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European Capitals Of Culture And Everyday Cultural Diversity: A Comparison of Liverpool (UK) and Marseilles (France)

Claire Bullen

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EUROPEAN
CULTURAL
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European Capitals Of Culture And Everyday Cultural Diversity:

A Comparison of Liverpool (UK)
and Marseilles (France)

Claire Bullen



European Cultural Foundation

CULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH AWARD 2010

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Foreword

Ten years ago, in 2003, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) and the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (RJ) decided to set-up the Cultural Policy Research Award (CPRA). The initiative was launched in 2004 with the aim to encourage applied comparative research in the cultural policy area in Europe by supporting a younger generation of cultural policy scholars. The CPRA award and competition is based on the submission of a research proposal that is assessed by an international jury of cultural policy experts. At the occasion of the annual Young Cultural Policy Researchers Forum, the six finalists of the competition present their research project to the jury. The winner is awarded a grant of €10,000 to accomplish the research project within one year. The annual CPRA competition and the Forum are developed in partnership with and managed by ENCATC (European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres).

Claire Bullen's *EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE AND EVERYDAY CULTURAL DIVERSITY: A COMPARISON OF LIVERPOOL (UK) AND MARSEILLES (FRANCE)* - is the seventh accomplished CPRA research, and the first to be released in the framework of the CPRA's 10th anniversary.

Claire Bullen is a PhD candidate at the Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures (RICC) at the University of Manchester, UK. Her research proposal was selected by the international jury in 2010 due to its highly relevant topic and methodology. Thanks to the award Claire was able to carry out very interesting ethnographic field research in both cities. She spent several months in urban areas of Marseilles and Liverpool collaborating

closely with local arts organisations, community groups and individuals, using this experience to provide insight into an important yet often overshadowed aspect of European Capitals of Culture: the impact on and the involvement of diverse communities in cities' cultural lives. Through a multilayered comparative analysis she reveals realities, gains and missed opportunities of Liverpool and Marseilles Cultural Capitals processes and events. This publication presents not only Claire's research process and findings but takes the reader on an exciting journey.

We wish to thank Claire Bullen for her original and insightful contribution to European cultural policy research. We trust that her analysis and recommendations will nurture constructively the debate on European Capitals of Culture. We also sincerely thank the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and ENCATC for their longstanding partnership in this initiative.

Isabelle Schwarz

*Head of Programmes and Advocacy, European Cultural Foundation,
January 2013*

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It has been a privilege to have spent the last two years carrying out research in Liverpool and Marseilles within the framework of this project. I haven't been able to do justice here to everything that I have learnt and experienced, nor can I mention everybody who has been instrumental in my being able to write this. However, I would like to take this occasion to acknowledge those who opened up their rooms, houses and homes to me, introduced me to family and friends, and guided me around and beyond their city.

I would also like to express my gratitude towards the many organisations that offered me an 'insider's perspective' to the workings of cultural association. In particular, I would like to thank, in Marseilles: *T.Public*, *association d'idées* and Matthieu Bouchain for sharing his razor-sharp analysis of local and global issues, his creativity and wit; *Les Pas Perdus* for a rewarding, on-going collaboration full of rich discussions and friendship, and all the volunteers and workers of the *CLCV*. In Liverpool I would like to acknowledge the warm welcome and support of *Black-E*, *Asylum Link Merseyside* and Oli Thomas from *Making Faces United CIC*. Thanks also to Father Fitzgerald, and the "Sunday lunch team". Considerable thanks are due to all those who gave up their time to be interviewed.

Of course, this research would never have been possible without the generous financial support from the *European Cultural Foundation*(ECF) and the *Riksbankens Jubileumfond* and I thank them, and the support of *ENCATC* in providing this chance, and through the *Young Cultural Policy Researchers Forum*, for offering me a

space to discuss and observe the ways in which cultural policy is currently being conceptualised and debated across the European continent. I would particularly like to thank Tsveta Andreeva at the ECF for her efficient and friendly support.

I also acknowledge the generous support of UACES (University Association for Contemporary European Studies) for awarding me with a travel scholarship to carry out three months' ethnographic fieldwork within the association Marseilles-Provence 2013 between February and May 2013. This opportunity was made possible by Isabelle Coustet, formerly Evaluation & European funding Manager at *Marseille-Provence 2013* (now at the European Parliament), who offered me the rare opportunity to be an intern within MP2013. Her good humour, intellectual generosity and patience at guiding me through very some confusing local, regional and European politics made the experience very interesting and also very enjoyable.

I have been lucky enough to participate in a number of different research groups. The *Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures* has been a wonderfully supportive environment in which to explore questions of culture and cosmopolitanism. I also have benefited from a fantastic supervision team being guided by Nina Glick Schiller, Sarah Green and Alan Harding at the University of Manchester. I've benefited from being involved in the "City Scalers" team at the University of Vienna. In France, I had many rewarding intellectual sessions at the *Centre Norbert Elias*, the regional seat of the *École des hautes études de sciences sociales* at *Vieille-Charité* in Marseilles and with the *Institut d'ethnologie méditerranéenne, européenne et comparative* at the *Maison Méditerranéenne des Science de l'Homme* in Aix-en-Provence. The monthly Saturday morning sessions and the working group that developed out of it with

citizens, artists, activists and academics at *Pensons le matin* continues to enrich my thinking.

It has been a pleasure to have my work edited by Diane Dodd, who has helped clarify my thinking, tighten up sentences and straighten out grammar. Of course, any omissions or mistakes remain my own.

Executive summary

The following report investigates how narratives about cultural policies within and across European member states are put into practice in particular European cities, and how these circulating dynamics might influence everyday social relations in and across urban neighbourhoods. To do so, it takes two European Capitals of Culture, Liverpool and Marseilles, as a starting point from which to explore how 'culture' is differently entangled with regeneration, arts and social relations.

The report presents an overview of cultural policy and regeneration in the two cities. But it should not be read as a linear description of what has gone on in Liverpool and Marseilles. It contains no concrete definition of what 'culture', 'cultural policy' or 'cultural-led regeneration' really is or does in these two different cities. Rather, it aims to depict some of the mess and perplexity involved in this policy field.

It starts with some historical context, then considers urban regeneration, from the point of view of arts and cultural actors and those 'on the ground', based on fieldwork in neighbourhoods in Liverpool and Marseilles. The aim is to better appreciate how

culture is understood, when it is 'anthropologised', when it is performed and 'aestheticised', and how these affect people's participation. The points of comparison used are the different ways in which culture and cultural policy are defined and understood by the various actors involved. It takes into account different stages of the policy process, the funding streams and other resources accessed to complement them, and the divergent ways in which these link to the Capital of Culture programme.

To do this it draws on interviews and field notes with cultural and political elites, business leaders, artists and arts administrators and local residents involved in city-making to offer specific examples of how policies are implemented in time and place.

In the conclusions, some of the similarities and differences are highlighted between the two culturally rich and unconventional cities. And, contends that investment in cultural activities or the cultural economy cannot, on its own, be imagined as the answer to today's growing social, economic and cultural inequalities.

Further, linking to a number of other research projects, urban decision makers are urged to become clearer, more flexible and more realistic about what they wish to achieve with cultural-led regeneration.

Clearer, because if the aim is really about improving the lives of those people in cities who are displaced from mainstream economic, social and cultural networks, the current model of top-down decision-making (hoping for some kind of 'trickle-down' effect) is not working.

More flexible, because in defining populations, identities and cultures, too often, cultural identities are created to better able elites to manage populations or to respond to particular policy directions. It is important that the every changing understandings of culture and identity of 'ordinary people' are included in cultural and urban regeneration policy. In this way, it will be possible to gain more nuanced understandings of the norms and values influencing social relations in urban neighbourhoods.

More realistic, because city leaders need to provide more credible expectations about what a population and other actors in cities can hope to gain from a capital of culture programme, and keep in mind that the European Capital of Culture is just one, and quite a small one at that, intervention in larger processes of urban transformation.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACIP – Arts and Cultural Investment Programme

ACSE - *Agence National pour la Cohésion Sociale et l'Égalité des chances*(National agency for social cohesion and equal opportunities)

AFLAM – *Association pour la diffusion des cinémas arabes* (Association for the distribution of Arabic cinema)

ANRU - *Agence National de Rénovation Urbaine* (National agency for urban renovation)

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

CLCV – Association nationale de défense des consommateurs et usagers (Literally ‘*Consommation, logement et cadre de vie*’-a consumer rights organisation)

CoOL – Cultural Organisations of Liverpool

DRAC – *Direction Régional des Affaires Culturelles* (Regional Department for Cultural Affairs)

EPAEM - Euro-Mediterranean Urban Development Agency

ECF – European Cultural Foundation

ENCATC - European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centers

EU – European Union

GIP – *Groupement d'Intérêt public* (public interest groups)

ICoCO – Institute of Community Cohesion

LAA – Local Arts Agreements

LARC – Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium

NML – National Museums Liverpool

SMAC – Small and Medium Arts Collective

UACES - University Association for Contemporary European Studies

UK – United Kingdom

1 Introduction

The city of Liverpool in the north west of the United Kingdom was one of two cities designated as European Capital of Culture in 2008. In 2013, Marseilles on the south east coast of France holds this title, in partnership with a number of surrounding urban and rural towns and cities. Urban decision-makers in these two European cities over 1000 kilometres apart, like the 40 other successful cities and approximately 10 times that number of cities who have bid for the title, clearly felt that the European Capital of Culture programme, now in its 27th year, was a desirable accolade for their city.

Often heralded as one of the most ‘successful’ cultural policies of the European Union it is no doubt the European cultural policy initiative with the most public recognition, in a policy field in which the EU has only limited competency.¹

At its inception the aim of the European Capital of Culture (or City of Culture as it was then) was to develop some ‘cultural capital’ or give a ‘human face’ to the European Union, a union that was seen as principally as an economic market.² The project was couched as

¹ European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc736_en.htm accessed February 2013.

² Contribution of Ann Branch, Head of the Culture Programme and Actions Unit, European Commission (DG Education and Culture) during conference organised by the regional representation of the European Commission in Marseilles, 2 May 2012 <http://www.mp2013.fr/2012/05/02/regards-croises-des-capitales-europeennes-de-la-culture/> accessed February 2013.

being a means to both celebrate the 'diversity of European cultures', predominately thought of in national or regional terms, and to increase understanding between 'Europeans'.³Over the years these aims have been expanded and 'urbanised' by actors involved in the various cities that have bid for the title. The European Capital of Culture title is now commonly presented as a way for cities to achieve a range of economic and social goals.⁴Whether and how well this can be done is of course the subject of contention.

The emergence of this initiative can be seen as reflecting what has been proclaimed as the 'cultural turn' within urban policies in the European Union and beyond (Helie 2009). It is a time when within Europe there is a perception that existing policy paradigms are facing a series of 'crises' - economic, social and cultural. Equally questions of identity, again economic, social and cultural, are being raised at the local, national and European level, and it would seem urban decision makers consider culture as one of the few remaining sectors over which they have control (ibid.: 301); or one in which at least they can make an impact.

So, notwithstanding the differences between cultural policies from one country to another, similarly extensive claims are being made about the effectiveness of 'culture' at tackling a whole gamut of

³ Decision 1419/1999/EC, of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc740_en.pdf accessed February 2013.

⁴ This point is made in numerous studies, but the report by Palmer/Rae Associates in 2004 gives the most comprehensive overview in the aims and objectives of different capitals between 1985 and 2004.

problems. Culture is held up as a ‘driver’ (of *what* is not always clarified), as being able to stimulate stagnant economies, provide the means to manage social relations, re-brand, and reposition the city locally and internationally, improve local governance, develop territorial cohesion as well as address exclusion and poverty (Zukin 1995). Apparently then, it is a very powerful tool...

1.1 Project aims

The goal of this research has been to explore how narratives about cultural policies within and across European member states are put into practice in particular European cities, and how these circulating dynamics might influence everyday social relations in and across urban neighbourhoods. It does this by comparing the way in which cultural policies and urban transformations are talked about and experienced in Liverpool and Marseilles, two cities selected to be European cultural capitals.

The growing prevalence of policy discourse about ‘culture’ has been matched by a similar growth in the publication of articles, conferences, research reports, impact assessments and evaluations about cultural policy. Yet despite the fact that this growing body of research has improved our understanding about the different ways in which ‘culture’ is involved in urban and regional planning (e.g. Bassett, Smith et al. 2005; Markusen 2008) or can achieve certain policy objectives, there remains a real vagueness about what it is, what it is supposed to *do* and what it *actually does*, both within and between different cities within and across different nation states.

One of the problems with analyses of cultural policy is that there is no uniformity in methodology used by cultural policy researchers. Much of the policy based research takes a normative

standpoint, meaning that only the positive social and economic effects of culture are described, as research is used to justify policy and militate for increases in funding of arts and culture (cf. EP 2006; Saez 2012). This is partly to do with the way in which the research is commissioned or financed. Funding and time constraints have created a tendency for research with an economic and city centre focus (Evans and Shaw 2004). Most studies still tend to ignore the social impact of cultural policies and the reception of local people. The links between growing inequalities and new forms of cultural intervention are still under explored, as is the way in which policies try and change social relations (Langen and Garcia 2009).

- This study draws on this literature and two years' ethnographic fieldwork in the two cities, during which an enormous quantity of data was amassed including: field notes, interview transcriptions, city marketing literature, festival posters, rich memories, informal conversations, various social relations including professional ties, academic contacts and friendships. It does this to shed light upon the following questions:
- What are the local understandings of culture and cultural policy, what are the variations, what are the similarities, and how do these influence the ways in which people experiences Liverpool and Marseilles?
- Do any observed variations differentially affect opportunities for people to participate in city structures?
- Is there a discrepancy in the perceived influence of the European Capital of Cultural programme on different forms of cultural life and cultural policies in cities?
- Can the variations in the two cities help us better theorise social relations and everyday creativity in cities, and the ways

in which people interact with urban institutions and cultural policy?

The search also explores the norms and values underlying these concepts, such as the assertion that: 'culture' or 'diversity' is good and when and how this might be the case and, importantly, for whom.

1.2 Report structure

The report begins by establishing the terms of the research framework, defending the choice of a comparative analysis between two cities and defining key concepts. This is a little theoretical, but clarifies some of the terms used to ensure comparability, something that is essential given the multifaceted nature of cities and cultural policy. Some historical background is also given enabling us to position Liverpool and Marseilles comparatively.

The middle section, and the bulk of the report, is dedicated to the presentation of the research findings. This section includes an analysis of the ways in which culture has been historically incorporated into urban policymaking and regeneration in each city. It also explores the role of and the way in which certain artists and cultural operators have been perceived and incorporated in and across different urban spaces. In the part of this section the study chronicles some of the ways in which culture, identity and social relations were understood and experienced by a range of people living in neighbourhoods targeted by urban and cultural policies.

The conclusion draws on the many insights and experiences gathered during these last two years. It underlines the need to pay

attention to the specific challenges of different locations for policy and academic debates about the role that these policies play in the everyday life of cities. In this way cultural policy research can help us better understand how individuals and organisations in cities interact, oppose and reshape urban cultural policies. It argues that by taking the time to examine situated examples can help us to better appreciate the complexity and politics of cultural policy debates. It pleads for an urban cultural policy framework that is both more inclusive and more flexible, and thus better able to reflect the richness of cultural ways of being within everyday city life.

2 Setting out the research framework

2.1 Why cities? Exploring the new urban turn in policy making

At one period in European policy making cities were viewed as the problem rather than the solution. At that time economic policy focused on the regional level. Now cities are seen as drivers of the global economy, and the sites where issues such as social cohesion can be addressed (Cochrane 2011). Concurrently, and ironically, in the wake of the shifts in the global political economy since the 1970s, direct funding for cities from central governments is being reduced (Harvey 1989; Harvey 2005). Urban decision makers are increasingly forced to look beyond the central state for investment, resulting in the increased competition between cities for public and private resources and a greater prevalence of city marketing strategies (cf. Jones et Ward 2002: 275; Harvey 1989; Wood 1996; Brenner 1999).

The policy focus on 'attractivity' has meant that crime control, transport, arts facilities and developing a tourist 'offer' have moved up urban agendas in order to attract the 'right sort' of people (John and Cole 1998). Such policies affect the ways that populations and territories are defined and managed. It shifts and changes the ways in which social relations and everyday lives are experienced.

Equally, whilst defining and developing urban policy was traditionally deemed the jurisdiction of central governments, the

picture has becoming increasingly complicated. City leaders are increasingly looking beyond the national framework to borrow policy ideas, and copy examples of 'best-practice' as they try and position themselves within a global imaginary of icon cases such as Bilbao, Baltimore or Barcelona (McCann, Ward et al. 2011). At the same time, national governments are both delegating urban governance to new structures (such as public-private partnerships, third sector organisations, and consultancy firms) and devolving new powers to the urban or local level. Supranational bodies such as the European Union and the Council of Europe have also grown in influence in urban affairs. Despite having no specific competencies in the area the EU uses a range of 'soft power' instruments to intervene at the city-level, such as through the production of white papers, financing inter-urban networks and funding research (Cochrane *ibid.*).

Studying multi-level policies in cities provides us with a way to explore the ways in which different policy agendas 'come to ground' and the ways in which understandings of local, national and transnational policy frameworks are conceptualised and experienced in daily lives (Mitchell 1993: 268; Smith 2000). The European Capital of Culture programme is a fine example of such a policy.

2.2 Why culture in cities? The cultural 'turn' in urban policy

And, as mentioned above, 'culture' has become increasingly important in policy terms across Europe as a means to address economic and social urban policy 'problems.' Local authorities and urban decision makers are increasingly signing up to what has been termed 'culture-led regeneration,' where particular cultural interventions are frequently referred to as the site and the sign of regeneration (Evans and Shaw 2004: 5).

Cities are a useful place to begin looking at local interpretations of 'cultural' policy as local municipalities have considerable scope to be creative with local cultural policy (Markusen 2008). Cities have the powers to designate an area of land as a 'creative quarter', set up funding streams to support arts and community projects and commission a marketing campaign to promote a particular aspect of cultural production or social relations.

2.3 Why compare?

The premise of this research is that a) urban and cultural policies, discourses and urban practices affect the ways in which people are seen within cities and b) the specificities of particular locations influence the opportunities of particular groups and individuals to participate in city structures. What we mean by 'specificities' here includes the distinctive norms, attitudes, behaviours and narratives that circulate in a place, as well as the physical infrastructure, the particular local economies, the arts institutions and so forth. It is also held that both these discourses and structures change over time. Yet, if this is the case, is it really possible to compare cultural policies in two cities in two distinctive European member states with diverse political, economic, cultural and institutional contexts?

The first thing to state is that when telling people about the research in Liverpool and Marseilles, people would automatically start making comparison between the two cities. Linkages, similarities or differences would be drawn. For example, people would mention that they knew the same shipping containers passed through the respective ports, that they had seen the same shops in both places but had observed different practices of shopping when they had visited. During the fieldwork, a range of people, football fans, technocrats, cultural consultants and the

son of a sailor who had visited, lived or worked in both cities were interviewed formally and informally. A friend in Liverpool had an uncle who lived in Marseilles and he introduced some local Provençal cultural groups. Some people had been involved in European cultural and artistic projects that deliberately linked the two cities (see for example: Davies 2008).

Yet within the mushrooming body of research looking at culture-led urban regeneration the majority of research projects are based on single-city case studies. Whilst single city case studies can be very rich in descriptive detail, often too much importance is placed on the particularities of local places. As a result it is difficult to make links between local developments and what is happening in the wider political economy (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999; Markusen 2008).

So in comparing Liverpool and Marseilles the aim is not to develop one more case study. Rather, a comparative perspective enables us to observe how different policy agendas are implemented and put into operation in different localities (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999) and the extent to which these processes vary from one instance to the other in different cities (McFarlane 2010). The actual 'agents' (in this case, cultural and political elites, business leaders, artists and arts administrators, local residents) involved in the processes are examined, providing specific examples about the ways in which policies are understood, bureaucratic processes are specific to particular locations, and social relations are experienced. This is in order to know how culture is understood, when it is 'anthropologised', when it is performed and 'aestheticised', and what similarities and differences there are between Liverpool and Marseilles. It thus helps in the construction of theories about these wider processes of cultural-led regeneration and urban restructuring.

2.4 Clarifying some comparative concepts

But, how is it possible to compare these cities if the terms and concepts used in both contexts are shifting all the time?

We need to be clear that this is not intended to be a ‘controlled’ experiment that considers the comparison between similar, homogenous ‘units’ of comparison with the ‘independent variable’ being the nation state. Instead the goal is to explore the points of comparisons and points of contrast, but also the ‘relationalities’ that emerge in and across the field-sites (McFarlane 2010; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2011).

Nonetheless, in order to justify that the comparison is ‘scientifically’ sound, that is, putting these two cities into a comparative framework is not a spurious exercise, we need to ensure that we know what we are comparing. It is also important to use a common language that works in both places but that does not import and impose conceptual terms from one site, and one national context, to the next (Glick Schiller 2012). This is addressed in the next section where a number of key concepts used throughout the document are defined, giving us the vocabulary to compare and contrast processes of cultural and urban policies and practices in the two distinct cities.

2.4.1 Clarifying concepts 1: Cities and city scale

We need to begin with a question that might seem self-evident: what do we mean by ‘cities’? Most of us have an immediate and instinctive understanding of what city is. For example, it could be to do with the density of buildings, the concentration of population, or the particular cultural and economic activities that take place. If we mention a particular city’s name, at that particular moment it is likely that this will conjure up certain images, smells,

associations of what that particular city is like and maybe some common characteristics of the people who inhabit that city. This might be influenced by a visit, a tourist brochure, films, television programmes or stories from friends or family.

Dictionary definitions might define cities as territorially based administrative unit with various powers. Yet, this 'common-sense' understanding of what we mean by cities is complicated straightaway in a French/British comparison. Anglophone speakers differentiate between 'city' and 'town', whereas in French, one word, 'ville' is used for both. In addition, central governments are constantly changing territorially boundaries and the administrative functions of cities. For example, they might grant a city new powers, turning it into the capital of a region or a metropolis, or take away competencies through the creation of a development agency charged to develop local urban regeneration. All this means that we need to look at how the term is used *in situ*.

Of course, cities are not internally uniform. Spaces of differences are constructed, or 'zoned' within them, both formally and informally. This might happen through the designation of an area to be an 'enterprise zone' with special fiscal breaks to encourage new start-ups; the drawing geographical boundaries around a regeneration project; or through the construction and allocation of social housing. Access to a sea view or the proximity of rented accommodation to a university or a hospital might influence rent-prices. Such land uses change over time and affects what urban spaces and places mean to different people. Understandings and access to the city are also affected by such variables as ethnicity, class, gender and access to work and services (Smith 1992: 67). All these reflect and affect possibilities to participate in city life.

So, people's idea and experience of what Liverpool or Marseilles is and *does* will vary depending on the individual concerned. In this project, therefore, the 'city' is not taken as an autonomous, unchanging site in which the research happens. How the city is perceived, where people feel they are included, where they can go, is also an object of analysis.

But what does that mean for our comparative analysis? If social understandings of cities are in a constant state of flux how can we decide that we are looking at two cities that are meaningful to compare? This is where the metaphor of city positioning within a scalar hierarchy is useful.

The notion of 'scale', something that has been developed in urban theory to compare the power and influence that different cities exert within different institutional frameworks (Wedel and Feldman 2005; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009). It works on the basis that all cities have social, economic, historic and cultural links that extend beyond their administrative boundaries. That is to say, to different degrees every city is 'global', yet the quantity and quality of transnational links differ. The connections of a capital city are likely to be qualitatively and quantitatively distinctive from those of a provincial capital. Consequently, urban actors in different cities have different economic, cultural and social resources upon which they can draw. From this we can infer that cities positioned similarly on an interurban scale might have access to similar resources.

From this perspective, and as we will show in more detail below, it can be argued that Liverpool and Marseilles are two cities that are similarly positioned within both national and international hierarch of cities and in which circulate comparable discourses about how to upscale in various international fields of power.

2.4.2 Clarifying concepts 2: Culture policy and the European Capital of Culture

Trying to clarify what we mean by cultural policy is notoriously problematic. Cultural policy is one of those slippery, notoriously-difficult-to-pin-down terms (Bassett, Smith et al. 2005; Ahearne 2009). It is variously used in relation to the arts sector, to the cultural industries and cultural economy, to the notion of culture as the way of life, to national, ethnic or religious diversity, or linked to regeneration policy. In each of these examples the term will suggest disparate ideas to different actors depending on where or when they consider it. For example, the ways in which cultural policy or policies are talked about by both official, non-official, public sector, third sector and private sector individuals and organisations in London, Paris, Bath, Avignon, Liverpool and Marseilles will be influenced by, and influence, the disparate, competing and conflicting norms, objectives, behaviour and resources of the different actors involved.

Given the chameleon-like quality of the concept some analysts prefer to assign it a tight working definition, usually concentrating on what Ahearne (*ibid.*) calls 'explicit cultural policies,' for example those that relate to the arts sector or those linked with what has been called 'cultural planning' (O'Brien 2011). For this paper, what Bassett, Smith et al. (*ibid.*) call the 'elasticity' of the concept is understood. Instead of trying to pin down one particular meaning we look at how culture and cultural policy is defined and deployed in policy discourse and in everyday interactions at different times and in different spaces in the two cities. The concern is how the terms 'culture' and 'cultural policy' might transmit different understandings of institutions, communities and identity, and how seeing how the terms are used in context might help us to understand norms and beliefs of the actor who uses or performs it (Mertz 2007).

The European Capital of Culture is used as a starting point from where to consider how 'culture' is entangled with understandings of regeneration, arts and social relations in the city. The points of comparison will be the different ways in which these are defined, understood, and the actors involved at different stages of the policy process, the funding streams and other resources accessed to complement them, and the divergent ways in which these link to the Capital of Culture programme.

2.4.3 Clarifying concepts 3: Identity, social relations and intercultural dialogue

The interest in the relationship between social relations and urban cultural policy emerged during fieldwork in an urban regeneration agency in Liverpool between 2004 and 2008. During this period, it was possible to see first-hand the way in which individuals and groups were perceived and how and where they lived affected their possibilities to participate in different networks, projects and processes. This research explores how particular localities *matter* in the ways in which social relations between different actors (individuals and institutions) in and across European cities are.

The conceptual starting point is that individual and group identities are constructed in social interactions, and that social identities shift and change over time and space. The second principle is that certain actors have a greater power to *name* individuals and groups than others (Bridge and Watson 2000). Whether you are considered a woman, French, Black, an immigrant, a refugee, disabled, a teacher and/or an artist will therefore depend on where you are. This affects everyday social relations. As Scott (1998: 83) notes, those classifications invented by officials 'can end up by becoming categories that organize people's daily experience precisely because they are embedded in state-created institutions that structure that experience.'

To illustrate this, we can imagine that in a locality in which there is an official policy to celebrate multiculturalism or cultural diversity there might be a higher instance of formation of ethnic-minority associations and, perhaps, a feeling of alienation from people who do not wish to identify as such. Such a policy could change who was identified as a *producers* of 'cultural' activity. Other people or groups might be identified as threatening a certain local cultural identity; some individuals or groups as needing to be inducted into particular certain cultural practices to fit into a certain model of social relations. It could also mean that certain parts of the city are seen as more 'cultural' than others.

