting an entrepreneurial approach to regeneration as 'clearing out the problems that existed at town hall in relation to the unions' (Dougal Paver, head of Paver Downes PR Company) 'clearing out the dead wood' (Interviewee Nine, head of a regeneration body);

I think what's happened since then is that first and foremost you have a management structure in Liverpool that was designed to clear out the problems that existed at the town hall. I mean problems with trade union domination, labour relations inefficiencies of service, a lot of it a lot of subtracting to the private sector for certain areas of work, I mean enterprise had obviously come in. I think that was a positive move, mm, and there would be people in the Labour movement who wouldn't necessarily agree with that but I think that was the way to go for Liverpool.'

'Well the councillors initially gave Henshaw and his team all the powers and to their credit they did clear out a lot of the dead wood in the council but that power kind of went to their head and in the end they were running the show rather than the elected representatives.

Through these reforms Liverpool Council divested much of its power to a group of unelected executive officers who headed up both the council and many of the partnership organisations and whose vision for the city was very much within the entrepreneurial mode; such a parallel structure of governance was inherently undemocratic and, consequently, created tensions between elected members and non elected executive officers the ramifications of which would come to undermine the city's plans for COC08.



**Figure Thirty One:** The intimate relationship between Liverpool Council and the Culture Company shortly after Liverpool’s award of European Capital of Culture 2008. Although the judging panel commended the city for its ‘strong urban governance’ the government would later demand that a reinsertion of an ‘arm’s length’ between the Culture Company and the Council.

#### 10.4 Economic Focus and 'loss of the people'

The economic focus of the award of COC08 became evident as soon as Tessa Jowell announced Liverpool as the winner. This manifested itself most visibly in a fever of property speculation, evidenced, according to Peter Mearns of the NWDA, by the crane count on the Liverpool skyline- in fact there seems to be something of a crane cult within regeneration in Liverpool with one interviewee claiming that the first thing that the city's Executive Officer did on coming to work each morning was to count the number of cranes he could see from his office window (in what could be deemed as the ultimate expression of the appropriation of culture for economic ends and the boosterist nature of Liverpool's COC08 award, the opening ceremony of Liverpool's COC08 celebrations involves dancing cranes);

It started as soon as it was announced, property prices started rocketing, I'm talking about residential property prices started rocketing..... but that's also been followed by very quickly what people call the crane count on the horizon and as you know if you go to Liverpool there's cranes everywhere, you wouldn't have seen a crane five years ago, so that's just phenomenal the confidence that's been generated within the property market for new development, residential, office and all the rest of it.

Mearns is correct in identifying the award of COC 08 as precipitating a frenzy of speculation on Merseyside: the Mersey Partnership announced a 30% rise in inward investment enquiries in the 12 months after Liverpool was awarded the designation (Mersey Partnership, 2005). Some estate agents suggested that property prices in the city rose by between 15%-20% in the week after the announcement. There was, however, a great deal of contention around these claims as they were based solely on an article by Helen Carter in *the Guardian* newspaper (June 18<sup>th</sup> 2003) relating the experiences of Steven Quinn, a recruitment company director in London, who 'bought

two flats for £95,000 each in a city centre development in Liverpool. The are now worth £110,000 each- an increase of nearly 16%'. In line with this speculative bubble property supplements began beseeching speculators to invest in the city: see, for example, *The Guardian Property Section* (June 28<sup>th</sup> 2003) where Tony Dyckhoff, citing the 'Loft Living' metaphor for bourgeoisification, claims that, as yet, Liverpool is 'unloftified'; while Helen Rumbelow, writing in the Times (Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> 2003) and Robert Liebman and Paul Peachey in *The Independent* (July 23, 2003) expose the dominance of the economic over the cultural by inverting the formerly artistic metaphor and identifying these speculators as 'culture vultures': Rumbelow writes 'a new breed of culture vulture is visiting Liverpool since it was crowned European Capital of Culture but instead of viewing art, they are looking at property' while Liebman and Peachey claim "*Vultures Flock to buy up City's Flats*". The fever of property speculation was, according to several interviewees, the proof that the award of COC08 was the economic stimulus needed by the city - the metaphor of the Capital of Culture as 'turbo charge', 'rocket fuel' or 'a massive shot of adrenalin' was repeated several times by interviewees and newspaper articles (*The Guardian*, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003; *The Independent*, June 5<sup>th</sup> 2003) following Liverpool's award.

The economic narrative and boosterist thrust of COC 08 was also to the fore in Culture Company documents written for the general Liverpool public. In the introduction to the widely distributed '08 What's it all about?' (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b, p.2) the marketing, branding and economic discourses take prominence;

What is beyond argument is that 4<sup>th</sup> June 2003 changed Liverpool. At a stroke, national and international perceptions changed and the image of the city improved. Already, 2008 is the rocket fuel that is propelling Liverpool's

economy, and solid foundations have now been laid for its ongoing transformation into a world-class city....Our vision is very simple: it is to help Liverpool shine on the world's stage by delivering the best-ever European Capital of Culture in 2008 and, as a result, to leave a lasting and positive legacy for you and the people of Liverpool, including more jobs, a stronger economy and a better place to live.

This pamphlet then asks several questions with regard to COC 08, one of which being 'How will the Capital of Culture title benefit Liverpool?' (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005b, p.5). In response to this the document makes even bolder economic claims which are again justified by citing the Glasgow success narrative;

Between now and 2008, and beyond, Liverpool will benefit from literally billions of pounds worth of investment, thousands of new jobs and massive regeneration which will see it reborn as a premier European city.. in 1990, Glasgow was the last UK city to have the City of Culture status, and experienced substantial economic and social benefits during its period as the City of Culture, both strengthening and promoting its own impressive regeneration.

This rush to speculation precipitated by the award led to ebullient analysis of the city's economic potential. Dougal Paver, head of Paver Downes PR agency, celebrated such economic development, using the metaphor that the COC award was the 'turbo charge' for Liverpool's economy and drawing on a boosterist discourse and trickle down economic theory utilises the metaphor 'all boats rise in a rising tide':

Capital of Culture was the turbo charge. We already had started growing quite strongly by then, there was a lot of confidence here, what it did was it took that confidence and shoved a rocket up its arse and we've actually shot off since then, it's had an enormous impact and to be fair it's already unlocked the investment premium from that. If you walk round you see cranes in the city centre but what it will do is build up a momentum that will attract more and

further investment and this will stretch out from the city centre- you know all boats rise on a rising tide.

Despite such enthusiastic economic analysis, considerable resistance emerged within the city regarding the increasing economic focus of the Capital of Culture award. The sense that the economic was outstripping the Cultural and that COC08 was being taken over by PR firms, property developers and speculators was not confined to small disaffected groups on the fringes of the cultural scene but was acknowledged by one of the key players in both the bidding for and the delivery of the Capital of Culture year, former council leader Mike Storey, who when interviewed for this study, claimed that there was a feeling that COC08 was being overtaken, as he described them, by people 'in Armani suits';

I have to say that there is a growing feeling at the moment that I'm concerned about, people feel we won it but it's going off to people in Armani suits and you know people aren't engaged anymore and I think you've just got to work through that carefully. If you're going to use this as a vehicle for regeneration you've got to sell your message to London, you've got to send your message to venture capitalists, you can't just pull up the drawbridge and say we're just going to have a great party ourselves, you've got to have the men and women in Armani suits to do that, I mean it's getting the balance right.

Storey, in fact, had been criticising the economic focus of COC 08 in the local press from the end of 2005: he slammed the 'gravy train for highly-paid officials' (*Daily Post*, December 31<sup>st</sup> 2005) while in the same paper (January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006) wrote;

I'm not sure it's by the people for the people. A lot of highly paid people have been brought in from the outside along with advertising and marketing agencies. It's the people that won it and I think we are in danger of losing sight of that.



However a Labour councillor, Steve Munby, claimed that it was somewhat hypocritical of Storey to condemn the excessively boosterist nature of Liverpool's development in that it was the Liberal Democrats' focus on an urban entrepreneurial regeneration paradigm which caused the problems for 2008 in the first place;

Under the Liberal Democrats, regeneration in Liverpool has rested on the indiscriminate growth of bars and flats in the city centre, backed up by a spin machine funded by council tax payers. We are now reaping the whirlwind.

Despite being the self proclaimed and, subsequently, almost universally acclaimed 'people's bid', there were claims from the cultural sector (as there had been in Glasgow) that the whole process was a case of a top down initiative driven by PR firms and business interests which sought to mould rather than reflect the culture of the city. As in the case of Glasgow, 'grassroots' resistance to the prevailing economic paradigm began to emerge- the 'roots' of this were mostly within the left leaning culture community and left inflected magazines such as *Nerve* and *Defcom* and websites *People not Profit*, *Indymedia* and *Kirby Times*. One such website, 'Peoplenotprofit', not only captured the tension between the economic and the social elements in its title, but presented a particularly cogent analysis of the central tension within the COC 08 strategy;

in the same way many hard working local artists, bands and writers feel excluded from the Culture bid and related projects. It's a classic example of something that is organised from the top down, by people who don't appreciate the diversity and value of grassroots activities. Voluntary projects and small arts venues are struggling for money while the cultural image of Liverpool is being shaped by councillors, PR firms and other business interests. Culture is produced whenever people meet and by everyone.

(Peoplenotprofit, 2005)

This perceived clash between the needs of the community and the economic development of the city is also at the heart of the manifesto of a group naming themselves Culture Watch 2008;

culture watch provides a forum for critical dialogue about all that surrounds 2008 Capital of Culture. We believe that 2008 offers a unique and positive opportunity, but we are not willing to sit back and let those involved forget that culture is about communities and people. It is not just about apartments for the rich, Harvey Nicks, and Firework Displays anymore than its about impoverished estates, Poundland and Bingo. We want to support the good work being done around 08. We also want to ensure that those involved know that they are being watched and that they are accountable. It's 'our culture' that won the bid, so it's our right to have a voice. We want, no, we demand, that our city thrives and makes the most of this unique opportunity.

(Culture Watch 2008, 2005)

There were voices of resistance, however, within the city to what some viewed as a re-emergence of the centre-focussed, trickle-down economic paradigm that most would agree failed the city in the 1980's. A community activist within the Garston area of the city argued that the 'trickle' neither arrived in the eighties nor following the award of Objective One funding to what he deemed as the 'scouse reservations' on the city's periphery.

Just as prominent artists and writers in Glasgow, such as James Kelman, were at the forefront of questioning the cultural agenda of their year of culture, similar voices began to appear in Liverpool. Prominent amongst these was playwright Alan Bleasdale who questioned both the economic focus of the award by making a not too disguised attack on Council head, Sir David Henshaw; "Capital of Culture has got to be about more than luxury apartments and knighthoods' (Bleasdale, 2004).

These sentiments were echoed by writer Jimmy McGovern who scorned Liverpool's by-line 'the World in One City' while criticising the physical regeneration of Liverpool 08;

This is Liverpool Eight, the only place which you really can describe as 'The World in One City', he says, aping the City of Culture's motto. "It's the Harlem of Britain: there's a black man living there called O'Riley, there's Irish and Welsh, Somalis and West Indians - and look at it. Bricked up for demolition. It's the 'Capital of Culture' on its arse - fucked up by these bastards wanting to knock it all down for development, investment and whatever they can get out of it. That's not culture, that's vandalism.

(McGovern cited in Vulliamy, 2004)

The argument that the Culture Company were losing the very people that had won the accolade in the first instance was supported by Pete Wylie of the band the 'Mighty Wah' who shortly after making a film for the BBC 2's Culture Show (April 14<sup>th</sup> 2005) stated;

I'm worried about the gold-rush mentality - the idea that this could just be about a lot of people coming to the city to make money off our backs. But it can't be allowed to be just about money. Capital of Culture is a great chance for us to showcase the city and its people. It's about taking ownership. This is our city, it's our roads being ripped up and it's our shopping areas which are being redeveloped.

(Wylie, 2005)

Wylie's views in this programme were widely supported in the letter's pages of the local press. Mike Cotgreave wrote in the Liverpool Daily Echo (April 19, 2005);

most people who love Liverpool were overjoyed when it won the title. However we must be wary of those who seek to exploit and profit from the

city, rather than celebrate what it has to offer. It would be great to see a grass roots celebration of Mersey culture, independent of the city council, the property developers and the cosmopolitan elite. Let's make this the People's Capital of Culture.

There was further support for Wylie in the letters pages of the Daily Post (April 19<sup>th</sup> 2005) from James West who wrote;

he is absolutely right when he says that the people of our city should take ownership of the title rather than allowing it to be hijacked by gold-diggers. There should be a forum involving ordinary local people to whom these developers and city council planners are accountable.

This conflict between the economic and the cultural within the city is illustrated in what became known locally as the Quiggins Affair. Quiggins was an alternative retail centre in the city for music, crafts, antiques, piercings etc. housing 50 small businesses and employing around 250 people (see Figure Thirty One, p.361). However, this bastion of alternative culture stood in the middle of the Paradise Street Development Area which was earmarked for regeneration under the auspices of Grosvenor Estates (owned by the Duke of Westminster). Quiggins became a rallying point for those opposing what they considered an officially sanctioned, commercially driven culture being imposed upon them, resulting in a 50,000 signature petition which was presented to the House of Commons by local MP, Clare Curtis Thomas on 24 March 2004 where she stated;

What a wonderful array of goodies we have to offer our visitors, including Quiggins, a marvelous retail mix with something for everyone. Motorbikes, antique furniture and the best 60s clothes on the planet are all available in this retail unit. But Quiggins is facing compulsory purchase as the mega Grosvenor empire seeks to close one of the best shopping experiences that Liverpool offers.

I present to the House tonight a petition signed by 50,000 people, which includes the names of thousands of my constituents who are both customers and retailers of that lovely emporium. I ask the House to urge the Deputy Prime Minister to consider carefully the recommendations placed before him by the planning inspectorate, to support the retention of a great Liverpool institution and to support Quiggins.

(Hansard, March 24, 2004)

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004, despite such protestations, John Prescott granted permission for a compulsory purchase order of the Quiggins site. The view that the economic was superseding the cultural was endorsed by a report produced by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and think-tank Demos with the chief executive of the RICS suggesting the ‘cities are often guilty of killing the goose that laid the golden egg by allowing the creative heart of a city to be smothered by commercial development’ (Minton, 2003). Opposition to the plan was also forthcoming from civil rights organisations such as Liberty who were concerned about the increasing privatisation and, as discussed earlier, the concomitant ‘cleansing’ of public space, claiming that the Paradise Street Development area would be policed by ‘quartermasters’; according to this report it was the first time in the UK that private security would be extended to public streets, ‘malls without walls’ (Minton, 2003 p.2). These fears would not seem unfounded with Donald Lee of the Open Spaces Society, claiming that: ‘When I asked city council officials why the new routes could not be declared public rights of way, it was explained to me that the council and the developers needed to be in a position to “control and exclude the riffraff element.”’ (Lee quoted in Ford, 2005). The Quiggins store finally closed on July 3 2006 (though there was a compromise whereby the store would relocate to the former George Henry Lee building on Church Street).

## 10.5 Controversies around COC 08

### 10.5.1 *The Abandoning of the Liverpool Bid's Infrastructural Projects*

While Liverpool's plans for COC08 were undermined by a succession of controversies, the abandoning of the Fourth Grace project was a harbinger of the series of cancelled projects and internecine fighting that was to bedevil the city in its preparation for 2008. An indictment of the boosterist and speculative nature of the bidding competition of COC08 was the fact that, following the announcement of the Fourth Grace's axing, there were suggestions emanating from both the architect Will Alsop and architectural correspondents in the national press, that the building was a means to market and brand the city, creating a boosterist stir but that it was never intended to be built (this has some justification as it was openly admitted that Liverpool never expected to win the award in the first instance): Alsop claimed 'I think the general perception was that Liverpool had used what was thought of as an extraordinary design to win Capital of Culture and then dumped it' (quoted in Booth, 2006)<sup>7</sup>. This interpretation was supported by Giles Worsley (2005) writing in *The Telegraph* when he argued that 'Will Alsop's bulbous Fourth Grace cleverly generated just the right go-ahead image for the city council's bid to become Capital of Culture. Once that bid had been won the project was cancelled, with disastrous effect for Alsop's practice'.

While it is impossible to assess these suggestions there remains considerable ambiguity around why this 'iconic' structure, the centrepiece of Liverpool's bid, was eventually axed. The Fourth Grace project was the result of a public/private partnership and it was the public sector which precipitated its collapse, citing rising

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<sup>7</sup> Alsop had agreed to an interview for this project but declined to speak on the day following an agreement forged between his practice and the Liverpool Culture Company. The collapse of the Fourth Grace led directly to his business going into receivership on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2005.

costs - £228 to £324 million - as the reason and arguing, somewhat provocatively, that there was a chance that it could have become a 'second Millennium Dome'<sup>8</sup>. While making this argument David Henshaw, by all accounts the instigator of its demise, claimed that its increased cost had resulted in the need to further the economic interests of the private sector and, subsequently, 'the tail was wagging the dog' and that 'the nightmare scenario was that the Cloud would become a residential tower block, a private building that we put x million pounds of public money into.' However, this explanation has been widely questioned on several grounds, not least economic, with Interviewee One arguing;

Now the Fourth Grace what they said was the business plan wouldn't stack up and what they said was that they would need to build more flats on stilts in the next dock and at that point the plug was pulled. But actually the plug was pulled I think not for those reasons at all. Although it's true that the costs went up it's also true that the value of land went up so in fact there would be no additional costs to the public sector.