The European Capital of Culture initiative is of interest in this regard as one of its three objectives is 'to foster intercultural dialogue. Accordingly, we see questions of identity and cultural difference feature in both Marseilles and Liverpool's bid documents. For example in Liverpool's bid they talk about the programme being "about economic, social and cultural reform in re-shaping the city, its *communities*, its urban governance and the inter-action of the city within the region." (LCC 2003: 301, emphasis added).

But how are terms such as 'intercultural dialogue' and 'cultural diversity' interpreted and translated in these two cities? Are social relations and identities differently imagined, and does that affect the ability of groups and individuals to participate? These questions get to the heart of the politics of space and culture, ethnicity and identity across different levels of governance (local through to European), and will be further explored below.

2.5 Why Liverpool and Marseilles? Similar yet different...

In the previous section, the conceptual framework that we will use to compare variations in particular places was set out. However, the case for this particular comparison needs to be made. What do we hope to learn by choosing these two cities, and not two others? Are they similar enough to be compared, and what might they reveal about the intersection of multilevel policies (global, national, regional, local) and urban social relations?

Clearly there are a wealth of quantitative and qualitative differences between Liverpool and Marseilles. Not the least of these is the fact that they reside in different European member states and their respective sizes and populations. With a population of over 800,000 residents, Marseilles is nearly twice the size of Liverpool. Further, both cities are perceived as being distinct or even 'exceptional', particularly when seen from a nation-state perspective (Belchem 2000; Biass and Fabiani 2011). Nevertheless there are a number of discourses and frames that make this pertinent, besides of course the obvious point that the two cities have been chosen to be European Capitals of Culture.

First, Liverpool and Marseilles share histories of being a 'gateway' to the colonies. This meant that up until the early 20th century they were positioned at the top of an international hierarchy of cities (Sewell 1985: 2). Yet for diverse reasons (some similar, some different) neither city was able to adapt well to economic and political changes in the mid. to late twentieth century. They are now often used as signifiers of massive economic 'post-industrial' decline and there is a sense in both that they have been let down and left out of the restructured global political economy. Nonetheless, they still have a certain clout and reputation that would place them above a number of provincial French or British cities in terms of historic, geographic, material and immaterial

international connections.

Both Liverpool and Marseilles are notorious in their respective nation-states for having turbulent relationships with central government. Notwithstanding this, London and Paris remain significant players within their local economic development. Since the 1990s the European Union played a greater role through its regional policy. In both, new organisational forms have been encouraged and funded by local, regional, national and transnational bodies as a way to make the region and the cities more internationally competitive.

Now signed up to cultural-led regeneration scene the two cities are 'untraditional' (in the sense of the Western artist and cultural canon that is) cultural cities. Consequently, both cities drew upon their historic and contemporary presence of migrants to justify themselves as sites of cosmopolitan cultural diversity and lauded the benefits of the presence of diverse cultures within their Capital of Culture bids. Yet, the notion of a cosmopolitan city is a contested one and its prominence in narratives about the cities oscillates over time and in space. During different periods both, Liverpool and Marseilles, have been associated with inter-ethnic conflict. In both, immigration and the presence of people of different backgrounds has been linked to social problems (Nassy Brown 2005; Ingram 2009). At other moments they are imagined as having better inter-ethnic relations than other cities in France or the UK (Belchem 2000; Williams 2005 ; Dickey 2012)

But what makes this comparison particularly interesting is that, despite the similarities within certain discourses and historical and economic trajectories, Liverpool and Marseilles are based in nation states with dissimilar frameworks for the management of social relations, different relationships between central and local

government, and distinct approaches to cultural policy.

2.6 Why France and the UK?

In an article entitled 'Distant neighbours', Bertossi (2007) evokes the differences in the French mode of governing social relations in response to the 2005 London bombings and the riots and violent clashes in suburbs with large share of immigrant population in France. Like most studies looking at social relations in Europe, the UK and France are depicted as polar opposites. The French republican 'philosophy of integration' is seen to run counter current to the UK multicultural model of 'social relations'.

Yet of course these policy positions changed over time. 'Top down' and 'bottom up' processes such as the ratification of the anti-discrimination legislation with the European Union Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 and an increase in the use of racial or ethnic categories in informal relations is changing the ways in which social relations are dealt with in France (Rinaudo 1999). Recent French government policy has focused on stemming immigration and the promotion of integration and French identity.⁵ The UK is associated with a multicultural model of social relations but recently there has been a growing questioning about whether multiculturalism contributes to alienation or integration. This has resulted in a shift towards a more general notion of community cohesion, integration of migrants, and the emerging notions of interculturalism and 'Britishness'.⁶

⁵ Intercultural Dialogue Country Sheets, France, <http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/intercultural-dialogue-country-sheets.php?aid=103> accessed September 2012.

⁶ Intercultural Dialogue Country Sheets, United Kingdom, <http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/intercultural-dialogue-country-sheets.php?aid=121> accessed September 2012.

Institutional frameworks for arts and cultural policies are also understood to differ greatly. The French cultural policy has long been highly centralised (Delvainquière 2010), in contrast to the British ‘arms’ length model’ of cultural policy and in the UK, policies for arts and culture have largely been peripheral to government (Griffiths, Bassett et al. 2003). UK cultural policy since 2007 is linked to creativity, urban regeneration and social inclusion. The promotion of cultural diversity in the UK is integrated into policy disseminating from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and reflected in all the arts councils of Great Britain.⁷ In French cultural policy, the concern is more obviously about an erosion of a unified national cultural identity with cultural policies framed by the appeal to Republican pact and national unity (Ingram 1998: 798).

The institutional framework for administering cities is also unlike, although again we do see a growing convergence over time. In France there is a much greater physical and policy presence of national and regional state actors in city policy than in the United Kingdom (John and Cole 1998). However, UK urban policy became more centralised through the increase in national regeneration frameworks and, the imposition of Local Area Agreements (LAAs). The LAAs are three-year agreements that set out the priorities for a local area, as agreed between central and local government. The LAAs were established under Tony Blair’s government and are seen by some to be based on the French model of *contrats urbain* (urban contracts between different state actors).

The aim here is to get beyond the stereotypical understandings of

⁷ Op. cit.

the differences between the French and UK states, assuming that there is a 'French' or 'British' way of doing things, something that has been critiqued as 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003; Beck and Sznaider 2010). This means not assuming that the approach to cultural policy, urban development and social relations will be uniform within nation states. Instead we look at how these different frameworks are interpreted by various urban actors who are working within particular constraints and drawing upon a range of other policy discourses and resources in specific urban localities.

3 Research methodology

As mentioned above, the bulk of research into cultural policy and urban regeneration is focused on city centre development, gentrification, city marketing, the impact on tourism and marketing, audience opinion and development and perhaps, more changes within the governance or relationships between political institutions (Langen and Garcia 2009).

Methodologies used in most cultural policy research are predominately quantitative or rely on one-off surveys or questionnaires. Research into social relations and cultural diversity is often very superficial and theoretical (op cit). Where ethnographic or in-depth qualitative studies are carried out they tend to be focused on an individual 'neighbourhood' based or event. This makes it difficult for findings to be compared and theories to be drawn.

This research does not set out to study 'local people' in 'local neighbourhoods', nor does it compare 'local' versus 'global', the 'ethnic minority' versus 'majority community' or the 'marginalised' versus 'mainstream'. Such categories exclude the ways in which people are part of the life blood of the city, move around, respond to critically evaluate and help shape urban policy, practice and place. A methodology was therefore needed to get beyond such simplistic codifications.

The principal methodological tools used for this research have been drawn from urban sociology and anthropology, and are most

notably *ethnographic* in nature. At one time ethnography was about going and living in a 'bounded' community in an 'exotic', far-away land where notes would be taken on the cultural structures and processes of the 'Other'. This research takes a different approach. The focus is not on a 'community' or group situated in a particular, geographically-delineated territory. Instead, it follows what has been called a 'multi-sited' approach that tries to follow discourses, metaphors and actors who are linked across space and time (Marcus 1995). This involves observing the processes that connect actors, organisations and institutions' social relationships in all their complexity (social, economic, cultural, virtual etc.) across multiple sites and different power domains as well as geographical locations.

As opposed to more quantitative methods, or survey work, ethnographic approaches allow close observation of the interrelation between institutions, discourses and practices – revealing complexities of actually existing social relations and enabling the researcher to access 'insider perspectives' (Glick Schiller 2003; Fairclough 2005; Grillo 2010). It offers a means to better explore the contradictions, tensions, translations and associations of people who live in the same 'worlds' and those who are considered to be 'worlds apart' (such as the 'policy-maker' or the 'resident'). It helps us better understand the 'personal'; that is how, when and where relationships are formed within space, what kind of relationships these are, and the structural framework in which these occur.

In both cities, the research began in places that would give access to the processes of/resistance to/negotiation of urban restructuring and cultural policies. I (the author) lived with people in

'neighbourhoods'⁸ that were close to the city centre and sites of urban regeneration, where the 'diverse' populations and 'working-class communities' celebrated in city branding exercises were based. The neighbourhoods were ones that were marginalised from city marketing narratives, and defined as 'défavorisé' or 'disadvantaged' in official jargon. They share disproportionate levels of unemployment and poverty. In both neighbourhoods publicly funded arts and cultural and social organisations were operating.

Though starting in the neighbourhood, I moved around the city as I carried out interviews, participant observation with a range of individuals and institutions. These methods were complemented by statistical survey data, secondary literature and by an analysis of a range of documents (marketing literature, evaluation reports, policy documents, funding bids etc.) to examine the "semiotic dimension of social events" (Fairclough 2005), on the grounds that an analysis of language and linguist metaphor is crucial to any study of culture (Hall 1992).

It is argued that by drawing on such an amalgam of methods and sources that we are better able to assess the ways in which local meanings are contextualised and the ways in which people

⁸ Please note that the terms 'neighbourhood' or 'places' are used to refer to a geographical area to avoid the formal administrative divisions of space such as 'quartier', 'arrondissement', or 'ward' or a post-code district. The aim in doing this is to get around the differences between administratively defined geographical places and the ways in which people understood where they lived their lives. When referring to the administrative structure of neighbourhood management brought in the UK under the New Labour government this will be referenced in the capitalised form as 'Neighbourhoods'.

perform their different subjectivities in relation to different discourses and different institutional layers (Nelson 1999).

Fieldwork in Marseilles

I formally entered the 'field' in Marseilles in September 2010 and lived with research participants until June 2011. I then returned to Marseilles in February 2012 to carry out a further three month's participant observation with the Capital of Culture organisation 'Marseilles Provence 2013'.

I lived with a research participant who was born in Tunisia of Italian parents and who had come to Marseilles when she was nine. She lived in social housing in Saint Mauront, one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse *quartiers* in Marseilles. I participated with her in a community choir that was being organised by a cultural association that had its base in the neighbourhood. This choir received cultural and social cohesion funding from local, national and European bodies and were involved in regional and European cultural operator networks. I shared in daily interactions with neighbours and family in the neighbourhood.

I observed, sometimes volunteered and was befriended by with another visual arts company, *Les Pas Perdus*, which rented office space in a former warehouse in St Mauront. They have subsequently commissioned me to carry out an evaluation of one of their participative arts projects in Marseilles. Two days a week I was a participant observer with a third arts company that was run from the house of the artistic director of *T.Public, association d'idées* in an impoverished city centre neighbourhood.

In parallel I carried out ethnographic observations with some Provençal cultural groups, and cultural and social events organised

in the neighbourhood and everyday interactions. I took notes on background events that effected how and what was said in different contexts. I was moving constantly between 'official' and 'ordinary' contexts, and private and public spheres.

In the second half of the Marseilles fieldwork I carried out 30 ethnographic interviews with cultural operators, people involved in cultural and urban policy, artists, local residents and people working for social associations within neighbourhoods. Interviews were structured thematically to cover questions around urban regeneration, cultural policy and social identity.

From February 2012 to May 2013 I carried 3 months participant observation as an intern with the association responsible for the running of Marseilles' capital of culture programme, Marseilles Provence 2013. Here I observed and participated in the putting in place of the evaluation framework for the programme. During my placement I attended various international and external meetings with different partners, read internal and marketing documents, and took part in formal and informal conversations members of Marseilles-Provence 2013.

Throughout the period I took notes about events that might affect local understandings, such as: national and local strikes; coverage of the 'Arab Spring'; national and local elections and political reforms; the 'crisis'; views on the restructuring of the city centre, and; the stepping down of the Director of MP2013, Bernard Latarjet.

Fieldwork in Liverpool

Liverpool is a field site that I 'knew' much better, having lived, studied and worked there from 2002. I was thus able to complement my fieldwork from August 2011 to February 2012

with notes taken during over three years' work for a Liverpool-based urban regeneration agency and from a two year period when I was involved in a range of cultural and socio-cultural organisations.

For the six months period of research I lived with a number of women from a number of different countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Pakistan, Tibet, Zimbabwe) who were claiming asylum in the United Kingdom. I found myself living there both because of my own networks with asylum seeker and refugee support agencies, but also because in the impoverished neighbourhood where I wanted to begin living, a spare room was a luxury that few could afford. We lived in accommodation paid for by a voluntary organisation which had rented space in a Catholic church. The church bordered the area in which I worked for the regeneration agency, and the priest and some of his parishioners had participated in some of the multicultural and anti-racist work I had helped to organise.

I attended a range of different organisations that participated in projects that were linked to the Capital of Culture programme and/or who were working in the city to celebrate diversity and multiculturalism, to promote community cohesion, engage 'marginalised' groups and to bring 'artists and communities together'. I spent approximately one day per week volunteering with *The Black-E*, an arts and community organisation based on the edge of the city centre. I attended staff meetings, assisted with funding bids, participated and observed the Black-E choir, staff games and cultural and artistic events either organised in-house or by external organisations.

As in Marseilles, approximately 30 interviews were held with a range of different actors involved in the cultural or urban life of

the city. Additional data relating the period of Liverpool's capital of culture bid is drawn both from interviews with actors involved in the city at the time, my own notes when I worked and lived in the city.

4 Situating 'European Capital of Culture' in Liverpool and Marseilles

4.1 Liverpool

Even for those who have not been to Liverpool, it is likely that the city's reputation and iconography will evoke some pictures in their mind's eye. After all, as was repeated a number of times in interviews with policy makers, Liverpool is a 'global brand'. No doubt 'The Beatles' and popular music, and Liverpool Football Club will figure somewhere in the evocations. Perhaps an image of grey imposing 20th century urban waterfront will feature there, accompanied by the echo of a strong local 'Scouse'⁹ accent. An impression that the city is poor, 'working-class' and, 'a long way' from London might figure. These were certainly some of the myths and images that people involved in developing Liverpool's Capital of Culture bid were working with, and trying to refashion.

Beginning with extracts from field-notes taken during a presentation by the General Manager of International Relations at

⁹ 'Scouse' is the name for the local dialect spoken in Liverpool and the local population can be referred to as Liverpudlians or by the more familiar term 'Scousers'. It is often associated with a 'working-class' or non-elite cultural identity.

'Culture Liverpool' February 2010, the goal of this section is to situate Liverpool's Capital of Culture bid in space and time, starting with the perspectives of the bid organisers and urban decision makers.

This particular presentation had been arranged by a lecturer from Manchester Metropolitan University, who was running a Masters course on European Cultural Policy. The representative from Cultural Liverpool¹⁰ had agreed to 'tell the story' of Liverpool's experience of the European Capital of Culture. This was to be followed by a tour with one of the city's urban planners of some of the 'cultural venues of the City, focusing especially on the 08 legacy'.¹¹ This intervention is useful at allowing us to see the central narratives used to frame Liverpool's social, cultural and spatial identities in the Capital of Culture bid. It is also a way in to explore the urban policy context in which the bid developed.

When we contrast this to Marseilles, it becomes evident how the inscription of 'culture' into municipal policy has been a relatively late arrival in Liverpool's urban policy bag of tricks. This had consequences for the ways in which cultural policy is understood and embedded in the city, and the norms and values that are invested in 'culture' by different actors.

¹⁰ Culture Liverpool is the cultural and international relations department of Liverpool City Council which replaced the Liverpool Culture Company, the association set up to manage Liverpool's bid for the Capital of Culture programme.

¹¹ Email correspondence with visit organiser from Manchester Metropolitan University, February 2010.

4.1.1 A city 'on the brink'

10 February 2010

I arrive in a Black taxi in front of the doors of Liverpool Town Hall. The building is located in Liverpool city centre about two hundreds metres up the hill from the river Mersey. It is on the edge of the new Liverpool One retail development and the newly designated 'Central Business District'. On the journey I had talked to the taxi driver, a white man, aged about 50 and former employee of Liverpool City Council. He tells me that he felt that the Capital of Culture year had been largely 'good for the city' but expressed disgust at the way it was run, talking about corrupt deals between the council and the sponsors, and budgets not being met.

Entering the impressive entrance hall I am met by the white, grey haired porter dressed up in grey coats and tails who directed me through the oak panelled corridors to the illustrious, red leather and polished wood Council Chambers where the students from the MA course and the city council representatives are.

The General Manager of Head of International Relations for the 'Culture Liverpool'¹² is a casually-suited, pin stripped-shirted, white man, and tells us (a group of approximately ¹² informally dressed students and their lecturer from across Europe, all white) that he is locally born, from Crosby, which for Liverpool is 'posh'. He does not have a strong Liverpool or 'Scouse' accent.

Before starting the slides he gives us an overview of the building we are in, and uses it to position what our speaker calls

¹² ????????

this formerly 'hugely important port city' in history, focusing on the period during 18th and 19th century when the city was at the apex of its international influence. He then describes how during the post war period, and particularly during the 1970s and 1980s the city was considered to be dying, or to have failed.

The talk involves a standard PowerPoint presentation, with bullet points set against photos of Liverpool city centre, fireworks, festivals, headlines cut from newspapers and art works. Whilst relying on a standardised presentation and using 'on-message' sound-bites ("the city went from big dig to big gig") he refers to the city in personalised and passionate terms. He tells us how he left the city because there were no jobs for graduate when the city was '**morally and politically bankrupt**' and, what is more, not at all 'business friendly'. He came back in the lead up to the Capital of Culture. Now, he tells us, the city has 'got its mojo back', referring to a headline from a national newspaper.

It is an account that presents urban regeneration initiatives and 'help from Europe' as having turned the city around. We hear that the European Capital of Culture has put Liverpool 'back on the map'. There was a sense of pride that Liverpool's Capital of Culture programme had gone well, that Liverpool is now been sought to provide advice to other cities and that 'Sir Bob Scott' who headed up the Liverpool bid went on to become the Head of the panel of jury members for the European Capital of Culture.

After questions from the students, and photographs, we are led up the red-carpeted stairs for coffee and biscuits in the grand ballroom and reception rooms before being taken around the city centre by the 'urban planner', dapper in a dark trench coat.

Our tour to see the cultural impacts of Liverpool 08 turns out to be focused on historic buildings from the period of Liverpool's apex, followed almost exclusively by a visit to the new, Liverpool One shopping centre.

Echoing what can be seen in the European Capital of Culture application booklet, during the morning we are presented with a narrative arc that describes Liverpool as a once 'great city' that suffered economic decline with the changes of the national and international economy in the post-War years, and during the 70s and 80s. It is a linear, simplified account that through the use of the framing of crisis and catastrophe (the city was 'failed', 'dying'), as well as normative moral framework in which trying alternative strategies are 'morally and political bankrupt'. The particular version of city centre development, (rendering the city 'business friendly) and cultural-led regeneration (where culture is the 'golden thread' of the regeneration) is presented as the only solution. Towards the end of the slideshow, 'communities' and 'cultural diversity' are referenced.

It is certainly true that Liverpool's economy suffered enormously with the shifts in the national and international economy in the twentieth century. The disintegration of the British Empire and changes in the global political economy (growth in trade with Europe, changes in transportation methods and relocations of industry etc.) meant that the city was, as one commentator put it, "in the wrong place, based on the wrong kind of economic activity with an outdated infrastructure and an under qualified labour force (Parkinson 1985: 9). The 1970s and 80s were particularly tough decades in the city's history when businesses were closing, downsizing or relocating. Reduction in public sector investment hit Liverpool particularly hard as it has an extremely high per cent

of public sector workers. The city lost nearly half its population during this period. Faced with growing unemployment and increases in demands on local services at a time when tax revenues were decreasing and reduced central government settlements, by the 1980s the municipality was staring financial ruin in the face.

The 'crisis' was epitomised and accentuated by what became known as the "Toxteth riots" in the summer of 1981. The riots took place in an area where some of the poorest people, particularly Liverpool's African, Caribbean and black Liverpudlian residents, lived. The riots were provoked by the stopping and searching of a black young person at a time of festering resentment about larger questions of racism in the city and growing poverty and unemployment. Although largely framed in national media as 'race riots', people from across the city took part in the arson and looting. Parkinson describes it as an occasion when the 'dispossessed of the inner city rose into a "poor people's revolt" against authority'(1985: 15).

The city was 'on the brink' of economic and social crises and there was a general sense that they had been abandoned by the national elites (Parkinson 1985). In the 1980s (1983-1987) a radical militant Labour administration (the Militant Tendency) took office in the city and refused to follow central government budget cuts. It is in this context of urban decline, civil unrest and bitter relations with central Conservative government that 'culture' emerged as a tool for urban regeneration in Liverpool.

4.1.2 Nascent cultural policy

Up until the late 1980s there was no 'official' cultural policy. During the period of the Militant Tendency administration, the

municipality took little interest in culture, having 'more difficult' things to deal with, focusing on housing, employment and welfare. Culture and the arts were seen as peripheral. There was a Department of Arts and Libraries but no cultural policy (Cohen 2007: 129). The direction of cultural activities was left to the major arts institutions, individual artists or non-for-profit associations and further education organisations in the city.

For observers of Liverpool¹³, a form of nascent 'cultural-led urban regeneration' was first identified in the central government's response to Liverpool's urban 'crises'. The 'cultural' part of this plan included an 'International Garden Festival' in 1984 in a disused urban area on the edge of Toxteth, the establishment of Urban Development Corporations and the redevelopment of the city centre waterfront. Largely commercial and property-driven, the plan included the relocation of the publicly-funded Tate art gallery and the Maritime Museum. Central government interventions also took the suite of public city-centre museums out of local government control, fearing that the Municipality might sell them off.

With change in local political power after the sacking of Militant Labour party and election of a more centrist, pragmatic Labour party towards the end of the 1980s, a new cohort of young policy makers started developing a local cultural policy looking outside of the city for ideas. The cultural experiment of the left-wing Greater London Council (1981-1986) was referred to as being influential.¹⁴ Here, under the helm of Ken Livingston, an approach

¹³ This emerged in interviews with Franco Bianchini, Beatriz Garcia and Ruth Melville.

¹⁴ Interview with Franco Bianchini, Consultant and Professor of Cultural Policy and Planning at Leeds Metropolitan University, 4 December 2011.

to cultural programming was developed that invested in what are now dubbed the 'cultural industries', that is the music and film industry, as well as developing a non-elitist and multicultural approach to funding the arts (Arnaud 2012).¹⁵ People involved in or observing policy making in Liverpool at that time noted the influence of the cultural industries model developed by Sheffield's Labour government's (Cohen *ibid.*), and the conferences and discussion surrounding Glasgow's preparation for their Capital of Culture year in 1990.¹⁶ External 'experts' were brought in to help the Council put their strategy in place that had been written by a number of influential 'experts' such as including Charles Landry, author of such books as 'The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators'(2000). Local policy development were also influenced by central government demands that urban regeneration policy be aimed less at welfare and more at initiatives that could generate economic growth (Cohen 2007).

In 1987 the municipality published their first arts and cultural strategy. It clearly sets out the role of political, cultural and economic role of the arts and its relation to economic development is clearly set out (LCC 1987, cited in Evans 2011: 5).

In the early 1990s Merseyside was assigned Objective One status by the European Union, because of the economic deprivation in the region. £1.25 billion of EU and UK central government money was allocated to Merseyside between 1994 and 1999 to encourage economic growth, with Liverpool being a major beneficiary. As Cohen points out (*ibid.* 133-134), European regional funds' played

¹⁵ This came out clearly in interviews with Bill Harpe, Director of the Black-E. and Franco Bianchini.

¹⁶ Interview with Franco Bianchini, *ibid.*

an important role in the development of local cultural policy. In the Objective One funding a culture, media and leisure budget line was included that explicitly made the link between these and economic development and competitiveness. Cohen also observes out that in the first round of bidding for this European money, the 'culture, media and leisure' funding stream was the only pot of money undersubscribed. She sees this as revealing the embryonic nature of the cultural sector in the city at that time.

This was to change in the next decade. European and national regeneration money funded many city-centre cultural institutions including Liverpool's principal public arts institutions (now known as the 'big 8') that dominate the city centre.¹⁷ Private theatres and the development of 'cultural industries' were also supported (Evans 2011). As with all European funding, it was a policy framework that favoured large organisations with experience of dealing with the public sector because of the bureaucracy involved (Cohen *ibid.*: 219). This new urban policy context and entrepreneurial approach to cultural-led regeneration by Liverpool City Council resulted in the creation of new cultural structures or events such as the Liverpool *International* Biennial, the first of which was held in 1988. Smaller arts organisations and a dense

¹⁷ The big 8 include: The Tate, the Bluecoat, FACT, Unity Theatre, Everyman and Playhouse Theatres, Liverpool Biennial, National Museums Liverpool. The latter, NML, which is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, pulled out because of differences in objectives (Interview with Director of National Museums Liverpool). Yet NML remains a significant player in Liverpool's arts and cultural scene, managing the majority of the key public arts and cultural institutions (including World Museum, the Walker Art Gallery, the National Conservation Centre, the International Slavery Museum, the Maritime Museum and the new Museum of Liverpool).

network of community associations continued to play an active role in the city but tend to be involved in festivals or one-off events or shows, or to develop cultural, social and economic activity in the neighbourhoods.

4.1.3 Going for European cultural capital

In 1998 the Liberal Democrats took office in Liverpool City Council, a year after Tony Blair's New Labour government had moved into in the seat of power in Westminster. Liverpool's Liberal Democrat administration was keen to change the city's status within the UK, wanting to lose the reputation as the awkward, whining Scouser.¹⁸ There was a perceived need to show central government and businesses that after their period of rebellion in the 1980s Liverpool was able to toe the line. It meant that local policies were developed that were 'almost more New Labour than New Labour' (Meegan 2004).

Down in London the New Labour administration was designing a new approach to urban policy, with a focus on high-quality design of city centres (DETR 1999), a reliance on urban master plans and greater importance given to private sector partners and the charitable sector. In Liverpool, Liverpool Vision, the first economic development agency in the country, was established in 1999, tasked with the city centre regeneration. The decision to bid to be European Capital of Culture took place at this time. It was seen as the ideal opportunity to change the face of the city. It also built on local expertise and practices in dealing with Europe, and local cultural and social understandings about how the city could get to the cash. In the next section we see more closely the way in

¹⁸ According to an interview with Liverpool Councillor Steve Mumby, this feeling still structures relations with the new local Labour administration and central government.

which Liverpool's policy context shaped the development of capital of culture bid and, thus, structured opportunities for different actors to take part.

4.1.4 Who decided what? The institutional framework for the bid

The Liverpool Culture Company was set up by the municipality to manage the bid. Whilst technically independent it was to all intents and purposes a (private) part of the city council, but with its own management board structure. It had an independent chairman, chief executive and board made up from the local institutions, regeneration agencies and universities, but the majority of staff were seconded from the City Council (O'Brien 2011).

Despite the 'cultural confidence' expressed by some of the City Council elected representatives and officers in the interviews, and through the glossy PowerPoint displays and presentations of the association 'Culture Liverpool' in the aftermath of 2008¹⁹ there was a general underlying belief in the city that the City Council's approach to cultural policy is far behind other UK cities (Glasgow, Newcastle and Sheffield were the most frequently cited).²⁰ Cultural policy is largely considered to lack a real sense of direction. This is made explicit in the following quote:

We have several versions of a cultural policy [or] a cultural strategy for the city, but if you really observe them, they seem very

¹⁹ Presentation by Head of International and Commercial Relations, Liverpool City Council, 10 February 2011.

²⁰ Interview with Franco Bianchini, op. cit.

*incoherent and very last minute...(there is) a very unclear sense of leadership in terms of who is driving (it) and for what reason they are using (it), or...what they mean by the term culture, and the way it could be used in the city.*²¹

The lack of internal know-how on the cultural front within the city council (an absence of a 'culture of culture') meant that there was a heavy reliance on outside 'expertise.' Of course, the fact that city politicians and technocrats looked outside the city boundaries for inspiration is not unique to Liverpool.

But a consequence was that it created the space for a number of actors to be involved in developing the project (Boland 2010). Indeed, one interviewee noted that there was a moment when 'everybody' in the north west of England involved in the arts and cultural sector claimed some involvement in writing the bid.²² What was meant by 'everybody' included the newly established Northwest Regional Development Agency and North West Cultural Consortium, Arts Council England, as well as experts from the academic community, representatives from key mainstream cultural institutions but perhaps particularly representatives of city-centre led urban regeneration (O'Brien *ibid.*).

Local consultation involved the establishment of two stakeholder groups, one for 'cultural diversity' stakeholders and one for regeneration (effectively, providers of public services, registered social landlords and redevelopment agencies). Additional 'public consultation' involved radio phone-ins, work in schools and

²¹ Interview with researcher involved in Liverpool Impacts08, October 2011.

²² Interview with a former member of the Arts Council, England and cultural consultant, 12 September 2011.

thematic arts projects in the neighbourhoods to ‘rally the troops’ and mobilise local opinion behind the bid.

The bidding process did generate new cultural policy networks, or forms of ‘policy coalitions’ across the city and the region, yet the foundations for these coalitions were flimsy. As is often the case in ‘policy by project’, all the emphasis was placed on winning and there was an absence of thought about how to put in place a structure after the bid was won (O’Brien 2011: 50).

As will be shown below, these policy and practices influenced what gets mixed up with culture, the way that the city and the people are represented, the implementation of the Capital of Culture programme and the ‘legacy’ of this *mega project* in this new ‘business friendly’ city. It meant that at the city leadership level there was little ownership about what the official understanding of the city and its citizens. It also meant that the narratives of what culture meant in the city were easily rewritten, particularly in the face of local friction, organisational complications and changes in local and national policy (Evans 2011).

4.1.5 World in One City: from race relations to celebrations of diversity

Whilst the main objective was urban regeneration, the ‘label on the tin’ of Liverpool’s Capital of Culture year was: ‘The World in One City’. Concepts such as cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism were adopted as the mark of distinction for Liverpool. Given that the percentage of people of migrant backgrounds and ethnic minorities is actually smaller than other cities in the UK, and that as Belchem (2000: 63) notes ‘Liverpool lacks a political culture and a historiographical tradition to incorporate its non-Celtic immigrants, the long-established presence of West Indians,

Africans and Chinese notwithstanding', this clearly was a strategic decision.

It is important to contextualise these tropes of cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism in the framework of bitter struggles for equality of people of African or Caribbean origin, present but marginalised in Liverpool for over four generations, and the stumbling development towards a local multicultural or equal opportunities policy by a historically 'institutionally racist administration' (Ben Tovim 1988).

First steps to develop a structure to represent the 'Black and racial minority' community and created race-relations outreach officers followed the so-called race riots of 1981. This led to at least the symbolic presence of multi-ethnic and religious groups within policy-making structures. The resultant framework for managing social relations, such as consultative bodies and funding for community and voluntary activities gave a certain symbolic visibility to certain ethnic, racial and faith groups, but were largely side-lined from Council decision making (Nassy Brown 2005).

The association of Liverpool with 'riots' and also the city's central role in the Atlantic slave trade was something that Liverpool's bid writers had to confront. At the same time they needed to respond to the criteria of the Capital of Culture guidelines to show that the choice of Liverpool would be in the interests of the European Union and the United Kingdom.

The bid document uses the city's history of migration and resultant cultural diversity as an indication of local acceptance of difference and as a plank of its international repositioning strategy. It is argued that:

Liverpool has learned the lessons of urban cohesion - sometimes from conflict and adversity - to emerge as a confluence of a myriad of cultures, which can now claim to lead by example, even on a world stage (Op. cit.)

We see a number of paradoxes within the bid. The links with the 'World' are developed by situating Liverpool geographically on what they call the 'fault lines of culture'²³ on the edge of Europe, America and Africa. Bid writers are clearly responding to the Capital of Culture directive that successful projects should "promote dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world" (Decision 1419/1999/EC). Yet there is little emphasis either in the bid or in the artistic programme on transnational links between people in the city and the rest of the world. Indeed, rather than Liverpool in the world, the signifier of diversity is attached to the identity of local population in the city. So we are told that the European Capital of Culture title and programme will 'build on the strengths of the city's cultural diversity and rich heritage'.

It is clearly asserted that Liverpool's 'strong local identity embraces cultural diversity', as though the cultural and personality traits of local people protect them from the displays of xenophobia and racism found in other localities. "*Liverpool's 800-year history has given the city one of the longest established truly cosmopolitan communities in Britain, second perhaps only to London*" (LCC 2003: 1102). Cultural diversity or the 'veritable cocktail' of 'cultures' is presented as a mix that includes the 'Irish, Welsh, Scots as well as English; Jewish, Muslim, Hindu; Chinese, Greek, Italian, Spanish;

²³ The 'fault-lines of culture' is a trope which echoes Samuel P. Huntington's (1996) clash of civilisations thesis, something that can be seen in Marseilles' bid.

more recently Caribbean, Somali and Yemeni; and most recently refugees and asylum seekers from the Balkans and the Middle East (LCC *ibid.*: 1102). This listing of religions and nationalities seems to be in a sort of flat, chronological order. There is little explanation of whether these groups meant to be mutually exclusive of national, ethnic, religious or legal categorisations. The struggles and particular nuances for identity and place that had taken place in Liverpool, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s are elided. It is a sort of 'museumification of living populations' (Herzfeld 2004: 31), with no allusion to the social categories that have emerged through struggles and everyday interactions over the decades in Liverpool, such as the categories 'Liverpool Born black', or the 'Liverpool Irish'. Further, ethnicity or cultural diversity does not seem to be linked in relation to the 'Scouser' identity; it seems. It also interesting to note those identities that are not included in this list of the 'culturally diverse': for example, there is no reference to Christian denominations.

Yet everyday observations of how the city 'works' do not reflect the presentation of a city at ease with 'diversity'. Interviews with technocrats, 'cultural operators' and leaders of ethnic minority associations corroborated the uneven picture of social relations are lived out. As Beatriz García, Director the Impacts08evaluation of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture programme said:

'Given how small the city is, even though there is diversity... you know, the way they operate is... quite particular. You know, it is not Manchester, it is not London... there is quite a cohesion which is very place based, so that the different neighbourhoods feel very differently... historically from a community point of view... it is not a melting point everywhere.' ²⁴

²⁴ Interview 12 October 2011.

In Liverpool particular forms of identity politics are strongly associated with a particular geographical area, the postcode Liverpool 8 (Nassy Brown, *op. cit.*).

Unlike Marseilles, where many of the urban elite, the technicians, cultural operators and other civil servants who had located to the city because of work, in Liverpool there was a sense for some interviewees that if you were middle-class, particularly if you were from the 'south' (i.e. from somewhere around London) you would rarely be accepted as a true 'Scouser' or local.²⁵ One interviewee, who preferred not to be named told me that how despite that he had worked in the city with major organisations, he 'somehow perceive[s] a strange barrier as if always looking in from the outside even if [he has] have been five or six years here.' It was suggested that this was one reason that there was so much local hostility to the Australian 'outsider' artistic director, Robyn Archer, who resigned in 2007.

Much of the legitimisation of the inclusion of 'diversity' was placed on local consultation and the role of the 'Diversity Steering group' which included representatives from the voluntary and charitable associations and the cultural sector. This structure and these processes enabled elites to claim that 'local people' and people from diverse backgrounds were given a voice in the bid planning stages. Yet in interviews people suggested that this consultation process was somewhat superficial.

First of all, there were few people involved in decision making from minority backgrounds. There was only one person of 'ethnic minority' background on the Liverpool Culture Company board.

²⁵ See footnote 9.

One interviewee, who represented several different organisations from the cultural sector, suggested that the BME communities got involved in policy making via the Faith Council, as if people of minority ethnic background automatically were religious and indicating the marginal involvement of minorities. Another interviewee spoke about how she had been asked to round up a group of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds to ‘wave flags’, providing photo opportunities for a visit by national and European judges. Even those who were supposed to be official representatives of Liverpool’s diversity seemed ambivalent about their involvement. For example some of the Black and minority ethnic (BME) ‘ambassadors’ for the city, revealed in interviews that they were not actually sure neither what they were representing, nor what the Capital of Culture programme might mean.

4.1.6 Bringing in ‘worldly’ expertise

From interviews with people involved in the bid writing and other observers it would seem that the idea of ‘World in One City’ was both based on a rather simplistic understanding brought in from outside that the city was a port and, *ergo*, cosmopolitan. This resonates with one interviewee’s experience of policy making directed towards people of diverse backgrounds. He told me that ‘*specifically targeting minority groups*’ only happened when the city council brought in external consultants.²⁶

Celebrating diversity and intercultural dialogue were *en vogue* in Europe at the time, part of elite European model of multicultural European union (Holmes 2000; Lähdesmäki 2010). Indeed, as was pointed out in the British newspaper *The Guardian*, at the time all of the competing cities were ‘falling over themselves to prove that

²⁶ Interview with Director of Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival, 15 February 2012.

not only are they keen on culture, but that they are culturally diverse' (cited in Cohen *ibid.*: 204).

Most of the external consultants used for the bid were closely involved in European and national policy making circles. They were seen to be responding to European and national policy debates that rendered urban problems in cultural and ethnic terms. The highest profile of these was Sir Robert (Bob) Scott, International Advisor who is credited for pulling the bid together and coming up with the slogan: 'World in One City'. For these external experts (or 'mercenaries' as one of them laughingly told me), what mattered was winning; whether the bid reflected local circumstances was actually of secondary importance. Thus the discourse around which the application was built relied on certain clichéd identities designed to meet European criteria for the bid. These reflected poorly the existing *structures of feeling*²⁷, the structures of inequality, nor the broad dynamics of urban regeneration in the city.

4.1.7 Diverse opportunities?

The question is: did this externally imposed discourse create new opportunities for people of different backgrounds and from different parts of the city to participate in and perform social relations within and beyond the city? Did the fact that the diverse ethnic and national 'communities' were foreground in the bid document create new ways of participating in city life?

On the face of it, it would not seem to have made much difference about the ways in which local leaders thought about the city

²⁷ Structure of feeling is a term developed by the cultural theorist Raymond Williams and suggests a common set of perceptions and values shared by a group or population.

(Jones and Wilks-Heeg 2004). The Cultural Diversity Steering Group was disbanded before the bid was won. For some this was read as an indication of the relative lack of importance given to this theme. When the new marketing and communication team were appointed in 2005 there was a deliberate decision to distance the city from the 'World in One City' brand.²⁸ Different reasons were put forward to explain this. Some claim that for the people who had been charged with delivery of the cultural programme and who had experience of other, 'more diverse', cities, the notion that Liverpool represented the 'World in One City' was both arrogant and derisory when compared to '*the traditional established cosmopolitan cities in this world, you know, Paris or New York*'²⁹ or cities like Leicester or Birmingham, where ethnic diversity is much more visible in the city centre. One Director of a major cultural institutions felt that the idea that Liverpool represented a 'World in One City' was a joke. He saw the city as largely mono-cultural with some vocal minorities. For him, the World in the City tag was seen as a stratagem of Bob Scott.³⁰

Then with the resignation of the Australian artistic director Robyn Archer in 2007 and her replacement by local cultural personage, Phil Redmond, some saw a further distancing of Liverpool from the idea of a cosmopolitan 'World in One City'. In the national media Redmond is credited in bringing a 'Scouse edge' to Liverpool's Capital of Culture festival.³¹ 'Scouse' in this context

²⁸ Personal communication, September 2011.

²⁹ Interview with a researcher from IMPACTS08, February 2012.

³⁰ Interview with the Director of National Museums Liverpool, February 2012.

³¹ Ward, David; 'Chainless wonder', The Guardian, Wednesday 15 October 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/oct/15/phil-redmond-european-culture-capital> accessed February 2013.

would seem to mean popular, (linked to the Beatles and football) working-class and predominately white.

Yet, as described in the sections below, changes in actors involved in implementing the artistic programme, the relatively weak management from the Liverpool Culture Company, and the new ways in which central government began to define the normative framework for urban social relations, meant that different actors in the city continued to appropriate the 'World in One City' title for different ends within neighbourhoods.

Further, the very broad definition of culture (everything from arts and entertainment to music and sport) and the role of the voluntary sector in the city (the Capital of Culture programme financed one of the largest funding packages for community art in the UK³²) there were opportunities within neighbourhoods and for small and medium sized arts organisations or voluntary and community associations to develop their own projects. These were able to differentially draw upon and reinterpret the many different discourses floating around the city, though of course this room for manoeuvre exists within disparate fields of power.

4.2 'Policy tourism' and the intercity spread of ideas

Before moving on to compare the development of Marseilles' bid, it is important to consider the way in which policy ideas whirl around Europe. Liverpool and Marseilles application processes cannot be considered in isolation from the 'professionalisation' of cultural-led urban regeneration that has proliferated since the early 1990s. As well as the increased reliance on external consultants, there has been a growth in visits by delegations from

³² <http://www.liverpool08.com/About> accessed 01 September 2012.

different cities, conferences and networks (such as the European Capital of Cultures network) and the establishment and use of social and professional networking technology (such as Facebook or LinkedIn). The presentation by Culture Liverpool to the MA students (Section 4.1.1) can be taken as a material example of how such processes work in practice.

As set out in the comparative research framework (Section 2) these linkages between the two cities do not impair a comparative framework. On the contrary it allows us to see how certain discourses develop in particular transnational social fields (Glick Schiller 2012). Whilst cities might be linked in material and immaterial ways, the ways ideas, policies and material realities will be appropriated differently. The Capital of Culture programme therefore becomes an example of 'emergent transnational forms of governance'...that.... 'are transforming the political and economic context for culture and cultural policy in Europe' (Ingram 2009), whilst bearing in mind that such transnational forms of governance are implemented in very specific historical and geographical contexts (McFarlane 2010).

This borrowing of ideas from elsewhere is clearly acknowledged in both bids. Liverpool positions themselves alongside the major cultural strategies of Glasgow, Antwerp and Rotterdam. When talking to people in Marseilles-Provence 2013 (MP2013) who were involved in writing the bid they mentioned that one of their starting points was to visit other Capital of Culture websites to see what key messages were being presented. Marseilles' bid was certainly influenced by the mooted success of Lille's Capital of Culture in 2004.

In Marseilles 'trade visits' or delegations and links were organised to former or potential Capitals of Culture and people talked about

different visits that they had participated in, including Liverpool. Personnel from the association Marseilles-Provence 2013 participated in a project led by the Liverpool Impact 08 team to develop an evaluation framework for cultural policy (see ECCPG 2010) and facilitated the involvement of Marseillaise artists in one of the genuinely 'European' projects of the Liverpool Capital of Culture programme entitled: 'Cities on the Edge'.

Capital of Culture bid writers were clearly trying to respond to EU decisions, policy documents and evaluation strategies coming out of Brussels, such as the 2008 European year of intercultural dialogue mentioned above. The now seminal 'Palmer report' (Palmer 2004) is required reading for any prospective bidding team, as are the European Commission guidelines which provide case studies of 'successful' projects. These policy networks are created and drawn upon, with actors who are successful (bid writing consultants, evaluation experts etc.) called upon, perpetuating and informing existing trends. Thus, a certain rhetoric is followed in the discussion, definition and depiction of cities, culture/s and identities (Lähdesmäki 2010: 28-29).

It is therefore not at all surprising when we see that Marseilles' bid strongly echoes some of the rhetoric that was associated with the European intercultural dialogue model, and a more Anglo-Saxon, 'Liverpool' version of multiculturalism. Yet, underlining the importance of local context, in informal conversations policy makers in Marseilles would talk about the impossibility and the undesirability of implementing an 'Anglo-Saxon' model in a country where recording data about ethnicity or targeting people based on their identity is still illegal. So it is the way in which these transnational discourses come to ground in local contexts and the ways in which understandings and experiences of social relations develop locally that are our focus.

4.3 Marseilles

Marseilles, like Liverpool, is a city that evokes, or perhaps better, *provokes* a strong reaction whenever its name is mentioned. This was especially the case amongst urban technocrats and cultural operators (unlike the local politicians interviewed) who were not from the city. These had generally moved to the city following different promotions or job opportunities. In interviews the exceptional and often exasperating nature of Marseille was often brought up. Corrupt politicians and the influence of the mafia was commonly cited, as was, on occasions, the fact that people in Marseilles were just too 'Mediterranean,' 'southern' or 'Provençal'. In a different breath or at a different occasion, people would state that Marseilles was cosmopolitan, France's busiest port, second city and that it was full of undeveloped potential. Similar to Liverpool, there was frequently a sense of former and currently unfulfilled glory in the way the city was imagined.

This section will explore some of these mental constructions of Marseilles and the particular historical and geographical context of the city. The focus is on frequently recurring tropes in both research, the media and everyday interactions, such as that the city's reputation as being particularly chaotic, corrupt and unmanageable; that this city is poor, marginalised and some what neglected; that the population is 'working class' and/or 'foreign', and importantly for this research, Marseilles' of the city being 'uncultured', or lacking in a certain cultural 'distinction' (Biaass and Fabiani 2011).

These mental constructions, as well as Marseilles geographical and historical positioning, shape and shaped the ways in which Marseilles' bid to be European Capital of Culture has been developed, and, equally, inform who and how people are involved in the city's urban cultural politics and everyday life.

4.3.1 Culture to manage (urban) 'chaos'

Similar to the Liverpool Culture Company, the Marseilles-Provence Capital of Culture bid is managed by a body, the association Marseilles-Provence 2013, that was established specifically for the task. Where the Marseillaise set-up differs from Liverpool is that the association Marseilles-Provence 2013 does not function as a 'private arm' of the municipal authority but is a separate entity managed by a large Board. It is presided over by the President of the Marseilles-Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry and on the Board are representatives from all the urban local authorities, the *département* (conseil général) and regional council (conseil régional), urban community organisation Marseille-Provence Métropole, the local universities, the airport, the Top Twenty business club (a group of businesses desiring that Marseilles be positioned within the top twenty European metropolitan cities) and the Euro-Mediterranean redevelopment agency.

The bid needs to be seen in the context of a commonly shared understanding among city leaders that Marseilles needs to change, to *upscale*, or, according to the recent metaphor is 'accelerate' if the city is to survive and compete internationally. The proposed 'rational' solution is to develop a larger-city region. This policy of the 'metropolitanisation' of Marseilles is very present in urban policy discussions today but it has been an idea that has been lurking around for decades. Since the Second World War urban decision makers working throughout various levels of local government have tried to develop a strategy to reposition Marseilles internationally and address social and economic issues through regional development (Ronai 2009; Biass and Fabiani 2011: 88). But none of Marseilles' neighbours want to be associated with this big, dirty, foreign, poor city, and particularly not lumbered with sharing Marseilles' bills.

Despite its often vaunted (and disputed) position as France's second city, as Europe's fourth busiest port, and its role as capital of a affluent *département* of Bouches de Rhône, Marseilles is much poorer than other similar sized French cities (Roncayolo 1996; Ingram 2009). It has higher unemployment, lower number of high-skilled people, and greater inequality. Additionally, it is in a far weaker economic position in terms of control over capital flows and has a smaller tax base than the surrounding urban districts (Ronai: *ibid.*). Cooperation with other local authorities in the region has rendered more difficult by inter-urban and cross-governmental political wrangling and posturing (Ronai 2009).

The decision by local decision makers (with a strong input from the Marseilles-Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry) to put themselves forward to bid to be France's European Capital of Culture in 2013, is often placed in the context of the city's failed attempt to bid for the 2007 America Cup and the Euro-Mediterranean urban development project. The connections with the America Cup are founded on the understanding that urban leaders would have settled for any kind of *mega event* to transform Marseilles' image (Peraldi and Samson 2005: 245-262). The associations with Euro-Mediterranean are because the idea had been developed under the broadly centrist, 'managerial' mayor Vigouroux (1986-1995), supported by local business leaders who saw the need for a national 'project' to circumvent local politicking in Marseilles (Pinson 2002) As Bertoncello and Rodrigues-Malta (2003) argue, it represents an effort for urban decision makers to try and impose some control over Marseilles urban chaos and order.

So, we see that the bidding process to be European Capital of Culture was able to bring together an array of actors around a

single project. The fact that this was headed up by the city of Marseilles was considered remarkable in light of the historic and continuing disputes and political differences between the different local authorities (Ronai 2009). However, that is not to say that there is a local history of using 'culture' and cultural policies in city branding.

4.3.2 Cultural policy à la marseillaise

Whilst some interviewees mentioned that the way things functioned in Marseilles had nothing in common with the way that cultural policy or urban planning was developed in the rest of the country. Yet, in contrast to Liverpool, 'cultural policy' has played a role as an urban policy and image management tool in Marseilles since at least the 1960s.³³ In this period investment in cultural infrastructure was seen as a means to try and combat the city's working class image and to develop a new image epitomising 'French' modernity and local progress in the face of the fall out of massive deindustrialisation (Suzanne 2007). Municipal cultural policy focused on investment on 'high art' institutions such as the opera, and the conservatory. For urban elites saw this as a means to compete with Lyons, as well as local, more 'bourgeois' rivals such as nearby Aix-en-Provence or Avignon.

In the 1970s inspired by the national 'cultural revolution' of 1968, a growing assertiveness by local authorities for a role in cultural

³³ Colleagues at the Centre Norbert Elias who have set up an 'Observatory' to follow the Marseilles-Provence 2013 project have noted the parallels between the objectives of the European Capital of Culture and the actors involved and the Colonial expositions that took place in Marseilles at the turn of the twentieth century.

See <http://www.ehess.fr/fr/enseignement/enseignements/2012/ue/606/> accessed January 2013.

policy development (Urfalino 2010) and the cultural policy developed by Grenoble's left-wing leadership, a strategy with a more explicit social vocation for culture was developed by Marseilles' socialist Mayor, Gaston Defferre.³⁴ This policy centred on the establishment of socio-cultural centres in impoverished neighbourhoods; what was called '*aménagement culturel du terroire*' (cultural-led development of the territory) with the establishment of national theatres across the city; and the development of local neighbourhood festivals.

Whilst changing the geographical emphasis of cultural activity (i.e. no longer being exclusively city centre focused), this approach largely reflected the national cultural policy of 'cultural democratisation' (*démocratisation culturelle*) (Urfalino *ibid.*). The central tenet of this policy was based on the transmission of 'universal' and 'legitimate' artistic values, that is, as judged by the French elite establishment, to promote national cohesion. Broadly speaking it involves the centralised dissemination of 'great works of art' (that is, largely, Western canonical works), supported through state funding, a countrywide network of national theatres and a very formal national education (e.g. *Les Beaux Arts* and the *conservatoires*) and professionalising framework (for example the system of providing state benefits for registered artists).

In the second half of the 1980s, local movements of artists and activists (linked also to national and later European networks) emerged and spoke up for more 'popular' and diverse forms of cultural expression. The slogan they used was '*démocratie culturelle*'

³⁴ A number of interviews recounted how as soon as Defferre returned from a visit to Grenoble he went straight to the Direction de l'action culturelle informing them that he wanted to see the same approach in Marseilles.

(cultural democracy). It was a movement inspired largely by the movement of '*éducation populaire*' (citizen education outside the state education system) (Suzanne, *ibid.*: 154-5). Mobilisation of artists (mainly artists involved in high art) behind the campaign for *démocratie culturelle* was countrywide. But, in the face of a developing national reputation that Marseilles was a racist and conservative city, with the rise of support for the *Front national* (France's far right party) at local and national elections, local artists and activists were particularly active in proclaiming Marseille as a creative and cosmopolitan city, an identity which put to the fore grassroots and diverse cultural expression and promoted values of hospitable and respect for diversity (*ibid.* 158).

From the '80s culture began to be intermingled with 'urban regeneration', of what in France is referred to as '*politiques de la ville*' (see below for a discussion). Cultural and artistic projects were publicly funded by both central and local authorities to promote integration and cohesion in the *quartiers* or the *banlieues* (the housing estates constructed on the edge of French cities). Unusually in France, local authorities continue to include culture as one of the axes of the central government urban regeneration scheme, the '*Contrat Urbain de cohésion sociale*' (the CUCS), despite the fact that from 2009 it was dropped from central government priorities.

These associations of Marseilles' with artistic currents that promote 'démocratie culturelle'³⁵ and local funding of urban cultural

³⁵ For example, the fact that in 2002, there was an international conference organised on 'Nouveaux Territoires de l'Art', at La Friche Belle de mai in Marseilles supported by the French ministry for Culture and Communication: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/rapports/lextrait/colloqueinter.htm> (accessed January 2013) and the

projects promoting social inclusion was considered an important factor in winning the bid.³⁶ Yet struggles between démocratisation culturelle and démocratie culturelle remain at the heart of the tensions of cultural policy debates in France today and in Marseilles it is one of the points of contention and tension within and surrounding the MP2013 project.

It would seem that within the 'cultural sector' there was an underlying fear about the local artistic capital and its ability to compete nationally (i.e. that it felt inferior to Paris). This would appear to be a structuring factor in the elaboration of local cultural understandings. During the research in 2011 and 2012 people involved in mainstream cultural production (visual arts, theatre, music) would bemoan *c'est honteux* (it's shameful) that France's 'second city' Marseilles was 'under-equipped' in prestigious cultural institutions and the municipal's cultural policy was largely considered to be non-existent.

4.3.3 The 'foreign city'

This next trope, the city as 'foreign' or as 'other', is interwoven into many narratives of Marseilles (and indeed criss-crosses with notions of the city as 'uncultured' and 'unmanageable'). A certain degree of this 'foreignness' emerges from a historical description of city's late incorporation into the French nation-state and its 'rebellious' nature (Dell'Umbria 2006). It is compounded in

involvement of cultural operators in the network ARTfactories/ Autre(s)pARTs, which is described as 'a common platform for reflection, research and action, transmission and solidarity for the development of art centres that organize their practices and experiments around the relationship between arts, territories and populations'. <http://www.artfactories.net/-24-About-us-.html> accessed January 2013.

³⁶ Interview with the Director of GIP Politiques de la ville, June 2011.

narratives that depict the city as facing out across the Mediterranean sea rather than inward to the French hinterland as other neighbouring cities such as Aix-en-Provence or Aubagne are considered to do.