By all accounts, however, the fate of the Fourth Grace was tied up with that of the other major infrastructural development celebrated within the city's winning bid, the King's Dock Arena (this development was planned prior to the bid and was not in any way contingent on the city winning the COC08 designation). Originally the centrepiece of the King's Dock development was intended to be the relocation from Goodison Park of Everton Football Club- a scheme that carried the imprimatur of David Henshaw. Everton were due to generate £30million to buy a 50% stake in the £150 million portion of the project. As Interviewee One stated, however, it was generally agreed that the football club had little chance of raising the required money

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed critique of the relationship between the public and private sectors and indeed a deconstruction of the Dome disaster narrative see McGuigan (2003a).

and, after several attempts to raise the required financing, the board of Liverpool Vision decided to withdraw Everton's preferred-bidder status on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002. In the end it was imperative that an alternative scheme was initiated and Liverpool Vision, Liverpool City Council, North West Development Agency and English Partnerships developed the King's Dock arena, a 9,400 seat arena and conference centre supplemented with two hotels, new public spaces and offices and 2,000 apartments (see Figure Twenty Four 314). It was the competing needs for these private apartments that, according to Interviewee Three, sealed the fate of the Fourth Grace project;

the real reason and nobody will ever tell you this, David had been terribly embarrassed by the collapse of the Everton stadium, he wanted his stadium on King's Dock and it depends on houses around it, Will Alsop's depended on houses and if the Fourth Grace were to go ahead, or so the theory goes, you'll eat up all the housing and nobody will move into the house there so you couldn't build the stadium so that's actually what happened. The private sector were happy but not the public sector.

The scepticism around the reason given for the pulling of the Fourth Grace was shared by the private partners within the partnership, The Fourth Grace Consortium, which described it as ill judged and accused the public sector of having no faith in the city's economy. Despite these protestations it would seem that the fate of the Fourth Grace was inextricably and indeed mortally bound to that of the other landmark project on the city's waterfront.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Evidence of one scheme being prioritized over another was that £12million of Objective One money was switched from the Fourth Grace to the King's Dock shortly before the rug was pulled from beneath Alsop's project.



The sanctioning and collapse of the Fourth Grace illustrates the bypassing of democratic structures within Liverpool and the myth that the entrepreneurial approach of COC08 is somehow 'people led'. After the announcement of the scheme's axing there were suggestions emanating from the Council's Executive that the regeneration company Liverpool Vision were to blame for the Fourth Grace's collapse. However, board member of Liverpool Vision and leader of the Labour bloc within the council, Joe Anderson, defended Liverpool Vision in a resignation letter written to the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott in which he complained of the influence of 'Liverpool Council' on the board (the rift between the elected members and the unelected executive can be seen by the fact that when speaking of the 'Council' Anderson is referring to the Council's Executive Officer and not councillors like himself);

In my belief Liverpool City Council exerts power and influence that means the regeneration company acts in the interests of Liverpool City Council, not in the interests of Liverpool or its citizens . . . The decision to scrap the project (Fourth Grace) and the way in which it has been done is appalling. I and other members of Liverpool Vision Board were excluded from the process and the way in which it was spun by Liverpool City Council to divert criticism away from its own failings is absolutely appalling. Millions of pounds of public money has been wasted on both of these projects and as we head towards the Capital of Culture we are being looked at, rightly so, as the city that can't deliver; the residents of this city are rightly also dismayed as to another failure. (BBC News, 2004)

The tension that emerged within Liverpool between the elected representatives and the Council Executive hinted at earlier in Anderson's letter was not confined to the Labour opposition but also existed within the Lib/Dem bloc which was instrumental in empowering the Executive in the first instance. As described above, the axis upon which the formerly strong working relationship within the council was built was

David Henshaw as Chief Executive and Mike Storey as Council Leader. This celebrated and commended relationship began to unravel shortly after the winning of the COC award, initially concerning a dispute over the planning of a new tram system for the city, another of the key infrastructural projects highlighted within the city's winning bid - Interviewee Four claimed that Henshaw had once stated to him that the trams would go ahead 'over my dead body'<sup>10</sup> (ironically the tram system was celebrated as illustrating the inclusive nature of the bid as it was designed to link the city centre with its deprived peripheral estates). The new tram system for the city was supported by both the elected council and the Labour run Merseytravel Authority and it was generally acknowledged that the government would underwrite £204 million of the £250 million costs of the eleven mile line. However, as costs supposedly spiralled David Henshaw and his executive officers campaigned against the project endorsed by their employers the elected representatives. This bypassing of local democracy was most clearly evidenced when it was revealed that Henshaw had sent a confidential report prepared for councillors in Liverpool to the Department of Transport before it had been even considered by the elected representatives themselves. This report was said to be the basis for the government's withdrawal of funding with transport secretary Alistair Darling stating 'Whilst I support tram schemes, I cannot do so at any cost' (Ward, 2005)<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> It has been suggested that Henshaw's resistance to the trams emanated from a personal conflict that he had with the head of Merseytravel, Neil Scales (Liverpool Daily Post, January 2006). This view was endorsed by one interviewee who used the metaphor 'rutting stags' to describe their power struggle and talked of a 'testosterone charged atmosphere between two alpha males'.

<sup>11</sup> Merseytravel subsequently went to court in an attempt to have the government's decision overturned but were defeated, leaving it with a £55 million bill for work already completed on Line 1 (Liverpool Daily Post, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006).

### 10.5.2 *The Breakdown of 'strong local governance'*

These initial clashes between the executive officers and the elected representatives (really the Liberal Democratic bloc) and the fracturing of the relationship between two key players in the campaign for COC08, manifested itself most visibly and bitterly over a dispute concerning Henshaw's pension scheme- the spark that lit the conflagration that would , eventually, engulf both Henshaw and Storey . This dispute began with Henshaw claiming that in order to prevent him having to pay extra tax on his pension due to new stringent government rules, he would have to retire early unless the council reimbursed him the money he would 'lose' by staying in his job after the new rules came into effect. Storey, however, and the majority of his fellow councillors, opposed this and the council's Staff Appointments and Disciplinary Panel refused to sanction such a payment, arguing that since the new rules applied to all council employees, it would be a dereliction of duty if they were to treat one council employee more favourably than another (it was generally felt and expressed by several interviewees that the elected councillors were using this as an excuse to rid themselves of Henshaw and an executive whom they felt were exercising too much power). It was at this point, when it was felt that Henshaw's bluff had been called, that the dispute escalated, the intrigue intensified and the machinations within the council took a decidedly Machiavellian turn: this surrounded the suspension of Matt Finnegan, the Council's Communication Officer for alleged 'procurement irregularities'.<sup>12</sup> On the seizure of Finnegan's computer<sup>13</sup>, e-mails between him and Storey 'plotting' the removal of Henshaw were found, one of which contained the allegation that the Council's Executive constituted 'an evil cabal': the irony of

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<sup>12</sup> Finnegan resigned from his position, two weeks before his tribunal was due to be heard in the summer of 2006.

<sup>13</sup> It has been speculated and repeated by two interviewees that Henshaw was aware of these e-mails before suspending Finnegan.

Storey's castigation of the Executive was not lost on one council employee writing in the Liverpool Daily Post (June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005);

It is rather illuminating that Mike Storey has chosen a phrase like '**evil cabal**' to describe David Henshaw's group of officers, considering the fact that it was the Liberal Democrat party that gave them such undiluted power in the first place. As an employee of Liverpool City Council, I can testify to the climate that has existed among its employees for the last few years and which has resulted in the voluntary redundancy of many excellent, experienced officers that have not been replaced. The city is poorer for it and we are glad that the inevitable 'house of cards' has finally come tumbling down.

Henshaw used this as evidence to threaten Storey to quit or face being reported to the Standards Board of England; when Storey refused to stand down he was duly reported. On 25 November 2005 the Standards Board for England's Ethical Standards Officer, Jennifer Rogers, released a statement concluding that Councillor Storey,

broke the code of conduct in a way that went to the heart of proper relationship between members and officers by seeking to improperly influence an officer of the authority...the investigation related to allegations that Councillor Storey has encouraged a paid officer of the authority to undermine the council's chief executive.

(Standards Board of England, 2005)

With the release of the report Storey agreed to step down as council leader, apologizing for his behaviour. The dispute, however, had quite a sting in its tail when Storey was replaced by his 'protégé', Warren Bradley, which rather than leading to a rapprochement served to entrench the breakdown between the Council's elected members and its paid executive: it was then that Henshaw realised his own position was untenable (Liverpool Daily Post, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006). In the end, following

protracted negotiations, Henshaw announced that he was stepping down- armed with a £340,000 retirement package.<sup>14</sup>

The Culture Company was undoubtedly greatly affected by tensions within the council (David Henshaw was Chief Executive of the Company, Mike Storey Deputy Chair while leader of the opposition, Joe Anderson and Executive Member for Leisure and Culture-and soon to be council head- Warren Bradley on the board).

This disputed relationship between the Culture Company and the council was, in fact, one of the sticking points in the arbitration talks between Sir David Henshaw and Mike Storey. In what seemed to be a recognition of Storey's position (and the argument put forward by all interviewees for this study), Sir Michael Lyons, who chaired the talks, recommended that Henshaw should step down from his position as Culture Company Chief Executive which he duly did. However, the appointment of the new Chief Executive of the Culture Company, Jason Harborow, proved as controversial as the resignation of the old one, as explained by a leading figure within the city's cultural scene;

Harborow's initial appointment was by Henshaw to market the Capital of Culture as his background was in marketing. Then Henshaw was told by Mike Lyons to let go of the reigns so there is then a truncated appointments procedure to appoint a new Chief Executive of the Culture Company. The reason given for the length of time before the appointment being made was that they should not appoint a new Chief Executive of the Culture Company without appointing a new Chief Executive of the Council who might want to contribute to that process, after we had just been told that we must put clear blue water between the Culture Company and the council.

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<sup>14</sup> Henshaw moved on the working with the Child Support Agency and headed the report calling for its 'phasing out'. His pay at the CSA has also come under scrutiny with the Guardian newspaper using the Freedom of Information Act to discover that he was being paid £900 a day, higher than any other civil servant in the country.

In an attempt to defuse these tensions within the Culture Company and clarify the relationship between it and the council the new council Chief Executive, Colin Hilton, called in lawyers to create ‘a memorandum of understanding’ between the Culture Company and the Council (Liverpool Daily Post, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2006). After the signing of this memorandum in an attempt to reduce the influence of the council’s executive officers over the Culture Company, the Culture Company Board was reduced in size to a maximum of 14 directors, including three council representatives, and meeting quarterly with a small Operational Board, replacing the Executive Group, which was due to meet approximately every six weeks. Despite this memorandum the tensions between the executive officers and the elected councillors continued to destabilise Liverpool’s plans for Capital of Culture 2008.

### 10.5.3 *Tension between Intrinsic Positions and Instrumentalist Imperatives*

The first public evidence that the faultlines between an instrumental and an intrinsic view of culture were beginning to fracture was with the appointment and subsequent resignation of the Culture Company’s first artistic director, Robin Archer (it also serves to highlight the mixed cultural discourses employed by the organisation as discussed in Chapter Seven)<sup>15</sup>. Apart from personalised and local disputes over her appointment- it was felt by many that she knew little of the local cultural scene within the city- her appointment highlighted the fractures that were beginning to emerge within the Culture Company due to its lack of a clear theoretical position as to what constitutes culture and, consequently, what should be represented in Liverpool’s year. Interviewee Seven, a highly regarded professional within one of the city’s leading cultural organisations, explained why she believed that Archer had resigned;

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<sup>15</sup> It emerged in early 2006 that Archer had yet to secure a visa to work in Britain while the Daily Post (September, 12, 2006) revealed that during the twenty two months that she had been employed she had only been in the country for ninety seven days.

I met her on a few occasions- I certainly wasn't in her inner circle so to speak. However, I do know for a fact that she was continually frustrated by interference from the council. She wanted to put on an international arts event and they were more concerned with local issues. She just didn't feel that she had artistic control.

Another interviewee's comments, while personalising the dispute, illustrates the tensions between competing definitions of culture (and an personal elitist sensibility) when he argued the main source of contention was between Archer and the Chief Executive of the Culture Company, Jason Harborow, because he 'knows nothing about culture, he's purely from a rugby league background' highlights how the contested interpretations of culture have manifested themselves in policy disputes which have severely impacted on Liverpool's plans for 2008 (Interviewee Seven argued that Culture Company documentation was 'turgid' and 'something that you would expect from an accountancy firm not an arts organisation')

The debates over Culture/culture and the tensions between the drive towards inclusion and the need for 'excellence' discussed earlier were at the centre of this dispute as explained by David Fleming, director of National Museums Liverpool;

we have to beware of knee-jerk reaction that (Archer's ideas) were too intelligent for this city, we need a variety that includes all sorts of weird and wonderful cultural adventures. There also has to be a lot that local people engage with but it mustn't be a parochial, inward-looking event celebrating Scouse culture.... Why would the rest of Europe take notice of us if we are too insular. (Ward, 2006b)

The resignation of Archer precipitated a wave of criticism in the media with the Today programme (BBC Radio 4, July 12<sup>th</sup> 2006) claiming that '*nobody knows what it is about or who it is aimed at*'. One of the fault lines that fissured in such dramatic style

leading to the resignation of Archer was, according to Joe Anderson leader of the Labour bloc on the Council and board member of the Culture Company, between disgruntled councillors, favouring a more democratic locally based festival and the artistic director who had aspirations to bring international, mostly Australian artists to the city leading Anderson to provocatively claim, 'the only Australian names missing from her list seem to be Rolf Harris, Dame Edna Everage and Skippy the bush kangaroo'.(BBC Radio 4, July 12 2006).

As the 2008 approached and the aspects of the Culture Company's programme were released<sup>16</sup> the city's community arts also became increasingly alienated in the run up to the event); Interviewee Ten, a longstanding paid worker within a community arts organisation within the city confirmed this:

there is a sense, rightly or wrongly, that we have been used. In some ways I feel sorry for the Culture Company because there is only so much money and maybe we thought that there would be a lot more but we haven't seen any of it. There is a lot of bad feeling towards the Culture Company, yes.

While a voluntary worker within the same organisation attempted to contextualise such feelings of disillusionment:

we were promised the moon after the bid and maybe we just got too excited, carried away. Definitely though any good feeling for the Culture Company around here is gone. I don't want to talk down Liverpool, we all love Liverpool. We want the year to be a success and all that and I think it will. We just feel a bit let down.

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<sup>16</sup> At the time of writing the programme for 2008 had yet to be released. However, these opinions reflect a strong sense of alienation amongst those community arts activists and community workers interviewed for this study.



These findings were endorsed by Joe Anderson following his resignation from the Culture Company board when he claimed that the regeneration of Liverpool was centre focussed which was at odds with community/people first rhetoric contained within the winning bid:

wherever I go I have community groups say that they don't feel part of Capital of Culture. People are constantly complaining about over emphasis on city-centre investment and when you visit parts of Speke and see the dereliction there it really hits home.

I met the judges- Jeremy Isaacs, Tessa Sanderson- and told them all about the communities and our bid's aspirations for them..... but these aspirations simply haven't been met.

(Liverpool Daily Post, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2007)

These sentiments were echoed by an unlikely source, the North West Development Agency head Stephen Broomhead, who worried that COC08 would be too 'elitist' (Liverpool Daily Post, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2007). These rumbling tensions again overflowed in June 2007 when Anderson himself stood down from the Culture Company board. In his resignation letter Anderson expressed the dissonance and tensions between the cultural/social regeneration and local ownership discourses and around the commissioning of art projects which he denigrates as 'elitist and which along with overspending on corporate hospitality has left the city with a huge deficit in relation to its Capital of Culture year' (Daily Post, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2007)<sup>17</sup>;

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<sup>17</sup> In June 2007 Liverpool Council appealed to Gordon Brown for a loan in the region to £20 million to be repaid over five years. Council leader Warren Bradley partially blamed the city's business community for the shortfall by claiming that the council were putting on a huge party and the city's business leaders needed to 'bring along a bottle'. Daily Post (June, 14<sup>th</sup> 2007)

I was so proud to be involved in the bid to be European Capital of Culture 2008 and along with everyone else in the city, was delighted at our victory. I believed it was a wonderful opportunity to show our city at its very best and that primarily it was for the people of **Liverpool** to enjoy and participate in (emphasis in the original text). Indeed it was the judges' belief I the involvement of the people of Liverpool that won us the bid. The fact that four and a half years after we accepted the nomination we have to seek 20 million pounds of emergency borrowing to pay for it, is a sad indictment of this council's failure to properly prepare for the event. I am concerned that after a total spend of 94 million pounds, the legacy will not be a lasting cultural legacy or improvement in the cultural industry in our city. The legacy will be one of debt and, quite frankly, one of missed opportunity. Those that tell you that the Capital of Culture is responsible for the regeneration of our city are misleading the people of Liverpool. The renaissance was kick-started with Objective 1 funding, supported with government money through agencies like the NWDA, and will be sustained by private sector investment like the Paradise scheme. Sadly I now feel that 2008 is very little about the people of Liverpool and community involvement and I am increasingly alarmed at the vast sums of money that have been spent and that are still required, with very little to show for it. I believe it is elitist, with far too much prominence given to organising elitist events..... I have in my offices invoices passed to me anonymously, showing Culture Company officers enjoying dinner in Liverpool's top restaurants paid for by taxpayers' money and yet we have small community groups being turned away for funding for their modest projects... there are token efforts to involve the community but even these, such as the Four Corners<sup>18</sup> event have spectacularly backfired, because local residents were not allowed to the launch which, surprise, involved wine and canapés for the city elite.