A major part of Marseilles' 'foreignness' relates to the visible presence of immigrants. Over and over again people would state that Marseilles is built on migration, and they would list different 'waves' of migration in chronological order (Armenian, Spanish, Italian, North African, Black African). I learnt the city was the 'first city on the Paris-Dakar road race', the largest Comorian city in the world, the largest Armenian city. At times, this is a source of pride and it is claimed that it allows people of different backgrounds to be part of the city. Researchers and journalists frequently cite local people who lay claim to stronger allegiance to Marseilles than to the nation state, (cf. Cesari, Moreau et al. 2001; Biass and Fabiani 2011). Many of the technicians and cultural operators would tell me that they feel Marseillaise and that anybody who steps of the boat in Marseilles is automatically Marseillaise.

For some of the urban bureaucrats interviewed, this acceptance of diversity was reflected in the municipal forum, *Marseilles Esperance*.³⁷ This structure was established by the Mayor Vigouroux (1986-1995) and continued by the UMP (right wing) Mayor Jean Claude Gaudin (1995 to date). It consists of 8 religious leaders of different 'spiritual families' (chosen by the Mayor). The technocrats and politicians interviewed would often refer to it as representing Marseilles' progressive approach to managing social relations. In an informal conversation with one of the religious leaders, it was very toothless. It was also dissociated from formal cultural policy.

³⁷ <http://www.marseille.fr/sitevdm/marseille-esperance/accueil> accessed February 2013.

In an interview, a spokesperson for *Marseille Espérance* was adamant that its function was purely symbolic, that *Marseille-Espérance* had no links with 'culture'.³⁸ This would seem to indicate the lack of power and influence given to people of minority background within the inclusion of cultural and symbolic production in the city. In a way, *Marseille-Espérance* can be seen as closing down the debate on the place of minorities within the city. In the same way that when I spoke to some policy makers about the city's policies to migrants and ethnic minorities I was told because Marseilles was 'self-evidently' cosmopolitan, there was no need to promote the inclusion of 'others'.³⁹ As Lähdesmäki (2010: 39) finds in her analyses of three other European Capital of Culture, the emphasis on positive effects of cultural diversity, often does not address the questions of (unequal) power relations between people of different backgrounds.

This sense of 'foreignness' needs to be placed within the context of a public debate where certain parts of the population are considered not to be 'integrated' into French society. It should also be noted that the right-wing party, the *Front national* regularly performs well at the local and national elections. Immigration in Marseilles, like Liverpool, has been strongly linked to social problems, and immigrants predominately live in the most deprived areas of the city. Often urban decision makers would talk about the effort being made to make the city more 'international', more like 'Aix', that is, to attract a certain white or East Asian visitor or investor and distract attention from the dirty, *populaire* (working class), 'foreign' actually existing cultural diversity (Tarrus 1992).

³⁸ Interview with an officer responsible for *Marseille Espérance*, June 2011.

³⁹ Interview with Chairman of Agam, town councillor representative for metropolitan cooperation and town planning, June 2011.

So Marseilles' identity is paradoxical; that of a city that is at times lauded for its cosmopolitan inclusion (Gastaut 2003; Dickey 2012) and at times described as a place where 'communities do co-exist, but often warily and at a distance.' (Ingram 2009. p. 273).

4.3.4 Professionalising and Parisian-ising the project

These tropes, of the city as, not very cultural and very foreign and chaotic, structured the way in which the project Marseilles-Provence 2013 was developed.

The fact that the city is seen as chaotic, and perhaps not capable, meant that there was a need to have an external project run by a 'neutral' organisation that was not too close to the city of Marseilles and that could work with politicians from all parties. Like Euromed, the European Capital of Culture introduced new structures that side-stepped the perceived urban chaos and disorder in the city. It also gave a greater role for organisations like the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and some members of staff were recruited from Euro-Mediterranean, reflecting a shared vision for 'cultural-led regeneration' between the two organisations.⁴⁰ For some, this 'professional' approach worked and was part of the reason that European judges chose Marseille (Giroud and Veschambre 2012: 252).

The second idea, and this is comparable with Liverpool, is the

⁴⁰ Although it is perhaps useful to underline that in working in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Marseilles was in no way exceptional. As Giroud and Veschambre (2012) draw our attention to, all the French cities competing to be the 2013 cultural capital stressed the links between the cultural and economic sector, no doubt influenced by the links between economy and culture that were emanating from Brussels.

understanding that despite the frenzy associated with the Capital of Culture programme there is no real municipal 'cultural policy' in Marseilles. Many of the cultural operators interviewed, and some of the urban technicians claimed that one of the main stumbling blocks for the development of a strong cultural policy for the city were the limited intellectual and cultural skills of some of the key politicians in charge. Over and over again people bemoaned the lack of direction, or suggested that the current mayor had little interest in any cultural activity other than the opera.

The need to show that the rest of France (perhaps particularly the critiques from Paris, and from the neighbouring city of Aix-en-Provence) that Marseilles would be capable of putting on a 'world-class', 'high-arts' event may have influenced the choice of a Parisian with a track record for managing cultural-led urban regeneration as Director of MP2013. It might also explain why many of the staff were recruited from outside the city or had first developed careers elsewhere. It is perhaps one of the reasons that local 'culture' and local cultural activity has less importance in the proposal and the project and that for the association Marseilles-Provence 2013 'high-quality' production and 'professionalism' of artistic production seem paramount.

Finally, the trope of the foreign city was appropriated in the bid into the construction of Marseilles as a 'Mediterranean' city. The next section explores why this trope was chosen to be the mark of distinction for Marseilles, and who were involved in these decision-making processes. We then examine how these categorisations affect the way groups and individuals are included and respond to Marseilles' version of urban cultural policy.

4.3.5 *Inventing Marseilles as a Euro-Mediterranean capital*

In the application sent to Brussels, Marseilles is depicted as being at the crossroads of Europe and the Mediterranean, a 'Euro-Mediterranean' city. It was a concept that found favour with many of the cultural organisations involved in the wide consultation that took place in the first months of 2007.⁴¹ Even actors who were largely sceptic of the politics and unequal power relations underlying the European Capital of Culture supported the notion. Thus, *T.Public association d'idées*, affirms on its website:

*Our beautiful city of Marseilles has won the 13 votes of the jury. Thus we will be European Capital of Culture Marseilles-Provence 2013. T.Public, association d'idées will be offering a range of locally based democratic, artistic and participative interventions looking at Euro-Mediterranean culture in local neighbourhoods.*⁴²

It also complemented the local, national and European political and economic strategy towards the southern border of the European Union as described in the Barcelona Process of 1995, the European Neighbourhood Policy of 2003 and the Union for the Mediterranean that was being advocated for strongly by Sarkozy in 2007-2008.⁴³ An indication of the close links between Marseilles-

⁴¹ For examples of groups who felt excluded from this discourse see section 3.2.7.

⁴² Author's translation. Original text:

Notre belle ville de Marseille a gagné les 13 voix du jury: Nous voici Capitale Européenne de la culture Marseille Provence 2013. La Cie T. Public, association d'idées, sur le terrain...propose à cette occasion...plusieurs formes d'interventions citoyennes artistiques partagées autour d'une culture euro-méditerranéenne. <http://tpublic.org/> accessed February 2013.

⁴³ Mediterranean (the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Barcelona Process – see discussion below).

Provence 2013 and the Union for the Mediterranean was that the latter was formally launched in Marseilles in 2008.

This 'Euro-Mediterranean' trope first took physical form in the latest move to try and 'manage' Marseilles' urban future at the start of the 1990s, with the development of a new urban 'project' to develop Marseilles waterfront. The project is discussed in more detail in Section 5.2.1. Here suffice to say that designated as the *quartier* Euro-Mediterranean (or Euromed for short) has changed the name and the nature of this part of the city. And, when considering the some of the politics and semantics of this 'Euro-Mediterranean' project it is important to note that the project has been critiqued as having very few underlying values other than urban development for urban development's sakes (Tiano 2010). Initially there was very little 'explicit' cultural dimension (Pinson 2002). Now however, on the Euro-Mediterranean website, it is proudly stated that eighty per cent of the cultural infrastructure built for this event falls within the Euromed zone.⁴⁴

Yet this framing, or 'invention', of Marseilles as a 'Mediterranean' capital in the application document is full of tensions and contradictions (Bullen 2012). Sometimes the notion of Mediterraneanism is linked to the southern part of the Europe Union, referring to cities, such as Barcelona and Genoa. Predominately though, the Mediterraneanism that emerged relates to a culture that is 'other' to Europe. Marseilles is being presented as being at the crossroads of European and Mediterranean 'civilisations', an idea which is echoed in the presence of the central state funded *Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations* that is one of the flagship of the Euro

⁴⁴ <http://www.euromediterranee.fr/themes/culture> accessed January 2013.

Mediterranean waterside development. As Lähdesmäki (2010: 32) points out, here the application reflects the discourse used in the European Commission Decision 1419/1999/EC which discursively distinguishes ‘European’ cultures from those outside Europe.

4.3.6 A discourse that ebbs and flows

During the first four months of field research (September 2010-January 2011), the southern Mediterranean area was not fore-grounded in official discourse in Marseilles (despite the fact that buildings associated with the Mediterranean were mushrooming up along the waterfront). In this period all efforts seemed to be focused on managing (the at times testy) relationships with urban partners such as Aix-en-Provence and Toulon (that finally pulled out in December 2011).

Yet after the 2011 spring uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East there seemed to be a shift southward in focus, putting an emphasis on Marseilles’ links with the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This is made explicit in the quote from Julie Chenot, in charge of international relations at MP2013 who was cited in a local newspaper as saying that:

*Marseilles-Provence 2013 is neither a European programme nor project...Recent events have changed things, and we hope that in 2013 to be able to reflect these changes within our creative programme.*⁴⁵

At other times, the Mediterranean dimension was very much diluted, for example at the presentation of the MP2013 project to the ‘Mediterranean Anglo-American Business Network’. Here the

⁴⁵ Schaller, A. « Euro-Méditerranée, enfin ! », La Marseillaise, 4 avril 2011.

cultural projects that were emphasised were those that represented a particular version of culture, one that was white European and ‘Provençal’ (a version of Provence embodied by lavender, Cézanne and Van Gogh).

This research is interested to learn whether this new discourse creates the spaces for new voices to emerge in Marseilles cultural scene. As shown in more detail in the last section these elite presentations of culture seem to have little to do with everyday experiences of social and spatial identities. People living in ‘quartiers’ are largely included in projects that aim to either ‘integrate’ people of minority backgrounds or facilitate access to an elite version of culture.

4.3.7 Exploring similarities and differences

This examination of Liverpool and Marseilles reveals clearly how European, national and local discourses, policies and people swirl around through time and space. They might be lodged in place for a while before being displaced by a new idea. Sometimes these ideas or discourses or policies are reformulated; sometimes they are adopted in part, sometimes quickly ignored and/or rejected.

What we see in both localities is the hegemonic understanding that the city’s future lies in being able to compete for (mainly private) capital. However, the local context both affects possibilities to achieve this, and the narratives used in the inter-urban rivalry. Yet, this does not mean that the ‘state’ is absent. London, Paris and Brussels remain very important in urban and cultural politics and policies. Indeed these projects are often seen as bringing in a new structure, grafted on to the existing social and regeneration framework.

The two cases highlight the socially constructed nature of spatial and social identities. Populations, social groups and parts of the city are vested with meaning different things as cities line themselves up with different policy agendas and to enable these to use them as a resource in different spheres of power. There is a sense that officials are coming up with ideas of populations that bear little reality to what or how people actually live their lives, in order to win funding or to control populations or create order (Scott 1998). We can also see the importance of the national and local context in the processes of naming and classifying local populations. At different times diverse groups are identified as the signifiers of various kinds of diversity.

The 'European-ness' of both European Capitals of Culture in this comparable research is a case in point. In Marseilles, the city's geopolitical position as a Mediterranean city is foregrounded at a time when France and the European Union were developing policies towards the region. But it is an urban identity which is fraught with tensions as city leaders move uncomfortably around the fact that there are strong currents of xenophobia and cultural elitism and local populations originating from the 'Mediterranean' are regularly excluded from urban and cultural city structures.

In Liverpool much rhetoric was initially linked to a model of multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue. But this was soon deemed not to fit with the 'world-class' aspirations of the city elite. We see a shift to a more mainstream understanding of culture, with cultural policy positioned as subject to the economic regeneration policies of the city. The city's connections with Europe are downplayed too, as trade links are developed with China and the United States of America.

5 Culture led regeneration

In both cities different urban policies and tools are seen being directed towards different geographic spaces and places in the city. In this next section the intersection between understandings about culture and the regeneration agenda are explored in more detail.

Urban regeneration is a hugely complex policy field, involving a variety of actors with different objectives and perspectives that influence the way in which people and places are conceived and incorporated in urban processes. Broadly put, there are major restructuring of the city centres which involve public and private investment in prestigious buildings and retail, leisure and commercial spaces. In the 'deprived' parts of the city, programmes of demolition and construction and initiatives directed to promote social cohesion are developed. Of course, one of the goals of this research is to explore the various ways in which 'cultural-led regeneration' is differently interpreted across space and time. As a brief synopsis we can say that it is linked to both transformations of the built environment and the management of local populations. In this section we explore the ways in which culture was 'operationalised' in different regeneration initiatives, particularly those aimed at shaping social relations, to look at the complex ways in which a European initiative such as the Capital of Culture comes to ground in particular locations.

5.1 Liverpool

5.1.1 Liverpool's take on cultural-led urban regeneration

The Capital of Culture bid that Liverpool presented shows that culture is to be harnessed to support the urban transformation of Liverpool:

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 (LCC 2005: 201).

This was also clear in the February morning presentation, the central aim of the Capital of Culture bid was to correct Liverpool's perceived position as being at the bottom of the English and European league tables of cities, and to 'Confirm Liverpool as a premier European city'. All the metaphors about change, upward motion, reinvention and reform are now very common in European Capital of Culture bids. The Capital of Culture was supposed to allow the city to 'forg(e) a new identity', to enable the city to 'punch above its weight', or to 'jump scale', trying to move beyond the national framework.

Following a tendency in UK urban policy since the 1980s, encouraged first by the Conservative government, then New Labour, a proliferation of actors can be seen involved in urban regeneration, with different spatial focuses and different policy frameworks. The new infrastructure includes such entities as public-private economic development partnerships, competitive bidding for area-based urban renewal initiatives and a new framework for neighbourhood management.

In Liverpool, Liverpool Vision headed up the city-centre ‘Urban Renaissance’ policy, which, as one interviewee described it, is based on the ‘...aggressive policy...of bringing the buildings...a lot of them, a new development, and then everything else will follow.... Deprived and outlying areas were dealt with under the city-wide, national ‘Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy’. A small part of the city was targeted by the geographically bound ‘New Deal for Communities initiative’, a 10 year central government initiative overseen by a ‘community partnership’ to the east of the city centre. These different structures reflect a separation in policy approaches towards economic and social concerns (Jones and Evans 2008: 2).

5.1.2 Culture, the ‘city centre’ and the ‘neighbourhoods’

As seen in the overview of Liverpool Council’s involvement with arts and cultural policy (section 4.1.1), whilst initially starting in the Department of Arts and Leisure services, explicit cultural policy shifted to the council’s regeneration portfolio since the early 1990s (Cohen 2007).

Alongside this was the aim of the Capital of Culture programme, which, to cite again, was to rely on culture to “*deal with the enormous challenges of regenerating communities*” (*ibid.*). To do this, the Capital of Culture team worked with the Neighbourhood Management infrastructure, five neighbourhood management areas which divided up the city of Liverpool along with representatives from a range of services such as health, education, police, fire services and the voluntary sector.

And what were the aims? On the Liverpool 08 website the objectives of the ‘Creative Neighbourhoods’ programme are described as:

At its most basic level (it) aims to promote community cohesion and values through the creative process.⁴⁶

Whilst the 'values' that will be promoted are not made clear, we see in five years from the bid writing to the implementation of the 'year' there is a shift in discourse from a bid which promised to build upon the strengths of the cultural diversity in the city to a rhetoric which views social relations in terms of a nationally advocated 'community cohesion' policy. Whilst Liverpool's bid was built on the cultural expression of local, working class or marginalised people, those people, or the 'communities' are the objects of policy that seek to reform them.⁴⁷ Diversity of cultural expressions is no longer seen as an asset, but a barrier to social relations. Instead social problems such as poverty and unemployment are couched in terms of an absence of 'social cohesion' in particular 'deprived' locations.

How is culture going to help? A close reading of Liverpool's website would show that the Culture Company's efforts to promote community cohesion are through a rather banal list of activities:

*'from simple meet and greets to gatherings at community venues etc. where residents can celebrate the occasion through various means and mediums as **encouraged or devised by our partners**' (emphasis added).*

⁴⁶ <http://www.liverpool08.com/participate/CreativeCommunities/Neighbourhoods> accessed 2 September 2012.

⁴⁷ This is also the case in the bids of a number of other cities. See Lähdesmäki (2010) for the cases of Turku, Tallinn and Pécs, and Giroud and Veschambre (2012) for the four French finalists to be European Capital of Culture in 2013.

As this extract would seem to suggest it is Liverpool City Council 'partners' who decide the norms and values of 'creative' activity in the city. Indeed, it would seem that the very legitimacy of the work of the Culture Company is drawn from the fact that it is reinforcing the other agendas of these partners. According to an interview with the person responsible for the Creative Neighbourhoods programme, the Culture Company's work boiled down to the brokering of conversations between registered social landlords and individuals' and to help people 'work through' or 'live through' the changes that were happening locally. The Liverpool Culture Company presented itself as a sort of social intermediary between the 'stake-holders' and the 'community'. It is an example of neoliberal governance par excellence, where the role of the public sector is to facilitate private and third-sector organisations in the delivery of particular services.

And so, one might ask, where is the 'culture' in all this?

5.1.3 Arts institutions as partners in Liverpool's regeneration

One of the main activities of the Liverpool Culture Company was to commission projects with cultural and arts institutions to work in 'neighbourhoods', or 'out in communities'. This was predominately with the 'Big 8'⁴⁸ for their flagship project 'Four

⁴⁸ The Tate, Bluecoat, FACT, Unity Theatre, Everyman and Playhouse Theatres, Liverpool Biennial, National Museums Liverpool. The latter, which is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, pulled out because of differences in objectives with the rest of the 'Big 8' (Interview with Director of National Museums Liverpool). Yet NML remains a significant player in Liverpool's arts and cultural scene, managing the majority of the key public arts and cultural institutions (including

Corners' where artists were commissioned to "explore the views, dreams, aspirations and memories"⁴⁹ of people who lived in different parts of the city. This involved working in 'poor neighbourhoods', in 'community outreach' programmes, developing projects alongside social and community associations and encouraging people to come to the city centre institutions for one-off performances or activities.

With changes in the governing body of the Liverpool Culture Company and, in 2007, the resignation of the artistic director, there was a shift in the way in which the capital of culture creative programme was directed, with a greater role for the eight largest cultural institutions to shape both the European Capital of Culture programme (O'Brien, *ibid.*) and Liverpool's regeneration. Yet, this was not a precursor of a switch in direction or the delivery of cultural policy. The large arts institutions in the city were broadly agreed with the dominant ideology in the UK that 'culture', and more specifically, the arts were 'good' for 'regeneration'. The 'big 8' established a body called the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC), the aim of which was to respond to central government agendas (and associated funding streams) to build an evidence base to 'prove' the value of arts activity in regeneration. According to their mission statement, their first job was to ensure 'world-class' events in what was described as a pivotal year. The second was to support 'regeneration', and increasingly in the north (and more mono-cultural) part of the city (following a new focus for area-based regeneration).

World Museum, the Walker Art Gallery, the National Conservation Centre, the International Slavery Museum, the Maritime Museum and the new Museum of Liverpool).

⁴⁹ Four Corners project <http://www.artreach.net/Resources/Articles/FourCorners.aspx> accessed February 2013.

Smaller arts organisations which had been working in certain areas over many years found themselves pushed out by the Big 8 who were seen to be taking a certain model of arts and culture ‘in to the neighbourhoods’ (Impacts08 2009). A number of interviewees found that the programming was dominated by city centre organisations, and consequently was both mono-cultural and very middle-class. For critics, the pressure to fill the calendar with ‘world class events’ pushed out opportunities to develop genuinely inclusive projects.

Yet in different parts of the city are ‘different geographies of culture, different cultural experiences and different socio-economic realities’ offer a different reading of Liverpool (Boland 2010: 640). The following section now looks at an area where culture-led regeneration was interpreted and implemented differently and the World in One City slogan became to be very important to the way cultural policy was locally developed allowing for local and transnational forms of creativity.

5.1.4 The ‘world’ comes to Kensington

The area to be examined in this section is situated on the outskirts of the city centre and the city centre urban regeneration programme.⁵⁰ To help make the link between the city centre and the ‘neighbourhoods’, it is useful to return to field notes taken in Liverpool in February 2010.

February 2010

After our tour of the ‘new’ city centre, I accompanied the group of students on a bus to meet an arts organisation working in the area

⁵⁰ The author’s four years experience as Diversity Project Developer for the regeneration partnership is drawn upon here.

covered by Kensington New Deal for Communities programme in 'Merseyside's largest Renewal Area'.⁵¹ It is only a fifteen minutes walk from the city centre, but feels very distance from some of newly renovated and designated 'cultural', 'knowledge' or 'historic' quarters and the new Liverpool One.

I note some of the comments of some of the students as we passed row and row of boarded up terraced houses and shops that had been identified for clearance as part of the 'regeneration' of this area. I remember that one student told me that if she hadn't seen this she would have left the city thinking that Liverpool was doing fine. She had been told that Liverpool ranked high in the league of deprivation but having just seen pictures of the city centre, had not believe it.

I note also the contrast between the cramped spaces the new identikit shoe-box houses that had gone up, spilling almost onto the road and the way in which the urban planner that morning had talked to us about city centre development when he had told about the measures to ensure high-quality buildings and urban landscapes. I had told me he had been involved planning decisions for these houses too, but clearly different notions of 'quality' are used.

This area has been designated New Deal for Communities regeneration zone. In the late 1990s with support from all major public organisations in the city, a proposal was put forward for this area to bid for the funding on the grounds that it was one of the

⁵¹ <http://liverpool.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing/housing-market-renewal-initiative/whats-happening-in-your-area/wavertree/Kensington> accessed

December 2012

most disadvantaged areas in the city.⁵² The area included for the regeneration is a relatively small geographical zone, where just 14,000 of the city's 400,000 residents lived.

It one of those parts of the city often used as signifiers of social problems. The body responsible for the management and delivery of the regeneration was a partnership named 'Kensington Regeneration'. It had a management board made up of people who were recruited from long-standing tenants and residents associations, all of whom were White British. Almost all of the staff had been seconded into the organisation from the city council, most of whom had a history of working in the 'white' north of the city.

In the mental maps of many policy makers at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, it was also seen as a 'white' area, on the frontier between the 'multicultural' south and the 'mono-cultural' north. These understandings structured the ways in which people from different backgrounds were initially included, or not, in the regeneration initiative. Yet the composition of the population who categorised themselves as being of a Black or minority ethnic (BME) background changed significantly in the 10 years between the censuses of 1991 and 2001.⁵³

⁵² There were other areas that were equally or more disadvantaged, but part of the reason it won the support of the council was it was designated as a 'gateway' to the city centre in city centre urban regeneration proposals.

⁵³ This was partly because of the cheap housing which made the area accessible for segments of the population such national and international students, migrant workers (particularly those working in the public services such as the National Health Service), as well as people who could no longer afford to live in the 'gentrifying' south of the city). In addition government policy started placing asylum seekers into privately managed

5.1.4.1 Developing a neighbourhood cultural policy

Very little 'formal' cultural policy activity took place in the Kensington New Deal for communities' regeneration area, although there were youth clubs and community centres that organised different arts and cultural activities, number of primary schools and a secondary school plus several churches (Protestant, Catholic and African) and a Hindu temple. In the run up to 2008, registered social landlords also began offering funding or residencies, to artists or arts organisations, to carry out programmes in the neighbourhood.

Whilst neither culture nor cultural diversity was identified as a policy priority locally or nationally in the New Deal for Communities programme,⁵⁴ the partnership (which was responsible to central government) had put in rigid targets for increasing BME involvement and 'community cohesion'. In the face of the evidence that people of certain backgrounds were not represented, incidents of racism, new government policy with regards to 'community cohesion' and the new census results forced the partnership to think about how to include people of different backgrounds. As a consequence 'engaging the BME' rose up the policy agenda in this particular neighbourhood. So in this part of Liverpool an attempt to redress what was seen to be a lack of formal BME infrastructure and participation by certain residents, what Putnam (1995) would call 'social capital', was developed.

properties, with little of no support services to help them navigate around the city and the social systems

⁵⁴ http://kensingtonregeneration.org/program_themes accessed September 2012.

In part because of the background and the approach of the newly recruited BME Support Officer, a very imaginative, resourceful individual who had previously worked for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, a strategy was developed in the Community Team around developing 'ethnic', national or multicultural associations. The idea was that this would provide the structure through which the regeneration partnership would be able to work with 'hard to reach' communities and create socio-cultural activity that would permit people 'of different backgrounds' to mix together.

The approach was to engage people, 'ethnic community' by 'community', in order of size, first the 'Chinese' community, then 'Black African', then Irish, Welsh, Italian, Jewish etc. Cultural activities were structured around local cultural calendars of ethnically-based festivals, and interspersed with multicultural football tournaments, multicultural arts projects and initiatives to support teachers to include 'cultural diversity' in schools.

The 'BME Team' were working in a city where the 'mainstreaming' of BME issues was virtually non-existent and in a neighbourhood with few services with experience of working with people of different backgrounds. They were working with colleagues who had little experience of working in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. Within the organisation there was often hostility towards the notion of 'diversity'. Policy officers were reluctant to introduce new models of working that might provoke resistance from the 'white working class', very vocal leaders of community and residents associations. In such circumstances, the fact that the BME team could link its work to the city-wide and 'European' project of 'World in One City' label was a useful resource.

Despite the fact that Kensington Regeneration was often ‘missed out’ of city-centre wide initiatives and that the organisation was not a ‘partner’ of the Capital of Culture programme; despite the fact that, as for many other organisations in the city wanting to work with the Capital of Culture team, it was difficult to forge strategic links with them (Impacts08 2009), the Capital of Culture project was used as an impetus to develop new structures for involvement of people of different backgrounds. And, at times, it was possible to work with the Capital of Culture team, or the Big 8, to facilitate the participation of individuals and associations in the ‘official’ calendar of cultural events.

So, as demonstrated below, whilst downgraded or ‘downplayed’ at the city centre level, the World in One City theme continued to have relevance, to different individuals, groups and in different parts of the city.

5.2 Marseilles

5.2.1 Cultural led regeneration and the city centre

Marseilles’ bid to be a European cultural capital cannot be analysed without placing it in the context of its wider urban regeneration strategy (Andres 2011). In a similar way to Liverpool’s strategy of foregrounding regeneration, in the Marseilles bid it is stated that:

From the very beginning, the Marseilles-Provence 2013 bid project has been founded on a dual analysis of the role of culture in the construction of Europe and in the renewal of the city.

Elsewhere in the bid it is asserted that:

“...the European Capital of Culture project will make a decisive contribution to building a true metropolis with essential practices for cooperation between different local authorities. **The project’s success will prefigure and determine that of the Marseilles Greater Urban Area**”

(MP2013 2008, p22, original emphasis).

Clearly underlying the importance placed on the role of culture in urban and regional development.

Like Liverpool, Marseilles’ urban restructuring is managed by a number of different institutions, the most significant of which are Euro-Mediterranean and two ‘groupements d’intérêt public’ (public interest groups) known as GIPs⁵⁵; one to manage the project of demolition and reconstruction in the ‘deprived’ neighbourhoods in the centre and to the north of the city, and one, GIP *Politique de la ville*.⁵⁶ Five years after negotiations, feasibility studies and

⁵⁵ GIPs provide structures to manage public and public-private partnerships.

⁵⁶ French urban development policy towards deprived neighbourhoods is subsumed under the slogan *politique de la ville* (urban policy). The policy framework is delivered locally by a partnership of services that enter into a contractual relationship with the French government – the *Contrat urbain*. Central government funding comes from two sources. Firstly, ANRU (*Agence National de Rénovation Urbaine/National agency for urban renovation*) established in 2003 and is responsible for demolition and reconstruction of housing stock. Three years later, after recognition that it was not enough to focus just on bricks and mortar (a realisation made more acute after the urban unrest in certain *banlieues* in the summer of 2005) the agency ACSE (*Agence National pour la Cohésion Sociale et l’Égalité des chances/National agency for social cohesion and equal opportunities*) was established. Since 2007 the urban contracts, the CUCS (the *Contrat urbain de cohésion sociale*, urban contract for social cohesion),

wrangling Euro-Mediterranean Urban Development Agency (EPAEM) was the first operation of national interest in Marseilles since the 1960s. The project targets a swathe of land along the waterfront that stretches northward along the docks and eastward towards the city's central station. Massively pump-primed by injections of European, national as well as local and regional government public funding; it is managed by a Board that is made up of a significant number of central government officials, as well as representatives from the local, *départemental* and regional authorities.

The aim of Euromed is to strengthen the city's position in the region and to contribute to the aspirations of the local economic leaders for Marseilles to move up into the list of the Top 20 European metropolises.

It is often imagined that these operate strategies are mutually exclusive but in fact, sometimes their objectives and geographical areas overlap. For example the designated Euro-Mediterranean zone and the regeneration zones intersect, as do the actors involved in the processes. So the GIP Politique de la Ville is tasked with promoting social inclusion of poor inhabitants in some of the same neighbourhoods where Euromed has been described as carrying out a policy of 'social cleansing' of the poor migrants from the city centre (Pinson 2002).

5.2.2 Capital of Culture and the quartiers

place the emphasis on social cohesion and improvement on the everyday lives of local residents.

As Grioud and Veschambre (2012: 145) note in their analysis of the bid application ‘Marseilles is presented as laboratory of cultural democracy and citizen participation’.⁵⁷ The MP2013 Capital of Culture bid document stated that within Marseilles there is a proven record of promoting social integration by and through culture. Yet the dominant discourse and practices in Marseilles-Provence 2013’s approach is to promote the circulation of contemporary artists. In the *Politique de la ville*, understandings of ‘culture’ are interpreted much more broadly (and perhaps much more similar to interpretations found in Liverpool).

Below some of the tensions and contradictions are explored between the different ways in which culture is described by actors in the association Marseilles-Provence 2013 and those involved within the sphere of *politique de la ville* (not to mention artists and individuals⁵⁸) and the ways in which some cultural interventions have been rolled out in city spaces.

To do this one of the projects of the association Marseilles-Provence 2013 is examined. This project links most directly with the urban regeneration dynamics taking place in poor neighbourhoods. This is followed by an examination of how cultural policies play out in a neighbourhood that is undergoing urban regeneration involving partners from the GIP for the Management of *Politique de la ville*, the GIP for the *Grand Projet de Ville* and actors involved in the Euro-Mediterranean restructuring.

⁵⁷ ‘Marseilles’affice comme terrain d’expérience de la démocratie culturelle et de la participation citoyenne’ (the author’s translation).

⁵⁸ See further discussion below.

5.2.3 Marseilles-Provence's Creative Urban Project

The flagship project of the Participatory Activities for Citizens of Marseilles-Provence 2013 is *Quartiers Créatifs*, (Creative Urban Projects).⁵⁹ It is the only MP2013 project that received European Regional Development Funds. In order to be eligible for this funding, the project had to emphasis 'social' and 'urban' rather than 'cultural' outputs, as the body that is responsible for the European finance is the association Marseilles- Provence Urban Community, which does not work in the cultural sphere. This project therefore pulls together the different 'stakeholders' with diverse agendas.

The stated aims are to develop residencies for 'artists, architects, designers, town planners and landscapers' in one of 14 neighbourhoods targeted for urban 'regeneration,' that will:

'...develop artistic initiatives questioning, improving or changing everyday environments in order to get local residents involved in their neighbourhoods.'

The role of the artist is to provide:

'...a new perspective that leads to imaginative solutions and poetic approaches to these areas, when associated with local projects and continuous dialogue with residents...'

⁵⁹ It is interesting to see the semantic echoes between this and the Liverpool 'Creative Communities' programme, although in Liverpool the word 'community' places the emphasis on social relations, whereas 'quartiers' refers to the spatial dimension of the project's objectives.

The project aims to transform:

...urban areas into playgrounds, explores our relationship with the city and improves daily life for residents by launching new and creative initiatives.’⁶⁰

Evidence from field research demonstrated that people involved in developing the project believe sincerely in possibilities that can be drawn from this intervention for altering the way in which urban planning is developed in the city. Yet, similar to the Creative Communities programme in Liverpool, ‘professionals’ are brought in to help local residents deal with their problems. The *Quartiers Créatifs*’ objectives do not make any reference to existing cultural activity in the neighbourhoods, nor notions of intercultural dialogue, heritage, the transnational or ‘Euro-Mediterranean’ links that might exist.

The project has been controversial amongst artists’ circles and local residents, with accusations that it is a Trojan horse for gentrification of poor neighbourhoods or, that it is sop given people in neighbourhoods to distract attention whilst their neighbourhood is transformed under their noses.⁶¹ There is also suspicion that the focus on ‘artistic excellence’ principally favours transient tourists over local residents. The latter view was endorsed when, in June 2012, during one of the first exhibitions organised by one of the artists commissioned for the Creative Urban Projects. With reference to field notes:

⁶⁰ <http://www.mp2013.fr/au-programme/actions-participation-citoyenne/quartiers-creatifs/> accessed February 2013.

⁶¹ This was the subject of heated conversations in the meeting of *Pensons le matin*, 17 November 2012, where artists, representatives from MP2013, activists and researchers discussed this programme.

6 June 2012

My friend and research participant, Janette, a 62 year old white woman born in Marseilles lived in a 'owner-occupied' small flat in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in one of the poorest arrondissements in Marseilles. She used to work in the social sector, but on retiring had become involved in a number of artistic initiatives, both funded by the public purse and paid for herself. She has strong social networks with her neighbours and with local traders in Marseilles and beyond the city.

Knowing that there is a weeklong exhibition of the Creative Urban Project five minutes away from her flat, I ask if she would like to go with me. She did not know anything about it, but was keen to attend.

Posters around the site inform the public that there is an event on, and that they are welcome. Next to a security guard, two student volunteers are behind a table on the road outside the site and encourage passers-by to come in. We wander around the exhibition and happen to meet one of the artists. Selected because he had a track-record of creating public art installations to transform urban landscapes around the world, he did not realise we were 'locals' and talked to us about the aims of the project as if we were 'tourists'. He told us that he had no interest in working with local young people, why should he? One would not expect a violin player, he tells us, or a composer to develop a piece in collaboration with participants. Rather than developing a 'continuous dialogue with residents', he saw his role to produce something that would be of interest to an international audience, or as he put it: 'to attract 'German tourists'.

To a certain extent this was an artist following the guidelines of the European Commission for candidate cities where it is stated that:

Attractiveness, from local to European level, is one of the main objectives for a Capital of Culture: how can it attract not only the local and national population but also foreign tourists? In the case of a city located in the Baltic countries, for example, the question could be formulated as follows: how could the event be of interest to a Spanish, Greek or Swedish tourist? (p. 12)

To return to field notes from the same June day:

6 June 2012

After visiting the exhibition my friend and 'research participant' buy a thé à la menthe sitting on plastic chairs on the pavement of a café downstairs from her flat. We were just alongside a primary school which had a poster up on the notice board offering classes in Tunisian culture.

I asked her for her reactions. Whilst she had liked some of the exhibitions but she told me that she had overheard one of the young students who was acting as a guide describe to other visitors how this neighbourhood was a 'ghetto'. This had angered her.

This is of course just one example of fourteen projects, and there are some very talented artists working in very rich and collaborative ways with local structures and individuals.

The problem is, the fact that these projects take place in 'quartiers' identified as being both bereft of culture and a place of social problems, often artists who are invited, arrive with a host of prejudices about the social relations they will find there.

Further, if we are talking about ‘cultural democracy’, the local participants have no choice about how public money is spent on art or cultural activity in their neighbourhood; they have to just work with the ‘cultural project’ that is given to them; and often it seems to be a distraction from the wider politics of urban regeneration. This was one of the complaints of the signatories of an open letter to the Minister of Culture and the Cities Minister rejecting the Creative Urban Project in their neighbourhood in November 2012.⁶²

5.2.4 Intersection of ‘culture’ and regeneration in St Mauront

In interview the Director of the GIP *politique de la ville* in June 2011 spoke about his apprehension with regards to the Creative Urban Projects, which he referred to as ‘opérations un peu phare’ (flagship operations) of Marseilles-Provence 2013. His definition of culture and his objectives for cultural policy were very different. He saw and worked with notions of cultural policy as relating to ‘communities of different origins’ (using language that echoes what might be thought of as an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ model of multiculturalism). His definition of cultural projects working included Berbère chants, dance from the Pacific islands and cooking. He saw these forms of cultural expression as both a rich resource for the city and a means to aid ‘integration’. He saw the artists’ role as one to put themselves at the services of local residents and to help the achieve the objectives of the *politique de la ville* which focus on access and participation, cultural infrastructure development in neighbourhoods, literacy

⁶² Gilles, Benoît. ‘Des associations de la Busserine écrivent à Aurélie Filippetti’ 14 novembre 2012. <http://www.marsactu.fr/culture-2013/des-associations-de-la-busserine-ecrivent-a-aurelie-filippetti-29372.html> accessed February 2013.

programmes, as well as projects that explore questions of identity and heritage.

Another example, of the different stakeholders involved can be seen in one example of 'cultural-led regeneration' that took place in the neighbourhood of Saint Mauront.⁶³

The neighbourhood, Saint Mauront, is situated on the edge of the land being developed by the Euro-Mediterranean project, on the edge of the city centre, and next to the neighbourhood La Belle de mai. Formerly a working-class area full of factories and warehouses, and small workers houses, it is very densely built with few open spaces, little social housing, and much of the private rented accommodation is of a very poor standard and rented out to migrants who have little choice about where to go. The population is a mix of first and second-generation Italian migrants, pied noirs⁶⁴ and, in recent years has seen a rise in the presence of people of Black African, North African and Roma background (moving towards fifty per cent). A significant proportion of the population do not have French nationality. There are many low rent properties where artists have set up workshops, run projects or live and work. It has not witnessed 'gentrification' yet, being described in a report from Marseilles' urban planning body as being characterised as having 'une attractivité résidentielle de non-choix', that is, an area where people would go if they had no other choice (AGAM 2009).

A neighbourhood choir organised by a local arts organisation

⁶³ The author lived in Saint Mauront during her fieldwork, from November 2010 to June 2011.

⁶⁴ 'Pied noir' is the term for French citizens of European origin who were resident in North Africa (particularly Algeria) until independence.

funded by the fund set up by Sarkosy's government to promote social cohesion 'Espoir banlieue' (Hope in the inner-cities) provides an insight. Members of the choir were predominately white European women (for the most part of Italian origin) who had been recruited through their connections with a welfare rights organisation and drop-in space, or through neighbours who in the same 'groupe', a block of social housing built in the 1930s or the same *quartier*. Referring to field notes⁶⁵:

4 May 2011

This week I received a call Nicole, one of the singers in the choir who is often tasked with phoning the different participants on behalf of the arts organisation. In her gruff, twenty-a-day voice she tells me we have been invited to perform at the inauguration of the Espace Lecture (Reading Room). We had been invited because Yolande, another choir members was also a very active member of several associations and neighbourhood working groups and therefore quite an influential local personage. Nicole arranged that we meet to have a quick rehearsal before walking down to the opening.

The new cultural institution consisted of a large central room, with a few shelves around the walls for newspapers and a small selection of books. The renovated, well-lit suite of rooms had previously been bath house for the local school. It is accessed by a door to the side of the school entrance, a small road lined by poorly maintained pavements that are a danger and a trial for the crowds of young children, pram-pushing parents, and older people unsteady on their feet. Next to it is a building site for new private flats that are being built in the face of protests by members of local residents,

⁶⁵ From November 2010 the author participated weekly as a member of the choir.

because it will block their sunlight, increase traffic congestion and add to an already existing sense of claustrophobia. This construction is part of the policy to change the demographic of the area, to increase 'mixité', that is, to attract in a new, property-owning class.⁶⁶ Just behind the school is the 'Théâtre Toursky', one of the theatres established in poor neighbourhoods in the 1970s. Nobody I knew in the neighbourhood went to this theatre, because it was deemed too expensive and 'pas pour nous' (not for us).

Its objective was to encourage reading and writing, to give children a place to do their homework if their homes were too cramped, to encourage people to go to libraries and, thus, it was explained to me, to help them integrate into French society.⁶⁷ It was to be run by the Association Culturelle d'Espaces Lecture et d'écriture en Méditerranée (Cultural Association of Reading and Writing Rooms in the Mediterranean).⁶⁸

The opening is a major event for the technicians working in both culture and politique de la ville. I was told that this project had been on the drawing board for over 19 years. It was locally understood that the funding had only come on line to show that something was being done in this neighbourhood that has largely been forgotten, in the face of the larger city centre redevelopment,

⁶⁶ According to a local newspaper the renovation of the area 'unfortunately' does not include plans for social housing. Instead, they are planning 900 new properties and the renovation of the others. Barrette, E. 'Le centre alpha de la réhabilitation'. La Marseillaise, 3 May 2011.

⁶⁷ Interview with the Director of ACELEM, May 2012.

⁶⁸ ACELEM was set up in 1993 as part of the Marseilles city council policy to promote 'integration' through literacy projects, in communities with high percentages of people of immigrant origin.

Euro-Mediterranean regeneration and the Capital of Culture projects. Funding came from the local mayor as well as other local layers of government and central government.

The room was full, with children from the local school of a range of different backgrounds, people in formal attire, mainly people there in a 'professional capacity', representatives of community associations, politicians and technocrats. It was the most diverse crowd I had seen, apart from when I was on public transport, in the supermarket or in the city centre.

In the speeches made by the director of the prefecture, a representative from the GIP responsible for urban regeneration, the deputy-mayor responsible for urban regeneration and social cohesion among others, we learn that this is a 'quartier en fort demande sociale' (a neighbourhood in real social need) and this building is a 'sign of the profound changes that are planned for the quartier'. Repeated references were made to the importance of the fact that such projects were done with the residents and not for the residents. The fact that over 100 people had signed up as members of the Espace Lecture, was given as proof of local demand. The importance of access to la culture (that is one culture) and la langue (again, in the singular) was emphasised as a means to address equal opportunities and to facilitate integration into French society.

I got the sense that the choir had been invited to represent the 'local neighbourhood' along with the school children brought by local teachers. Several references were made to the choir as a sort of signifier of 'authentic' everyday culture during the speeches. Yet we seemed out of place amongst the suits and highfalutin discourse. Nor could we be seen as being representative of the composition of the resident population. Two Black African musicians had also been

invited to inaugurate the event and play some music. At the end of over an hour of speeches, by which time most people had gone, with what seemed to be an after-thought, or an oversight they were finally invited to perform. Some members of the choir danced with them; everyone else was 'networking'.

Later, one of the musicians interviewed, Kélé Coulibaly, who was also the director of an African theatre, explained that this event epitomised for him the French elitism that pervades understandings of cultural production. His understanding of the policy is one based on a rigid notion of 'inclusion' that ignores the language skills, knowledge and forms of cultural expression that exist in local neighbourhoods. In his experience if you are not able to read in French you are not considered to be educated and knowledgeable, despite the fact that many of the 'illiterate' people targeted by this policy are fluent at reading in their mother tongues or Koranic Arabic.

A few weeks afterwards, on a return visit to the Reading Room, Coulibaly was observed delivering a story-telling workshop, an after-school activity for school children and their parents. There were about twenty children and parents of predominately black and North African background. At the end of the story-telling session, a group of black African women passed the door of the centre. They seemed curious, but stayed in the pavement until one of the coordinators invited them in. Uncertainly, and in hesitant French, one woman asked what the room was for. The centre coordinator described its function and the woman left. Coulibaly explained that the woman had been to a cultural event and were looking for a place to hold their activities in the future. In a later interview Coulibaly gave this incident as an example of the fact that there was little consultation within the neighbourhood for

such a service. He inferred that people were not aware of it, and that it was not meeting the needs of local people.

5.2.5 Variation finding

This section has explored the different ways in which urban regeneration policies are constructed, funded and implemented. It was interested in how these processes shape the ways people become included in city making. In both cities we see how 'culture' is conceptualised differently by a range of urban decision makers. These diverse actors are involved in a range of restructuring agendas that engender different understandings about place and identity. We see, also, how the Capital of Culture programme both reflected and affected the already existing structures (cultural-led) urban regeneration.

In Liverpool, the Capital of Culture programme and municipal funded arts activity have been used to prop-up the agendas of other partners, most particularly that of urban economic development. Because Liverpool is a poor city reliant on external capital, and because cultural policy has never been an integral part of city policy, culture can be seen to be hostage to the different national and European initiatives available. For a while Liverpool was deemed multi-cultural, then it became mono-cultural with multicultural 'bits', changing the opportunities for people in different areas, and changing the stakes of being identified in such and such a way.

Sometimes actors drew upon different discourses and resources to develop other trajectories for the way in which 'culture' is understood, produced and responded to. For instance, the example of Kensington Regeneration shows how certain actors worked with national discourses to instigate cultural forms of expression based

on ethnic diversity that often ran contrary to both neighbourhood and city-wide norms, revealing the ways in which people can develop alternative understandings of social and spatial relations.

The shifts and turns in the 'World in One City' discourse could be read as a cynical instrumentalisation of marginalised groups. This is not necessarily intentionally hypocritical, but it can be taken as an example of how policies shift and change as they are implemented and as different actors try and fine tune different local, national and transnational narratives within a specific context.

In Marseilles, we see how the Capital of Culture programme is equally supporting the wider economic and urban development of Marseilles, in contested circumstances. Structures have developed different norms and objectives surrounding cultural policy than those drawn up by mainstream cultural organisations and the Capital of Culture programme. Yet the wider and more powerful politics of urban restructuring seem to trump the more social objectives of some of the actors involved.

To sum up, the local understandings of ideas about culture, cultures, arts and regeneration affect who is represented as a producer of cultural policy. People are sharing info and reinterpreting the meaning of the bid, it is being negotiated, not the same for each other. Despite the well-meaning intentions, these definitions and understandings of what is culture and who needs to be 'included', definitions of legitimate forms of cultural expression are being developed in unequal positions of power which excludes non-mainstream artists from been seen as producers of cultural goods. The following section considers some of those artists and cultural producers as subjects, objects and agents of cultural policy in the two cities.

6 Focussing on arts and cultural organisations

This section explores actors who are considered artist or a cultural operator by state officials and looks at what they are being asked to do. It is interesting to see here, how these ‘understandings’, and related ‘understandings of culture’, and diversity might organise people’s social relations in and across cities. The way in which public discussion of culture produces understanding of local identities and facilitates the involvement of people in urban structures is also looked at. (See Dubois 2012: 228-9 for an interesting methodological discussion).

6.1 Liverpool

6.1.1 *Everybody’s an artist, but some more equal than others?*

Very differently to Marseilles, the formal, on-paper definition of ‘artist’ in Liverpool was very broad ranging from ‘professionals’ to everybody involved in an artistic capacity in projects, including ‘performances from the community.’ (Garcia, Melville et al. 2010).

The very broad definition of culture, the inclusive notion of ‘artist’ and a significant community grants funding programme meant that a wide range of actors were able to be included in the

production of Liverpool 08 'cultural' activities. Yet the way in which cultural organisations and actors were categorised, valued and the different roles assigned to them was actually both rigid and hierarchical, affecting who was involved in certain decision making processes and understandings of social and spatial relations.

In interviews and from observations taken in the field, the sense of 'snobbery and elitism' was emerged as a barrier for some of the smaller arts organisations and artists. It should be reiterated here that Liverpool is a city where there are few people of diverse backgrounds in the higher echelons of urban decision-making. One young white Liverpool-born man who was trying to forge a career in the arts sector told me that he was deliberately trying to change his 'Liverpudlian' accent, and thus his identity, so that he would be better accepted around the decision making table within Liverpool cultural policy making circles. Despite this sense of elitism it is interesting in Liverpool to see the broad support for cultural and arts associations who receive funding or operating in the city are in broad support the city council policy.

The Liverpool 08 and subsequent City Council funding was distributed through a system of grants or commissions. The grant-funding stream is divided and organisations apply as 'cultural drivers', 'cultural contributors' or 'grassroots innovators', which tend to be small arts institutions, voluntary organisations or social structures. Cultural drivers were predominately the members of the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) formed in 2007, cultural contributors tended to be associations involved in Small and Medium Arts Collective (SMAC) later to become COoL (Cultural Organisations of Liverpool). A number of people involved in the cultural sector expressed pride that 'culture' has been

instrumentalised in a pragmatic ‘Anglo-Saxon’ way, that it was being used to get things done (and often this is contrasted to the French ‘arty’ model).

The LARC group had direct access to the Capital of Culture decision making process, with the (all white, highly educated) Directors sitting around the table during stakeholder meetings. After the resignation of the artistic director, took a direct role in the artistic direction of the programme and clearly supported the role of arts organisations in urban regeneration.

COoL, is a collective of 31 not-for-profit arts organisations that, according to the website, ‘are rooted in Liverpool, and work closely with local communities in every corner of the city’.⁶⁹ Predominately organisations involved in one-off festivals or work with marginalised ‘groups’, who are defined as young people, diverse communities, disabled people etc. The main thematic areas of these associations are identified on the website as: ‘health, youth, regeneration, and arts’. In an interview the Director of COoL told me how they worked with arts to ‘regenerate’ the workforce, to provide opportunities for people who are working or create new jobs. He was very positive about Liverpool’s experience of the Capital of Culture, and his conviction of the importance of city-branding and the use of culture to achieve certain aims. We are told that these organisations are located in the city to develop the creative and cultural economy and that the artwork they develop has an impact around the world. This echoes very closely the discourse of the city council. The website is endorsed by the Councillor for Culture and Tourism.

⁶⁹ <http://www.cool-collective.co.uk/> accessed January 2013.

Almost all the organisations that make up LARC or COoL receive regular funding from Arts Council England, the arms-length national funding body, whose mission is to achieve great art for everyone. According to the Director of the National Museums Liverpool, there is a tendency in Arts Council funded projects to put the artist at the centre of everything.⁷⁰

6.1.2 Representing the world? A question of when and where

The Liverpool 08 website claims that:

‘our diverse communities play an integral role in the activities that we deliver.’

The evaluation of the Capital of Culture programme showed that over thirty per cent of the ‘artists’ were from a Black or minority ethnic background. However the majority participated in festivals and community activities such as the *Chinese New Year, Arabic Arts Festival, Africa Oye, Irish festival, Children’s Festival, Slavery Remembrance Day, Black History Month, DaDaFest* (Disability and Deaf Arts festival) and *Homotopia* (which produces and promotes gay culture). Of course, these events are predominately organised by people of diverse backgrounds. But the point is, as one interviewee stated, the leading arts organisations of the city continue to programme predominately white European and male artists. ‘Diversity continues to be sidelined.’⁷¹

It would seem to be indicative that the ‘Diversity’ webpage of the Liverpool Culture Company is found tucked away in the subsection, ‘Creative Communities’ which is itself placed under the subsection:

⁷⁰ Interview with Director of National Museums Liverpool, February 2012.

⁷¹ Interview with Director of the Black-E, February 2012.

'Participation.' Once you find it, if you click on a 'link' on the Diversity page of the Culture Liverpool website you can download a word document outlining the small grants awarded to promote 'Diversity' in 2008. They include an Arab cultural group, the Merseyside association of Ghanaians, a Muslim woman's group, Somali woman's group, an association for Scandinavian activities, South Asian community and two Welsh groups, as well community and social centres, associations working with people with disabilities or special needs. Most of the activities that were funded, were small neighbourhood based one-off activities that did not feature in the official marketing materials.

The mainstream organisations (both public and private) were judged to operate with a '*mono-cultural edge, so that in certain environments you don't see that much diversity*'.⁷² 'Diverse communities' are invited to 'participate' or be 'included' rather than be considered part of the city's creative actors. For example, despite the fact that three of their member organisations were promoting ethnically diverse forms of expression (Chinese, Irish and Arabic) when I asked the Director of COoL about his work with minorities he talked about how he had been commissioned to write a report on gang culture in Toxteth.

Speaking to some people who represent 'diverse communities' such as an actor who runs an African music group, and who is commissioned to produce 'culturally diverse activity' in schools and museums, there is a sense that local policy makers were increasingly distant from everyday cultural production. This spatial separation would seem to be epitomised by the new home of Culture Liverpool's 'business unit' which is now based in the

⁷² Interview with one of the Researchers from Impact 08.

offices of Liverpool Vision on the 10th floor in a building in the Central Business District of Liverpool, in the perhaps appropriately named ‘Capital Building’. As the African musician lamented, he has the impression that the Communities Team within Liverpool City Council no longer know the leaders of different ‘communities’ because they ‘sit in their offices and do everything by email; they do everything by remote control’.⁷³

Some suggested the lack of clarity over what culture meant in the city, and with a ‘*weak and relatively provincial artistic programme*’ the World in One City discourse surrounding the Capital of Culture did not create the opportunity to put in place either international or ethnically diverse cultural strategy for the city. For others, there were good intentions but not enough time and resources. For example, one actor involved in developing a Capital of Culture project told me how:

‘we were thinking of making multi-ethnicity one of the themes of our project, which...clearly would have been fitting, excellent as a theme, but in the end (because of time pressures) we didn’t.’⁷⁴

An elected representative in Liverpool in 2011 summed it up, the desired legacy of Liverpool 08 to embed multiculturalism or the celebration of diversity into people’s practice have tended to be ‘more ‘aspirational’ than substantive.’⁷⁵ This view was corroborated by the director of a small arts association. He argued that whilst he could not fault the cultural policies produced by the mainstream organisations, he challenged:

73 Informal interview at cultural event, 17 September 2011.

74 Interview with Franco Bianchini, December 2011.

75 Interview Steve Munby, Liverpool City Council councillor, February 2012.

If you look in terms of cultural diversity, the culture should be representative of the society in terms of its make up, gender, race, disability, class. (If that's the case) then you are asking, how representative it is (in Liverpool)?⁷⁶

However, for some of these 'diverse' organisations, 2008 provided with an unprecedented opportunity to develop tighter partnerships with the mainstream cultural organisations and attract new funding streams. For Taher Ali Quassim, director of the Liverpool Arabic Association Festival (LAAF), the Capital of Culture had provided an unprecedented opportunity to raise the profile of marginalised forms of cultural expression visible. In an interview he recalled how ten years ago there was a virtual absence of Arabic artistic expression in the city, despite the longstanding presence of Arabic people, particularly of Yemini and Somali origin. The LAAF now organises an annual festival in partnership with the major cultural institutions. It consists of an Arabic film festival, concerts, talks and debates, plus work in schools. They are in conversation with arts companies in Belgium and looking to expand their model in the UK. For Ali Quassim there is little chance that this would have happened without Liverpool 08.