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<sup>18</sup> Four Corners a project where a tenement building near the city's Chinatown was covered in 175 salvaged front doors is illustrative of the clash between a community/social orientation and an Artistic imperative. This piece was a response to artists being asked the question 'What makes a neighbourhood?' To celebrate its opening and European Neighbours Day the Culture Company organised a launch though no local groups were invited- in fact one former local resident, M.Doyle, wrote a letter to the Daily Post (June 5<sup>th</sup> 2007) telling of how security guards turned him away.

Anderson's complaints were endorsed by local artists within Liverpool who claimed that money was being squandered on 'gimmicky' art (Daily Post, June 18<sup>th</sup> 2007 '*Artists accuse Culture Company of snobbery*')<sup>19</sup> at the expense of local talent. Amidst all the bluster, recriminations and counter recriminations in the wake of Anderson's resignation it was perhaps film maker Phil Redmond, a member of the board of the Culture Company who clearly articulated what COC08 might deliver for Liverpool (Daily Post, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2007):

hanging a few pictures, sending out jugglers and playing a few tunes here and there is not going to bring life-changing experiences to Norris Green, Nehterley or the outer territories of Huyten and Kirby. At the same time, there is no doubt that the marketing exercise around 2008 has been a real catalyst for change in itself over the past few years, but whether it pays off in terms of economic regeneration, only time will tell.

The nadir for Liverpool came in August 2007 when the city's Matthew Street festival celebrated within the city's bid and one of the largest free music festivals in the country was cancelled three weeks before the event due to health and safety concerns emanating from a report by the Capita Symonds group<sup>20</sup>. At the same time it was revealed that the Culture Company were £22 million in debt. The outcome of this were calls from Warren Bradley for the sacking of Jason Harborow and calls from within the board itself for it to be scrapped. Leading the campaigning for the scrapping of the board was board member and independent television producer Phil Redmond who argued that the board should be brought back within the council, claiming that it was run by the council in the first instance:

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<sup>19</sup> One piece that attracted special attention was Richard Wilson's 'Turning the Place Over' which involves rotating a panel which is cut from the side of a derelict building.

<sup>20</sup> A study into an Capita Symonds itself yield some illuminating insights into the relationship between the worlds of consulting and commerce and the company's dual role as a commercial events organiser providing traffic and safety for events and its consultancy role in assessing health and safety issues for the same events.

It is only an advisory board for a council-run operation. If its advice is neither sought, or listened to, I don't think there is a point in it.

(Redmond 2007a)

In the end the board of the Culture Company was 'slimmed down' with Redmond taking over as deputy chair and figurehead for Capital of Culture. On taking the position Redmond attempted forward his own unique interpretation of the Arts/culture paring that underpins/undermines New Labour and Liverpool COC08 culture policy when he argued that within Liverpool's year: 'its treats for the Toffs are bigger and better than anywhere but so is its Creative Communities and mass participation programme.' (Redmond, 2007b).

### **10.6 Conclusion**

This chapter traced the fallout from Liverpool's award of COC08. It demonstrated how the tensions between the 'people's first' and entrepreneurial narratives within the city's bid destabilised Liverpool's plans for 2008 and illustrated how economic boosterism came to predominate following the COC08 award. It then illustrated how the economic projections deconstructed in the previous chapter became hegemonic in the wake of the COC08 award raising unrealizable expectations. The boosterist, yet unrealizable, nature of the city's winning bid was also illustrated by the abandonment of the key infrastructural developments mentioned within it.

The chapter also illustrated how an instrumentalist approach to culture demands a level of political interference that, inevitably, results in instability within a cultural organisation. It demonstrated how the institutional structure of the Culture Company and its relationship with Liverpool City Council is a reflection of the instrumentalist

imperative of Liverpool's strategy, which, in many ways, renders the traditional arm's length relationship between cultural and governmental institutions inappropriate.

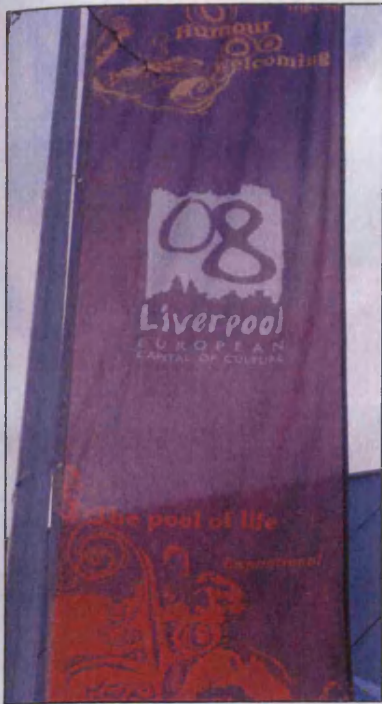


**Figure Thirty Two:** The Quiggins store which was served with a compulsory purchase order to allow for the building of the Paradise shopping centre (photograph author).



**Figure Thirty Three:** O8 Place the new visitor centre built for COC08 (photograph author)





**Figure Thirty Four:** The branding of Liverpool in preparation for COC08. The most popular product and increasingly a symbol for the city is the 'Super Lamb Banana' (middle row left) a recent addition to the city's public art (1998), designed by Japanese artist Taro Chiezo is being promoted within COC08 as the new symbol of the city (photographs author).





**Figure Thirty Five:** 'Liverpool's Ultimate Status Symbol' The bourgeoisification of the city. (photograph author)



**Figure Thirty Six:** Talk, talk, talk and wait for the cranes. Cranes in the Liverpool skyline (photograph author).

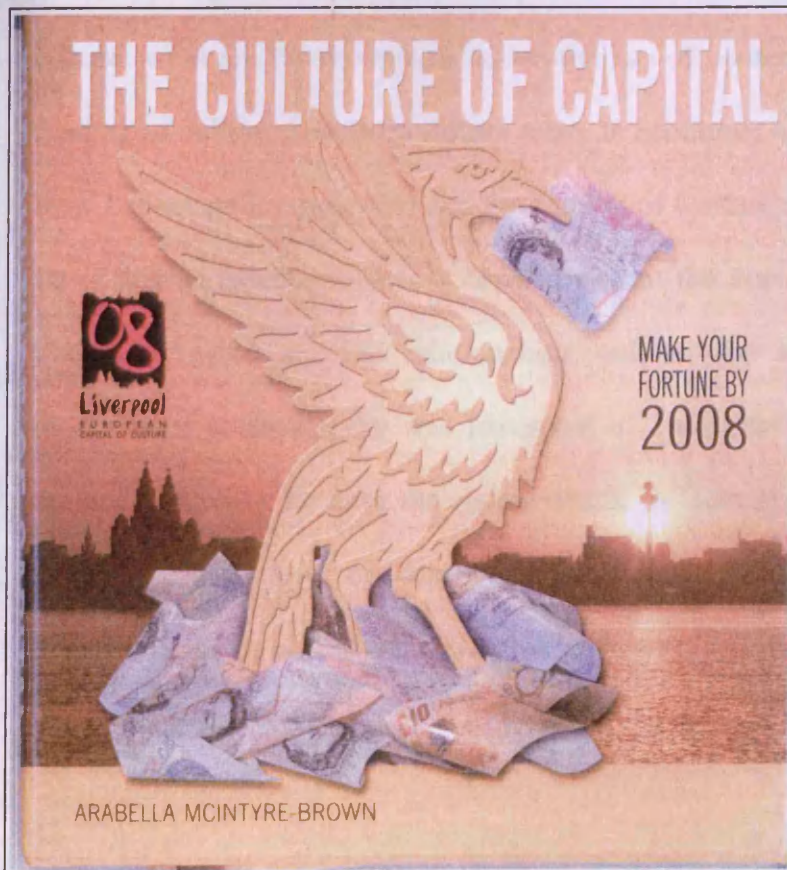


LIVERPOOL  
**VISION**  
THE CITY CENTRE REGENERATION COMPANY

THE CITY CENTRE REGENERATION COMPANY



**Figure Thirty Seven**  
(above): Following an entrepreneurial vision for the city.



**Figure Thirty Eight:**  
(left) *The Culture of Capital* by Arabella McIntyre Brown written for entrepreneurs and endorsed by the Culture Company. The cover unintentionally reads as a satire of the crass commercialism that accompanied aspects Liverpool's COC08 award.