Yet Ali Quassim was aware that people of different minority ethnic backgrounds - and he mentioned the Liverpool-born black 'community' - would not necessarily feel the same. As research for the evaluation of the Capital of Culture programme highlighted, local residents of Chinese and British-born Black backgrounds noticed that funding for cultural events that they were organising had actually reduced in the run up to 2008 (Impacts08 2008).

⁷⁶ Interview with Director of the Black-E, February 2012.

6.1.3 *The multicultural model in Kensington*

Returning to the Kensington New Deal for Communities patch, this section examines how the different ways in which ‘culture’ was understood by certain actors in a particular neighbourhood can differently structure social relationships and the production and consumption of cultural activities.

The research draws on observation and participation in a number of arts and cultural organisations including some of the ‘Big 8’ who were doing outreach ‘in the communities’ and ‘professional’ arts organisations that had moved to the city and into the neighbourhood following Liverpool’s designation of European Capital of Culture and who were supported by new sources of funding from the registered social landlords, the council and Kensington Regeneration (cf. Impacts08 2009). However, the focus is on several social and cultural organisations set up as a direct consequence of Kensington Regeneration’s policy to celebrate diversity, engage the ‘BME communities’ and break down barriers between people of different backgrounds.

The latter were almost exclusively run by volunteers. Many were led by people of ethnic minority backgrounds, such as the *Merseyside Regional Chinese Association* or the organising committee of the *Afro-Kensington Festival*. Some had been encouraged by Kensington Regeneration to develop cultural activity based on ethnic difference and ‘multicultural’ associations to bring the different ‘communities’ together.

One of the roles of the BME Team was to assist groups to access funding. Because of the national framework for implementing anti-discrimination and equality, each public grant was subject to contractual obligations to collect data on ethnicity, gender, age, or

geographical area, and complete monitoring and evaluation forms to prove that the project had reached a particular 'communities'. In Kensington, the particular cultural diversity policy agenda in the New Deal for Communities team, and the closeness between the team and the associations that were being established meant that cultural activities were constrained to fit in with the 'Cultural Diversity Calendar'. Those projects that received funding were requested to come up with certain products to fit in with the local 'African' festival, Irish, or Chinese New Year celebrations, or to 'hunt down' people who were categorised in certain ways: 'hard to reach,' 'Black and ethnic minorities,' 'people from Kensington'.

These projects both created new ways for people to participate in the transformation of the city; as well as social and spatial identities. People began to foreground their 'ethnic' or 'national' identity in order to be eligible for funding or to participate in certain projects. People came together and formed social, cultural and economic relations with other individuals and structures that they otherwise would not have been involved in. It facilitated the participation of a few people from minority backgrounds within the administrative and management structure of Kensington Regeneration. One went onto become a local councillor, something that she states would not have happened if she had not first participated in one of the community-based arts groups that was established first. Some people used their experience of participating to set up new associations or businesses. This approach also caused tension, (see the last section), with people who felt left out by this 'multi-cultural', area-based model of managing social relations.

This form of 'grafted-on' cultural expression is very susceptible to changes in the funding climate. It was not an 'organic' form of

cultural expression such as arose the 1960s when the Mersey beat flourished or the 1980s with the Liverpool black movement in Toxteth.

After 2008, celebrating diversity is no longer the key concern in the city. The subsequent year's theme for cultural activity was the environment, and now the focus is on health and well-being, an agenda driven by the city council's partnership with the local health service. In 2010 Kensington Regeneration was wrapped up, many of the groups set up during Kensington Regeneration's tenure, dribbled to a close. Many of the organisations that sprung up in Kensington and across the city in the run up to 2008 dissolved, partly because the money for 'cultural diversity' dried up and the structures and individuals providing a shape, energy and conviction in a certain agenda were no longer in place. Sometimes associations wound up because some of the key individuals involved in the newly created 'cultural diverse' infrastructure yielded to other pressures or found new interests in their lives. Some endure and continue to provide opportunities for people to come together and contribute to the city's vital cultural scene.

Concerning those projects that did not last long, this does not mean that the associations or the activities should be classified as 'failures.' It is perhaps more helpful to view them as a micro-example of cultural-led urban regeneration in action. They reflect structural, spatial and temporal constraints which affect the possibilities and pressures on individuals to participate and shape - or not - different urban futures.

6.1.4 Alternative approaches?

Of course, arts and cultural organisations do not just respond

docilely to policy edicts from local or national government. Some, particularly those involved in networks that expand beyond the city and those established for a long time, are better able to develop their own understandings of culture and cultural policy. Between September 2011 and March 2012, one of these, the Black-E, was observed from a participant's perspective

The Black-E

The Black-E is, according to its website, the UK's first community arts project combining contemporary arts and community activities. It was set up in 1968. Located on the edge of what is now, in urban planner talk, designated Liverpool's 'creative quarter', it is also at the intersection of the city's 'Chinese quarter', and 'Liverpool 8' (the post-code area which includes Toxteth). It is thus situated at the crossroads of the two 'multicultural' geographical districts, and on the edge of Liverpool's city centre regeneration. Whilst bordering the prosperous city centre developments, it is where child poverty is very high, where three youth clubs have closed down in recent years, and where unemployment in some pockets is nearly 40 per cent.

Whilst not directly involved in the Capital of Culture programmes because it was undergoing redevelopment, the Black-E is funded by Liverpool city council as one of the city's 'cultural drivers', and writes itself into Liverpool's legacy as international Cultural Capital.⁷⁷ It is a member of COoL and has links with LARC organisations. Though from observations, it was not treated like an 'equal partner' by these structures. It is not included in the official tourist maps pinpointing 'cultural sites of interest'.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Black-E bid document, Arts and Cultural Investment Programme (ACIP) grant, Liverpool City Council, 2009-2011.

⁷⁸ Talking to the Director in January 2013, it appears that after a 40 year struggle with the

According to the business plan: *'The proximity of the Black-E to Britain's oldest established African-Caribbean community - and to Europe's oldest Chinatown - has meant that cultural diversity is celebrated as a natural phenomenon.'* It is a neighbourhood that is qualitatively very different from that of Kensington, and its particular history and geography affects local participation.

Notions of recognising and valuing cultural diversity permeate the organisation's governing documents. In the business plan it is stated clearly that the organisation's objective is to promote work which reflects the experience and concerns of those groups within society, 'whose voices have been marginalised, anthropologised or ignored', and promote 'a perspective on the arts which is local, regional, national, and international – in order to stimulate and develop a sense of cultural and geographical inter-relatedness and variety'.

These norms and values have been developed over 40 years, influenced by movements and trends outside of the city, for example, the Black Power movement and Black music in the 1970s, the cultural policy of the Greater London Council (the director Bill Harpe worked part time on cultural policy in the GLC under Livingstone's tenure), as well as social movements in the city.

At times, the building was one of the most mixed social places in Liverpool, and this is a source of pride. In their business plan they cite an article from a local newspaper that described The Black-E to be *'generally full of characters not in the least bit arty-looking, and bursting at the seams with a truly assorted audience, black, brown, Asian*

Tourist Board, this might be about to change as somebody with close links to the Black-E has started to lobby for them from within the official structures.

*and white, young and old, poor and well-to-do.*⁷⁹ The participative projects and youth arts programme involve predominately Liverpool born Black and white Scousers of Toxteth and Liverpool city centre. People of Chinese background are less likely to be involved in these activities. The Chinese community is seen to have their own structures of community and cultural activity.⁸⁰ Instead links with people of Chinese background tend to be via collaborations with free standing structures that hire the space for weekly tai chi or chi gong sessions or through the annual Chinese New Year Festival.

Yet even an organisation with such a sophisticated cultural policy and a trustee board, *'the keepers of the vision'*, which reflects the diversity of the neighbourhood is influenced by national and local policy discourse. The 'crisis' and changes in funding priorities altered the way in which they identify potential 'participants' for cultural activities. Lack of funding, short-term, and reduction in volunteers meant that the organisation's capacity to engage with certain 'segments' of the population, such as teenagers, was deemed to be reduced. Yet, they try to maintain links through informal and historical contacts with local families.

Different funders require the Black-E to categorise 'participants' in certain ways, or restrict with whom they work.⁸¹ In order to access

⁷⁹ Black-E internal documents, Business Plan 2012.

⁸⁰ Field notes, December 2011.

⁸¹ The organisation was also obliged to change its own name. Locally known as 'The Blackie', so named discoloured facade of the building, feedback from UK and US funding bodies was that this name was too 'politically incorrect'. Wanting to respect local appropriation of the building they got around the scruples of funders by adopting the name the Black-E - a good example of the way in which individuals and

funding they had to find at different times people who are ‘at risk of committing crime or anti-social behaviour’, young people, the unemployed, refugees and asylum seekers, or ‘people from the community’ (wherever that might be). Whilst carrying out participant observation, bids were being worked up to apply for funding to reduce social exclusion and ‘employability’ (European Social Fund), or to work with those who the director described as: ‘women whom the Arts Council refers to as “BME”’.

They are currently working with a funding organisation that defines community relations in terms of rising anti-social behaviour, violent crime, breakdown of relationships and unprovoked rage in today’s Britain, which, according to this organisation ‘fuel division, intolerance and hatred in our communities.’ This seems to be qualitatively in opposition to the more nuanced stance of the Black-E.

Of course, applying for certain funding streams and working with organisations that adopt certain ways of classifying groups does not mean that the Black-E follows suit. ‘Targeted’ by certain projects, the norms and values that underpin the Black-E encouraged cross-dissemination in ways that defy these narrow categorisations. There are many examples of individuals who came through the doors as potential ‘participants’, then at different times in their life, became volunteers, loyal neighbour, trustees or member of staff.

Other alternatives

Other structures in the city equally look beyond the Council and cultural-led regeneration pots of money to continue with their

organisations can play with convention.

own 'visions' of culture in Liverpool. For a manager of an asylum support association on the edge of Kensington 'cultural projects' were the 'nice' aspect of their work, creating time for sociable and convivial time for people to come together. They had been involved in a number of projects with the Capital of Culture funding but they could not get funding to do this any more.⁸² The asylum project continued to organise solidarity evenings and social and cultural evenings across the city, in both 'deprived' neighbourhoods such as the Irish Community Centre, a city centre nightclub and a church hall in leafy suburbia to raise money for their association and to raise awareness about the 'half life' in which asylum seekers in Liverpool were existing.

When a local priest who had long been involved anti-racism work and had participated in some of the cultural projects in the Kensington neighbourhood, was asked what he thought about cultural policy he straightway brought up the subject of multiculturalism. With regret he felt that was a concept that had credibility with local and national policy makers. Yet rather than following twists and turns of local or national approaches to social relations or cultural policy he developed his own policy of welcome, influenced by policy documents issued by the Catholic Church on welcoming migrants. He pointed to the activity of some of his parishioners from South India or Africa who had started to organise multicultural evenings at the local Irish centre in an effort to create structured spaces for people to come together, and learn about each others background, and to provide spaces for the exchange of experiences for local people.

When we turn to Marseilles, we observe a different way of

⁸² Field notes, September 2011.

conceptualising the role of cultural activity and the arts provides different opportunities for different actors to participate in producing cultural activity in neighbourhoods. However, we will also observe a number of similar structural constraints that shape cultural expression.

6.2 Marseilles

6.2.1 *Who are the 'artists' and 'cultural workers' in Marseilles?*

When reading the Marseilles-Provence 2013 application, and from conversations and observations with actors from within the organisation, it is clear that there is a rigid framework governing the types of cultural producers who will be included in the official programming. This hierarchically structures the associations who are working in 'co-production' with MP2013, those 'labélisés' (literally 'labelled', which means officially in the programme but not funded) and those rejected. There were of course artists and cultural producers who did not choose to participate for several reasons. In this section we try and explore how these different categories developed in a bit of depth.

6.2.2 *Qui est 'in', qui est 'out'?*

At the start of the consultation process in 2007 a wide range of organisations were invited to participate in workshops organised by the association Marseilles-Provence 2013. Included in some of the consultations or presentations were a number of the associations that had been interviewed but did not have a formal role in the 2013 festivities. Some organisations that participated in this research had bid for Capital of Culture funding; some successfully, some not. Some had decided that they would never be successful and decided instead to ignore the process altogether.

This consultation was purportedly used to develop the key themes for the artistic programme. It also allowed the bid writers to present the application as having been founded on local creativity. Yet there were critiques of this. One actor who had participated in the consultations told me that he felt that the themes had already been decided, and they were invited just to endorse it. Others felt that they contributed creative ideas that were incorporated into the programme, whilst they were left out. Others were not able to attend. As one participant told me, they received notice of the consultation at the last minute, and for this small volunteer-led organisation it was difficult to find people who had the time to attend.

Nonetheless, in 2010 when a call for projects was announced over 2000 different initiatives were submitted. This involved completing and submitting complex application forms, budget spread-sheets and having meetings with officers from Marseilles-Provence 2013. It is important to note, that funding for the arts in France is very complicated, and this is no different in Marseilles. Arts and culture are funded by a myriad of public bodies: the municipal council, the CUCS, through the departmental, regional councils, the *Direction Régional des Affaires Culturelles* (DRAC) and some received funding from national bodies such as 'Fondation France' or the Ministry for Culture and Communication. A certain amount dare apply for European funding. Being able to apply for this funding requires bureaucratic skill that excludes certain organisations. Marseilles-Provence 2013's approach, based on professional standards, necessarily excluded smaller associations and voluntary groups from participating in formal processes. It differs here from Liverpool where small voluntary associations were able to take part by accessing community and grassroots grants (even if they were not given a high profile in the city marketing).

Of the 2000 projects finally around 400 were selected. These had to match the themes presented in the MP2013 bid document. Projects were either 'selected' because they met the criteria and were feasible, put on a waiting list, rejected or offered the chance to be 'labélisé'.

Those cultural associations or arts organisations who worked with MP2013 were definitely the junior partner in the relationship. If financed by MP2013, it was strongly underlined that this was not a 'bourse' (grant) for the association to go and do something but a contract of 'co-production' (governed by a rigidly defined legally binding agreement). Someone who was working in the 'prod' team described her role as to 'veiller' ('watch over' or 'look after') cultural organisations commissioned to work in co-production with MP2013. She saw the aim of these organisations was to ensure that the MP2013 programme should succeed.⁸³

Those organisations that had applied and were rejected were very pessimistic about their future. One of the big controversies of the 2013 project was that the European Capital of Culture programme was not meant to siphon off arts funding. But again and again associations that had in previous years been funded by the local authorities found that on hearing that they had been rejected by MP2013, were equally rejected from the City, the *Département* or the Region, and saw this decision as linked.

6.2.3 What does an 'artist' look like in Marseilles?

This section considers the profile of the cultural producers engaged with during the field work. The majority of the

⁸³ 'qui étaient récipients d'argent pour réussir les programme de MP2013'

associations, included in the field observations were quite 'classical' French arts organisations. That is, they almost exclusively run by salaried, white middle-class French individuals (often caricatured as *bobos*⁸⁴) had been through formal arts or university education. Most were run by people born outside of Marseilles; all had been operational before the decision to tender for the Capital of Culture programme. The majority of the organisations had initially supported the Capital of Culture bid and were keen to be part of the project, even if sceptical about some of the ways of working. All of these organisations received funding from a mix of cultural and *politiques de la ville* funding streams.

This profile largely reflects the makeup of the arts organisations associated with MP2013, although they also included 'European' or 'Mediterranean' artists and arts associations. Because of the need to show the world the quality of the artistic production and the professionalism behind the project, those associations or cultural producers that do not have a high profile, do not have formal qualifications, or were not 'professional' artists or arts professionals were largely discounted from the programming. Thus, the 'non-mainstream' organisations, such as an African theatre and the Provençal cultural groups were not present.

Unlike Liverpool, there was never a 'cultural diversity' steering group to militate for the inclusion of such groups. Like Liverpool, neither the staff nor the Board of Trustees were representative of the local population. Further, because the artistic programming

⁸⁴ The term '*bobo*' is an abbreviation of *bourgeois-bohème* (*bourgeois bohemian*) and used in France to refer to left-leaning, well-educated people, often involved in cultural or alternative scenes. The term 'champagne socialist' seems to translate the idea well.

had to be palatable for all the partners and remembering that this bid brings together several urban and rural districts that did not think they have anything culturally in common with Marseilles), given that all artistic decisions had to be approved by the governing board, it is not surprising that the artistic decision making was deemed to be 'less adventurous' than it might have been.⁸⁵

To illustrate this point, it is interesting to consider the fate of a project put forward by the Marseilles based group, Aflam (*Association pour la diffusion des cinémas arabes/Association for the diffusion of Arabic cinema*).

This association submitted a bid to MP2013 to organise the International Arabic Film Festival in 2013. The project was supported by MP2013 who saw it as a driver of regional economic development and supporting the objectives of the bid. The Regional Council came out in favour of it, arguing it reflected the 'Arabic' cultural identity of Marseille. (The president of the Regional Council, Michel Vauzelle has long been a prominent proponent of developing a 'Euro-Mediterranean' region). Yet the municipality vetoed it on the grounds that the title would lead to inter-community problems and stigmatise a 'community'. They proposed instead that it should be dubbed a 'Mediterranean' film festival, one supposes on the grounds that 'Mediterranean' was considered less ethnically inflected, and less 'foreign' than 'Arabic'.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Intervention by the Deputy Director of MP2013 Ulrich Fuchs during the meeting of the group *Pensons le Matin*, <http://www.pensonslematin.org> 13 March 2011.

⁸⁶ La Ville de Marseille contre un Festival du cinéma arabe en 2013, *La Provence*, 05 May 2011. <http://www.laprovence.com/article/marseille-10979> accessed February 2013.

6.2.4 The 'off' and the left-out

During the research local artists and activists would regularly talk about how the programme that is planned does not reflect the real cultural richness of Marseilles, the everyday culture of 'making do' (*bricolage*), the immigration and the poverty that is seen by many to be constitutive of the city, and the general 'vibe' which seems in opposition to more formal 'French' understandings of culture.⁸⁷ Unlike Liverpool, where the messiness of its project management and a relatively weak and fluid artistic programming approach provided breaches (within limits) for manoeuvre, in Marseilles the control of the artistic content is much more inflexible, limiting opportunities for actors to appropriate the official discourse for their own purposes. Yet people found their ways to either develop a counter narrative or continue their own cultural vision.

A number of activists and (predominately 'contemporary') artists proposed to set up alternative frameworks to present artistic and cultural work in 2013, such as the 'Off' or the 'Alter-off'.⁸⁸ Others looked beyond the city.

In interview the director of the African theatre, (see 2.3.2) confirmed the difficulties in accessing funding for his small city-centre theatre. He blamed this on the overarching norms behind cultural policy in France where 'artistic excellence' and 'cultural diversity' are not included in the same framework. He had seen

⁸⁷ Field notes from interventions by artists and activists during the meeting of the group *Pensons le Matin*, <http://www.pensonslematin.org> 13 March 2011.

⁸⁸ *Pour 2013, demandez maintenant l'Alter Off : Après le In, le Off et le Out, voici une nouvelle utopie pour l'année capitale européenne de la culture. La Provence*, 25 April 2012 <http://www.laprovence.com/article/spectacles/pour-2013-demandez-maintenant-lalter-off-apres-le-in-le-off-et-le-out-voici-une-n> accessed February 2013.

countless 'French' cultural organisations get hundreds of thousands of euros for projects, where he was only able to access small grants through the *politique de la ville* funding stream to run socio-cultural projects, intergenerational work, or story-telling in 'deprived' neighbourhoods.

This director also felt excluded from discourse of the 'Euro-Mediterranean' identity. This seemed to ignore many of the other social, economic and cultural links between the city and the African continent, and the rest of the world. But driven by desires to promote their culture, he drew upon transnational and diaspora networks linking people in Paris through to social and economic contacts in to Africa to raise money to continue promoting African music and the arts.

The two small voluntary 'Provençal' associations also felt excluded from the Capital of Culture programme. They had observed a reduction in funding for 'traditional' forms of local cultural expression in favour of 'multicultural' associations or the sort of cultural activity that would raise the international profile of the city.⁸⁹ Such groups felt pushed resorted to accessing funding from other (more 'Provençal') local authorities and/or participating in exchanges with European networks of folk and traditional cultures.

6.2.5 What does a 'participant' look like?

The aim of this section is to explore the ways in which participants of the formal cultural projects were framed.

⁸⁹ Field notes, September 2010.

In the Marseilles-Provence 2013 bid, people were divided into categories, such as:

- Residents
- Tourists
- Visitors or 'non-visitors'
- Public
- Public that are excluded or *far from culture*

Implicit in these categories are binary oppositions between the static inhabitant versus the (desirable?) mobile tourist. In the Participatory Activities for Citizens programme of the Capital of Culture organisation to the City and, in particular, the 'Quartier créatifs' project, there is a sense that the *quartier* or *neighbourhood*, is a bounded space in which social relations taking place within them. Often these spatial semantics (that is, a certain neighbourhood, or quartier) were used as signifiers of ethnic or cultural difference. For example, '*les quartiers nord*' (the neighbourhoods situated to the north of Marseilles where the majority of the population is either an immigrant or of immigrant origin), are synonymous with neighbourhoods with a high percentage of immigrants, or no go areas, and areas that were 'uncultured'. It is a discourse which spatialises understandings about where 'culture' is produced and consumed. In these descriptions there is little sense of the networks or links between these 'territories' and the ways in which people can shift from being 'residents' to 'tourists' to 'members of the public' to 'producers of cultural activity'.

Even cultural actors who have militated all their careers for the development of more inclusive notions of cultural activity seem bound by this binary way of thinking. For example, at a meeting of ARTfactories/Autre(s)pARTs in April of 2012 much of the

discussion was about the difference between 'professionals' and 'non-professionals' or the 'non-artists'. The people they worked with were 'in' *quartiers populaires* (working class neighbourhoods).

These categories reflect the need for simplifications of cultural operators when managing complex projects, but also mirror the categorical terms of funders, or the social landlord that had 'invited them in' to work with a particular group of inhabitants.

So on occasions, the practices of arts and cultural associations would serve to reinforce official understandings of territories and spatial and social segregation. As one cultural operator admitted, administrators of arts institutions find themselves having to play this naming game. They find themselves having to prove, using official terminology, that they are 'worth more' than another type of social intervention, for example, a neighbourhood party, the latter which could be considered equally effective at achieving certain social aims (bringing people together) would probably be less expensive than commissioning a team of 'artists'.

Arts organisations that wished to work differently, in ways that challenged official categories, found it difficult to get funding. It was particularly tough for those who wished to cross administrative boundaries of the city, or to include people who were not living in either the areas being regenerated by the various different schemes in the city.

The organisation *T.Public association d'idées* illustrates this well. This association was set up to develop a sort of 'cultural acupuncture' across the city, refusing to limit their activities to a certain geographical area or to target socio-professional profile certainly struggled to access local pots of money. Their aim, to develop

sustainable artistic practices to challenge a 'cultural politics [that] compartmentalise people, puts people in boxes, when in reality nobody ever fits into the categories that have been designated for them.'⁹⁰ Yet when faced with neighbourhood based funding schemes, such as the 'Contrat urbain de cohésion sociale' they were often turned down by the juries. Their projects did not benefit the 'right' people.

6.2.6 Drawing out some similarities and differences

In the above examples it is possible to observe 'objectification' of certain identities and different definitions about what counts as 'cultural'. We can see how the local context affects who is included in the 'creative and cultural' classes, the 'working class' and 'migrant communities'.

In both cities there are projects that seem to fete the neighbourhood as a site of cultural production: Liverpool had the 'Creative communities' project, and Marseille 'Quartiers créatifs'. Yet in both examples, 'professional artists were brought in to 'work with' local residents. These processes frequently deny the agency and creativity of 'local people'. Often local cultural producers of aesthetic work or performers of culturally diverse practices feature are side-lined from funding processes⁹¹.

This observation is not new. Many have pointed out the difference between policy which assumes aesthetic production in city centres and multicultural activity in poor ethnically diverse

⁹⁰ Interview with the Director of T.Public, association d'idées, June 2011.

⁹¹ For a discussion of the situation on the American continent see Dávila Dávila, A. (2012). *Culture Works: Space, Value, and Mobility across the Neoliberal Americas*. New York: New York University Press.

neighbourhoods(Kosnick 2009). But perhaps this division is rendered all the more stark in the Capital of Culture programme because it brings the two together in its dual objectives of developing an artistic programme of an 'international' standard and engaging people who are imagined as being in neighbourhoods.

This framing seemed particularly influential in configuring social relations in Marseilles. Here cultural projects involved elite artists aiming to increase 'participation' or 'access' to mainstream contemporary artistic activity. Differently to Marseilles, in Liverpool, cultural activities were, at least rhetorically, interpreted very broadly, particularly when the projects linked to social inclusion. Small and non-for profit organisations, involved in folk, tradition, craft or amateur forms of cultural expression were able to participate in the capital of culture programme. More broadly conceived, Liverpool provided greater opportunity for local participation and expression, though it tended to remain in neighbourhoods, and only reached the city centre for sporadic special events.

Cultural operators in both cities identified an increase in short term rather than long term funding and also an increase in a sense of the precariousness of their financial future. In both cities professional artists, as well as those groups that organise cultural activities, are squeezed in a funding system that both leads to an exploitation of people's work but also an instrumentalisation of certain individuals and groups' identities. Cultural operators learn new survival tactics such as, adapting to new policy trends, learning new semantics, creating networks and collaborating so that they can continue to play 'the funding game', and win enough to continue.

The difficulties of those artists who wish to challenge structural inequalities but also access funding was clear. Some organisations that are connected to a range of local, national and transnational networks are able to find certain autonomy, for example, in Liverpool the Black-E could draw on external sources of finance, experience of cultural policy outside of the city and its own building allowed it to have a certain independence. The African theatre company and the Provençal groups in Marseilles also look beyond public funding of their cultural activities.

Consistent in both cities is a cultural sector that is dominated by what could be called the 'middle-class' elite. This privileges the cultural contributions of certain 'cultural workers'. We see the ambivalent ways in which people living in impoverished neighbourhoods are included in official forms of urban cultural production. Some places were imagined as multicultural, some as working class, with local people used as representatives of a city or a neighbourhood's culture. The contribution of others, particularly those 'local' artists or people categorised as 'ethnic minorities', tend to be marginalised.

The final section examines how 'ordinary people' perceive culture, diversity and social relations in and across cities, which, to reiterate, have a are similar but different celebrations of urban cultural diversity at the policy level and in which discourses of welcome, assimilation and xenophobia interweave with everyday lives.

7 Culture, diversity and everyday social spatial relations

Despite the fact that the European Capital of Culture bids and city cultural policies use 'local culture', the characteristics of 'local people' and a certain local 'authenticity' as a unique selling point in the inter-urban competition, talking to cultural operators revealed a sense that these 'ordinary' people (people seeking asylum in the UK, impoverished elderly immigrants in France) were beyond the radar of cultural associations and beyond the influence of Capital of Culture city marketing plans.

7.1 Liverpool

To contextualise this section about everyday culture in Liverpool, it is useful to begin by looking at Liverpool's European Capital of Culture bid Executive Summary (2003). In this document it was asserted that that:

'(t)he cultural map of Liverpool is grounded in the experiences of traditionally under-represented groups and individuals...'

Included in their list of these 'under-represented groups and individuals' are immigrants, ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers. It was stated that Liverpool's 'culture' is the:

"...outward expression of the vitality, resilience, inventiveness and tenacity of its people".

Culture was described as enabling ‘Liverpool’s citizens to express affiliation and identity’ and the bid aimed to ‘to empower an inclusive and dynamic community.’

The next section uses field notes, starting with a workshop that took place at the Black-E in February 2012 to try and show the complexity, tensions and contradictions between these assertions and the way that ‘culture’ and ‘cultural policy’ is performed and understood in daily urban interactions.

7.1.1 Whose culture? Who’s cultural?

February 2012

Between December 2011 and January 2012 staff from the Black-E had been in discussions with a London-based charity that had secured funding to run group sessions to promote ‘community cohesion’ in different neighbourhoods. They had offered to pay the Black-E to host some of these. For the staff of the Black-E involved in the day to day activity of the association (running the youth arts project, hiring out and managing the performances spaces, developing new artistic projects), this seemed to feel like an ‘add on’ to the daily tasks. Nonetheless invitations were sent out by email and word of mouth to some of the Black-E’s networks, inviting a group to attend a session this Wednesday afternoon during the February half-term holiday. A spread of Caribbean food was provided beforehand; a way of encouraging people to attend.

The workshop coordinators, one Black British man in his early twenties and a similar aged British woman of Asian origin, had both come up from London on the train for the day. The workshop participants were a mix of ages and ethnic and social backgrounds, recruited from across the city. They included a young Black

Liverpudlian women from the nearby neighbourhood, in very trendy dress which I had seen promoted in one of the high-street stores based in Liverpool One; two young people, one young British Asian man, and a white Liverpudlian, who had been recruited from 'Creative computer course' that the Black-E was running funded by the European Social Fund for people 'not in education or training'; a British Asian man who was involved in youth and community work; two white youth workers in their sixties and trustees (and local parents) of the Black-E from different ethnic backgrounds.

The workshop was structured around team building games and group exercises sitting in circles talking about 'our community'. The last exercise of the day involved standing around a table to draw on a large roll of paper 'our local geographies'. We were asked to pinpoint places that we identified as sites of 'interconnectedness', and where there was 'ethnic diversity'. The aim of the session was to encourage people to think about how they could develop 'projects' to improve their 'community.' Accreditation was offered to people who chose to go and develop a project according to their model.

This session raises many questions, not least the way in which the workshop organisers were using terms ('community', ethnicity) that were perhaps alien to the everyday ways that people lived their lives in Liverpool. Nonetheless, around the table, we learnt about some of the places that people did not tend to frequent and those places where they did not have 'social relations', such as Liverpool One or the universities (these were blank spaces on the map). For some, who lived in the south of the city, the north of was perceived as having little to attract them.

Returning to the field notes:

February 2012

At one point the discussion turned to the European Capital of Culture. This provoked one participant, a black woman wearing an Islamic headscarf and with a Liverpool accent, critiqued what she called the European 'culture of capital'. Using an idiom that I had heard elsewhere she asserted that this event was 'based on our backs but we don't see any of it'. Articulate and confident she expressed a sense of alienation in cultural terms, but also linked to social and economic estrangement from city centre structures.

Whilst she was participating in workshops trying to promote some form of 'cross-cultural' learning, clearly her cultural identity as a black woman in Liverpool was important and she saw that she needed to defend this identity in the city.

What was said here strongly echoed comments heard in a meeting organised by Liverpool City Council two years earlier to discuss findings about research on the 'Muslim community' in Liverpool.⁹² At the meeting a contributor stated that Liverpool remains a segregated city with no-go areas for non-whites, a view corroborated by the research findings.⁹³ Talking about Liverpool One, the new city-centre regeneration project, one participant

⁹² This research was commissioned in response to a national government policy to prevent Islamic radicalism.

⁹³ The report was entitled 'Understanding and Appreciating Muslim Diversity in the City of Liverpool' and was a research project commissioned by the Institute of Community Cohesion (ICoCo) and Liverpool's City Safe Strategy Unit as part of the UK government's strategy to prevent 'terrorism'. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/prevent/overview/whatisprevent> accessed September 2009.

said: 'We live five or ten minutes away from the tourist attractions but we don't go there.' Again, the subject of the Capital of Culture came up, with one audience member calling out: 'Capital of Culture, whose culture?'

This turn of phrase triggered off memories from four years earlier when undertaking field work at Kensington Regeneration when social relations in the neighbourhood were being framed through the "world in one city" discourse. Then, white residents would regularly assert that everybody's culture was being celebrated apart from 'theirs'. 'What about our culture?'; 'what about "English" culture?' People who would consider themselves white British, English, or Scousers were feeling that their cultural identity and their links with the neighbourhood were being lost. Other people interviewed who in their daily relations had positive interactions with people of different backgrounds (international students, Polish migrant workers, Brazilian doctors, British Chinese families) were very critical of the *focus* on celebrating diversity in certain poor neighbourhoods. One argued that it was not that he was against such celebrations but in the current model it diluted resources from other requirements such as housing or health. Yet, often, these legitimate complaints were framed by policy makers as being 'racist'.

As the woman first cited at the Black-E workshop suggested, it seemed to some that the representations of culture and notions of who belonged circulating in the city '*pitted communities against each other*'.

Returning to the Black-E in October 2012,¹ I saw two men, both in their late 50s/early 60s, one black, one white, hanging up a photograph exhibition of images of the struggles for the Liverpool-born Black community and the anti-apartheid campaigns in the

1980s for 'Black History Month'.⁹⁴ I asked one of them how he felt race relations had changed in the city, and his views on the 'World in One City'. He laughed and said that nothing had changed. For him, structural racism still mediated social relations in the city.

Talking about the music scene in the city one interviewee reflected:

*it is quite interesting that music innovation, intercultural music innovation has emerged from a place like Bristol but not Liverpool.*⁹⁵

He saw this as a sign of the marginalisation of the ethnic minorities in the city.

Yet these observations must not let us ignore the positive, and at times transformative, experiences of different individuals when they partook in formal cultural projects. As Dávila reminds us, despite being caught up in a web of politics, 'culture' retains a 'power to promote community, and, through it, to bring about enjoyment and the possibility of change' (2012: 20).

The potential of cultural activities to bridge so called 'differences' was evident in the Black-E choir. Here people would talk about how they really valued this opportunity to mix with people who they considered different from themselves. Drawing from observations and participation in cultural events in Kensington, during these events people were heard expressing their pleasure to take part in 'culturally diverse' activities (referring here to the

⁹⁴ Black History Month is an annual observance in the UK, Canada and the United States of important people and events of the African diasporas. See http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/sitea/BHM_FAQ.html accessed February 2013.

⁹⁵ Interview with Franco Biancini, December 2012.

first Kensington Chinese New Year Festival in 2005), that it gave them the space and the time to interact with their neighbours, to get to know 'another' culture. Some people would assert that participating in particular projects had changed their lives, or that being involved in a cultural activity had created new spaces for them to participate or to feel that they too could be producers of culture. It is important to remember that for some, participating in formal cultural activities is a long-term life changing experience; for others it was a temporary chance to forget their everyday concerns.

A further example is of a Hong-Kong Chinese mother. Her case shows some of the paradoxes and contradictions experienced in people's social relations:

The research participant is a single mother of two British-born Chinese young men. She is a business owner and a Kensington resident. She was approached in 2004 when the BME Team of Kensington Regeneration was trying to set up a Chinese associations. Initially she was very timid, partly because of her hesitant English, but she decided to participate because she wanted to do something to counter the racism that she and her boys experienced regularly. She went on to put together educational resources for Kensington schools. She considered these projects had made a slight difference because some of the young people in the neighbourhood began to greet her in Chinese, rather than shouting abuse. It allowed her to value part of her cultural identity and was a small gesture to try and improve everyday social relations in her local neighbourhood.

Over the years she developed a business in the city centre, participated with her sons in city-centre cultural activities such as

the Chinese New Year and mainstream 'cultural' events such as the spectacular crowd pleasers organised with last vestiges of money of the Capital of Culture programme. Yet, when interviewed in 2010 and in informal conversations between 2011-2012, she still admits to being afraid in the street. She said that she wished she had a magic power to make her look 'English':

'You know, if I am Chinese when I am walk on the street...the lads will... ..make fun of you...or do something or talk something nasty...But if I am English and I walk on the street, I feel safe... but you know I still want to be a Chinese'⁹⁶

Seven years after the first meeting, her two now university-educated sons have decided to return to Hong Kong to look for work because they feel less 'conspicuous' there, less 'Other' and were more likely to get a job.

Whilst the Liverpool's Capital of Culture makes bold claims about according 'everyone the right to be themselves', some of these observations of interactions and understandings about where, when and how people participate in city structures makes this claim seem very overstated.

As we saw in the bid, asylum seekers were considered to be carriers of cultural identity. Yet the women and men who participated in the research were marginalised from economic, social and cultural structures and unable to work, afford public transport, participate in family networks or live full social and cultural lives. Whilst Liverpool might claim to be a world or global city, it is not able to protect the people living there from exclusionary national and

⁹⁶ Interview, February 2010.

international practices, such as those in the UK which prevent people seeking refuge from being able to work.

Some might argue that asylum seekers are a case a part, and do not reflect the experience of other residents in the city. Bill Harpe, director of the Black-E noted:

...my perception of the people that we engage with for a lot of our work is that they are having a very, very, very difficult time, and if you don't hear from them it's because they don't have the money on their mobile to let you know.⁹⁷

Places like the Black-E or Asylum Link Merseyside where people could go on a whim' were considered very valuable. The local neighbourhood libraries were also considered a lifeline, providing free access to cultural resources and most importantly on-line transnational social networks. Yet it is places such as these that are more likely to be threatened in the latest round of funding cuts that focus on a city centre-led cultural strategy.

It is important to note that the people who participated in this research be not considered solely as marginalised from mainstream urban structures. Often they also were involved in rich (culturally and often economical) social networks within different local and transnational fields (Glick Schiller 2012). This was the case for the members of several African churches, networks of Hong Kong Chinese origin or those how participated in everyday cultural and social spaces such as parks, supermarkets, or institutions such as schools, social centres and churches that contribute to the everyday culture of Liverpool.

⁹⁷ Interview with the Director of the Black-E, February 2012.

7.2 Marseilles

One of the research findings that emerged was the way cultural identity and spatial identity and sense of belonging were very important. It is helpful at this point to introduce some notes from the field to show the different ways in which individuals respond to cities and city discourse:

January 2011

On a cold January day in 2011 I am invited into the city centre, or more precisely to the 'Old Port' (Vieux port) by "Marie", a sixty year old woman whom I met in the 'community choir' (chorale du quartier). The choir has organised by an arts group receiving funds by a central government pot of money 'Espoir banlieues' (Hope for the neighbourhoods) and the Contrat urbain de cohésion.

Marie's mother is Dutch and a Spanish father who worked on Marseilles' docks. She is a carer for her disabled husband and daughter. She is very proud of being Marseillaise.

Marie lives in St Mauront and participates in various social and cultural networks including the local cafes and arts organisations yet she tells me that she does not like the neighbourhood. When she is alone with me or with other white people she criticises the neighbourhood because there are trop de Blacks et arabes' (too many blacks and Arabs). Yet she exchanges kisses, conversations and gifts with all her neighbours in the apartment block many of whom fit into this category. When she goes out in the evening it is to nightclubs outside of the city and she dreams of being able to take herself off on a cruise.

She has invited me today because she learns I haven't seen some of the tourist sites in the city centre, she wants to rectify this, to show me the "real" Marseilles.

To do this she dressed up very smartly for this special occasion. Meeting her at the foot of her apartment block we walk down to take the overcrowded bus. She shows me how to avoid paying the €1.50 for a ticket, because nobody else does, so it would be ‘con’ (stupid) to do so. It is important for her to not be taken in by the ‘system.’ The bus is jammed packed with predominately Black or people of North African origin. Maria shows me how to hold my bag so my wallet won’t get stolen.

In the city centre she insists on treating me to lunch in a touristy restaurant. Here she spends like a ‘tourist’, buying me souvenirs of typical scenes from films of Marcel Pagnol:⁹⁸ before paying €14 for two tickets to take the miniature blue and white tourist train to the Basilica of Notre Dame de la Garde, or ‘La bonne mere,’ the city’s most well-known historic symbol. Whilst we are pulled up the hill by the little train a recorded narration interspersed with well-known local songs is played. Marie sings along to many of the songs. The tinny voice refers to the official ‘sites of interest’, including the ‘Euro-Mediterranean’ regeneration where much of the Capital of Culture infrastructure is being built. On hearing the term “Euro-Mediterranean” Marie riposted, quick-witted as ever, that this was a project that had nothing to do with Europe, because, referring to the districts that were undergoing restructuring – ‘there there are only Arabs’.

This example shows the way in which a ‘inhabitant can move around the city and adopt different identities, as both the savvy

⁹⁸ Marcel Pagnol is a French novelist, playwright, and filmmaker was born in the department of Bouches de Rhône and spent much of his life in Marseilles. Many of his books and films were set in Provence, including the trilogy Marius, Fanny and César which was based around the Old Port.

'local resident' and a tourist willing to splash out in order to consume a cultural experience. We also see the disparity between the discourse of city elites who envisage a Euro-Mediterranean future for the city, and the ways in which local people understand and respond to city restructuring (Biass and Fabiani 2011: 87). We can observe how 'ordinary people' can feel excluded from these major urban transformations.

It was not only the relationship between the city centre and the neighbourhood that was important. In everyday discussions about what was 'Marseillaise culture', people would define what was particular about St Mauront or another neighbourhood. People would denote differences between *real* Marseillaise accents, which in this instance was a city centre accent, and other accents from the north and the south of Marseilles.

Yet for *Marie*, neither the 'real' Marseilles, nor her version of 'culture' could be found in her neighbourhood. For her it involved either city centre tourism, or she would take her car and drive to beaches or nightclubs, to get away from her claustrophobic quotidian.

On another occasion (December 2012), hearing a news rapport on the television about the Capital of Culture programme, she quipped, with derision '*Hah! Culture, capital of culture of languages, more like!*' The question of 'whose' culture is being valued in Marseilles, and the question what was culturally of worth, and who has the right to choose was a contested field.

November 2010

I have explained my project to the Directors of the cultural association that coordinates the choir and told that I can attend the

community choir and am told to turn up at 2pm at the community centre where it is taking place. The group of women who are members of the choir welcome me. One offers to be my host during the period of the research. After the session we return to the group of flats where I will live and I am shown the rooms which serve as a drop in service for benefits advice, most of the members of the choir are volunteers or work for this. They ask me to explain again what I am interested in. I say cultural politics, urban regeneration and social relations. One of the members, Yolande walked me in front of a display board which lined up against the wall. She shows me an A4 poster of a dilapidated house in St Mauront where a well-known artist had been born. She took the state of this building as an example of a lack of respect by the authorities in Marseille for 'our own cultural heritage.'

Six months later in an interview Yolande (who had militated for welfare rights all her life) talked about a new publicly funded dance school opening in the neighbourhood. Here she dismissed the relevance of what might be called 'cultural-led regeneration', saying:

March 2012

Culture; me, I love to sing, I love to act, I love all that...I used to be a member of the Marseilles School of Music. But I gave that up when I was young because I got involved in activism...if you only have culture, we're leaving something out...When people go out, when they are out they are happy, they relax, they return home and they find themselves in the same conditions, with their kids who've got nowhere to go because it's too cramped. So, what do we gain?

Often 'culture' was seen to be about heritage and performance, something external to everyday life, something that is organised,

in which you participate, learn about or go to. Sometimes people who were 'targeted' for particular projects that would enable them to 'access culture' would be disparaging about it, claiming that what was offered locally was rubbish, or perhaps not to their taste. Just because tickets were free or reduced or that it was local would not mean that it was either accessible or desirable.

Organised, publicly funded cultural activities could both include or exclude. At times formal activities challenged, reinforced or prevented certain social relations developing. For example, access to the choir was mediated by local residents who relied on this project for their 'breath of fresh air', a way to forget work or home. The group was not at all representative of the neighbourhood. They did not want it to be turned into something 'serious' nor alienating. It was 'theirs.' Consequently they tended to serve as gatekeepers, informally determining who participated and where the sessions took place. Yet when organising neighbourhood social events such as the bingo nights at the end of each term, conviviality, and willingness to help out were the most important criteria for membership.

Some artistic projects would be deliberately more challenging for 'participants' and for city officials. For example, the street theatre company called *T.Public, association d'idées, 'Défilé d'hommes et de femmes* was more overtly 'political' project than the community choir. This was manifest in the objective of incorporating people from across the geographical, social and cultural spectrums of the city, working as 'citizen artists' alongside professional actors from Marseilles, Toulouse and Paris. Not only was the content political in challenging peoples' relation to each other and to the city, but in between practices, Matthieu Bouchain, the artistic director would talk about people notions of rights, identity, equality and challenge many of the discourses in the city.

Involvement in arts and cultural activity can also provide access to new networks and lead to new perceptions of space and social relations. It can also lead to magical' moments of self-empowerment, exchange and pleasure and pride when taking part in a performance, alongside fellow citizen actors and professionals, and in front of friends and family.⁹⁹

As well as, formal cultural activities, the field research included participation and observation of less 'formal' activities. Many of these officially sanctioned social events in the neighbourhood organised by local social, religious and cultural associations. These, like the multicultural evenings organised by the church in Liverpool, were planned with the objective to allow people the time and space to get to know each other, be it across generations, or between people from different countries. Or, it could be a regular meeting at a café terrace, what Oldenberg (1999) calls those 'great good places' where people of all backgrounds would sit together with people who at other moments might be considered 'Other.'

In a neighbourhood that was at times suffocating, in which every inch of space was being built upon; where the walls between apartments are paper-thin meaning that a tickly cough of next-door neighbour's baby's or the couple's dispute can ruin your night's sleep; where people lived in fear of muggings ('I live in fear' *'je vie dans la peur'*), meaning that people would eschew eye contact in the street, choose routes that were less threatening, and sometimes, avoid 'strangers', in this intense, dense, claustrophobic

⁹⁹ The author experienced this for herself while taking part in a performance in front of the opera house in Marseilles and in a community choir performance at the Black-E in Liverpool.

atmosphere, the importance end of year fête, the bingo evenings, the municipal funded street festivals, performances at the local school or informal religious, family or neighbourly activities was great.

For the people who partook in the choir, what they were doing was not a cultural activity. For them the choir was a time to get together, to relax, to have a laugh. This was extremely important: *'ça te fait du bien'* (it's good for you). Yet it very important for the people who took part, and when funding stopped it felt like something was lost from Thursday afternoons.

Also what was important for this particular group were the symbols of a Provençal identity that were found in their houses, the cigadas, the rural scenes on the wall, the Provence of Pagnol. Members of the choir would talk about how much they value mainstream TV documentaries, old Marseillaise music hall heroes and contemporary crowd-pulling comedians: all forms of popular cultures that are generally excluded from discussions of 'culture', 'the arts' and 'cultural policy'. Rarely considered cultural ('I don't do anything cultural' as one person said) yet they provided meaning and sociable 'time out' from the intensity or banality of everyday interactions in and across the city.

7.3 Similarities and variations

Investments in cultural organisations, infrastructure and events have impacts on the sociability, creativity and the economic activity of 'ordinary' people and the way in which space, place and relations are imagined and experienced. Participating in cultural projects at times can result in new ways of allowing people to forge social relations with urban spaces.

However what we see here, when we move between the formal activities of cultural organisations and the cultural activities of everyday life, is the distortion between the ideology of the prescribed cultural policy and daily life. We also see a tendency for short-term cultural projects to be funded at the expense of longer-term embedded community and educational activity.

Sometimes formal projects reflect or create modes of conviviality that are celebrated and foregrounded as being local authentic culture and the objectives of the bids.

Sometimes the frameworks for putting these into place overlook the everyday creativity, the network of networks of 'ordinary people' and the struggles for economic, social and cultural survival which variously enrich and impede cultural expression and social relations in multi-ethnic poor city neighbourhoods.

8 Last words from the field

8.1 Post 2008 and about Liverpool's 'legacy'

Because there is so much discussion circulating now about impact and legacy, this section will briefly consider the 'legacy' of Liverpool's year as Capital of Culture.¹⁰⁰ This is perhaps particularly needed because amongst decision makers in Liverpool, but also at the UK government level and in EU policy circles there is what has been called a 'myth of success' surrounding the event. For example, the British government decided to develop a national Capital of Culture programme in the wake of the 'extraordinary success' of Liverpool.

Such understandings have been partly generated by the use of data produced by the longitudinal evaluation of the programme, the IMPACT08 project, which was largely based on analysis of economic impact and increase in visitor numbers.¹⁰¹ These findings are used to 'prove' that: 'Regeneration led by culture and cultural projects can be the most successful and durable, stimulating a new creative economy'.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ In this section the author draws greatly on interviews with Franco Bianchini and Beatriz Garcia.

¹⁰¹ See Boland (2010) for a discussion of some of the different discourses that circulate.

¹⁰² Wintour, Patrick. In Liverpool's footsteps: now every city can aim to be Britain's capital of culture, *The Guardian*, Wednesday 7 January 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2009/jan/07/british-capital-of-culture/print/> accessed February 2013.

In 2011, different people in Liverpool were asked what they thought were the impacts and how that had changed cultural policy in the city. For one actor who had been closely involved in the preparations for the bid:

1997 to 2010 was a good period in the history of the city, when unemployment was reduced, skills were upgraded in several areas of the city, and the fact that there is an understanding in the city across class barriers of the importance of culture... obviously it is not a universal understanding, is an important achievement, but it is a fragile, very fragile achievement.

Yet this interviewee felt that understandings about the importance of culture were once again becoming marginal in a deteriorating economic situation, where the national government is not active in the field. Other technicians and local politicians interviewed talked about the 'battle' that they were fighting to defend funding for cultural policy.

As was shown in section 4.1.1, cultural policy in Liverpool has always felt to be 'fuzzy'. The evaluation of Liverpool 08 by the IMPACT 08 team, is described in terms of how they have been able to defend the sector based on economic impact, with culture now understood as art and arts institutions, tourism and the city centre leisure industry, firmly linked to the economy rather than diversity, creativity, self-expression or social policy.

February 2012

During an interview with a policy officer from the Capital of Culture team, it is clear that people are clearly proud of what they have been involved with. Another told me that Liverpool has a 'sense of place now', that it was becoming a

'destination'.¹⁰³After the interview I walked up the hill to the Black-E, passing a new 'Moroccan' café has been opened in what has been designated by the local economic development agency, Liverpool Vision, the 'bohemian creative quarter'.¹⁰⁴As the quote from the local on-line review shows, the arrival of this restaurant in 2011 was seen to be something new, a signifier of cultural diversity in the city-centre that is largely viewed as mono-cultural. The journalist described it as:

*Nothing new in any of that if you are reading this in London or Manchester, or even bits of Lodge Lane¹⁰⁵, but plenty to write home about for the mainstream in this particular city on the edge.*¹⁰⁶

For this journalist, Liverpool is becoming more diverse. Clearly Liverpool's city centre is not seen as multicultural until a certain kind of consumable cultural diversity appeared (the author dismisses the taxi-rank, 'kebab shops' and the Indian and Chinese food that until now 'provided the spice - the bit of strangeness - for generations past').

This is quite ironic given that post-2008, within the municipality a new image of the city is being developed, with Liverpool setting its sights elsewhere, at another scalar

¹⁰³ Interview with Head of Participation and Engagement at Culture Liverpool, Liverpool City Council, February 2012.

¹⁰⁴ http://www.liverpoolvision.co.uk/City_Centre.aspx accessed 10 September 2012.

¹⁰⁵ A road lined with shops and restaurants in a part of Toxteth.

¹⁰⁶ Angie Sammons. First Look: The Kasbah Cafe Bazaar. Angie Sammons experiences the Moorish and moreish on Bold Street, Published December 6th 2011. <http://www.liverpoolconfidential.co.uk/Food-and-Drink/First-Look-The-Kasbah-Bold-Street-liverpool-restaurants> accessed February 2013.

dimension if you like. City leaders are now talking about 'smart Liverpool' not 'cool Liverpool'.¹⁰⁷ Liverpool is no longer aiming to be a 'European' city but rather a 'global' one. Liverpool is no longer proclaiming its cosmopolitan credentials. This affects local policy. Where cultural diversity had been in cultural production in festivals and events, but there has been a shift to engage with minority ethnic groups as 'businesses' rather than 'cultural' organisations.¹⁰⁸

So what we see is that in the increasingly difficult financial environment, growing distinctions are developing between what is understood as arts and culture, cultural diversity and the social realm in Liverpool. These affect opportunities for the experiences of traditionally under-represented groups and individuals to be included in significant ways in official city structures, meaning that community and voluntary sector continue to have to scabble around to create spaces for people from different backgrounds to be included.

City leaders talk about how the Capital of Culture programme showed everybody the importance of culture, and that funding for 'cultural activities' has only been cut by ten per cent in the recent City Council budget in the face of the economic downturn and the central government's austerity policy. Yet, what is included in this definition of 'cultural activity' continues to be linked to leisure, entertainment and the major cultural institutions in the city

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Director of Partnership and Innovation, the University of Liverpool, 2 February 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Head of International and Commercial Relations, Liverpool City Council, January 2012.

centre and activities that will drive the tourist economy. Other budget lines, including those for library and voluntary association services, have been cut by up to twenty five per cent.

In the third sector such thinking is being echoed. The trustees of Liverpool Voluntary and Charity Services made a decision that they would no longer fund general cultural projects because they needed to concentrate on more urgent issues of education, health, income security and community safety.¹⁰⁹ Whilst some arts organisations have not been able to continue, some have changed their objectives to fit in with the new criteria. Other artists and arts organisations are trying to disentangle themselves from the official discourse and structures altogether, looking for new ways to survive.¹¹⁰

When asked what the strategy for the sector was one local official pointed me to what he called a '*tourism and marketing type document*'. He said:

We've got a new thing, called the 'Liverpool plan', that you should look up...it is a tourism and marketing type document, but it is around focusing all of our organisations, and what the city council does, and the departments together, to do something that is really positive for the city. So I would say that that is an important cultural policy document, even though it might not look like a traditional cultural policy document, what it actually does is look at economic development and infrastructure and tries to put them together in something that makes sense to all of the stakeholders.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Personal correspondence, Colin Heaney, Grants Officer at LCVS, 14 September 2012.

¹¹⁰ The arts collective Tuebrook Transnational is an interesting example of this. Informal conversation with Directors, September 2012. Also see <http://tuebrooktransnational.com/support-us-2/> accessed February 2013.

¹¹¹ Interview with a Liverpool City Council official, February 2012.

This quote seems to be representative of the new 'business friendly' city which needs a 'great' cultural programme to 'sell the city to a global audience'. Cultural policy now seems to have fallen back on turning the city into a 'destination' for agents of inward investment (tourists or businesses).