## Chapter Eleven: Review and Conclusion

*'I wish I'd never heard of that damned word culture' Raymond Williams*

This study has both wrestled with and, indeed, been scarred by Raymond Williams' 'vague and baggy monster'- culture; a monster whose morphing and shapeshifting make the task of casting a theoretical net around it interminably frustrating (like a later Williams I too sometimes wish that 'I had never heard that damned word culture' [Williams, 1981 p.154]). Through its investigation into New Labour cultural policy generally and COC08 specifically, the study has attempted to tame Williams' monster and put it back in its theoretical cage.

The study began with six initial questions in relation to contemporary conceptions of culture: what are the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary justifications for the funding of culture; how does culture relate to economic and social regeneration within New Labour policy generally and the Capital of Culture scheme specifically, and how far is this an extension of or a departure from the economic objectives within neo-liberalism; what are the relationships culture and class within urban cultural regeneration projects; why was Liverpool awarded the European Capital of Culture accolade, and how far have the claims within its bidding document been realised in its plans for 2008; how do discourses of culture and creativity map onto policy, observable forms of civic intervention and institutional structures at a local level in the winning city, Liverpool?

This review will consider how far these questions have been answered and consider any additional areas of enquiry that might have emerged from this study.

In its widest sense this study traced a network of discourses around culture from antiquity to contemporary cultural policy and, finally, its manifestation in the city of Liverpool in relation to COC08. The study's earlier chapters can thus be read as an attempt provide a sound theoretical and philosophical background for contemporary cultural policy which, as later chapters demonstrated, have lost a connection with its complex theoretical traditions and intellectual histories. These chapters provided a genealogy of the philosophical, intellectual and theoretical traditions that underpin many of the implicit assumptions which inform contemporary cultural policy. This section highlighted the reformatory nature of discourses around Art and Culture, and illustrated how initial nineteenth century justifications for cultural policy, although informed by an 'intrinsic' position, were in fact directed towards the social instrumentalist agenda of reforming the working classes. As later chapters illustrated, the vestiges of this normative and reformatory function of culture are present in contemporary cultural policy discourse, especially in relation to New Labour's strategies for social inclusion (Chapter Six), and within Liverpool Culture Company's Creative Communities' strategy (Chapter Nine).

This role of culture as a mechanism for reforming the 'masses' was celebrated in the writings of Mathew Arnold. Chapter Two illustrated how an Arnoldian consensus formed the theoretical platform upon which post-war British cultural policy was built. This chapter highlighted various theoretical positions which challenged its basic assumptions, raising certain fundamental questions which the study then considered: how can one reconcile a commitment to a democratic definition of culture with a belief in innate or intrinsic value? This central question was explored, primarily,

through the work of Raymond Williams. It illustrated how the rallying to a catch-all, 'anthropological' definition of culture ignores the complexity of Williams' work and challenges the misappropriation of his theorising around an anthropological definition of culture. He did acknowledge that culture is embedded in social processes; culture is social, however, does not mean that all that is social is cultural. This misreading ignores Williams' argument (1989, p.90) that culture refers to 'a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development.... the works and practices of intellectual *and especially artistic activity*' as well as the celebrated 'particular way of life'. This misappropriation of Williams' anthropological definition was illustrated in the bidding for COC08 and various cities' rhetorical attempts to 'out anthropologize' one another in order to prove their social commitment.

As Chapters Six and Seven illustrate, although rhetorically adopting this anthropological definition, contemporary policy discourse merely conjoins it to discourses of art in an arts/culture pairing: rather than existing in a productive dialogue, culture and art exist alongside one another in an ingrained, unproductive silence. This results in many of the theoretical contradictions at the heart of New Labour policy; contradictions which, as Chapter Six illustrates, New Labour's culture ministers were themselves increasingly aware of, evidenced by the recent reintroduction of discourses around 'art and excellence' into governmental policy. These unresolved theoretical tensions form a faultline which runs through New Labour cultural policy, the bidding for COC08 and which, in the end, destabilised Liverpool's plans for its Capital of Culture celebration.

The thesis also argued that through the endorsement of an unbounded anthropological definition the distinction between cultural studies and a general sociology becomes blurred, and as was illustrated in relation to New Labour and COC08, cultural policy becomes, in effect, a surrogate social policy. In addition this discussion illustrated how Williams not only retained a strong hold on value, but a strong aversion to the celebration of the 'popular' outside of its social, political and economic context. A decontextualised celebration of the anthropological can result in an homology between popular cultural expression and the neo-liberal sovereign consumer, and as in Liverpool's bid for COC08, allow for projects primarily concerned with profit - as in the case of Liverpool's bid , the building of a huge shopping centre - to be claimed as a cultural activity.

Chapter Four of this study illustrated how the principles which underpinned a patronage approach to cultural funding were challenged under neo-liberalism, where cultural policy makers were forced to find economic justifications for the state's funding of culture; moves which were traced within both policy generally, and specifically in relation to urban regeneration. The chapter illustrated the relationship between neo-liberalism and forms of civic boosterism that were aimed at property development, and the creation of zones of consumption that favoured a professional-managerial class. It was within this context that the study considered Glasgow's City of Culture Year in 1990. While the study questioned 'the Glasgow success narrative' from a social justice perspective, its approach to culture led regeneration was, at least, theoretically consistent: it aimed to use the city's cultural assets for marketing and branding purposes to attract primarily tourists - 'yuppies and backpackers'- in an attempt to move the city to service sector employment. However, the study illustrated

how such a strategy raises accusations of elitism and the silencing of the working class cultural tradition. Added to this, the centre-focussed, entrepreneurial thrust of a Glasgow strategy abandons politics of redistribution in favour of a trickle down approach to regeneration which, as this chapter illustrates, has considerable inequitable social ramifications and repercussions, resulting in the much vaunted, though disturbingly polarised city we see today. The central question which the study then engaged with was how far New Labour's policies represented either a departure from or a continuity with these neo-liberal approaches to culture and regeneration. It is the contention of this study that just as much of New Labour's policies represent a neo-liberal agenda with a social veneer, so too is Liverpool's approach to COC08 a form of urban entrepreneurialism dressed up in and legitimated by New Labour social rhetoric.

To illustrate this argument the study considered New Labour's policies generally and its cultural policy in particular. These chapters analysed the general political context within which contemporary cultural policy operates, outlining how neo-liberalism and globalisation frame New Labour politics. Within this the chapter discussed how New Labour is represented as transcending old dualisms and argued that a key feature of its cultural policy is the claim that it has transcended 'old' ways of thinking in relation to culture. The central discursive construction that indicates this rapprochement is the arts/culture pairing which informed not only New Labour policy generally, but the bidding process for COC08, Liverpool's cultural regeneration policy and, indeed, the institutional structure of the Culture Company itself. This pairing manifested itself within the bidding for COC08 in various ways, all with a distinct class inflection: art for the centre, the tourists and the 'toffs'; culture for the periphery, the community



and the working class. Inevitably within this construction the arts end is privileged since events like COC08 are, in reality, concerned with place 'making and place marketing'. This privileging of the 'arts' side of the equation resulted in the disillusionment and 'loss of the people' within Liverpool, discussed in Chapter Ten.

Chapter Five argued that such a rapprochement was a classic rhetorical construction within the political (non) ideology of the 'Third Way'. This chapter traced the emergence of a 'Third Way' political analysis to a 'position' that emerged in the British Left, 'New Times'. This 'New Times' project attempted to reinterpret leftist politics in an era where traditional class formulations and class based political analysis were seen to have altered under the prevailing global economic conditions and the impact of information technology. This analysis came to inform the position of the influential think tank DEMOS and the cultural planning consultancy firm Comedia who, as Chapter Six illustrated, were key in the formulation of what this study identified as a 'creativity city/cultural planning' approach to culture led urban regeneration. The study illustrated how this approach is based on a series of circular, self-fulfilling assertions. It celebrates the development of cultural activity and 'creative industry', which both creates a vibrant economy and rebrands the city (which in turn attracts both tourists and investment). The development of 'cultural/creative' activity (which discursively embraces a broad definition of culture but in practice prioritises the arts) alleviates social exclusion (which is deemed the result of a cultural deficit) expressed through 'engagement' in the economy.

As with the Third Way in general a creative city/cultural planning approach rearticulates the objectives of social justice within a discourse of social inclusion.

While these two objectives are, at times, grouped together within Liverpool's Creative Community strategy (Chapter Nine), they are inherently different objectives based as they are upon different ideological assumptions: social justice is constructed upon the belief that inequitable structural relations constrain some social groups' ability to access social, economic and cultural resources; social inclusion/exclusion is theorized as the desire of - and opportunities for - marginalised groups to fully 'participate' in society. Within this template participation is generally conceived in economic terms (employment). As Chapter Six illustrates, this imputed 'lack of desire' to fully 'participate' is described by former Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, as 'poverty of aspiration'. As part of Liverpool's Creative Community strategy, Chapter Nine describes how traditional indicators of socio economic deprivation are used to earmark Liverpoolians suffering from a cultural deficit. Within such a policy framework there is no room for addressing or counteracting the structural reasons of social exclusion. Instead this approach offers policy interventions that seek to address not the causes but the cultural manifestations of exclusion; what this study termed the turn from the structural to the cultural. Although this policy template makes rhetorical calls to the anthropological definition of culture, it simultaneously draws upon residual notions of art as a civilising process: this is demonstrated in Chapter Nine's deconstruction of Liverpool's Creative Community strategy, where artistic activity is prioritised as a superior form of engagement with some of its claims having clear echoes of a nineteenth century, Arnoldian reformatory discourse.

In its deconstruction of New Labour cultural policy the study interrogated the ubiquitous discourse of creativity. This study has taken a highly critical position in relation to creativity (it is not of course against creativity per se- who could be?), but



questions the idea of the creative industries being a coherent industrial sector and the melding of traditional discourses around creativity based on aesthetics, with those rooted in the high tech economy, to provide not only an economic justification for funding/investment in the arts, but economic arguments around urban regeneration. The study highlighted how this creative city discourse was rooted in the 'pseudo-academic writing' of Tom Landry and Richard Florida and, consequently, views discourses around the 'creative city' as an urban marketing strategy. The tension between a creativity discourse as rhetoric and one which offers solid policy formulations was explored at a local level in Liverpool (Chapter Nine).

Chapters Seven and Nine demonstrated how Liverpool drew heavily on a creativity discourse in both its social and economic policy. While representing Liverpool as a creative city may help market the city and, arguably, attract investment, there must be the recognition that the city is not moving to an employment base rooted in the 'creative industries', but one that will, in all likelihood, be based within the service sector (this assertion is based on the assumption that 'creative industry' is a recognisable industrial sector which is questioned in Chapter Six). As Chapter Seven demonstrates, definitions of the cultural and creative industry sector used within Liverpool's bid actually includes service industry, with most of the prospective jobs resulting from COC08 being within the tourist sector; this would suggest that waiting *is* creating. This is not to suggest that service sector employment is not a welcome outcome of COC08. However, the types of jobs that are created has important implications for the nature of training and learning that should be put in place within the city, so that Liverpoolians can benefit from those jobs created in relation to COC08.

The later chapters of the study highlighted how the mixed discourses within a creative city/cultural planning template informed the bidding for, the awarding of, and the winning city's strategies for COC08. These chapters demonstrate how this drive to make unsubstantiated and, this study would argue, unrealizable instrumentalist claims around the role of culture in social and economic regeneration, has resulted in both New Labour's cultural policy generally and aspects of Liverpool's 08 strategy being a surrogate economic and social policy. As Chapter Ten illustrated the move to an instrumentalist interpretation of culture has implications for the institutional structures that fund cultural provision. If culture becomes both a surrogate economic and social policy, then it is inevitably politicised with the repercussions outlined in Chapter Ten; it was somewhat ironic given that Liverpool won the award because of its instrumentalist promises, the government called for the reinsertion of the arm's length principle and thus distance between Liverpool Council and Liverpool Culture Company.

Chapter Seven's consideration of the bidding process for COC08 discussed how the competing cities invoked elements of the New Labour influenced cultural planning/creative city approach. The chapter illustrated how within the British competition there has been a discernible movement away from a discourse that focuses on the European arts tradition to a social and economic regenerative discourse that underpins a cultural planning/creative city approach. This chapter demonstrated how the social function of the scheme is no longer rooted in a paternalistic paradigm concerned with improving access to cultural resources, but instead its social

instrumentalism is justified by the mesh of arguments around social exclusion and creativity outlined in earlier chapters. The chapter also illustrated how such a social instrumentalist discourse was rooted in an anthropological definition of culture which not only served to expand the reach of cultural initiatives, but which within the bidding scheme resulted in culture becoming something of an empty concept.

This chapter also illustrated how despite the rhetoric, the bidding cities saw the award of COC08 much in the same, entrepreneurial mode as Glasgow, whereby culture is used to rebrand and market the city. It demonstrated how the marketing and economic regenerative discourses within the various cities' bids were accompanied by ebullient economic forecasting around wealth and job creation based around the experiences of Glasgow. A key element within this marketing discourse was the ill defined notion of 'creativity'. The bidding analysis in Chapter Seven demonstrated how the bidding cities attempted to meet a Landry/Florida inspired template and thus represent the city as youthful and multicultural to attract creative individuals and also foster local creativity.

Chapter Seven's analysis of the various cities' bidding documentation highlighted the selective appropriation of these cities' histories and the absence of voices, such as the elderly, whose culture is not seen as marketable. What is marketable and seen as a prerequisite within a 'creative city' strategy, is multiculturalism and Chapter Nine illustrated how Liverpool's bid sought to represent the city as multicultural and cosmopolitan through the bid's strapline 'The World in One City', despite the fact that it is one of the least ethnically diverse cities in the UK. Despite claims within its bid that such rebranding was a bottom up, organic exercise in 'self-discovery', this

inevitably involves the manipulation and reduction of multiple social realities into a marketable package and the silencing of voices which do not represent the image that a city is wishing to project. Within Liverpool such a voice was the city's white working class, around whom many of the negative images - belligerence, recalcitrance, indolence - which Liverpool was attempting to distance itself revolved. Chapter Eight provided an historical and political context for Liverpool's turn to culture to rebrand its city, highlighting how the negative images of the city were rooted in residual representations of its nineteenth century underclass and of its late twentieth century working class male and 'belligerent' class politics. The analysis of Liverpool's bid suggested that it best matched the 'cultural planning/creative city' template outlined in the previous chapters; central to this strategy and a cornerstone of Liverpool's bid was both a promotion of urban entrepreneurialism (strong civic leadership and 'replicating a Glasgow') and, simultaneously, a denial of an entrepreneurial agenda through discourses of local ownership. The chapter highlighted the obvious vacuity of such claims, especially in relation to the increasing de-democratisation of the city which was lending it the reputation for strong urban governance.

Chapter Ten discussed how the faultlines at the heart of such a strategy came to fracture as Liverpool began to implement its plans for COC08. It described how the Culture Company's structure mirrored the arts/culture pairing described in the earlier chapters. It deconstructed the social element within this strategy, the 'Creative Communities' project, highlighting how the mixed discourses around culture and social inclusion have been cleaved onto discourses of art and creativity, to form the argument that culture and creativity will tackle the city's economic and social

problems. The chapter illustrated how the social element and discourse of local ownership was superseded in the aftermath of Liverpool's award by an increasingly economic focus and a frenzy of property speculation which contributed to a general disillusionment about the direction of the scheme. It provided further evidence of the boosterist tenor of Liverpool's winning bid by outlining the abandonment or amendment of most of the major infrastructural projects promised within its submission. The chapter also highlighted how the Culture Company's structure differed from the model of an arm's length cultural organisation under a patronage model and how tensions between its artistic and instrumentalist objectives served to further destabilise its plans for COC08.

There is an increasing awareness that Liverpool's plans come at a cost and that public money, whether through limited support from Europe, central government, the NWDA or Liverpool Council is being redirected to support city centre boosterism without any evidence of a social pay off. As the Liverpool debt grows and the prospect of a council tax looms the question remains who will benefit from Liverpool 08. Tellingly the Liberal Democrat Mayor Warren Bradley recently naively quipped that the Council is holding the biggest party ever and it's now time business brought a bottle; he should be aware that there is nothing that business likes more than gatecrashing a publicly financed party.