In the new 'brand Liverpool', the global Liverpool that is being invented by urban decision makers and consultants, in the international marketing strategies or the cultural tourism initiatives, the contribution of migrants or ethnic minorities is no longer presented as an attribute. In an interview with a marketing manager for the Liverpool City Region, flashy, silver documents are produced on their strategy for the Visitor economy until 2020. In these, there are no pictures of people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Whilst the city is propelled from participating in one mega event to the next (the 2010 Shanghai Expo and the 2012 Global Entrepreneurship Congress were cited regularly in interviews) the rhetoric between how cultural policy is being talked about now and how cultural policy was talked about when bidding for the Capital of Culture has changed considerably.

There is still funding for 'poor' neighbourhoods, but these were to be opened up to a new tourist market, 'discovered' or turned into new 'performance spaces' for spectacular events.

The city centre is cleaner and a number of people noted a new buzz around the city, with young people getting involved in setting up their own creative businesses, and with city policy makers trying to ensure that they encourage what might be called the young 'creative class' (Florida 2002). Yet the city continues to have

some of the worst economic indicators in the UK and Europe, and alongside the new office blocks and leisure and retail spaces are older buildings with 'for let' or 'for sale' signs up. As Mooney (2004) critically argued in the case of Glasgow's Capital of Culture programme, a major event such as the European Capital of Culture programme cannot solve deep set structural urban inequalities.

8.2 Marseilles, looking post 2014

The finishing touches to this report were made one week after returning from Marseilles, when the launch of the Marseilles-Provence 2013 European Capital of Culture year had just taken place. The opening weekend provoked considerable debate amongst artists, journalists, academics and activists in the city. Artists, musicians, school children, journalists and TV cameras had been mobilised. A lot of people are excited about this year, some are cynical, some will ignore it as they are unaware of what the fuss is about, or have more pressing concerns in their lives.

During post-launch scrutiny various angles of analysis prevail: whether the event was 'representative' or not; who participated and how; comments on the cost, the effectiveness, the artistic quality; notes on which local structures and groups were and were not involved; who and how people were contesting the dominant narratives; critiques of the critique of the 'Parisian' journalists who were felt, once again, to look down on Marseilles. I met school teachers and children who were thrilled to take part. I equally had conversations with people living in Marseilles who had not even noticed the event take place, apart from a vague recollection, when asked, about having seen something reported on the television.

Behind the scenes there are artists who are very worried. Some are already planning to leave Marseilles after 2013, no longer seeing a

future for themselves in the city. Socio-cultural organisations that were involved in the initial bid for Capital of Culture and very initially optimistic about the potential of such a programme to make a difference in the city are starting to become either circumspect or cynical. Echoing what was seen in Liverpool, there is a perception that spectacular one-off events are soaking up the funds, but those cultural and social organisations that have been working in neighbourhoods for many years, and core public services are being cut.

An evaluation framework has been put in place to measure the impact of the Capital of Culture year on the change of image and attractiveness of the region, the economic impact and the ways in which the project has created new structures for collaboration. We will have to wait until sometime in 2014 to see how the evaluators judge Marseilles-Provence's success. How far will it go to achieve its aims of promoting intercultural dialogue between the north and south banks of the Mediterranean, improving equality between men and women, integrating immigrants, creating a Greater Marseilles Urban Agglomeration...? Unfortunately, according to the findings in this research, life for ordinary people and cultural workers seem to remain precarious and the tensions between the different urban agglomerations seem as rocky as ever.

9 Conclusions

In the culture sector, and amongst some policy makers there is a school of thought that offers 'culture' as a panacea of all social problems. There is an opposing current of thought that dismisses cultural policy interventions as both a tool of and distraction the imposition of neoliberal governance practices. Yet much of the evidence for either case remains too general and abstract. In this area of study tends to elide over the contradictions, definitional confusions and overall instability of concepts (Herzfeld 2004:24). It thus overlooks that at different times 'culture' can reinforce social and spatial inequalities and, at others, provide critical alternatives and opportunities for rethinking or transcending contemporary concerns.

The premise of this research, therefore, has been to assume that cultural processes and practices are perplexing and that our knowledge of them can only ever be partial. It means that what is found here is not a linear description of what has gone on in Liverpool and Marseilles. Nor is there a concrete definition of what 'culture', 'cultural policy' or 'cultural-led regeneration' *really* is or does in these two different cities. Rather, it aims to depict some of the mess and perplexity involved in this policy field. At the same time, by developing a comparative perspective it aspires to draw out some of the generalities that transcend the particularities of Liverpool and Marseilles.

The comparative perspective helps us to see how different cities' historical narratives and their geographical positioning provide particular resources in inter-urban repositioning. Despite the

different national institutional framework, city decision-makers in these poor, 'down-scale', down-at-heel, yet bold and brash cities, have used very similar discourses and policy responses to secure possible futures. The European Capital of Culture programme facilitated a particular 'European', transnational policy context for local and national debates about means to accumulate capital and manage social relations in cities in the twenty-first century.

What is interesting in the comparison of these two cities is that local elites in both shared a feeling that there would be national *schadenfreude* should these projects fail. There was also a sense that there was not the 'expertise' locally to manage such a high profile project. This gave increasing power to external consultants to shape the form of Liverpool and Marseilles' cultural-led urban regeneration.

We have seen that the adoption of European policies and discourses about culture and city making led to new ways of incorporating cultural difference into city imaginings. Initially, popular culture and cultural diversity was drawn upon to distinguish Marseilles and Liverpool from the European cultural 'mainstream', turning their 'otherness' to an advantage. Yet these discourses (for example Marseilles as a Euro-Mediterranean city, or Liverpool's portrayal as holding the world in one city) seem to be strategic, based more on the need to win funding competitions rather than reflecting local normative frameworks for understanding and managing social relations. Consequently, when these 'cultural' and 'culturally diverse' representations are less 'useful' in city marketing strategies they are dropped.

But as we have seen in both Liverpool and Marseilles, city officials are not the only ones setting the debate. In both cities an evolution

from grassroots' struggle for recognition of difference can be seen. In both this was subsequently appropriated by policy-makers through the 'commodification' of difference, a process that at times can veneer over inequalities (Trouillot 2001).

We have observed the contingent way in which policy discourses are developed. The research also reveals the differences between the 'French' and 'British' model of understanding artistic or cultural interventions and social relations. These provide different points of access for people living in neighbourhoods to participate in city life. In both there was a sense that local diverse forms of expression were excluded from mainstream cultural activity. This is a common critique of major cultural interventions. (see Garcia 2004).

This should not be read as a critique of all formal cultural activities. Participation in cultural activities, however that might be defined, is a fundamental part of human existence and our quality of life. As Stern and Seifert argue, this form of investment, 'compared to other neighbourhood revitalization tools, excel at nurturing both bonding and bridging social capital'. Artists and activists can produce new paradigms for resistance and challenge the status quo through the production of new ways of engagement and provocative and inspirational ideas. For Rosler (2008), optimistically: "the cultural sphere, despite relentless co-optation by marketing, is a perpetual site of resistance and critique." We saw this, for instance, in both the Black-E's involvement in the Black Power Movement in the 1970s and support for Liverpool Black groups today, and in *T.Public*, association *d'idées* notion of 'cultural irrigation' that defied rigid classifications of social relations.

Further, whilst certain 'local residents' had little power to decide what is culturally important or what culture means and are excluded from formal city making processes, the fieldwork drawn from time spent in 'poor' neighbourhoods in both cities, with artists, cultural operators and people involved in deciding city futures, showed the multiple ways in which people see themselves, their place in the city and their possibilities of interactions with structures and others. It was possible to observe how both informal everyday creative activities and formal cultural projects provided routes into inclusion in urban structures.

But this does not mean that we should not offer a critique of the unequal structures of power that determine who or what is considered of cultural value. It is important to assert plainly that participation in cultural projects does not necessarily mediate against poverty and inequality. As Evans (2011) argues, cultural production still tends to be voluntary and underpaid and does not generate substantial employment. We have seen that cultural policy interventions can perpetuate social and spatial stereotypes. There is a considerable body of literature arguing that cultural-led regeneration perpetuates unequal power relations. Yes, these processes can be very enriching and empowering for individuals or groups. But, whilst arts and cultural projects remain short term, poorly funded and situated within a rigid hierarchy of values, this research adds to the literature which argues that investment in cultural activities or the cultural economy cannot, on its own, be imagined as the answer to today's growing social, economic and cultural inequalities.

9.1 Recommendations for future research

As advocated by Bennet (2011), this research underlines the need for researchers looking at cultural-led regeneration to pay

attention to the particular political relations involved in the different spheres of 'culture'. Whilst there has been a lot of interesting research analysing discourse and policy framework, a research paradigm is needed which can explore how policy frameworks and simplified discourses about people and place might be too rigid, often based on flawed information. Over simplification changes in circumstances, misapplication of labels might be challenged or resisted by both officials and the people at whom it is aimed. This can affect the way cities are imagined and constructed.

Critical attention is required in research not only to the examination of what is being defined as a subject and object of these policy interventions – that is how are the 'targets', who are the 'cultural workers', including consideration of who is writing the proposals, who is coming up with these definitions, who are the consultants, who are evaluating these policy interventions, and what does this tell us about social relations and structures of power.

It is also vital to include the understandings of culture and identity of 'ordinary people' in order to explore the tensions and contradictions of the social and spatial identities produced by decisions makers involved in cultural and urban regeneration policy. In this way we can gain more nuanced understandings of the norms and values influencing social relations in urban neighbourhoods.

9.2 Recommendations for policy-makers

At a workshop in Liverpool in September 2011 organised by the 'Knowledge Exchange Network on participation and engagement in the arts', a consultant and researcher who had been involved in

helping cities write their Capital of Culture proposals confessed that he used to work with anthropologists when developing the bids but he found that what they wrote was too wishy-washy. He needed clear, strong lines in order to write a successful bid. The point here is that anthropologists find it very difficult to make meaningful recommendations to policy makers, having a tendency to say that everything is all very complex and to deconstruct the simplified categories about people and places that policy makers need to make the tasks manageable...

It is also true that the difference between the 'worlds' of policy makers and the 'worlds' of 'ordinary people' emerged very strongly in this research. In both cities we see policy makers simplifying and fixing people's spatial and social identities in order to have a framework that they can use, and which can be backed up with the tools of governance, statistical analysis, evaluations etc. So cities are divided into *quartiers* and neighbourhoods, and people into groups (based on age, gender, ethnicity, nationality) in order to manage social relations. Such an approach cuts out the richness of everyday life. It also overlooks, or squeezes out the existing potential of multi-ethnic social, cultural and economic activity within neighbourhoods, activities which can be its own regenerative force for urban renewal.

The recommendation is not that policy makers tear up their statistical models, logical frameworks, project management tools, after-all, this is needed to create order. Rather to suggest that somehow urban leaders need to be encouraged to think more creatively about the potential within cities and to explore how a diversity of cultural expressions in the building of new urban futures is not an obstacle to be overcome but an integral part of the richness of intra and trans-urban social relations.

But the current framework for bidding and implementing the 'project' is extremely rigid and controlled. With its logical frameworks, its regular evaluations and audits it does not allow for mess and flux of everyday life, or the realisation that perhaps a city will change during the life of a 'project'. The problem is compounded because this bloodthirsty format of inter-urban competition does not allow for failure. The need for Marseilles to show that it was 'as good as Liverpool', that it attracted an equal number of tourists and sponsors means that the centre has to keep control of the project, to ensure that it keeps on track. It leads to a simplification of social and spatial identities, inflexibility and a hierarchical centralised control.

In light of this, is it not without irony that both Liverpool and Marseilles' Capital of Culture programmes include expositions to Le Corbusier¹¹² the arch protagonist of a 'high modernist' urbanism, who 'embraced the huge, machine-age, hierarchical, centralized city with a vengeance' (1992/1992). This does not seem a long way from the discourses of some of the urban planners interviewed, who talked about their plans to *construire la ville sur la ville* (build the city on the city), to construct 'creative' or 'knowledge' *quartiers*, or demolish and reconstruct 'failing neighbourhoods, turn cities into playgrounds or regenerate 'communities' often with little regard for the actual existing urban and cultural ecosystems.

What is needed, within cultural 'projects' is room for informal processes (flexibility in the face of unpredictability) from the

¹¹² Booth, R. 'Le Corbusier comes to Liverpool as part of Capital of Culture', The Guardian, 17 July 2008, <http://www.mp2013.fr/evenements/2013/10/lc-au-j1-le-corbusier-et-la-question-du-brutalisme/> accessed February 2013.

European bureaucrats who want to run an efficient and effective programme. Locally, it is crucial that structures be developed to allow for local informal involvement in cultural projects to allow the potential of multi-ethnic social, cultural and economic activity within neighbourhoods to emerge.

In terms of concrete recommendations, urban decision makers need to be both clearer and more realistic about what they wish to achieve with cultural-led regeneration. Clearer because, if the aim is really about improving the lot of those people in cities who are displaced from mainstream economic, social and cultural networks, the current model of top-down decision making, hoping for the 'trickle-down' effect is plainly not working.

More realistic because, as the European Commission guidelines notes:

*'In spite of the potential benefits, it is important to retain a sense of realism; cities may encounter problems with the event, including criticisms, disappointments, political risks, and financial difficult'*¹¹³

This advice is also echoed in the conclusions of Evans (2011). He argues that city leaders need to have more credible expectations about what a population and other actors in cities can gain from a capital of culture programme. They should not be distracted by league tables and newspaper headlines and remember that this

¹¹³ European Commission. Guide for cities applying for the title of European Capital of Culture. p.4 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc633_en.pdf accessed February 2012.

intervention is just one - and quite a small one at that -
intervention in urban transformation.

10 References and resources

10.1 Interviewees

*Marseilles*¹¹⁴

Interview with:

- Vice-Présidente, Association CLCV (Consommation, logement et cadre de vie) and member of community choir, 25 March 2011
- Jean Canton, member Pensons le matin, former Director général de l'urbanisme et de l'habitat, Ville de Marseille, 25 March 2011
- Director, Maison Pour Tous, Belle de Mai, 29 March 2011
- Claude RENARD, member Pensons le matin, Présidente de l'Art de vivre and formerly employed at Délégation Interministerielle à la Ville, 4 April 2011
- Technician, Direction de l'Action Culturelle, Ville de Marseille, 5 April 2011
- Président du Comité d'Intérêt de Quartiers Belle de mai, 6 April 2011
- Director général de l'urbanisme et de l'habitat, Ville de Marseille, 20 April 2011

¹¹⁴ When people were speaking in a professional capacity just the names of their positions are given. Full names of elected representatives and people willing to be cited in a personal capacity are included.

- Architect and member of Pensons le matin, 22 April 2011
- Philippe FOUQUIE, member of Pensons le matin, founder member of La Friche Belle de mai, 3 May 2011
- Bernard COLETTE, Association Marseille Provence 2013, 3 May 2011
- Keletigui COULIBALY, Director Afriki Djigui Theatri, 5 May 2011
- Rémy MARCIANO EUROMED II ARCHITECT 10 May 2011
- Chef du service Etudes, Observation et Prospective. Direction de la Prospective, des Etudes, et de la Démocratie de Proximité, Le Conseil regional de Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur and member of Pensons le matin, 11 May 2011
- Director and musical director, L'Art de Vivre, 13 May 2011
- Philippe SAN MARCO, Marseille Provence Métropole Communauté Urbaine, 17 May 2011
- Director, Association Culturelle d'Espaces Lecture et d'écriture en Méditerranée (ACELEM), 17 May 2011
- Architect, Agence d'urbanisme de l'agglomération marseillaise (AGAM), 18 May 2011
- Chef de Projet GIP Politique de la Ville pour le 3ème arrondissement, 18 May 2011
- Directeur du Groupement d'intérêt Public Politique de la Ville, 18 May 2011
- Michel PEZET, Conseil Général, 10 June 2011
- Lisette NARDUCCI, Maire du Secteur, 2 and 3 Arrondissement, Vice Président de Conseil Général, councillor on the board of Euroméd, 14 June 2011
- Gisèle GROS CROISSY, councillor of 2 and 3 Arrondissement, responsible for culture and the CUCS (Contrat urbain de cohésion sociale), member of Pensons le matin, 16 June 2011
- Attaché, chef du bureau de l'habitat et de la rénovation urbaine for the Préfecture of the Bouches de Rhône, 20 June 2011

- Thierry FABRE, MuCEM (Musée de Civilisations Européennes et Méditerranéennes), 20 June 2011
- Chef de Bureau Habitat et Rénovation Urbaine, Préfecture Bouches du Rhône, 20 June 2011
- Claude VALETTE, Chairman of AGAM, elected representative for metropolitan cooperation and town planning, 21 June 2011
- Deputy Director. Association Marseille Provence 2013, 22 June 2012
- Noureddine ABOUAKIL, Centre Ville Pour Tous, 22 June 2011
- Guy André LAGRESSE, artistic director. Association Les Pas Perdus
- Matthieu Buchain, artistic director. Association T.Public, association d'idées
- Member of community choir.
- Association Espaceculture
- Spokesperson, Marseille Espérance, 22 June 2011

Liverpool

Interview with:

- Arts Infrastructure Manager. Culture Liverpool, Liverpool City Council, 23 September 2011
- Wendy SIMON, Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism, Councillor for Kensington and Fairfield, 20 September 2011
- Director of ACME, support agency dedicated to developing creative industries in the region, 24 November 2011
- Senior Development Manager, Liverpool Vision, 24 November 2011
- Head of International and Commercial Relations, Liverpool City Council, 10 January 2012

- Representative of North Liverpool Culture Committee, 16 January 2012
- Steve MUMBY, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Councillor for Riverside and Labour Group Spokesperson for Safer Stronger Communities, 17 January 2012
- Policy Officer at Liverpool City Council and former Impacts08 Programme Manager at University of Liverpool, 20 January 2012
- Enterprise Director at Plus Dane Housing Group Limited, 2 February 2012
- Director of National Museums Liverpool, 13 February 2012
- Director of Hope Street Ltd. and Cultural Organisations of Liverpool (COoL), 13 February 2012
- Head of Participation and Engagement at Culture Liverpool, Liverpool City Council, 13 February 2012
- Coordinator of Liverpool Art and Regeneration Consortium (LARC), 16 January 2012
- Father Arthur Fitzgerald, St Michael's church, Liverpool, 13 February 2012
- Head of Visitor Economy. The Mersey Partnership, 2 February 2012
- Director of Partnership and Innovation, the University of Liverpool, 2 February 2012
- Steve ROTHERHAM, MP, former Mayor of Liverpool
- Strategic Planning Director. Peel Holdings (Management) Limited, 24 February 2012
- Estates Director, Liverpool One, 24 February 2012
- Bill HARPE, Director of The Black-E,
- Tahir ALI QASSIM, Director of the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival, 15 February 2012

International, researchers etc.

- Ruth MELVILLE, researcher for Liverpool IMPACT08, 15 September 2011
- Interview with David O'BRIEN, researcher for the Liverpool IMPACT08 and researcher
- Franco BIANCINI, Consultant and Professor of Cultural Policy and Planning at Leeds Metropolitan University, 4 December 2011
- Beatriz GARCIA, Head of IMPACT08 and Liverpool Institute of Cultural Capital
- Sir Robert SCOTT, leader of the Liverpool's application for the title of European Capital of Culture 2008, former ambassador of the Liverpool Culture Company

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- COoL: www.cool-collective.co.uk
- Department of Local Government and Communities: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/prevent/overview/whatisprevent>
- Black History Month: http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/sitea/BHM_FAQ.html
- Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium: <http://www.larc.uk.com>
- Liverpool Culture Company: <http://www.liverpool08.com/About>
- Liverpool Vision: http://www.liverpoolvision.co.uk/City_Centre.aspx

- Liverpool City Council: <http://liverpool.gov.uk>
- Kensington Regeneration: http://kensingtonregeneration.org/program_themes
- The Black-E: <http://www.theblack-e.co.uk>
- Tuebrook Transnational: <http://tuebrooktransnational.com>

France

- ARTfactories/Autre(s)pARTs: <http://www.artfactories.net/-24-About-us-.html>
- Euromediterranée: <http://www.euromediterranee.fr/themes/culture>
- Pensons le Matin: <http://www.pensonslematin.org>
- Les Pas Perdus: <http://www.lespasperdus.com>
- Marseille Provence 2013 <http://www.mp2013.fr/au-programme/actions-participation-citoyenne/quartiers-creatifs>
- T.Public, association d'idées: <http://www.tpublic.org>
- Marseille Espérance, Ville de Marseilles: <http://www.marseille.fr/sitevdm/marseille-esperance/accueil>
- Ministry of Culture and Communication <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/rapports/lextrait/colloqueinter.htm>

Europe/international

- European Commission "European Capital of Culture": http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm
- Decision 1419/1999/EC, OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event

for the years 2005 to 2019 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc740_en.pdf

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10.5 List of CPRA 2010 Jury Members

Milena Dragičević Šešić, President of the Jury (Serbia)

Ritva Mitchell, Jury member (Finland)

Lluís Bonet, Jury member (Spain)

Veronika Ratzenböck, Jury member (Austria)

Michael W. Quine, Jury member (United Kingdom)

Mikhail Gnedovsky, Jury member (Russian Federation)

Milena Dragičević Šešić, President of the Jury (Serbia)

Professor at the Faculty of Drama of the University of Arts in Belgrade (Cultural Policy and Cultural Management, Cultural studies, Media studies); Chair-holder of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management University of Arts Belgrade; President of the Orientation Board of the European Diploma in Cultural Project Management (Marcel Hicter Foundation, Brussels); Board member of ELIA (European League of Institutes of the Arts, Amsterdam). Former Rector of the University of Arts in Belgrade; Member of the Art & Culture Sub Board, Open Society Institute (Soros fund), Budapest. Lecturer in Moscow School of Social and Economical Sciences, MA-AMEC, Utrecht School of the Arts, CEU Budapest, Lyon II, Jagiellonian University Krakow, etc. Expert, consultant in cultural policy and management for the European Cultural Foundation, Council of Europe, UNESCO, Marcel Hicter Foundation, Pro Helvetia, British Council, etc. Published 15 books and more than 100 essays. Translated in over 10 languages all over the world.

Ritva Mitchell, Jury member (Finland)

Director of Research CUPORE (Finnish Foundation for Cultural Policy Research), Lecturer at the University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Social Sciences. former President of the Cultural Information and

Research Centres Liaison in Europe (CIRCLE), the European Research Institute for Comparative Cultural Policy and the Arts (ERICArts) and of the Orientation Board of the European Diploma of Cultural Project Management (Marcel Hicter Foundation, Brussels). Lecturer at the Sibelius Academy of Music (MA Programme in Arts Management) in Helsinki. She is involved in a number of research projects in Europe. Member of the editorial board of the *Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidskrift* (Nordic Cultural Policy Journal). She has published articles and papers on youth cultures, artists, cultural policies, new technologies and European issues in Finland and in Europe.

Lluís Bonet, Jury member (Spain)

Professor of the University of Barcelona, and former President of the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centers (ENCATC). Vice-President of the European Association of Cultural Researchers (ECURES), board member of the Association of Cultural Economics International (ACEI), and member of the Board of Trustees of Abacus (the largest Spanish cooperative on education and culture). External advisor in cultural policies, statistics and economics at the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNESCO, and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI). Director of a large number of research studies in cultural economics and cultural policies. Teaching: Director of the Graduate Programmes on Cultural Management of the University of Barcelona. Professor undergraduate courses at the same university (Schools of Law, Economics, Documentation and Librarianship) on Political Economy Cultural Economics, Cultural Industries, Cultural Management and Policy. Research fellow and Assistant Professor on Cultural Policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1991-1992). Guest Professor in different

graduate programmes on arts and heritage management, and lecturer in courses and seminars in more than 20 countries in Europe, Latin America and USA.

Veronika Ratzenböck, Jury member (Austria)

Director of the “Österreichische Kulturdocumentation, Internationales Archiv für Kulturanalysen” a non-university institute for applied cultural research and cultural documentation founded in 1991(www.kulturdocumentation.org). Research projects on culture, economic and social history of the 20th and 21st century; Visiting professor at the Institute of Philosophy of Law at the University of Salzburg (subject: “the European project”) . Lecturer in cultural studies and cultural policy at the University of Vienna. Since 1998 consultant to the Council of Europe, Programme: Evaluation on national cultural policies (Croatia and Bosnia&Herzegovina). Research and advisory work in Comparative cultural policy, European cultural and media policy and cultural aspects of European integration, cultural and creative industries, urban cultural policy, culture and employment, EU cultural policy, cultural studies (e.g. the “Exploitation and development of the job potential in the cultural sector” 2001, commissioned by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs, project: “Cultural Competence. New Technologies, Culture % Employment” 1999, study “The potential of Creative Industries in Vienna” commissioned by the City of Vienna. (www.creativeindustries.at)

Michael W. Quine, Jury member (United Kingdom)

Senior Lecturer in Arts Management at London City University. Acting Head of Department, Department of Arts Policy & Management, City University London. An extensive career in managing arts organisations, in educating arts managers and in

research. Initially from a theatre background, his interests range from the economics of the arts to arts marketing and financing, and into international comparisons. His international teaching experience includes countries as diverse as the US, Greece, Finland, Moldova, Spain and Russia (St Petersburg). Founding member a multi-university exchange programme, funded by the EU SOCRATES programme, encouraging staff and student mobility as well as annual conferences. During the last three years, as a Vice-Chair and Board member of ENCATC (European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres), he organised the first non-Francophone AIMAC conference, in London in 1995, and also works within the Scientific Committee for successive conferences (e.g. in Australia, Helsinki, San Francisco and Milan) into international comparisons of these and a range of wider policy issues. Former President of the Thomassen Fund for supporting mobility of arts management educators and trainers.

Mikhail Gnedovsky, Jury member (Russian Federation)

Mikhail Gnedovsky has been Director at the Cultural Policy Institute, a Moscow based NGO, since 2003. During these years, he has led, or supervised, various projects aimed at the promotion of innovative agenda in the cultural field in Russia. He has been involved in the research and capacity building projects, as well as in the development of strategies focused around the issues of creative industries, arts and business collaboration, social implications of the arts, the role of cultural heritage in the regional economy, etc. He has worked internationally, as an expert in various cultural projects, including the programmes of the Council of Europe. In 1998–2002, he worked as Director for the Arts and Culture Programme at the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) in Russia. In 2000-03, he was also Member of

the Arts and Culture Subboard at the Open Society Institute in Budapest. In 2009, he was elected Chair of the Board of Trustees at the European Museum Forum, an organisation that aims at the promotion of excellence, innovation and public quality in the European museums, and operates the European Museum of the Year Award scheme. In 2005, he was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit of Poland

10.6 Biographical note: author

Claire Bullen, author (France, United Kingdom)

Claire Bullen is a doctoral student at the Research Institute of Cosmopolitan Culture and the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester.

She was awarded the Cultural Policy Research Award from the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond for her project: “European Capitals of Culture and everyday cultural diversity: Comparing social relations and cultural policies in Liverpool (UK) and Marseilles (France) in October 2010.

In 2012 she was provided with a University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) Scholarship to enable her to carry out further research in Marseilles.

She is currently employed as a Research Assistant on the City Scalars project at the University of Vienna (funded by Vienna Impulse Programme for the Humanities, Social and Cultural Sciences). This project explores cultural diversity, migrant incorporation and processes of urban renewal in the cities of Marseilles, Berlin, Essen, Budapest, Pécs, Vienna and Linz.

Her research interests include cities, cultural policies, everyday cosmopolitanism and social relations. She also explores questions of urban comparison and policy mobility.

She continues to live and research in both Marseilles and Liverpool.

Correspondence address: claire.bullen@postgrad.manc.ac.uk

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Jan van Goyenkade 5

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