The study offers a huge scope for further enquiry. At a theoretical level it could be developed to inform Tessa Jowell's call for a reconsideration of cultural policy in general. The study has also provided the context for numerous local enquiries within

Liverpool: an investigation of how the strategy employed by Liverpool has been inscribed into the cultural infrastructure of the city; a longitudinal analysis of the social and distributional outcomes of COC08; a detailed study of the employment trends within the city up to and after 2008 with a particular emphasis on the *types* of jobs created; an analysis of the motivations for investment in or migration to Liverpool before and after 2008; a study of how working class Liverpoolians actually react to and participate in COC08 initiatives.

In general this study deconstructed New Labour cultural policy and its manifestation in the urban sphere as a ‘creative city/cultural planning’ strategy. It illustrated how this quixotic strategy pursues unrealizable social and economic goals. The study argued that this approach is predicated upon an understanding of culture that allows all areas of economic and social life to come under its purview.

The second chapter of the study was entitled ‘putting culture back in its place’ and, in a sense that is what all the chapters have attempted to do. Within cultural policy some limits must be set upon the anthropological definition; without these limits culture becomes everything and nothing. It is hoped that this study might contribute to the setting of these limits.

While the study has taken a critical analysis of the European Capital of Culture Scheme 2008, the spirit of criticism within this work is not that of negative carping of a detached critic, but part of a dynamic whereby knowledge is produced and people’s lives (especially the disadvantaged) are improved. In line with that it is hoped that while critical towards much of rhetoric around Capital of Culture 2008, the work has demonstrated a warmth towards the city of Liverpool and its people and a genuine

hope that COC08 proves to be a success (success being an improvement in the lives of Liverpudlians, especially its most deprived residents). Indeed in years to come I fully expect to pick up a marketing journal and read of the 'Liverpool model' being lauded as a template for urban regeneration. If this is the case then I too hope that I don't also read of 'scallies' being barred from the city centre, of unemployment and health amongst the worst in the country, and of an increasing social divide between the city centre and the 'reservations' on the city's periphery.

# Appendices



<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Title of Interviewee</b>	<b>Place/Duration of Interview</b>	<b>Rational for conducting this interview</b>
Neil Rami	Managing Director Newcastle/Gateshead Initiative	Newcastle 80 mins	Neil Rami was the person with the overall responsibility for delivering the Newcastle/Gateshead bid for COC08.
Interviewee 1	Head of a partnership organisation responsible for one of the six final city's bids	England/ 60 minutes	This person headed a partnership organisation within one of the competing cities. He was happy to be acknowledged if some of his more controversial observations were anonymised. It was felt that this might compromise his identity so all his remarks have been anonymised.
Paula Mc Fetridge	Leading figure in the cultural sector within one of the six cities (Belfast) that failed to make the DCMS shortlist	Telephone interview/ 40 minutes	This interviewee was contacted to give a perspective on the views of the cultural sector within the city on its controversial failed bid for COC08.
Interviewee 3	Cultural commentator within one of the six cities the failed to make the DCMS shortlist	England/ 60 minutes	This interviewee wished to remain anonymous as s/he was working as a consultant for a regeneration company within the city.
Tom McCarthy	Head of Cork Capital of Culture 2005	Telephone 70 minutes	This interview was chosen to provide an account of a recent City of Culture outside the U.K.
BillMacNaught	Head of Cultural Services Gateshead Council	Gateshead/ 70 minutes	This interviewee was chosen as I wanted to interview a representative from both the private and public sector within each shortlisted city.
Paul Burnett	Head of Cultural Services Bristol Council	Bristol/ 40 minutes	Paul was chosen as a representative of a public body in the shortlisted city of Bristol.
Andrew Kelly	Author of the Bristol bid for COC08	Bristol/80 minutes	Andrew wrote the Bristol bid document
Yvette Vaughan Jones	Author of the Cardiff bid document	Cardiff/90 minutes	Yvette was the author of the Cardiff bid.
Rachel Martin	Representative of Oxford Inspires the partnership which headed the Oxford bid.	Oxford/60 minutes	Rachel was involved in the planning and delivery of he Oxford bid.
Andrew Ormston	Head of Cultural Services in Birmingham council	Birmingham/70 minutes	Andrew was a key figure within the public sector in Birmingham when the city forwarded its bid for COC08.
Interviewee 4	A leading cultural commentator in Liverpool who was also involved in an advisory role with the board of the Culture Company	Liverpool/60 minutes	This interviewee requested anonymity as s/he was closely involved with the Culture Company.

Interviewee 5	A Labour councillor in Liverpool with a cultural remit	Liverpool/ 45 minutes	This interviewee did not request anonymity but expressed two strong opinions during the interview that s/he requested be anonymised. S/he was approached to give the study a wide political balance.
Interviewee 6	A Labour councillor in Liverpool with a regeneration remit	Liverpool/30 minutes	This councillor requested anonymity as s/he did not want to be seen to be 'talking the city down'. S/he was chosen for his/her opinions on the regeneration of Liverpool.
Councillor Frank Doran	A Liberal Democrat councillor with a cultural remit	Liverpool/90 minutes	Councillor Doran was elected by the Council leader for interview.
Councillor Mike Storey	Head of Liverpool Council and key player in the city's bid for 2008	Liverpool 40 minutes	Mike Storey was one of my initial key interviewees as he was cited by both the judges and the press as being instrumental to Liverpool winning the COC08 accolade.
Peter Mearns	Spokesperson for the Northwest Development Agency	Warrington 60 minutes	This interviewee was chosen for several reasons: as part of the largest public regeneration body in the region I was interested in how he viewed cultural regeneration. Also the NWDA was/is one of the main stake holders in the Fourth Grace project and Kings Dock Development.
Dougal Paver	Owner of Paver/Downes Public Relations Agency	Liverpool 60 minutes	Dougal Paver emerged as an interviewee since his company represents many of the property development companies working in Liverpool. He was also chosen as it was suggested to me that he might prove to be a valuable contact.
Frank McKenna	Head of Downtown Liverpool in Business	Liverpool/ 45 minutes	Frank McKenna was chosen as his organisation promotes business development in Liverpool.
Paul Smith	Head of Arts and Business Northwest	Liverpool/60 minutes	Paul was earmarked as his organisation promotes economic regeneration through culture.
Angela Roberts	Marketing Director: The Mersey Partnership	Liverpool/45 minutes	Angela Roberts was chosen as a representative of the largest business promotion organisation on Merseyside and for an insight into how COC08 was being used to brand/market the city.
Martin Thompson	Senior Researcher Liverpool City Council	Liverpool/90 minutes	Martin was interviewed as he was a key player in Liverpool council's cultural regeneration strategy.
Claire McColgan	Head of the Creative Communities team in the Liverpool Culture Company	Liverpool/ 70 minutes	Claire was one of my initial key interviews as she was part of the team that bid for COC08 and remained in the Culture Company during the planning stage for 2008.
Interviewee 7	Director of one of Liverpool's leading theatres	Liverpool/60 minutes	This interviewee was chosen to give an account of attitudes towards COC08 from within the city's 'traditional' cultural community.
Kevin MacManus	Director of Merseyside ACME an organisation at the forefront of promoting arts led social regeneration.	Liverpool/80 minutes	Merseyside ACME were cited in the social regeneration literature and advised Liverpool in the writing of its COC08 bid.
Interviewee 8	A Community Arts activist in Liverpool	Liverpool/90 minutes	This interview was chosen to assess the reaction to COC08 developments within the community arts sector. This interviewee requested anonymity.

Interviewee 9	Head of a regeneration body within the city	Liverpool/45 minutes	This interviewee was chosen for a perspective on the relationship between culture and regeneration. He stated that at the start of the interview that he preferred his views to be anonymised.
Interviewee 10	Director of a Community Arts project in Liverpool.	Liverpool/70 minutes	This interviewee was chosen to provide a community arts perspective on COC08 and because his/her organisation had applied for a grant from the Culture Company (this application was subsequently declined). Because this organisation had applied for a grant this interviewee wished to remain anonymous.
Tony Parrish	Pseudonym given to a 'blogger' who described himself as having and showed himself to have insight into Liverpool city council.	Contact was kept both by e-mail and one lengthy telephone interview.	This interview emerged both from the controversy over an anonymous internet 'blog' in the city and from a recommendation by a key interviewee. This interviewee requested anonymity though he has held a key role in Liverpool City Council.
Liam Fogarty	Head of the Campaign Organisation 'A Mayor for Liverpool'	Liverpool/60 minutes	This interviewee was chosen for his local knowledge in Liverpool's civic structures.
Joe Kenny	Spokesperson for the Quiggins store	Liverpool/30 minutes	This interviewee was earmarked to provide an insight into the debate over the compulsory purchase of the Quiggins alternative retail store in the city.

